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P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Contact: Nanciann Regalado, CCO
Phone: 904-232-2236 - FAX: 904-232-2237
Email: nanciann.e.regalado@saj02.usace.army.mil

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Unique partnership brings Lake Okeechobee/Herbert Hoover Dike information directly to the public

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. –. At a community festival hosted by Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Our People in Emergencies) of Southwest Florida, and held in Clewiston on Saturday, September 23rd, the US Army Corps of Engineers will bring the latest information about Lake Okeechobee and the Herbert Hoover Dike directly to the Glades communities. This event is just one way in recent months that Project H.O.P.E. and the Corps have worked together to provide information to area communities.

Storms of Yesteryear: 1926 & 1928 - Then & Now recognizes the 80th anniversary of the hurricane of 1926, which at an estimated strength of category 4, devastated many south Florida communities. Hurricane awareness, particularly the need for hurricane preparedness, will be highlighted during this event.

Project H.O.P.E of Southwest Florida was established in 2005 after Hurricane Wilma swept across south Florida. It provides outreach, crisis counseling and social service support to the victims of Wilma. The Corps manages Lake Okeechobee and the surrounding Herbert Hoover Dike, which has provided protection for 40,000 residents of lakeside communities for more than 70 years. The Corps provides workshops and

seminars to Project H.O.P.E. staff, to equip them to address residents' questions and concerns about the lake's water levels and the stability of the Herbert Hoover Dike.

"Working with Project H.O.P.E. has dramatically increased our ability to deliver information to the community we both serve," said Nanciann Regalado, chief of the Corps' Corporate Communication Office. "Project H.O.P.E staff are talented communicators who can answer an individual's questions with a sensitivity to past experiences, in the preferred language, at the appropriate level of complexity, and in consideration of cultural influences."

"Large public meetings just don't work well in these communities. In fact, they don't work in most communities. Our mutual goal is to establish trust and credibility, which can only be earned by communicating on a personal level," said Doug Fowler, Project Manager for Project H.O.P.E. Southwest Florida. "Project H.O.P.E staff brings their skills and understanding to the table. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the Corps and to help the Glades communities."

All members of the public are invited to participate in the festival, which will include fun and informative activities appropriate for all ages. Local disaster response agencies and organizations will present displays and answer questions. The effects of hurricanes will be featured in the artwork of local school children and artists. The artwork of regional professional artists will be on display and the Clewiston Museum will be open. Robert Mykle, author of *Killer 'Cane: the Deadly Hurricane of 1928* will be on hand to discuss his book. The event will take place between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Clewiston Civic Park (just west of the Clewiston Inn).

For more information, call Project H.O.P.E. Southwest Florida at 863-226-6492.