



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Jacksonville District

NEWS RELEASE

Release No.: 0657

For Release: Nov 28, 2006

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

Contact: Nanciann Regalado, CCO

Phone: 904-232-2236

Email: nanciann.e.regalado@saj02.usace.army.mil

FAX: 904-232-2237

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers revising draft Lake Okeechobee

Regulation Schedule, new comment period opens in March

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, is revising its draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that supports the Lake Okeechobee Water Control Plan. A second public review and comment period will begin in March and will be open for 45 days.

The environmental impact statement for the water control plan outlines in detail the proposed actions, alternative actions and their probable environmental ramifications.

The original process drafted by the Corps anticipated adoption of a new regulation schedule in January 2007. However, new information and comments gathered during the public comment period have resulted in changes that warrant development of a second draft of the EIS. This draft will be made available for public review in March 2007. Based on this schedule, it is anticipated that implementation of the new regulation schedule will begin in July 2007.

Following a series of public meetings last September, Jacksonville District Commander Col. Paul Grosskruger asked the interagency study team to revisit the proposed draft regulation schedule and fine-tune it to minimize impacts on the coastal estuaries.

“Our goal is to adopt a plan based on the best engineering, science and water management analysis available and the best plan for the entire greater Everglades region, including the



Kissimmee River Basin, Lake Okeechobee, the coastal estuaries and the water conservation areas, Everglades National Park and Florida Bay,” said Grosskruger. “Public involvement is a very important part of our process, and we are listening to the public’s concerns. In our desire to deliver the overall most effective plan possible, we’re taking the additional time needed to address those concerns.”

“The public wants to see more water moving south. Of course, that’s what we all want to see, and what the Everglades restoration program will ultimately provide,” said Pete Milam, project manager. “In the meantime, we’re moving water south, though we are constrained by the amount of water we can move until water storage and treatment components start coming on line in 2010.”

As Everglades projects come to fruition, the Corps will use them to route more water south. In the interim, the proposed plan provides for a higher level of safety to lake communities and improves Lake Okeechobee environmental conditions by managing the lake at lower elevations.

Once the proposed regulation schedule is implemented next summer, water managers will immediately begin developing a new schedule that will take into account Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects, including Acceler8 project components. This schedule is planned for early 2010 implementation.

For further information on the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule Study and Environmental Impact Statement, please visit the Jacksonville District web site at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/> or call Susan Jackson of the Corporate Communication Office at 904-232-1953.

###