US Army Corps of Engineers®
Jacksonville District

MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR: ALL SOUTH FLORIDA MEDIA OUTLETS

TO: ALL EDITORS, NEWS DIRECTORS, REPORTERS

EVENT: STATUS OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE

WHEN: MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2008

After two years of drought conditions and historic low levels, Lake Okeechobee has risen 0.3 ft. since yesterday, to a current elevation of 13.41 ft. NGVD. A quarter of an inch of rainfall has occurred in the Kissimmee River drainage basin in the last 24 hours.

At this time, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is storing water and has not made water releases from the lake. Following the heavy rainfall from Tropical Storm Fay, the Corps inspected the Herbert Hoover Dike and found no significant issues with the dike as a result of the storm.

The lake level rose 2.15 ft. during the Tropical Storm Fay event. Due to additional drainage from the Kissimmee River basin, it is expected that the lake will continue to rise, to reach about 15 ft. in the next eight days without additional rainfall. This would raise the lake above the average of 14.23 ft., over the period of record 1965-2006. Additional rainfall or projected rainfall may require releasing water from the lake.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has spillway gates on the lake at Moore Haven to the Caloosahatchee River and at Port Mayaca that discharges to the St. Lucie Canal, which are closed. The spillway gates of the Corps' navigation structures located downstream from the lake - the St. Lucie Lock and Dam, Ortona Lock and Dam and the W.P Franklin Lock and Dam - are open to promote drainage of local basin runoff.

The Corps is closely monitoring two tropical depressions that might bring additional rainfall to Lake Okeechobee area.

The target operating levels for the lake are between 12.5 and 15.5 ft., which is considered a safe range for the Herbert Hoover Dike structure.

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