



Port Everglades Fact Sheet

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG.

Congress authorized the Port Everglades navigation improvement project in the December 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act.

The project will bring the port into 21st Century shipping by accommodating existing and future vessel movement, and resolving navigation restriction problems. It also presents opportunities for economic development.

The Corps continued consultation with state and federal agencies since release of the draft feasibility study in June 2013. The Port Everglades Final Feasibility Report, dated March 2015, and the May 2015 Environmental Impact Statement, completed with the signed Record of Decision in January 2016, include a number of provisions that reflect information gained from the Miami Harbor Deepening Project. Provisions include implementation of upfront mitigation for indirect impacts to non-Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed corals and reef structure, consistent with the Coastal Zone Management Act; and, refined measures to avoid and minimize impacts to threatened coral species and their critical habitats.

The March 2015 Port Everglades report and Biological Opinion (BO) both included a commitment to have the Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Environmental Protection Agency, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Broward County jointly update the environmental monitoring plan. This action represents a shift toward a greater level of interagency cooperation among the Corps and state and federal resource agencies in development of environmental monitoring measures. The interagency working group is making strides as new information becomes available.

The Corps re-initiated consultation with NMFS to amend the existing BO for the Port Everglades project. Factors that contributed to this decision include:

- In the March 7, 2014 BO, NMFS assessed the potential effects of the Port Everglades project. This BO showed that the project may affect listed species that included staghorn (*Acropora spp.*) corals, as well as six additional coral species that were proposed for listing at the time of the opinion. Five of the original six species were listed as threatened under the ESA. (The BO determined that the project's direct and indirect effects on those corals species will not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the coral species.)
- The Corps is developing a sedimentation transport model for Port Everglades, designed to identify areas that the project sediment might affect. The Corps is currently conducting fieldwork and the modeling effort will start once the required data is collected.
- The Corps is also working with its partners to conduct post-construction monitoring for the Miami Harbor Deepening Project. This study, which is being conducted pursuant to the Corps' Florida Department of Environmental Protection permit, will assess how sedimentation levels have changed over the one year period since project completion, and determine if there is any long-term effect on coral species. This information will prove valuable for the Port Everglades project.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT

www.saj.usace.army.mil

The listing of the five additional coral species, the results of the modeling and the information derived from the Miami Harbor Deepening Project constitute "new information" in assessing effects to listed species. This new information led the Corps to re-initiate consultation with NMFS and request an amended or new BO.

As part of this process, and to ensure transparency, Jacksonville District will release any new information to the public as part of the National Environmental Policy Act process. Look for quarterly updates in the future.

The Port Everglades navigation project is in the preconstruction engineering and design phase, which will continue through 2018. The Corps and its partners continue efforts to collect and provide the best science available to inform decision-makers and prepare for project implementation.

Port Everglades Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is the improvement project needed at Port Everglades?

The project will bring the port into 21st century shipping by accommodating existing and future vessel movement, and resolving navigation restriction problems. It also presents opportunities for economic development. As a result of increased traffic and overall growth in vessel size, improvements including deepening and widening will help alleviate vessel congestion and improve transit efficiency and maneuverability.

2. Why are you deepening the channel?

The existing Federal Channel project depth of 42-feet does not provide adequate, safe depth for large tankers and container ships currently visiting the harbor. Today's container ships and oil tankers require significantly more channel depth to operate efficiently.



3. I'm concerned about environmental damage caused during the Miami Harbor Deepening Project; will it also occur at Port Everglades?

The Corps is committed to protecting marine resources of South Florida and is working with our partner federal, state and local resource agencies at every stage of the Port Everglades project. The Corps is still evaluating what impacts, if any, resulted to adjacent benthic resources from the Miami Harbor Deepening Project. More information about different techniques to avoid and minimize impacts will be included in the updated Port Everglades NEPA document.

At left, healthy relocated Acropora cervicornis colonies recorded in November 2014 during Miami Harbor construction showing abundant growth since their relocation in November 2013. See the February 2015 one-year post relocation and other reports at www.saj.usace.army.mil. (Photo courtesy of CSI)

4. Is it true the Corps is starting the Port Everglades environmental process from square one and it's causing a two-year delay?

Not exactly. The Corps will supplement previously completed environmental information with new data gained since 2015. This new information requires the Corps to reinitiate consultation under the Endangered Species Act and for NMFS to issue a new or amended Biological Opinion (BO) under the Act. Environmental information collection and analysis is ongoing during the Corps' preconstruction, engineering and design phase, a three-year phase that we are currently in. The Corps anticipates working in this phase throughout 2017 and into 2018. Once a new or amended BO is received and NEPA analysis and documentation has been updated, the Corps will finalize design and proceed to construction.

5. Did the Miami Harbor Deepening Project cause excessive coral or coral reef damage?

The extent of sedimentation damage, if any, to the benthic environment is still being evaluated. The area of effect being evaluated is approximately 250 acres and spans both north and south of the Miami Harbor channel overlapping the middle and outer reef tracts.

6. What types of environmental monitoring will occur at Port Everglades?

The Corps and Port Everglades are committed to examining traditional methods and innovative means to make timely, informed management decisions. These traditional methods include sending divers to observe and collect data on the adjacent benthic habitat before, during and after construction. This type of monitoring logs in tens of thousands of hours collecting underwater data. To supplement this traditional data, the project will also use new technology, including installing camera systems on the ocean floor to view real-time conditions throughout the deepening effort. Installed devices will monitor the benthic environment and relate information to where project work is occurring. The collected information can include turbidity, sedimentation, and speed and direction of currents. The collected information will aid the Corps and the Port in determining if work should stop, be postponed, or otherwise modified to help assure the natural environment is not adversely affected. The Corps will deploy this camera system in advance of construction to also record the ambient conditions of the area.

7. How will you protect the coral environment?

The FEIS recognizes that there are unavoidable impacts associated with construction of the project, including direct impacts associated with channel deepening and expansion, as well as with indirect impacts associated with sedimentation. To offset these unavoidable impacts, upfront mitigation was included in the authorized project. Refined measures to avoid and minimize impacts to ESA listed threatened coral species and their critical habitats are being formulated in collaboration with an interagency working group.

8. I'm concerned about transparency – how will the public really know what is going on with this project?

As the Corps and the Port serve the people, we believe that transparency is a critical requirement and part of our public service mandate to Florida and United States citizens. The project is using new technology to provide the public with real-time monitoring during construction. We will also publish all final scientific reports on our website along with our management plan, and our actions taken at Port Everglades. In addition, we commit to hold periodic public meetings throughout the design process, as well as teleconference calls that are open to the public. We welcome feedback.