US Army Corps of Engineers®
Jacksonville District

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District** specializes in the planning, engineering, construction and management of large infrastructure projects in Florida and the Caribbean. The Corps' mission includes flood control and water management; navigation; shore protection and restoration; environmental restoration; hazardous, toxic and radioactive remediation; military support and emergency support. The Army Corps of Engineers built the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project 50 years ago at the state of Florida's request and with the authorization of the United States Congress.

Baby eagles find new home in St. Petersburg

Two baby bald eagles that were carefully removed from a nest near Pahokee – adjacent to dike construction – have new homes in St. Petersburg.

Eagle Watch volunteer Jim White puts the male baby eagle in a protective carrier for its trip to Maitland.

On Feb. 25, the Corps of Engineers coordinated the relocation of the baby bald eagles – called eaglets – from a nest four miles south of Pahokee. The nest is nestled between two construction sites, which are part of the **Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation Project.** The Corps and contractors were aware of

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Cutoff wall construction to start in Pahokee

Construction to strengthen the Herbert Hoover Dike is expected to begin in the city of Pahokee this summer. Contractors for the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District** will install a partial cutoff wall in the dike within city limits.

The Corps of Engineers is strengthening the 143-mile Herbert Hoover Dike which circles **Lake Okeechobee.** The dike has kept lakeside communities and residents safe from flooding for more than 70 years, but Corps studies since the 1990s show that high lake conditions put extreme stress on the aged dike, making it susceptible to breaching.

Corps contractors will begin work on two sections of cutoff wall in Pahokee this summer.

Like all earthen dikes, Herbert Hoover leaks. As Lake Okeechobee rises and puts pressure on the dike, seepage increases and sometimes carries sediment through to the landside. This is known as "piping" or internal erosion. One of the nation's largest dam rehabilitation projects is underway at Herbert Hoover Dike. This involves installing a two- to three-foot thick wall from the dike's crest to limestone layers about 70 feet below to prevent and stop erosion. Other features that are still in design stages will also help control seepage.

Corps contractors will soon begin emplacing two sections of wall in the city of Pahokee. One section spans 3.9 miles from the S-352 structure in **Canal Point** to the **Everglades Marina.** The other section spans 2.6 miles from the Everglades Marina to the **East Beach Pump Station.** Contractors will begin work in the northern sections of the stretches and move south.

Residents with homes and businesses along the dike can expect an increase in noise, dust and truck traffic during this time. Once equipment areas are set up, contractors may work 24-hour operations to expedite construction. Contractors average about 300 feet of wall per week, and normally operate for at least a week or two before moving their work limits to a new location.

"The noise and dust is the price we pay for a more secure lifestyle," said **Ted Roberts,** Glades Community Liaison headquartered in Pahokee. "The alternative of not doing anything is totally unacceptable. It's like rehabilitating your house. It is a temporary inconvenience to have something better at the end."

The dike is closed to the public from Port Mayaca to Belle Glade, with some localized areas open to pedestrian traffic. Safety is a key factor and the Corps asks residents to use caution in areas near construction sites.

To date, 11 miles of cutoff wall in the 22-mile stretch are under construction or have been completed totaling over $105.6 million in wall contracts. In 2010, the Corps will award over $100 million in cutoff wall orders for an additional 11 miles.

For more information or to report any issues that may arise, please contact Roberts at 904-576-3010 or at the city of Pahokee at 561-924-5534, ext. 19. Also, please visit the dike rehabilitation website at www.saj.usace.army.mil/Divisions/Everglades/Branches/HHDProject/HHD.htm

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the nest and monitored it closely for nesting activity. In January, two chicks were born. The options were to stop construction for months while the eaglets fledged (learn how to fly and leave the nest) or risk interfering with the health and safety of the young birds. Stopping construction would cost about $2.5 million and delay vital construction until after the start of the hurricane season – not a desirable outcome.

In consultation with the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** and **Audubon of Florida,** the Corps decided to relocate the eaglets for fostering in another nest. Audubon's Center for Birds of Prey (ACBOP) has had great success in relocating and fostering eaglets. ACBOP officials say eagles make good foster parents because they can't smell or count – "so as long as chicks are about the same age, the parents feed all the screaming eaglets in their nest."

An agile tree climber and Audubon volunteer set up a net below the nest, climbed 50 feet up the Australian pine, and carefully put the eaglets in a canvas bag using towels. An Audubon **Eagle Watch** coordinator and a volunteer transported the six-week-old eaglet brother and sister to the ACBOP in Maitland, Fla. to care for them until foster nests were found. Several days later, and after banding them with USFWS bands for future identification, Audubon officials announced the "days of the all-you-can-eat luxury accommodations" for the HHD eaglets were over. Eagle Watch volunteers found two foster nests in St. Petersburg, Fla. and that same day, volunteers relocated the baby eagles. So far, it seems the "foster" parents and siblings are accepting the new eaglets as their own. Over a week after placement in the nests, volunteers say that they appear to be doing fine.

Rehabilitation continues at two construction sites while the bald eagle nest tree, tallest of the trees at center-left, is monitored. The adult eagle pair will likely use the nest in the future.

Audubon volunteers will continue to monitor the relocated eaglets through its Eagle Watch program. The Corps will continue to monitor the nest and adult pair near Pahokee.

In your community

The **Community Outreach on the Go Mobile Information Van** recently visited the **Okeechobee Health and Safety Expo** and **Speckled Perch Festival.** People of all ages enjoyed the van's info and video, and left with an eco-friendly backpack or canvas tote bag with informative materials. To schedule the van, please call 305-948-8063.

Sampling the dike's core

Corps' crews from around the nation assist on the Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation Project. This winter, crews from **Baltimore,** Md.

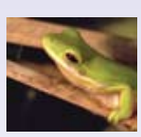
and **Mobile,** Ala. traveled to **Clewiston** and **Port Mayaca** to take core samples and conduct other tests. The tests identify the composition of the dike and foundation materials and the direction of the underground water flow. This data is used in modeling which helps engineers design the construction project.

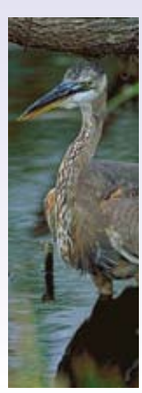
To Learn More:

Both the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and the dike strengthening project will take years to complete. There are many ways to keep informed and get involved. Both have Web sites, newsletters, and public meetings.

The Corps of Engineers has an active community outreach program around the lake, too. To learn more, visit www.saj.usace.army.mil or call 1-800-291-9405.

For more information about Everglades restoration and how it affects you, visit www.evergladesplan.org or call 1-877-CERP-USA.





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