



## UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGENCY DEVIATION March 2016

On Feb. 15, 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved a request from Florida Governor Rick Scott for a temporary emergency deviation from its water control plan for Water Conservation Area-3 (WCA-3). The deviation raises water levels in the L-29 Canal as high as elevation 8.5 feet, which is one foot higher than operations under the current water control plan. This action allows more water to flow from WCA-3 into Everglades National Park.

The Corps partnered with the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, and coordinated with the Miccosukee and Seminole tribal staff to undertake this emergency action.

### **What You Should Know About The Deviation:**

- **This temporary deviation required extensive coordination with multiple agencies**
  - The South Florida Water Management District operates many structures in accordance with water control plans approved by the Corps. When state water managers wish to conduct operations outside the limits of an approved plan, a formal deviation request is required so potential impacts can be evaluated.
  - The State had to acquire temporary flowage authorizations from potentially impacted property owners to flow additional water across their property.
  - The Corps performed an environmental assessment to determine potential environmental effects and determined that no significant impact would occur during the 90-day period the deviation is in effect.
  - To accommodate the temporary deviation, the Corps suspended Increment 1 of the G-3273 and S-356 Pump Station Field Test, an ongoing water operations field test to determine operational flexibility in the system.
- **There are risks involved in this temporary deviation**
  - Raising the L-29 Canal level before the necessary data and infrastructure is in place poses a degree of risk due to the uncertainty involved with how the system will respond to a change in operations.
  - The State is monitoring areas along the L-29 Canal to ensure no adverse effects are occurring at adjacent properties and businesses as a result of the temporary emergency deviation.
  - Additional infrastructure to maintain existing levels of flood protection in South Dade is needed before the Corps can raise water levels in the L-29 Canal on a long-term basis.
- **This temporary deviation is what is envisioned as part of Everglades restoration efforts**
  - Federal and state officials eventually anticipate raising the L-29 Canal level permanently as part of Everglades restoration. Ongoing construction efforts and the water operations field test are working to make this happen.
  - In order for the southern portion of the Everglades ecosystem to be operated as effectively as possible, the necessary infrastructure needs to be in place, the necessary data to evaluate operational flexibility needs to be known, and the resulting Combined Operating Plan needs to be developed and implemented. [Learn more here.](#)

Additional information on the WCA-3 Emergency Deviation located at: [http://bit.ly/WCA-3\\_Deviation](http://bit.ly/WCA-3_Deviation)