

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT 4400 PGA BOULEVARD, SUITE 500 PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA 33410

February 19, 2025

Regulatory Division South Branch Palm Beach Gardens Permits Section

PUBLIC NOTICE

Permit Application No. SAJ-2024-02302(SP-RJP)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army (DA) permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §403) as described below:

APPLICANT:

South Florida Water Management District c/o Drew Bartlett 3301 Gun Club Road West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The proposed project is within the C-23 Canal and C-24 Canal and is located south of SR 70 within the Northwest portion of the C-23 drainage basin, within the Cow Creek sub-watershed. The project is being proposed on parcel numbers: 3218-111-0002-000-3; 3111-111-0001-000-8; 3124-111-0001-000-8; 3112-111-0001-000-8; 3112-111-0001-000-1; and 3207-311-0001-000-6, respectively. The project is in Sections: 1, 6, 7, 11-14, 16-21, 24-25, and 30-31; Townships 36 and 37; Ranges 34 and 38, in St. Lucie County, Florida.

Directions to the site are as follows: From Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, head north on I-95 North for approximately 46 miles to exit 126. Turn left, heading west on County Road 712/Midway Road for approximately 1 mile then turn left, heading west on FL-70. Stay on FL-70 for approximately 13.5 miles, to the project entrance.

APPROXIMATE CENTRAL COORDINATES:

Location	Latitude	Longitude					
C23/C24 South Reservoir	27.349575 °	-80.577460°					

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: Increase water quality and flood risk management

Overall: To increase water quality and flood risk management across the Southern Florida basin in St. Lucie County Florida.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY: The C-23/C-24 South Reservoir Project (C-23/C-24 Reservoir) is a component of the Indian River Lagoon South (IRL-S) Restoration Project, to reduce freshwater inflows and generate habitat and water quality improvements in the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River.

IRL-S was authorized by the Chief of Engineers via the Chief's Project Initiation Report with the supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PIR/EIS) for Central and South Florida, Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), Florida, dated March 2004. The PIR/EIS includes the recommended project activity to construct the C-23/C-24 Reservoir. IRL-S is a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, Public Law 110-114, in accordance with Section 601 of WRDA 2000.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The proposed site consists of an approximately 297-acre above ground impoundment constructed over former citrus groves with approximately 15,200 feet of perimeter levees, a 20,000 gallon per minute diesel pump and a concrete overflow and discharge weir.

The South Reservoir site consists primarily of former citrus groves which have been converted to improved pasturelands and being used for cattle grazing. Some of the former citrus groves are overgrown with invasive and nuisance vegetation. A large portion of the land area is being upkept as pastureland. Irrigation canals, fencing, and irrigation swales are located throughout the project site.

The proposed site includes a variety of habitats to include marshes and grass prairies with clumps of cabbage palms and willow that are seasonally flooded or inundated at the ground surface. The site has been observed with clusters of mixed hardwoods, such as live oak (*Quercus virginiana*). There is existing agricultural pumps, wells, and other equipment located within the project footprint that would need to be removed, prior to construction.

PROPOSED WORK: This project requests authorization to construct the C-23/C-24 Reservoir. The project would require the construction of the following.

- a. Dredge approximately 228,651.4 cubic yards (CY) of sediment material along approximately 18.5 acres of the C-23 Canal to clear and grub the site to a uniform elevation.
- b. Construct a twenty-nine (29) foot (ft) high, eleven (11) mile long embankment with access roads, to construct the reservoir (structure D-447).

- c. Construct an approximately 7.3 sq mile reservoir with a maximum depth of approximately 16.5 ft and can hold approximately 57,815 ac-ft of water at full capacity. The C-23/C-24 Reservoir would include the construction of one (1) broad crested weir and approximately two (2) stilling and monitoring wells.
- d. Construct one (1) pump station with a maximum output capacity of 1,200 cfs (structure S-447).
- e. Construct two (2) outlet structures with emergency spill (structure(s) S-443 & S-446, respectively).

Once complete, water would flow into the C-23/C-24 Reservoir from the S-447 pump station and would convey south via the two (2) outlet structures on the east side of the reservoir (S-443 and S-446). The proposed project would impact approximately 242-acres of wetlands and approximately 135-acres of tributaries.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION INFORMATION –The proposed project would impact aquatic resources associated with the C-23 Canal and C-24 Canal, respectively. The applicant would be required to implement best management practices throughout the entire period of construction. Additionally, turbidity monitoring would be required.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION – The applicant has identified permanent impacts to approximately 242 acres of wetlands and 135 acres of tributaries associated with old agricultural ditches. The applicant has proposed compensatory mitigation to offset these impacts. The applicant has indicated that the proposed project would provide functional benefits to the North Fork of the St. Lucie River, the South Fork of the St. Lucie River, the estuary section of the St. Lucies River, and a portion of the Indian River Lagoon as required in the Federal project (EIS/PIR, 2004). The Corps is reviewing the applicant's information and will continue to evaluate the information provided by the applicant to determine if compensatory mitigation will be required.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The Corps is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government Agencies with respect to historic resources. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, those federally recognized tribes with concerns in Florida and the Permit Area, and other interested parties.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The Corps has reviewed the effects of the proposed project on threatened or endangered species and their habitat, that may potentially occur in the project vicinity. The Corps has determined the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the threatened Audubon's crested caracara (*Polyborus plancus;* caracara); the threatened Eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis* *jamaicensis*); the endangered Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumberus*); and the endangered Florida bonneted bat (Eumops floridanus); the endangered Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*), the threatened West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*), and the threatened wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). The Corps has determined the proposed project may affect, likely to adversely affect the Eastern indigo snake (Drymarchon corais couperi). The Corps will request initiation of formal consultation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by separate letter.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH): The site consists of a freshwater system and does not support habitat for marine fisheries pursuant to NMFS purview. The applicant has indicated that there would be no essential fish habitat proposed to be impacted by this activity.

NAVIGATION: The effects to navigation are currently being evaluated to determine if the proposed action would obstruct navigable waters of the United States.

SECTION 408: The proposed activity, would alter, occupy, use, or impact a Corps Civil Works project. Therefore, the applicant may be required to request authorization under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 USC 408).

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The jurisdictional line has not been verified by Corps personnel.

COMMENTS regarding the potential authorization of the work proposed should be submitted in writing within 30 days from the date of this notice. Comments should be submitted via the Regulatory Request System public notice module at https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs/public-notices. Alternatively, you may submit written comments to the attention of the District Engineer through the United States Army Corps of Engineers Palm Beach Gardens Permits Section, 4400 PGA Boulevard, Suite 500, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33410. The decision whether to issue or deny a permit based on this application will be based on the information received from this public notice and the evaluation of the proposed activities.

QUESTIONS concerning this application should be directed to the project manager, Ryan J. Poland, in writing at the Palm Beach Gardens Permits Section, 4400 PGA Blvd. Suite 500, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410; by electronic mail at <u>Ryan.J.Poland@usace.army.mil</u>; or, by telephone at (561) 472-3512.

IMPACT ON NATURAL RESOURCES: Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Services, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, environmental groups, and concerned citizens generally yields pertinent environmental information that is instrumental in determining the impact the proposed action will have on the natural resources of the area.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Water Quality Certification would be required from the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY: In Florida, the State approval constitutes compliance with the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan. In Puerto Rico, a Coastal Zone Management Consistency Concurrence is required from the Puerto Rico Planning Board. In the Virgin Islands, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources permit constitutes compliance with the Coastal Zone Management Plan.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.







SR. 68

SR 70

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S-154

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OSCEOLA CO. OKEECHOBEE CO.

SR. 700

RFB 600000XXX INDIAN RIVER LAGOON SOUTH C-23/24 SOUTH RESERVOIR - PACKAGE 2 PERMITTING ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

GOVERNING BOARD

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE READY TO ADVERTISE SUBMITTAL



DREW BARTLETT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

APPROVED BY:

SEAN WILLIAMS, P.E. BUREAU CHIEF, **ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION BUREAU** ENGINEERING, CONSTRUCTION & MODELING DIVISION

The consultant, contractor or other parties associated with this project shall comply with Florida Statutes Chapter 119. These plans are the property of the District and must be secured and maintained in a confidential manner. Review by any unauthorized individual or outside/third party not performing work necessary for this project is prohibited.

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



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