



**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-2024-05127 (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 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-25 Canal/Belchor Canal and is located approximately twenty-seven (27) miles northeast of Lake Okeechobee and south of the Florida Turnpike, mile marker 160.5, in the Belchor Canal sub-watershed. The project is being proposed on parcel number(s); 12-11-1235-121-0001-000-4, in Sections 31, 35, and 36; Township 34 South; Range 38 East, in St. Lucie County, Florida.

Directions to the site are as follows: From Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, head north on Interstate 95 North (I-95 N) for approximately sixty (60) miles to exit 131 (Orange Ave) heading west. Turn left and continue west on Orange Ave for approximately six (6) miles, then turn right and head north onto North Ffa Road for approximately two (2) miles, then turn left, heading west onto West Angle Road for approximately one and three-quarter (1 ¾ miles); the project will be on your right-hand side.

**APPROXIMATE CENTRAL COORDINATES:**

Location	Latitude	Longitude
C-25 RSTA Central Point	27.478124°	-80.494266°

**PROJECT PURPOSE:**

Basic: Increase Water quality

Overall: To increase water quality in the Belchor Canal in St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River, in St. Lucie County Florida.

**ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:** The C-25 Canal/Belchor Canal Reservoir & Stormwater Treatment Area (C-25 RSTA) project 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-25 RSTA. 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.

The C-25 RSTA was designed to provide peak flow attenuation to the IRL, water supply to benefit users, and provide water quality benefits to reduce loading of nutrients contained in runoff that currently discharge to the IRL. The C-25 RSTA components will capture water currently discharged to tide and store it to meet water quantity, quality, timing, and distribution targets outlined in the Federal project. Water would bypass through the C-25 Reservoir to the C-25 Stormwater Treatment Area (STA), where the water would be treated to remove phosphorous and nitrogen from the water before being released back into the C-25 Canal, downstream of the S-99 gated spillway water control structure. From there, cleaner water would be discharged into the Indian River Lagoon via the S-50 concrete weir control structure.

The C-25 RSTA is expected to increase aquatic resource function to the surrounding Gomez Creek-Belcher Canal watershed. Specifically, the proposed project would capture the first 0.4 inches of runoff from the East Florida Coastal basin (HUC ID: 030802), into the C-25 RSTA via flows from the C-25 Canal.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The proposed project consists of approximately twelve hundred (1,200) acres of prior agricultural lands used for growing various commodity crops, before it was acquired by the applicant in accordance with the long-term implementation of the federal project CERP via the Indian River Lagoon – South component. The project site is surrounded by lands designated agricultural to the north, east, and west.

In December 2024, the Jacksonville District Regulatory Division (CESAJ-RD) issued a DA Permit SAJ-2024-00948, to authorize the applicant to complete certain preliminary requirements prior to constructing the C-25 RSTA, including clearing, grubbing, and grading the site to a uniform elevation prior to construction of the reservoir, please refer to the permit for further information.

The project proposed impacts to approximately 72.97 acres of tributaries, determined to be Waters of the United States (WOTUS) within the C-25 Canal and Hewes Brothers Grove (HBG) property. The Corps determined that compensatory mitigation would not be required because the project is not creating the loss to wetland and/or aquatic resource function.

Prior to permit authorization of SAJ-2024-00948, the proposed site had been previously disturbed for approximately forty (40) plus years, via agricultural related activities. The proposed site is currently cleared of all native and exotic vegetation. Currently, the site has minimal wildlife benefits for aquatic resources, with limited access for large mammals. The soil stratum has been previously assessed as having a range of Pineda sands, Wabasso sands, and other loamy soils, that shows little hydric functionality in the soils across the site.

**PROPOSED WORK:** The applicant seeks authorization to construct Phase II the of the C-25 RSTA features. The proposed project was designed and engineered to treat approximately eighty percent (80%) of the phosphorus entering the STA from the reservoir. The total storage capacity of the reservoir and STA is approximately 5,392 acre-feet. The applicant requests authorization of the following activities:

- a) Construct the C-25 RSTA levee. The applicant would construct an approximately 7.30-mile, 24-foot-wide perimeter levee and access road. The perimeter levee and access road would be constructed of mainly lime rock material being brought on site. The proposed activity would impact approximately 30.29 acres of agricultural ditches.
- b) Construct the C-25 Reservoir: The applicant would construct an 806-acre above ground reservoir with a maximum depth of eight (8) feet.
- c) Construct the S-461 Inflow Pump Station (PS) along the C-25 Canal/Belchor Canal. The PS would allow for a total inflow capacity of approximately 255 cubic feet per second (cfs) (please see Attachment A, Drawing (DWG) Series C-00114). The proposed activity would impact approximately 1.00 acre of tributaries associated with the C-25 Canal/Belchor Canal.
- d) Construct the S-462 emergency spillway and S-463 emergency drawdown structure to provide emergency overflow from the C-25 Reservoir. The emergency spillway structure (S-462) would provide a maximum flow capacity of approximately 300 cfs and the drawdown structure (S-463) would provide a maximum capacity of approximately 150 cfs (please see Attachment A, DWG Series C-00114).
- e) Construct the S-466 double barrel box culvert to allow flows from the reservoir into the proposed STA structure. The double barrel box culvert structure (S-466)

would provide a maximum output flow capacity of approximately 100 cfs (please see Attachment A, DWG Series C-00114).

- f) Construct a 25-foot-long S-496B concrete weir to provide protection from sudden drawdowns to the system by approximately 100 cfs (please see Attachment A, DWG Series C-00114).
- g) Construct the C-25 STA: The applicant would construct a 527-acre STA.
- h) Construct the S-467A; S-467B; S-467C; S-467D single barrel box culvert to convey water from STA Cell 1 distribution canal to the STA Cell 1 Spreader Canal. The single barrel box culvert structure(s) (S-467A; S-467B; S-467C; S-467D) would provide a maximum flow capacity of approximately 25 cfs each (please refer to DDR figure 13).
- i) Construct the S-468A; S-468B; S-468C; S-468D single barrel box culvert to convey water from STA Cell 1 distribution canal to the STA Cell 1 Spreader Canal. The single barrel box culvert structure(s) (S-468A; S-468B; S-468C; S-468D) would provide a maximum flow capacity of approximately 25 cfs each (please refer to DDR figure 13).

The applicant has identified that the proposed project would impact approximately one (1) acre of tributaries associated with the C-25 Canal/Belchor Canal and approximately 30.29 acres of agricultural ditches on the HBG property, located directly adjacent to the C-25 Canal/Belchor Canal.

**AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION INFORMATION** – The proposed project would impact aquatic resources associated with the C-25 Canal/Belchor Canal, respectively. The applicant would be required to implement best management practices throughout the entire period of construction, including sediment and turbidity monitoring. The applicant has proposed to utilize all applicable Best Management Practice for in-water work. In addition, implementation of erosion control measures and turbidity curtains will protect water quality and adjacent habitats where applicable and will minimize impacts to the adjacent surface water systems.

**COMPENSATORY MITIGATION** – 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 and its designated critical habitat (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*); 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.

The Corps received written concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding effect determinations to threatened and endangered species pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), for activities identified in phase I, via a Biological Opinion (BO) dated November 15, 2024. The Corps will re-initiate consultation with the USFWS for the proposed project activities identified herein 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 would 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 [Ryan.J.Poland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Ryan.J.Poland@usace.army.mil); 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:** A 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.