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Jacksonville District commander talks about south Florida programs

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Col. Jason Kirk, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District, talked with reporters this afternoon about ongoing efforts to rehabilitate the Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding Lake Okeechobee and implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and other components of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Program.

Highlights from today's call:

- On ecosystem restoration projects in the Everglades and other parts of south Florida, Kirk said the Corps remains committed to following the project sequence outlined in the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS).

"We have a strong partnership with the South Florida Water Management District and the state of Florida," said Kirk. "The IDS was developed through public dialogue and discussion between the partners in the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Program. It is the optimal sequence of restoration activities."

- On the future of the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS) and plans to manage water, Kirk said the Corps anticipates starting a study to update the documents in 2022. If changes are identified, they can be implemented upon completion of dike rehabilitation in 2025.

“We anticipate having more flexibility in managing water in the lake,” said Kirk, “but it would be premature to paint a picture of what that looks like. We will develop alternatives during a future study, share those with stakeholders, and listen to feedback. Additionally, if funds become available to accelerate rehabilitation efforts, we will look to start such a study about three years before the projected end of rehabilitation activities.”

For more information on Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation and ecosystem restoration programs, visit the Corps’ website at www.saj.usace.army.mil.