



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUN 28 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Regulation (33 CFR 230.11), this letter constitutes the Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for 1) 2018 Planned Temporary Deviation to the 1988 Regulation Schedule for Water Conservation Area (WCA) 2A and 2) 2018 Planned Temporary Deviation to the 2012 Water Control Plan for WCA 3A. A series of mid-May storms have caused conditions to rapidly change from very dry conditions to very wet in South Florida. This record area-wide rainfall has caused water levels in the three WCAs to rise above their maximum regulation schedule and the maximum exceedance elevations per the 2012 Water Control Plan. If the rate of rising water levels is not mitigated to limit the prolonged duration of high water conditions, there is potential for high water levels to pose greater risks to valuable natural resources, public health, safety or welfare as the wet season and hurricane season continue due to reduced flood storage.

The purpose of these deviations are to provide high water relief for WCA 3A by raising the regulation schedule of WCA 2A to accommodate additional storage, therefore, reducing inflows into WCA 3A through the S-11 structures. The Corps, in coordination with the South Florida Water Management District, is proposing to temporarily increase the regulation schedule in WCA 2A, not to exceed a peak height of 14 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929. WCA 2A has sufficient capacity to hold more than the current regulation schedule, and the Corps is proposing to utilize this to alleviate conditions in WCA 3A. The Corps is also maximizing flows out of WCA 3A and coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on options to open S12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B and S-344 structures on June 30, 2018, prior to their official opening date of July 15, 2018.

The proposed water management actions described within the two EAs would be implemented until the WCA-3A three-station gage average falls below Zone A of the Regulation Schedule, at which point a recovery period would be initiated to reduce the WCA-2A stage to the pre-deviation regulation schedule (normal operations). The Corps may generate supplemental EAs, as necessary, to discuss and disclose any additional effects to the human environment that may not have been considered within these EAs.

The EAs and FONSI's for the 2018 Planned Temporary Deviation to the 1988 Regulation Schedule for Water Conservation Area (WCA) 2A and the 2018 Planned Temporary Deviation to the 2012 Water Control Plan for WCA 3A are available for your review on the Corps Environmental planning website under multiple counties:

<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx>

Any comments you may have must be submitted in writing to the letterhead address within 15 days of the date of this letter. Questions concerning the WCA 2A Planned Temporary Deviation can be submitted to Sharon Tyson at Sharon.L.Tyson@usace.army.mil; questions concerning the WCA 3A Planned Temporary Deviation can be submitted to Jenna May at Jenna.C.May@usace.army.mil. I can also be reached by telephone at 904-232-2336 and by email at Gina.P.Ralph@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gina P. Ralph', written in a cursive style.

Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch