



Update from Lee County

September 14, 2018

Flood-mitigation update from Lee County

Agreement reached to help flow ways

The Lee Board of County Commissioners at its Oct. 2 regularly scheduled meeting is expected to approve an interlocal agreement with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) that would help the county and district join forces on flood-mitigation efforts. Specifically, the agreement would have the district take over management and maintenance of 10 natural flow ways and waterbodies.

The upcoming work after the Board adopts the agreement Sept. 18 would begin on the Orange River in east Lee County, Mullock Creek in south Fort Myers and Oak Creek in Bonita. Work would resemble what the district did on the Imperial River following Hurricane Irma. The agreement provides for future work on Bedman Creek, Hickey Creek, Daughtrey Creek, the Estero River (including the North and South branches), Halfway Creek, Spring Creek, the Imperial River, Leitner Creek and Kehl Canal.

For more information and to see the agreement, visit the agenda for the 9:30 a.m. Oct. 2 BoCC meeting at <https://www.leegov.com/bocc/meetings>. Note: The meeting agenda will be posted later this month.

Additionally, the BoCC has \$3 million allocated in FY18-19 budget for flood remediation. The final hearing and expected adoption of the budget is slated for the 5:05 p.m. budget hearing Sept. 18.

Joint meeting looks at regional and local watershed issues

Officials from the SFWMD, the City of Bonita Springs, Lee County and Collier County met earlier this month and agreed to have a future public workshop to further discuss a proposal that could help shorten the duration of flooding in Bonita Springs and southern Lee County.

The proposal, which is still in the preliminary stages of being explored and modeled, would involve a drainage swale that is already planned to be constructed along the Bonita Beach Road and Logan Boulevard intersection improvement project in Bonita Springs.

The proposed swale and associated water control structures would potentially allow a limited amount of floodwaters from the Bonita Beach Road area to flow south into the Big Cypress Basin in Collier County. The features only would be used when there is excess water in the Bonita Springs area and conditions in the Big Cypress Basin in Collier County would not be negatively impacted by accepting additional water.

The meeting earlier this month included Big Cypress Basin (BCB) Board Chairman and SFWMD Governing Board member Rick Barber, Bonita Springs Mayor Peter Simmons, Collier County District 2 Commissioner Andy Solis and Lee County District 3 Commissioner Larry Kiker. All entities will be included in Lee County's Phase 3 flood-mitigation study.

Phase 3 flood-mitigation study set to begin soon

Lee County continues negotiations with the two local engineering firms who were selected via a procurement process to do a yearlong assessment with recommendations for the Board in 2019 looking at potential long-term flood-mitigation projects. The process will include input from community stakeholders and citizens.

Completion of Phase 3 of the county's flood-mitigation effort is necessary before any long-term and large-scale infrastructure improvements can happen. It could include an array of actions such as grant applications, land acquisition (if necessary), permitting, design, bid and construction.

Sediment removal set to start

Work will begin soon on sediment and debris removal, thanks to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grant that Lee County received. The funding is designed to help with remaining post-Hurricane Irma issues such as completion of San Carlos Park ditches and the East Mulloch weir repair as well as sediment removal from countywide canals, including Ten Mile Canal.

For the Ten Mile Canal, the Notice to Proceed should be issued soon to the awarded contractor Energy Resources, with work beginning shortly thereafter. The anticipated completion date is early January 2019. The amount of grant money the county ultimately receives for its array of eligible projects will depend on the actual costs of the work.

The NRCS grant-funded work is only to repair damages caused by Hurricane Irma and is not intended to fix pre-existing conditions.

Island Park and KB Homes Canal update

In the last two weeks, a KB Homes contractor cleared out the northern portion of the canal for maintenance access. In addition, limited grading was done on the canal – and the contractor removed some heavy vegetation and some high spots in the canal bottom. This has improved the storm water flow.

Now Lee DOT is working to further the improvements. A crew has surveyed and is evaluating next steps to continue to help the flow on adjacent lands.

San Carlos Park debris removal

Work will resume in the San Carlos Park area and the East Mullock Drainage District to remove debris from ditches. You may recall this work commenced after Irma but ended after a set number of days due to funding requirements. Now, the county has received bids from additional companies and is currently evaluating their qualifications. A start date for work to begin will be known soon. Area residents with questions can call Lee County Natural Resources at 239-533-8109.

Work continues in The Villas

Lee DOT is has completed the first section of work in The Villas and is moving on to the second section. The county has a crew dedicated solely to this project while the department's other operations crews continue to address numerous countywide issues as well.

The crew started at Woodland Boulevard between Austin Street and Beacon Street and worked north to Aldridge Avenue. DOT now has staked the right of way, placed door hangers between Chatham Street and Crest Lane from Woodland Boulevard to Harvard Avenue, and will start roadside ditch maintenance in this area this week.

To sign up specifically for future Villas updates, click here and scroll down to the "sign up" prompt:

<https://www.leegov.com/irma/flood/villas>

County ready for continuing storm season

Lee County DOT effectively monitored and adjusted weirs in various flow ways before, during and after Tropical Storm Gordon earlier this month. Crews will continue to do so as the storm season continues. Lee County DOT manages and operates 52 weir

gates with 13 weir stations countywide; weir stations control the water flow at major outfalls.

DOT staff closely monitors its weir systems daily to ensure storage areas are kept to a minimum in case of a large storm. With the active storm season upon us, DOT is in contact with Lee County Emergency Management officials as well as with emergency cleanup contractors and equipment rental contractors, in case they are needed quickly.

Lee County Emergency Management is currently updating the county's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) based upon across-the-board lessons learned from Hurricane Irma.
