



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS | Jacksonville District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Construction starts near Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

Federal, State agencies break ground on third restoration project

Jacksonville, Fla. – State and Federal officials paid honor to a former retired secretary, grandmother and native New Yorker for her many quality of life accomplishments today. In the 1980s, the late Fran Reich led local Florida residents to fight – and win – against building a landfill adjacent to one of Florida's natural wonders, the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Palm Beach County.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and its partners hosted Fran's family during a groundbreaking celebration at that exact location. The Corps is constructing the Site 1 Impoundment Project on lands now designated as the Fran Reich Preserve to provide water storage considered essential to restoring the Everglades' historic health and viability.

"Make no mistake! People matter! It's absolutely amazing what Fran Reich spurred for the future of this unique ecosystem and restoration in general in Florida," said Jacksonville District Commander Al Pantano. "This project will increase much needed water storage capacity and water management flexibility in the area. The work itself will benefit many people, and improve the quality of life for Palm Beach County residents, businesses and area visitors," he added.

More than 100 people attended the special event, including U.S. Representative Ted Deutch, U.S. Representative Ron Klein, Ronna Reich Schwartz from Westport, Conn. and Sheara Reich from Washington, D.C., granddaughters of Fran Reich, Mimi Drew, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Jo Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; Tom Strickland, Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks; Eric Buermann, Chairman, Board of Directors, South Florida Water Management District and Burt Aaronson, Commissioner, District 5, among others.

"Our grandmother, Fran Reich, once said, 'On the other hand, I stop to think about what would happen if we weren't here. I believe in what we're doing. I believe strongly in what we're doing,'" said Sheara Reich.

"For her (Fran Reich) it was more about the greater good -- what's good for the community and especially what's good for children and future generations -- than her own personal passions. That's what



made her such an amazing person and I also think that's part of why she was so successful," added Sheara Reich.

"Because she was here, something meaningful to generations to come is taking place here today," added Ronna Reich Schwartz, "and we are glad we can be a part of it."

"The Site 1 project reduces urban water demands on Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and leaves more fresh water in the Everglades where it is needed most," said Tom Strickland, the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. "Today's ground-breaking represents the Administration's strong commitment for Everglades restoration and underscores the progress we are making everyday to restore this world class natural resource."

The Corps awarded a \$44 million contract in August for phase one construction of the project, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Corps anticipates the completion of the first phase in the fall 2012, and awarding phase two in fall 2012.

"Forward progress in Everglades restoration continues today with the start of construction on the Site 1 Impoundment," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann. "This project on the edge of the historic Everglades illustrates the ongoing commitment of the District and our federal partners to protecting and restoring a national treasure."

A component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, the 1,800-acre project is located along the Hillsboro Canal, south and east of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The Corps' local sponsor, the South Florida Water Management District, acquired the lands.

The impoundment will capture and store excess water currently discharged to the Hillsboro Canal. Water managers will use the stored water when availability is low in the dry season. The project will also reduce wasteful discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway, as well as water supply demands on Lake Okeechobee and the Loxahatchee refuge. The impounded water will decrease the loss of water from the Loxahatchee refuge caused by naturally occurring seepage. Other potential benefits include flood mitigation, water quality improvements and reduced saltwater intrusion.

Phase one of the project includes modifications to the existing L-40 levee and construction of a 5.5-acre wildlife wetland area. Construction activities also include demolition, installation of a temporary access bridge, vegetation clearing and grubbing, dewatering operations, borrow and disposal area operations, excavation and fill placement, construction of an armored spillway, placement of erosion control measures that include soil cement and reinforced grass, and installation of embankment instrumentation. Once built, the Corps will turn operations and management of the site over to the SFWMD.

For more information on the Site 1 Impoundment Project, please visit www.Evergladesplan.org and click on the link to Projects and Studies. To view the video news release on the project and the interviews with stakeholders and family members visit www.youtube.com/JaxStrong.