



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS | Jacksonville District

BUILDING STRONG®

Release No.: NR 1090

For Release: Nov. 24, 2010

Contact: Barry Vorse

Phone: (904) 232-2236; (904) 614-4976

Email: [barry.d.vorse@usace.army.mil](mailto:barry.d.vorse@usace.army.mil)

FAX: (904) 232-2237

## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### **Corps awards \$79 million contract for Faka Union Canal Pump Station, a portion of Picayune Strand restoration work**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, continued its progress in Everglades restoration earlier this week when it awarded a construction contract for the Faka Union Canal Pump Station, part of the Picayune Strand Restoration Project in Collier County.

The \$79 million project was awarded to Harry Pepper and Associates, Jacksonville, Fla., to construct a pump station, continue plugging the Faka Union Canal and removing 100 miles of roadway. Construction will begin in early 2011 and take about three years to complete. In October of 2009 a similar contract for \$53 million was awarded to Pepper for the Merritt Canal phase of the project.

The Picayune Strand project area includes 55,000 acres of native Florida wetlands and uplands located between Alligator Alley (Interstate 75) and the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41) in the southwestern corner of the state. When completed the entire project will include three spreader canals, three pump stations, more than 100 canal plugs, roadways and levees.

The land was formerly a privately owned subdivision called Southern Golden Gate Estates. Decades ago, canal excavation and road construction disrupted the natural water flow and over-drained the area, which led to reduced aquifer recharge, greatly increased freshwater discharges to southern estuaries, and increased invasion of upland and non-native vegetation. All of this caused the loss of ecological connectivity and habitat expanses sufficient to support the endangered Florida panther and other wildlife. In 1974, Collier County commissioned the first study to determine how to reverse the impacts of the failed development.

The project is nearly surrounded by public lands including the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Collier-Seminole State Park and the Picayune Strand State Forest.

Page 1 of 2

**US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS** | Jacksonville District  
P.O. Box 4970 • Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Get Jacksonville District news and information at: [www.saj.usace.army.mil](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil) or visit our social media sites:  
Facebook - [www.bit.ly/JaxStrong\\_Facebook\\_Fan\\_Page](http://www.bit.ly/JaxStrong_Facebook_Fan_Page) | YouTube - [www.youtube.com/JaxStrong](http://www.youtube.com/JaxStrong) | Twitter - [www.twitter.com/JaxStrong](http://www.twitter.com/JaxStrong) | Flickr - [www.flickr.com/photos/jaxstrong](http://www.flickr.com/photos/jaxstrong)



In the 1980s, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection began land acquisition that ultimately cost about \$250 million. To expedite restoration, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) moved ahead with an effort to plug the northern seven miles of the Prairie Canal, remove about 200 miles of roadways adjacent to the canal, and clear exotic plant species from the canal banks. This work was completed in 2006. The SFWMD also moved forward with much of the design effort and completed construction on one of four phases of road removal.

For more information on the Picayune Strand Restoration and other CERP projects, please visit [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org).

- 30 -

**(Note to Media:** Jacksonville District and its partners are planning a Picayune Strand ground-breaking celebration tentatively scheduled for February 25, 2011. For more information, call Lacy Shaw at 904-232-1550.

-30-