



## **Risk MAP Success Story: The Herbert Hoover Dike Presented a Unique Challenge; FEMA Responded With a Unique Solution**

### **Background and Issue**

The Herbert Hoover Dike, which surrounds Lake Okeechobee in South Florida, could not be accredited to protect against the 1% annual chance flood event by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Portions of five counties surrounding the lake—Glades, Hendry, Martin, Okeechobee, and Palm Beach—would be mapped into a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as a result.

### **Approach**

Before completing the Flood Insurance Study updates for the counties around Lake Okeechobee, FEMA Project Manager Mark Vieira proactively reached out to both the USACE and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to obtain their latest modeling. At that time it was discovered that the USACE was updating their two dimensional model for the Herbert Hoover Dike. FEMA put all five countywide studies on hold so that the new modeling results could be used in a comprehensive statistical analysis to determine the 1% annual chance flood event.

### **Impact**

The initial benefit of coordination with the USACE and SFWMD was multiple government agencies using the same model and information. But the real impact of this effort was through public outreach—how would FEMA help the counties and communities around Lake Okeechobee explain the SFHA changes to their citizens?

FEMA Region IV's Project Manager Mark Vieira and Outreach Lead Henrietta Williams developed a comprehensive approach, which was implemented by the entire project team. This unique solution included:

- Meeting with the USACE and SFWMD to explain the results of FEMA's statistical analysis of the 1% annual chance storm event on Lake Okeechobee and the Herbert Hoover Dike before mapping began
- Meeting with each county and local municipality to explain the modeling and mapping results before maps were issued preliminary
- Leading three outreach coordination calls with the project team, Florida State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Office, counties, and local communities to help prepare for the Preliminary DFIRM Community Coordination (PDCC) meetings and public open houses
- Working with External Affairs to host a Congressional Briefing call and an Intergovernmental/local elected official call for the five counties
- Holding PDCC meetings and public open houses in Glades, Hendry, Martin, and Okeechobee Counties in September 2013 with more than 450 citizens attending



### Risk MAP Project Phases

This success story is relevant to the Risk MAP project phase listed below. Find more Risk MAP Success Stories organized by project phase.

- Community Engagement, Outreach, and Education

### Relevant Risk MAP Products

Changes Since Last FIRM

### Key Words

Post Preliminary Processing, Public Outreach, Multi-Agency Coordination, Levee Accreditation