

## Emergency Preparedness

Hurricane season is June 1 through November 30. However, given Florida's unpredictable weather extremes, it is essential to be prepared for emergencies at all times.

Central County Water Control District personnel staff work year-round to maintain our water control system to ensure operations during rain events. Each rainfall event has its own characteristics and must be managed as it develops. Radar and other weather reporting technology, along with constant communication with emergency management entities, are utilized to assist District staff in responding to rain and storm events.

Water levels in canals are monitored, and control structures and flood gates may be opened to release water. Water levels and structures must also be monitored and operated to ensure sufficient water is released without letting so much water go that we threaten the underground aquifer and drinking water of our residences. Rights-of-way, culverts and bridges must be inspected and cleared quickly of any blockage so there is a continuous free flow of water throughout the connecting canal system.

### RURAL RESIDENTIAL FARMING

Rural Residential Farming (RRF) communities are designed to retain water in swales and onsite detention ponds or lakes. When lakes reach their designed control elevation, water is discharged through a weir or fixed or operable control structure into the adjacent canal. With prior authorization from the SFWMD, communities with operable structures may be allowed to open their structures to increase the stormwater discharge rate prior to and after a rain event.

CCWCD must pre-designate authorized individuals to act on behalf of the community regarding the maintenance and operation of its drainage system and discharge control structure operation. These individuals are employees of the District.

The most important action that a District can take is to ensure year-round maintenance of the community's drainage system to ensure that control structures, swales, drains and outfall pipes have an unobstructed flow. In addition, property landscape maintenance and removal of any encroachments on canal rights-of-way are imperative to avoid potential blockages in canals due to debris and provide a clear path for large equipment should emergency access be required.

## Residents

Residents also play a key role in emergency response. Effective flood control is dependent on well-maintained canals and rights-of-way. Unauthorized enhancements on canal rights-of-way such as landscaping, fences, swing-sets and patio furniture, can severely hinder the District's ability to access structures and canals. Vegetation and other structures along the canals may cause blockages, slow the progression of drainage and reduce response time in an emergency event.

In advance of a storm or heavy rainfall event, it is important for residents to know who is responsible for the operation and maintenance of their community drainage system. These individuals should be contacted with questions regarding the operation of the neighborhood's stormwater drainage system.