

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Katelyn Potter, Communications Director
Suwannee River Water Management District
386.362.1001 or 800.226.1066 (FL)
SRWMDCommunications@SRWMD.org
www.mysuwanneeriver.com



IMPROVED FLOOD FORECASTING FOR SANTA FE RIVER BASIN RESIDENTS

LIVE OAK, FLA., Jan. 12, 2018 – The Suwannee River Water Management District (District), in partnership with the National Weather Service in Jacksonville, FL and the Southeast River Forecast Center in Peachtree City, GA are increasing flood forecast services to residents in the Santa Fe River Basin to help improve high water level predications and flood preparedness.

Effective February 1, 2018, three new forecast points will help provide flood forecasting and warning protections for an additional 50% of the entire Santa Fe River basin. Water levels along the Santa Fe River and its tributaries are capable of dramatic rises, particularly during and immediately after tropical rainfall events. At the High Springs gage during Hurricane Irma in 2017, the river rose almost 17 feet from pre-storm levels, while the Worthington Springs gage rose 16 feet. These gauges will provide more accurate information about rising water during heavy rain events.

“Hurricane Irma showed us the need for increased information and forecasting along the Santa Fe River. These gauges will increase our ability to inform residents of potentially damaging river levels so they can take action to protect themselves, their residences and belongings,” said Tom Mirti, Director for the District’s Division of Water Resources.

Stakeholders and residents are invited to a public informational meeting regarding the new forecast points on January 18, 2018 at the High Springs Historical Museum, located at 120 NW 2nd Avenue in High Springs, FL. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. At the meeting, information will be provided on the following:

- Discuss and learn how recent adjustments to river modelling allow for forecast services on the Santa Fe River,
- Provide input for flood stages to be implemented at the three new forecast points,
- Learn how future events will be handled by the National Weather Service and Suwannee River Water Management District using these new forecast services.

Generally, the river rises slowly enough that life-threatening situations can be avoided with proper precautions. However, during a hurricane or tropical storm in the Santa Fe River water levels can rise 10 feet or more within 48 hours. Consequently, planning is required to ensure public safety and move valuables from flood-prone areas before access roads become impassable.

The mission of the Suwannee River Water Management District is to protect and manage water resources using science-based solutions to support natural systems and the needs of the public. The District holds true to the belief of water for nature, water for people. Headquartered in Live Oak, Florida, the District serves 15 surrounding north-central Florida counties.

For more information about the District, visit www.mysuwanneeriver.com or follow us on Facebook and Twitter, search @SRWMD.

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