



ALEX LUCES The Jupiter Courier

Gale English, general manager of the South Indian River Water Control District, stands on one of the new structures in the Jupiter Farms area that will be computer operated.

\$1.6 million Farms canal project nears completion

By Alex Lucas
Staff Writer

Five canals intended to improve the ground water storage and for the ground water recharge in the Jupiter Farms area soon will be completed after six months of work, according to Gale English, general manager of South Indian River Water Control District.

"(They) will reduce over-drainage during the dry periods, (improve) water conservation and to improve the quality of the runoff that's discharged into the northwest fork of the Loxahatchee River," English said of the project, which affects 45 miles of the canal system.

The project also will allow officials to control the gates via computer.

The canals will also provide freshwater augmentation, he said, which will provide better flow downstream and steady flow northward that will contain a saltwater mixing-zone. When tide water from the Loxahatchee River meets the freshwater from the marshy area of the Loxahatchee slough, the canals will keep the mixing zone from coming upstream, said English.

"During a system runoff at natural level, which is elevation at 10 feet, the weirs are raised to a different elevation, three to four feet higher, which enables the system to recharge and

have more water in the system," he said of the newly constructed concrete and steel dam gates. "That will enable it to better control the exotic weeds and the quality of the water runoff."

When completed, the project should have a total cost of \$1.6 million. Grants from the South Florida Water Management District (\$750,000) and the Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative (\$650,000) paid for the lion's share of the construction, and the district added \$300,000.

English, who is entering his 25th year with the district, said that building materials shortage has delayed the project a bit but it should be complete within 45 days.