

January 2012 Employee of the Month

Joseph (JK) Wells, Pilot

Administrative Services Division

In October of 2011, the Kissimmee River felt the impacts of what meteorologists now refer to as one of the wettest Saturday's in history from, "The No Named Storm of 2011." Record rainfall fell between Orlando & Lake Okeechobee in amounts of 7.5" - 17.12" with the highest amounts near Yeehaw Junction in Southeastern Osceola County.

With water levels quickly rising, local flooding occurring and further flooding threatening upstream, it was critical to transport an electrician to the spillway to bypass gate limit switches to allow for a maximum gate opening.

A call was made to Flight Operations requesting helicopter support to accomplish this critical mission. Although darkness was approaching & weather conditions marginal, Pilot Joseph "JK" Wells immediately made preparations to pick up the electrician and regional managers and ferry them to this remote site.

Once on-site, the limit switches were quickly adjusted and all of the spillway gates opened to their maximum allowable gate openings. Mr. Wells then transported field station staff safely back to their vehicles.

We recognize Mr. Wells for his boldness, skill & dedication to duty under difficult environmental conditions. His actions helped prevent additional flooding & may very well have prevented the loss of property or life in the aftermath of the extreme rainfall event.

January 2012 Team of the Month

The S-65 Boat Lock Emergency Water Conveyance Team

Team Members:

- Chris Graham
- Phillip Jones
- Don Saunders Jr.
- Shawn Spry

On October 8, 2011, record rainfall fell between Orlando and Lake Okeechobee in amounts of 7.5"-17.12". This was recorded as one of the wettest Saturday's in history.

This team of four (4) were deployed by boat for the 11 mile trip down river from Highway 60 due to the flooding in the area. Making matters worse, as they drew near to their destination, they were overtaken by a strong thunderstorm. This brave team continued to S-65A to accomplish their mission.

This team of dedicated employees is to be commended for their swift and effective actions under difficult environmental conditions as their efforts helped mitigate a very serious flooding situation.

Good Samaritan Award

Chris Scharkopf, Science Technician 3, Water Quality Bureau

Bruce Weaver, Science Technician 2, Water Quality Bureau

Bill Karlavige, Science Technician 3, Water Quality Bureau

On December 7, 2011 these three gentlemen were traveling west on County Road 833 and came upon a scene of head-on collision, between a passenger car and a citrus trailer truck, this team was the first to arrive on the scene, who stopped to provide assistance and to call 911. Also joining District staff was a Miccosukee police officer, who had been in front of the passenger car prior to the accident.

Bruce, informed the office of his EMT background and promptly began to access the area for any potential danger before proceeding to check the victim for vital signs. Unfortunately, Bruce was unable to find any signs of life.

While Bruce was attending to the victim, the officer ordered Chris and Bill to position the District's vehicle in such a way as to block the road to prevent other motorists from accessing the scene until additional law enforcement and medical personnel could arrive. We would like to send our sincere gratitude to these three individuals for their willingness to extend help and for their quick thinking during an emergency.