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Plans for Celery Fields will be subject of July 15 public meeting

Plans to expand the Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility, including new and improved trails for public use, will be presented at a public meeting 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, July 15, at the Fruitville Library, 100 Coburn Road, Sarasota. A project presentation is scheduled at 5:30 p.m., but the plans will be on display throughout the meeting.

Work on the Phase 3 stormwater project is expected to begin later this summer and be completed in late 2010. On July 7, the Sarasota County Commission awarded the \$7.2 million construction contract to Brooks & Freund, LLC of Fort Myers.

The main purpose of the construction project at the Celery Fields, located on the south side of Fruitville Road, is to provide floodplain storage, reduce flooding and improve the quality of water flowing from the stormwater facility to Phillippi Creek and Roberts Bay. The project is designed to reduce street and structure flooding of 15 homes downstream of Phillippi Creek in the area of Colewood Place, Laurelwood Place, Brookmeade Drive and Woodmont Drive.

The project includes more than 80 acres of enhanced wetland vegetation for water quality treatment and floodplain storage in the 120-acre southern cell. It also will provide additional floodplain storage in the 30-acre parcel known as the former Walker Tract along Raymond Road.

The area will continue to be used for passive recreation by residents. Among the planned construction improvements for public use are:

- Walking trail around the perimeter of the facility
- An improved walking and bike trail on the proposed observation hill
- A sidewalk along Raymond Road
- Expanded parking area at the gazebo

During construction, the existing parking and gazebo area will be closed to public use, but parking will be available at Ackerman Park and Fruitville Public Library. Portions of the Celery Fields facility and some sidewalks may also be closed for public safety during construction.

While the stormwater project is under construction, work on two other county projects in the area will be under way. A temporary fire rescue station will be built at the intersection of Apex and Palmer roads, and the wooden bridge on Raymond Road will be replaced with a new concrete structure. A permanent fire station will be constructed at Apex and Palmer site beginning in late 2011.

The \$7.2 million project will be funded through a Florida Department of Environmental Protection 319 grant and the existing Phillippi Creek basin stormwater capital-improvement assessments.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000.

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