

# Sea level team advances to active responses, insurance rates

BY NINA LINGOFF

Active responses now in the works to deal with rising sea levels took center stage last week at the third meeting of the Miami-Dade Sea Level Rise Task Force.

Moving forward, the task force intends to hear in January from insurance experts on how rising seas will affect rates for everyone from the county to homeowners.

The task force, appointed by Miami-Dade county commissioners, heard presentations last week from the South Florida Water Management District and the Miami-Dade Public Works and Waste Management and Water and Sewer Departments.

Whereas previous meetings largely surveyed sea level rise in South Florida and reviewed past recommendations by organizations like the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Compact, this meeting took an active view of what government agencies in South Florida and Miami-Dade are currently doing in response to swelling seas. Presentations made clear

that from the federal level to individual homeowners, sea level rise is a problem that affects all.

The South Florida Water Management District is focusing on flood control structures. Of about 30 in the Miami-Dade region, some will need repairs and replacements over the next 20 years, said Tommy Stroud, district assistant executive director of operations, maintenance and construction.

These salinity control structures serve two basic purposes, Mr. Stroud said: barriers to saltwater intrusion into draining and freshwater systems, and flood control during storms. They have a typical lifespan of 40 to 50 years, with electronics and mechanical components lasting about 20 years. In response to rising seas today, the district adds pumps to supplement what these structures can't do.

But there's another organization that the district answers to and needs approval from.

"We can't unilaterally make changes to the flood control system without

approval from the US Army Corp of Engineers," Mr. Stroud says.

On a county level, Miami-Dade's Water and Sewer Department has been preparing for sea level rise for decades. Since 1992's Hurricane Andrew, which wiped out South Miami's waste water treatment plant for about two weeks, the department has been preparing for slowly rising seas by adding barriers to its facilities. The core figure cited by the department's Deputy Director Douglas Yoder is 3 feet of sea level rise by 2075.

During storms, the people of Miami-Dade expect to lose power, but not necessarily water, Mr. Yoder said.

"One of the learning points is that if we get wiped, a lot of our customers are going to get wiped out," he said.

Miami-Dade Water and Sewer is also looking into the future of sea level rise with its Stormwater Interface Geographic Information Systems model, a joint project with the US Geological Survey, said Virginia Walsh, a geologist with department.

The model will consider factors like

inches of sea level rise, storm surge, and timing to run scenarios on how sea level rise will affect Miami-Dade water and sewer infrastructure.

On a micro level, homeowners in at-risk areas face one major question: "Do they want to leave?" asked Marcia Steelman, an engineer with Miami-Dade's Public Works and Waste Management Department.

In certain areas, homes and streets today are simply too low. In preparing homes for rising seas, it's important to still consider if staying in them is still cost effective.

"When it's not cost effective, people walk away... But if the person has the economic incentive to be there, they'll raise [their homes] because it makes economic sense for them to be in particular places," Ms. Steelman said.

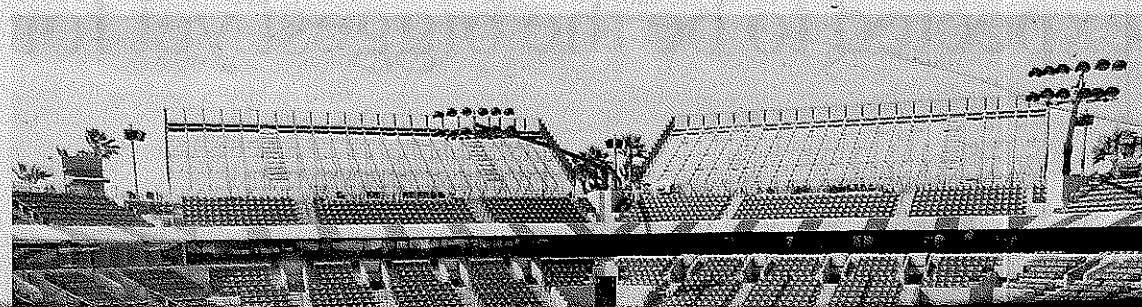
The Public Works and Waste Management Department is now surveying about 20 at-risk basins in unincorporated Miami-Dade and singling out properties that need to be either evacuated and demolished or raised and renovated.

# Key tennis center court volleys grow increasingly personal

BY SCOTT BLAKE

The legal battle over the proposed expansion of Key Biscayne's Crandon Park Tennis Center is getting a bit personal.

Lawyers for International Players Championship, or IPC, which hosts the annual Sony



as he would have others believe. And, the family did not condition the 'gift' on its use as a passive preserve.

"The county acquired the land that is now Crandon Park as part of a business transaction with the Mathesons — a trade — in which the county provided the