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Levy County Emergency Management Phone Line Crashes

URGENT PUBLIC INFORMATION

Published Sept. 13, 2017 at 8:57 a.m.

LEVY COUNTY -- The AT&T phone lines at the Levy County Emergency Operations Center have crashed. In the short term, we will allow people to ask us questions through Facebook messages and comments at www.facebook.com/lcdem . Please try to limit questions only to important needs. Please do not ask about fuel or power restoration as we will not have that answer.

If you must talk to someone, you can call the Levy County Sheriff's Office at 352-486-5114, but please only call if you absolutely have to.

9-1-1 service is working as normal.

If you have an emergency please call 9-1-1

LCSO non-emergency telephone line breaks; 352-486-5114 is working; **Use 9-1-1 FOR EMERGENCY ONLY**

Published Sept. 12, 2017 at 9:17 p.m.

BRONSON -- For some reason, the Levy County Sheriff's Office non-emergency AT&T telephone number of 352-486-5111 is broken, LCSO spokesman Lt. Scott Tummond said.

There is a number to use instead.

The LCSO only non-emergency line that is working is 352-486-5114.

For emergencies, the 9-1-1 line continues to work well. The 9-1-1 emergency lines are still operational.

NEVER CALL 9-1-1 UNLESS YOU HAVE A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY.

Communications are already stressed, Lt. Tummond said, and 9-1-1 is for true emergencies.

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"Please be patient as we work to restore the other lines," Lt Tummond said. There is no projected date for the normal non-emergency LCSO number to be restored.

Levy County courthouse and government offices closed Wednesday Sept. 13

Published Sept. 12, 2017 at 5:47 p.m.

LEVY COUNTY -- The Levy Courthouse, including the Levy County Court and Eighth Judicial Circuit court in Levy County will be closed tomorrow (Wednesday, Sept. 13).

Levy County government offices will all be closed tomorrow.

Of course, the Levy County Sheriff's Office and Levy County Department of Public Safety (Levy County Fire-Rescue) will have their 24-hour deputies, firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics on duty to help people in emergency situations.

Flooding forecasted for Santa Fe River

**By Katelyn Potter, Communications Director
Suwannee River Water Management District**

Published Sept. 12, 2017 at 2:47 p.m.

LIVE OAK -- The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) and National Weather Service are forecasting near record water levels along the Santa Fe River.

Water levels are expected to peak by Thursday (Sept. 14) as impacts from rainfall associated with Hurricane Irma accumulate.

River levels on the Santa Fe River near Fort White are expected to reach 35.4 feet (NAVD 88) which is near the 100-year flood elevation level of 36 feet (NADV 88) and higher than the last recorded highs during Hurricane Dora in 1964. Homes built to code/regulation should have been constructed to the 100-year flood elevation level plus one foot. Homes built prior to mid 1980's are more likely to be built with a finished first floor elevation below this level.

The greatest impact from flood waters will be loss of access. The District is urging residents and business owners near and along the Santa Fe River to identify a way in and out of their property so they do not become isolated by water. Those along the river should also clear out any items of value in low lying areas. Even large, heavy items,

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such as trailers and equipment, can be carried away by flood waters.

Upstream gauges along the Santa Fe River are already showing flood levels. The Graham gauge at County Road 225 and the New River gauge at Lake Butler have already crested at or above record stages from Hurricane Dora.

The District provides river and lake levels with real-time updates and flood predictions. Visit <http://www.mysuwanneeriver.org/realtime/river-levels.php> to check gauges throughout the District.

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.

Levy County Emergency Management provides Tues. morn update

Published Sept. 12, 2017 at 10:37 a.m.

LEVY COUNTY -- Levy County Emergency Management sent the following information for publication in HardisonInk.com.

- All Levy County Schools are CLOSED Wednesday due to power issues.
 - A lot of businesses are opening for normal service today Tuesday, Sept. 12.
 - Massive power outages are continuing, but Duke Energy and Central Florida Electric Cooperative have reps at the EOC assisting with information.
 - Public Information lines at the EOC will be open from 7am to 7pm for the rest of the week.
 - Damage assessment teams are continuing, but so far it has been mostly good news.
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Hurricane Irma spares Cedar Key

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The dry stretch of Gulf bottom on Sunday (Sept. 10) stretches from the Faraway Inn to Piney Point, a distance of more than a quarter of a mile in the Gulf of Mexico off of Cedar Key. A potential storm surge on Monday night was relatively uneventful and Cedar Key was among the areas that fared relatively well from the destructive power of Hurricane Irma.

Published Sept. 12, 2017 AT 7:17 a.m.

Photo by Amanda Robinson, daughter of Cedar Key Fire Chief Robert Robinson

By Terry Witt, Senior Reporter © Sept. 12, 2017 at 7:17 a.m.

CEDAR KEY -- Hurricane Irma spared Cedar Key from flood damage Sunday when its wind pulled the Gulf of Mexico away from the shoreline rather than pushing toward waterfront homes and businesses.

The island city never lost electric power. A few trees were toppled on the island city, but the business waterfront was largely untouched by the powerful storm that devastated portions of South Florida.

Jordan Keeton and Shannon Sykes said the submerged land beneath their 83 West Restaurant was dry and muddy after Irma's powerful winds exposed about 100 yards of Gulf bottom.

Just like their neighbor on Dock Street Steamer's Clam Bar and Grill, which opened Tuesday, these business owners said their restaurant will re-open on Thursday.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Andrew McKaughan said 30 to 40 mile per hour winds from Irma blowing out of the northeast pushed the Gulf waters westward away from the Cedar Key shoreline.

He said the hurricane didn't have an eye when it passed east of Cedar Key.

"It just had a large wind field and northeast winds," McKaughan said.

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Keeton and Sykes watched helplessly last September as Hurricane Hermine pushed four feet of water into the bottom floor of their two story Gulf front restaurant.

Many other business owners and residents of Cedar Key suffered significant losses during the Labor Day 2016 event, which delayed the annual Cedar Key Chamber of Commerce Auction, which is a fundraiser for this Chamber.

As for Keeton and Sykes, they took a different approach to preparing for Hurricane Irma this year. They stayed at Keeton's parents' home in Bronson rather than riding out the storm in the restaurant like last year in Hurricane Hermine.

They were astonished to see the Gulf waters retreating from the shoreline around 2 p.m. Sunday. Later they noticed on hurricane tracking maps that Irma had skirted Cedar Key to the east. They wondered if that made a difference.

"The edge of the storm went past Cedar Key to the east instead of the west. It blew the water out of the Gulf and luckily it didn't push it back in again. We were worried about the surge at high tide," Sykes said.

McKaughan said the fact that Irma missed Cedar Key to the east wasn't a factor in moving the Gulf waters off the shoreline. He said the northeast winds were the main factor.

On Monday the tide was high and winds from Irma were blowing across the waterfront with enough force to rip a baseball cap from a person's head. But neither the tide nor the wind were expected to pose problems for the community.

The Cedar Key Pirate Invasion festival is set for this weekend. Cedar Key was cleaned up Monday. The island city didn't look like Irma had made a dent in the landscape other than one pile of palm fronds along State Road 24.

Cedar Key Fire Chief Robert Robinson said his daughter photographed on Sunday (Sept. 10) the dry Gulf bottom Sunday in an area known as Sand Spit, a large bay extending from the area of the Faraway Inn to Piney Point near the Cedar Key Airport.

Chief Robinson said that years ago the Gulf waters retreated even farther away from the shoreline than on Sunday during a big storm.



HardisonInk.com mascots Goldy the cat Hardison (left) and Inky the cat Hardison rest on a motel bed during their period of evacuation from The Ink Pad, which is located in the unrecorded subdivision in Levy County known as Jemlands. They

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are seen here on Sunday night (Sept. 10). For the Story, Photos and Videos, PLEASE GO TO THE [LIFE PAGE](#).

Photo By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 11, 2017 at 3:27 p.m.

Levy County curfew ended on Sept. 11 *Evacuations shelters began closing at 6 p.m.*

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 11, 2017 at 12:27 p.m.

Updated Sept. 12, 2017 at 7:17 a.m

LEVY COUNTY -- The countywide curfew in Levy County is scheduled to end at 2 p.m. yesterday (Sept. 11), Levy County Sheriff's Office Lt. Scott Tummond said in a press release.

Evacuation shelters in Levy County are scheduled to begin emptying at 6 p.m. that evening, Tummond said.

Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks in conjunction with Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum and the Levy County Emergency Management Department have ordered that the curfew for Levy County be lifted at 2 p.m., Tummond noted.

This will ensure that Levy County is no longer under any threat of tropical storm force winds and will give damage crews time to make sure that there are no major hazards that have not been identified.

Power lines are down and reports from Central Florida Electric Cooperative and Duke Energy representatives indicate that will take some time for trees and lines to be cleared and power restored.

Everyone is warned to use caution as they attempt to clear downed trees.

If the tree has become entangled with a power line, Tummond said, it would be safest to wait for the power crews to make the area safe.

"Please, if you have not had an electrician install proper wiring for generator hook-up for your home," Tummond added "do not plug the generator directly into your home. This creates a dangerous condition known as back feed for power crews as they work to restore power."

All Levy County evacuation shelters will begin closing today at 6 p.m.

Sheltered evacuees who need transportation need to contact the shelter manager to have their name added to a list that is being compiled. Based upon the information being supplied by the National Weather Service, weather conditions will be safe for Levy County residents to return home.

Reports currently being sent to the Emergency Management Center are that roads are clear and no closures have been reported.

"We are working on plans with Emergency Management and the Red Cross for evacuees who find themselves displaced," Tummond said. "For evacuees who know their

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homes have been damaged and cannot return home please call 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576.

Tri-County Area: STAY PUT FOR NOW

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 11, 2017 at 7:47 a.m.

Updated Sept. 11, 2017 at 8:37 a.m.

TRI-COUNTY AREA -- All three top leaders at Emergency Management Departments in Levy County, Dixie County and Gilchrist County say the same thing: The curfew is in effect until further notice.

Dixie County Emergency Management Division Chief said he thinks it may be safe for people to check their property as early as sometime this afternoon, but for now, everyone needs to stay where they are located during this time of evacuation.

"Hang tight," Levy County Emergency Management Director John MacDonald said.

The official word is to stay put until sustained winds drop below 39 m.p.h. and the "all clear" official word is given in any of the 67 counties. Recovery is the phase after the current status of being in an active event.

* As Levy County Emergency Management Assistant Director David Peaton noted in a message "**Levy County is still under a Tropical Storm warning. It is still unsafe to go out. Wait until you hear from an official source before you leave safety. Tropical storm force winds are expected in our area until approximately noon. The curfew is still in effect..**"

Gilchrist County Emergency Management Director Ralph Smith reminds everyone there are many immediate dangers if a person goes out before the event is over. Flying debris, live downed electric wires can charge the wet ground for a large area where a person would not think they would die from electrocution, but the electricity will kill them.

Fallen trees and other material on roadways is a hazard as well.

The curfew that started yesterday is active until further notice. All three counties' emergency management directors ask people to remain off of the streets until they complete damage assessments.

DIXIE COUNTY CURFEW AT 9 p.m. TONIGHT - SUNDAY

Published Sept. 10, 2017 at 8:47 p.m.

DIXIE COUNTY -- Although there is nothing on the Dixie County Emergency Management's website itself, one of the social media sites from Dixie County Emergency Management notes there is a 9 p.m. curfew tonight (Sunday, Sept. 10).

That notice is the single point of reference for all Dixie County residents and visitors, and others, in this regard.

Any request for information relating to needs associated with Hurricane Irma need to be handled through the Office of Emergency Management at 352-498-1464. Shelter locations and other information may be obtained by calling that number.

LEVY COUNTY CURFEW AT 4 P.M. TODAY

From LCSO Lt. Scott Tummond

Released Sept. 10, 2017 at 12:23 p.m.

Published Sept. 10, 2017 at 12:37 p.m.

LEVY COUNTY -- Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks in conjunction with Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum and the Levy County Emergency Management Department ordered a mandatory curfew for all of Levy County beginning at 4 p.m. today (Sunday, Sept. 10, 2017).

Therefore, this new information combined with the fact that no emergency services will be able to respond once sustained wind speeds exceed 39 miles per hour, the leaders of Levy County cannot stress enough to the residents and visitors that they must be in a safe shelter location by this time.

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## **GILCHRIST COUNTY**

## **CURFEW AT 2 P.M. TODAY**

**GILCHRIST COUNTY** -- Due to the pending and declining weather conditions produced by Hurricane Irma, Gilchrist County will be issuing a countywide Curfew beginning at 2 p.m. today (Sunday, Sept. 10).

The curfew will be lifted once the storm clears the immediate area and the roads of Gilchrist County are safe for travel.

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## **Levy County Emergency Management Sunday Morning Update Last Chance For Safe Evacuation**

**Published Sept. 10, 2017 at 9:07**

**LEVY COUNTY** -- According to press release today (Sunday morning, Sept. 10) at 8:10 a.m. from the Levy County Emergency Management Department:

Hurricane Irma is very rapidly approaching and will begin to affect Levy County today and progressively get worse throughout the day and into tomorrow.

This is your final opportunity evacuate safely. Please get out of the path of the storm to a safe location. Levy County shelters are open at Bronson Elementary, Bronson High School, Williston Middle/High School, Williston Elementary, and Chiefland Elementary.

Inland areas can expect damaging hurricane force winds with heavy rainfall. Coastal communities can expect severe storm surge for both tide cycles. If you live in a storm surge area, you absolutely must evacuate. If you do not evacuate, you run the risk of being completely cut off.

No emergency services will be able to respond when sustained wind speeds exceed 39 MPH, that includes transportation to shelters.

Please do not wait any longer, get to a safe place now. Call us at 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576 if you have any questions or need assistance.

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## Levy County Emergency Management HURRICANE IRMA

### Saturday eve update

**Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 9:37 p.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** -- Residents and visitors are almost out of time to complete your preparations.

Based on the current projections, we can start to see Effects to Levy County starting tomorrow afternoon with probable hurricane force winds going into very early Monday morning and continuing into the day.

If you are not somewhere safe, please get there very soon!

**INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ALL COASTAL AREAS, PREPARE FOR MAJOR STORM SURGE.**

**THIS WILL BE THE SAME OR WORSE THAN HURRICANE HERMINE FROM LAST YEAR.**

**THERE IS A VERY GOOD CHANCE THAT CEDAR KEY AND YANKEETOWN WILL BE INACCESSIBLE.**

Go to [www.levydisaster.com](http://www.levydisaster.com) for wind and surge information and timing

Call Levy County Emergency Management at 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576 if you have questions.

## Cedar Key water shutdown scheduled for Sunday

**Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 3:37 p.m.**

**CEDAR KEY** --Due to the expected severe impacts of Hurricane Irma, the Cedar Key Water and Sewer District will be shutting off water service at noon tomorrow, Sept. 10.

Water service will be restored as soon as possible, but a precautionary boil water notice will be in effect until water pressure is restored and proper water testing has been conducted.

For more information, call the District at 352-543-5285.

## Levy County schools to be closed Tuesday; *Dixie and Gilchrist may open Tuesday*

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 9, 2017 at 3:27 p.m.**

**TALLAHASSEE** -- In addition to being closed Friday, Sept. 8 and Monday, Sept. 11

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the following counties have additional closings, according to the Florida Department of Education website concerning school closures.

While Levy County is listed and neither Gilchrist County nor Dixie County are listed on the state website, this may simply be the result of bad phone service between Dixie, Gilchrist and Leon counties now, or they may be some human factor.

The best method to find out if school resumes for any county is to go to <http://www.fldoe.org/irma>.

As of Saturday, Sept. 9, at 3:17 p.m. the following additional closures were noted:

- Alachua schools will be closed on Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Bradford schools will be closed on Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Brevard schools will be closed until further notice.
- Broward schools will be closed until further notice.
- Citrus schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Columbia schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Lafayette schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Lake schools will be closed until further notice.
- Leon schools will be closed on Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Levy will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Madison schools will be closed on Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Marion schools will be closed on Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Monroe schools will be closed until further notice.
- Palm Beach schools will be closed until further notice.
- Polk schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Seminole schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Suwannee schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Taylor schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Union schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Volusia schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12.
- Wakulla schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12 and Wednesday, Sept. 13.

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## ***LEVY COUNTY***

### ***EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:***

**RESIDENTS MUST COMPLETE  
EVACUATIONS, SHELTERING  
OR ANY OTHER PROTECTIVE  
MEASURES IMMEDIATELY**

**Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 12:27 p.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY --** The MANDATORY EVACUATION sent yesterday (Sept. 8) is being re-issued.

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We are strongly encouraging residents and visitors to complete their evacuation, sheltering, or any other protective measures as soon as possible.

Dangerous tropical storm force winds are expected to reach our area by Sunday at 10pm with Hurricane Force Winds arriving by 6am Monday morning.

These are the best predictions available and could change at any time, so preparations must be completed as soon as possible. Coastal areas are projected to see a severe storm surge, equal to or greater than Hermine. When the weather becomes too dangerous, emergency services will not be able to reach you!

Levy County shelters are currently open and staffed.

Residents and visitors seeking shelter at any of the listed general population shelters will need to bring pillows, blankets, medications and bedding.

NO Shelters in Levy County are pet friendly. Citizens with dogs or cats that need to be sheltered have to bring a crate, food for the pet and a current rabies certification. All dogs and cats will be sheltered in a separate facility at Levy County Animal Services in Bronson. Pets will not be accepted if a current rabies vaccination certificate does not accompany the animal. Animal Control personnel can vaccinate your animal on arrival for \$10 if current vaccination records are not available.

**(PLEASE SEE THE PREVIOUS ALERT (SCROLL DOWN) FOR MORE INFORMATION.)**

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## Gilchrist County Emergency Management orders mandatory evacuation

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 9, 2017 at 9:37 a.m.

Updated Sept. 9, 2017 at 12:07 p.m

**GILCHRIST COUNTY** -- Gilchrist County Emergency Management upgraded to Mandatory Evacuation for the entire County effective two hours ago (at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 9).

Hurricane Irma's forecasted track indicates that it will directly impact Gilchrist County.

Residents are strongly urged to make necessary preparations to protect property and personal safety, Gilchrist County Human Resource Manager Tammy Moore noted in a press release sent at 8:50 a.m. on Saturday (Sept. 9). The updated was sent after that.

**PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO THE LEVY COUNTY MANDATORY EVACUATION STORY TO SEE WHAT THIS MEANS.**

The storm is expected to bring 10-plus inches of rain and sustained hurricane force winds. In addition, there is a strong potential of tornadoes as the storm approaches and passes through the area. The period of strongest winds are expected between 5 p.m. on Sunday and extending throughout Monday Sept. 11, Moore said.

The Gilchrist County Emergency Operations Center, along with the Gilchrist County Sheriff Office, based on the most recent 5 p.m. storm update from the National Hurricane Center in regard to the current forecasted path of Hurricane Irma, is

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recommending evacuation of all county residents.

**Sandbags are available at the following locations:**

- Trenton City Park 214 S.E. Third Ave. Trenton
- Fanning Springs Fire Department 17651 N.W. 90th Court Fanning Springs
- Gilchrist County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) 3250 N. U.S. Highway 129

Bell.

There is a 10-bag limit and you will be required to fill the bags.

Currently, there are voluntary evacuations starting at 10 a.m. TODAY, Saturday Sept.

9.

General population shelters will be opened at 10 a.m. Saturday Sept. 9.

Shelter locations are:

- Trenton Elementary School 1201 W. Wade St. Trenton
- Bell Elementary School 2771 East Bell Avenue (N.W. 10th Ave.) Bell
- Bell Health Academy SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER - (Behind main building of Bell High School) 930 S. Main St. Bell

**Items to bring to the shelter:**

• A list of your current medications and at least a 7 day supply of the medications in their original labeled containers.

- Documentation of specific medical information
- Important papers in plastic bag
- Identification (I.D.) with current address
- Medical equipment \*oxygen supplies \*nebulizers / cpap \*canes/walkers/wheelchairs \*power cords if needed
- Diabetes equipment \*glucose meter/strips \*insulin/syringes \*other insulin supplies
- Non-perishable special dietary items \*special dietary nonperishable foods and your favorite snacks
- Personal care items \*change of clothing for several days \*socks \*shoes (durable) \*shoes for shower area \*undergarments \*dentures with case \*eyeglasses with case \*hearing aids with case
- Infant care items \*formula \*food \*diapers \*toys
- Personal hygiene items \*soap/shampoo \*deodorant \*brush/comb \*wash cloth and towel \*toothpaste/toothbrush
- Sleeping lounging equipment \*sleeping bag \*pillow with pillowcases \*blanket and sheet \*a limited number of cots are provided with priority for the primary registrant. \*you may wish to bring a folding lawn/lounge chair
- Entertainment / electronic items \*flashlight \*radio \*extra batteries \*cell phone & charger \*magazines, books and a book light \*toys \*cards \*games \*headset or earphones for all handheld, battery operated devices

**DO NOT BRING TO SHELTER:**

- **pets** • **firearms** • **alcoholic beverages** • **perishable food items**

**ALL SHELTERS ARE NON-SMOKING AREAS**

Please remember using a shelter is a last resort choice. Every effort is made to provide a safe space for your protection during an evacuation, but your personal preparation is really the key to the success of your experience, Moore noted.

**Please contact the Gilchrist County Emergency Operations Center for any questions 386-935-5400 or 1-866-751-1728.**

## **Dixie County Emergency Management orders mandatory evacuation**

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 9, 2017 at 10:07 a.m.**

**DIXIE COUNTY** -- As of 7 p.m. last night (Sept. 8) Dixie County Emergency Management issued a MANDATORY evacuation order for ALL of DIXIE COUNTY residents.

Although its website was not showing that as of that time, it is now up to date.

The evacuation order is based on the latest Weather Service Advisory indicating that Dixie County is expected to receive tropical storm force winds beginning Sunday morning (Sept. 10), increasing to Category 2 Hurricane Force Winds extending for an estimated 30-plus hours.

Storm surge predictions are currently 3-6 foot above ground.

Dixie County's residents and visitors should be advised that any changes in the storm's track may increase impact.

Shelters opened seven minutes ago, today (Saturday, Sept. 9) 2017 at 10 a.m.

The General Population Shelter will be the Ruth Rains Middle School, located at 981 S.E. Highway 351 Highway in Cross City. Once that shelter is at capacity, the "new" Old Town Elementary School on Dixie Country Road 55A will be used.

The Special Needs Shelter will be at the Bell Health Academy (Bell High School) located at 930 South Main St. in Bell. For more information on Special Needs Patients and evacuations, please call Dixie County Emergency Management.

For general storm information, contact us at 352-498- 1240 ext.1

Any requests relating to needs associated with Hurricane Irma will be handled through the Office of Emergency Management by calling 352-498-1464.

All EMERGENCY requests should be handled as normal by calling 9-1-1.

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## **Levy County Emergency Management Issues Saturday morning Update**

**Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 7:47 a.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** -- PUBLIC INFORMATION LINES ARE OPEN AT 352-486-5155 OR 352-486-5576.

Hurricane Irma has again continued a slight shift to the west which increased the danger to Levy County and surrounding counties. Levy County is currently in a Hurricane Watch and Storm Surge Watch.

A public shelter is currently open at Bronson Elementary with additional shelters opening later this morning at 9 a.m. You will not have much more time. If the current

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track does not change, Levy County could start to see Tropical Storm force winds starting Sunday evening with winds increasing into Monday. Finish your preparations and evacuations as soon as possible.

Reminder, our Public Information Lines are open 24 hours a day during this event. You can contact us at 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576 for information on shelter locations or any other questions that you have

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## ***EVACUATION FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION***

If you cannot get to a shelter due to lack of transportation, call Levy County Transit at 352-486-3485.

If you have issues with that phone number call the Public Information Line at 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576.

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## **Evacuation ordered for Levy County**

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 8, 2017 at 5:07 p.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** – Levy County Emergency Management Director John MacDonald announced that effective more than an hour ago, Levy County is under a **mandatory** evacuation order.

The entire population is affected by this order.

**A MANDATORY EVACUATION has been ordered for Levy County residents beginning at 4 p.m. today, Sept. 8.**

Shelters in Levy County including the special needs shelter, will be opening at 4 p.m. today, Sept. 8.

The first shelter location opening is the Bronson Elementary School, this is the only special needs location, but will also house general population.

Overflow from this shelter will be moved to the Bronson Middle/High School, today if needed. The Williston Middle/High School will be the third facility to open for people seeking shelter on Saturday, Sept. 9 at 9 a.m.

Overflow from the Williston Middle/High will be moved to the Williston Elementary School, as needed.

Individuals seeking shelter at any of the listed **general population shelters will need to bring pillows, blankets, and bedding. Cots for sheltering citizens will not be available.**

Special needs citizens need to be prepared to move to the special needs shelter at Bronson Elementary beginning at 4pm today.

**NO Shelters in Levy County are pet friendly.** Citizens with dogs or cats that need to be sheltered have to bring a crate, food for the pet and a current rabies certification.

All dogs and cats will be sheltered at the Levy County Animal Services facility in

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Bronson. Pets will not be accepted if a current rabies vaccination certificate does not accompany the animal.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to complete preparations and evacuations before 5 p.m. on Saturday. Residents and visitors that are able to leave the area are encouraged to do so. If you are not able to evacuate the county, shelters will be opened to accept people.

**Individuals who do not have transportation and need to evacuate to a shelter should call 352-486-5427. For all other questions, please call 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576.**

Shelter Locations:

- Bronson Elementary School 400 Ishie Ave., Bronson 32621
- Bronson Middle High School 351 Ishie Avenue Bronson 32621
- Williston Middle High School 350 Robert Philpot Way Williston 32696
- Williston Elementary School 801 S. Main St. Williston 32696
- Levy County Animal Services (Animal Control Facility) 12055 NE 69th Lane

Bronson 32621 Call 352-486-5138

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A mandatory evacuation is an order that is given to residents in order to allow them ample time to evacuate an area that is expected to experience a disaster or other event.

“A mandatory evacuation does not mean that we will forcefully remove anyone from their home,” MacDonald said. “It means that if you choose not to leave, emergency services will not be available to assist you when the weather becomes too bad.

“If you choose not to evacuate, that is your choice. However, if you are not evacuated by the time that the severe weather is here, you run the risk that emergency services will not be available and the roads will be too congested for you to leave in time.”

Anyone with questions is asked to please call Levy County Emergency Management at 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576.

CF closed Friday through Tuesday due to Hurricane Irma

From CF Marketing And Public Relations

Published Sept. 6, 2017 at 10:27 p.m.

* Updated Sept. 8, 2017 at 1:47 p.m.

* **Ocala** — The College of Central Florida will close all locations Friday (Sept. 8) through Tuesday (Sept. 12) due to Hurricane Irma.

Locations include the Ocala Campus, the Citrus Campus, the Levy Campus, the Hampton Center, the Appleton Museum of Art, and the Vintage Farm.

All museum and college events Friday through Tuesday, including the Citrus Campus Careers & Colleges Expo, have been cancelled.

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Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to prepare now for this catastrophic storm.

Governor orders all schools closed * today through Monday

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 7, 2017 at 8:57 p.m.

*** Updated Sept. 8, 2017 at 6:37 p.m.**

TALLAHASSEE -- Although the Levy County School Board agreed to keep schools open today (Friday, Sept. 8), the latest information from Gov. Rick Scott shows all schools are closed in Florida today.

Yesterday (Thursday, Sept. 7), Gov. Scott directed all public K-12 schools, state colleges, state universities and state offices to close Friday, Sept. 8 through and including Monday, Sept. 11.

"Today (Sept. 7), I am directing the closure of all public schools, state colleges, state universities and state offices for their normal activities effective Friday through Monday," Gov. Scott said, "to ensure we have every space available for sheltering and staging. Floridians are facing a life-threatening storm in Hurricane Irma, and every family must prepare to evacuate. Our state's public schools serve a vital role in our communities as shelters for displaced residents and staging areas for hurricane recovery efforts. Closing public schools, state colleges, state universities and state offices will provide local and state emergency officials the flexibility necessary to support shelter and emergency response efforts."

For detailed shelter information, visit www.fldoe.org/irma and www.floridadisaster.org/info.

Evacuation traffic flows through Chiefland

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DOT urges use of 511 - Real Time Traffic



This is a view looking south on U.S. Highway 19 from an area near the southern border of the City of Chiefland. The line of traffic goes farther than the eye can see.

~

Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 7, 2017 at 8:17 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- On Thursday afternoon (Sept. 7) as Luther Drummond was about to enter Winn-Dixie to buy some groceries, he commented on the mass of cars going through Chiefland, and he said it is unusual.

He knows this is evacuation traffic.

This video is from a dash cam and from an aerial camera to look at the traffic for a few minutes through Chiefland on U.S. Highway 19, although in the narrative, the narrator says U.S. 27 at first. This film was made Thursday (Sept. 7). The traffic is ongoing.

A few hours later, Chiefland Police Chief Scott Anderson was out at the intersection of U.S. Highway 19 and U.S. Alt. 27 and U.S. Highway 129 helping to direct traffic. Traffic has become hectic on northbound U.S. 19.

The evacuation by Floridians and visitors who are in the path of Hurricane Irma is going to tie up northbound roads through Sunday at least.

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Use FDOT resources

By Dick Kane

Of the Tallahassee Office of FDOT Communications

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is urging motorists to use the department's real-time traffic information tools to ease their evacuation.

Traffic can be heavy at times during a hurricane evacuation and we appreciate the public's patience. The following real-time traffic information tools are available:

- Florida 511 - FDOT's official source for traffic information is Florida 511, or www.fl511.com. This website provides real-time traffic information on crashes, incidents, construction, congestion, road closures and detours, and other urgent alerts.
- Traffic Count Information - Real-time evacuation data for Hurricane Irma on state roads. A summary of selected traffic counter data for state roads is available for review at www.fdot.gov/traffic.pdf. This data is updated hourly.
- Waze - FDOT and Waze have a data sharing partnership to enhance each partner's ability to provide needed traffic information to the traveling public. Waze (www.waze.com) is a free navigation app that uses information from millions of drivers to navigate traffic in real-time. www.fdot.gov

Two Marion County shelters are full to maximum capacity

By Lauren Lettelier

Marion County Sheriff's Office

Public Information Officer

Sept. 9, 2017 at 6:26 p.m.

Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 7:17 p.m.

MARION COUNTY -- The Marion County Division of Emergency Management has received notification that two Marion County shelters have reached their maximum capacity.

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West Port High School (a special needs and general population shelter) and North Marion Middle School (a general population shelter) can no longer accept any more citizens for sheltering at this time.

Currently, there are no additional shelters openings, but we will continue to provide updated information to our citizens.

Here is a current list for the remaining shelters that are open in preparation for Hurricane Irma:

General Population Shelters: Fort McCoy School (16160 NE Highway 315, Fort McCoy) Lake Weir High School (10351 SE Maricamp Road, Ocala) Forest High School (5000 SE Maricamp Road, Ocala) Hammett Bowen Jr. Elementary (4397 SW 95th Street, Ocala) Belleview Middle School (10500 SE 36th Avenue, Belleview) Madison Street Academy (401 NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Ocala) Dunnellon High School (10055 SW 180th Avenue Road, Dunnellon)

Special Needs Shelter: Belleview High School (10400 SE 36th Avenue, Belleview - Special Needs ONLY)

Pet-Friendly Shelter: Vanguard High School (7 NW 28th Street, Ocala)

Special needs individuals can contact the Citizens Information Line at 352-369-7500 to arrange transportation to a shelter, if necessary. If sex offenders or sex predators need to evacuate, they are encouraged to first seek shelter with family or friends, in a non-residency restricted area. If that is not an option, they must report to the Marion County Sheriff's Office Sex Offender /Predator Unit office for shelter.

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There will be law enforcement presence at all shelters for extra security. Shelters will remain open for intake until the weather worsens and winds exceed 35-40 m.p.h.

FDOT and FHP open I-4 emergency shoulder for travel (Now ended);

ESU no longer active on I-75

Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 4:57 p.m.

Updated Sept. 9, 2017 at 9:47 p.m.

TALLAHASSEE -- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), working with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), has implemented a limited Emergency Shoulder Use (ESU) plan for Hurricane Irma evacuations on I-4 from 50th Street in Tampa to east of SR 429/Western Beltway in Orlando.

*** THE ESU FOR I-4 IS OVER. ALL TRAFFIC IS RETURNING TO NORMAL LANES NOW (9:47 p.m.)**

This plan is anticipated to assist the large number of motorists evacuating from Florida's west coast. Motorists may only use the left shoulder when directed by law enforcement and highway signs.

The previous ESU between Wildwood and the Georgia state line on I-75 was stopped some time ago,

- There is no contraflow or one-way operation in use on Florida state roadways.
- No other state roadways are currently approved for shoulder use.
- Although there are heavy pockets of evacuation traffic in some areas; traffic is flowing on this section of roadway.
- Law enforcement urges motorists to use caution when driving on the shoulder – right shoulder use is prohibited,
- FDOT has 13 Traffic Management Centers where hundreds of DOT workers are monitoring traffic cameras 24/7 to ensure traffic flows continue and evacuations proceed without interruption.

NOTE: Contraflow blocks essential southbound lanes needed to bring supplies to shelters and families in the southern part of the state. Contraflow also inhibits emergency vehicles from reaching people in need, and removes law enforcement from critical life safety tasks.

Road and bridge restrictions start Sunday in Marion County

Information from the PIO of MCSO

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Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 12:57 p.m.

MARION COUNTY – Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods is strongly encouraging all residents to restrict travel on our roadways beginning at 3 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 10, due to the potential for high winds.

If winds exceed 45 m.p.h., first responders will not be permitted to use their vehicles to answer calls for service.

Residents will also not be permitted to travel on certain bridges if high winds occur. The State Road 40 and the County Road 316 bridges over the Ocklawaha River will be closed to traffic if winds sustain 35 m.p.h.

In case of emergency travel, Sharpes Ferry Road may be used as an alternative route if the aforementioned bridges close.

Sheriff Woods is asking residents call the MCSO Information Line at 352-369-7500 for any questions or concerns about the storm. If Marion County citizens would like to receive emergency weather notifications through Alert Marion, they can visit www.alertmarion.com to sign up.

Woman dies in Levy County crash

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 9, 2017 at 7:07 a.m.

held until Sept. 9, 2017 at 9:17 a.m. due to next of kin not notified until later

LEVY COUNTY -- A 38-year-old woman from Tallahassee died at UF Health at Shands in Gainesville from injuries after she suffered in a two-car crash Friday night(Sept. 8), the FHP said.

Amanda M. Farnsworth, 38, of Tallahassee was driving a 2000 Mercedes C300 westbound on Levy County Road 346A at 10:41 p.m., according to a press release from Florida Highway Patrol Lt. P.V. Riordan, based on information from crash investigator FHP Trooper Cameron Thweatt and homicide investigator FHP Cpl. Jason Roberts. She was not wearing a seatbelt, the FHP said.

Michael Rogers, 21, of Chiefland was driving a 2002 BMW 323I southbound on Levy County Road 341, the FHP said. Danielle Crise, 24, of Chiefland was a passenger in the BMW, the FHP said.

It is unknown whether Rogers was wearing a seatbelt, the FHP said. Crise was not wearing a seatbelt

Farnsworth failed to observe the posted stop sign at the intersection of County Road 341 and County Road 346A, which resulted in a angular collision with the car driven by Rogers, the FHP said.

Farnsworth was ejected during the crash, the FHP said, and both drivers were transported to Shands UF in critical condition. Farnsworth later died, the FHP said. Crise was taken to Shands with minor injuries.

Alcohol was not listed as a factor in this accident.

Florida Attorney General's Office opens Price Gouging Hotline

Published Sept. 5, 2017 at 7:57 p.m.

TALLAHASSEE -- Florida Gov. Rick Scott declared the whole state to be in a "state of emergency" on Monday (Sept. 4).

Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi's Office has opened the Price Gouging Hotline for the State of Florida.

If you suspect a business of price gouging, please report it to 1-866-966-7226.

Price Gouging Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Price Gouging?

Florida Statute 501.160 states that during a state of emergency, it is unlawful to sell, lease, offer to sell, or offer for lease essential commodities, dwelling units, or self-storage facilities for an amount that grossly exceeds the average price for that commodity during the 30 days before the declaration of the state of emergency, unless the seller can justify the price by showing increases in its prices or market trends. Examples of necessary commodities are food, ice, gas, and lumber.

2. How do I know if I'm being price gouged?

The law compares the reported price of the commodity or service during the state of emergency to the average price charged over the 30-day period prior to the declared state of emergency. If there is a "gross disparity" between the prior price and the current charge, it is considered price gouging.

3. What is covered under the Price Gouging Statute?

The Price Gouging Statute covers only essential commodities. A "commodity" means any good, service, material, merchandise, supplies, equipment, resources, or other article of commerce, and includes, without limitation, food, water, ice, chemicals, petroleum products, and lumber necessary for consumption or use as a direct result of the emergency. The law also requires those selling goods and services to possess an occupational license. Examples of non-essential items luxury items are alcoholic beverages and cigarettes.

4. What evidence do I need to help enforce the Price Gouging Statute?

If you suspect price gouging, obtain as much information as possible in the form of estimates, invoices, receipts or bills. When comparing products, note as much information as possible, including the product name, size or quantity, manufacturer, item number and unit price. For lumber products, note the grade, thickness and quality. If it is a service such as storage or towing, note the per-mile (or other distance) charge, removal charges, per-day storage charges and other charges such as security, clean up or other "add-ons."

Report this information to the Attorney General's Price Gouging Hotline at 1-866-966-7226. You may also report violations online at <http://myfloridalegal.com> or mail documents to the following address:

Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol, PL-01
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050

Please remember to include your name, the name of the company or individual, and a complaint number, if you received one.

5. How can I avoid becoming a victim of price gouging?

Plan ahead. Prepare for a disaster before it happens. Always have the following items on hand:

- Five gallons of drinking water per person in your household
- At least two working flashlights
- A portable radio

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- A telephone with a cord – If the electrical power is lost, a cordless telephone will not work
- An ample supply of batteries to power these and other items
- A full tank of propane and charcoal if you have a charcoal grill
- Non-perishable food items
- Formula and diapers, if you have young children in the home

Although not essential, board games, books and playing cards might be helpful to entertain young children. Additionally, do not forget to make plans to care for any pets.

If government officials recommend evacuation, it would be wise to heed that advice.

Mandatory evacuations mean just that. Gas tanks should be filled in advance in case evacuation is advised.

After the danger has passed, obtain estimates for clean-up and repairs in writing from licensed contractors. Check with county or city contractor's licensing board for recommendations and demand proof of proper licensing.

Don't allow anyone to bully you or force you into making a quick decision. Never hesitate to call the local law enforcement if necessary.

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation licenses more than 20 types of professions and can be reached via telephone at 850-487-1395 or via the internet at <http://www.myflorida.com/dbpr>.

141 state parks close for Hurricane Irma; *11 More closed by 5 p.m. today*

Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 2:17 p.m.

TALLAHASSEE – The Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Park Service announced Saturday afternoon (Sept. 9) the closure of 141 state parks across the state due to imminent weather conditions including strong winds and rain.

Preparations are being made to close an additional 11 parks by 5 p.m. today.

The following state parks are closed until further notice:

- Addison Blockhouse Historic State Park (Volusia County)
- Addison Blockhouse Historic State Park (Volusia County)
- Alafia River State Park (Hillsborough County)
- Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek Preserve State Park (Polk County)
- Amelia Island State Park (Nassau County)
- Anastasia State Park (St. Johns County)
- Anclote Key Preserve State Park (Pinellas and Pasco counties)
- Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park (Martin County)
- Avalon State Park (St. Lucie County)
- Bahia Honda State Park (Monroe County)
- Big Shoals State Park (Hamilton and Columbia counties)
- Big Talbot Island State Park (Duval County)
- Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park (Dade County)
- Blue Spring State Park (Volusia County)
- Bulow Creek State Park (Flagler and Volusia counties)
- Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park (Flagler County)
- Caladesi Island State Park (Pinellas County)
- Cayo Costa State Park (Lee County)
- Cedar Key Museum State Park (Levy County)

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- Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve (Levy County)
- Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park (Lee and Charlotte counties)
- Cockroach Bay Preserve State Park (Hillsborough County)
- Collier-Seminole State Park (Collier County)
- Colt Creek State Park (Polk County)
- Crystal River Archaeological State Park (Citrus County)
- Crystal River Preserve State Park (Citrus County)
- Curry Hammock State Park (Monroe County)
- Dade Battlefield Historic State Park (Sumter County)
- Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park (Monroe County)
- De Leon Springs State Park (Volusia County)
- Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park (Collier County)
- Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park (Alachua County)
- Don Pedro Island State Park (Charlotte County)
- Dr. Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park (Broward County)
- Dudley Farm Historic State Park (Alachua County)
- Dunns Creek State Park (Putnam County)
- Egmont Key State Park (Hillsborough County)
- Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park (Citrus County)
- Estero Bay Preserve State Park (Lee County)
- Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park (Collier County)
- Fanning Springs State Park (Levy County)
- Faver-Dykes State Park (St. Johns County)
- Fernandina Plaza Historic State Park (Nassau County)
- Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail (Monroe County)
- Forest Capital Museum State Park (Taylor County)
- Fort Clinch State Park (Nassau County)
- Fort Cooper State Park (Citrus County)
- Fort George Island Cultural State Park (Duval County)
- Fort Mose Historic State Park (St. Johns County)
- Fort Pierce Inlet State Park (St. Lucie County)
- Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park (Monroe County)
- Gainesville-to-Hawthorne State Trail (Alachua County)
- Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach (Flagler County)
- Gasparilla Island State Park (Lee County)
- General James A. Van Fleet State Trail (Sumter, Lake and Polk counties)
- George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park (Nassau and Duval counties)
- Haw Creek Preserve State Park (Flagler, Volusia and Putnam counties)
- Highlands Hammock State Park (Highlands and Hardee counties)
- Hillsborough River State Park (Hillsborough County)
- Honeymoon Island State Park (Pinellas County)
- Hontoon Island State Park (Volusia and Lake counties)
- Hugh Taylor Birch State Park (Broward County)
- Ichetucknee Springs State Park (Columbia and Suwannee counties)
- Ichetucknee Trace (Columbia County)
- Indian Key Historic State Park (Monroe County)
- Indian River Lagoon Preserve State Park (Brevard County)
- John D. MacArthur Beach State Park (Palm Beach County)
- John Gorrie Museum State Park (Franklin County)
- John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park (Monroe County)
- Jonathan Dickinson State Park (Martin and Palm Beach counties)

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- Judah P. Benjamin Confederate Memorial at Gamble Plantation Historic State Park (Manatee County)
- Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park (Okeechobee and Osceola counties)
- Koreshan State Historic Site (Lee County)
- Lafayette Blue Springs State Park (Lafayette County)
- Lake Griffin State Park (Lake County)
- Lake June-in-Winter Scrub State Park (Highlands County)
- Lake Kissimmee State Park (Polk and Osceola counties)
- Lake Louisa State Park (Lake County)
- Lake Manatee State Park (Manatee County)
- Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park (Monroe County)
- Little Manatee River State Park (Hillsborough County)
- Little Talbot Island State Park (Duval County)
- Long Key State Park (Monroe County)
- Lovers Key State Park (Lee County)
- Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park (Lake and Seminole counties)
- Madira Bickel Mound State Archaeological Site (Manatee County)
- Madison Blue Spring State Park (Madison County)
- Manatee Springs State Park (Levy County)
- Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway (Citrus, Levy, Marion and Putnam counties)
- Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park (Alachua County)
- Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park (Clay County)
- Mound Key Archaeological State Park (Lee County)
- Myakka River State Park (Manatee and Sarasota counties)
- Nature Coast State Trail (Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy counties)
- North Peninsula State Park (Volusia County)
- O'Leno State Park (Alachua and Columbia counties)
- Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park (Okeechobee County)
- Oleta River State Park (Dade County)
- Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park (Baker County)
- Orman House Historic State Park (Franklin County)
- Oscar Scherer State Park (Sarasota County)
- Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail (Bradford, Clay, Putnam and Union counties)
- Palatka-to-St. Augustine State Trail (St. Johns County)
- Paynes Creek Historic State Park (Hardee County)
- Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (Alachua County)
- Price's Scrub (Marion County)
- Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park (Duval County)
- Rainbow Springs State Park (Marion County)
- Ravine Gardens State Park (Putnam County)
- River Rise Preserve State Park (Alachua and Columbia counties)
- Rock Springs Run State Reserve (Orange, Lake and Seminole counties)
- San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park (Alachua County)
- San Pedro Underwater Archaeological Preserve State Park (Monroe County)
- Savannas Preserve State Park (St Lucie County)
- Seabranh Preserve State Park (Martin County)
- Sebastian Inlet State Park (Brevard and Indian River counties)
- Silver Springs State Park (Marion County)
- Skyway Fishing Pier State Park (Pinellas, Hillsborough and Manatee counties)
- South Fork State Park (Manatee County)
- St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park (Martin County)

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- St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park (Brevard and Indian River counties)
- Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park (Hamilton and Columbia counties)
- Stump Pass Beach State Park (Charlotte County)
- Suwannee River State Park (Hamilton, Madison and Suwannee counties)
- Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette and Suwannee counties)
- Terra Ceia Preserve State Park (Manatee County)
- The Barnacle Historic State Park (Dade County)
- Tomoka State Park (Volusia County)
- Troy Spring State Park (Lafayette County)
- Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park (Levy County)
- Washington Oaks Gardens State Park (Flagler County)
- Weeki Wachee Springs State Park (Hernando County)
- Wekiwa Springs State Park (Seminole, Orange and Lake counties)
- Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park (Pasco County)
- Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park (Suwannee County)
- Windley Key Fossil Reef Geological State Park (Monroe County)
- Wingate Creek State Park (Manatee County)
- Withlacoochee State Trail (Citrus, Hernando and Pasco counties)
- Ybor City Museum State Park (Hillsborough County)
- Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park (Duval County)
- Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park (Citrus County)

The following state parks will be closed by 5 p.m. today:

- Bald Point State Park (Franklin County)
- Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park (Franklin County)
- Econfina River State Park (Taylor County)
- Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park (Leon County)
- Lake Talquin State Park (Leon, Liberty and Gadsden counties)
- Letchworth-Love Mounds Archaeological State Park (Jefferson County)
- Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park (Leon County)
- San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park (Wakulla County)
- St. Marks River Preserve State Park (Leon and Jefferson counties)
- T.H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park (Gulf County)
- Tallahassee-St. Marks Historic Railroad State Trail (Leon and Wakulla counties)

The remaining Florida State Parks remain open at this time.

Visitor safety is paramount in the decision to close and open Florida State Parks during times of severe weather. Additionally, Florida State Parks are in constant communication with state and local emergency operations centers and will close based on conditions and location.

Please visit floridastateparks.org and the Florida State Parks Facebook page for continuously updated information.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott declared a state of emergency in preparation for Hurricane Irma. Visit FloridaDisaster.org for updates and information about this storm.

State forest campgrounds closed

Published Sept. 7, 2017 at 2:47 p.m.

TALLAHASSEE -- In preparation for Hurricane Irma, Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam announced today Thursday, Sept. 7) the Florida Forest Service will be closing all campgrounds at more than 20 state forests starting tomorrow (Friday, Sept. 8).

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“Today we are implementing campground closures to help ensure the safety of our residents and visitors,” said Putnam said.

Campgrounds for the following state forests will be closed starting Friday, Sept. 8:

- John M. Bethea State Forest
- Twin Rivers State Forest
- Cary State Forest
- Jennings State Forest
- Ralph E. Simmons State Forest
- Etoniah Creek State Forest
- Goethe State Forest
- Ross Prairie State Forest
- Welaka State Forest
- Lake George State Forest
- Matanzas State Forest
- Tiger Bay State Forest
- Seminole State Forest
- Withlacoochee State Forest
- Charles H. Bronson State Forest
- Little Big Econ State Forest
- Lake Wales Ridge State Forest
- Myakka State Forest
- Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest
- Picayune Strand State Forest

These campgrounds will remain closed until further notice. While all Florida state forests remain open at this time, the Florida Forest Service urges all people to take extreme caution and not to visit them if they seem unsafe due to weather.

Depending on Hurricane Irma’s tract, the Florida Forest Service may announce additional campground closures or state forest closures. The Florida Forest Service team is in constant communication with state and local emergency operations centers.

The Florida Forest Service, a division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, manages more than 1 million acres of state forests and provides forest management assistance on more than 17 million acres of private and community forests. The Florida Forest Service is also responsible for protecting homes, forestland and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire on more than 26 million acres. Learn more at FloridaForestService.com.

Levy County parks closing at end of business on Thursday

Information From Director Matt Weldon

Published Sept. 6, 2017 at 1:47 p.m.

LEVY COUNTY – Levy County is closing all parks on Thursday (Sept. 7) by 5 p.m., and from then until further notice due to Hurricane Irma.

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This will include

- Devils Hammock
- Blue Springs
- Shell Mound campground
- Bird Creek park
- Henry Beck Park

“We will reopen as soon as conditions allow them to open safely. Thank you,” Parks Department Director Matt Weldon said Wednesday afternoon.

All Swiftmud-managed lands closes today (Sept. 6)

Information from Swiftmud

Published Sept. 6, 2017 at 1:27 p.m.

BROOKSVILLE -- The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) will close all District-managed lands throughout its 16-county region on Wednesday, Sept. 6 in anticipation of impacts from Hurricane Irma.

The following properties will be closed until further notice:

- Annutteliga Hammock
- Chassahowitzka River – Burnt Bridge Road entrance
- Chito Branch Reserve
- Conner Preserve
- Cypress Creek Preserve
- Deep Creek Preserve
- Ed Chance Reserve- Coker Prairie Tract
- Ed Chance Reserve- Gilley Creek Tract
- Flying Eagle Preserve
- Green Swamp East including Hampton Tract
- Green Swamp West
- Hálpata Tastanaki Preserve
- Lake Panasoffkee
- Lake Tarpon Outfall Canal
- Little Manatee River -Southfork Tract
- Lower Hillsborough Wilderness Preserve – Oakridge and Washburn
- Masaryktown Canal
- Panasoffkee Outlet
- Potts Preserve
- Prairie/Shell Creek
- Starkey Wilderness Preserve- Serenova Tract
- Tampa Bypass Canal
- Upper Hillsborough Preserve
- Upper Hillsborough – Alston Tract
- Upper Myakka -Flatford Swamp Preserve
- Weekiwachee Preserve
- Withlapopka Park
- Wysong Park