

FEATURE – USDA HELPS REPAIR HURRICANE DAMAGED CANAL

INTRO: The U-S Department of Agriculture helped repair a hurricane damaged canal in South Florida and in the process helped save people's homes. U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. 1:27

IN THE AFTERMATH OF TWO THOUSAND FIVE'S HURRICANE WILMA, HOMES ALONG THE LOOP CANAL IN THE MIAMI-DADE AREA WERE IN DANGER. THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE HELPED STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FIX DAMAGE FROM WINDS, FLOODING AND SUBSEQUENT DREDGING.

Rebeca Sosa, Miami-Dade County Commissioners: When the hurricane passed many trees were falling down, there was a dredging of the canal done and houses started falling apart.

Jesse Wilson USDA NRCS: We worked with Miami-Dade County engineers to come up with a solution to stabilize these banks. They did the majority of the engineering and we provided some expertise from past jobs we did to help stabilize these banks. When we complete this project, not only will these residents be shielded from future flood events, but it stabilizes the banks behind their homes.

N-R-C-S PROVIDED ONE POINT FIVE MILLION DOLLARS TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TO RESTORE THIS CANAL THROUGH THE EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM.

Rep. Marco Rubio (R), Speaker, Florida House of Representatives: We're always proud when we see government dollars at work for people. There's always a lot of criticism about how government spends money on studies or on things that don't get back to the taxpayer. But this one we can actually link the government dollars to the people who sent us the tax dollars.

IN ADDITION TO SAVING HOMES, REPAIRING THE CANAL BANKS HELPED THE ENVIRONMENT.

Jerry Joiner, Consultant: These canals are all connected to Biscayne Bay and by these types of stabilization structures you keep sediment and pollution out of Biscayne Bay. So there's a water quality benefit and there's a personal benefit to the homeowners.

FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.