



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

September 24, 2010

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Kissimmee Navigation Lock Refurbishment Progresses on Schedule *Normal navigation expected to return by the end of 2010*



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

Kissimmee, FL – Work is progressing well on the complete refurbishment of four navigation locks throughout the Kissimmee Basin that allow boaters to travel from the City of Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee. The locks are expected to reopen by the end of the year.

“Smooth navigation of local waterways is a central component of our recreational and sporting culture and is crucial to the region’s economic health,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “We look forward to christening a refurbished set of locks that will provide another 50 years of dependable service to the boating public.”

Built in the early 1960s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this is the first time the locks have undergone a complete renovation. The four navigation locks are S-61, at the south end of Lake Tohopekaliga; S-65, at the south end of Lake Kissimmee; S-65A, at the

northern stretches of the Kissimmee River; and S-65D, at the Kissimmee River, approximately 15 miles north of Lake Okeechobee. S-61, the busiest of the four navigation locks, moved 2,700 boats in 2009 alone.

Scheduling the renovation of all four locks at the same time saved taxpayers approximately \$480,000 in design and engineering costs. The winning bids for all four lock refurbishments totaled \$9.4 million.

Each navigation lock will receive new concrete, paint, utilities and mechanisms to operate the lock doors. The locks allow boats to navigate around water control structures, providing navigation from the Upper Chain of Lakes to Lake Okeechobee. Their purpose is purely navigational, and they have no impact on water flow or flood protection.

During the renovation, boaters and outdoor enthusiasts will still be able to access the restored Kissimmee River at various locations, such as the Istokpoga Canal Boat Ramp Area near the border between Highlands and Okeechobee counties, or the S-65C boat ramp near Lorida. Travel is also possible between S-65A and S-65D, which includes about 24 miles of restored river channel and 14 miles of the channelized Kissimmee River.

The navigational lock refurbishment work is part of an ongoing effort to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure of the Central and Southern Florida Project, a massive system of flood control works authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1948. Five years ago, the SFWMD established a 50-year operations and maintenance plan to ensure regular, timely maintenance of the system.

For more information about the temporary lock closures, please contact the Orlando Service Center at (407) 858-6100 or the Okeechobee Service Center at (863) 462-5260.

[Click here to view a map](#) of the locks undergoing refurbishment.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.