



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

July 13, 2012

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### **Falling Lake Levels Require Closure of Lake Okeechobee Locks**

*Navigation locks on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee will reopen when the lake sufficiently rises for safe navigation*

Okeechobee, FL – The navigation locks along the north shore of Lake Okeechobee will be closed beginning Monday due to lake levels declining below 12 feet NGVD.

The following locks will close:

- S-135 at J&S Fish Camp, Martin County
- S-127 at Buckhead Ridge, Glades County
- S-131 at Lakeport, Glades County
- G-36 at Henry Creek, Okeechobee County

While the navigation locks are out of operation, boaters will continue to have access to Lake Okeechobee from its north shore at local boat ramps. The locks will be available for boat traffic on July 14 and 15, but will close starting Monday, July 16 until the lake sufficiently rises for safe navigation.

Continued high evapotranspiration rates have resulted in Lake Okeechobee dropping to 11.97 feet NGVD. Despite recent rainfall, the lake is 1.6 feet below the historical average for this time of year. The short-term forecast does not call for significant rain to adequately boost lake levels over the next week.

Boaters should also note the status of other navigation locks in the area:

- The S-193 Lock, located on Taylor Creek on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee, is closed due to ongoing renovation work to refurbish the lock and ensure decades of reliable service.

- The S-310 navigation lock on the south shore at Clewiston is currently secured in the open position.

- Navigation locks operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which includes locks in the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie Canal, are also impacted by declining water levels. Information on those navigation locks is available by calling the Corps' South Florida Operations Office at 863-983-8101.

For a guide to recreation sites on Lake Okeechobee, including boat ramps and public parks, please visit the District's website at [www.sfwmd.gov/recreation](http://www.sfwmd.gov/recreation). For more information, please call the SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center at 863-462-5260, or the Orlando Service Center at 407-858-6100.

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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.*