



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

April 30, 2010

CONTACTS:

Bill Graf

[Orlando Service Center](#)

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (407) 858-6100, ext. 3837 or Cellular: (407) 908-4764

Missie Barletto

[Okeechobee Service Center](#)

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (863) 462-5260, ext. 3006 or Cellular: (863) 634-0774

www.sfwmd.gov/news

follow us on [twitter](#)

Modernization of Kissimmee Navigation Locks to Begin in Mid-May

Six-month effort will ensure locks will continue to deliver safe, reliable service



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

Orlando, FL — Nearly 50 years after going into service, the navigation locks in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and the Kissimmee River will undergo complete renovation this year. The improvements will modernize the locks and make them suitable for many more decades of safe and reliable service.

Beginning May 17, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will temporarily close the S-61, S-65, S-65A and S-65D navigation locks in Lake Tohopekaliga, Lake Kissimmee and the Kissimmee River for complete refurbishment. The work will be completed by December 31, 2010.

“Many of these locks went into service in the early 1960s, so it is time to do the necessary work to ensure their continued operation for another half century,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “We regret the temporary inconveniences that the work will place on the boating public. However, by refurbishing all the locks at the same time, we will save \$480,000 in taxpayer dollars and complete the entire project without even more prolonged disruptions.”

Each navigation lock will receive new concrete work, 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. Closing them will have no effect on water flow or flood protection.

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. Accessing the river from the Istokpoga Canal, boaters can travel between S-65A and S-65D, which includes about 24 miles of restored river channel and about 14 miles of the channelized Kissimmee River.

The District is placing signs at the locks and at boat ramps throughout the Kissimmee Basin to notify boaters of the planned renovations.

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 aging 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.

#

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.