



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

January 24, 2011

CONTACT:

Gabe Margasak

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 670-1245

www.sfwmd.gov/news

follow us on 

SFWMD Completes Airboat Crossings to Boost Recreation in Kissimmee *New crossings offer enhanced access to boating, camping, hunting and related activities*



(Click on the pictures for larger versions.)

Kissimmee, FL – Outdoor enthusiasts now have two new boater-friendly airboat crossings in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes as part of the South Florida Water Management District’s (SFWMD) commitment to increasing recreation on public lands.

“The Kissimmee region is one of the most beautiful and ecologically diverse landscapes in our region, not to mention its importance to the Everglades and South Florida’s water supply,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “The District is continually searching for ways to enhance recreational opportunities on public land, where it is compatible with restoration, so that residents and visitors can enjoy the outdoors.”

Located in the Gardner-Cobb Marsh, the new crossings feature slats that allow airboats to easily move from one marsh to another across gravel roads that run through the property. The new structures improve the ease with which people can access the area and replace old gravel crossings that were abrasive to airboat hulls.

Accessible only by boat or airboat, the Gardner-Cobb Marsh is the largest District property in the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes region. Gentle slopes in elevation by only a few inches or feet result in a rolling landscape that produces a contrast in natural communities. Swamps, pine flatwoods and wet prairie, which burst forth in the fall and spring with an abundance of wildflowers, dominate the landscape.

Outdoor enthusiasts can rest in the shady oak hammock, explore the property or set up camp at the primitive campsite after docking along the sandy shoreline. The landing there is known as “The Yacht Club” among airboaters. The land is also a good place to hunt deer and turkey.

The marsh offers walks along the oak- and cypress-lined berm, just landward from the lake’s edge to the neighboring Drasdo property. A small area at the southeast corner is high ground where the scrub jay forages in rare scrub habitat.

A more common habitat in the region is the prairie hammock. This classic Florida landscape sports cabbage palms and live oak trees among grassy prairies and marshes. Boaters can enjoy fishing at the lake’s edge or anywhere else on the property that is fishable.

The South Florida Water Management District is steadily increasing recreational access to public lands while continuing to manage them to support environmental restoration, water supply, water quality and flood control missions. At present, the District owns 621,000 acres of land that are open to the public. Many of these properties are in their natural state or have enhancements such as picnic tables, informational kiosks, campsites and hiking trails. For more information on recreational opportunities throughout the District’s 16-county region, visit www.sfwmd.gov/recreation.

#

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.