



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Two Renovated Navigation Locks Return to Service in Kissimmee Basin** *Six-month effort nears completion on Lake Kissimmee and Kissimmee River locks*



*While renovations continue on the S-65D navigation lock (SFWMD file photo, above), the S-65 and S-65A locks in the Kissimmee Basin have resumed operation following more than six months of refurbishment work.  
(Click on the photo for a larger version.)*

**Kissimmee, FL** — The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has placed the S-65 and S-65A navigation locks in the Kissimmee Basin back in service for boaters.

The 45-year-old navigation locks are two of four in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and on the Kissimmee River that have undergone more than six months of refurbishment. Work will continue at both the S-65 and S-65A for about another month while the locks remain in operation.

“The last several months of refurbishment work will help ensure another half century of reliable service from these navigation locks for boaters in the Kissimmee region,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance.

“The smooth navigation of local waterways provided by these locks is crucial to Central Florida’s recreational and sporting culture and its economic well-being. We appreciate the public’s patience and understanding as we near completion of these renovations.”

The S-65 navigation lock allows boaters to travel between Lake Kissimmee and the Kissimmee River. The S-65A lock, located about 11 miles south of the S-65 on the Kissimmee River, enables navigation between the river’s northern stretches and its restored central segment.

Among the other navigation locks:

- The S-65D lock – located on the Kissimmee River 16 miles north of Lake Okeechobee – is expected to be back in service by February 14. When the lock resumes operation, one gate will remain stationary for continued repairs. The lock will accommodate boats up to 13 feet wide while the affected gate is out of operation. Passage of larger boats and barges will require a 48-hour prior notice.
- The S-61 lock, known locally as the Southport Lock, has been back in service since January 4, allowing boats to pass back and forth between Lake Tohopekaliga and the C-35 canal.

Built in the early 1960s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, all four navigation locks are undergoing complete renovation for the first time. The S-61 lock, the busiest of the four, moved 2,700 boats in 2009 alone.

Each navigation lock is receiving new concrete, paint, utilities and mechanisms to operate and seal the lock gates. 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.

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.

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. The SFWMD has established a 50-year operations and maintenance plan to ensure regular, timely maintenance of the system.

For more information about the locks, please contact the SFWMD Orlando Service Center at 407-858-6100 or the SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center at 863-462-5260.

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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.*