



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **S-193 Lock to Close as Lake Okeechobee Level Continues to Decline**

*Lake access remains available at area boat ramps on the lake's north shore*

**Okeechobee, FL** – Beginning on Monday, May 2, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will close the S-193 navigation lock at Taylor Creek on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee because of declining lake levels. The lock will not have a locktender on duty when closed.

Declining lake levels caused the closure of four other navigation locks in March:

- **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

As the lake level reaches 12 feet NGVD and lower, the SFWMD closes these locks to maintain water levels in adjacent canals and protect groundwater availability. This operational decision also ensures that boats do not attempt to navigate when water levels are insufficient to support safe travel and helps to prevent damage to manatee protection devices inside the lock chambers.

While the navigation locks are out of operation, boaters will be able to continue to access Lake Okeechobee from its north shore at local boat ramps.

The lock closures are part of a larger effort by the District to ensure South Florida's water resources are properly maintained throughout the remainder of the dry season. Lake Okeechobee's current level is 11.07 feet – more than two and a half feet below the historical average for this time of year – and is continuing to decline.

On the south shore of Lake Okeechobee, the S-310 navigation lock at Clewiston is currently secured in the open position. The navigation lock is operational and manned by a locktender when lake levels reach 15.5 feet NGVD and higher to provide flood protection upstream of the lock.

Navigation locks on the Okeechobee Waterway, which includes the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie Canal, are operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These navigation lock schedules also are affected by lower Lake Okeechobee water levels. Information for those navigation locks may be obtained 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](http://www.sfwmd.gov). The information is also available at local bait and tackle shops as well as the SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center in the Bank of America building in downtown Okeechobee. For more information, please call 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.*