



NEWS RELEASE

October 11, 2011

CONTACT:

Randy Smith

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 389-3386

www.sfwmd.gov/news

follow us on 

Kissimmee River Closes to Navigation Because of Fast Flows from Storm *The river locks will reopen when conditions become safe*



(Click on the pictures for larger versions.)

West Palm Beach, FL — As a public safety measure, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is closing navigation locks on the Kissimmee River effective at 7 p.m. today because of fast flowing water from a drenching weekend storm that passed over the Kissimmee region. Boaters are urged to stay off the river because of hazardous conditions until further notice.

“The safety of the boating public is a top priority,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Director of the Operations, Maintenance and Construction Division. “We are working to move as much water as possible for flood control and will reopen the river to navigation as soon as water levels have receded and conditions become safe again.”

According to District meteorologists and the chief engineer, Saturday, October 8, was the wettest single day in the upper and lower Kissimmee basins combined in nearly 100 years. In that one day, the storm

Facility	Status	Effective Date
S-65 (Lake Kissimmee)	Closed	Oct. 11 - 7 p.m.
S-65A (Kissimmee River)	Closed	Oct. 11 - 7 p.m.
S-65C (Kissimmee River)	Closed	Oct. 11 - 7 p.m.
S-65D (Kissimmee River)	Closed	Oct. 11 - 7 p.m.
S-65E (Kissimmee River)	Closed	Oct. 11 - 7 p.m.
Click here for a map of the area		

dropped an average of 6.05 inches in the two basins spanning approximately 3,000 square miles, with local maximums up to 14.09 inches. The second wettest day was recorded in 1933.

In an effort to alleviate and prevent further high water levels, District water control structures are moving water as quickly as the system can safely operate. This means water that fell in the Kissimmee region during the weekend storm event is now flowing south down the Kissimmee River into the Istokpoga watershed and to Lake Okeechobee. Flows at the S65-E weir, just north of Lake Okeechobee, accelerated from 6,000 cubic-feet-per-second (cfs) Monday to about 19,000 cfs on Tuesday morning.

The weekend rainfall will help the current water shortage situation, but it is too early to assess the overall significance of this storm on the region. The larger South Florida region did not receive as significant an amount of rainfall as the Kissimmee basins. Key areas such as the Water Conservation Areas received 2 to 2.5 inches, while Lake Okeechobee received approximately 1.50 inches from this event.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages Lake Okeechobee water levels and has coordinated with the District throughout this event. At this time, the Corps has indicated there are no planned releases to the St. Lucie or Caloosahatchee rivers, as the water level will likely remain in the Water Shortage Management Band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule. Water seen moving through the C-43 (Caloosahatchee) and C-44 (St. Lucie) canals will be from basin runoff, not water from the lake.

Updates on the status of Kissimmee River navigation will be provided as needed on the District's website at www.sfwmd.gov.

#

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.