



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Falling Lake Levels Require Closure of Lake Okeechobee Locks**

*Locks will be closed starting Monday until lake levels rise enough for safe navigation*

**Okeechobee, FL** – The navigation locks along the north shore of Lake Okeechobee will be closed beginning on Monday due to declining water levels.

The following locks will close:

- **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

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 locks will reopen when the lake sufficiently rises for safe navigation.

Continued below-average rainfall during the dry season in South Florida, coupled with warm temperatures and high evaporation rates, have resulted in Lake Okeechobee dropping to 11.93 feet NGVD. The lake is more than two feet below the historical average for this time of year and is continuing to decline.

When the lake level reaches 12 feet NGVD and lower, the SFWMD closes these locks to ensure that boats do not attempt to navigate when water levels are insufficient to support safe travel. This is also necessary to maintain water levels in adjacent canals and protect groundwater.

Also note the status of other navigation locks in the area:

- The S-193 Lock, located on Taylor Creek on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee, is closed due to ongoing renovation work to refurbish the lock and ensure decades of reliable service.
- On the south shore of Lake Okeechobee, the S-310 navigation lock at Clewiston is currently secured in the open position. The navigation lock remains operational and is staffed by a locktender when lake levels reach 15.5 feet NGVD and higher.

- Navigation locks operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which includes the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie Canal, are also impacted by declining 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). For more information, please call the SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center at 863-462-5260, or the Orlando Service Center at 407-858-6100.

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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.*