



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Kissimmee River Navigation Lock Reopens to Boaters**

*S-65D is the last of four Kissimmee locks undergoing renovation to resume operation*

**Okeechobee, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has placed the S-65D navigation lock on the Kissimmee River back in service for boaters.

The 45-year-old navigation lock is the last of four in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and on the Kissimmee River to resume operation after being closed for more than six months of refurbishment. Work continues at all four locks to complete renovations.

“With the reopening of the S-65D, we are nearing completion of a refurbishment project that will help ensure that these navigation locks offer boaters the same reliable service that they have enjoyed for decades,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “We want to thank the public for its patience and understanding over the last several months as we have conducted these needed renovations.”

The S-65D navigation lock is located on the Kissimmee River, 16 miles north of Lake Okeechobee. The lock can currently serve recreational boats up to 13 feet wide because one gate remains stationary for further repairs. Passage of larger boats and barges will require a 48-hour prior notice.

The other three navigation locks are:

- **S-61:** Enables navigation between Lake Tohopekaliga and the C-35 canal. Operation resumed on January 4.
- **S-65:** Enables navigation between Lake Kissimmee and the Kissimmee River. Operation resumed on January 29.
- **S-65A:** Enables navigation between the Kissimmee River’s northern stretches and its restored central segment at a location about 11 miles south of the S-65 lock. Operation resumed on January 22.

Built in the early 1960s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, all four navigation locks underwent 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 received 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.*