

Welcome to the Kissimmee Waterway . . .

one of the most beautiful and exciting recreation areas in the state. Whether beginning in the headwaters of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Lake Okeechobee or any place in between, you are sure to witness some of Florida's most spectacular natural areas.

The Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and the Kissimmee River offer sites and experiences enjoyed by Floridians and visitors for generations. A new era is under way for the Kissimmee River Basin as the ongoing Kissimmee River Restoration project restores habitat that will benefit more than 320 species of fish and wildlife.

The South Florida Water Management District has prepared this map to help boaters and anglers navigate the waterway and locate public boat ramps, locks and other facilities. This brochure also contains safety tips and information about lock operations and the benefits and periodic navigational challenges created by the Kissimmee River Restoration.

Anglers will enjoy the Kissimmee River and the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes where native Florida

species are well represented. Lakes Kissimmee and Tohopekaliga rank among Florida's top ten bass lakes, and Lake Okeechobee has a worldwide reputation as a prime bass producer.



For further information visit us on the web at www.sfwmd.gov or contact our local service centers:

SFWMD Orlando Service Center

1707 Orlando Central Parkway, Suite 200
Orlando, FL 32809
Phone: (407) 858-6100
Toll Free in Florida: (800) 250-4250

SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center

205 North Parrott Avenue, Suite 201
Okeechobee, FL 34972
Phone: (863) 462-5260
Toll Free in Florida: (800) 250-4200

Please share this information with other anglers or pass this brochure along to a friend.



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Guide to the Kissimmee WATERWAY



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Restoring Natural Curves and Habitats

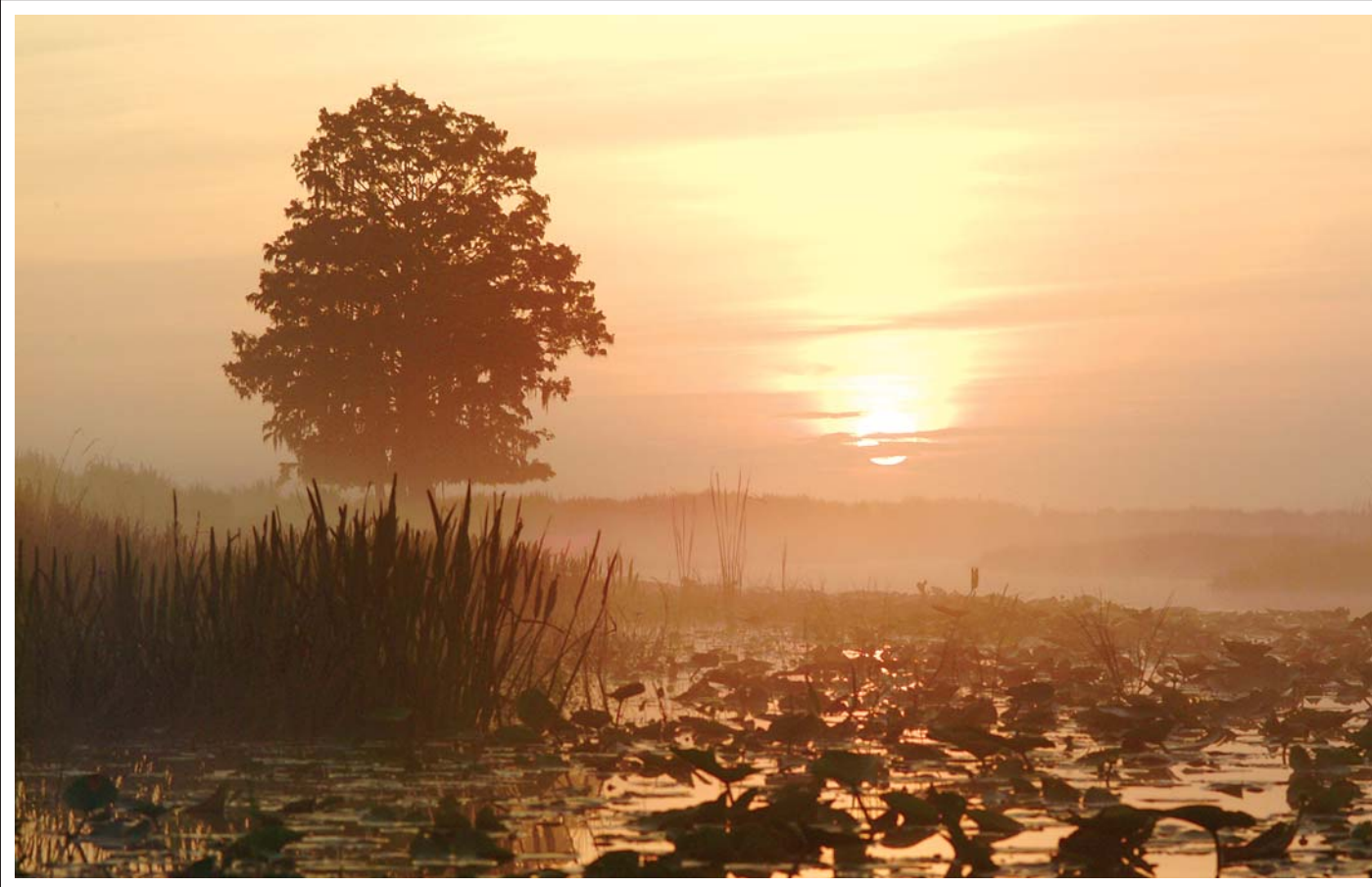
The Kissimmee River continues to greet boaters and anglers with new challenges and even greater opportunities as the Kissimmee River Restoration project moves forward to restore an ecosystem that was nearly destroyed during and after channelization.

Instead of the straight, deep and wide canal dug 40 years ago, sections of the Kissimmee River are already once again meandering through its historic and wetland-rich floodplain. This restoration creates opportunities for improved fishing, wildlife viewing and nature study. When complete, more than 300 species of fish and wildlife are expected to benefit from the restoration.

In response to periodic flooding, the 1960s channelization project transformed the 103-mile Kissimmee River into the 56-mile C-38 canal. The 300-foot-wide and 30-foot-deep canal achieved its flood protection goal, but dramatically altered

fish and wildlife habitat. About 90 percent of the wintering waterfowl population no longer used the system and wading birds largely disappeared. Rough fish, such as bowfin and gar, thrive in this once-renowned largemouth bass fishery. The vast and diverse wetland plant communities of the Kissimmee River floodplain were primarily transformed into cattle pasture.

To preserve the flood protection benefits of the channelization project, the upper and lower portions of Canal 38 will remain while a 22-mile stretch of the canal's midsection in Highlands and Okeechobee counties are being backfilled. Ultimately the Kissimmee River Restoration will return flow to 43 miles of the river's historic channel and restore about 40 square miles of river/floodplain ecosystem. The restoration project—a 50-50 partnership of the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—is scheduled to be complete by 2013 at a cost of more than \$575 million. While the Kissimmee River Restoration seeks to restore an ecosystem and greatly enhance the outdoor experience of anglers and boaters, construction will inhibit travel along



The Kissimmee River, in its natural state, once meandered freely.



In the 1960s and early 1970s, the river was channelized.



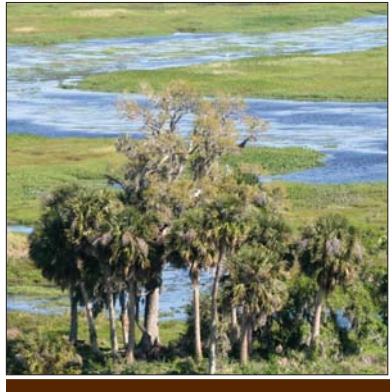
Today the river is the site of an ambitious restoration to benefit the hundreds of plants and animals of the Kissimmee's floodplain ecosystem.

portions of the river during some phases, and some activities will temporarily block navigation. The canal construction destroyed nine miles of the historic river channel, so dredges will recarve the channel to reconnect historic oxbows. In some cases, earthen bridges will be built across the channelized waterway to move fill material to construction sites.

To receive up-to-date information about navigation on the Kissimmee River, contact either the Okeechobee or Orlando Service Center of the South Florida Water Management District. The Okeechobee Service Center can be reached at (863) 462-5260 or (800) 250-4200. The phone numbers for the Orlando Service Center are (407) 858-6100 and (800) 250-4250.



River Restoration Land Acquisition Expands Recreation Areas



As more natural flow regimes are returned to the meandering Kissimmee River, the South Florida Water Management District has acquired the associated lands needed to allow the river to overflow its banks and re-inundate floodplain habitats.

Approximately 102,000 acres have been purchased along the river and around Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, Hatchineha and Tiger. This land is critical to the Kissimmee River Restoration, and almost all of it is open to public recreation. Along the river, public land will allow the river to rise and inundate its floodplain. Land purchases around the lakes will allow 1.5 feet of additional lake level fluctuation. This will create additional storage in the four southern-most lakes in the chain and allow the Kissimmee River to receive flows similar to the historic condition.

Although all four lakes are already among the best bass angling lakes in Florida, the greater water fluctuation in Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, Hatchineha and Tiger will expand the lakes' littoral zones, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat throughout.

To learn more about the public lands in the Kissimmee River Basin, visit www.sfwmd.gov (click on "Recreation") or call your nearest South Florida Water Management District Service Center and request a free Recreational Guide.

Flood Control Structures, River Weir Require Boater Caution



Six navigation locks are located between the city of Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee. Each lock measures 30 by 90 feet and has an average depth of six feet. From downtown Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee, six bridges are located along the waterway, all having

vertical clearances of 11.5 feet or more.

The Kissimmee River between State Road 60 and Lake Okeechobee consists of three features – the main flood control channel (C-38), the disconnected oxbows of the historic river channel and the reconnected river oxbows in the physically restored section. Boaters will encounter little difficulty navigating the wide and relatively straight canal. Within physically restored portions of the river, boaters will encounter the habitat-rich floodplain, but also a meandering channel that requires more caution to navigate – especially during low water conditions.

Constructed in 2008, a large water control weir is located just south of the S-65E structure (the southernmost lock and spillway on the river channel). The weir protects S-65E from being affected by extreme water level differences upstream and downstream of the spillway. Although the weir spans the entire channel, a large navigation notch allows for continued boat traffic. Well-marked buoys guide boaters through the center notch.

Access to the old oxbows is possible at a number of locations along the main channel. Boaters should exercise caution and watch for natural hazards such as shoals and aquatic weeds. Several oxbows are dead-end channels.

Due to the lack of navigation locks, boaters cannot travel through the canals connecting the Alligator Chain of Lakes and East Lake Tohopekaliga with Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, Hatchineha and Tohopekaliga. Access to East Lake and the Alligator Chain of Lakes is provided at several parks and commercial fish camps.

Birds Flock Back to Physically Restored Sections of the River

Phase I restoration construction was completed in February 2001. Approximately 7.5 miles of flood control canal was backfilled, 1.3 mile of river channel was recarved and a spillway (S-65B) was demolished. This action reestablished flow to 14 miles of continuous river channel and allows for intermittent inundation of 5,792 acres of floodplain. Another construction phase (Phase IVA) was completed in September 2007. This reconnected four additional miles of historical river channel by backfilling two more miles of the canal, and is expected to recover 512 acres of floodplain wetlands.



All backfilling construction (Phases IVB and II/III) is scheduled to be completed by 2013. Ecological monitoring will extend through 2018.

The river and its floodplain have improved in remarkable ways, surpassing at times the environmental response anticipated by scientists

working on the project. Comprehensive monitoring of the physically restored sections of the Kissimmee River has documented these results:

- Wading bird populations in the restored river and floodplain region have more than tripled.
- Duck species including fulvous whistling duck, northern pintail, northern shoveler, American wigeon and ring-necked duck have returned to the floodplain after being absent during the 40-plus years that the system was channelized.

- Similarly, several shorebird species including American avocet, black-necked stilt, dowitcher, greater yellowlegs, semipalmated plover, least sandpiper, spotted sandpiper and western sandpiper have also returned to the river and floodplain.
- The number of wading birds, including white ibis, great egret, snowy egret and little blue heron, has increased significantly, in some years more than double the restoration target.
- Organic deposits on the river bottom decreased by 71 percent, reestablishing sand bars and providing new habitat for shorebirds and invertebrates, including native clams.
- Dissolved oxygen levels have doubled, which is critical for the long-term survival of fish and other aquatic organisms.
- During the extreme drought of 2006-07, the physically restored riverine ecosystem adapted to the extreme weather conditions much more readily than the channelized river.
- Largemouth bass and sunfishes now comprise 63 percent of the fish community, up from 38 percent.

Scientists with the South Florida Water Management District continue to carefully monitor and document ecosystem changes in response to the physical changes to the river. For more information on the environmental perspective, visit www.sfwmd.gov (click on "ecosystem restoration").



Lock Information

Weekday Hours for Locks

S-61, S-65, S-65A, S-65C, S-65D, S-65E
Monday – Friday, all year, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Weekend Hours for Locks

S-61, S-65, S-65A, S-65C, S-65D, S-65E
March 1 – October 31, 5:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
November 1 – February 28, 5:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

S-65B has been removed as part of the Kissimmee River Restoration.

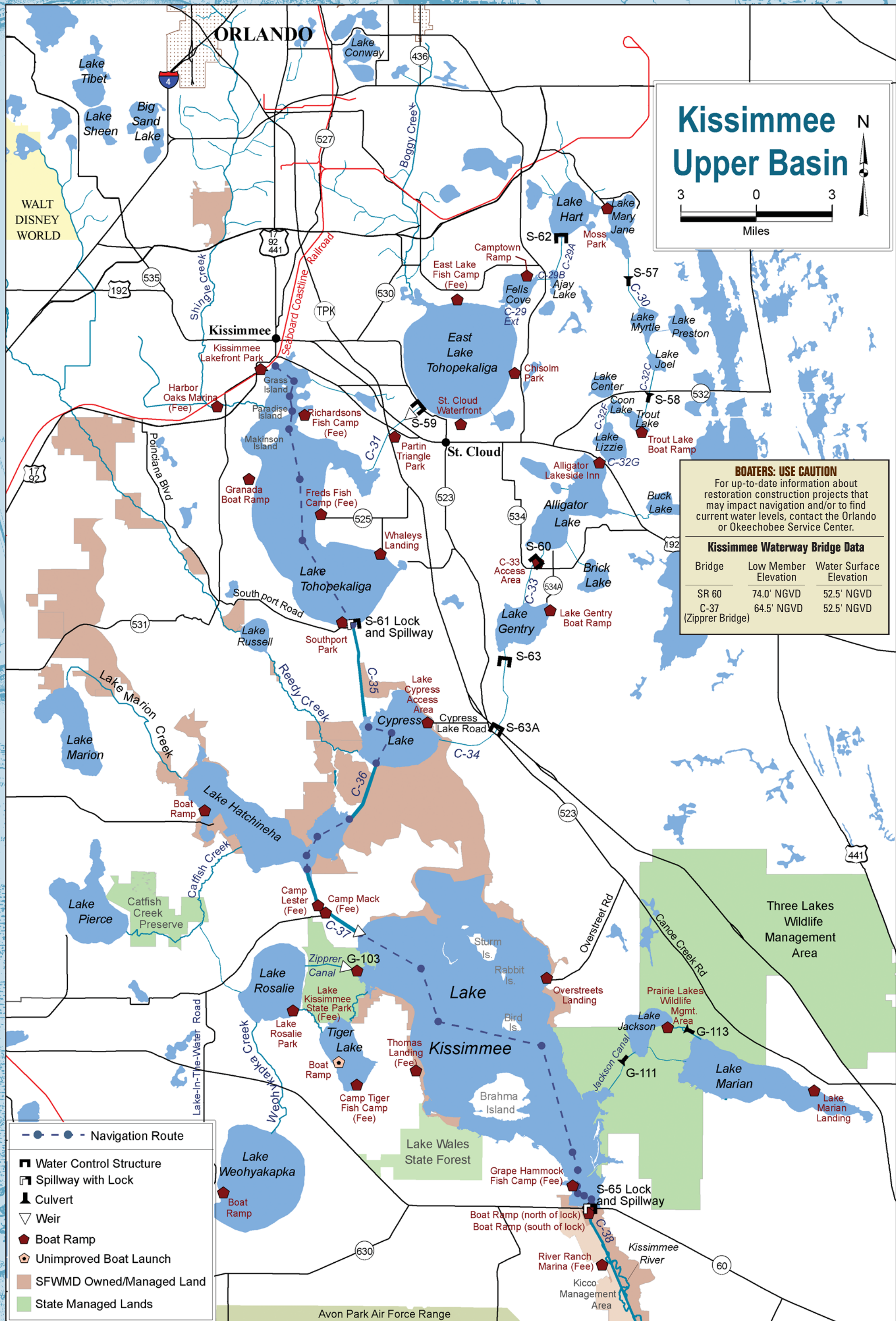
Approximate time to go through locks is 15 minutes.

There is no charge for going through locks during posted hours. After hours, however, the locktender is not required to permit passage. If boats are admitted, a fee may be charged. For your own protection, and as a courtesy, notify the locktender ahead of time if late passage is necessary.



Freddy's Top Ten Rules for Boater Safety

1. Remember all Coast Guard boating regulations and the Florida boat safety laws apply in these waters. Please obey posted signs and speed limits.
2. Always wear a personal flotation device while the boat is in motion.
3. Boaters encountering a spray crew applying herbicide should maintain a distance of at least 500 feet and slow to avoid creating a large wake. The South Florida Water Management District airboats are clearly marked and numbered, making them easy to spot.
4. Boaters planning to travel from Lake Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee are encouraged to call ahead for navigation information. Both the Orlando and Okeechobee Service Centers can provide daily water level and navigation information. The Okeechobee Service Center can be reached at (863) 462-5260 or (800) 250-4200. The phone numbers for the Orlando Service Center are (407) 858-6100 and (800) 250-4250. During drought times, water levels may fall and limit access to motor boats. Also, periodic maintenance and Kissimmee River Restoration project construction may restrict navigation.
5. Alcohol consumption while piloting a boat is illegal.
6. Navigate carefully at all times, but particularly when traveling the meandering oxbows of restored sections of the river. The depth of the river varies and sandbars can shift and reappear as water levels rise and fall.
7. Always pack your garbage out. Garbage spoils the view and can pose a danger to visitors and wildlife.
8. Hunting regulations along the Kissimmee River are unique. Ignorance of the law is not a defense and can result in severe fines, penalties and the confiscation of your guns, boat and hunting equipment.
9. While locking through the structures along the Kissimmee waterways, turn off your boat motor and extinguish your cigarettes.
10. Be considerate of others on the waterways. Their rights are as valid as yours.



Kissimmee Upper Basin

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BOATERS: USE CAUTION
 For up-to-date information about restoration construction projects that may impact navigation and/or to find current water levels, contact the Orlando or Okeechobee Service Center.

Kissimmee Waterway Bridge Data

Bridge	Low Member Elevation	Water Surface Elevation
SR 60	74.0' NGVD	52.5' NGVD
C-37 (Zipper Bridge)	64.5' NGVD	52.5' NGVD

- - - - - Navigation Route
- Water Control Structure
- Spillway with Lock
- Culvert
- Weir
- Boat Ramp
- Unimproved Boat Launch
- SFWMD Owned/Managed Land
- State Managed Lands

Kissimmee Lower Basin

BOATERS: USE CAUTION
 For up-to-date information about restoration construction projects that may impact navigation and/or to find current water levels, contact the Orlando or Okeechobee Service Center.

Kissimmee Waterway Bridge Data		
Bridge	Low Member Elevation	Water Surface Elevation
SR 78	38.7' NGVD	18.7' NGVD
SR 70	39.3' NGVD	22.3' NGVD
CSX RR	43.5' NGVD	31.5' NGVD
US 98	45.0' NGVD	33.5' NGVD
SR 60	74.0' NGVD	52.5' NGVD

- ⋯⋯⋯ Florida Trail
- Water Control Structure
- Spillway with Lock (navigable)
- Culvert
- Weir
- Boat Ramp
- Unimproved Boat Launch
- SFWMDC Owned/Managed Land
- State Managed Lands

