



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS | Jacksonville District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Temporary Closure of Moore Haven Lock scheduled to begin May 14 to install Manatee Protection System

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has postponed the start date for installation of the Manatee Protection System (MPS) at the Moore Haven Lock as a result of concerns expressed by the public at a meeting held Feb. 16 in Clewiston.

The lock on the Okeechobee Waterway is now scheduled to be temporarily closed from May 14 – July 9, 2012. The adjustment comes after local business owners, recreational boaters and residents expressed concerns about closing the locks earlier in the spring due to heavy usage of the facilities.

“After hearing the economic and recreational concerns expressed at last night’s meeting, the Corps has adjusted the scheduled lock closure to reduce the impact to the local communities,” said Lt. Col. Michael Kinard, deputy district commander. “This timeframe will allow the lock to remain open further into the boating season, while allowing us to complete the installation at the beginning of the hurricane season when the risk is low. It’s all about balancing impacts and risks.”

Installation of the MPS is part of the Manatee Pass Gates project. The primary goal of the project is to safeguard Florida’s endangered manatees from serious injury or death at water control structures and navigation locks by modifying these structures with a MPS. Using a set of acoustic transmitters and receivers, the MPS detects the West Indian manatee and prevents the gates from closing and harming the protected animal.

The Manatee Protection System has been manufactured and above-ground fixtures have been installed at Moore Haven Lock. The remaining work includes dewatering the lock, installing the MPS to the lock gates, testing the system, and re-watering the lock. Work is expected to be complete within two months.

Additional information is available at http://bit.ly/MPG_USACE.

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