

# **Locking Through**

## **The Okeechobee Waterway and the Canaveral Harbor**



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Jacksonville District

### **Safety Equipment**

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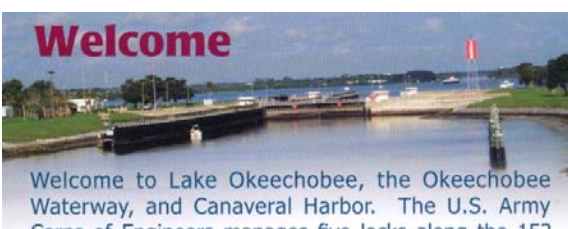
### **Manatees**

### **Okeechobee Waterway**

### **Canaveral Harbor**

### **Locking Through**

# Welcome



Welcome to Lake Okeechobee, the Okeechobee Waterway, and Canaveral Harbor. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages five locks along the 152 mile Okeechobee Waterway and Canaveral Lock in the Canaveral Harbor.

Canaveral Lock provides passage from the Banana River to the Atlantic Ocean, and the Okeechobee Waterway provides a convenient link between Florida's west and east coast.

This brochure will provide you with information on locking through. It is intended for the first time user as well as the return user to help assure that your experience is both safe and memorable.

Remember that the lock operator has full authority over movement of boats when approaching the lock and while the vessel is in the lock. For your safety, please follow the instructions of the lock operator at all times.

## Please remember to have the following items on board your vessel:

**Personal floatation device (PFD).** One correctly sized U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD for each person. Children and non-swimmers should wear them at all times.



**Fire extinguisher.** Fire extinguisher of the type and quantity prescribed by the U.S. Coast Guard for your vessel should be on board.



**Fenders.** Fenders for both sides of the vessel. Vessels may be asked to moor on either side of the lock chamber or to another vessel.



**Mooring lines.** Two or more 50-foot lines should be available at all times. Locks on the Okeechobee Waterway provide lines as a convenience.



## Safety Equipment



## Who Goes First?

Waiting to go through the locks can be frustrating, but by understanding vessel priority, frustrations can be reduced. The Secretary of the Army has established the following priority:

- 1st**     **Government vessels (Federal, State, City)**
- 2nd**     **Commercial passenger vessels on scheduled trips**
- 3rd**     **Commercial vessels**
- 4th**     **Recreational pleasure craft**

Larger vessels should enter first when asked to do so. When they have been secured, smaller vessels can enter with greater safety.

## Safety Hazards

Water and wind conditions can create hazardous situations when using the locks. Water turbulence occurs during the filling and emptying process, resulting in dangerous current and undertows.

Windy conditions around locks and dams also influence the navigation of your vessel. Strong tail winds or side winds can make a difference in stopping speed or controlling your vessel. Always consider these elements before entering the lock.

"No Boating" areas are located immediately upstream and downstream of the dams. These areas are hazardous, as boats can be pulled into the dam spillway by discharge currents. Loss of boats and lives have occurred because of carelessness. Please remember to use caution.

- \* Know your location on the waterway in regards to the proximity of each lock and dam.**
- \* Note Coast Guard mile markers to determine your location.**
- \* Approach lock and dam areas along the bank and next to the lock at a reduced speed.**

## Priority / Hazards



# Navigational Aids



**Channel markers** are located along navigation routes. Green buoys should be kept on the left facing upstream. Red buoys should be kept on the right facing upstream.

- A. CAUTION.** Controlled area as indicated in circle.
- B. DANGER.** Danger may be indicated inside the diamond.
- C. BOATS KEEP OUT.** Nature of danger may be displayed outside crossed diamond.

**\* Remember, these are only a few of the many navigation aids on the waterways. Be sure you are familiar with all of them.**

## Locking Data

Operating hours are from 6:00 am to 9:30 pm unless otherwise noted in the U.S. Coast Guard published "Notice to Mariners." For current information on waterway depths, locking, and navigational data contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at any of the following numbers:

Jacksonville District Office.....	(904)232-2539
South Florida Operations Office.....	(863)983-8101
W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam.....	(239)694-5451
Ortona Lock and Dam.....	(863)675-0616
Moore Haven Lock and Dam.....	(863)946-0414
Port Mayaca Lock and Dam.....	(561)924-2858
St. Lucie Lock and Dam.....	(772)287-2665
Canaveral Lock .....	(321)783-5421

### Drawbridges and Swing Bridges Along the Okeechobee Waterway

Location	Phone Number
State Rte 31	(239)694-2941
Alva-State Rte 873	(239)728-2704
	(239)573-1680 x408
Fort Denaud-Rte 78A	(863)675-2055
LaBelle-State Rte 29	(863)674-4663

(Bridge tenders operate on VHF Channel 9)



## Locking Data

# Manatee Facts



West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*)

Canaveral Harbor and the Okeechobee Waterway are home to one of Florida's most fascinating endangered species, the West Indian Manatee. When a manatee is present, you will often see a swirl in the water followed by the animal's snout, tail, or flipper breaking the surface of the water.

Manatees have a large seal-like body that tapers to a flat, paddle shaped tail. The body is grayish-brown in color and 9-10 feet long, weighing on the average of 1,000 pounds. They can grow up to 13 feet long and weigh 3,000 pounds.

Manatees are often found in shallow, slow moving rivers, estuaries, saltwater bays, canals, and coastal areas. They can live in both fresh and saltwater environments.

Completely harmless and non-aggressive, they are often reclusive and shy. They may surface every few minutes when active or every 10-15 minutes when resting.

Recent population estimates suggest that only 3,000 manatees are left in Florida and the southeastern United States. Manatees are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the Florida Marine Sanctuary Act of 1978.

## Here are a few things you can do to protect manatees:



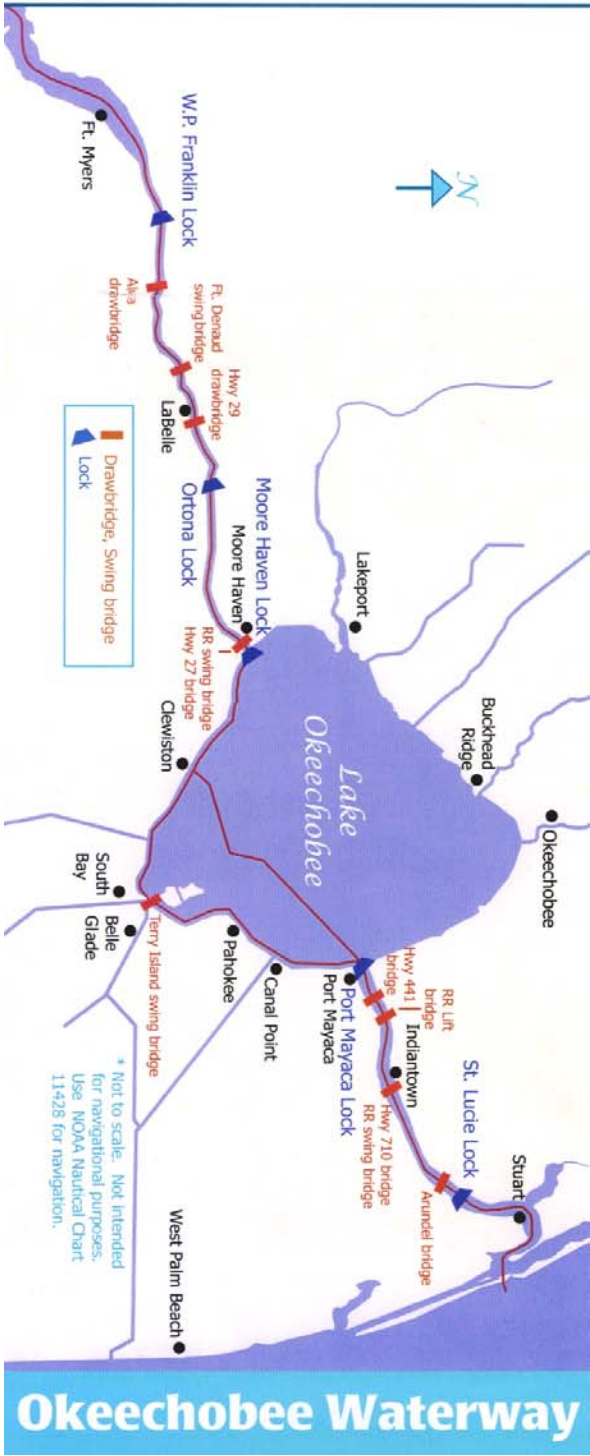
- \* Abide by posted restrictions and speed zones signs.
- \* Try to stay in deep water channels. Avoid boating in seagrass beds or shallow areas.
- \* Remain at least 50 feet away from a manatee when boating.
- \* Do not annoy, harass, or disturb a manatee.



## Manatees

# Waterway Distances

Location	Mileage
W.P. Franklin Lock to Gulf Intracoastal	33.2
W.P. Franklin Lock to Ortona Lock	27.9
Ortona Lock to Moore Haven Lock	15.5
Moore Haven Lock to Port Mayaca Lock via open lake, Route #1	39.0
via rim canal, Route #2	50.0
Port Mayaca Lock to St. Lucie Lock	23.7
St. Lucie Lock to the Atlantic Intracoastal	15.1







The Canaveral Harbor is 145 miles south of Jacksonville and 70 miles north of Fort Pierce. These are the two closest major inlets from the Intracoastal Waterway to the Atlantic Ocean. The Canaveral Harbor was created in 1951 when an artificial cut was made through a barrier beach to provide access to a dike-enclosed turning basin in the Banana River.

Canaveral Lock was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1965 to secure safe passage of vessels from the Banana River to Port Canaveral and the Atlantic Ocean. The purpose of the lock is to compensate for the difference in water level of the Banana River and the ocean. It also reduces tidal-currents in Canaveral Harbor, prevents entry of hurricane tides into the Banana River, and prevents saltwater intrusion.

Canaveral Lock is used by recreational and commercial vessels. Any vessel with a draft up to 12 feet may use the lock. The lift of the lock varies according to the tide stage of Canaveral Harbor and the water level of the Banana River. Locking through will usually take 20 to 30 minutes.

Canaveral Lock is the largest in Florida. Its original size was 56 by 400 feet. It was enlarged to 90 by 600 feet in order to accommodate large space booster rockets shipped by waterway for NASA. The lock is 13 feet deep.



Booster rocket locking through Canaveral Lock

## Canaveral Harbor

# How to Lock Through



Before going through a navigation lock, always double check that you have all the equipment you will need (such as lines and fenders), that your vessel's reverse gear is operating properly, and that you are ready for safe passage.

If this is the first time locking through or you feel uneasy about locking, inform the lock operator. The lock crews are interested in locking you through safely and will assist and instruct you.

If guests are taking part in the mooring, take a few moments before you reach the lock and review the entire locking process: handling the lines, using deck cleats, monitoring the vessel's security during lockage, etc. This will prepare you and your guests for the process and help avoid an accident.

**Locking Through.** Always follow this list of safety procedures and precautions when locking through. These will reduce the potential for accidents and injuries.

1. Stay between the red and green buoys. They mark the navigable channel.



2. Watch for the Arrival Point sign. Arrival points are located 1/4 mile from each end of the lock.



3. Upon arrival at the lock, try to make radio contact on Channel 13 and continue within 400 feet of the lock wall. At this point, if radio contact has not been made, signal the lock with two long and two short blasts with a horn or whistle.



**\*Note:** All locks monitor FCC Maritime Band Channels 13 and 16. Channel 16 is authorized call, reply, and distress frequency only. Locks are not permitted to work on Channel 16. After call and reply, the lockmaster will direct you to a working channel.



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## Locking Through



4. The lock operator will give directions on the working channel. This will include information such as waiting time, the rise or fall of the lock, where to prepare fenders, and where to position your vessel.



**\*Note: When approaching the lock, watch for a traffic signal. Red and green traffic signals are located upstream and downstream of each lock.**

5. While waiting to lock through, remember to position your vessel away from the lock approach channel so those exiting may do so safely.



6. Traffic lights and horns will guide you at the locks. In addition, the lock operator may give you verbal instructions or signal you with a horn.



7. Once your vessel crosses the arrival point, you have entered the lock approach. The lock operator has full authority over your vessel while in the lock approach area. For your safety, please obey the lock operator's instructions.



8. Enter the lock chamber at slow speed, minimum wake and pull forward to allow other boats to fall in behind you.



9. During lockage, the following rules will be strictly enforced: fenders must be used, no smoking, no open lights, and everyone must keep their hands and legs inside the vessel.



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## Locking Through

10. Locking lines will be exchanged, so make sure there is a cleat or bit free of all other lines on your bow and stern.



11. Station someone at both the stern and bow to pass lines to a lock attendant and monitor lines. If you are locking by yourself, notify the lock operator for special instructions.



12. Arrange your line neatly. Secure the boat by holding on the lines provided. Do not tie locking lines to your vessel and do not wind locking lines a full figure 8 on the cleat to avoid hanging the vessel up on the lock wall or pulling the cleat out. (A half figure 8 is acceptable. Take in or let out line as the water level changes.)



13. When the lockage is complete, wait for the lock operator's instructions before releasing the lines. Wait for lock gates to fully open before exiting the lock chamber.



14. Remember to leave at slow speed, minimum wake. Fast speeds endanger lock gates, your boat, other boats, and manatees which frequent the area.



Images used throughout this brochure are courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, U.S. Geological Service, Omnigraphix and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



**For more information:**

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Jacksonville District  
South Florida Operations Office  
525 Ridgelawn Road  
Clewiston, Florida 33440-5399**

**[www.saj.usace.army.mil](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil)**

