

OVERVIEW



AUGUST 2014

The Manatee Pass Gates project received authorization in the Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act of 1994. The project is located in southeast Florida at selected Okeechobee Waterway and Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) project navigation locks and water control structures located in areas within West Indian manatee habitat. The federal government listed the West Indian manatee as an endangered species in 1967, and actively began protecting the manatee under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. To this day, the manatee remains on the endangered species list.

BACKGROUND

Construction of drainage canals in the Everglades began in the early 1900s by local interest groups. Since 1948, a number of canals have been modified or constructed as part of the C&SF project. To prevent salt water intrusion and excessive drainage, small dams or spillways were constructed on the coastal canals. By the 1970s, most of the spillways were modified to include remotely-operated hydraulic gates. Most of the canals and salinity control structures are currently operated by the South Florida Water Management District.



PROJECT PURPOSE

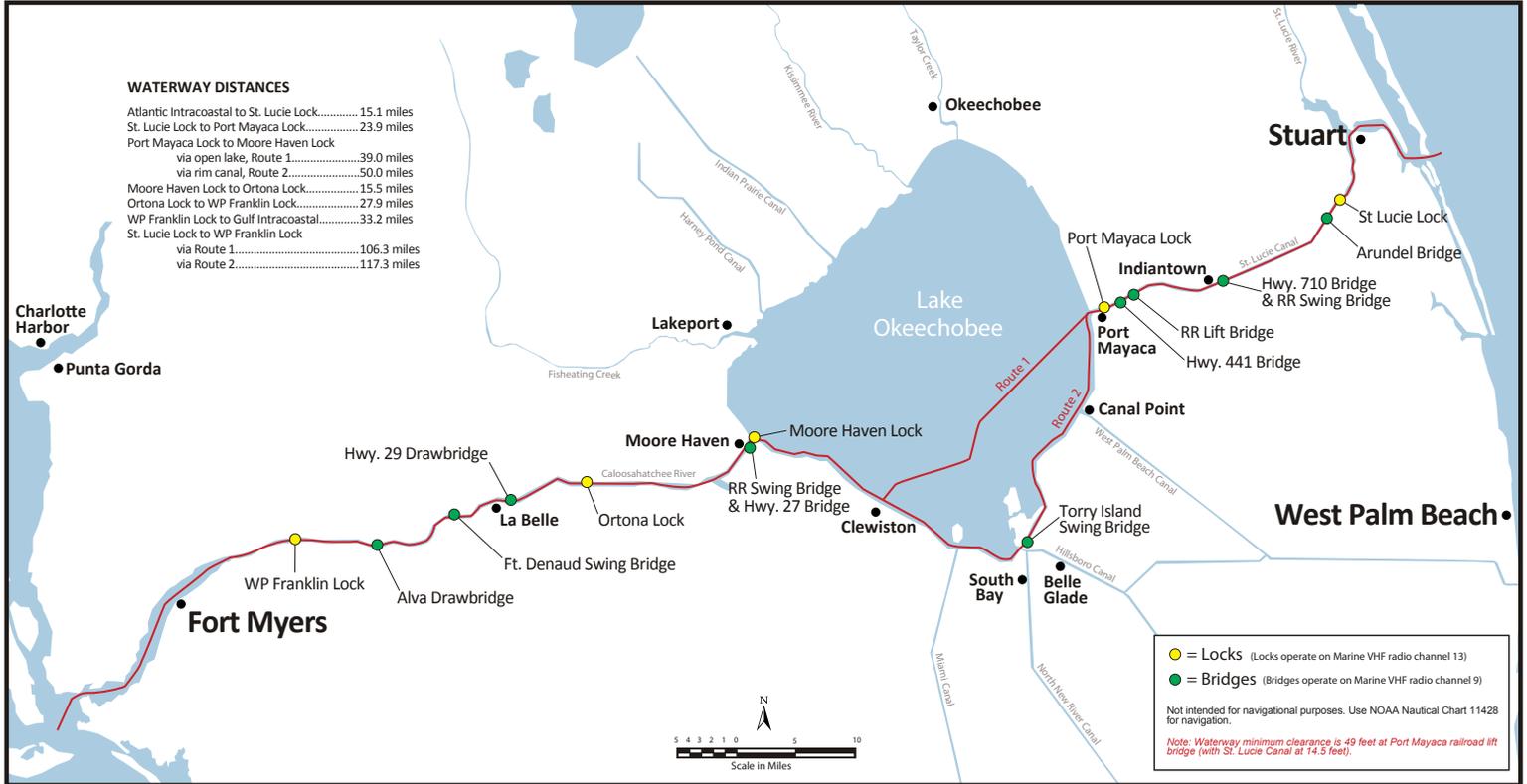
The primary goal of the Manatee Pass Gates project is to safeguard Florida's endangered manatees from serious injury or death at water control structures and navigation locks by modifying these structures with a manatee protection system (MPS). This system is designed to detect the West Indian manatee and prevent the gates from closing and harming the protected animal.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, south Florida's water control structures and navigation locks were once the second highest cause of human-related manatee deaths in the state. The flood gates and canal locks can potentially kill manatees by crushing or drowning them.

The MPS consists of a set of acoustic transmitters and receivers that run from the bottom of the gates to the water line. The MPS turns on when the gates are approximately 15 percent from the fully-closed position. If the signal between the sensors is interrupted by a manatee, the lock gates automatically stop. After a programmed delay to allow the obstruction to clear, the gates will attempt to close again. If the obstruction is clear, the gates will close. If the obstruction is still present, the gates will stop again.



OKEECHOBEE WATERWAY



CURRENT STATUS

Installation of the Manatee Protection System on the Moore Haven Lock was completed July 14, 2012.

In partnership with other agencies, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is working proactively to help protect the vulnerable manatee from extinction.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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