



City of Belle Glade FLORIDA

The City of Belle Glade has hired WRS Infrastructure & Environment, Inc. to design a boat lock. The objective is to assist the City in achieving their desire to create water access between the City and Lake Okeechobee. The proposed boat lock would allow passage from the canals in the City through the Herbert Hoover dike and into the Lake Okeechobee Rim Canal at Torry Island. While the engineering of such a lock is complicated and requires permitting through state and federal agencies; its economic benefits to the community are expected to be significant.

The City of Belle Glade is located in western Palm Beach County and lies to the southeast of Lake Okeechobee. It straddles what is known as the Hillsboro Canal (which runs generally east-west). This canal joins the North New River Canal at Water Control Structure 351.

Water control structures are built into the Hebert Hoover Dike, which surrounds Lake Okeechobee and helps control water levels through discharge into the Hillsboro and North New River canals (among numerous discharge points). West of the dike is the Rim Canal, a part of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICWW).

The markets for this type of project fall into two categories: the boating public and land development. The first is a target for the reason you would want to build a vessel lock – to allow travel by boat between the lake and the canals. The development growth would result from opening up a large area to waterfront residential area development which can benefit from the first category – access to Lake Okeechobee.



The target area for this vessel lock makes it very practical for boaters. It also takes advantage of the nearness of the City proper to the proposed vessel lock by the boating public. The design of the lock itself is related to the size of the target vessel expected to use the area.

Recreational boats can be placed into three categories based on size: recreational day boats under 30'; sport fishing and cruiser vessels 30' to 120'; and super yachts 120' or more. The proposed lock design will handle 90% of all vessels in the 30' to 120' size. Since the majority of boats sold are 80' or less, and the typical movement along the rim canal for other than local recreational boating is by boats in this category, this becomes the primary boating market.

The Okeechobee Waterway through Lake Okeechobee takes two routes. The first is a direct route through the Lake from the west at the Moore Haven Lock to the east at the Port Myaca Lock. Once boaters enter the Lake, however; they may choose to take a more circuitous, albeit calmer route along the rim canal. It is from the rim canal that any boat traffic will approach the proposed Belle Glade Lock.

The City has chosen to target both the boating public and new development on lands adjacent to the canals served by the proposed lock. In and of themselves, they would appear to be two separate projects. However, in the case of constructing a lock in this particular location, it is suggested that this will attract boaters (both day trippers and permanent) and open up adjacent lands for waterfront development, thereby increasing property values and the economy.

Torry Island Lock Project

Current Status – February 2009 :

Since the Corps of Engineers was contacted in September of 2008, the City's engineer has completed several site visits, evaluated alternate locations and completed the Location Feasibility Study. The City of Belle Glade has endorsed the proposed location. Contracts for surveying and geotechnical investigations were let on January 25, 2009. An essential step for this project was the City of Belle Glade and Corps of Engineers discussing methods to add this project to the Lake Okeechobee projects that were authorized by Congress. Initial survey and geotechnical field work is expected to be completed late February with actual survey reports being generated in March 2009.

The Site

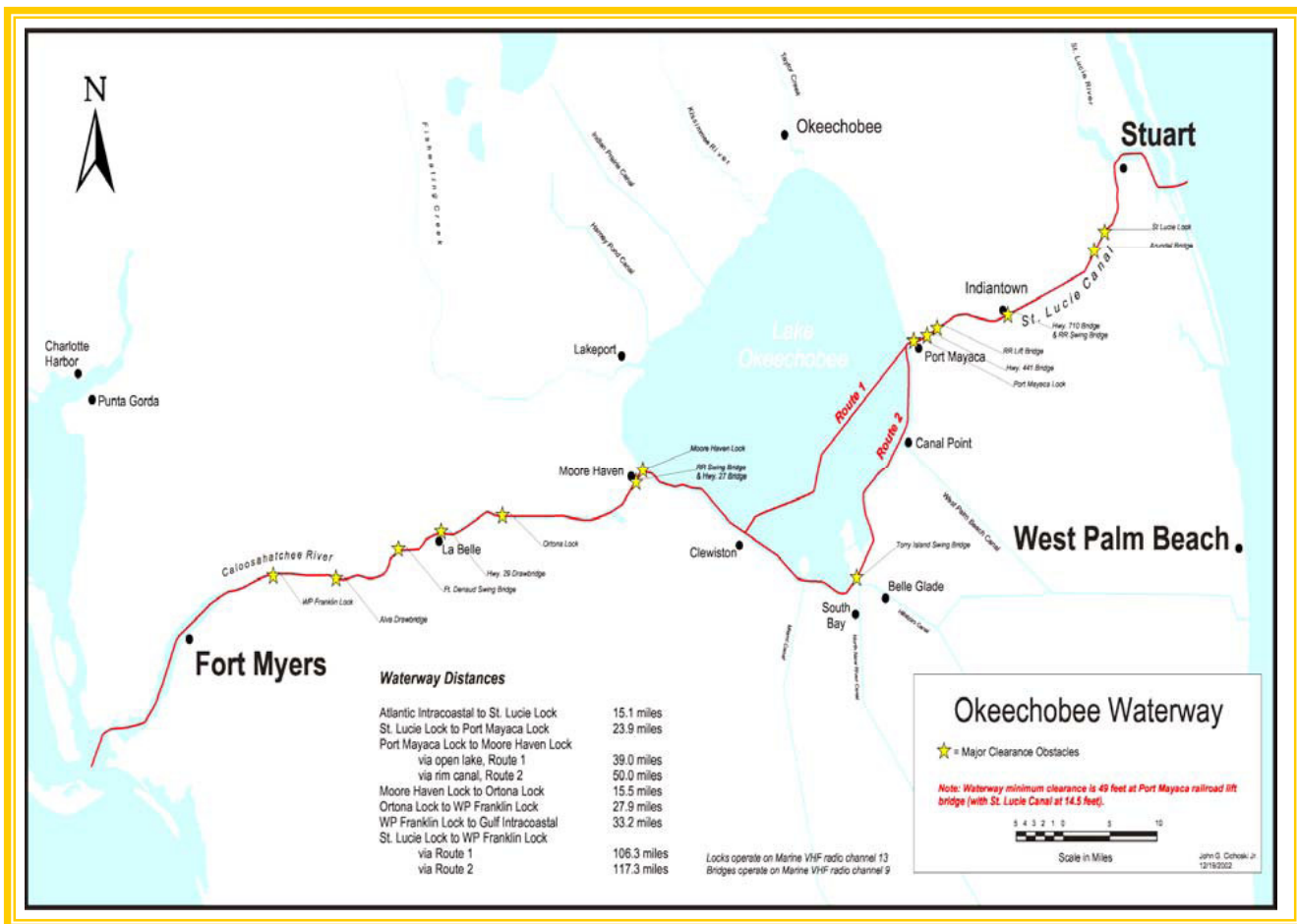
- City of Belle Glade, Florida
- Largest city within the 2,682,000 acre subtropical Everglades
- Located in western Palm Beach County
- Lies to the southeast of Lake Okeechobee & Straddles Hillsboro Canal

Driving Forces

- Job creation
- Increased economic impact to the City of Belle Glade
- Improved property values
- Enhanced private and commercial development
- Boat ownership continues to increase

Marine Industry in Florida

- Generates an annual economic impact of \$18 billion
- Estimated employment base of over 220,000
- The most boater registrations in the United States



Jerry Island Lock Project