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Renovations set for Lee County's Pine Island Commercial Marina boat launching facility

St James City, FL, Oct. 29, 2015 — Long-awaited renovations of the Lee County-owned Pine Island Commercial Marina are set to begin Monday, Nov. 2. This is the last weekend recreational anglers and boaters will be able to use the boat ramp as the construction happens. The ramp will be closed for about six months while work is underway.

When the site reopens, boaters and anglers will have a new, wider boat ramp; improved docks with more space; and better access due to a newly dredged channel. Also included in the renovations are an improved barge landing and new seawall.

Although the marina is a popular weekend launching spot for recreational boaters year-round, completing the dredging and renovations now prevents further deterioration to the existing docks, improves safety and ensures the barge will be able to continue serving the outer islands for trash pickup.

"We realize with seasonal residents returning and tourist season approaching, the popular ramp will be in demand, but for safety reasons the project needs to happen," said Dana Kasler, Lee County Parks & Recreation director. "We hope the long-term improvements will outweigh the short-term inconveniences."

Please check www.leeparks.org and click on "boat ramps" for project updates, including the ramp reopening date. The ramp is at 6001 Maria Drive, St. James City, about a mile south of Pine Island's four-way stop.

Once the boat ramp reopens, recreational boaters and anglers can resume using the ramp during regular recreational hours, which are on Saturdays, Sundays and Lee County-recognized holidays. The gate will be open 6:30 a.m.- 8:30 p.m. The marina will be limited to commercial use Monday through Friday.

Most of the cost of the renovation – \$520,546 – is being paid by the West Coast Inland Navigation District. Additionally, state vessel registration fees account for \$197,012 and another \$158,681 will be paid from Lee County's general fund.

Formerly known as the Lee County Fishermen's Cooperative, the 15-acre facility was purchased by Lee County in February 2006 to serve the bridgeless barrier islands of Lee County including Upper Captiva, Useppa Island, Cabbage Key and Cayo Costa.

Existing business operations that provide services to the outer barrier islands will continue to operate during the renovations.

For additional information about Lee County Parks & Recreation and the Pine Island Commercial Marina, or for alternative boat ramps for the Pine Island area, log on to www.leeparks.org.

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Note to media: Images available upon request. Contact Kristie Valone at Lee County Parks & Recreation, (239) 533-7437 or kvalone@leegov.com.