

AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY CANAL INDEX

CANAL	Bel Marin Keys Lock		STATUS	Operating		ACS
STATE/PROVINCE	California					HAER
COUNTIES:	Marin					
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal):	Bel Marin Keys housing development, Novato		ENLARGEMENTS	DATES IN USE	LENGTH CANAL SLACKWATER TOTAL	LIFT LOCKS No./ SIZE
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:	Novato CA 7½'			1 1974		1/18x60'
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:
 Bel Marin Keys Lock proves that it is feasible to finance and construct small locks for marinas (which with a lock can now be built on dry land, instead of by filling wetlands), to connect lakes, to make drainage canals navigable, and to restore to operation historic canals which have been truncated or need a lock or two. This and others have been designed by John A. Blume & Associates, Engineers, 130 Jessie St., San Francisco CA 94105. The Project Engineer, Robert Van Blaricom, P.E. has written two articles on the lock (vid. inf).
 The lock connects the Bel Marin Keys lake with a tidal tributary of San Francisco Bay, so miter gates could not be used. Instead, sector gates were installed so they could operate with a head of water in either direction, and could be cracked open to fill or empty the lock, without any need for sluices. All four gates are operated hydraulically by one pump and motor, and have a novel mechanical linkage to provide the most power, and slowest operating speed, just as they begin to open, or just before they close. Each landowner in Bel Marin Keys has a magnetic card "key" to operate the lock from a central panel box.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:
 Special interlocks allow only one set of gates to open at a time, and water-level sensors control the opening speed. Once a month during the high tide cycle, both gates are opened at once to flush the silt out of Novato Creek, to reduce the need for dredging down to the Bay. The Lock usually backs water up into the marina, but it also works the other way, protecting the marina from floods. There is a minimum of 6' over the sills; passage takes about 5 minutes.
 Because the lock is fenced in and not accessible without a card key, visitors should contact a local resident or Mr. W.F. Aubel, Executive Secretary, Bel Marin Keys Community Service District, 221 Caribe Isle, Novato, CA 94947, (415) 883-4047.

NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:
 Bel Marin Keys Community Service District, address above.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:
 Robert Van Blaricom, P.E., "Marina Lock," A/E CONCEPTS, July-August 1976 (1651 Old Meadow Road, Suite 135, McLean, VA 22101).
 _____, "From Levee to Lagoon," SEA (now WESTERN SEA), November 1976 (1499 Monrovia Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92663).

UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):
 This information was supplied by Robert Van Blaricom, P.E., and W.F. Aubel.

EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):
 None.

REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: W.E. Trout, III, 1932 Cinco Robles Drive, Duarte CA 91010 DATE: 8Sep '81
 RETURN TO: CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H. STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549



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Imagery Date: May 31, 2007

38°05'13.38" N 122°30'55.17" W elev 0 ft

Eye alt 415 ft