

HURRICANE WILMA

Marine storage facilities take a hit

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More than a week after Hurricane Wilma swept through South Florida, several marinas still have not been able to assess all the damage caused by the storm.

Part of the problem is that the structures that house boats on land, known as storage barns, cannot be safely entered.

One of the most visibly damaged storage barns is at Marina One, 580 N. Federal Highway, Deerfield Beach.

The facility has two barns, a west and an east. The west barn, which has more than 140 boats, was badly damaged by Wilma, but it was uncertain how many boats were damaged.

The U.S. Coast Guard, the state Department of Environmental Protection and the cities of Deerfield Beach and Boca Raton have been involved in the recovery effort at the marina, which does not yet have power. Access to the marina has been restricted, although contractors will be allowed to come in and determine what work needs to be done.

No timetable has been given as to when boats might be removed from the barn and repairs started.

At Gateway Marina, 8250 S. Federal Highway, Hypoluxo, owner Chris Ciasulli, 36, is trying to recover from what he calls "the worst storm we've had in our 19 years here."

Wilma's winds ripped through the huge boat barn, twisted steel trusses in the roof, blew open the doors and left the sheet metal building



OFF LIMITS: Hurricane Wilma's winds ripped through the huge boat barn at Gateway Marina, 8250 S. Federal Highway, Hypoluxo. Staff photo/Mark Randall

in partial collapse. Although the 150 boats inside escaped serious damage, the structure looked as if it was in danger of collapsing. The marina store and Ciasulli's office were also damaged.

"We are in uncharted waters here," said Ciasulli, whose family has been in the boat storage business for years. He estimated the marina's losses at nearly \$1 million.

Nonetheless, Ciasulli said he hoped the marina would be open for business by early December.

A few miles up the road, Loggerhead Club & Marina, 870 N. Federal Highway, Lantana, fared better, perhaps because the doors to the boat storage building were left open.

Raymond Graziotto, president of Seven Kings Holdings, said part of the building's front along the Intracoastal Waterway flew off and a piece of the roof hit one of the boats stored on the top rack.

In Riviera Beach, Seven Kings' \$25 million marina project near Blue Heron Boulevard escaped major damage and should open soon after the first of the year as scheduled.

**South
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Have more fun!