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Marathon Marina: An Irma Survival Story

The new floating fuel dock, ship store and adjoining docks at Marathon Marina had been open for two months when Irma hit. To the amazement of the marina's owner, the new docks survived undamaged.

Marathon, FL, USA – 30 January 2018 – The new Marathon Marina fuel dock had just reopened to the public when Hurricane Irma rampaged through the Florida Keys. Ranked as one of the most powerful Atlantic storms on record, Irma left a trail of destruction across the Caribbean islands and Florida.

"We saw what Irma had done to the islands before ours and were mentally preparing ourselves for the worst," shared Robert (Bob) Leef, owner and operator of Marathon Marina.

"We had poured everything we had into our new docks – time, energy and financial resources. The project consumed us for over a year and a half. We were just beginning to feel the liberation of being on the other side of the project when Irma hit."

"The possibility that all our toil could all be swept away in a single day, was more than we could bear," Bob stated.

General Manager, Susan Prichard, and key marina staff returned to the marina on September 13th, four days after Irma had passed over Marathon Key. "I can't describe the feeling of relief we felt when we saw the new building and docks were still standing, unmarked amongst horrific destruction" Susan recalled.

There are many whose story did not end as well as that of Marathon Marina. "We feel so fortunate," Bob remarked.

"We attribute much of our outcome to our choice of dock designer and builder. Irma would have exposed any corners cut in engineering or weaknesses in construction. Our docks are solid."

"Our old, fixed docks on the west side of the marina didn't fare as well. We plan to rebuild with Bellingham's concrete floating docks."

In January 2016, Robert Leef hired Bellingham Marine to rebuild the Marathon Marina's fuel dock, floating store, and fixed approach pier. Construction was completed in July 2017.

Marathon Marina happily announced the reopening of their floating marina store, fuel dock and adjoining docks, both floating and fixed, on December 1st, 2017. After months of clean up, guests and crew alike were glad to have their marina back.

Bellingham Marine is the world's leading design-build marina construction company. Bellingham Marine specializes in floating docks, platforms and wave attenuation systems for marinas worldwide. The company also produces dry storage systems for the upland storage of boats.

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