



South Florida Water Management District

RECREATIONAL PUBLIC FORUM AGENDA

September 25, 2023

5:00 PM

District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium

3301 Gun Club Road

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

FINAL

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks - Drew Bartlett, Executive Director, SFWMD, and Newton Cook, Facilitator
2. Update on the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Plan Initiatives & Hunt Program - Veronica Kelly, Park Ranger, Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
3. Upper Chain of Lakes Land Management Overview - Ayounga Riddick, Science Supervisor, SFWMD
4. 2023 Florida Python Challenge® Recap & Overview of the SFWMD's Python Management Program - Mike Kirkland, Sr. Invasive Animal Biologist, SFWMD
5. Central Everglades Planning Project North Overview, L-5 Canal Improvements - Greg Nolte, Project Manager, SFWMD
6. Recreation Facility Design & Project Updates - Mike Cheek, Recreation Project Manager, SFWMD
7. Recreational Discussion, Updates and Future Meeting Topics
8. Adjourn

Draft Presentations for Agenda Items: 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Agenda Item Background:

- 02 Update on the ARMLNWR Visitor Services Plan Initiative & Hunt Program
- 03 Upper Chain of Lakes Land Management Overview
- 04 2023 Florida Python Challenge Recap & Overview of the SFWMD's Python Mgmt Program
- 05 Central Everglades Planning Project North Overview, L-5 Canal Improvements
- 06 REC Facility Design & Project Updates



NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE SYSTEM

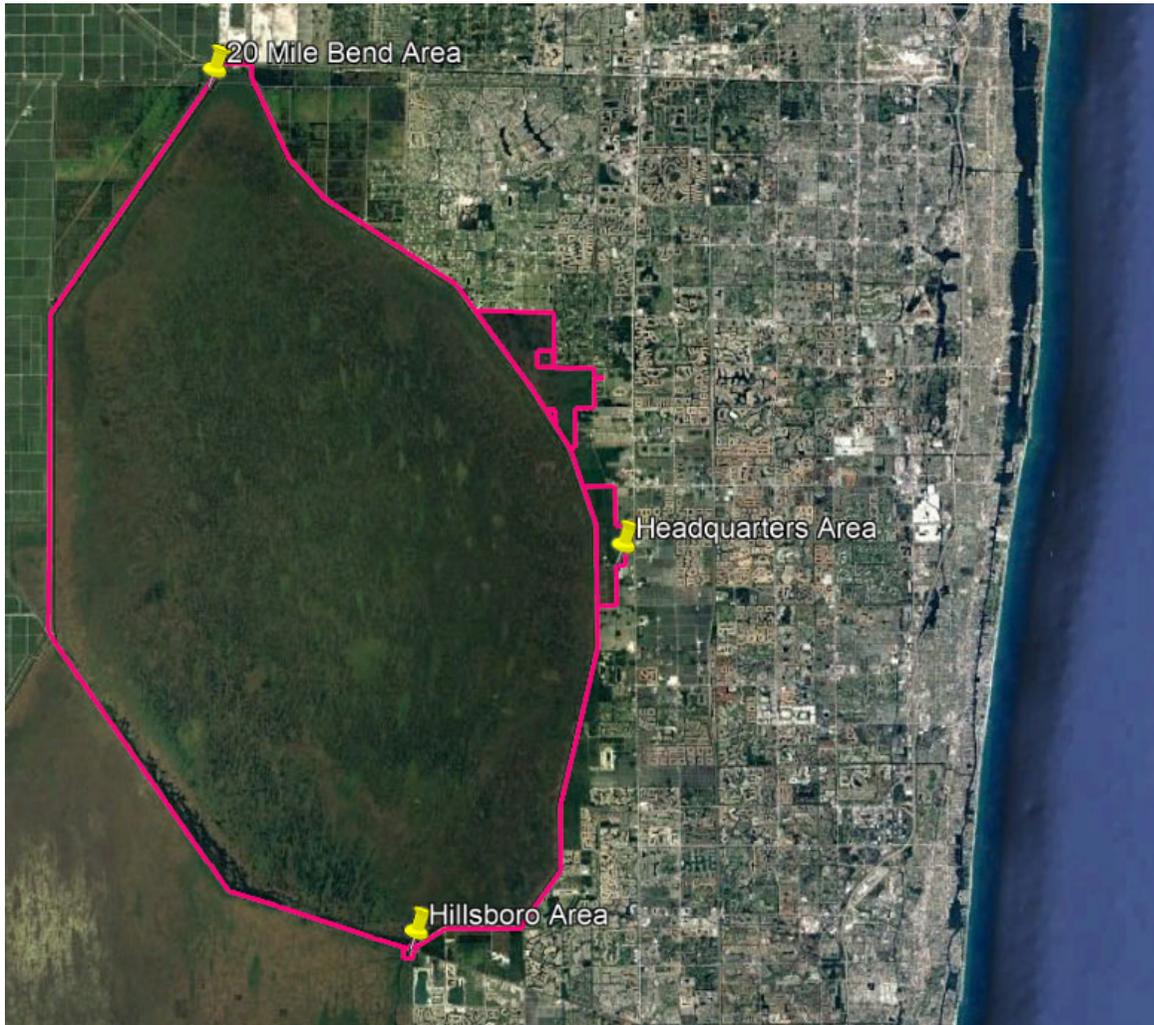
Update on the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Plan Initiatives & Hunt Program

Presented by Veronica Kelly/Park Ranger

Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

September 25, 2023





About Loxahatchee

Established in 1951

145,188 acres

Over 1 million visitors annually

Three entrances:

- Headquarters Area, Boynton Beach
- Hillsboro Area, Parkland
- 20 Mile Bend, Loxahatchee

Urban Wildlife Conservation Program

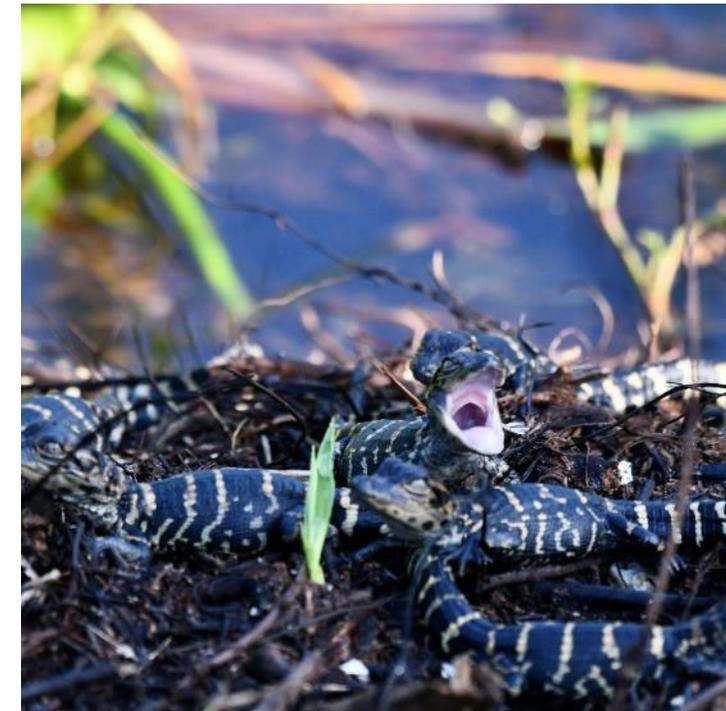
Within a 1-hour of over 6 million people
Community-centered engagement
80% of Americans live in and near cities

Ensure that **all** members of the public feel **welcomed, included**, and can **experience** and **recreate** in nature, as well as exercise their rightful **ownership** and **responsibility** for fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation.



Refuge Hours

- **Visitor Center**
- Open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas days
- **Headquarters Area: 5am-10pm**
- **Hillsboro Area: Open**
- **20 Mile Bend Area: Open**



Visitor Center

- Open 9am-4pm
- Front desk volunteers
- Brochures and maps
- Amazing exhibits
- 16-minute refuge video
- Special events
- Guided walks and tours
- Nature store
- Butterfly garden
- Bathrooms with A/C



PHOTO: USFWS/Veronica Kelly
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, FL

Recreation Opportunities



- We have the **Everglades!**
- Over 50 miles of hiking, biking, and paddling **trails**
- **Birding, wildlife viewing, photography**
- **Events** and **educational programs**
- **Hunting** (duck, coot, alligator, deer, hog)
- **Fishing** (Bank fishing, fishing piers, by boat)
- **Boating** in over 140,000 acres and 58 miles of canal
- **Pet walking & horseback riding** (36 miles of perimeter levee)
- **Volunteering** – get involved!

Events and Programs

Education staff reached almost 1,000 students last year.

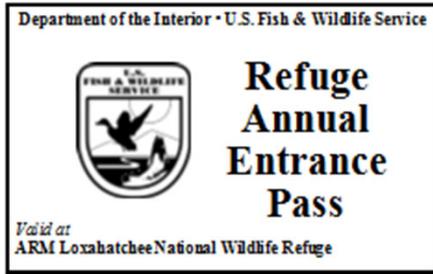
Guided walks and more: Tram Tours, Bird Walks, Ethnobotany Walks, Night Walks, and more

Events

- Everglades Day (Feb 10-17, 2024)
- Family Fishing Day (Feb, June, Sept)
- National Public Lands Day (Sept)
- Walk for the Wild (Oct)
- BioBlitz events (varies)



Entrance Fee (per vehicle)



\$10 Refuge Daily Pass

\$25 Refuge Annual Pass

\$25 Duck Stamp



Scan me
to buy your
pass online

America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes

- Annual Pass
- Senior Passes (62 and older)
- Military Passes (active or veteran)
- Access Pass (permanently disabled)
- Every Kid Outdoors Pass (4th grade)

2023 Fee Free Days

January 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 20: Presidents' Day

June 19: Juneteenth

August 4: Great American Outdoors Act

September 23: National Public Lands Day

October 8: First Sunday of NWR Week

November 11: Veterans Day



Alligator Hunting

Hunt Area: (38,260 acres) Motorized Zone and Perimeter Canal south of latitude line 26°27.130

Season: Refuge specific (see hunt brochure)

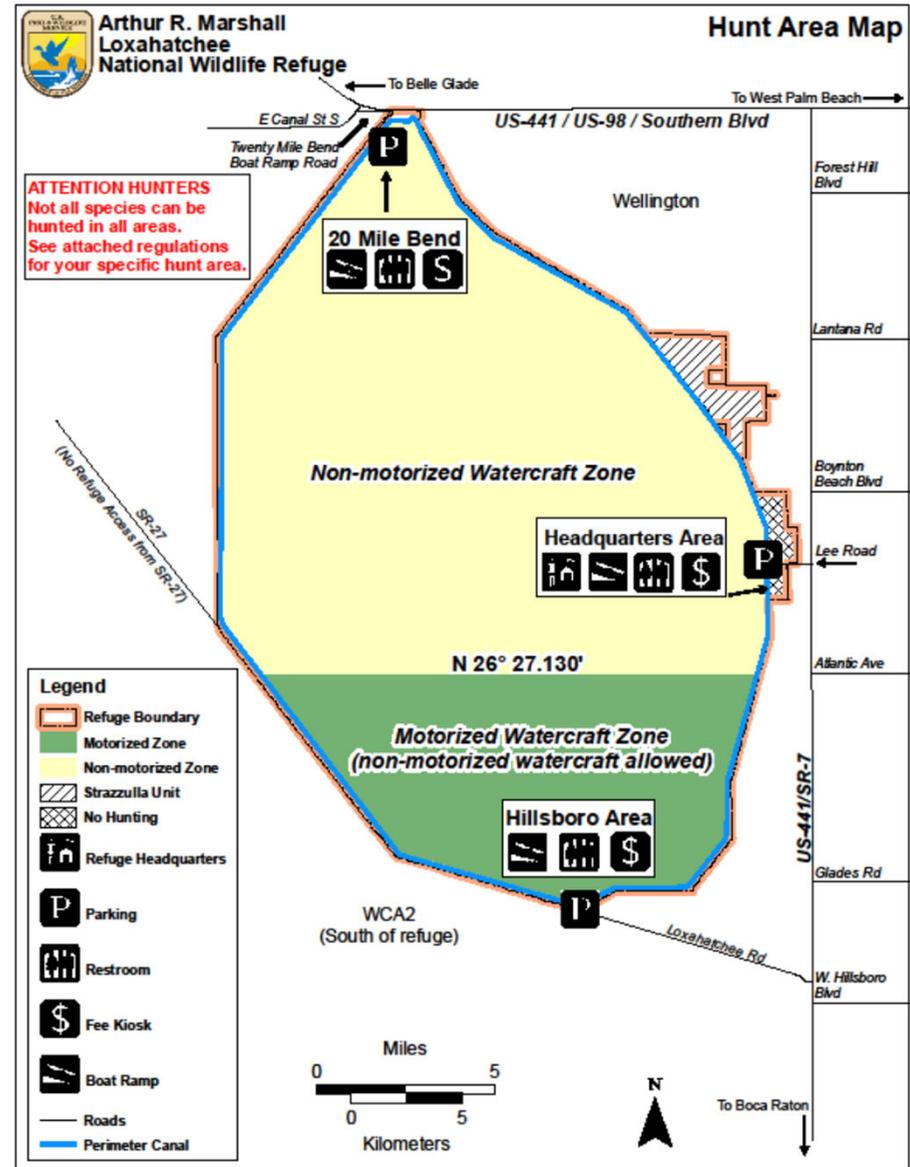
Bag Limit: 2/permit

2020: 11 permits, 18 harvested, 1 airboat permit

2021: 6 permits, 9 harvested, 1 airboat permit

2022: 0 quota

2023: 6 permits, *harvest TBA*, 0 airboat permits



Duck and Coot Hunting

Hunt Area: Refuge Interior (140,705 acres) Motorized and non-motorized zones.

Season: Open state hours and seasons

Duck/Coot Hunt Airboat Use Permit

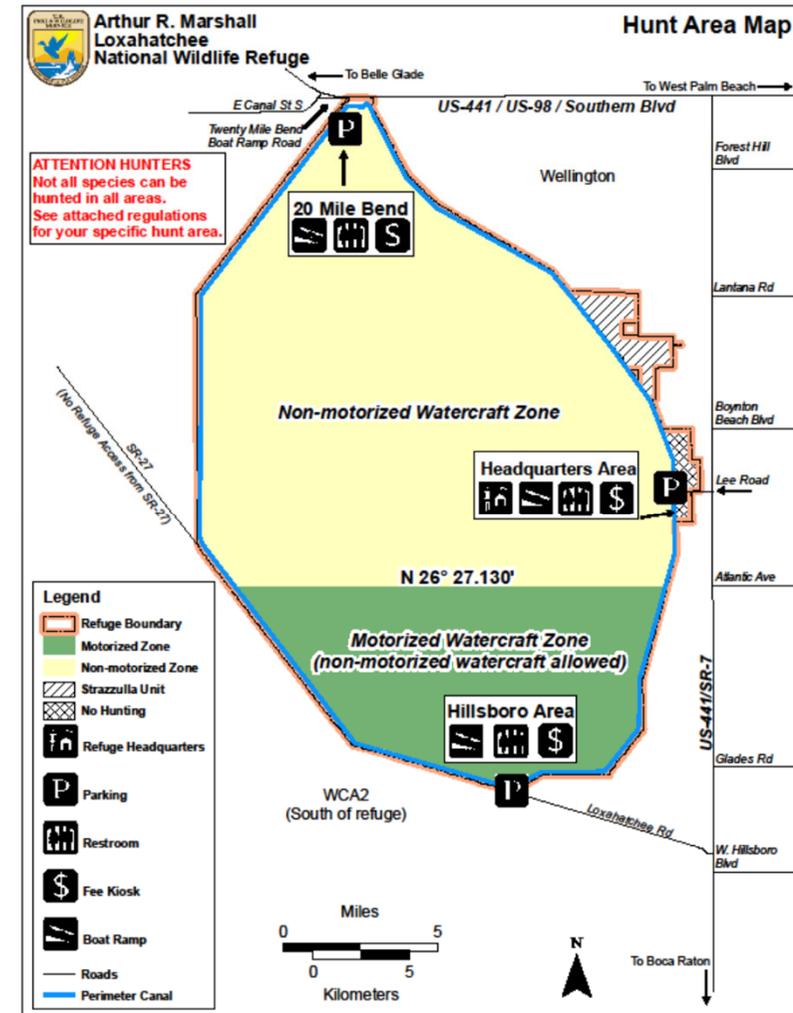
Apply through FWC in early Sept. for Dec/Jan season

2020 (FWS) 7 applications received, **5 permits** issued

2021 (FWC) 296 applicants, **2 permits** issued

2022 (FWC) 381 applicants, **4 permits** issued

2023 (FWC) *applicants and permits TBA*



Strazzulla Deer and Hog Hunt

Hunt Area: Strazzulla Unit (2,592 acres)

Season: Early August

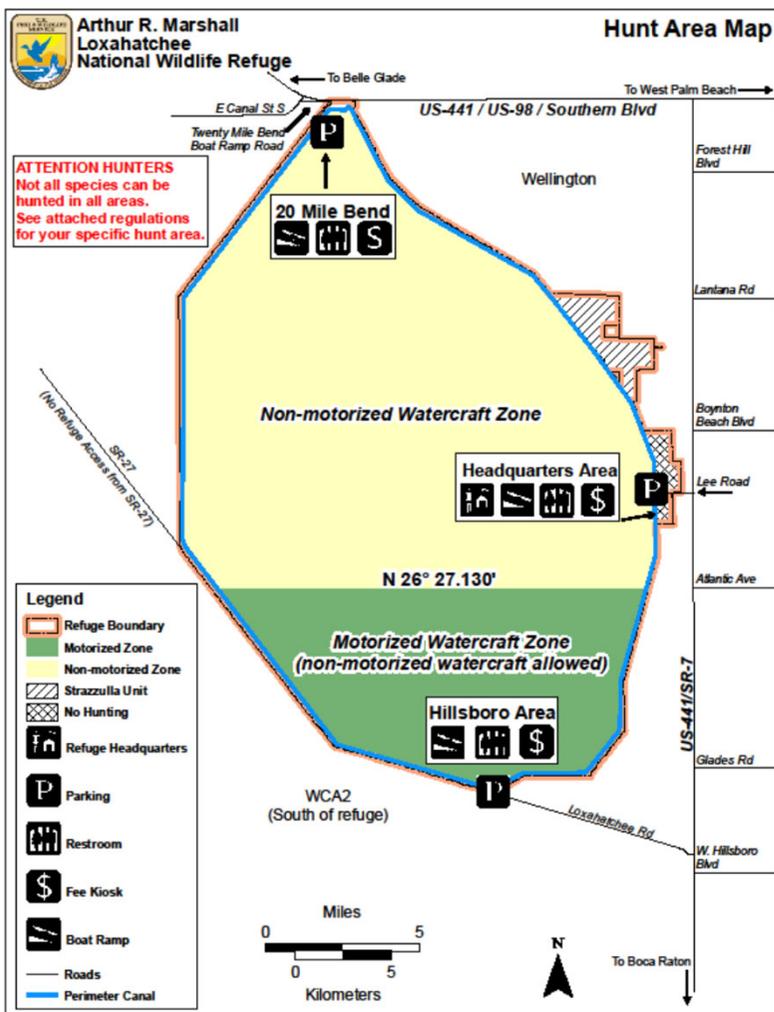
Bag limit: One antlered deer (per DMUA1)

- Archery/Crossbow Hunt
- Apply through FWC in May

2021: 8 permits, 2,146 applicants, 6 hunters, 1 deer

2022: 8 permits, 1,744 applicants, 5 hunters, 0 deer

2023: 8 permits, 1,880 apps, 6 hunters, 2 deer



Interior Deer and Hog Hunt

Hunt Area: Refuge Interior (140,705 acres)

- Includes motorized and non-motorized zones

Season: Early December. **Bag Limit:** One antlered deer (DMUA1)

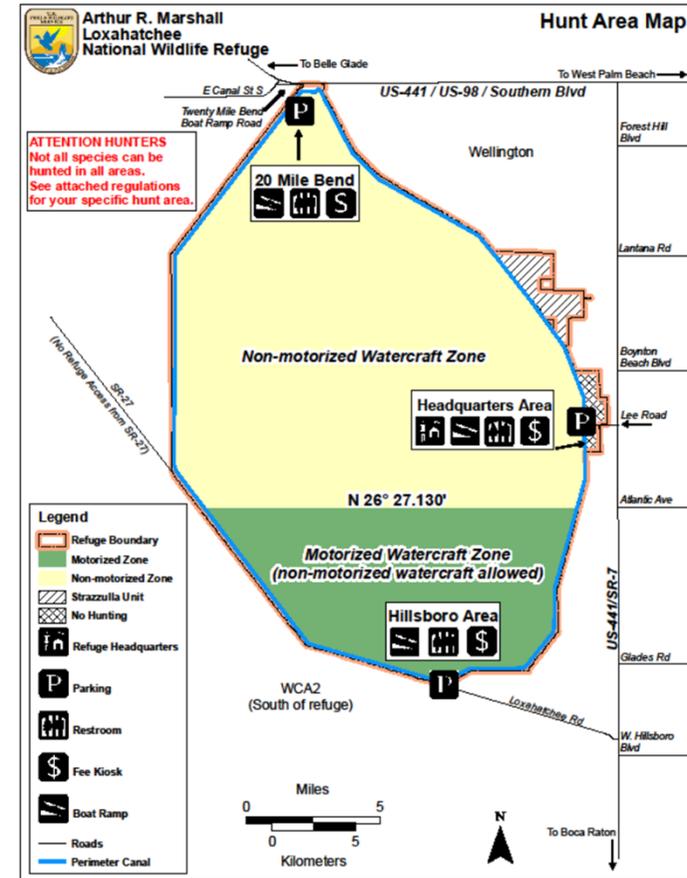
Access: non-motorized, Jon boat, or airboat by permit

- Apply through FWC in May

2021: 10 permits, 2,105 applicants, 3 hunters, 2 deer harvested, 2 airboat permits

2022: 10 permits, 1,817 applicants, 5 hunters, 3 deer harvested, 5 airboat permits

2023: 10 permits, 1,878 applicants, *harvest and airboat permits TBA*





Harvest Success
2021: 3 youth, 0 deer
2022: 3 youth, 1 deer
2023: 5 youth, *TBA*

Mentored Youth Deer and Hog Hunt

Hunt Area: A-impoundments and Strazzulla

Season: Dec 1-3, 2023

Partnering with FWC's Youth Hunting Program and FWC HuntMasters

Target audience is youth ages 12-17 who have never hunted before. Hunter Safety Course is required.

How to hunt safely, legally, and ethically, marksmanship and firearm safety, tracking and processing game, and the relationship between hunting and conservation.

Recruitment via FWC's Events Calendar



PHOTO: USFWS/Veronica Kelly
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, FL

Airboat Permits

- By permit in designated areas during specific times of year
- Airboat Operator Course
- Airboat inspection
- Online application

Non-hunting Airboat Permits

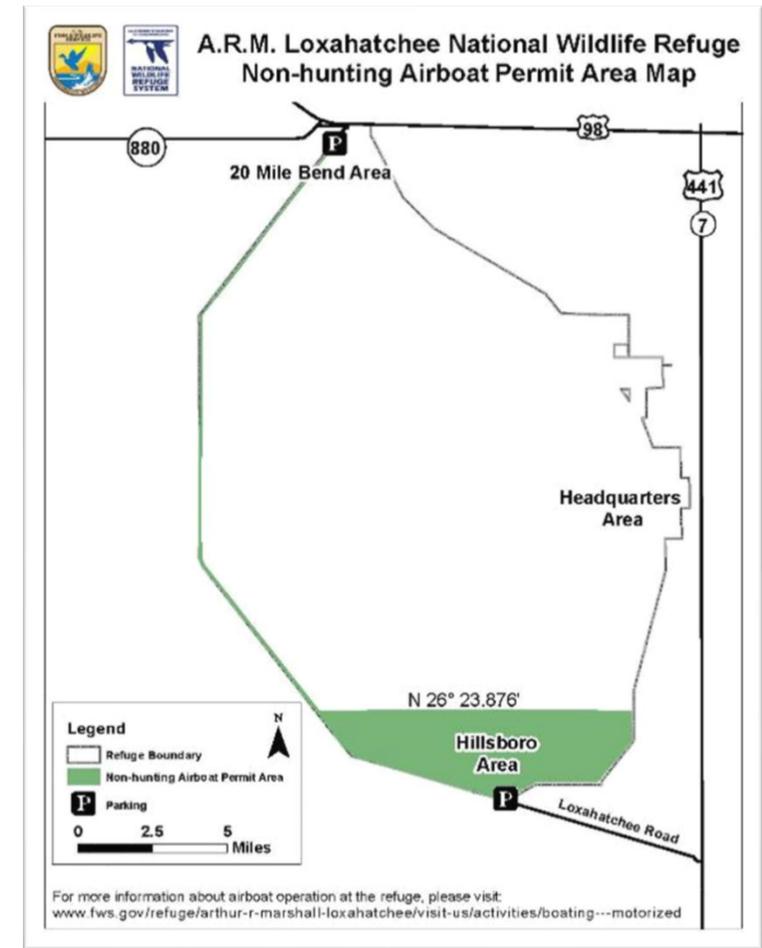
Area: 13,900 acres south of latitude line N 26° 23.876'

Season: July–November on Fri, Sat, and Sun. Restricted during duck and coot seasons

Submit **applications** May 1–15. Information is on the Motorized Boating page on Lox's website.

10 permits available annually.

Leftover permits are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.



2020: 18 applications, 10 permits issued

2021: 10 applications, 10 permits issued

2022: 3 applications, 2 permit issued

2023: 10 applications, 9 permits issued

Boating

Boat ramps at all three entrances. All boats operating outside of the perimeter canals in Refuge Interior must fly a 10"x12" orange flag 10 feet above the vessel's waterline.

Non-motorized boats

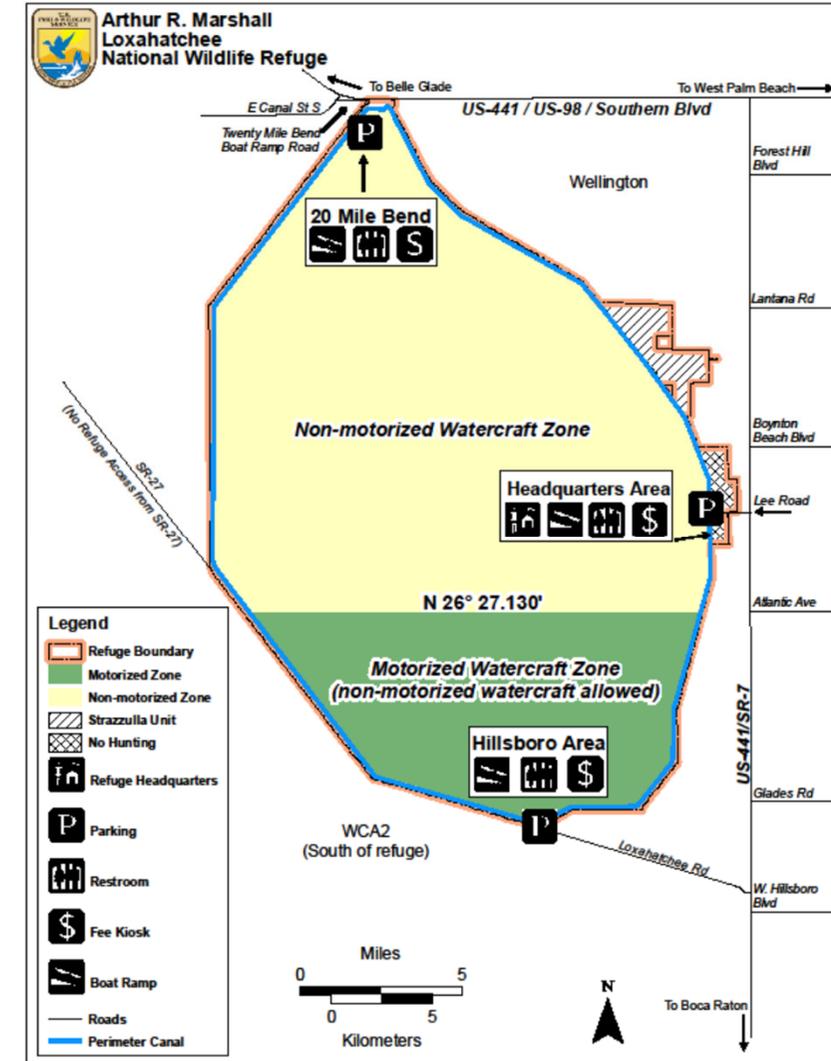
- Refuge Interior (140,705 acres)

Motorized boats

- Perimeter canal (58 miles)
- Motorized Zone (38,260)

Airboat Permits

- Designated areas during specific times of the year



MAP: USFWS/Veronica Kelly
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, FL

Freshwater Fishing

Where to fish?

- >140,000 acres water
- >58-mile Perimeter canal
- >60 miles of trails for bank fishing
- Fishing pier, dock

Bowfishing – year long

Fish gigging – year long

Frog gigging – July 16 to March 15



PHOTO: An angler removes a hook from a fish
ARM LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, FL

Pet Walking

- Perimeter levee only
- No prohibited species

Bag your pet's waste
Always leash your pet (6')
Respect wildlife
Know where you can go

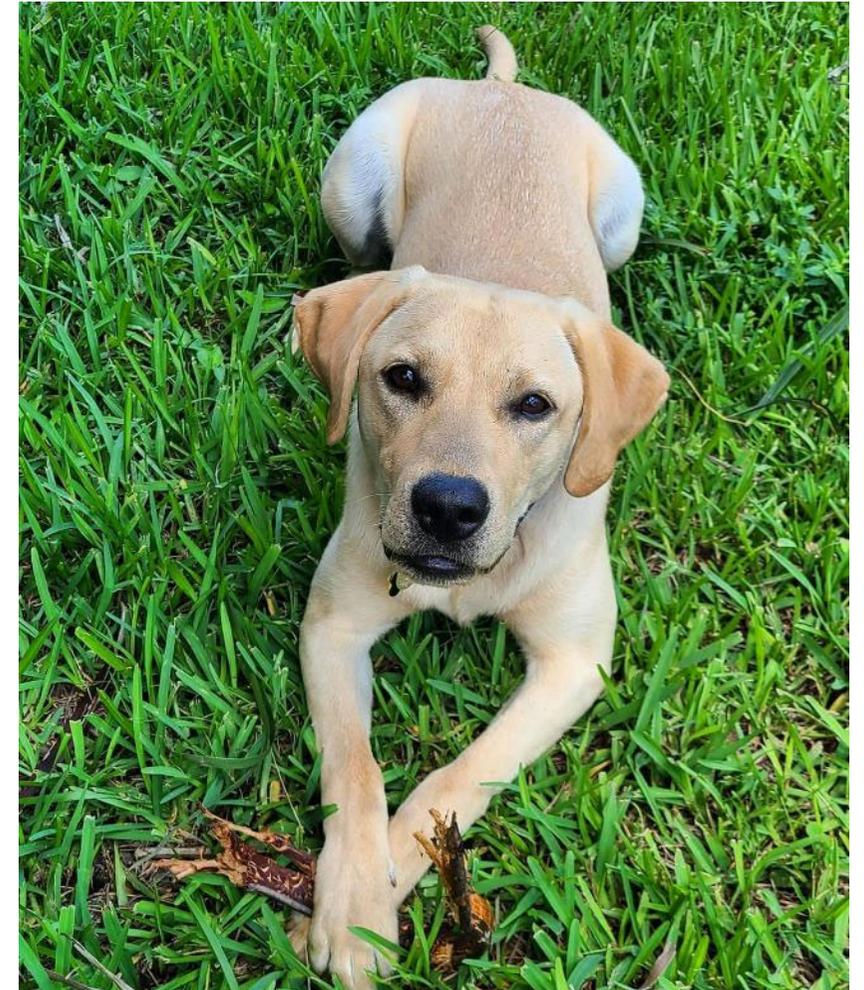
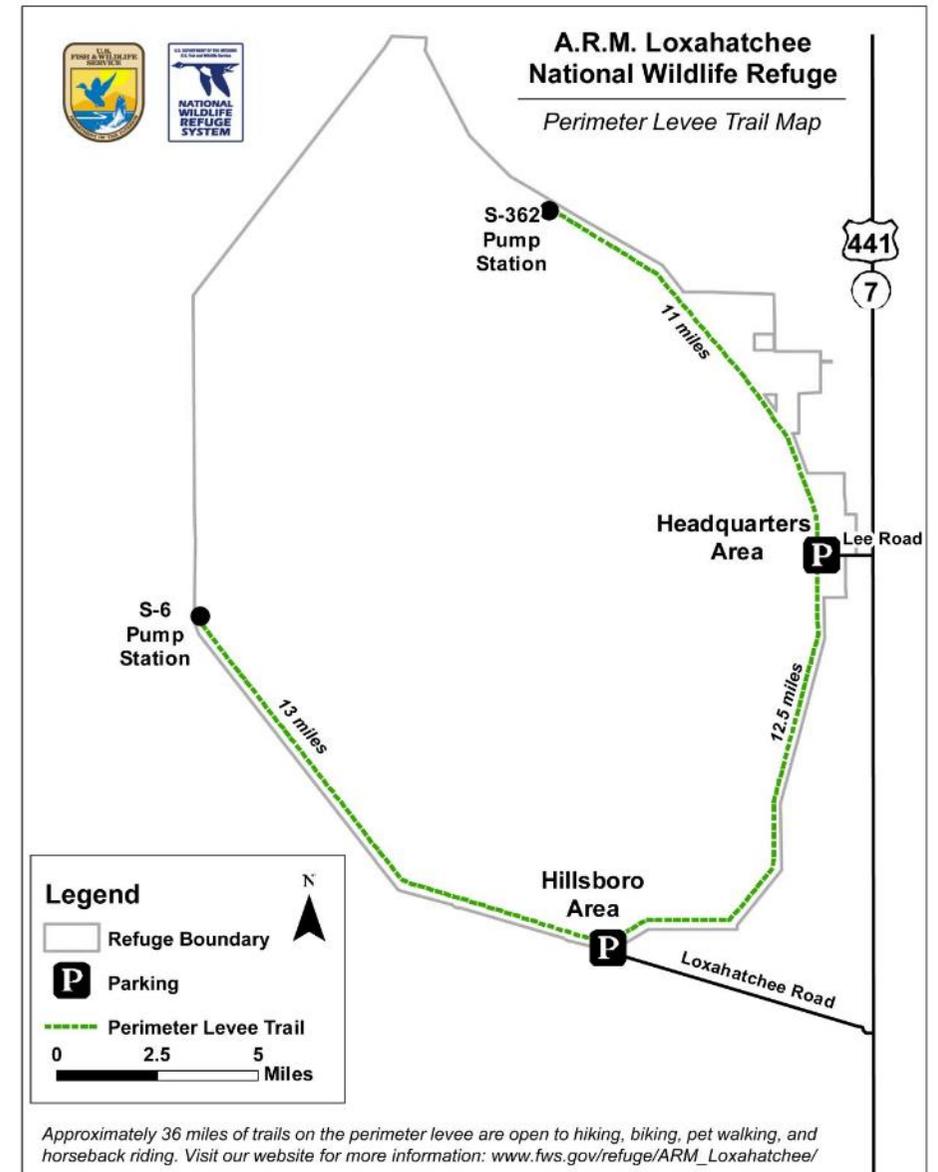


PHOTO: USFWS/Veronica Kelly
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, FL

Horseback Riding

- Perimeter levee only
- Multi-use trail
- Shell-rock levee
- A manure containment bag is required



Get Involved!

We ❤️ Volunteers!

Front desk greeter

Maintenance

Weed pulls

Trash day (usually Mondays)

Contact Volunteer Coordinator

Maria_Quitugua@fws.gov



Infrastructure Update

New observation tower at the end of Lee Road.

Completed during summer 2023.



Upcoming Infrastructure Projects

The VSP includes development of additional structures and facilities including campsites along the L-7 Canal, and new and expanded trails along the Perimeter Canal and Headquarters Area.

Hillsboro Area: construct a fishing pier, canoe trail, and boat-in camping platforms.

Strazzulla: public parking areas, fishing pier, two observation towers, a photo blind, two boardwalks, and an environmental education center

To replace concession operations, we are currently accepting proposals for rental operations (canoe, kayak, and bike) and guided pontoon boat tours.

Questions?
Veronica_Kelly@fws.gov



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE SYSTEM**

Upper Lakes Land Management Region Overview

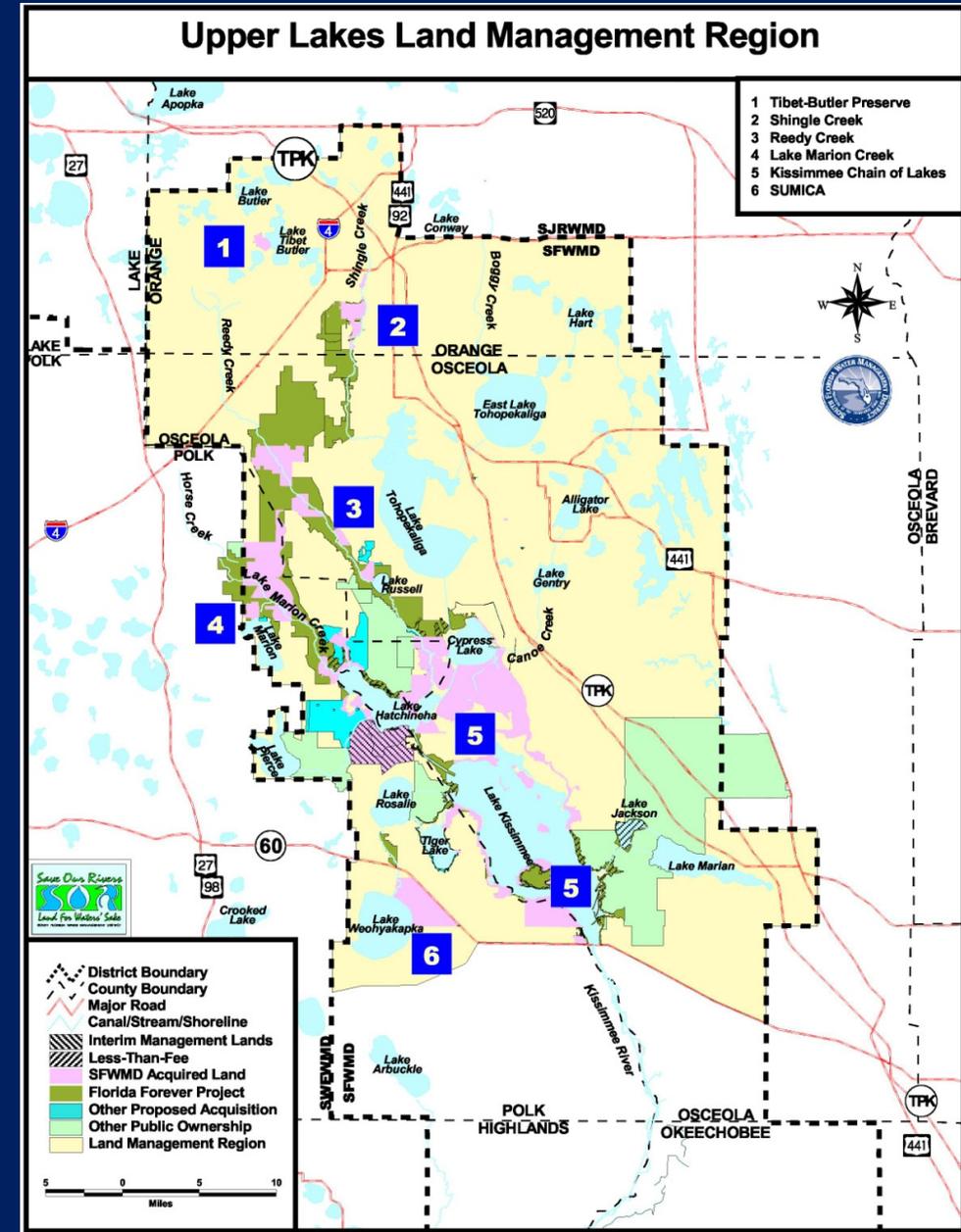


**Land Stewardship Section
Recreation Public Forum
September 25, 2023**

Presenter: Ayouna Riddick
Science Supervisor

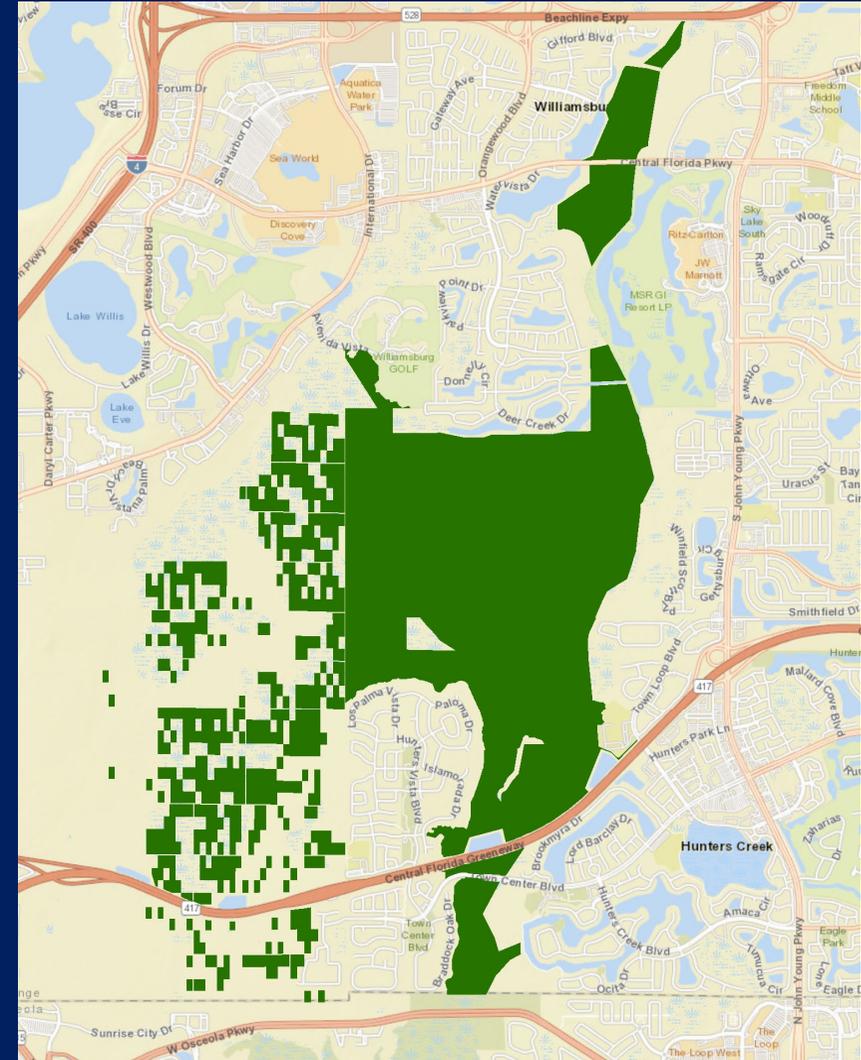
Upper Lakes Land Management Region

- 4 Lead Areas
- 2 Non-Lead Areas
- Orange, Osceola, and Polk Counties
- 46,842 Total Acres
- 4 Full-time Employees:
 - Science Supervisor
 - Senior Scientist
 - Senior Land Management Assistant
 - Land Management Technician II

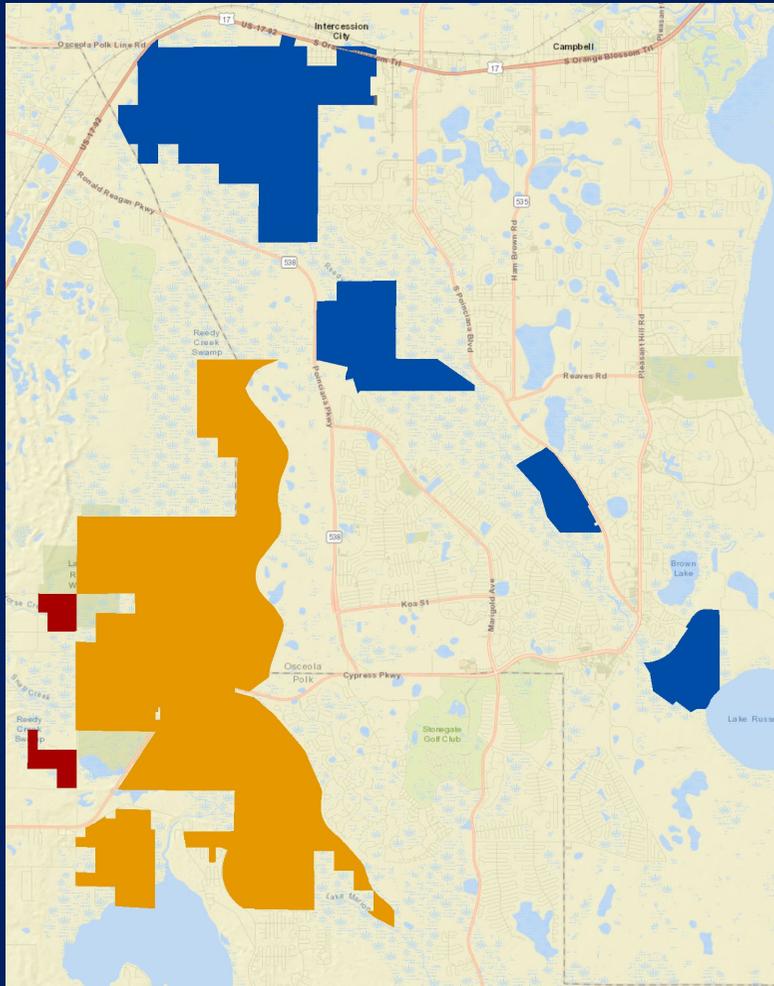




Shingle Creek – 2,402 acres (Orange County)

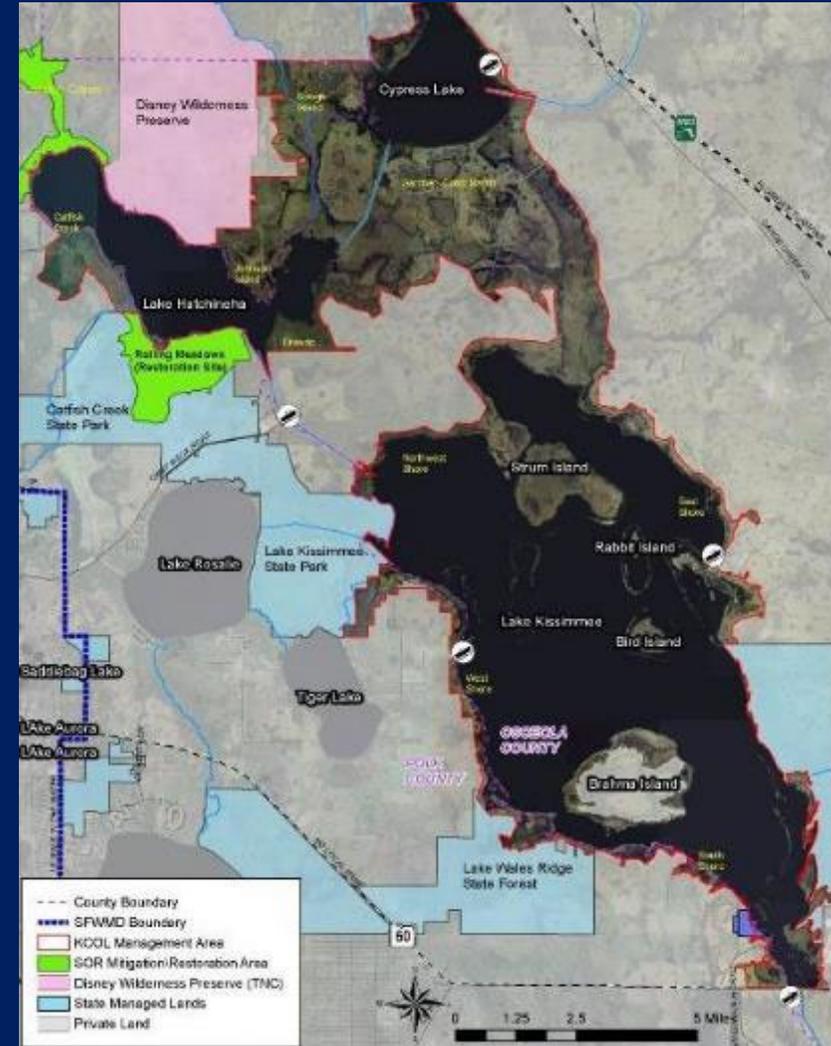


Reedy Creek – 4,923 acres
and
Lake Marion Creek – 8,011 acres
(Polk and Osceola Counties)



Kissimmee Chain of Lakes

27,040 acres
(Polk and Osceola Counties)



Exotic Plant Management at Shingle Creek

Using UAS to identify hotspots for targeted treatment within vast swamp



Woody Vegetation Control

- Reduce woody shrub encroachment
- Promote fine fuels development to aid in prescribed burn operations
- Maintain plant diversity



Rollerchopping dense wax myrtle along the southwest shore of Lake Kissimmee

Infrastructure Maintenance



Prescribed Burning in the Wildland/Urban Interface



Prescribed Burning in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes



Integrated Land Management at Lake Marion Creek



Integrated Land Management at KCOL

Fire damaged shrubs in wet prairie habitat (left)



Brazilian pepper treatment in a recently burned management unit (right)

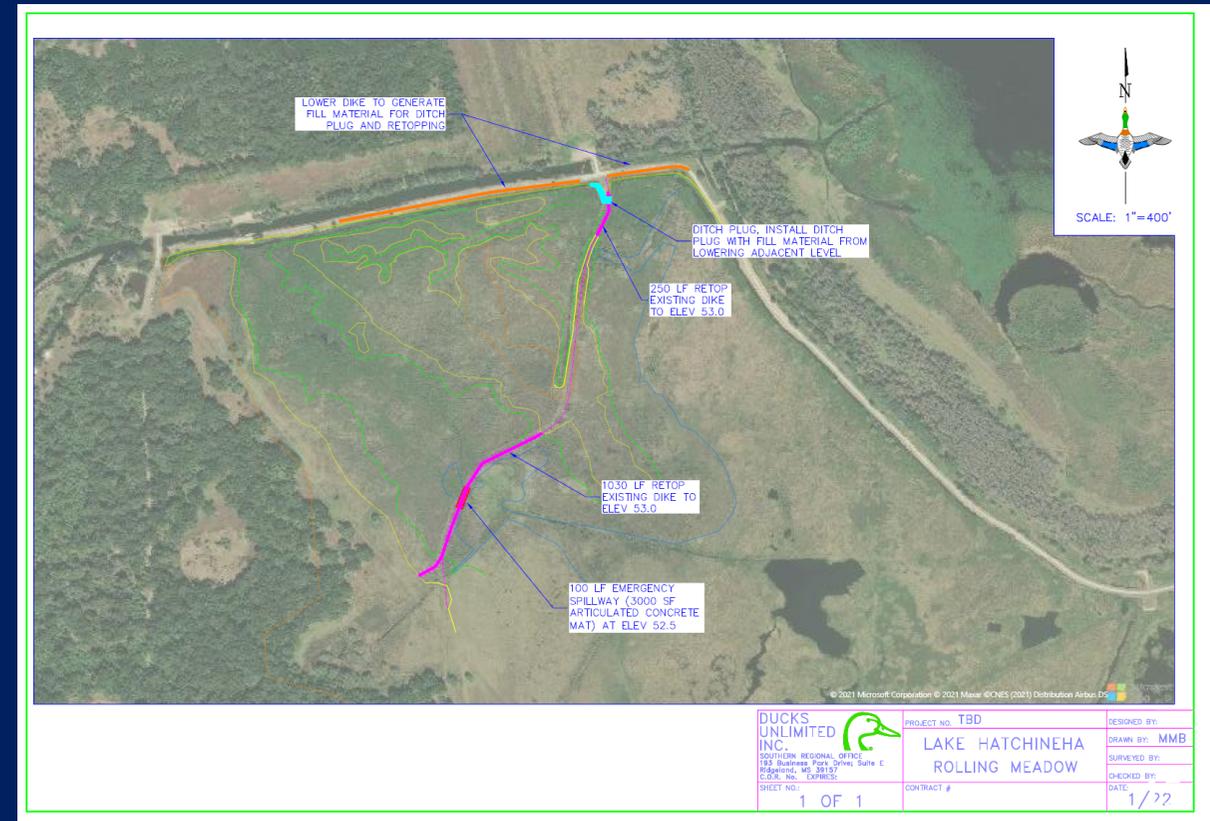
Hydrologic Enhancement and Restoration

- Enhance wetlands by reducing water drainage from the property
- Employs ditch plugs and filling of old ditches
- Improves waterfowl and wading bird habitat
- Part of the Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan
- Priority identified in the Ten-Year General Management Plan for the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Management Area



Proposed North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Projects – In partnership with Ducks Unlimited

Cypress Lake Marsh (left)



Rolling Meadows Northwest Marsh (right)

Illegal Activities



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Thank you to our volunteers and stakeholders!

- Kissimmee River Valley Sportsman Association
- Osceola Airboat Association
- Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association – Orlando Chapter
- The Nature Conservancy
- Osceola County Public Schools
- Orange County Public Schools
- Hunter’s Creek Community Association





Questions?





2023 Florida Python Challenge[®] Recap & Overview of the SFWMD's Python Management Program

Recreational Public Forum
September 25, 2023

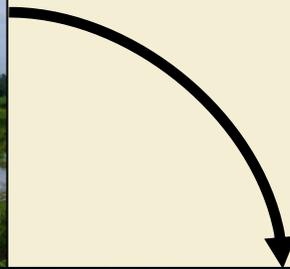
Michael Kirkland, M.S.
Invasive Animal Biologist
Python Elimination Program Manager



A Common Ecosystem



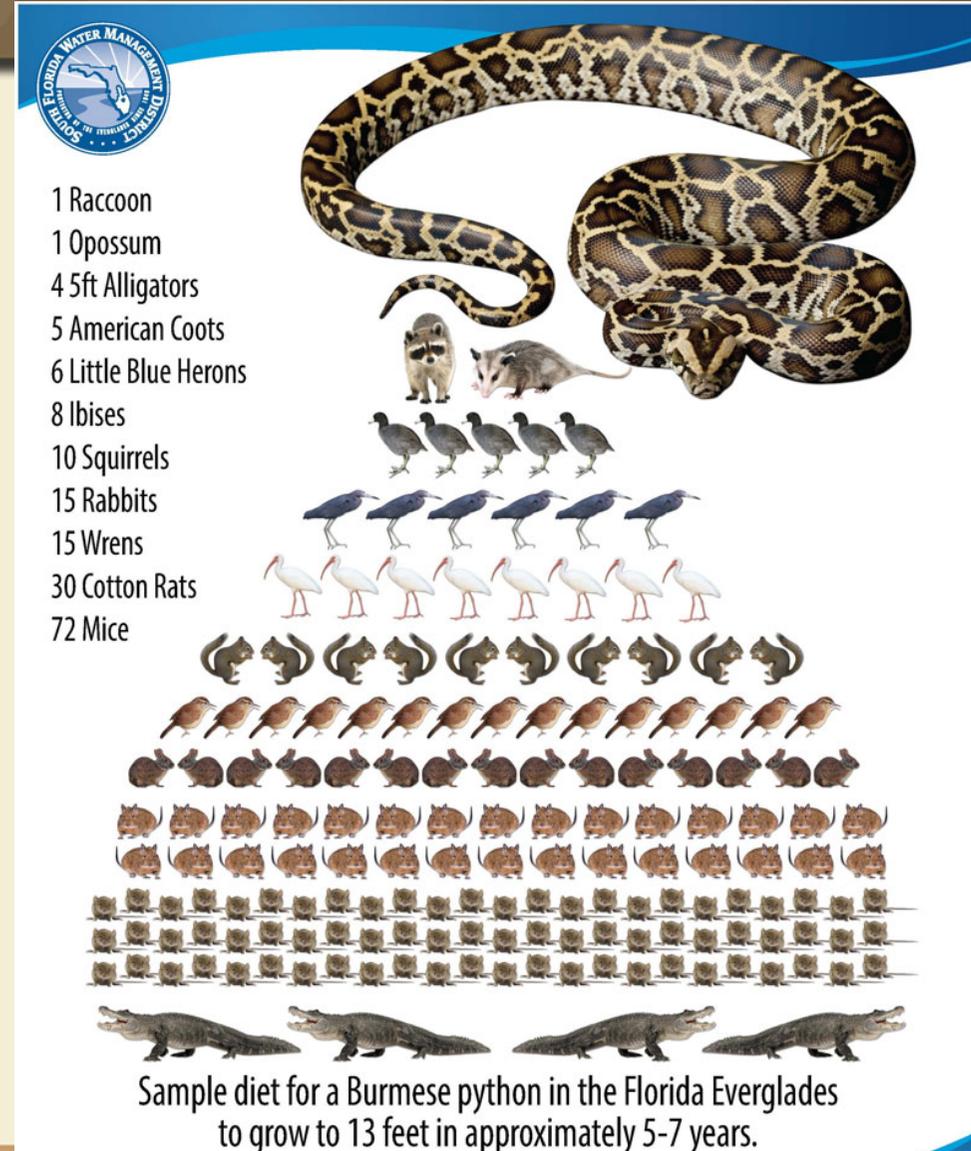
SE Asia



FL Everglades

Ecological Impacts

- Severe mammal declines
- Threats to wading bird colonies
- Exotic parasite and pathogen introductions
- Restoration Obstacles



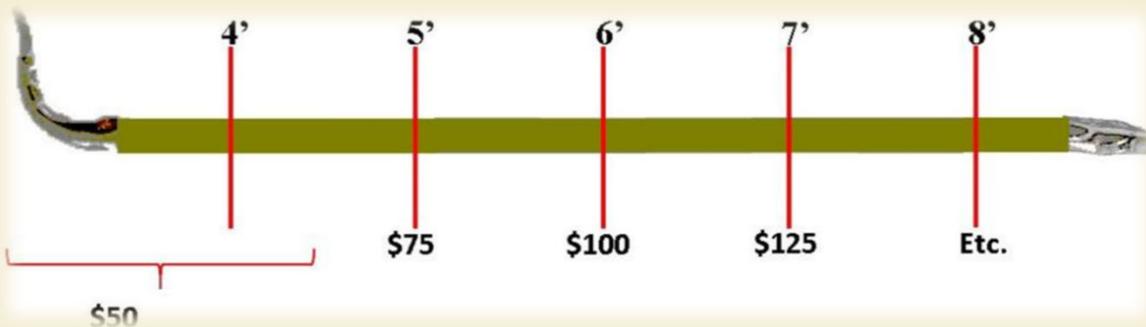


Contractor Removal Program



Python Elimination Program

- March 25, 2017 - Present
- 50 contractors
- Paid to survey designated project area
- Additional incentive based on length



PATRIC Python Action Team Removing Invasive Constrictors

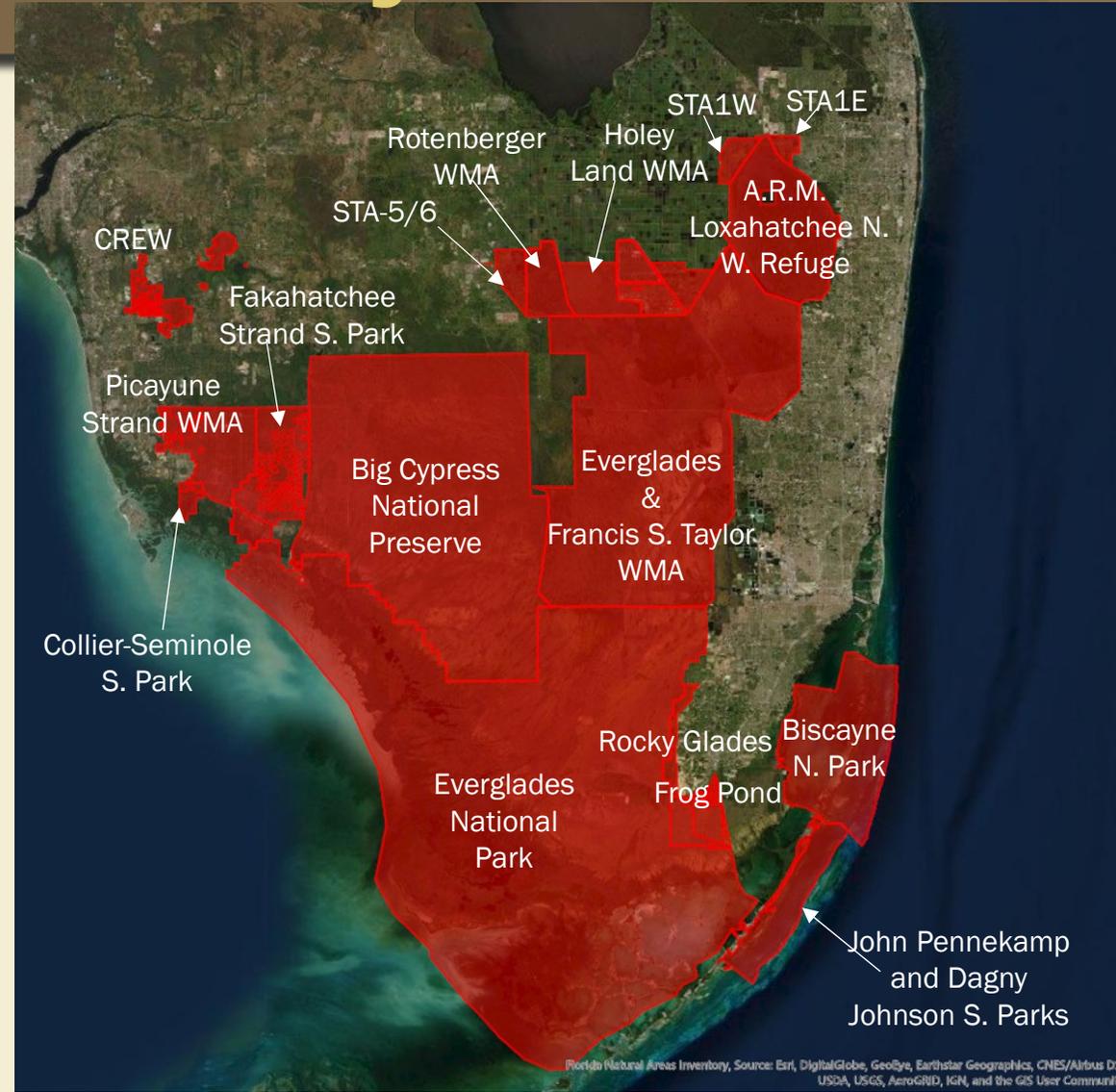


Target Species

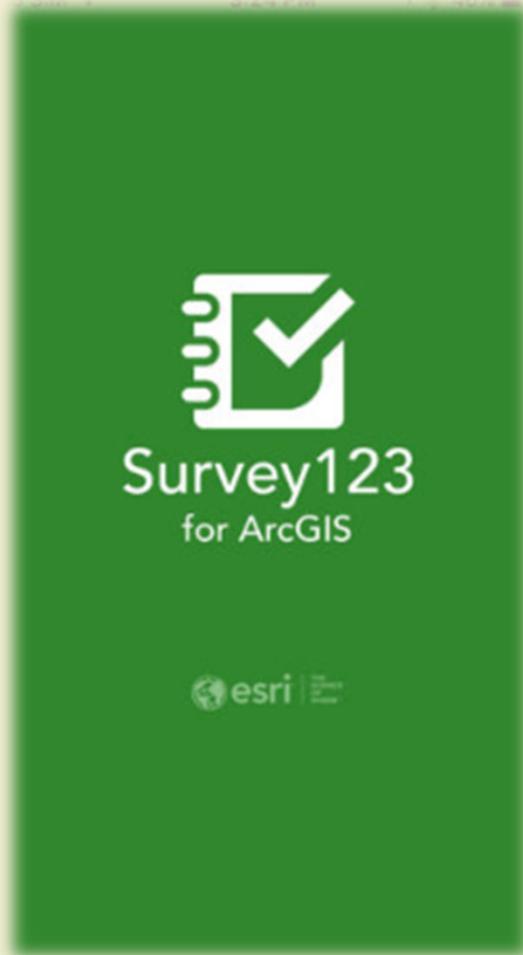


- **Asian Python (*Python bivittatus*)**
- **Burmese Python (*Python sebae sebae*)**
- **Green Python (*Python reticulatus*)**
- **Natal Python (*Python sebae natalensis*)**
- **Spotted Python (*Morelia amethystina*)**
- **Common Constrictor (*Constrictor*)**
- **Green Anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*)**
- **Common Anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*)**
- **Beni Anaconda (*Eunectes beniensis*)**
- **DeSchauensee's Anaconda (*Eunectes deschauenseei*)**

Project Area



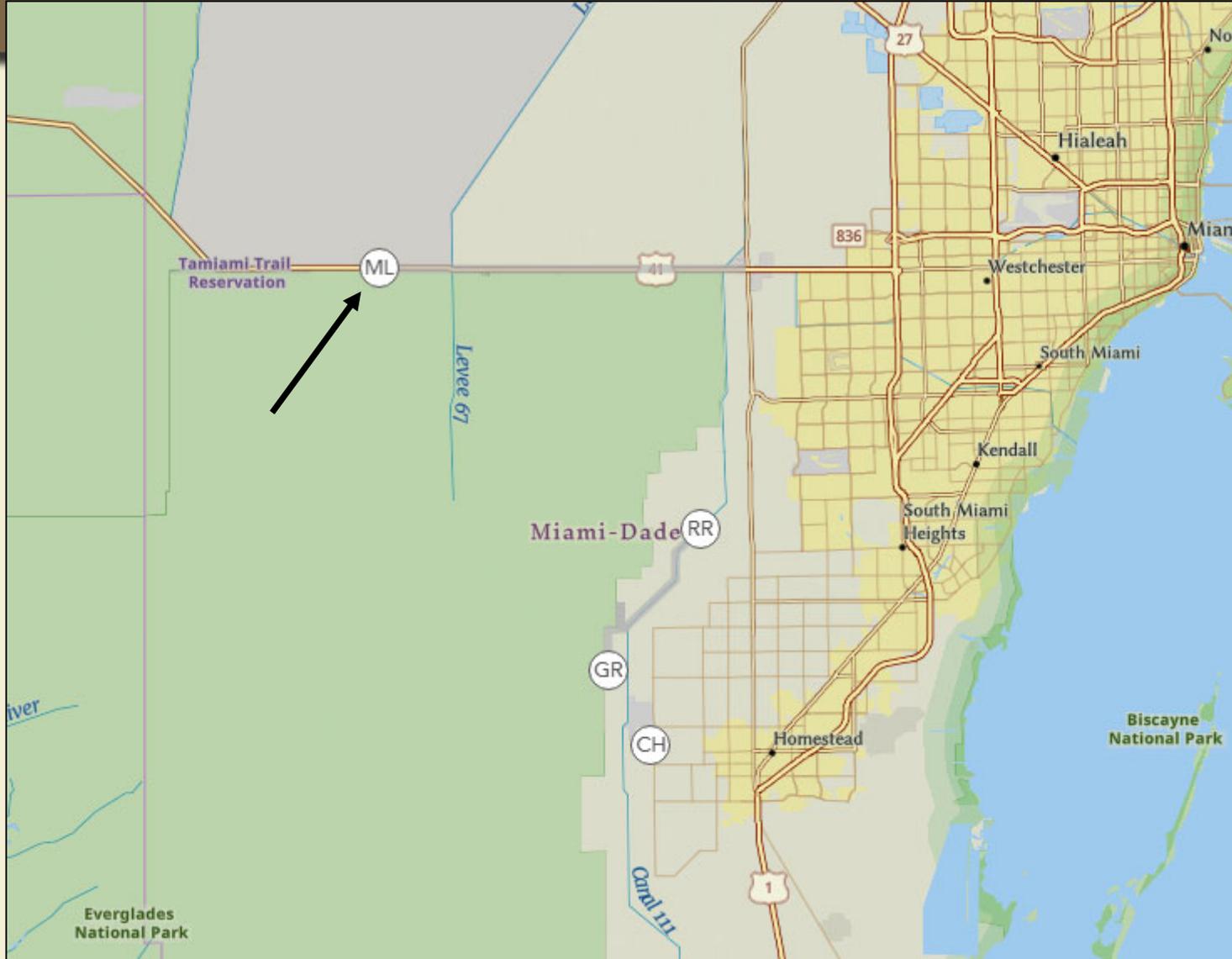
Data Collection



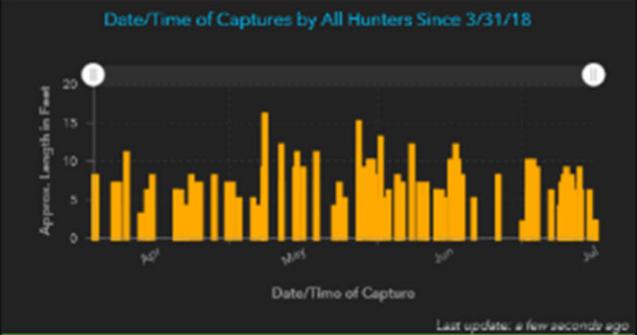
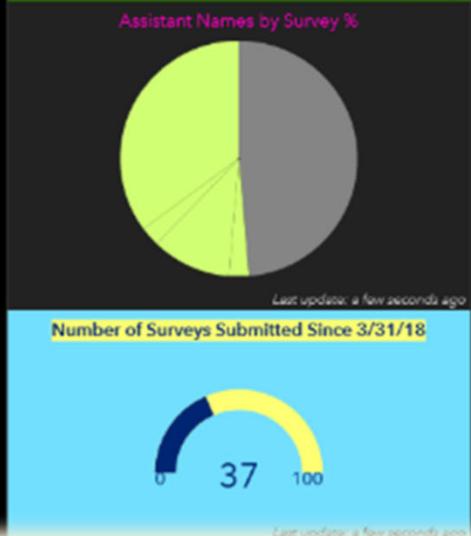
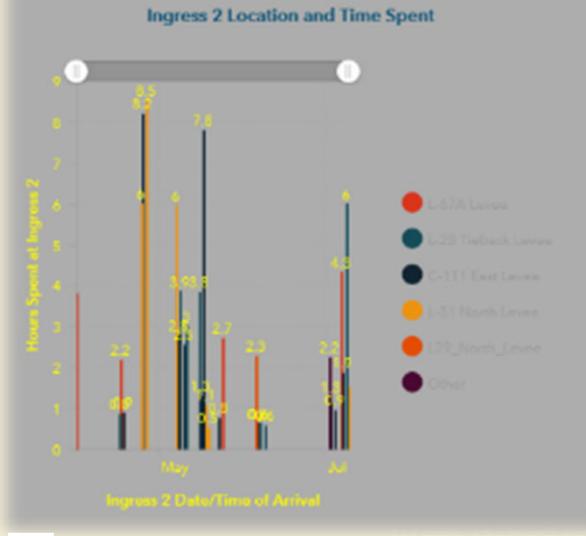
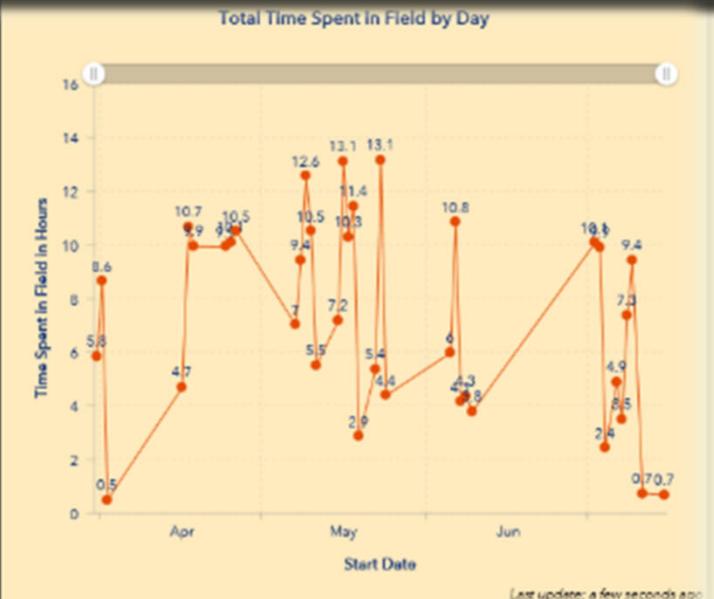
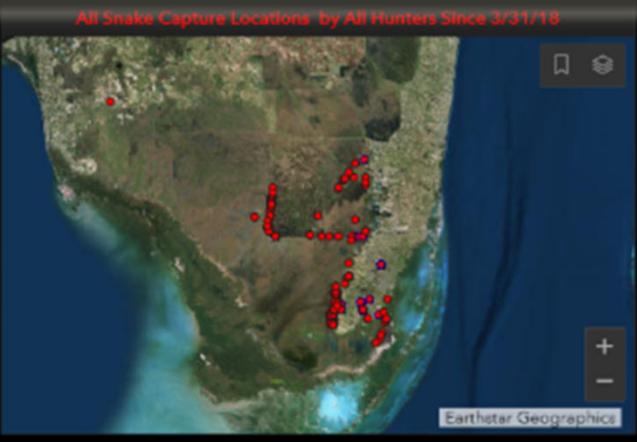
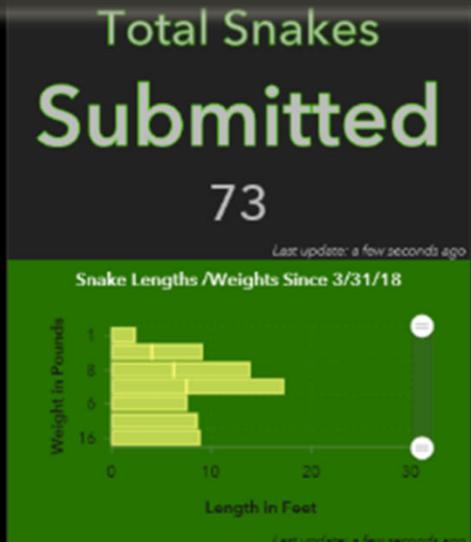
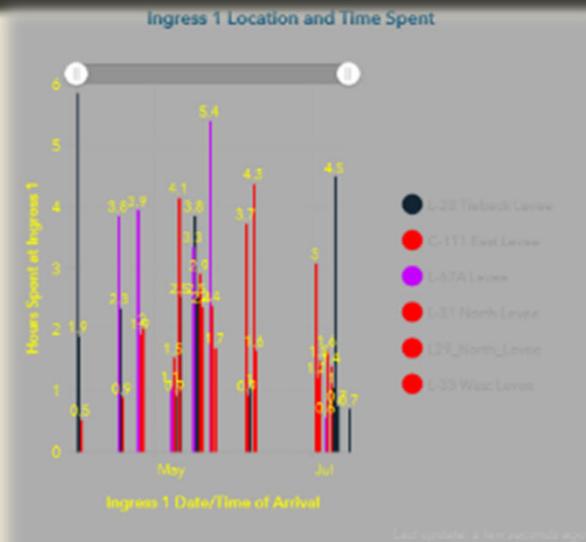
- **Survey-123 and Tracker software**
- **Electronic data collection**
- **Automated Invoice System**
- ***Real time* tracking in the field**



Real Time Tracking



Dashboards

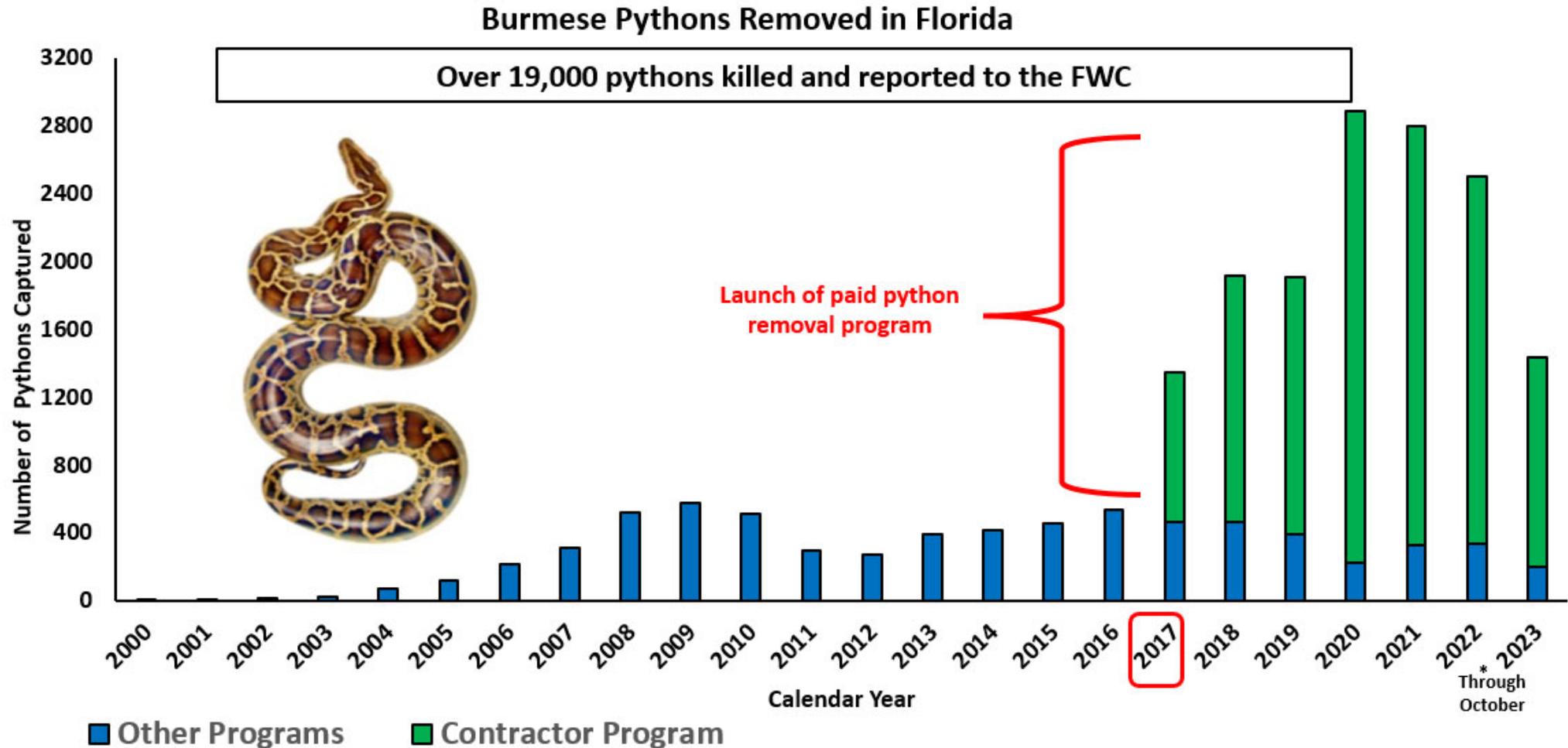


Contractor Programs

- **Paid Python Removal Contractors**
 - **Most effective python removal tool**
 - **Python removal has increased by 200% in some areas**



Impact of Contracted Python Removal



Governor DeSantis Joins SFWMD, FWC, and NPS in Announcing Python Removal Effort Expansions on August 7, 2019



Seamless Partnerships in Python Removal

- **Coordinate management goals and actions**
- **Maximize removal efforts**
 - **Expand contractor and volunteer removal programs**
 - **Align Programs both in Access and Requirements**



Florida's Python Management Program: One Mission

Increasing Number of Python Contractors

- FWC and SFWMD to have 50 contractors each



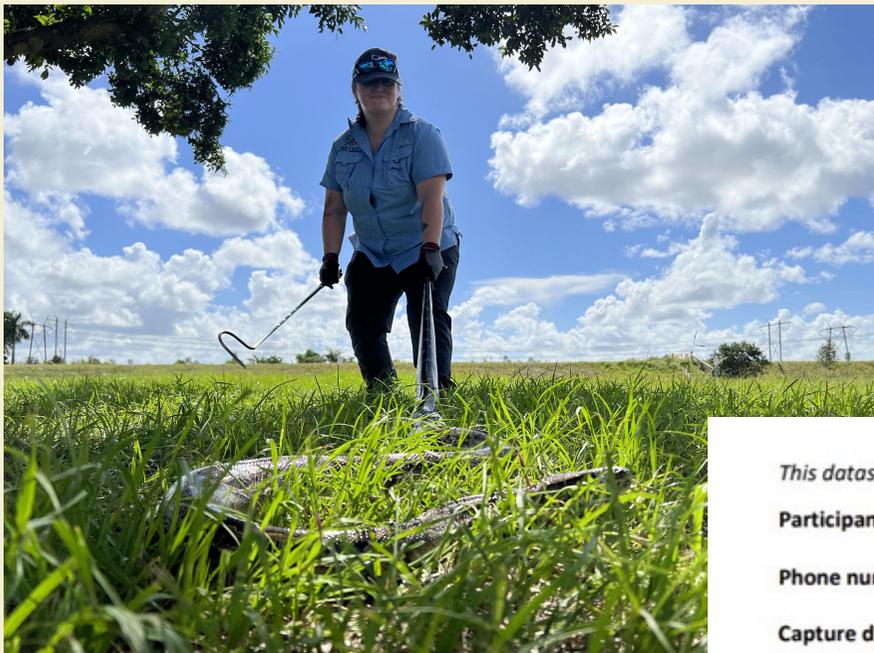
Florida Python Challenge®

The intent of the Florida Python Challenge® is to raise public awareness about invasive species in Florida, like Burmese pythons, that are a threat to the Everglades ecosystem.

The Florida Python Challenge® is an effort to promote protection of native wildlife through removal of Burmese pythons



Florida Python Challenge®



Florida Python Challenge® Datasheet

This datasheet MUST be fully completed and accompany each python.

Participant name: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

Capture date: ___/___/___ Capture time: _____ AM/PM (circle one)

Trip start: _____ AM/PM Trip end: _____ AM/PM

Exact location of python capture - decimal degrees preferred

Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Select the name of the competition location where the capture occurred:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Holey Land Wildlife Management Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rocky Glades Public Small Game Hunting Area

Florida Python Challenge®



- August 4 – 13, 2023
- Updated training and education
- \$30,000 total cash prizes available to participants
- 1,050 participants registered 25 states, 1 international (Belgium)

- **209 pythons removed**
- **Ultimate Grand Prize Winner \$10,000: *Paul Hobbs* (removed 20 pythons)**
- **Ultimate Grand Prize Runner-Up \$7,500: *Ronald Kiger* (removed 14 pythons)**
- **Military Category Winner \$2,500: *Justin Morgan* (removed 7 pythons)**

Awards Ceremony



Special thanks to Challenge Sponsors:

- Inversa Leathers
- Bergeron Everglades Foundation
- Edison National Bank/Bank of the Islands
- The Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida

Removal of Pythons Year-Round by the Public

Hunting on Private Land:

- Landowner permission required
- Must be **humanely euthanized** on site
- No live transport
- No permit / license required
- No bag limit

Hunters must follow specific area regulations and local ordinances

Specific area regulations may be found:
MyFWC.com/Hunting/WMA-brochures
Or MyFWC.com, search for Removing Pythons

Hunting on Commission-managed Land:

- Executive Order 23-16
- 32 Commission-managed lands
- Must be **humanely euthanized** on site
- No live transport
- No permit / license required
- No bag limit

Hunters must follow specific area regulations and local ordinances

Other Management Efforts

- Florida Python Control Plan
- Telemetry Projects
- Genetics-based Management Studies
- Attractants Testing
- Radio Collared Prey
- AI Camera Detection
- Targeted Outreach

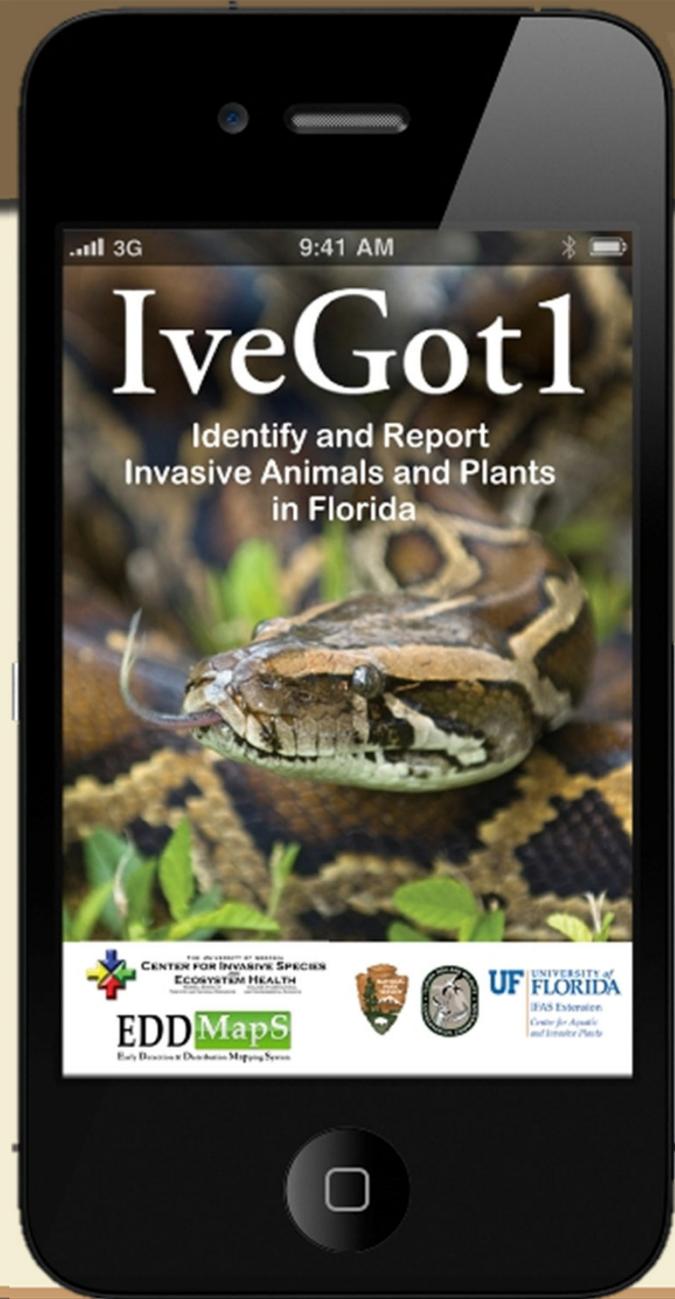




One Team-One Mission

Presenter: Michael Kirkland

Florida's Python Management Program: One Mission



Questions



Recreational Public Forum Meeting September 25, 2023



Greg Nolte
Lead / Principal Construction Engineer
Engineering & Construction Bureau
Project Management Section

CEPP North Phase Overview

Meeting Agenda and Purpose

- CEPP Overview and Purpose
- Present CEPP North Phase features
- Provide details on current and future activities

CEPP North Phase Overview

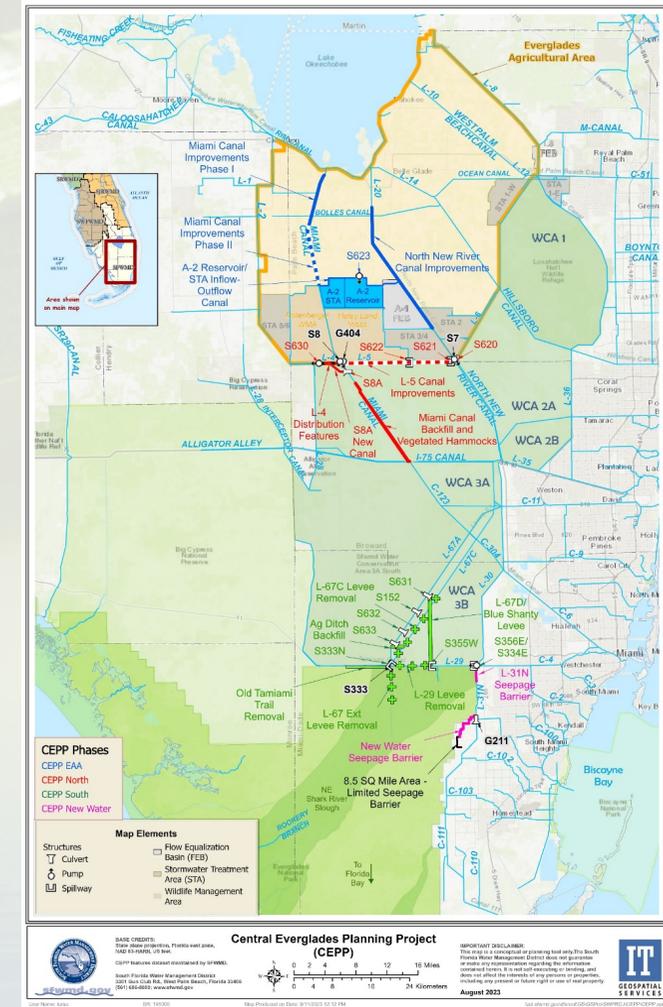
CEPP Project Overview

➤ Project purpose

- Increase quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water to the Central Everglades
- Provide additional water to the northwest corner of WCA-3A to reduce period of dry-out and improve habitat conditions

➤ Four phases

- Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA)
- North
- South
- New Water

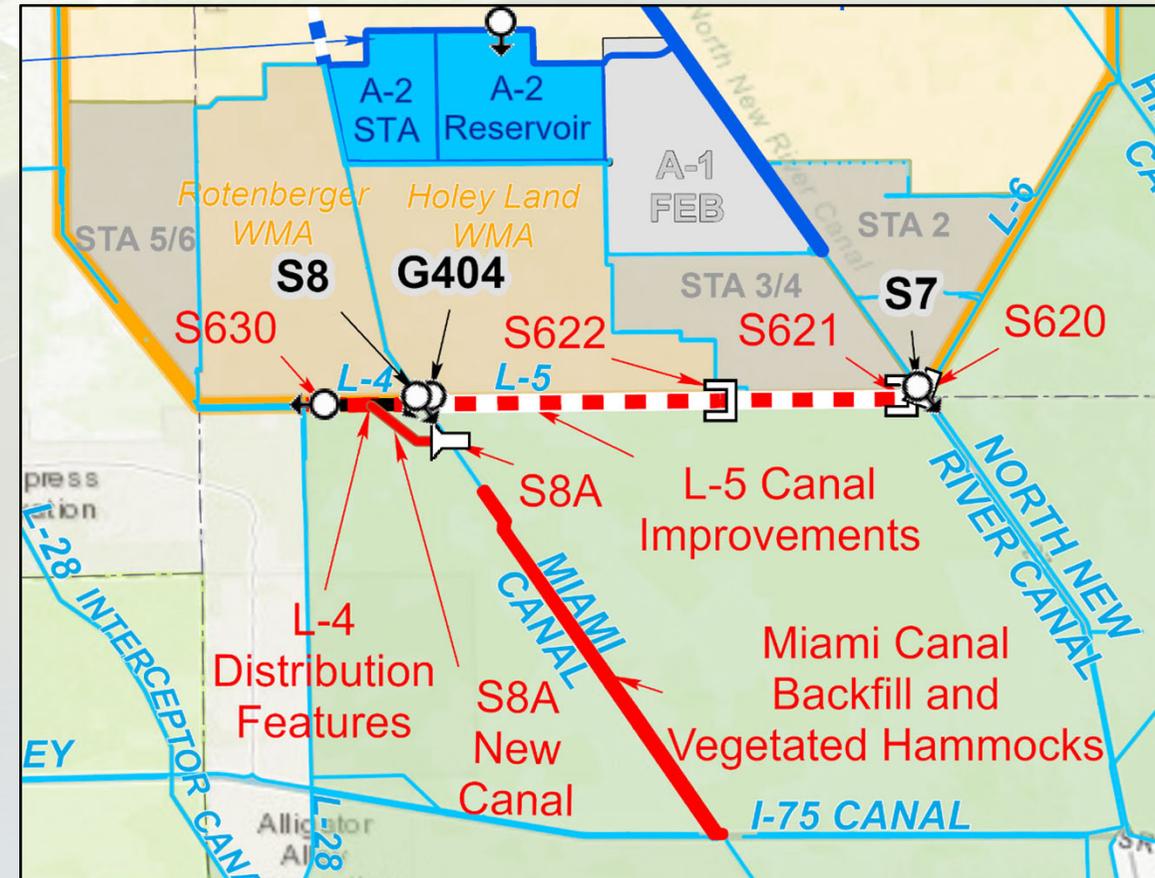


CEPP Project Overview

CEPP North Phase Overview

CEPP North Features (2014 PIR authorization)

- S-620 500 cfs gated culvert
- S-621 2,500 cfs gated spillway
- S-622 500 cfs gated spillway
- S-8A gated culverts and canal
- S-630 360 cfs pump station
- L-4 levee degrade
- Miami Canal backfill and vegetated hammocks
- L-5 remnant canal improvements
- L-5 canal improvements

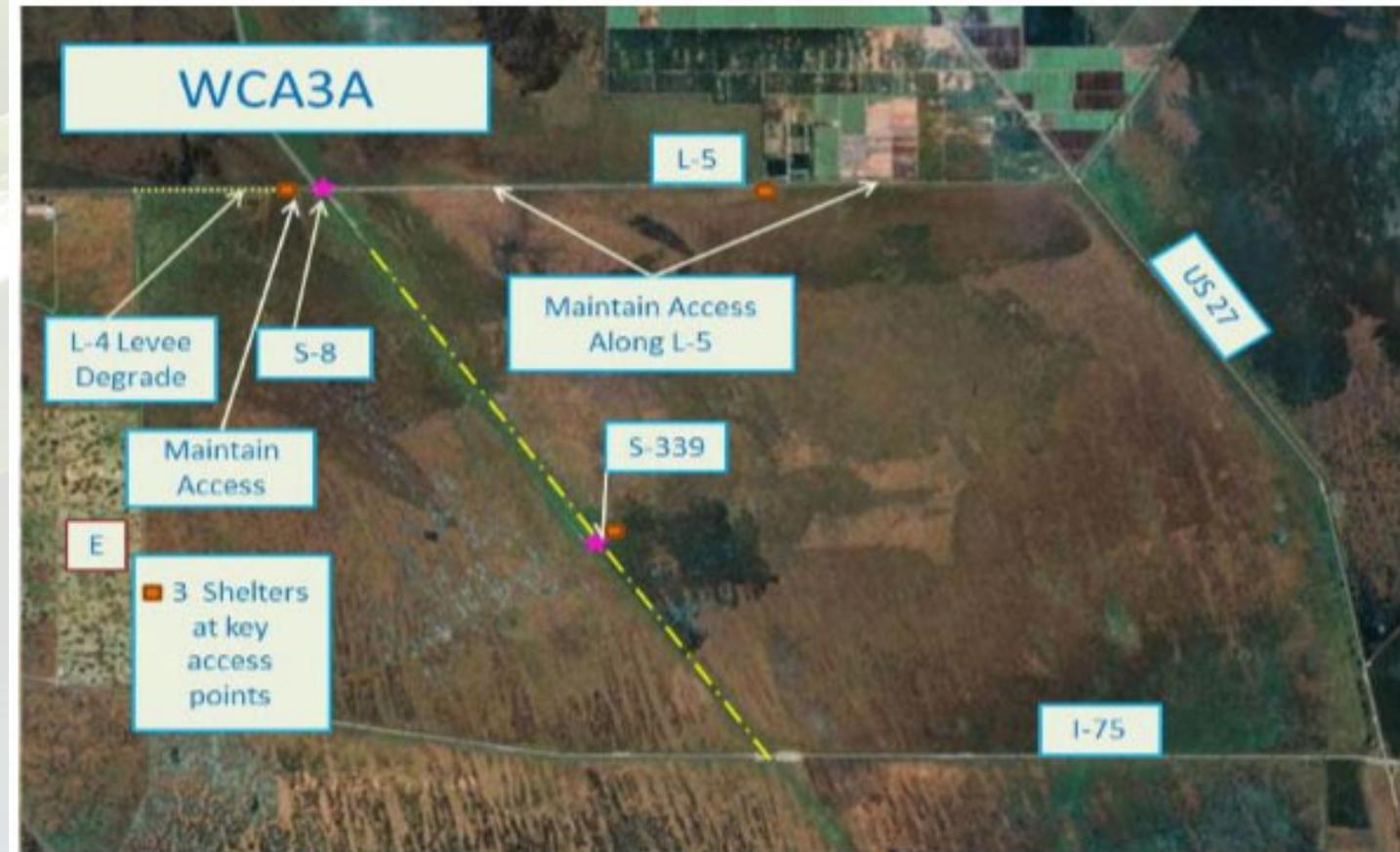


CEPP North Features

CEPP North Phase Overview

Water Conservation Area-3A Conceptual Recreational Plan

- PIR identified 'Site E' for recreational access along the L-5 levee
- Includes 3 shelters, 2 boat ramps, additional parking and maintain the vehicle crossing across the L-5
- Public currently has open access to the entire length of the L-5 and L-4 from US27 through the S-8, 24/7



USACE and SFWMD, 2014. CEPP Final PIR and EIS. Appendix F Recreation

CEPP North Phase Overview

Current schedule on the 2023 Integrated Delivery Schedule Working Draft

Project	FISCAL YEAR											
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
CEPP North: Inflow facilities needed to restore northern WCA-3A and move additional water south to Everglades												
Validation Report	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●								
L-4 Degrade, Pump Station S-630	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●				
S8A Gated Culverts and Canal	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●		
L-6 Diversion	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●				
Miami Canal Backfill/Vegetated Hammocks		●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●
L-5 Canal Improvements		●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●●

- Blue = Non-Federal
- Black = Federal
- Design
- Construction
- Operational Testing and Monitoring Period

CEPP North Phase Overview

L-6 Diversion & S-620 Gated Culvert

- Construction underway and anticipated completion July 2024
- Public access is being maintained along the L-6 NW levee
- Additional public access is temporarily being opened during this year's waterfowl season to route the public safely around the construction site

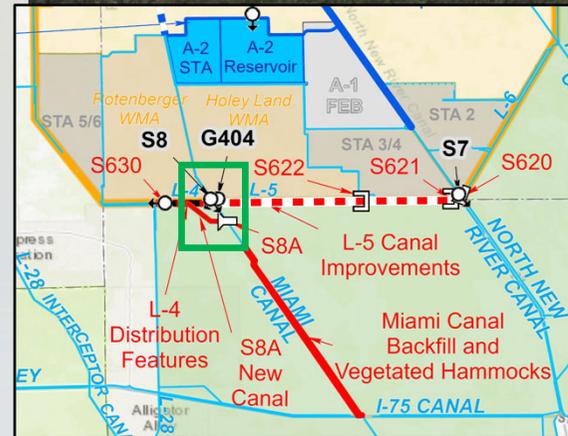
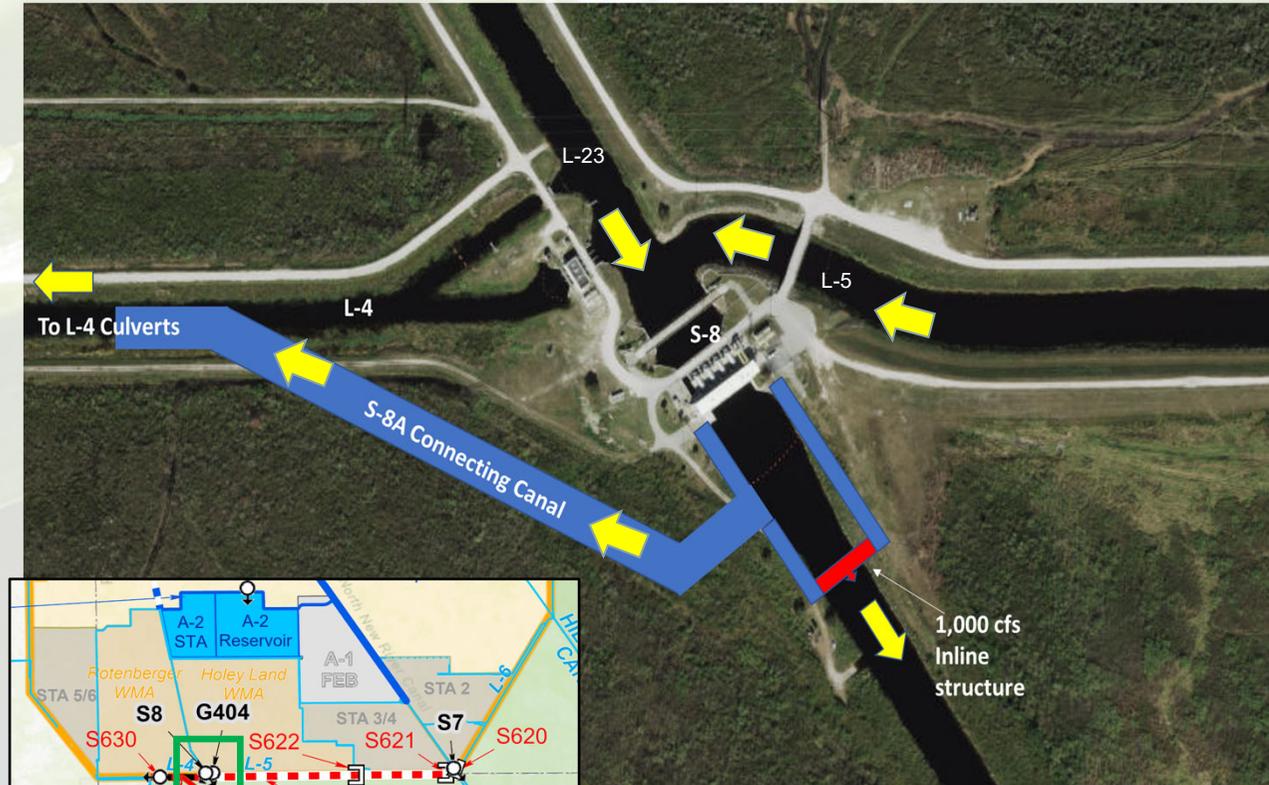


S-620 Gated Culvert, August 2023

CEPP North Phase Overview

S-8A Gated Spillway & Canal

- Detailed modeling ongoing, design FY 2024
- Construction from FY 2025-2028
- Proposed S-8A Spillway and Connecting Canal between Miami Canal and L-4 Canal
- Future public recreational access and use will be evaluated as part of the design process



S-8 Pump Station & Miami Canal

CEPP North Phase Overview

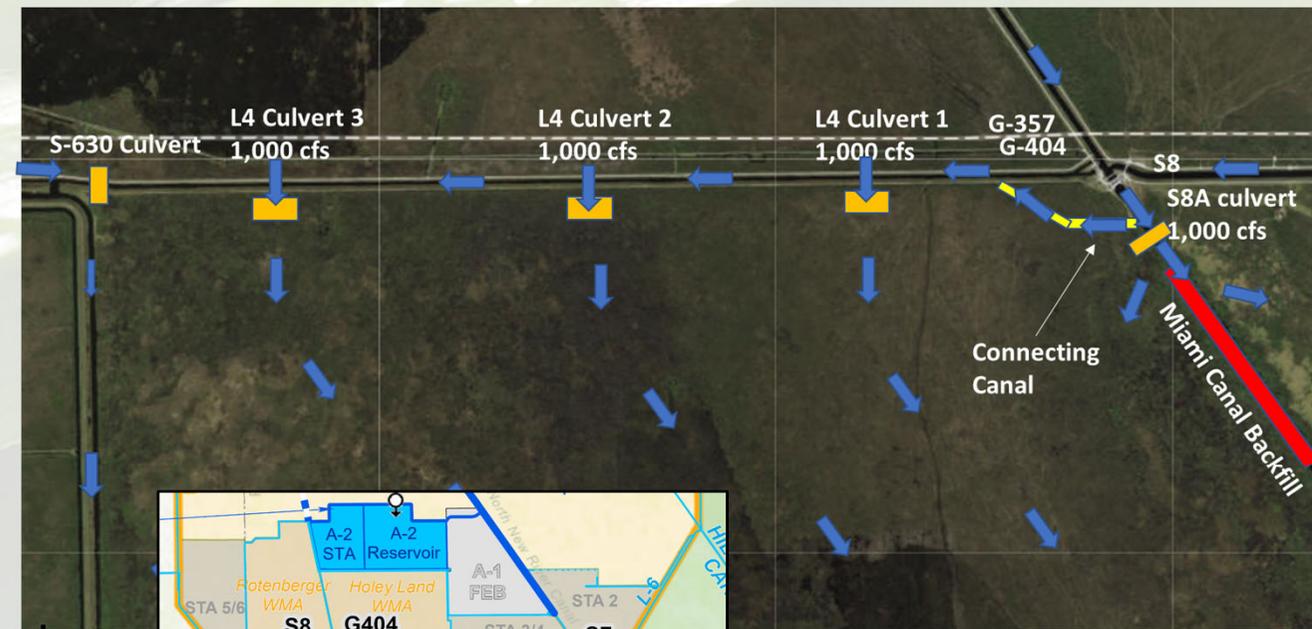
L-4 Canal Improvement & Distribution Features

- Detailed modeling ongoing
- Construction anticipated over FY 2025-2028
- Temporary access during construction will be coordinated during detailed design with stakeholders

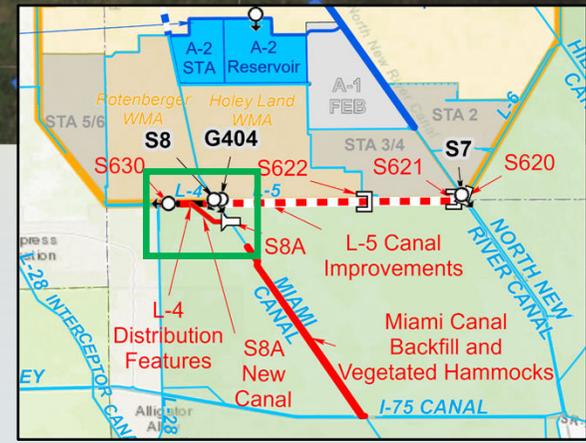
S-630 Structure

- Provides water supply to Tribal Nations
- Will be designed once L-4 features are designed

Future public recreational access and use will be evaluated as part of the design process, following the proposed recreational facilities in the authorized PIR



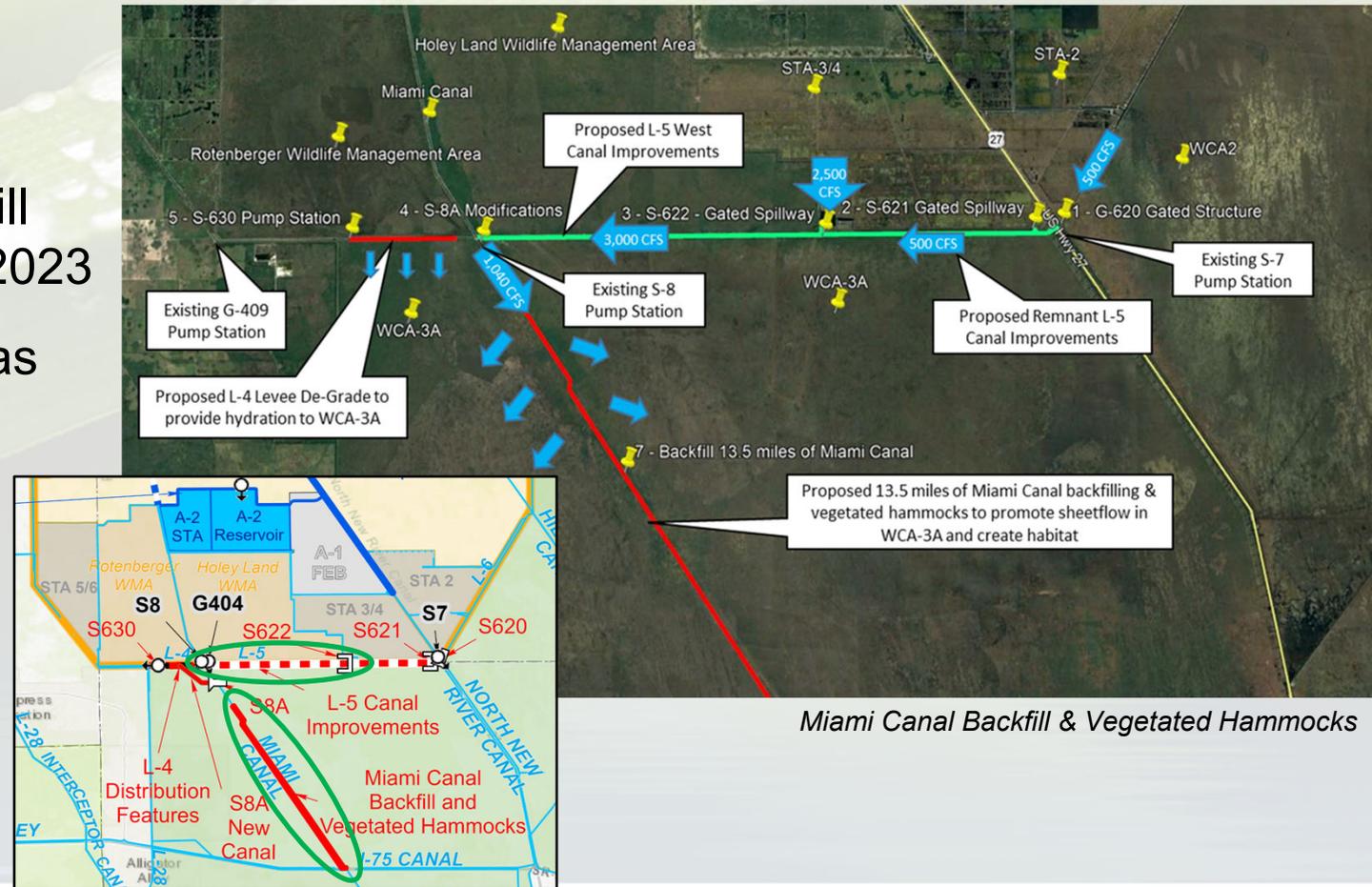
L-4 Canal Improvements



CEPP North Phase Overview

L-5 Canal Expansion, Miami Canal Backfill & Vegetated Hammocks

- Surveying is ongoing, to be complete in Nov-23
- Conceptual design of Miami Canal Backfill and Vegetated Hammocks to begin late 2023
- RECOVER design planning workshop was held, July 2022
- Project will be constructed with the L-5 expansion, FY2025-2029
- Additional workshops and stakeholder outreach during conceptual level design of Vegetated Hammocks

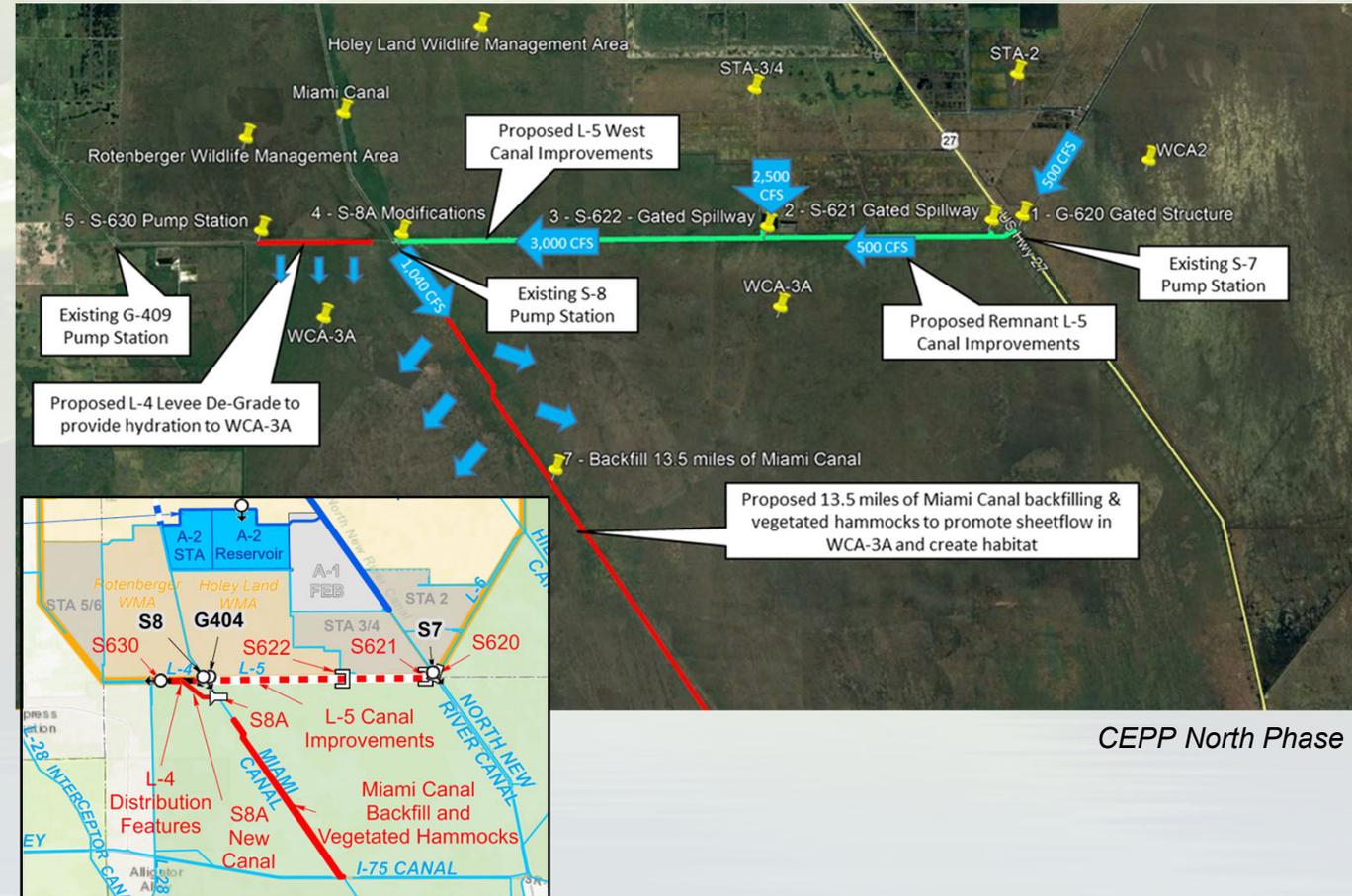


Miami Canal Backfill & Vegetated Hammocks

CEPP North Phase Overview

CEPP North Phase Summary

- All projects under design except Miami Canal backfill and Vegetated Hammocks
- Miami Canal Backfill and Vegetated Hammocks will include significant outreach efforts
- Construction activities will cause temporary impacts for recreational users
- Completed CEPP North Phase will restore all public access, add additional recreational features and improve hydrologic and ecologic conditions in WCA-3A



CEPP North Phase

CEPP North Phase Overview

QUESTIONS





Recreation Facility Design and Project Updates

Recreational Public Forum
West Palm Beach, FL
September 25, 2023

Michael Cheek
Recreation Project Manager
Land Stewardship,
South Florida Water Management District



RUNDOWN

- **Kissimmee River navigation signage update**
 - **Closure/detour access to Sportsman's Crossing (Everglades WMA)**
 - **Closing/reopening of WMA's for Hurricane Idalia**
 - **Ocean to Lake Trail reopened in Cypress Creek**
-
- **Invasive exotic sedge notice, Wright's nutrush (*Scleria lacustris*)**
 - **STA public user education/outreach (FWC and SFWMD)**
 - **Two new boat-in campsites and one day-use area on Kissimmee River**
 - **S-356 Boat Ramp completed**
 - **STA waterfowl hunting access trails completed**

KISSIMMEE RIVER NAVIGATION SIGNAGE AT CROSSOVERS WITH RIPRAP (USACE CONTRACTOR)



- Contract award expected by September 2023
- Notice to proceed by end of October

Limestone rocks (riprap)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District



Danger



Submerged Rocks and Weir

PROCEED WITH CAUTION



US Army Corps of Engineers



sfwmd.gov

Kissimmee River Main Channel

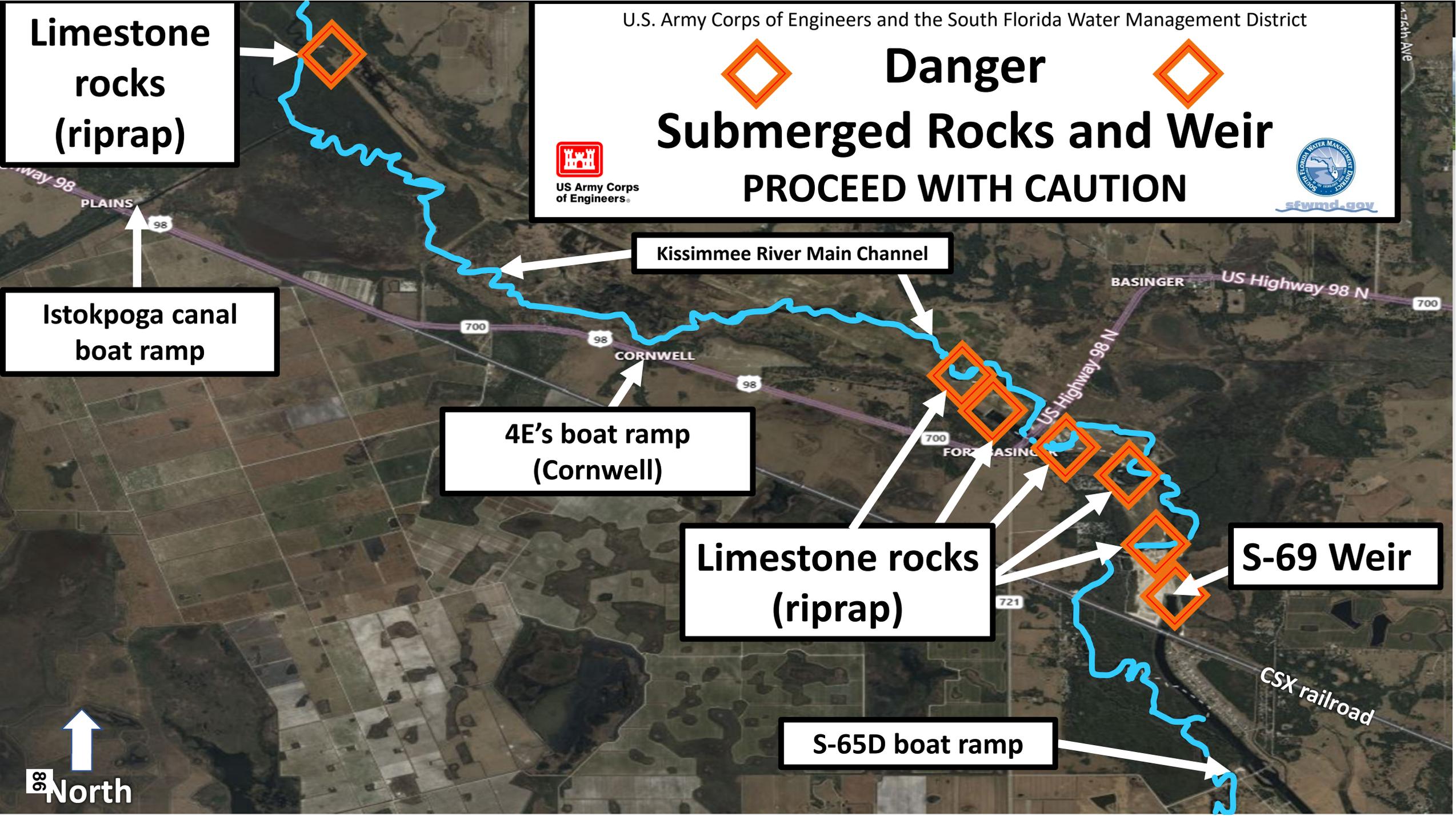
Istokpoga canal boat ramp

4E's boat ramp (Cornwell)

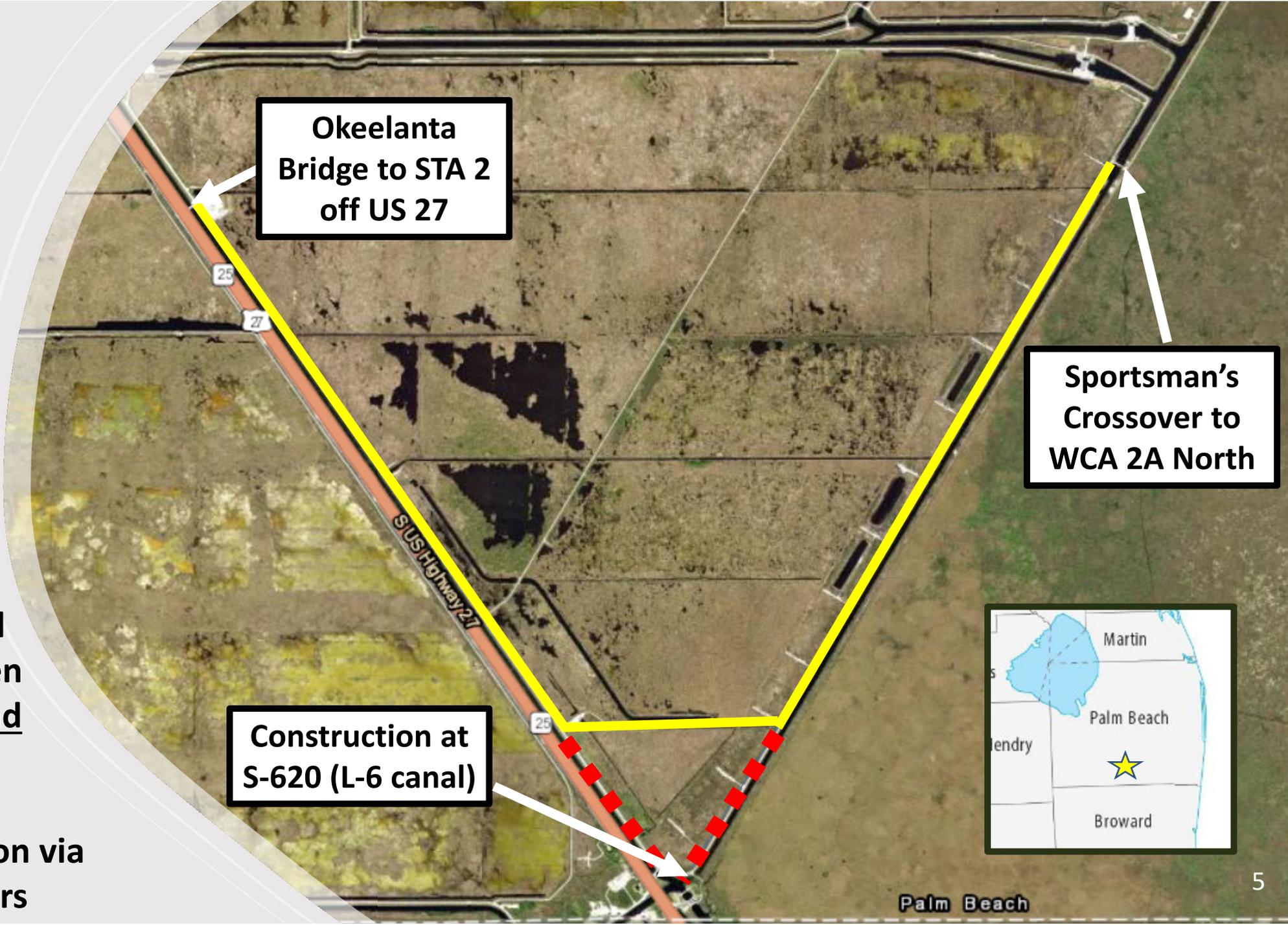
Limestone rocks (riprap)

S-69 Weir

S-65D boat ramp



ACCESS CLOSURE AND RE- ROUTE TO STA 2 AND WCA 2A



Okeelanta
Bridge to STA 2
off US 27

Sportsman's
Crossover to
WCA 2A North

Construction at
S-620 (L-6 canal)

- Access closed until September 30, then open Saturdays and Sundays only
- Re-route (yellow) around construction via construction trailers

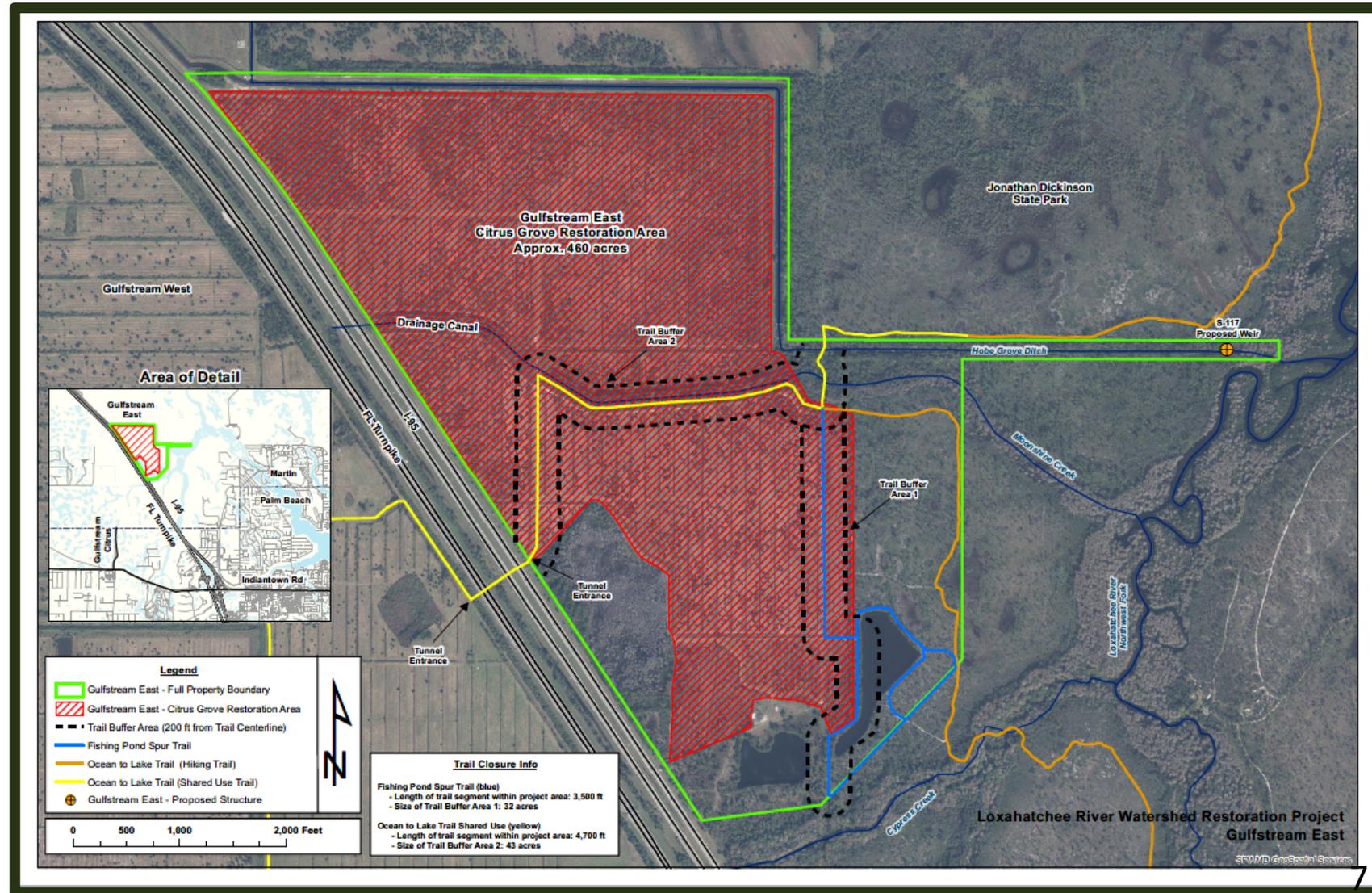
WMA CLOSURES/REOPENINGS DURING HURRICANE IDALIA



- 12:00 p.m. August 28th District-managed lands closed in anticipation of Hurricane Idalia coming ashore as Cat 3.
- Lee (CREW WEA), Collier, Polk (KICCO and Lake Marion Creek WMAs), Osceola (KCOL WMA), and Orange counties closed.
- Re-opened as soon as possible on Aug 30, 5:00 p.m. after the all-clear was given.
- Quick turnaround time to get properties back open ahead of hunting seasons (e.g. CREW Muzzleloading gun was opening Sep. 2-4)

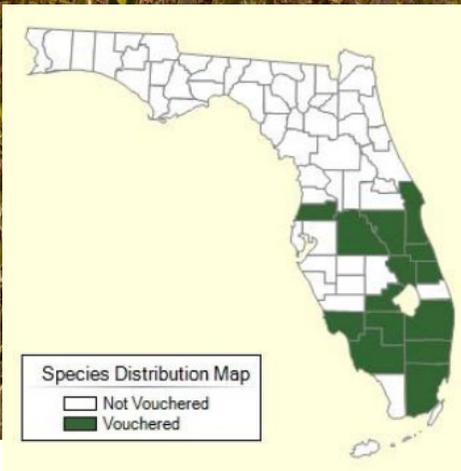
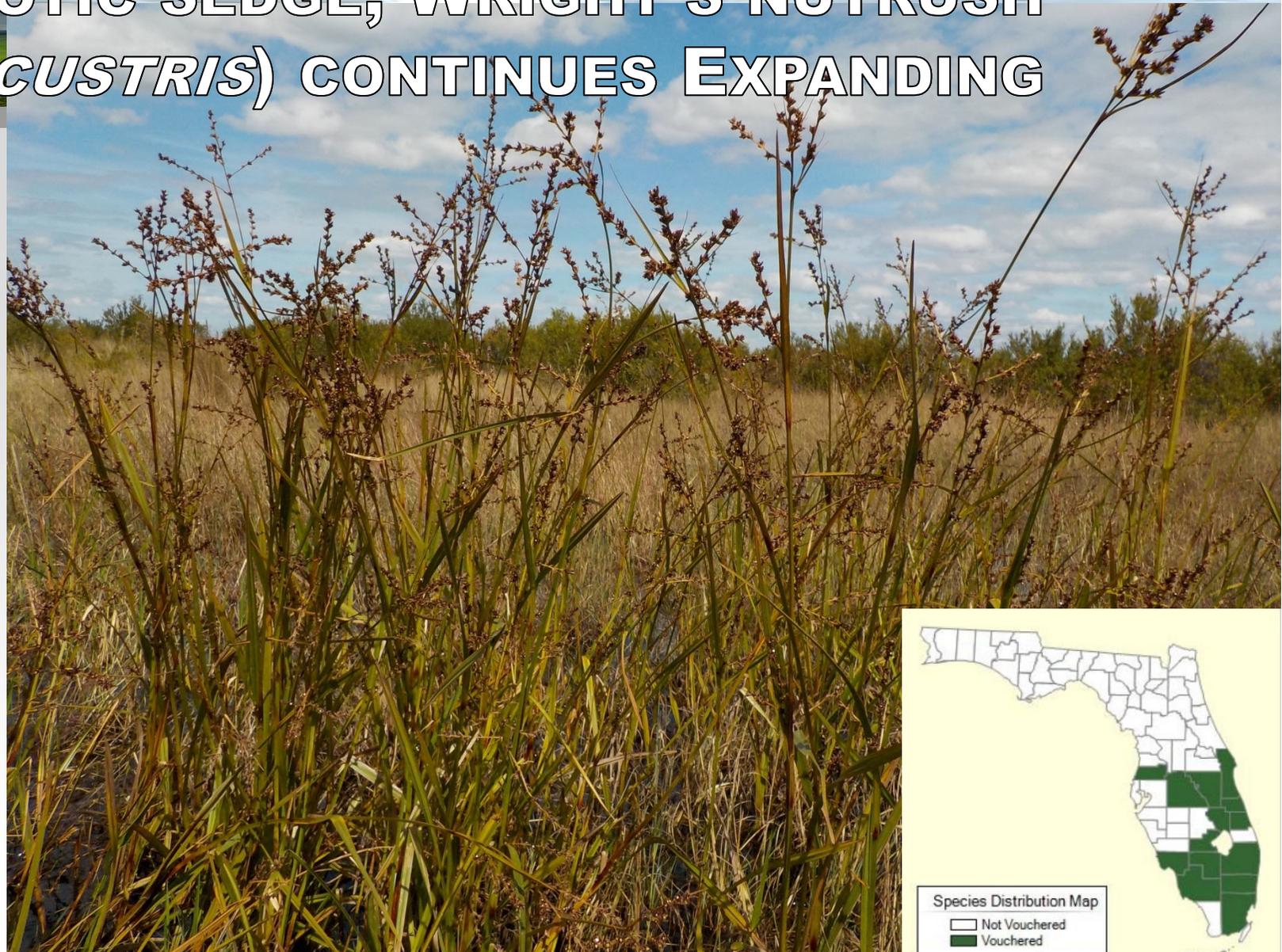
OCEAN TO LAKE TRAIL (MULTI-USE) RE-OPENED AT CYPRESS CREEK

- On-going restoration project to remove Brazilian pepper and other exotics
- Heavy equipment (grinders, loaders, etc.)
- Both the Fishing Pond Spur and Ocean to Lake segment have re-opened



INVASIVE EXOTIC SEDGE, WRIGHT'S NUTRUSH (*SCLERIA LACUSTRIS*) CONTINUES EXPANDING

- “Wright’s Nutrush”
- Annual, spreads by seed
- FLEPPC Cat I Invasive
- First recorded in FL 1988
- Invading seasonal wetlands
- Native range -Caribbean, Central & South America
- Expanding throughout Central and South Florida



INVASIVE EXOTIC SEDGE, WRIGHT'S NUTRUSH (*SCLERIA LACUSTRIS*) IDENTIFICATION

- Rough leaves with W-shaped pleat



INVASIVE EXOTIC SEDGE, WRIGHT'S NUTRUSH (*SCLERIA LACUSTRIS*) IDENTIFICATION

- Small, smooth protected achenes



- Triangular stems



- Base of plant spongy and red



INVASIVE EXOTIC SEDGE, WRIGHT'S NUTRUSH (*SCLERIA LACUSTRIS*) IDENTIFICATION



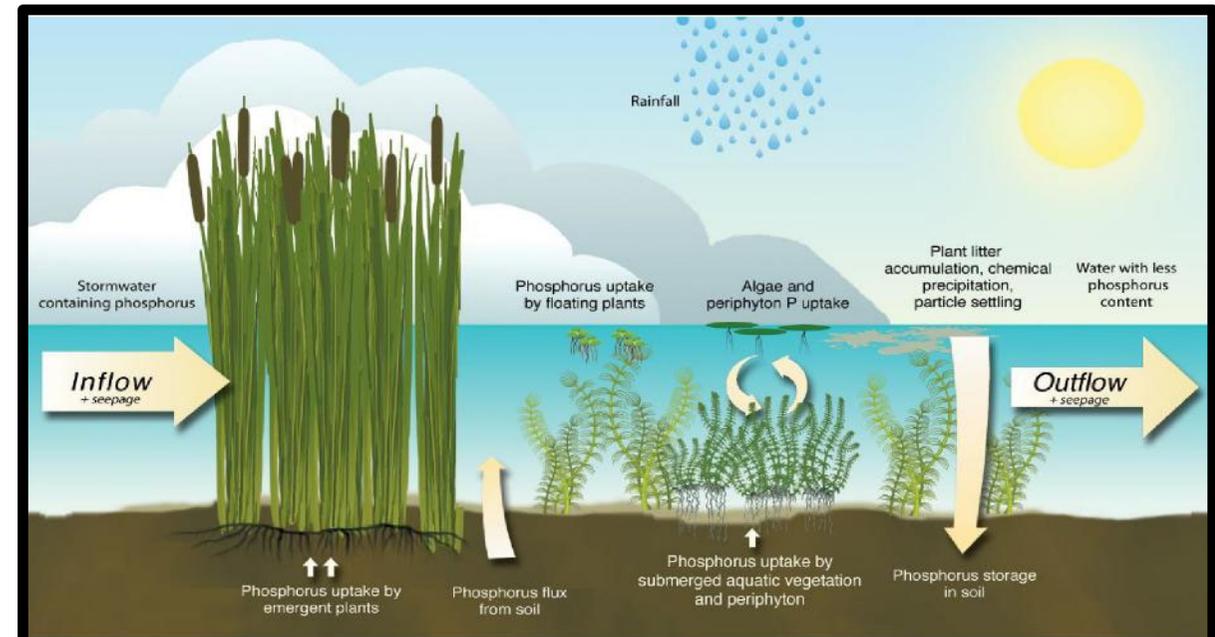
SCLERIA LACUSTRIS MANAGEMENT

- Survey in early spring, time with hydrology
- Treat early, before seed production
- Diquat (non-selective)
- Clip and bag seed heads
- **Avoid driving airboats over it when seeding**
- **Rinse boats well inside and out before/after launching**



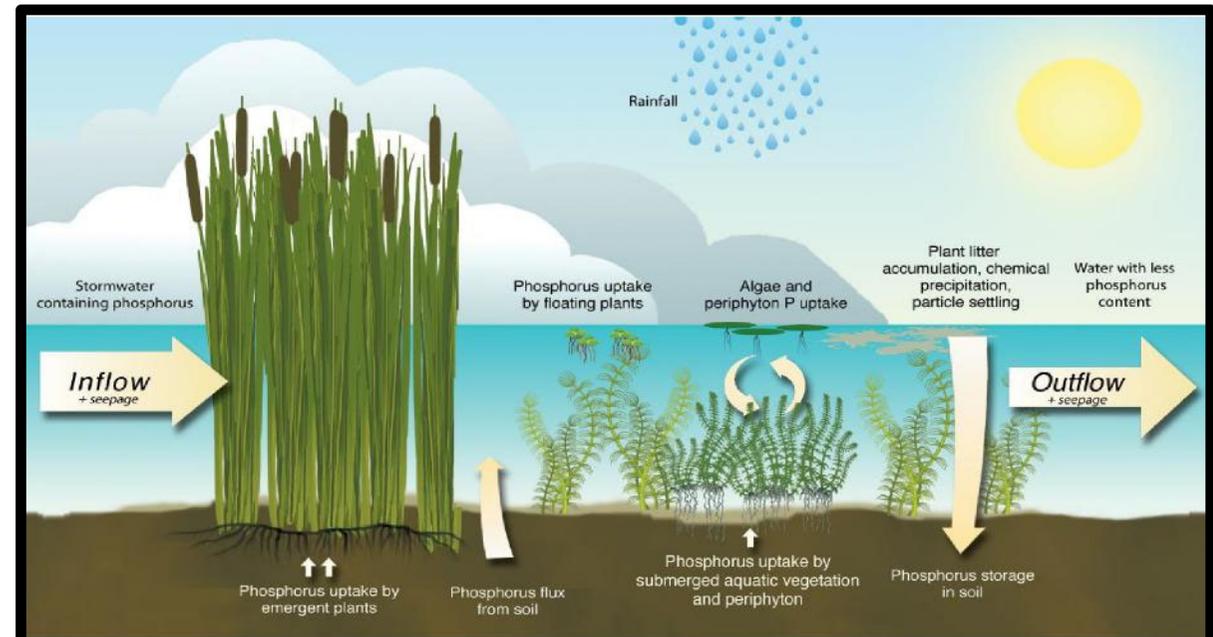
STA PUBLIC USER EDUCATION/OUTREACH EFFORT (FWC AND SFWMD)

- FWC and SFWMD to post new information at [STA Waterfowl Hunting | FWC \(myfwc.com\)](https://myfwc.com)
- Content will include STA basics for public users:
 - Purpose of STA's
 - Water treatment goals
 - Engineering/planting design
 - **Best management practices for public users, emphasis on scheduled hunts**



STA PUBLIC USER EDUCATION/OUTREACH EFFORT (FWC AND SFWMD)

- **Best management practices for public users include:**
 - **Enter and exit levees and interior cells at designated entrances/times** to have the least impacts on the treatment process and sensitive areas (e.g. ongoing research areas and monitoring stations)
 - **Pack out what you pack in** (e.g. trash, drink containers, shell casings, bait containers, fishing lines, and nets)
 - **Avoid introducing “Hitchhiker vegetation”** by making sure all equipment, kayaks, etc. are free of vegetation before entering the STAs
- Currently working on a video short



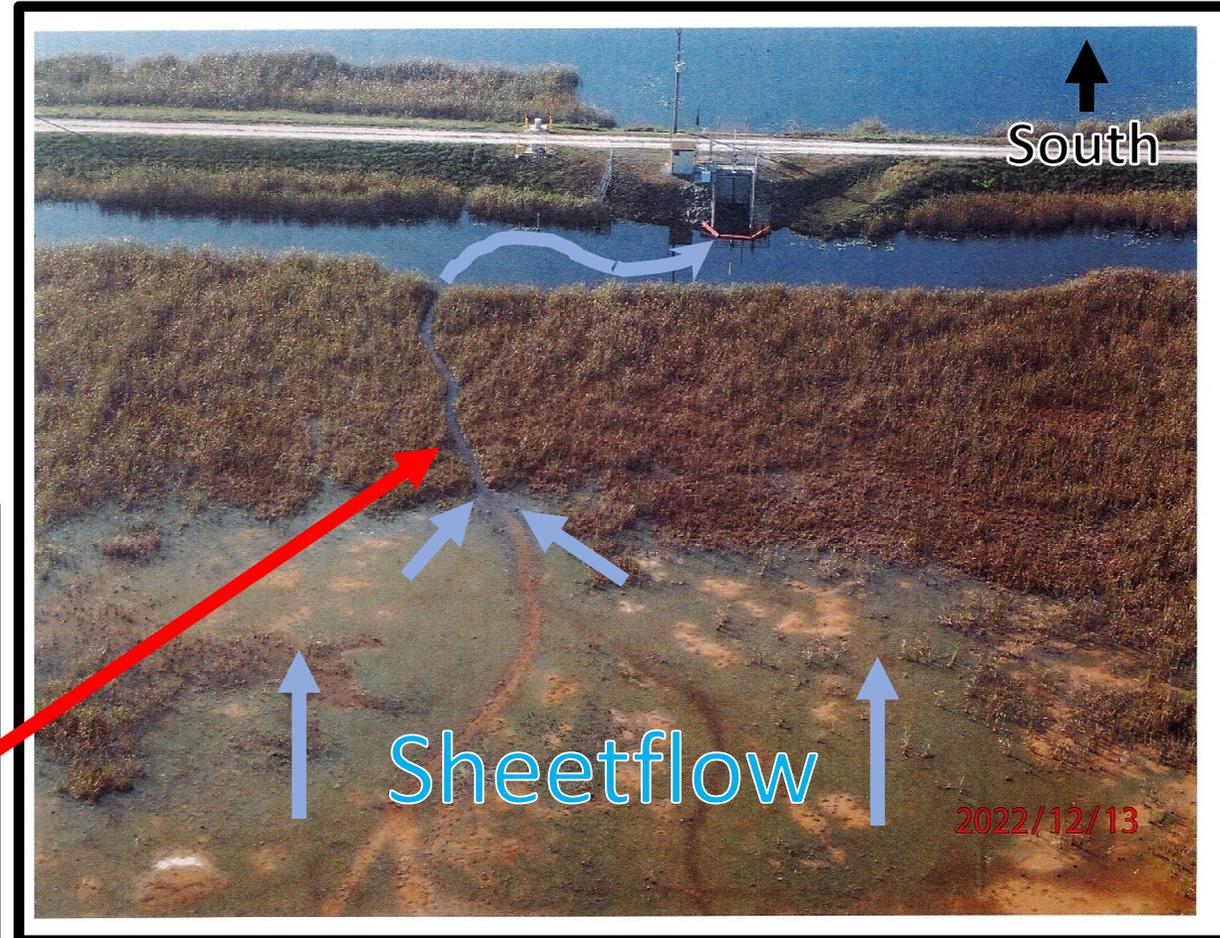
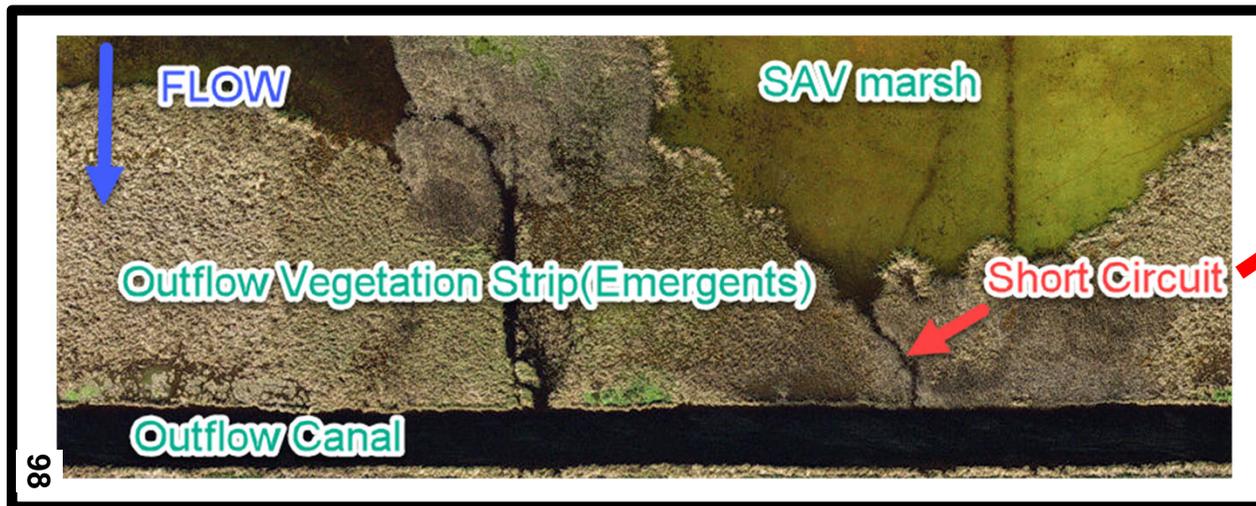
STA WATERFOWL HUNTING ACCESS TRAILS COMPLETED

- Access trails perpendicular to flow were mashed down in early September based on aerial vegetation surveys
- Trails will be evaluated throughout the season to determine follow-up needs
- Some trails were adjusted based on field conditions



STA WATERFOWL HUNTING ACCESS TRAILS

- Facilitate Entry/Exit into prime SAV habitat and waterfowl hunting grounds
- Decrease likelihood of creating damaging parallel preferential flow paths (“short circuits”) within the STA’s



S-356 BOAT RAMP ON TAMAMIAMI TRAIL (WCA 3B) MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMPLETE



Everglades WMA (WCA 3B)



Everglades WMA (WCA 3B)

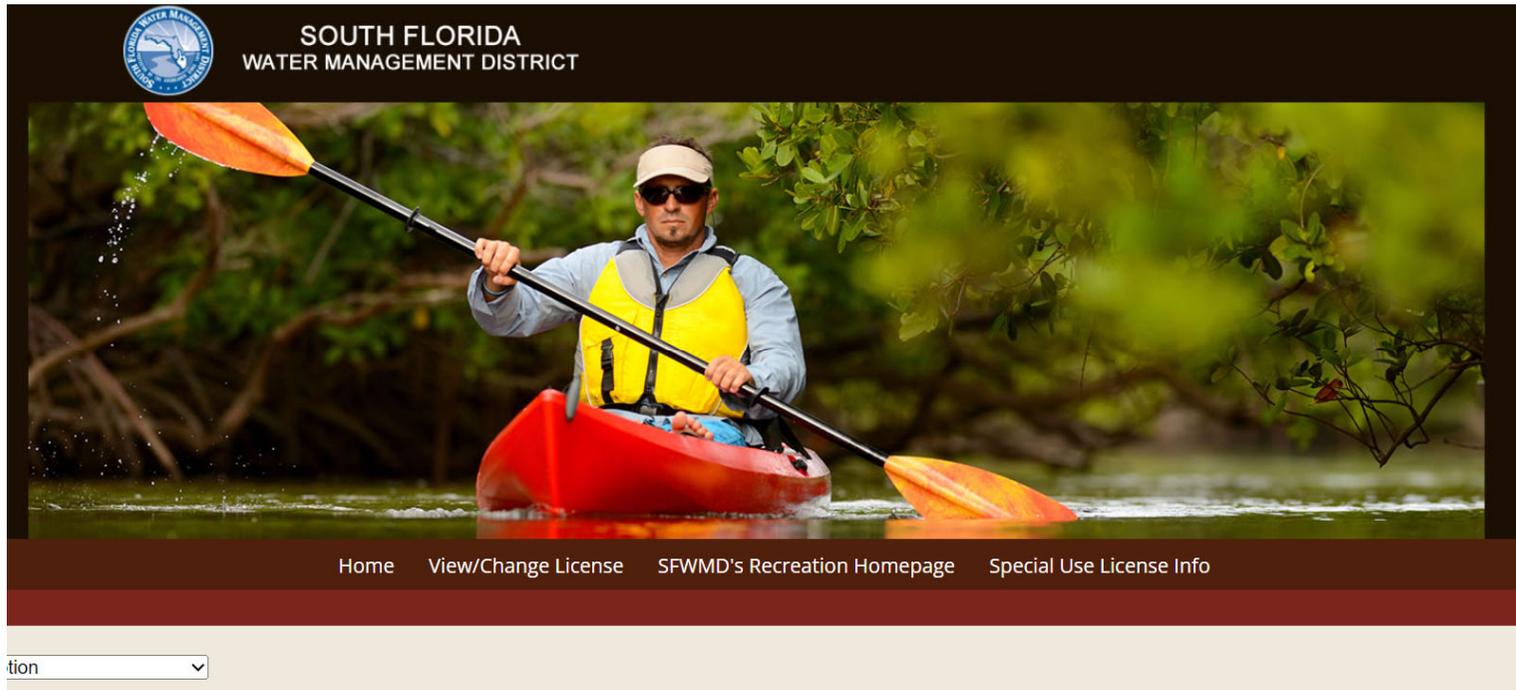
- Completed early August 2023
- Replacing existing ramp during construction of new S-356 pump station

S-356 BOAT RAMP ON TAMiami TRAIL (WCA 3B) MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMPLETE



SFWMD SPECIAL USE LICENSE (SUL) CAMPING RESERVATION SYSTEM IMPROVED

- Problem of unused camping reservations preventing campsite access during the busy Nov-Apr camping season.
- Camping permittees are now sent automated text messages to confirm/cancel reservations at 2 weeks (and again at 72 hours) prior to the reservation date.



TWO NEW CAMPSITES ON KISSIMMEE RIVER COMPLETE

- Boat-in only
- Chandler Slough Boat-in
- Seaboard Marsh South Boat-in
- Florida Paddling Trails Association Blueways designation in progress— Lake Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee (79 mile route)



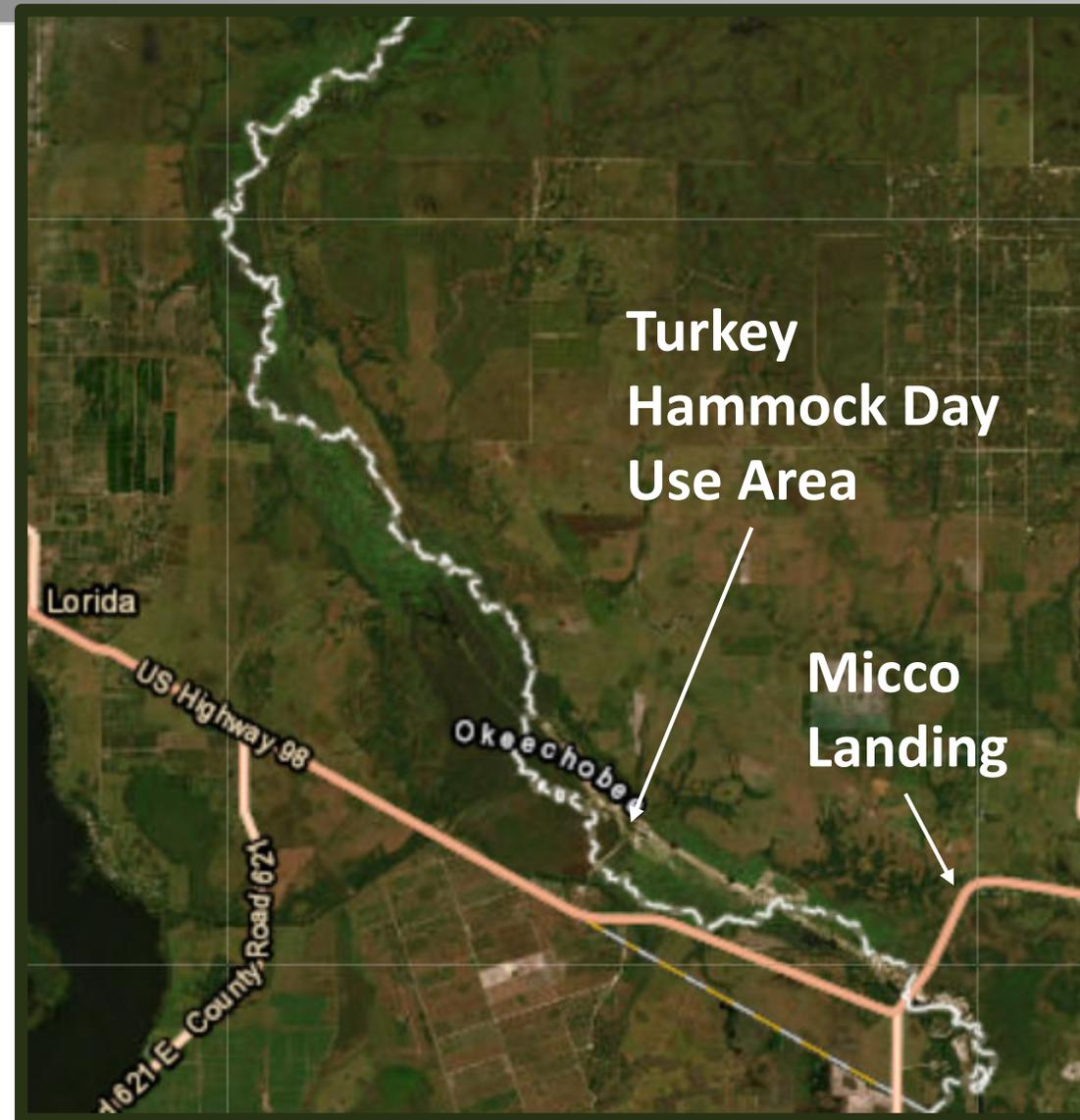
TWO NEW CAMPSITES ON KISSIMMEE RIVER

- 2 primitive campsites with picnic tables and fire rings
- Reservations made online for Special Use License
(<https://www.sfwmd.gov/community-residents/recreation/sul>)
- Boat-in access only
- Nearest boat ramps are 4E's and S-65D structure



TURKEY HAMMOCK DAY USE AREA, KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN

- Designated day use area with picnic table and fire ring
- No overnight camping
- Airboat access only (or hiking if floodplain dry)
- Nearest boat ramps are Istokpoga Canal and 4E's



TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS

KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN



TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS

KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN



TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN

Picnic tables loaded in boats



Seaboard Marsh South Boat-in Site



TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS

KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN



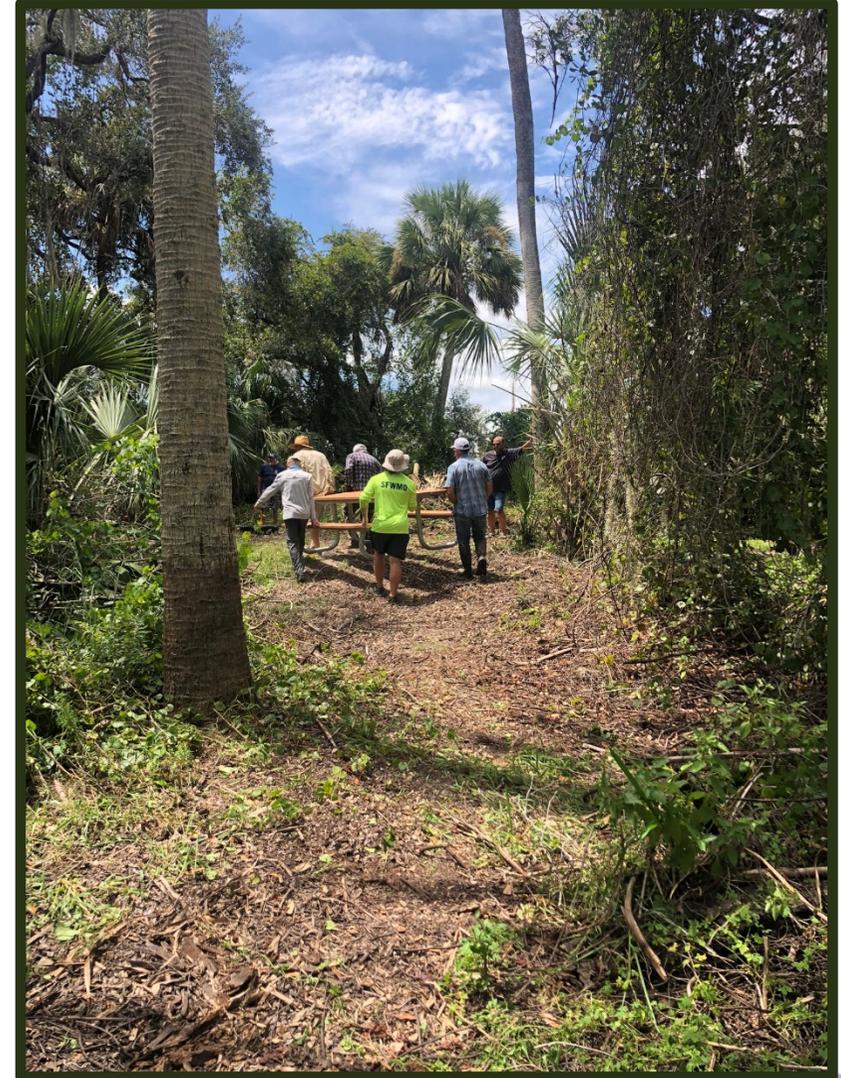
Seaboard Marsh South Boat-in Site

TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS

KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN



Chandler Slough Boat-in Site



TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS

KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN



Chandler Slough Boat-in Site



TWO CAMPSITES AND DAY USE AREA VOLUNTEERS

KISSIMMEE RIVER FLOODPLAIN



Chandler Slough Boat-in Site



- A huge **Thank You!** to Volunteers from both the **Florida Paddling Trails Association** and the **Florida Sportsman's Conservation Association** for helping on September 6.



COMMENTS/QUESTIONS?

Zoom:

- If you're participating via Zoom – use the Raise Hand feature

Phone:

- If you're participating via Phone –
 - *9 Raises Hand
 - *6 Mutes/Unmutes

THANK YOU!

MCHEEK@SFWMD.GOV