



South Florida Water Management District

RECREATIONAL PUBLIC FORUM AGENDA

March 24, 2025

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. Alligator Alley (I-75) Recreational Updates - Ann Broadwell, Environmental Manager, Florida Department of Transportation
3. Indian River Lagoon South Recreational Features Validation Report - Michael Bush, Project Manager, USACE; and Gustavo Suarez-Narvaez, P.E., Planning Technical Lead, USACE
4. Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) South Recreational Features - Cecilia Simpson, Project Manager, USACE
5. CEPP North Update - Greg Nolte, Project Manager, SFWMD
6. Vegetation Management in Stormwater Treatment Areas - Nathan Ralph, Section Leader, SFWMD
7. Recreational Project & Facility Updates - Mike Cheek, Recreation Project Manager, SFWMD
8. Recreational Discussion, Updates and Future Meeting Topics
9. Adjourn

Presentations: (Staff contact, Yvette Bonilla)

Agenda Item Background:

Presentations:

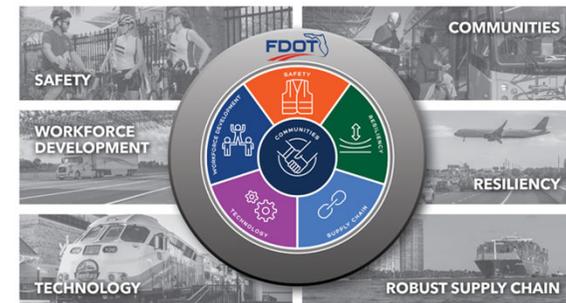
- 02 Alligator Alley
- 03 Indian River Lagoon
- 04 CEPP South
- 05 CEPP North
- 06 Vegetation Management
- 07 REC Project & Facility Updates

Alligator Alley (I 75) Recreational Updates

Ann Broadwell, District 4 Environmental Manager

Broward County

Financial Management # 453510-1



Alligator Alley (I 75) Recreational Updates Agenda

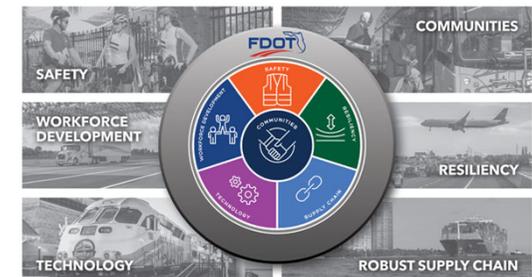
I 75 Boat Ramps

MM 35 Rest Area – new Environmental Education Exhibit

Alligator Statue

Observation Tower

Wildlife Crossing/Safety update





5 Counties

- Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River

Miles

- 52.4 million miles travelled daily
- 6,016 Lane Miles
- 5,000 Square Miles
- 1,385 Centerline Miles

Bridges

- 663 fixed
- 38 movable

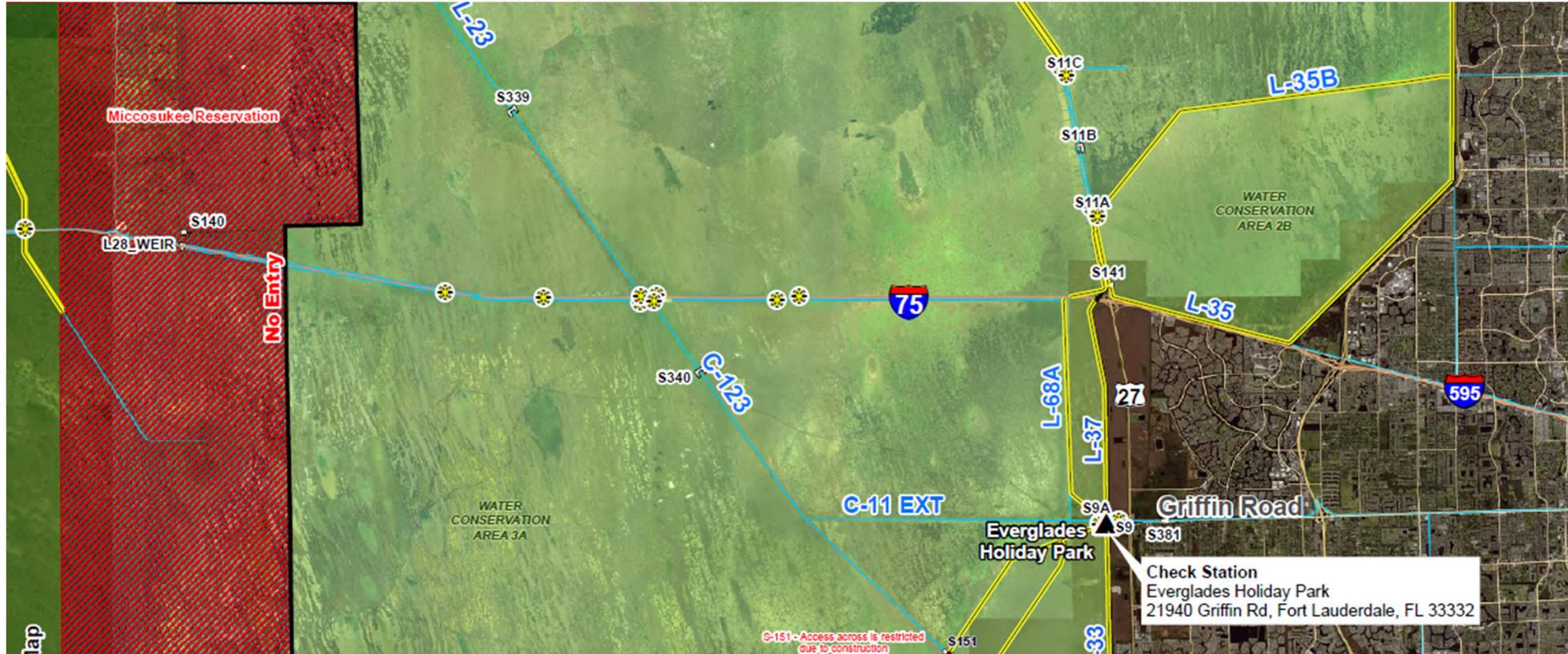
Population

- **3,615,400 Residents**

Land, Air, & Sea

- 90 Airports
- 3 Deep Water Ports
- 2 Rail Lines (Freight and Passenger)
- THE FIRST TUNNEL IN THE STATE





Boat Ramps Update

All boat ramps currently in the design phase

Financial Management # 453510-1

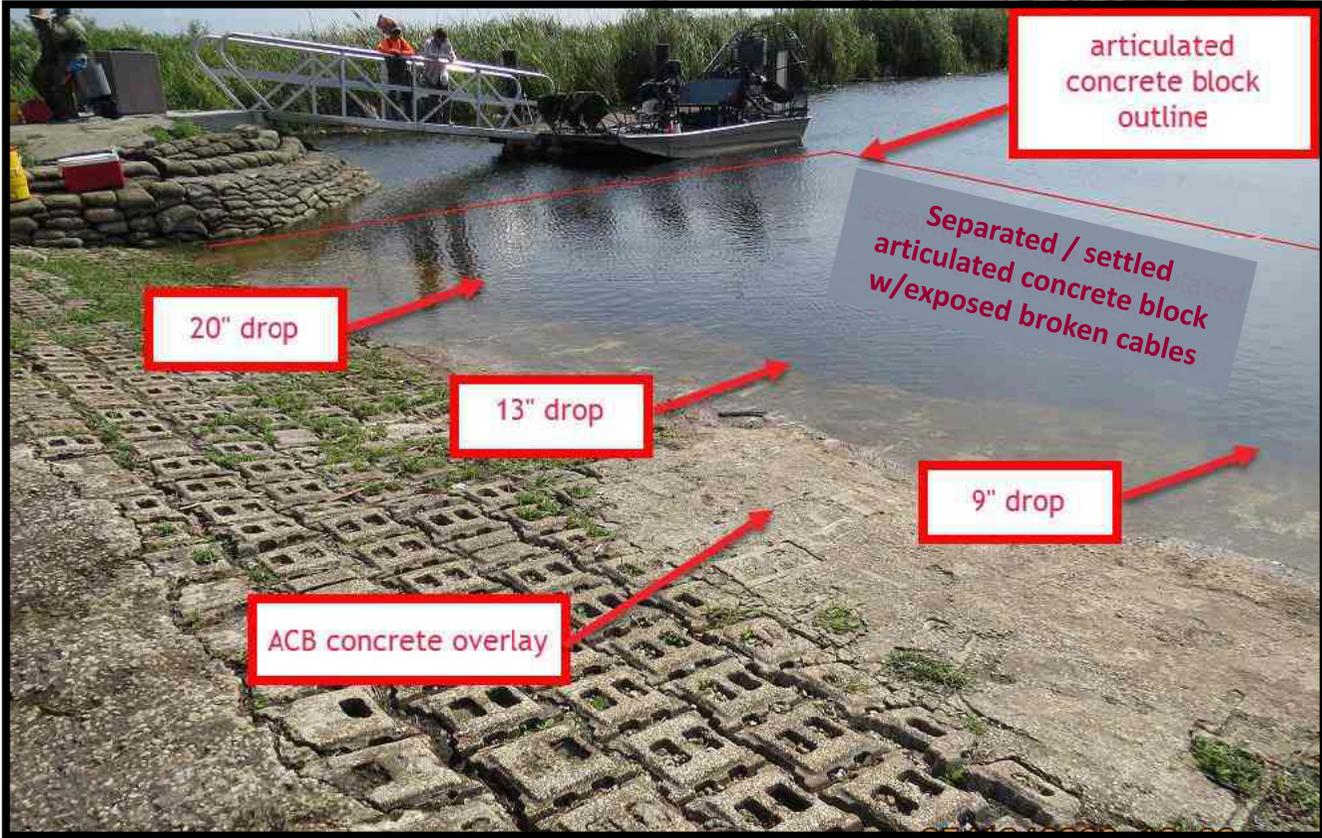
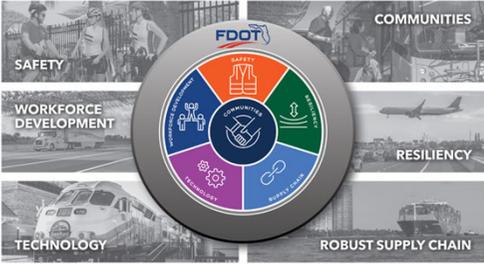
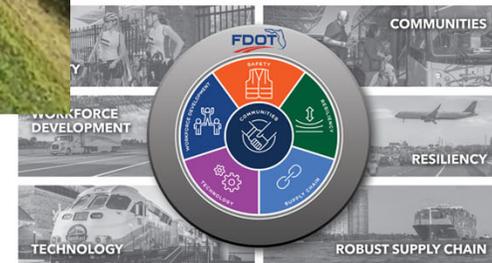


Photo 2: 86BR01 Deficiency Photo



US 27 Boat Ramp Update

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I 75 MM 35 Rest Area

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I-75 Alligator Alley Environmental Education Project

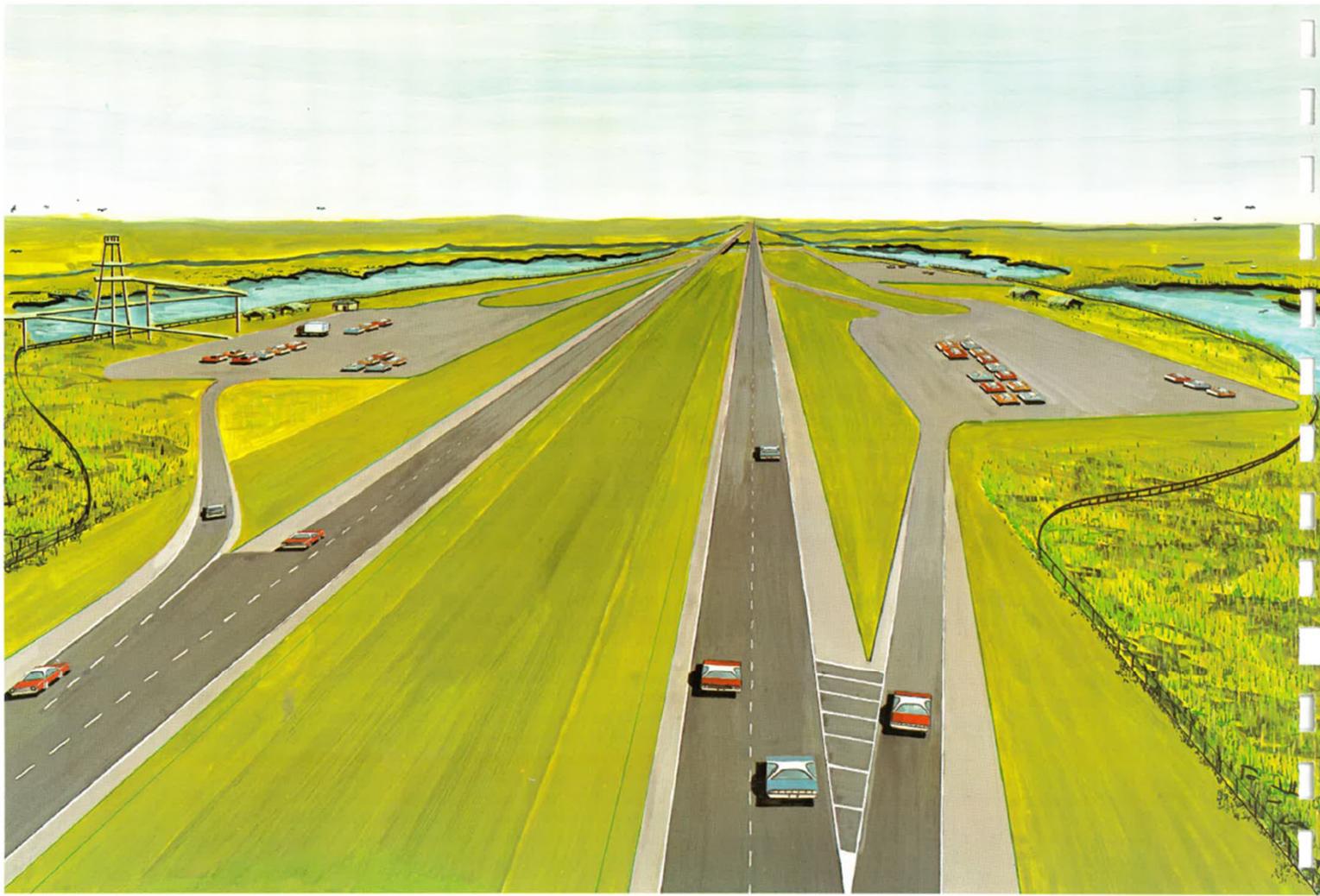
Alligator Plaza

- Statue installed October 2023.
- 16 feet long
- Weighs 999lbs



I 75 MM 35 Rest Area





PROPOSED REST AREA-RECREATIONAL ACCESS FACILITY

134

FIGURE 49



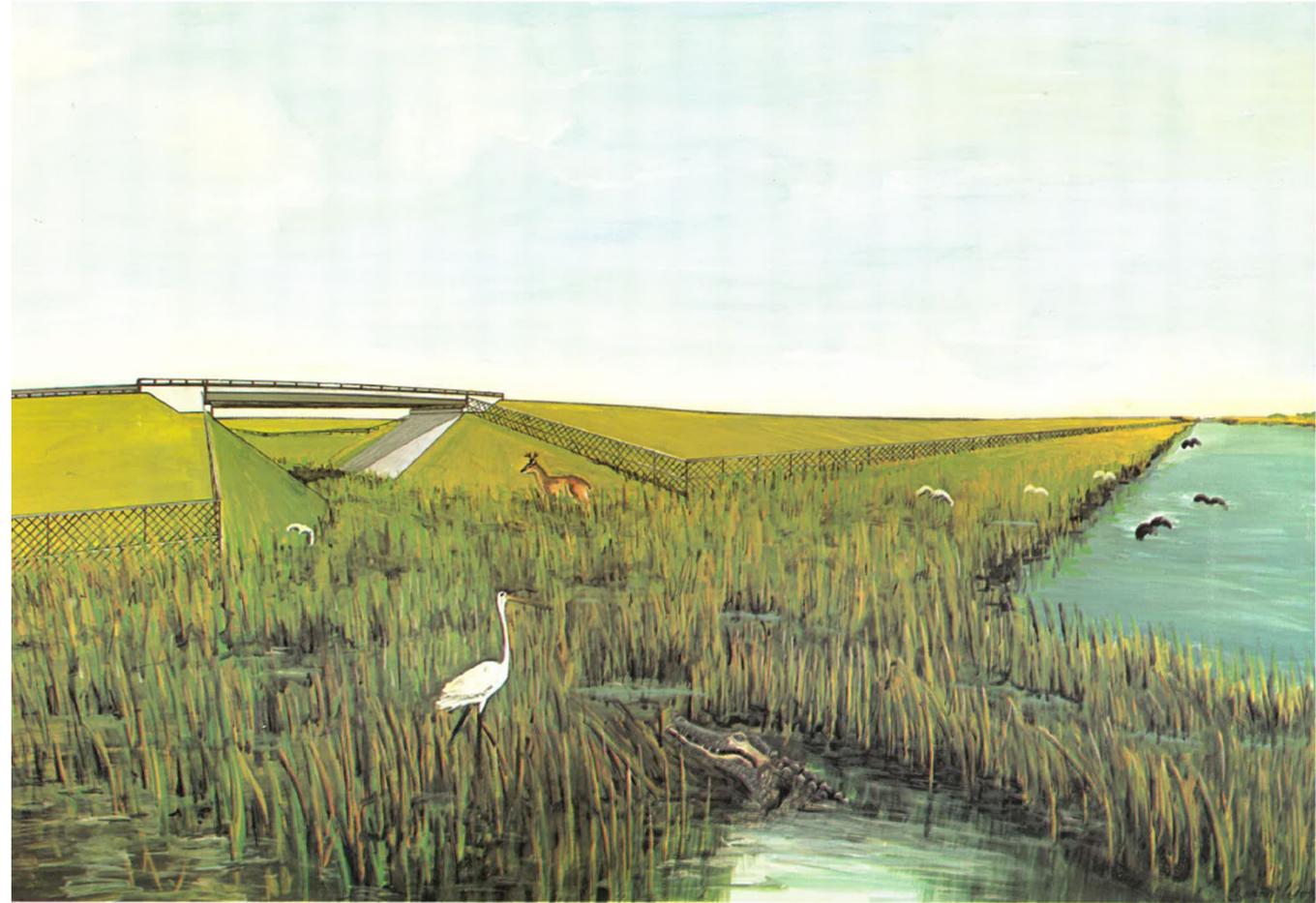
1974 EIS Rendering





Wildlife Crossing and Safety Update

- New fencing in District 4 section
- Guard Rail in the median



PROPOSED LAND BRIDGE FOR WILDLIFE



CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FLORIDA PROJECT INDIAN RIVER LAGOON SOUTH PROJECT (IRL-S) RECREATION FEATURES

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SFWMD RECREATIONAL PUBLIC FORUM
March 24, 2025, 5:00 – 8:00 PM



***Trusted Partners Delivering Value
Today for a Better Tomorrow***



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US Army Corps of Engineers
BUILDING STRONG.





Michael Bush

Project Manager

Programs and Project Management Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

Michael.A.Bush@usace.army.mil





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HOUSEKEEPING



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- Questions and comments will be taken at the end of the presentation.
- During feedback and comment times, please state your name and affiliation.



INDIAN RIVER LAGOON – SOUTH (IRL-S) PROJECT TEAM



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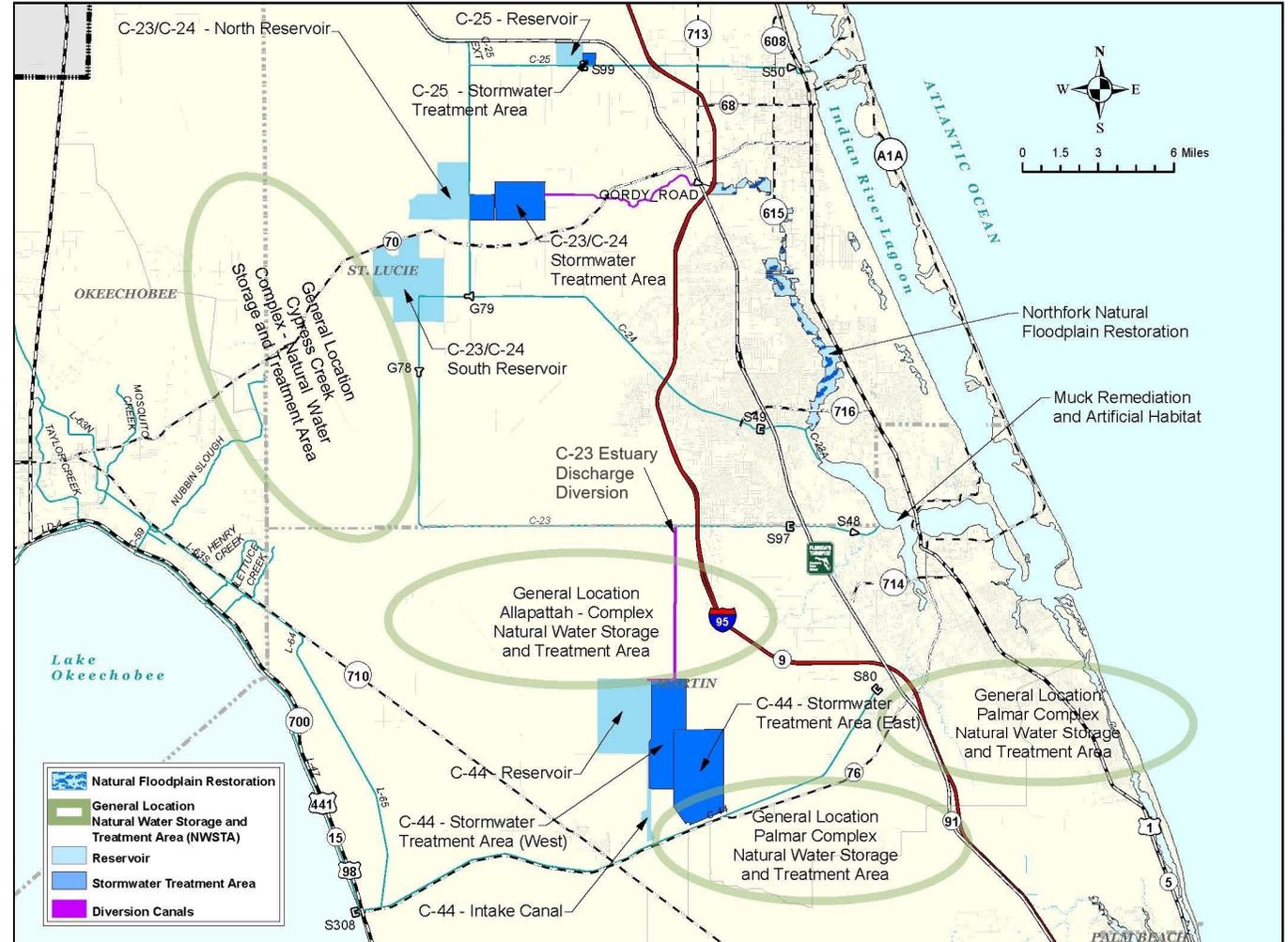
- **Project Management:**
 - Michael Bush, USACE / Mike Drog, USACE
 - Patrick Murphy, SFWMD
- **Planning Technical Lead:** Gustavo Suarez, USACE
- **Environmental Lead:** Samuel Hans, USACE
- **Cultural Resources:** Marc Tiemann, USACE
- **Economics:** Del Cabeche, USACE
- **Engineering Lead:** Joel Gaillard, USACE
- **Tribal Liaisons:**
 - Cindy Thomas, USACE
 - Armando Ramirez, SFWMD



INDIAN RIVER LAGOON – SOUTH (IRL-S) PROJECT OVERVIEW



- Purpose - to restore ecosystem function in the St. Lucie Estuary (SLE) and the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) by providing for approximately 145,000 acre-feet of above-ground reservoir storage volume, improving water quality, and allowing for freshwater deliveries to the SLE and IRL with volumes and timings reflective of historic ecological conditions.
- The project includes reservoirs, stormwater treatment areas, natural water storage and treatment areas and floodplain restoration, diversion of existing flows, oyster habitat creation, and muck removal.



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INDIAN RIVER LAGOON – SOUTH (IRL-S) PROJECT STATUS



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Phase 1 – Storage and Treatment

Completed Construction

- C-44 Reservoir
- C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area (STA)
- C-44 Reservoir & STA - Testing and Monitoring - 2027

Ongoing Construction

- C-23/C-24 Stormwater Treatment Area - 2026
- C-23/C-44 Estuary Discharge Diversion - 2026
- C-23/C-24 North Reservoir (1st Contract) - 2028

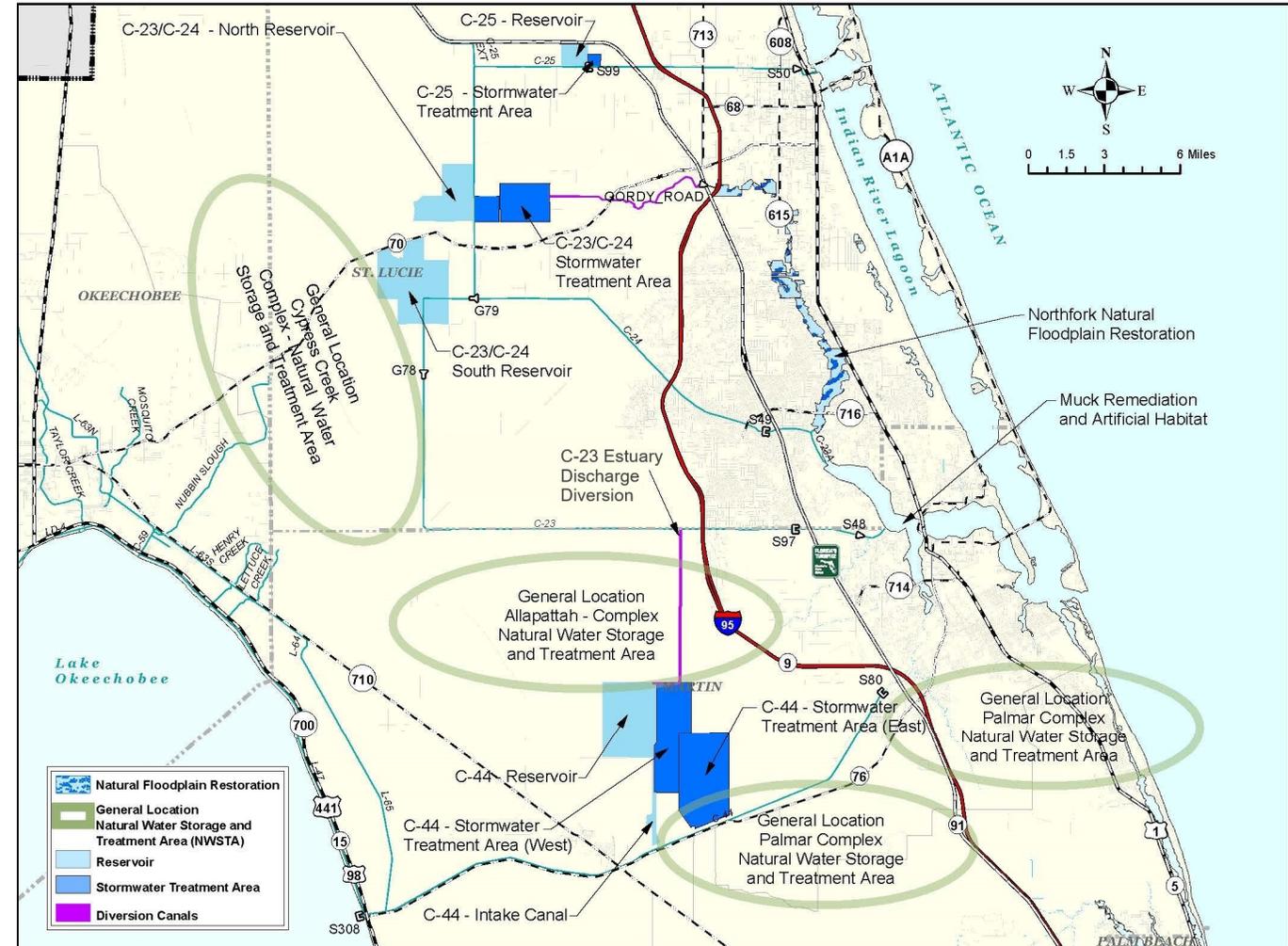
Ongoing Design

- C-23/C-24 North Reservoir (Remaining Contracts)
- C-23/C-24 South Reservoir
- C-25 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area

Phase 2 – Natural Lands

Pending Execution of Project Partnership Agreement

- Natural Storage and Water Treatment Areas
- Floodplain Restoration Area
- Muck Removal
- Habitat Creation for Oysters



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Gustavo A. Suarez

Planning Technical Lead

Planning and Policy Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

Gustavo.A.Suarez-Narvaez@usace.army.mil





AUTHORIZED PROJECT – RECREATION FEATURES



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

- The Indian River Lagoon South (IRL-S) Final Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement (PIR/EIS) was completed in 2004, and IRL-S was authorized in Section 1001(14) of the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. Section 8401(6) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022, Public Law 117-263.
- The project did not include any recreation features in the recommended plan at the time of authorization.



VALIDATION REPORT



WHAT IS A VALIDATION REPORT?

- A Validation Report is a type of Post-Authorization Change Report (PACR).
- Validation Reports are scoped based on newly proposed changes after a project is authorized.

INDIAN RIVER LAGOON SOUTH (IRL-S) VALIDATION REPORT SCOPE

- The lead agency is the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District.
- The South Florida Water Management District (non-federal cost share partner) requested to add recreation features to all components and phases of the IRL-S project.
- A Validation Report (VR) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis are being developed in support of the request to include recreation features.

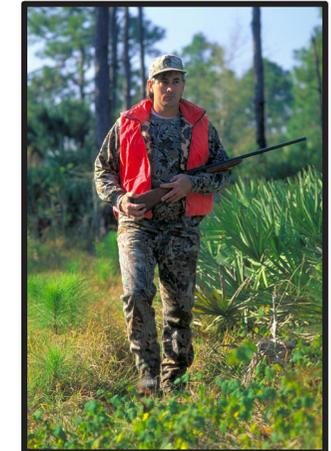


RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES VALIDATION REPORT – ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT



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Indian River Lagoon – South (IRL-S) Project Feature	Potential Recreation Opportunities
Reservoirs & Stormwater Treatment Areas (STA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-44 Reservoir and STA • C-23/24 North and South Reservoirs and STA • C-25 Reservoir and STA 	Fishing, boating, biking, hiking, wildlife viewing, hunting, birding
Natural Water Storage and Treatment Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palmar Complex (includes South Fork Complex) • Allapattah Complex 	Birding, wildlife viewing, hiking, biking, hunting, camping, fishing, horseback riding, picnicking, boating
Floodplain Restoration Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Fork Natural Floodplain Restoration 	Birding, wildlife viewing, biking kayaking, hiking, fishing
Muck Remediation	Fishing, boating
Artificial Oyster Habitat	Fishing, boating



Example Recreation Opportunities. Photo Credit: SFWMD

Presenter: Gustavo Saurez



RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES VALIDATION REPORT – ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT



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Recreation features to be considered may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Shelters
- Parking
- Public Restrooms
- Access roads
- Possible additional boat ramps
- Possible crest bike/walking path markings
- Other features included in recently Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) authorized projects.
- Camping
- Equestrian facilities
- Boardwalks,
- Viewing platforms
- Trails



Photo Credit: SFWMD

Presenter: Gustavo Saurez



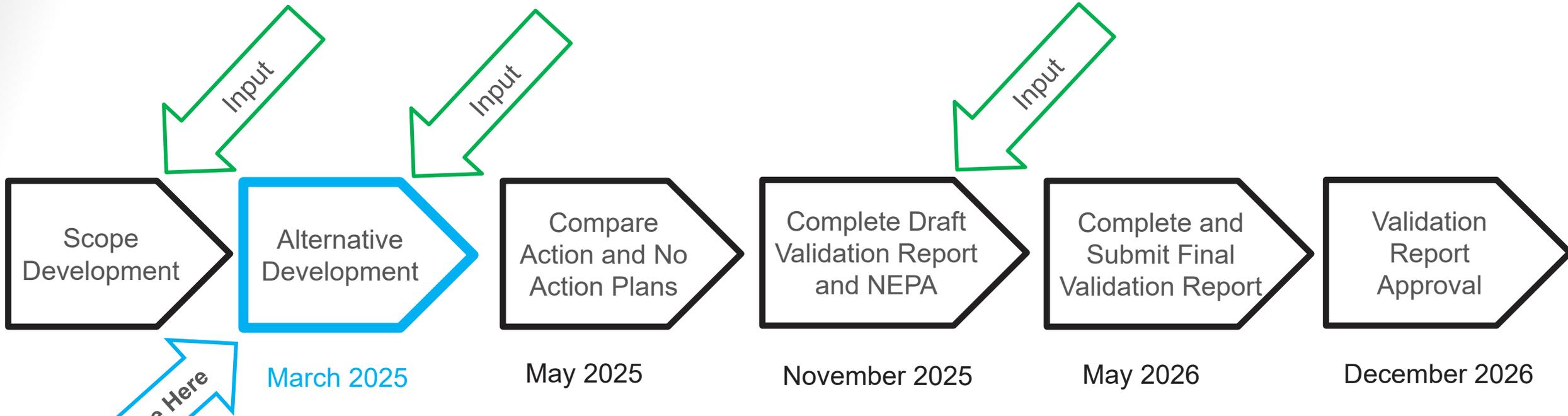
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HOW TO PARTICIPATE



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What are we doing and how are we doing it?



Tribal, stakeholder, and public input is very important



Presenter: Gustavo Saurez



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FEEDBACK REQUESTED - EXAMPLES



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- What areas within the Indian River Lagoon South (IRL-S) Project footprint would benefit from recreation features?
- Are there any sensitive areas or resources that have not been considered where recreation should be avoided?
- Are there specific types of recreation features not on our list that we should consider?
- Other feedback?

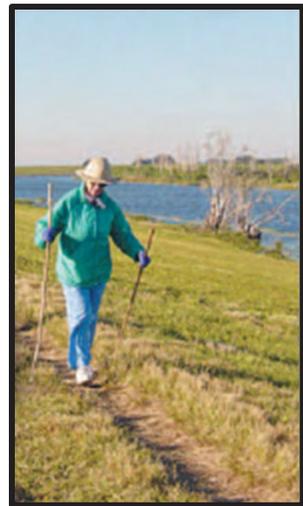


Photo Credit: SFWMD

Presenter: Gustavo Saurez



RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES VALIDATION REPORT – SCHEDULE



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- Development and Evaluation of Recreational Features:
 - **January – March 2025**

- Release of Integrated Draft Validation Report and National Policy Act (NEPA) Document:
 - **Target: November 2025**

- Final Integrated Validation Report and NEPA:
 - **Target: May 2026**

- Validation Report Decision:
 - **Target: December 2026**



Photo Credit: SFWMD

Presenter: Michael Bush



Public Feedback



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Please state your Name and Affiliation before providing comments, suggestions, or questions.



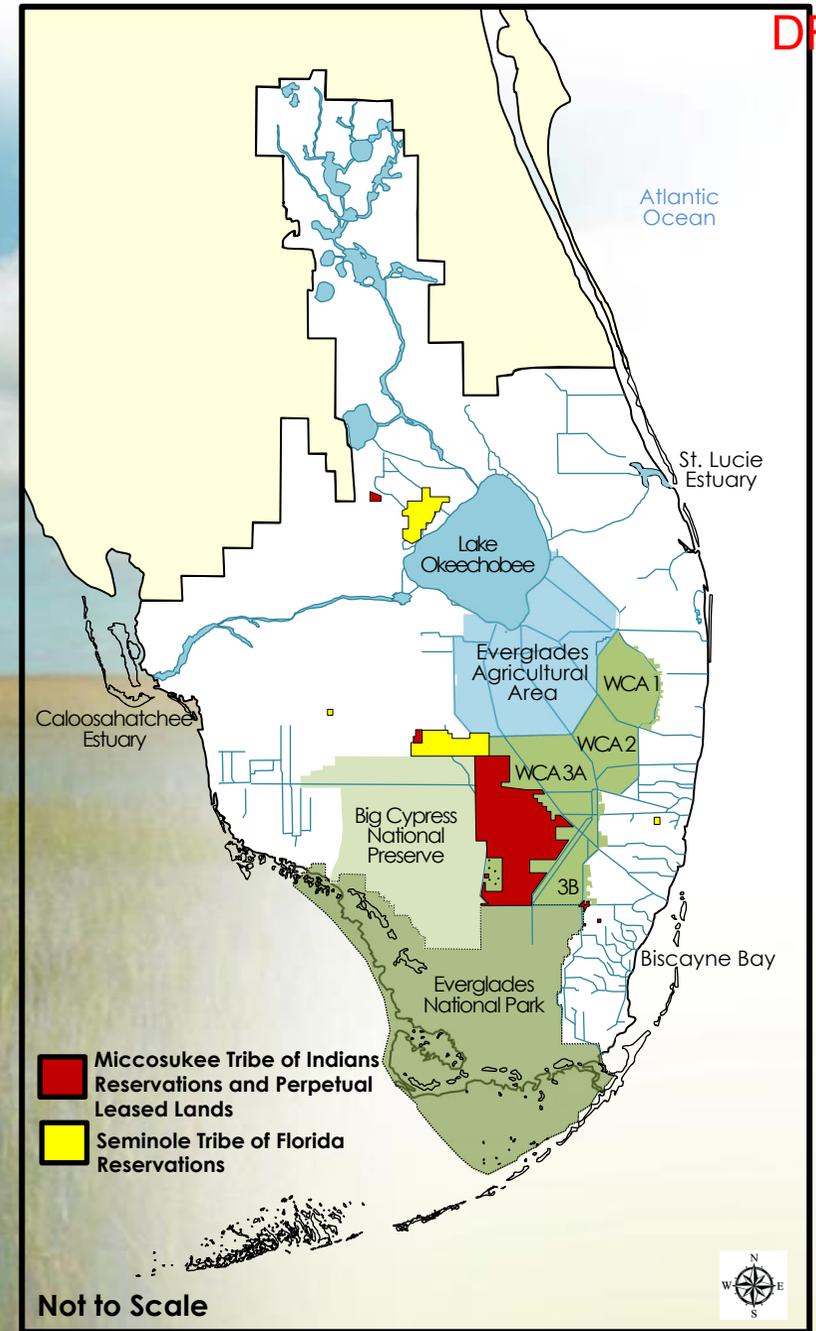
Email: IRL-S_recreation@usace.army.mil
(public feedback via email closes March 28th, 2025)

CENTRAL EVERGLADES PLANNING PROJECT (CEPP) SOUTH PHASE

SFWMD RECREATIONAL PUBLIC FORUM
March 24, 2025

PRESENTED BY: CC SIMPSON, P.E.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (USACE)
SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
(SFWMD)



MEETING PURPOSE AND AGENDA



AGENDA

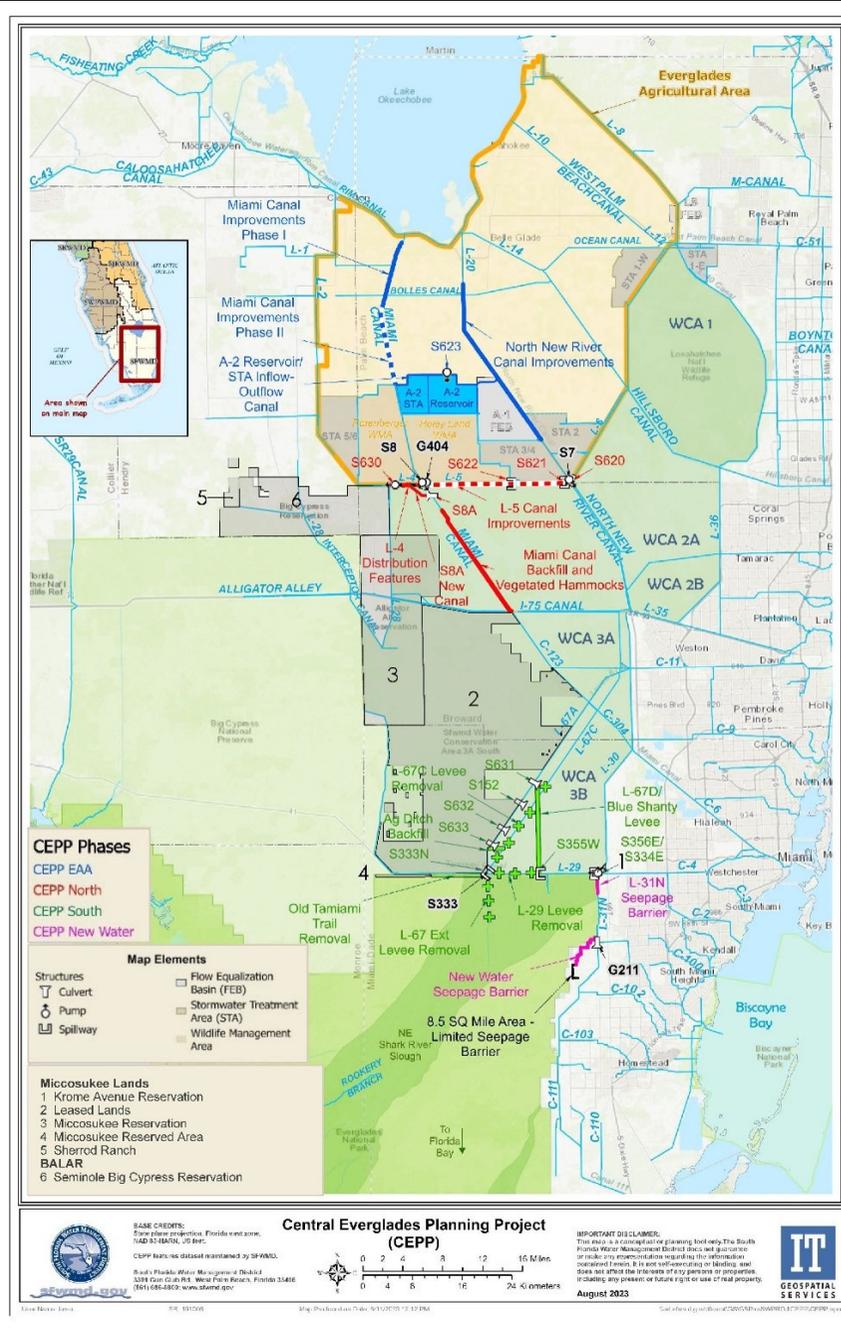
- Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) South Phase Overview: USACE
- CEPP South Recreation Features
- Decomp Physical Model (DPM) Purpose
- Limited Reevaluation (LRR) Effects on Recreation
- Next Steps



CEPP PURPOSE



Northern Estuaries
 Water Conservation Area (WCA) 3
 Everglades National Park (ENP)
 Florida Bay





CEPP OVERVIEW

CEPP EAA

Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) moves new water south, stores it, and treats it before it goes to the Everglades.

CEPP North

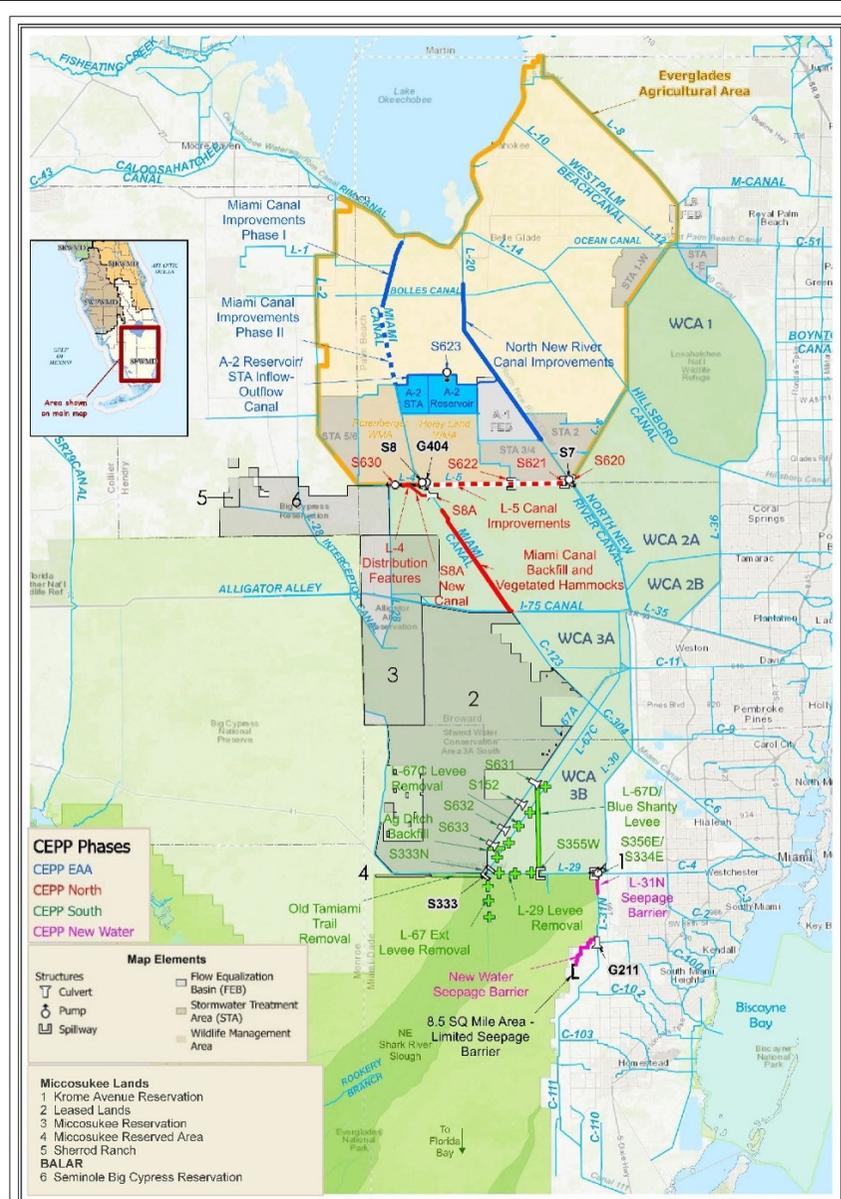
Provides inflow facilities needed to restore northern Miccosukee Water Conservation Area (MWCA) 3A and move additional water south for ENP.

CEPP South

Removes water flow barriers in the southern portion of the project's footprint to flow more water south into ENP.

CEPP New Water

Puts protections in place to prevent seepage and reduce flood risk to the east of ENP, thereby allowing additional existing water to flow south of Tamiami Trail.



Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)

DATE CREDIT: State of Florida, Florida West Coast, NAD 83-BNAD, US FWS.

CEPP Phases dataset maintained by SPWMD.

Map of Florida showing the location of the project in the central Everglades region.

Scale: 0 to 16 Miles / 0 to 24 Kilometers

August 2023

IT GEOSPATIAL SERVICES

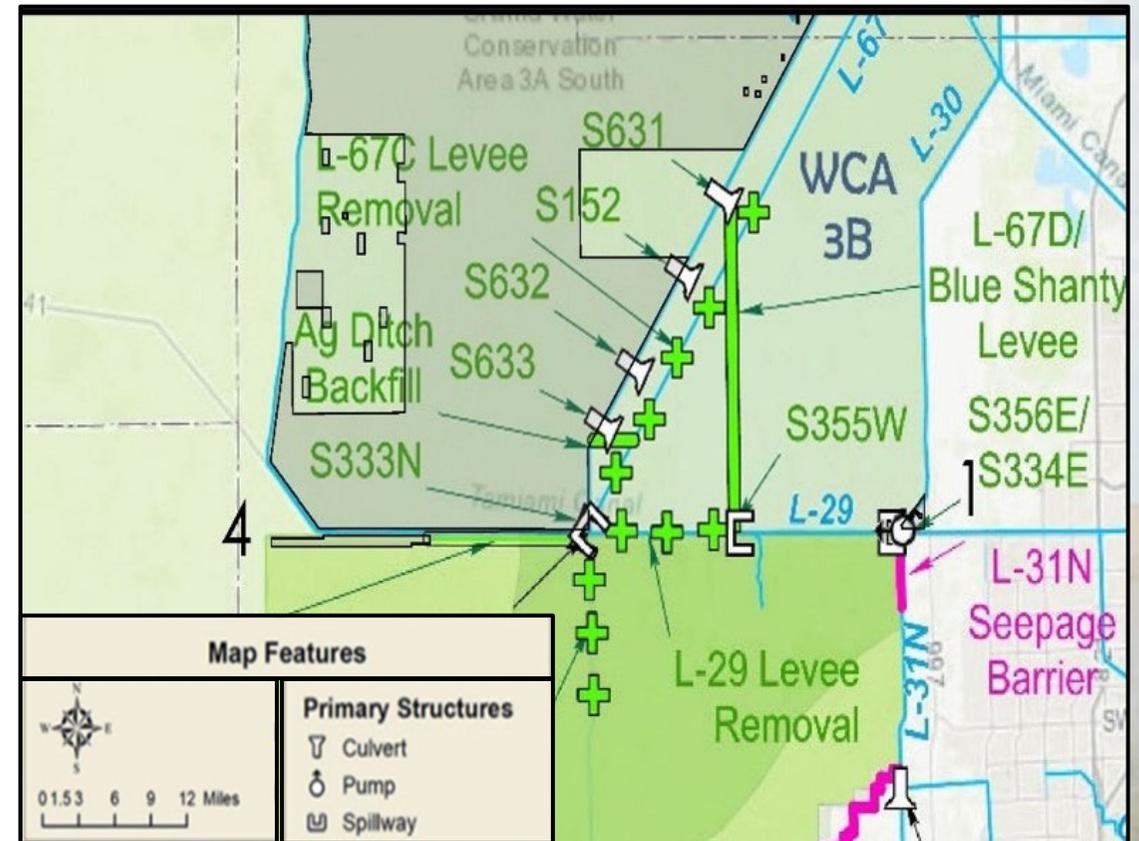


CEPP SOUTH PHASE FEATURES FROM 2014 FINAL PIR/EIS



Planned Work	Details
L67 Gated Culverts S-631, S-632, S-633	500 cfs/each
Spoil Removal NW Side of L-67A Canal	1.7 miles
S-355W Gate Spillway	1230 cfs
S-344E Spillway & S-356E Pump Station	1000 cfs
Blue Shanty Flowway Work	Details
Degrade L-67 Extension Levee & Backfill Canal	5.5 miles
Degrade L-67C Levee	8 miles
L-67D Blue Shanty Levee	8.5 miles
Ag Ditch Backfill	4.1 miles
Degrade L-29 Levee	4.3 miles

Completed Work	Details
S-333N Spillway Modification	1150 cfs
Remove Old Tamiami Trail Road	5.45 miles





2014 CEPP FINAL PIR - RECREATION

Site F: Education and Boat Ramps

- Picnic Table
- Shelter
- Kayak Launch Site
- Toilet

Site G: Public Access

- Increase Parking Capacity
- Picnic Tables
- Toilet

Site H: Public Access

- Picnic Table
- Kayak Launch Site

Site I: Spoil Island Camping

- Picnic Table
- Fire Ring
- Toilet
- Courtesy Dock

Site J: Blue Shanty Public Access

- Airboat Crossing

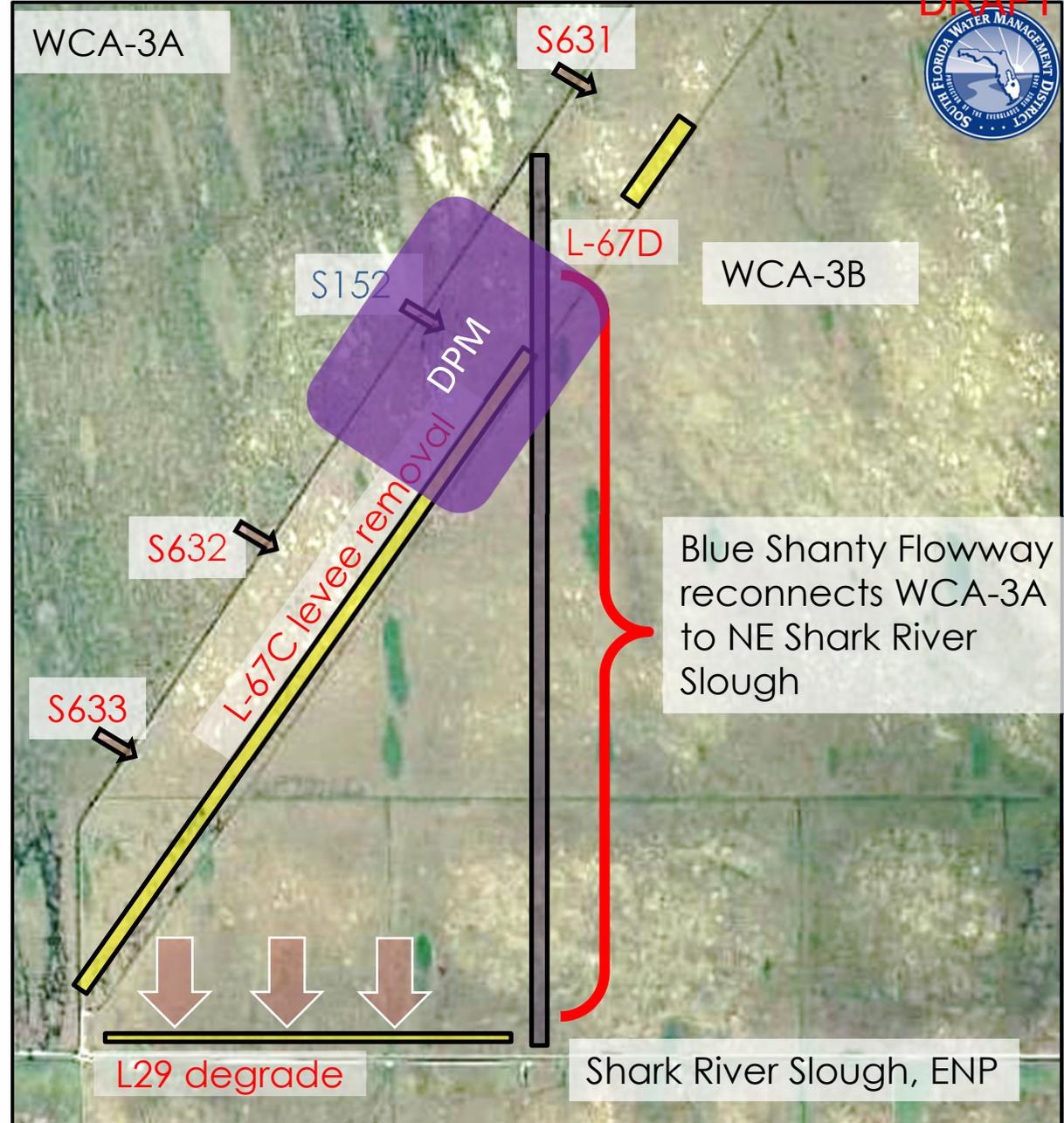




DECOMP PHYSICAL MODEL PURPOSE



- Temporary Field Test Provide Information About Ecological Benefits/Consequences
 - Sheet Flow
 - Understand Gated Culvert Velocities
 - Vegetation Effects
 - Nutrient Loads
 - Effects on ENP

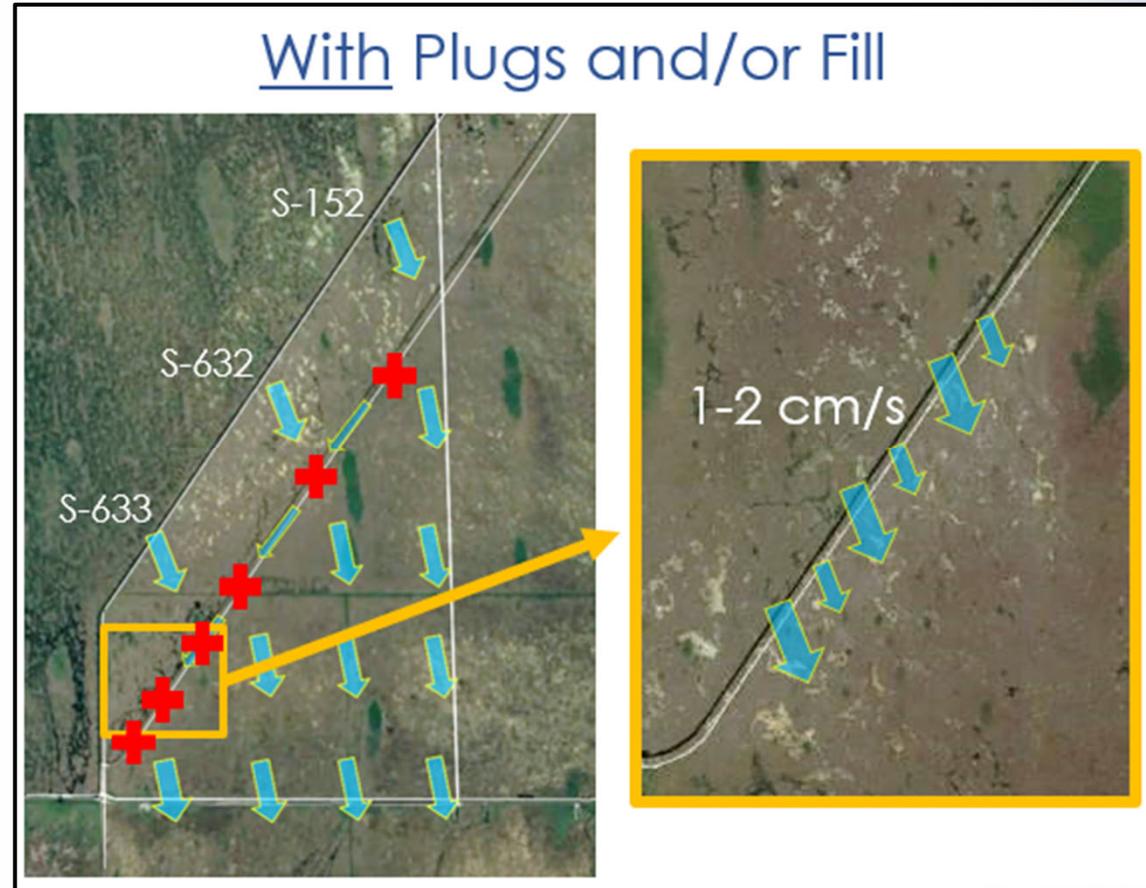




FEATURES UNDER CONSIDERATION

Recreation Impacts in L-67C Canal

- Canal Plugs Reduce Access in Canal
- Different Lengths, Heights, and Plug Numbers



NEXT STEPS

- NEPA Public Comment Period Finished March 13th
 - What We've Heard
 - How It Informed Initial Scope
 - Development of Alternatives
 - Identification of Criteria to Evaluate Alternatives

- Next Public Meeting | Working Workshop TBD

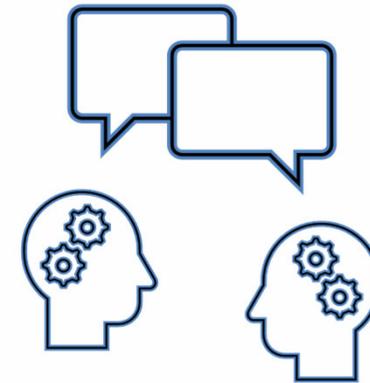


COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Project Comments Due: Comments Welcomed
- Comments may be made during the meeting and submitted in writing to the Jacksonville District Office mailing address or via email:

District Address: Melissa Nasuti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Email: CESAJ-CEPPSouth@usace.army.mil



- Additional information on the project is available at:

<https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/EcosystemRestoration/Central-Everglades-Planning-Project/>

COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Thank You
Any Questions ?



Recreational Public Forum

March 24, 2025



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

Agenda

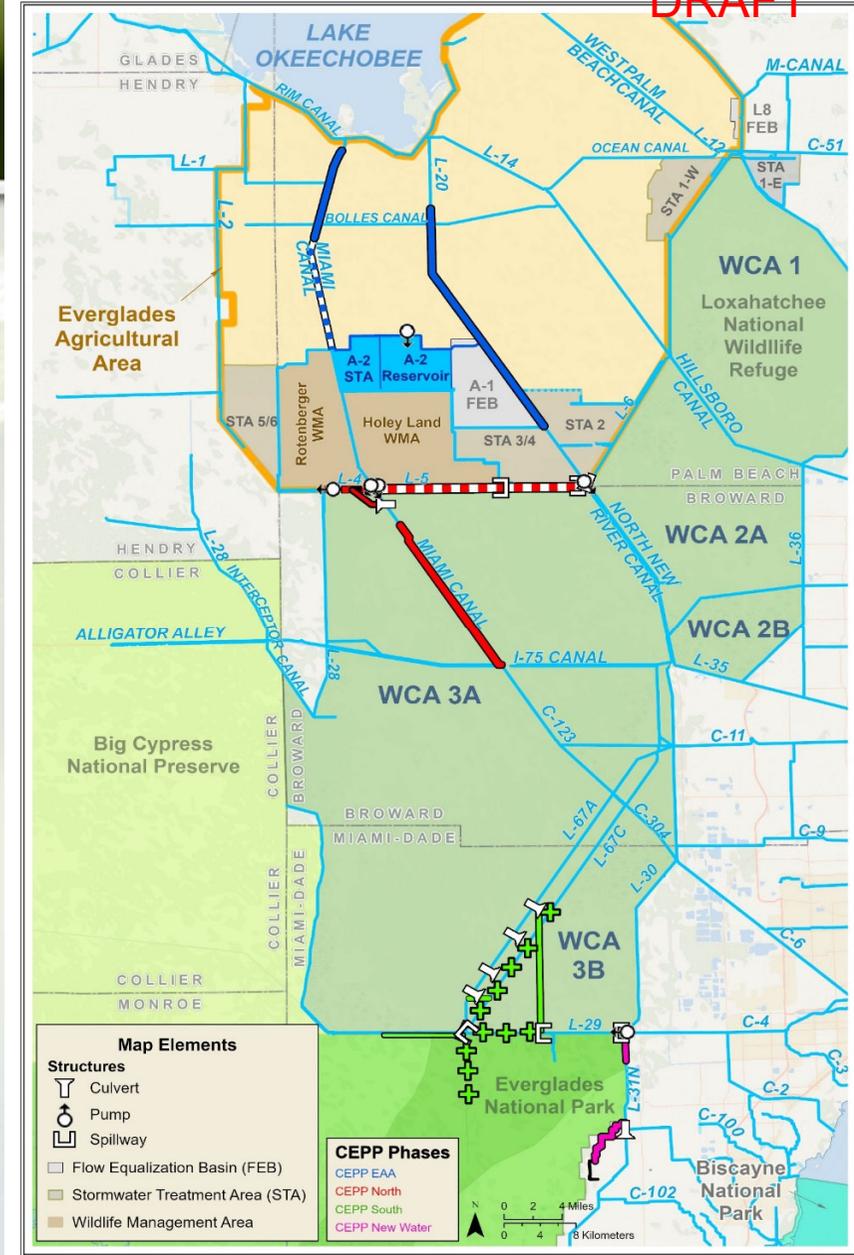
- CEPP Purpose and Overview
- Present CEPP North Features
- Updates
 - L-5 Remnant Canal Improvements
 - S-622 Gated Culvert
 - S-8 Pump Station Modifications
- Review of Recreation Plan

CEPP Overview

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- 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

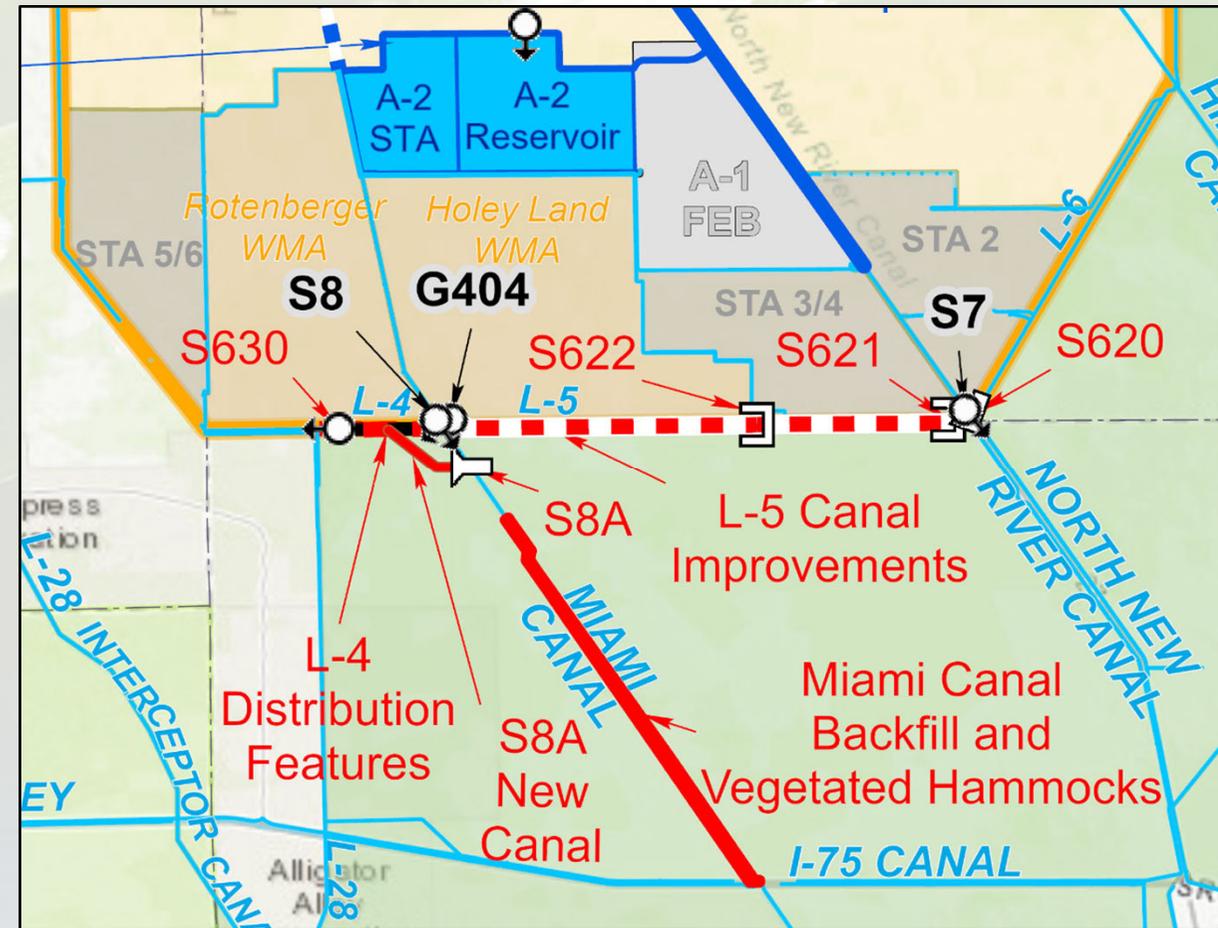
- Four phases
 - EAA improves conveyance, storage, and treatment capacities
 - North redistributes water from east to west along northern portion of WCA-3A
 - South increases flow out of WCA-3A by opening up the southern end of the system
 - New Water provides seepage protection keeping water in ENP



CEPP North Features

CEPP North Features

- S-620 500 cfs Gated Culvert
- S-621 2,500 cfs Gated Spillway
- ➡ ■ S-622 500 cfs Gated Spillway
- ➡ ■ S-8 Pump Station Modifications
 - Crane Refurbishment (Phase 1)
 - Pump Station Modifications (Phase 2)
- S-8A Spillway and Connecting Canal
- S-630 360 cfs Gated Culvert
- L-4 Canal Improvements & Distribution Features
- Miami Canal Backfill and Vegetated Hammocks
- ➡ ■ L-5 Remnant Canal Improvements
- L-5 Canal Improvements



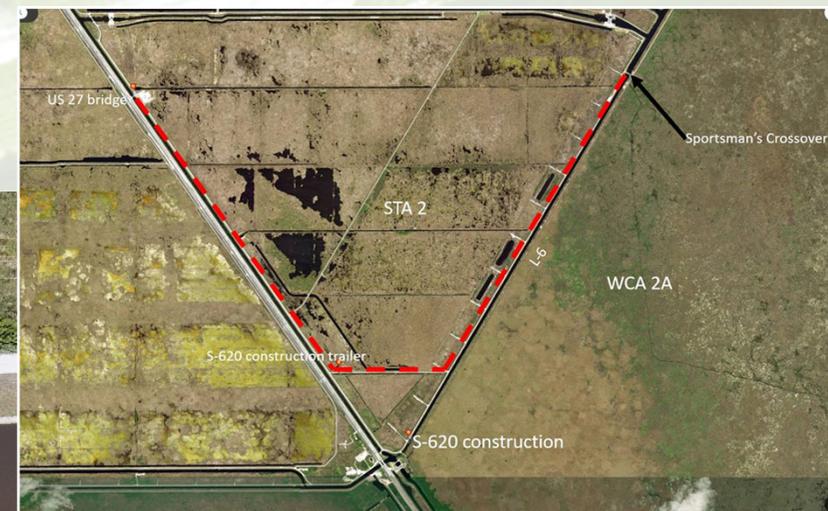
CEPP North Features

S-620 Gated Culvert

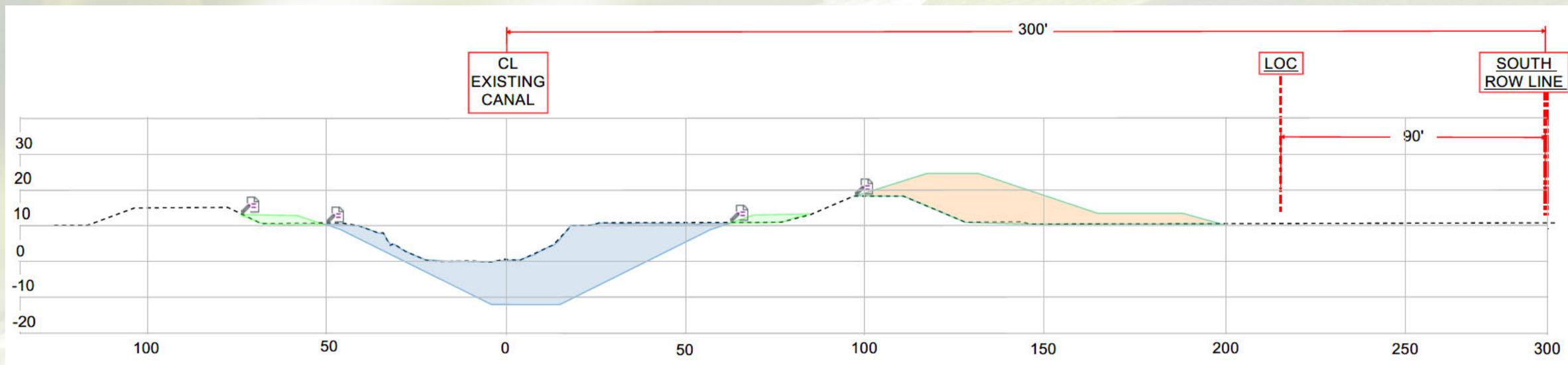
S-620 Gated Culvert and L-6 Canal Improvements



S-620 Gated Culvert & L-6 Canal Improvements



L-5 Remnant Canal Improvements



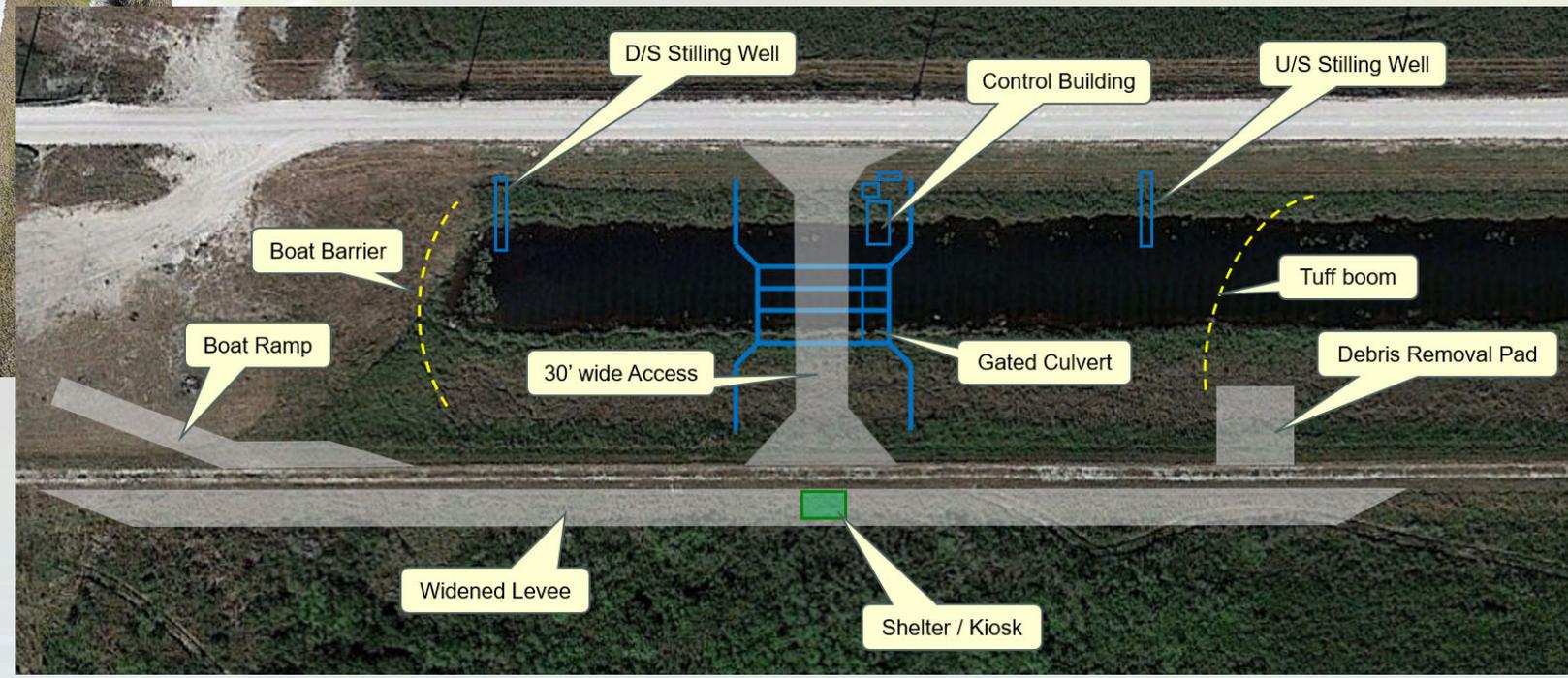
- Cut to enlarge the L-5 Remnant Canal
- Fill for raising the north and south benches
- Over build of south levee with excess material

Typical L-5 Remnant Cross Section, N.T.S

S-622 Gated Culvert Recreation Features



Example: S-620 Gated Culvert



S-622 Gated Culvert schematic

Dredge Material Management & Stockpile Areas

- Dredged Material Management Area (DMMA) and Stockpile Area will be utilized for:
 - L-5 Remnant Canal
 - S-622 Gated Culvert
 - L-5 Canal
- Construction trailers site to be utilized for 3-5 years
- Harold A Campbell Public Use Area to remain open, no planned closures
- Access to STA-3/4, Holey Land and Rotenberger Wildlife Management Areas to remain open during construction



S-8 Pump Station Modifications

S-8 Pump Station Modifications

- Crane Refurbishment (Phase 1)
 - ✓ Construction started April 2024
 - ✓ Substantial completion March 2025
 - ✓ Final completion April 2025
- Pump Station Modifications (Phase 2)
 - Construction to start April 2025
 - Duration ~3.5-years (Winter 2028)
- Traffic to be routed to trash rake bridge when service bridge is closed
- Public notices will be provided on District web page of any closures



S-8 Pump Station, Miami Canal

CEPP North Recreation Plan

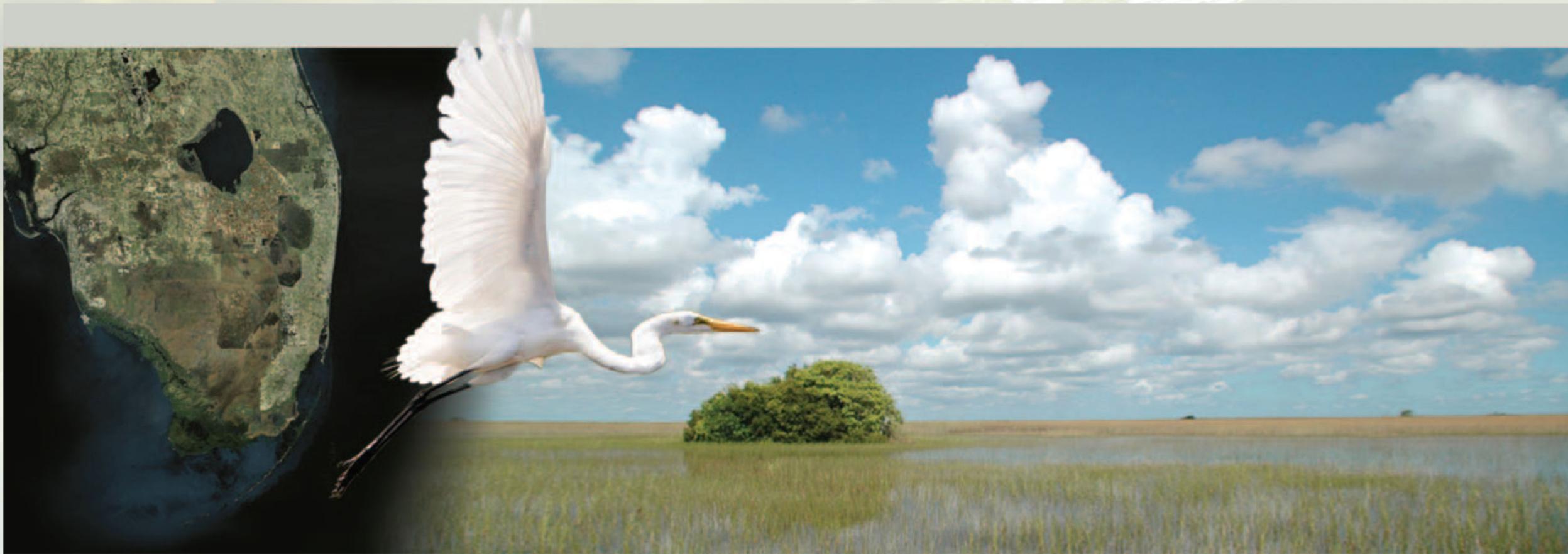
CEPP North – PIR Recreational Plan

- PIR identified recreational access along the L-5 levee
- Three (3) Shelters at key access points
- Maintain access along L-4 levee and into Rotenberger and Holey Land Wildlife Management Areas
- CEPP North Designs:
 - ✓ North L-5 Levee to remain open, 24/7 throughout construction
 - ✓ South L-5 Remnant Levee to be closed during construction
 - ✓ Three existing L-5 levee ramps to WCA-3A to be improved
 - ✓ Includes 3 shelters with parking
 - ✓ 2 Boat ramps into L-5 Canal with parking and will maintain vehicle access across L-5 Canal, (Palmer Crossing)
 - ✓ Relocate existing L-4 levee ramp to WCA-3A
 - ✓ Relocate existing S-8 / Miami Canal boat ramp
 - ✓ Public currently has open access to the entire length of the L-5 and L-4 levees from US27 through S-8, 24/7 and continuous access to Rotenberger and Holey Lands WMAs



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

Questions



Vegetation Management in Stormwater Treatment Areas

SFWMD

Recreation Public Forum

March 24, 2025



Nathan Ralph

Section Lead

Land Resources Bureau

Vegetation Management Section

Mandated Water Quality Improvements

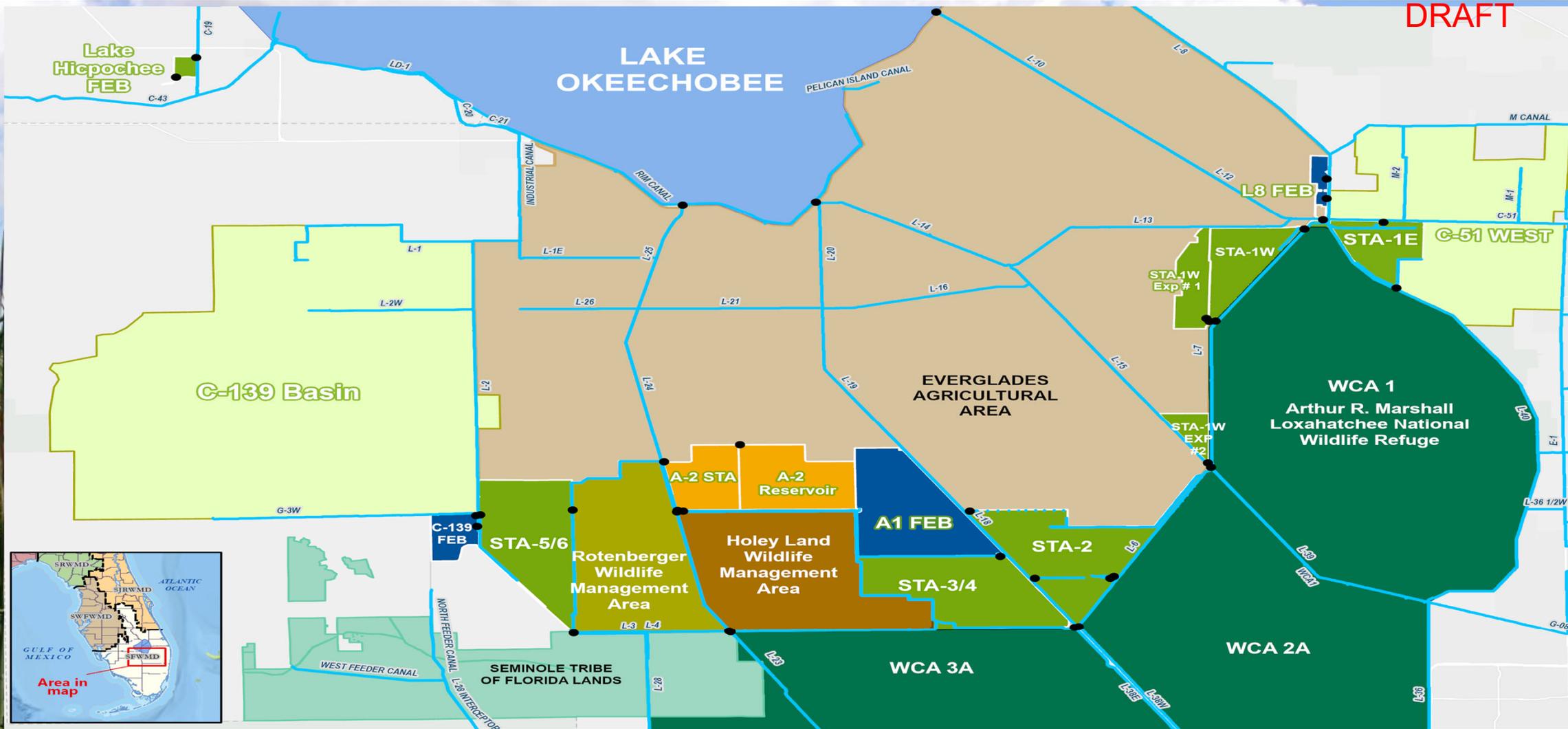
- Everglades Forever Act (1994)
 - Directs SFWMD to construct and operate Storm Water Treatment Areas
 - Objective: Use biological and physical wetland processes to remove surface water nutrients (phosphorus) prior to entering the Everglades



STA-3/4 G370 Pump Station

Presenter: Nathan Ralph

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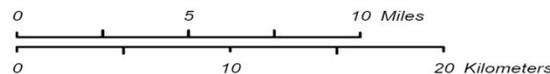


BASE CREDITS:
State plane projection, Florida east zone, NAD 83-HARN, US feet.

South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Rd., West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
(561) 686-8800; www.sfwmd.gov



STA Ecological Conditions Map



IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER:
This map is a conceptual or planning tool only. The South Florida Water Management District does not guarantee or make any representation regarding the information contained herein. It is not self-executing or binding, and does not affect the interests of any persons or properties, including any present or future right or use of real property.

Map Date: March 2025



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Nature-Based Recreation

- Most popular activities
 - Hunting
 - Fishing
 - Birdwatching
 - Hiking/Biking
 - Star Gazing

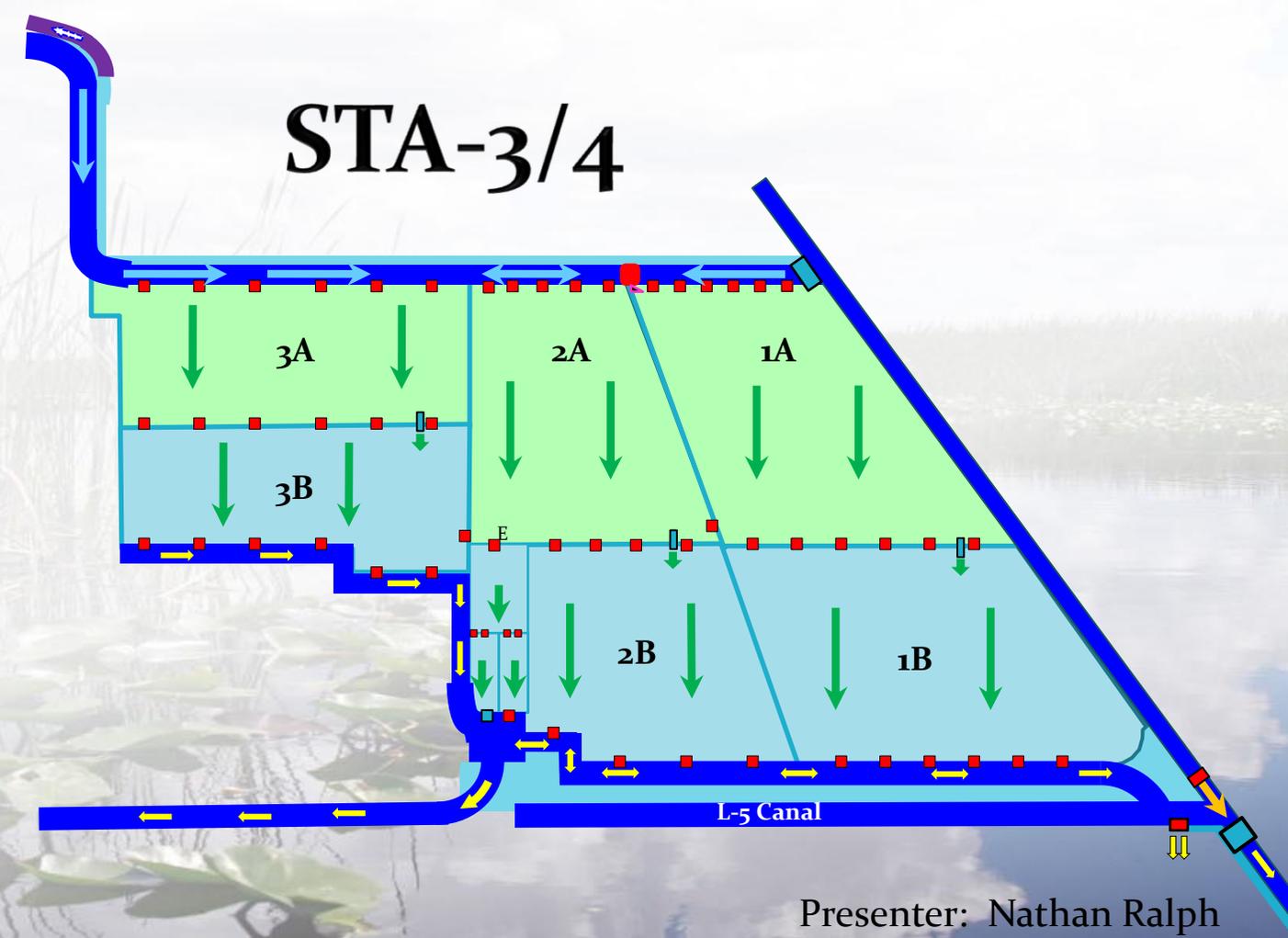


STA waterfowl hunters

Presenter: Nathan Ralph

STA Principals and Design

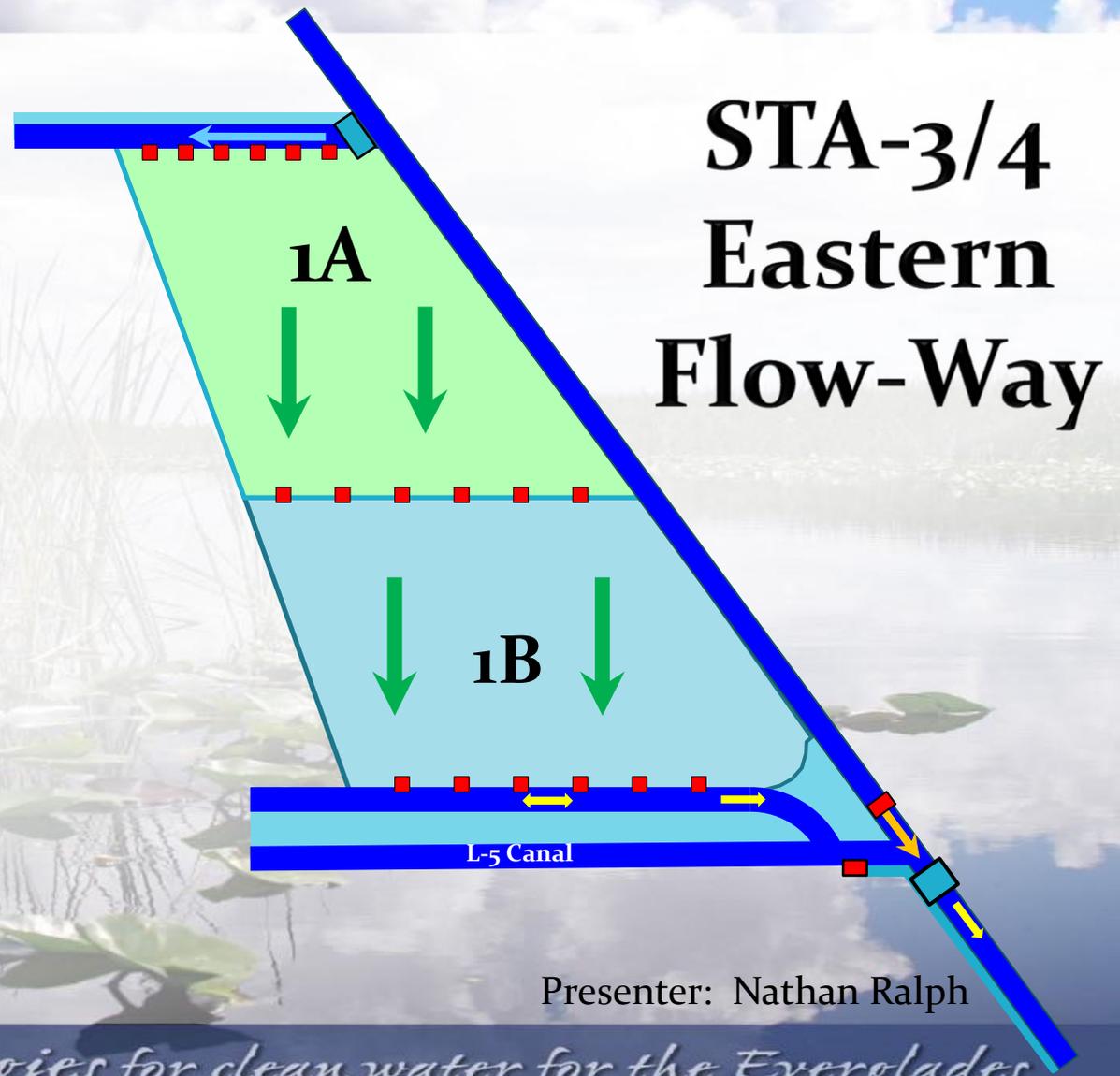
- Each STA consists of multiple flow-ways
- Flow-ways begin with emergent vegetation (e.g., cattail)
- Flow-ways end with mixed marsh (mainly submerged plants)



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

STA Principals and Design

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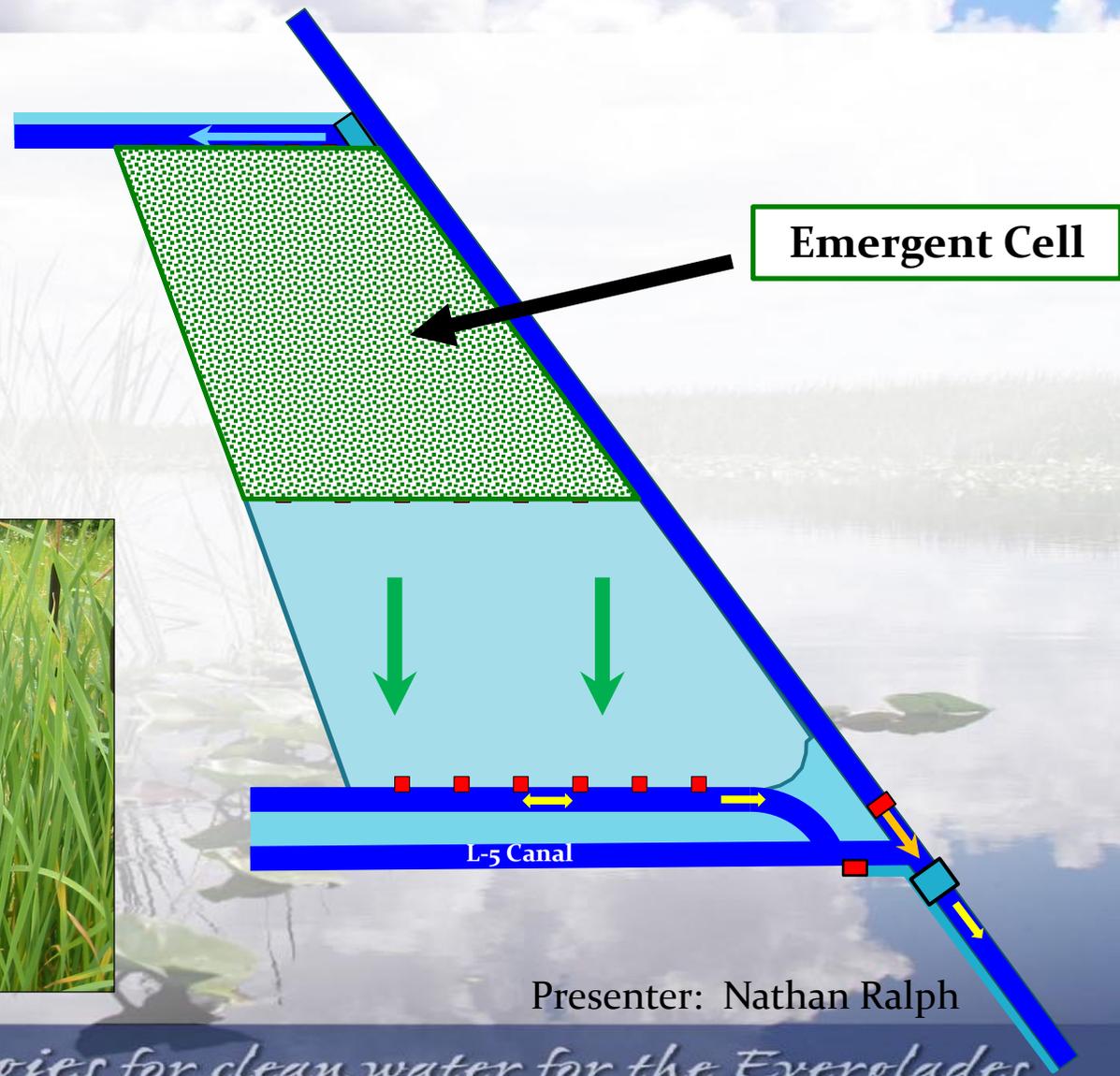
Presenter: Nathan Ralph

STA Principals and Design

- Each STA consists of multiple flow-ways
- Flow-ways begin with emergent vegetation (e.g., cattail)
- Flow-way marsh (native plants)

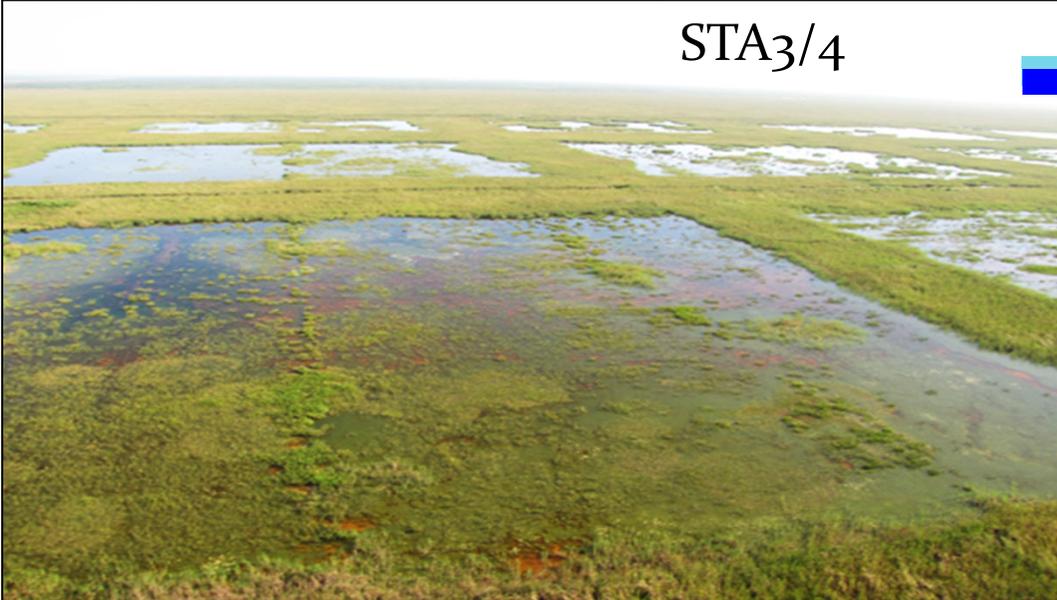


Dense cattail

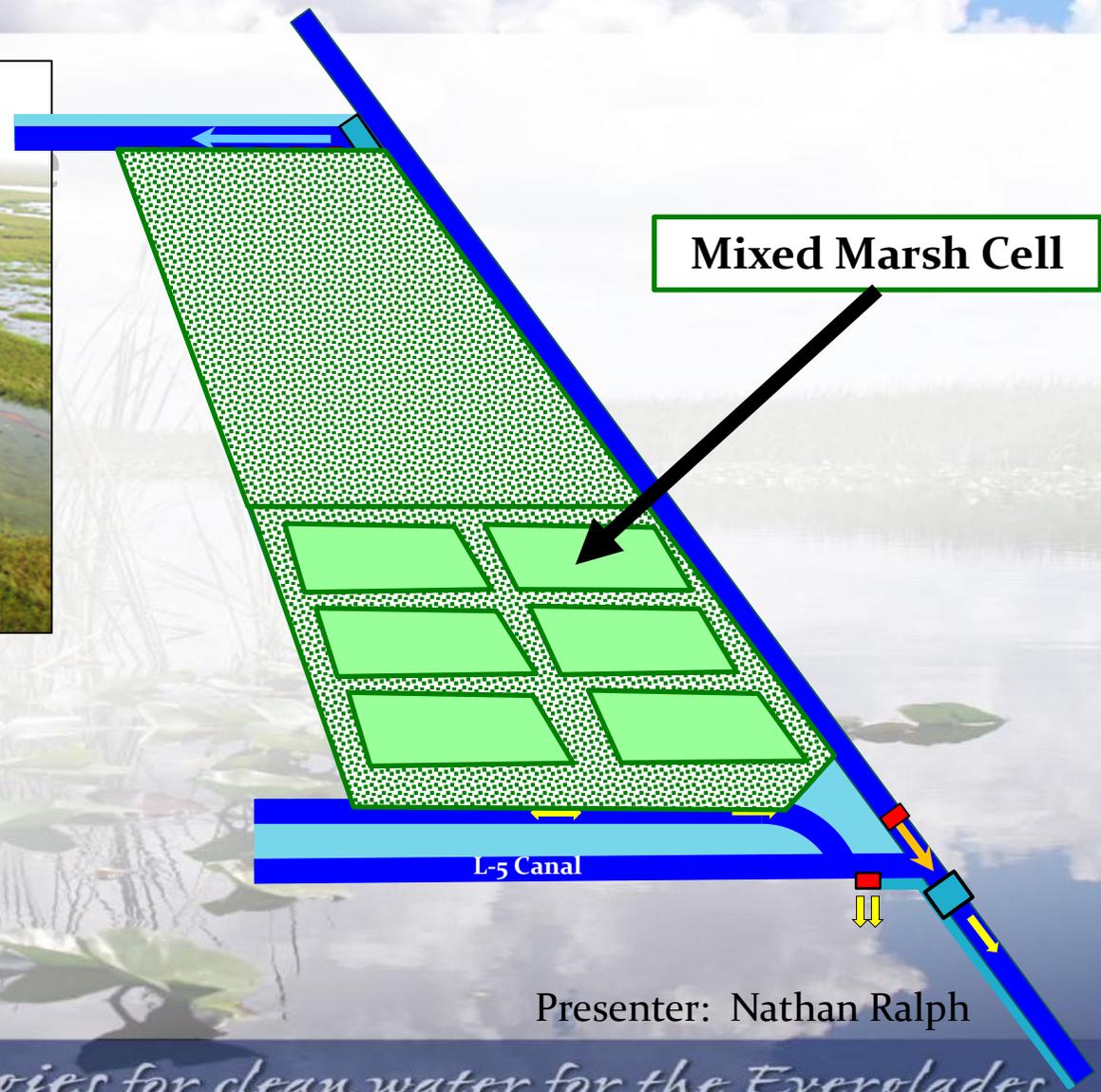


Presenter: Nathan Ralph

STA Principals and Design



- Flow-ways end with mixed marsh (mainly submerged plants)



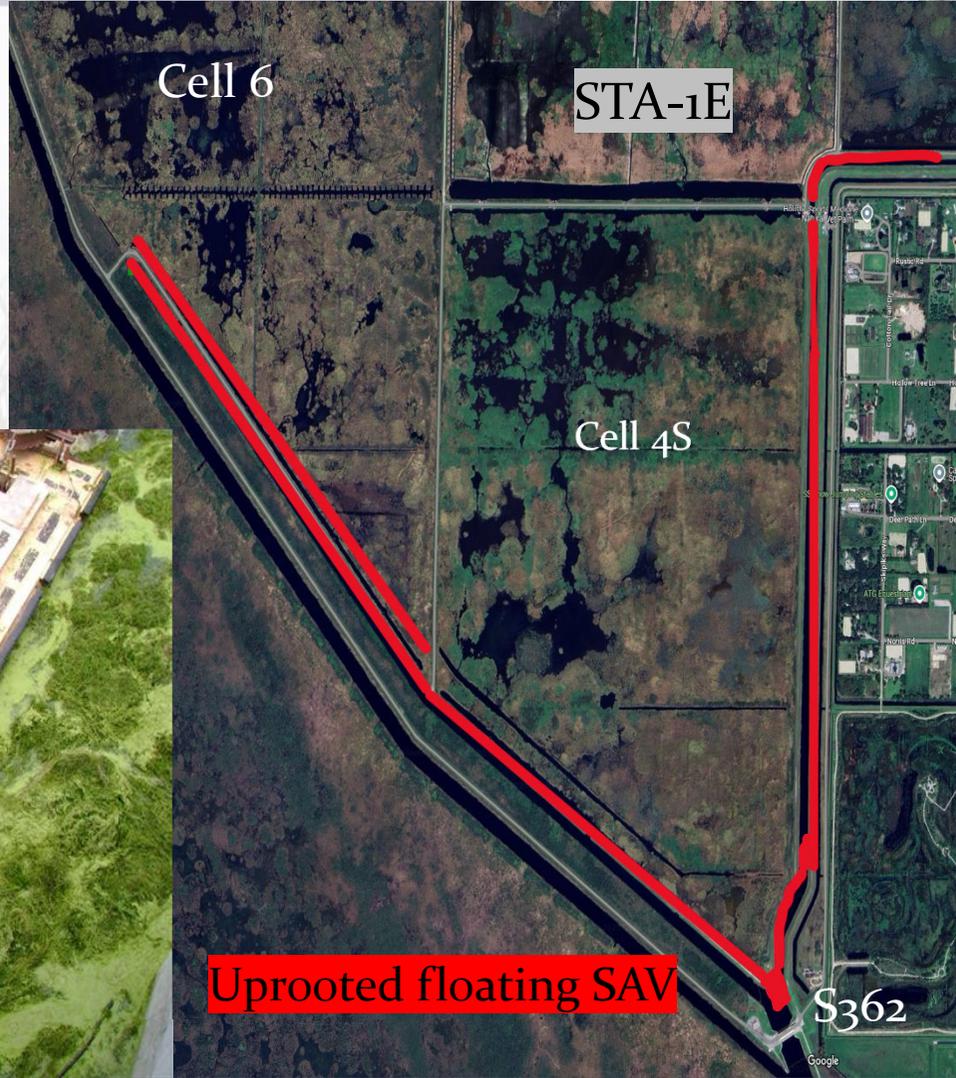
Presenter: Nathan Ralph

STA Principals and Design

S362

STA-1E Cell 6

July 2009 rain event
*90% SAV lost
*2+ years to return



Discharge canal choked with floating SAV



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

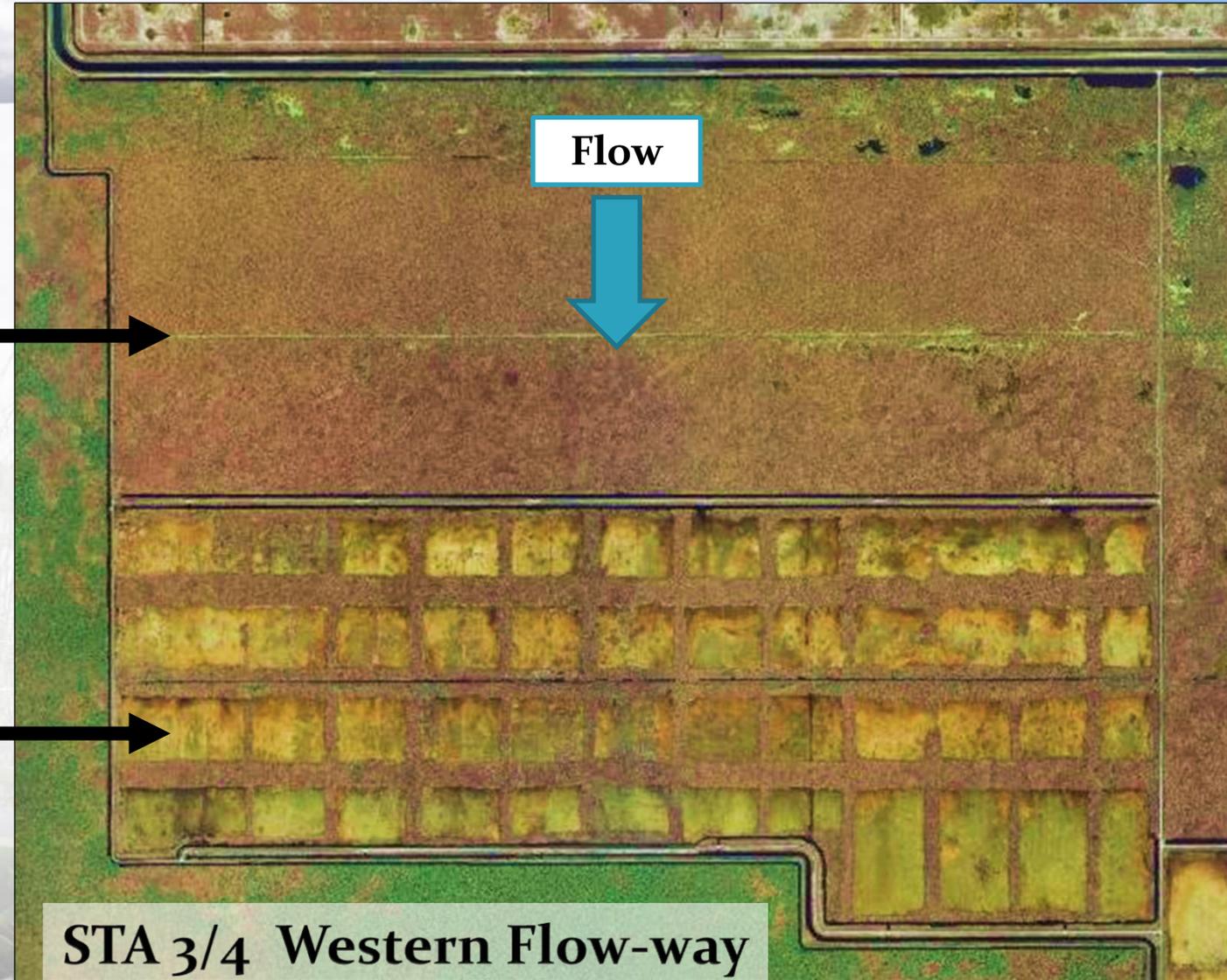
Model Flow-Way

Upstream Cell

- Dense emergent vegetation
- Even flow and distribution
- Maximum sedimentation

Downstream Cell

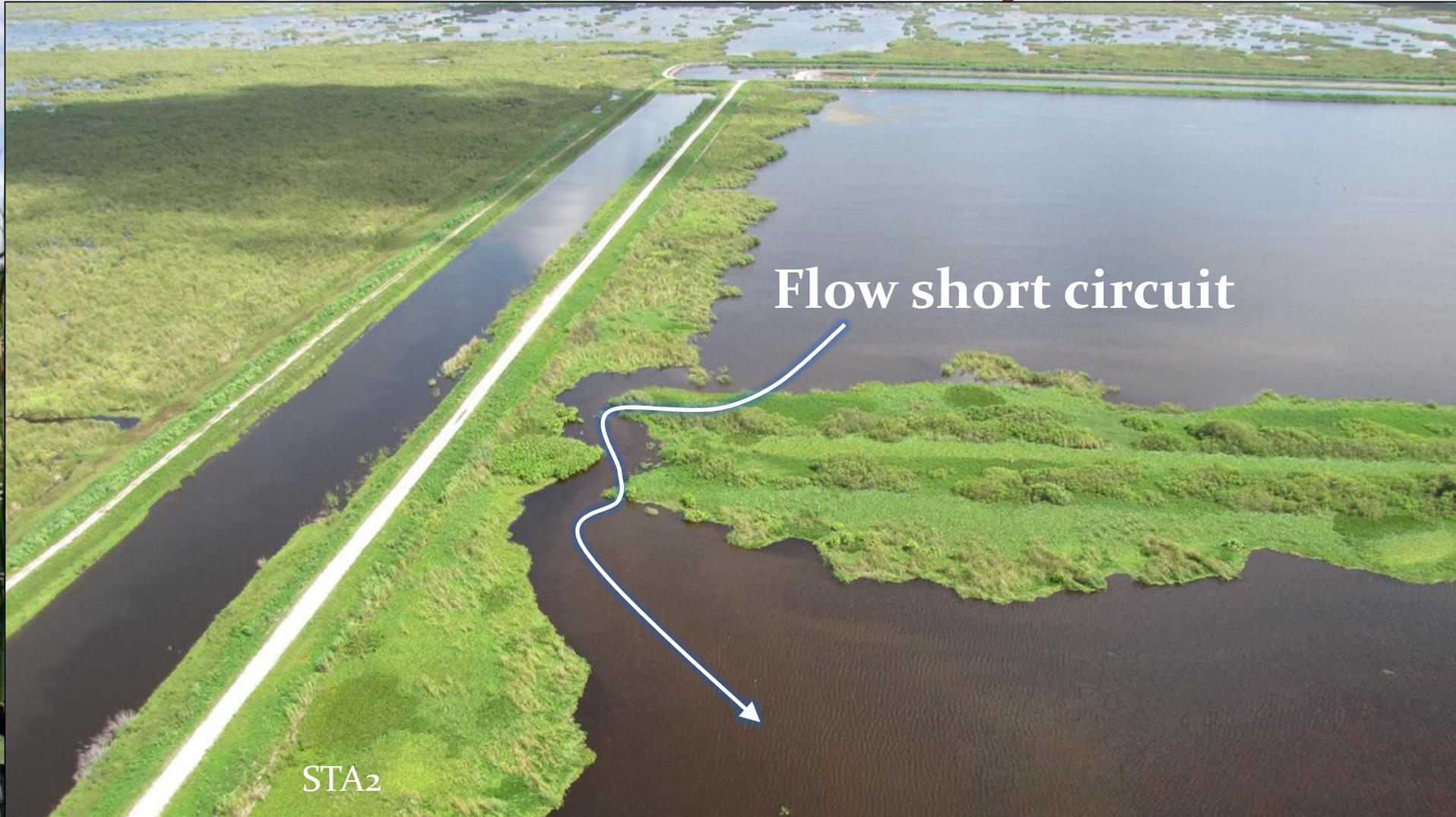
- Mixed emergent and submerged vegetation
- “Vegetation strips” for SAV stabilization and even flow distribution



STA 3/4 Western Flow-way

Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Short circuits reduce STA performance



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Replanting Short Circuits



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Replanting Short Circuits



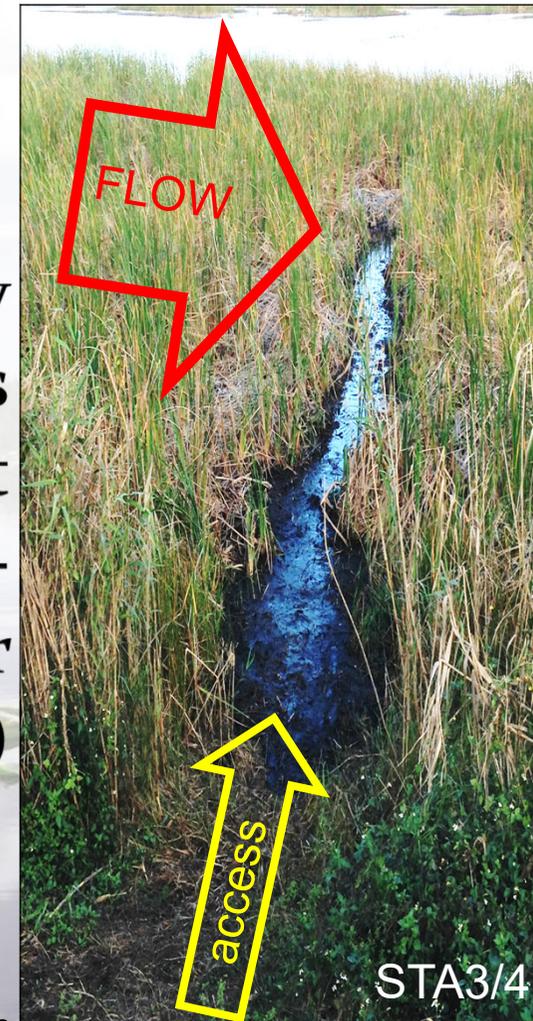
Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Access Strategy for STA Waterfowl Hunting



Previous Access Point (cell outflow)

New Access Point (perpendicular to flow)



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Creating waterfowl hunter access trails

MarshMaster making trails connecting levee to open water

STA-3/4

4
5

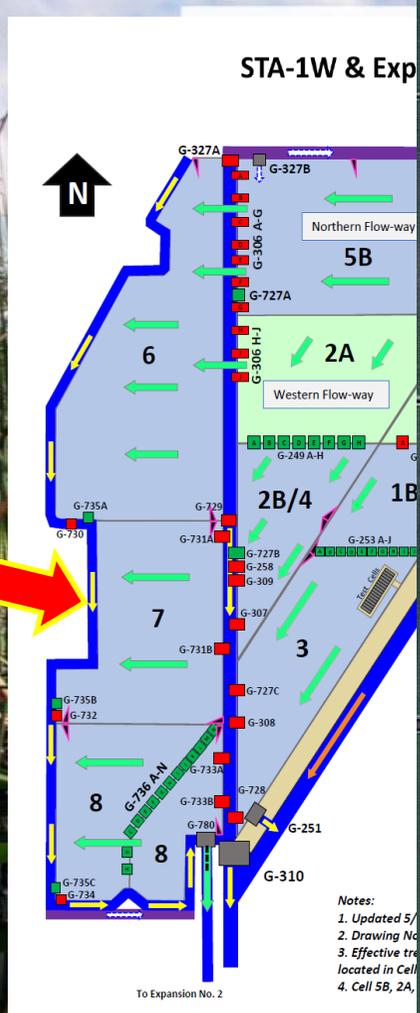
STA-3/4

22



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Illegal access: STA-1W Cell 7 (Jan. 2025)



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Illegal access: STA-1W Cell 7 (Jan. 2025)

- Access paths parallel to flow are problematic
 - Water flows seek path of least resistance and will enlarge these paths over time
 - Water circumvents treatment
 - Scours develop and wash away sediment



STA-1W Cell 7
west levee
facing east

illegal access path

Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Illegal access: STA3/4 Cell 2B(Jan. 2025)



Presenter: Nathan Ralph

Discussion



Presenter: Nathan Ralph



Public Use and Recreation Projects Update

Mike Cheek
Recreation Project Manager
Land Stewardship
South Florida Water Management District



C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area



C-44 STA opened in May 2024

- Activities currently limited to Audubon Birding Tours
- Construction of Recreation Features currently underway (completion early 2026)
- FWC/District evaluating potential limited entry waterfowl and alligator quota and specialty hunts for this season (2025-2026)



C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area

➤ Recreation feature construction underway now (completion early 2026):

- At-grade and levee-top car and trailer parking at both Reservoir and STA, including ADA spots
- Reservoir Boat ramp resurfacing
- Kiosks and interpretive signage
- 2 prefab concrete restrooms
- Shelters and benches at parking area and 2 cells within the STA



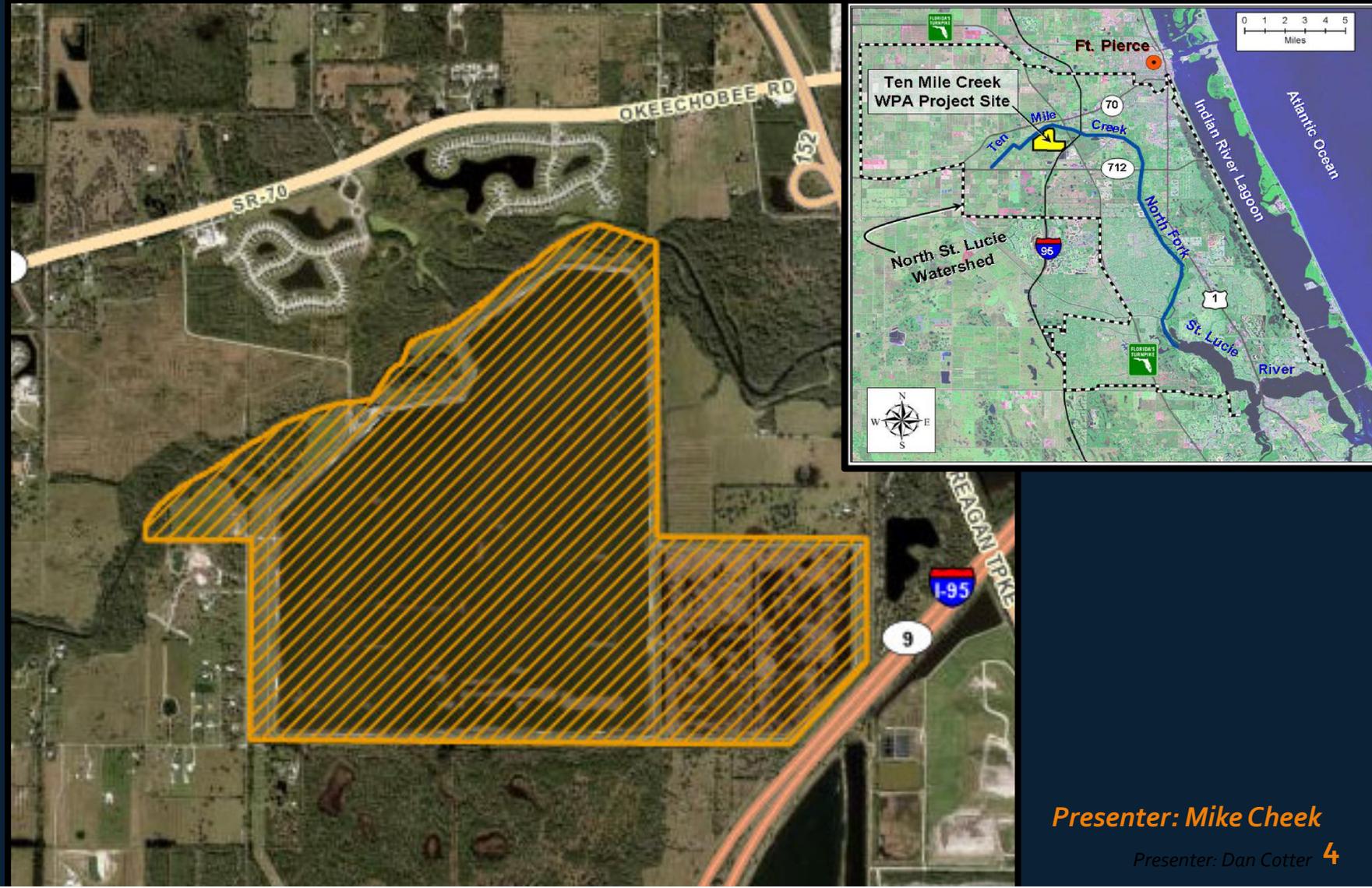
Example parking area and trailhead amenities



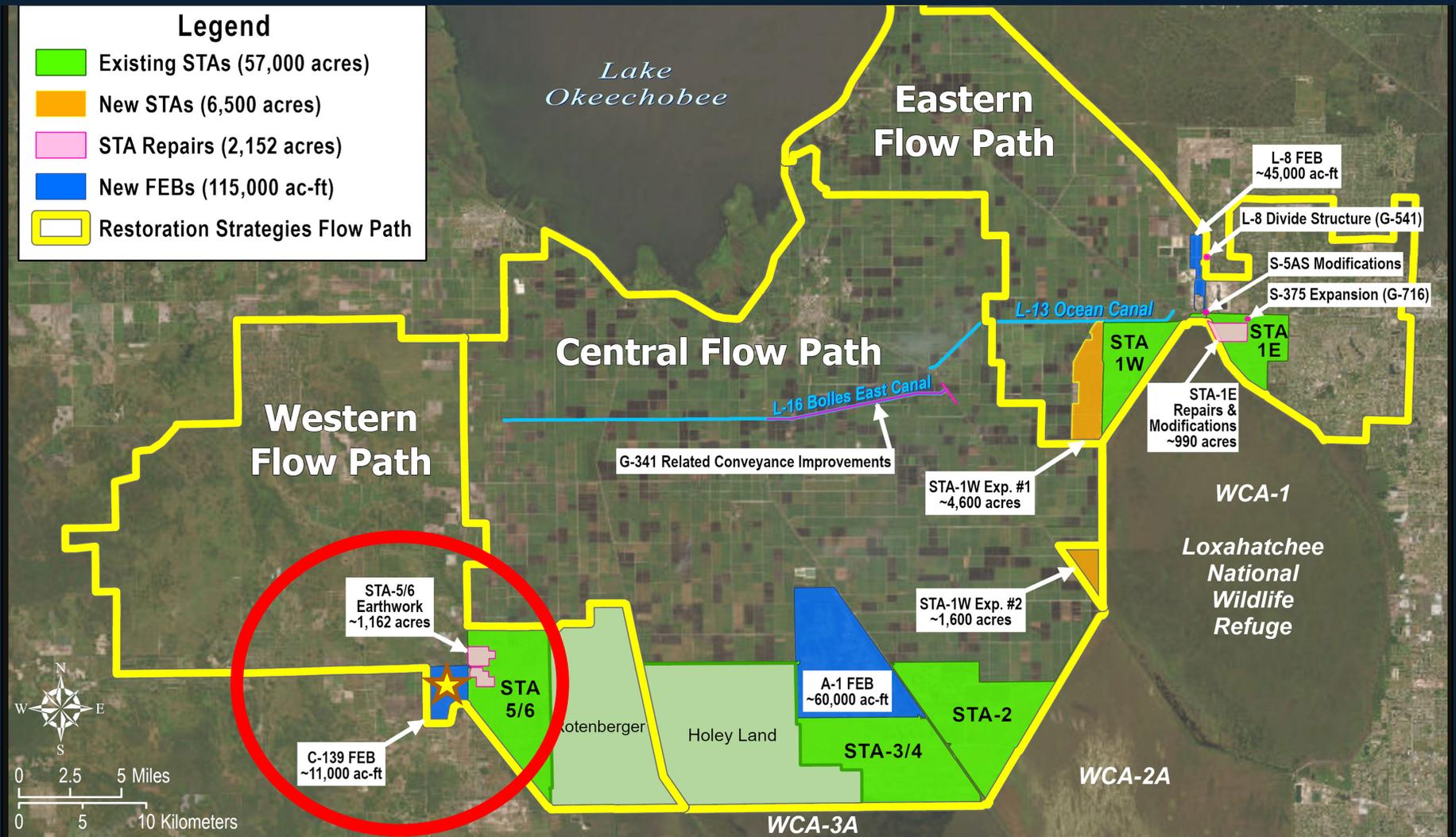
Ten Mile Creek (TMC) Water Preserve Area

Governing Board approved and Opened February 13, 2024

- TMC is located in St. Lucie County.
 - Consists of an approximate 526 acre reservoir and 132 acre stormwater treatment area
 - Activities include hiking, biking, and wildlife viewing, fishing in STA



C-139 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) Public Access Planning Phase



C-139 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) Public Access Planning Phase

C-139 FEB (≈11,000 acres) is located in Hendry County, features likely to include:

- At-grade car and trailer parking, including ADA spots
- Boat ramp
- Kiosks and interpretive signage
- 1 prefab concrete restroom
- Shelters and benches at parking area and possibly levee corner



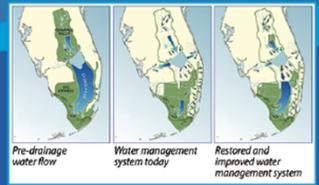
C-139 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) Public Access Planning

- Activities will likely include:
- Hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, wildlife viewing, fishing, and limited entry quota and specialty hunts for waterfowl and alligators





Taylor Creek New Interpretive Kiosk Panel



WHAT IS AN STA?

Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) are large, constructed wetlands with a variety of aquatic plants. The plants remove and store nutrients such as phosphorus that are found in stormwater runoff before it is moved out of the STA. Nutrient concentrations, particularly phosphorus, were naturally ultra low in the Everglades. The STAs have dramatically reduced the concentrations of phosphorus in Everglades-bound water. Water from Lake Okeechobee travels south to America's Everglades and providing clean water is vital to protecting critical habitats. STAs are continually monitored to maximize water treatment capacity.

This STA is located adjacent to Taylor Creek on 170 acres in Okeechobee County. Taylor Creek runs along the western boundary of this property and continues to flow under HWY 441 just south of this project, through the City of Okeechobee and ultimately into Lake Okeechobee. The purpose of this STA is to take some water from Taylor Creek and run it through a wetland treatment process. After the water is treated, the clean water is released back into Taylor Creek for its journey onto Lake Okeechobee.

This property is open to the public for recreation, enjoyment and education about our valuable natural resources. The trail around the site is approximately 3.1 miles. For your pets safety, please do not bring dogs into the STA. Dog walking, even on a leash, is not permitted.

HOURS: SUNRISE TO SUNSET, 7 DAYS A WEEK
Periodically, the STA may be closed for maintenance activities.

Taylor Creek Stormwater Treatment Area

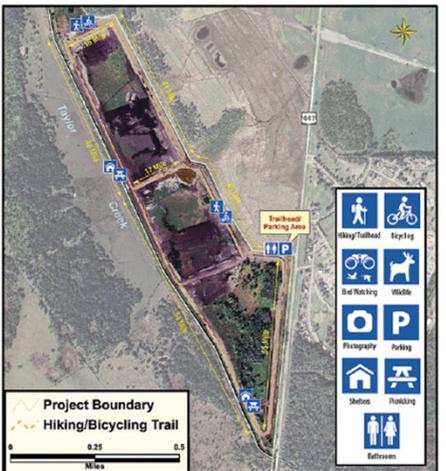
Enjoy a wide variety of bird species and other wildlife along more than three miles of hiking and biking levee trails



Crested Caracara



American Alligator



Monarch Butterfly



Roseate Spoonbill



Sandhill Cranes

WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE HERE

Commonly observed birds here include sandhill cranes, crested caracara, wood storks, great blue herons, tricolored herons, white ibis, glossy ibis, a variety of egrets, and many songbirds. In addition, deer, wild turkey, American alligators, and others are observed here.



PARTNERSHIPS

The Taylor Creek STA has been implemented by a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District. Public use of this STA is made possible by the partnership between Okeechobee County and the South Florida Water Management District.

For more information, please contact the South Florida Water Management District, Okeechobee Service Center at 863-462-5260.

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[YouTube.com/SFWMDTV](https://www.youtube.com/SFWMDTV)

Scan the code to learn more about recreational opportunities

Public Use and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects

2024

- Replaced 3 restrooms in in two STA's

2025

Okeechobee County

- Nubbin Slough STA
- Taylor Creek STA

Martin County

- Dupuis Family Camp

Palm Beach County

- Dupuis Group Camp



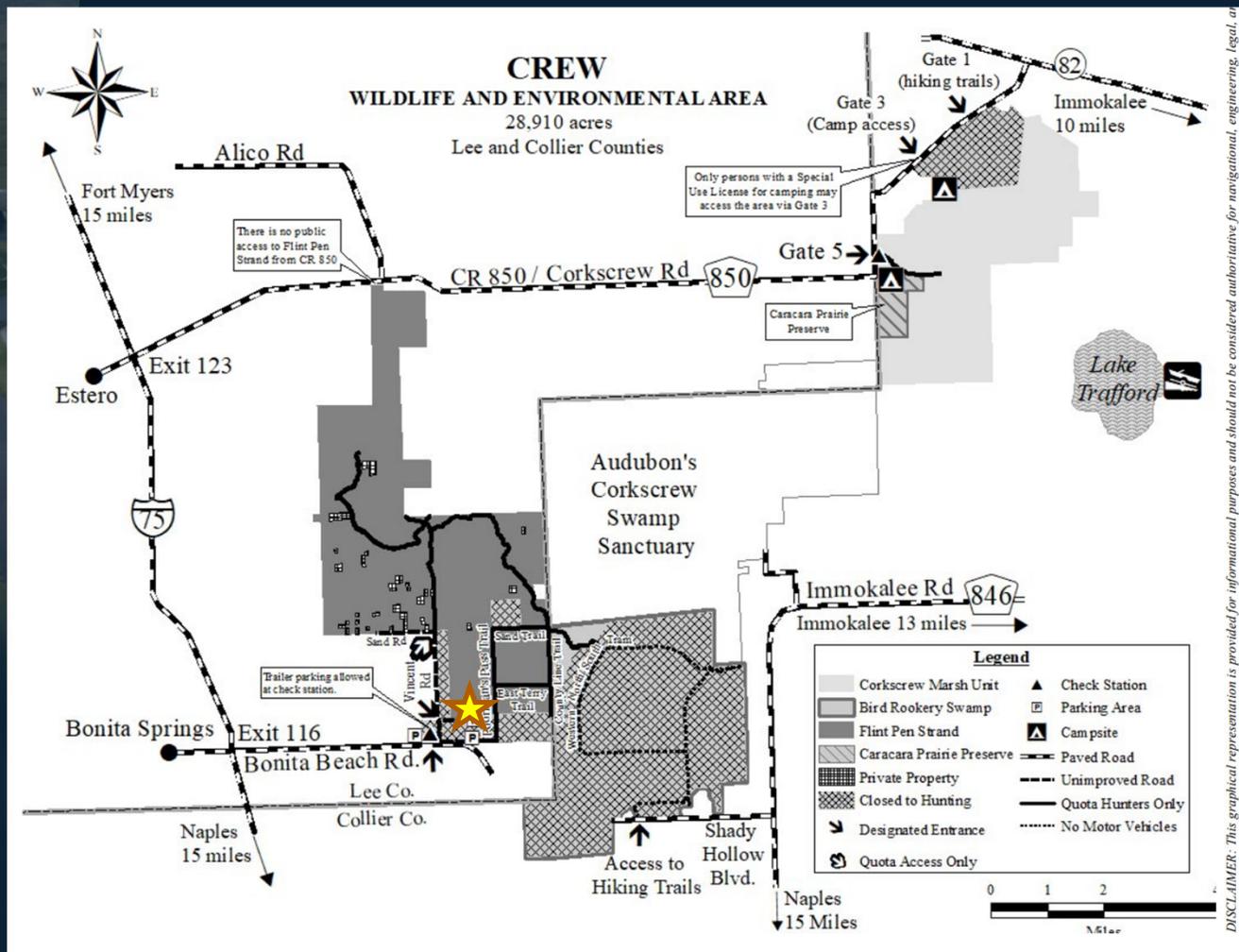
Public Use Facility Refurbishment Projects

CREW Bird Rookery Boardwalk

- CREW Bird Rookery Swamp located in Collier County.
 - 1400' boardwalk links to 12 miles of hiking and biking trails.
 - Replacement of structure under design this year.
 - Construction to refurbish boardwalk scheduled to begin this year

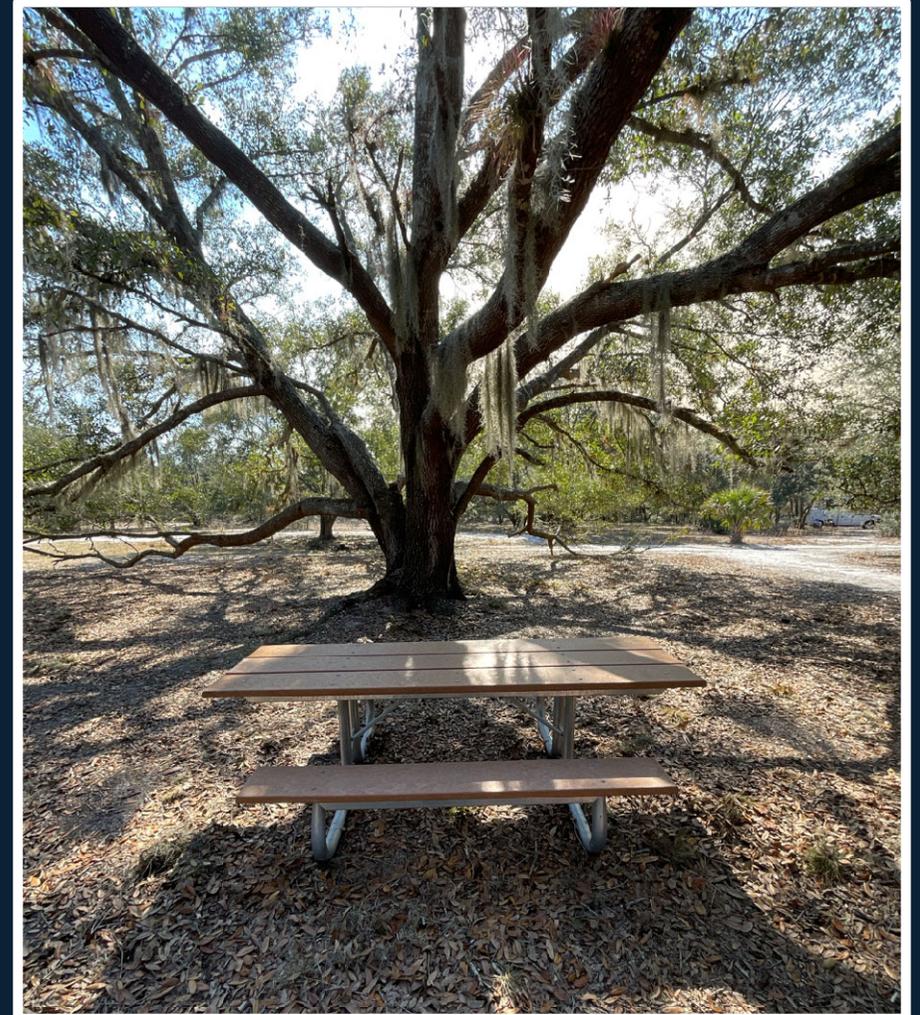


New Campsite at CREW Flint Pen Strand (Kehl Oaks)

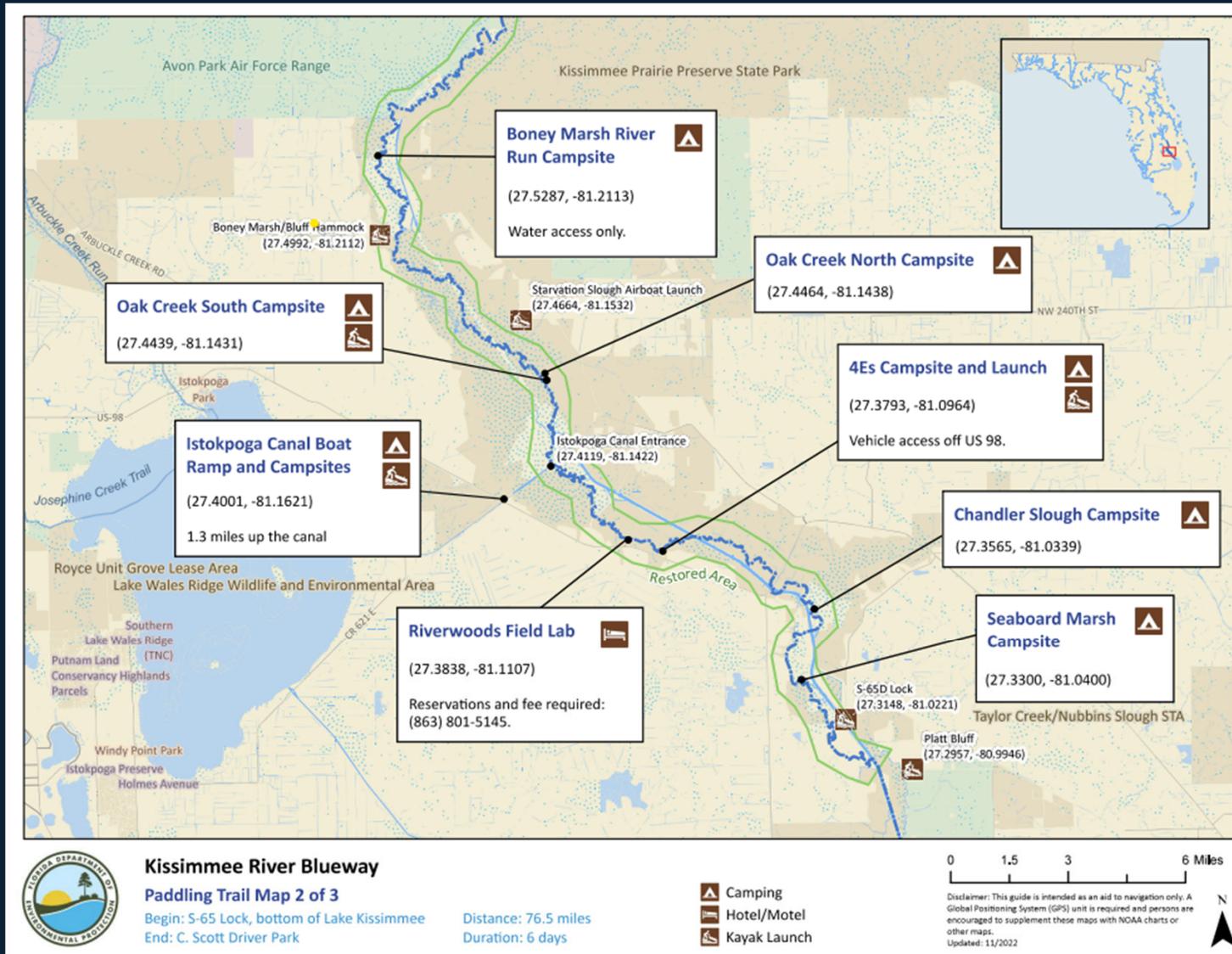


District-wide review of campsite picnic tables and fire rings

- 57 unique camping locations were reviewed for needs
- Tables and rings replaced as needed (mostly Kissimmee River and Kissimmee Chain of Lakes)
- District now has 176+ individual campsites



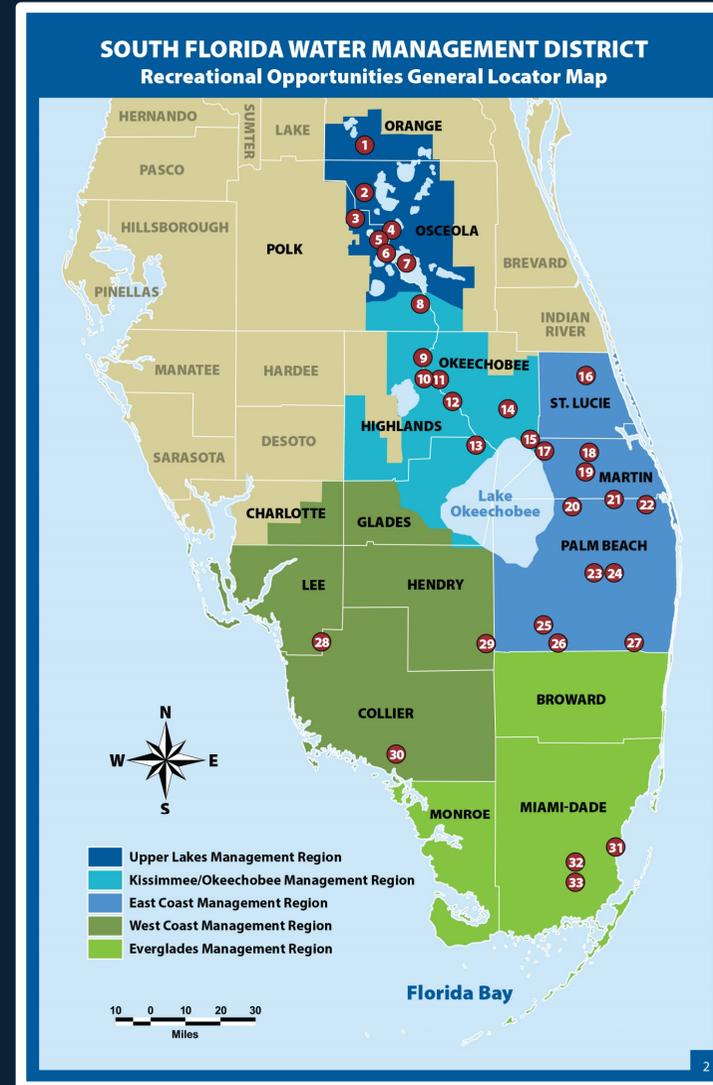
Kissimmee River Blueway Trail Designation 9/24/24 (DEP Office of Greenways and Trails)



District-wide Recreational Guidebook Update

-Field guide size (8.5"x5.5")

-Hard Copies available in the coming weeks!



Presenter:
Mike Cheek
14

District-wide Recreational Guidebook Update



Chickee Hut Shelter at Taylor Creek STA

ABOUT THE SITE

The Taylor Creek Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) is located east of Taylor Creek on a portion of publicly held land previously known as the Grassy Island Ranch in Okeechobee County. The area features a stand of ancient cypress trees. Native wildlife species and a variety of birds can also be seen here.

This STA removes phosphorus from water headed to Lake Okeechobee.

The Grassy Island (East Side) site is located just west of the Taylor Creek STA. Both sites offer many recreational activities including bicycling, hiking, bird watching, picnicking and wildlife viewing. At the Grassy Island site, visitors will also find bicycling trails, equestrian trails and geocaching opportunities.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES



Taylor Creek Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) and Grassy Island (East Side)

GETTING THERE

- Taylor Creek Trailhead: Located on US 441.
- Grassy Island (East Side): 1901 Hillard Rd., Okeechobee, FL 34972.

Legend 14

- Parking
- Restroom
- Chickee Hut
- Information Kiosk
- Hiking and Biking Trail
- Equestrian Trail
- Public Use Areas

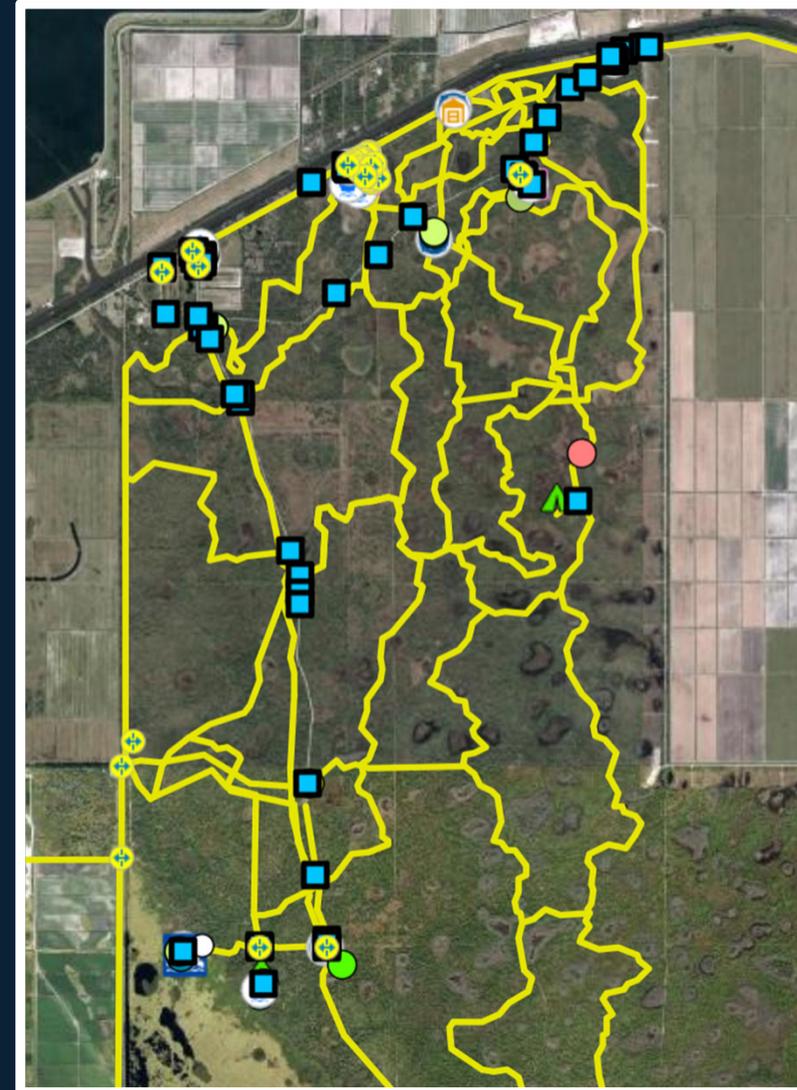
Approximate Acreage: 1,463

0 0.38 0.75 Miles

SFWMD.GOV/RECREATION

District-wide Interactive Public Use and Recreation Map (in progress)

- Example: Dupuis WMA
- Map will show all recreational features available to public (including photos).
- Map will also include public use infrastructure, gates and signage for internal tracking purposes.
- Features will be able to be turned On/Off for public visibility.



Proposed Designated Access Point Kissimmee River (Seaboard Marsh)



Special Use License
access gate

Proposed Designated Access Point Kissimmee River (Seaboard Marsh)



Proposed Rule Change to Youth Spring Turkey Hunt on several co-managed (District and FWC) properties

- Add 2 days to the existing Youth Turkey hunts, without excluding other public users during the hunts

- Would include the following areas that have Youth Spring Turkey:
 - Allapattah Flats WMA
 - CREW WEA
 - DuPuis WEA
 - KICCO WMA
 - Kissimmee River PUA
 - Lake Marion Creek WMA
 - Kissimmee Chain of Lakes WMA
 - Kissimmee Chain of Lakes – Rolling Meadows Unit WMA



Specialty Hunts on District Property this Season (2024/25)

FWC Youth Hunt Programs this year (19)

- 7 alligator
- 2 turkey
- 9 deer/hog
- 1 waterfowl



Wounded warrior hunts (3)

- 2 alligator
- 1 waterfowl



Volunteer Events: Istokpoga Canal Airboat Launch refurbishment (February 9, 2025)



**Florida Sportmen Conservation Association (FSCA)
Lake Okeechobee Airboat Association (LOAA)**

Volunteer Events: Istokpoga Canal Airboat Launch refurbishment



Volunteer Events: Istokpoga Canal Airboat Launch refurbishment



Volunteer Events: Dupuis Group Camp Fire Ring Area (December 24,25)



Before

Volunteer Events: Dupuis Group Camp Fire Ring Area

After



Shingle Creek Volunteer Event 2/22/25 Southern Off-road Bike Association (SORBA, Orlando Chapter)

- Rebuilt footbridge just south of the canoe launch near Hunter's Creek Middle School access point



Posting Campsite Signage: Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (3/15/25)

- Posted new signage at **17** primitive campsites
- **59** people, **20** airboats (KRVSA, FSCA, LOAA, others)



Posting Campsite Signage: Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (3/15/25)

➤ >43 miles of shoreline covered during the event



Upcoming Kissimmee River Volunteer Project (5/3/25)

- Saturday May 3rd there will be a volunteer workday scheduled to remove old fence posts and debris and assist with the installation of public use signage.
- If wishing to participate, please contact Matt Nelson from Florida Sportsmen Conservation Association (FSCA) at mattnelson480@gmail.com.



Volunteers
removing posts



Signs for
airboat line

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

- Volunteers logged over **17,036 hours** of time in FY2023
- Volunteers perform activities including:
 - water-way clean-ups
 - facility maintenance and development
 - serving as campground hosts
 - providing environmental education programs.
- The Volunteer Program provided in-kind services valued at **\$538,508.00**
(2023 Florida volunteer rate = \$31.61/hour).



QUESTIONS?

MCHEEK@SFWMD.GOV

***Presenter:
Mike Cheek 26***