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## South Florida Water Management District

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### RECREATIONAL PUBLIC FORUM AGENDA

June 24, 2024

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. Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA) - Dorsey DeMaster, Region C Co-Director, FPTA and Steve Cournoyer, Region C Co-Director, FPTA
3. Green Heart of the Everglades Property and Draft Interim Land Management Plan Update - Justin Nolte, Section Administrator, SFWMD
4. CEPP North Overview, L-5 Canal Improvements - Greg Nolte, Project Manager, SFWMD
5. Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) Updates - James Harbaugh, Recreation Planner, SFWMD
  - STA Waterfowl and Alligator 2024-2025 Hunting Season
6. Recreation Project and Facility Design Updates - Mike Cheek, Recreation Project Manager, SFWMD
7. Recreational Discussion, Updates and Future Meeting Topics
8. Adjourn

Final Presentations

**Agenda Item Background:**

02 Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA)

03 Nolte Green Heart of the Everglades

04 Nolte CEPP North

05 Harbaugh STA Updates

06 Cheek Project and Facility Design Updates



# Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA)



**Dorsey DeMaster**  
Region C Co-Director



**Steve Cournoyer**  
Region C Co-Director

SFWMD  
Recreational Public Forum  
ω June 24, 2024



*[Video: Live Wildly Kayaking the Kissimmee River](#)*



# Green Heart of the Everglades Property and Draft Interim Land Management Plan Update

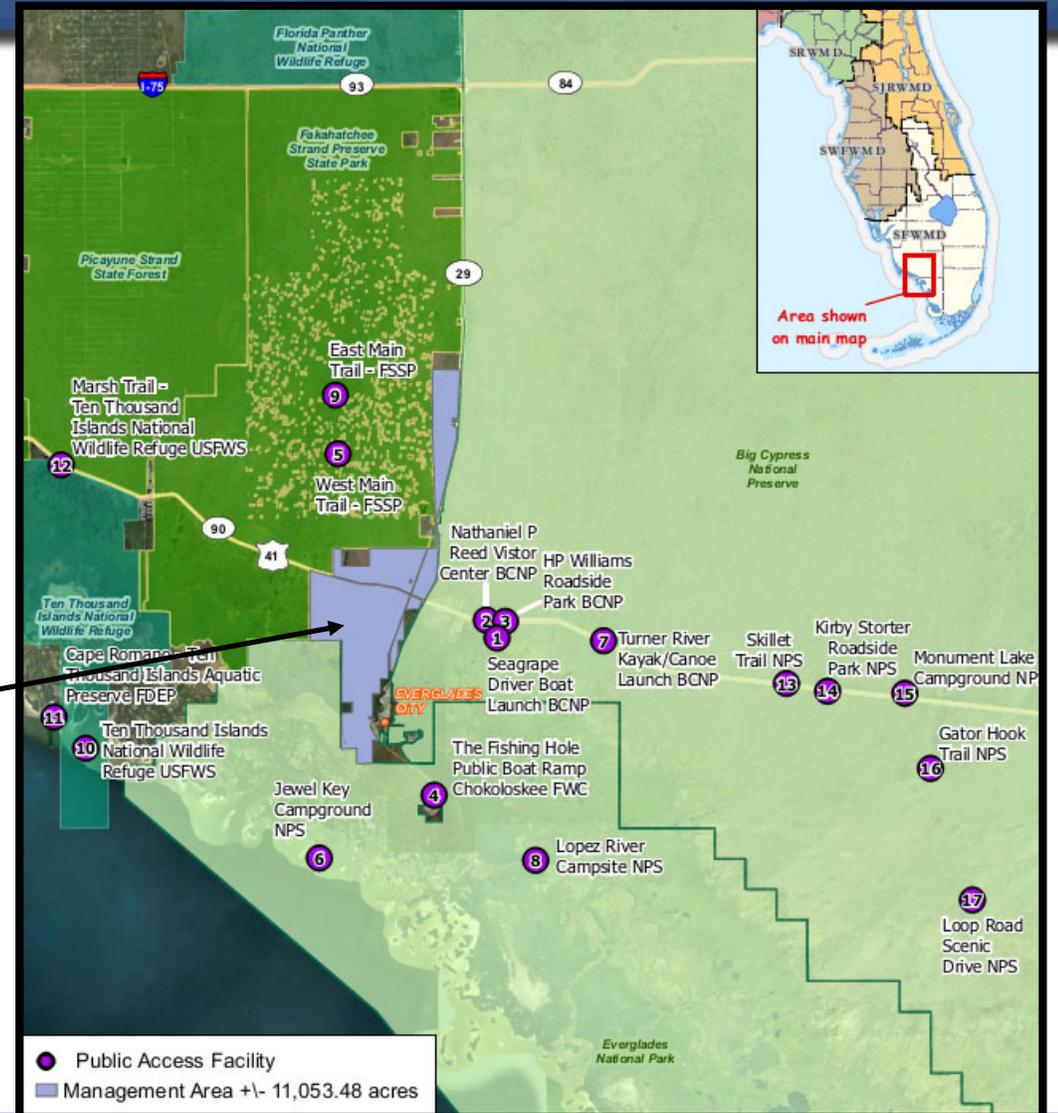
Justin Nolte  
Land Stewardship Section Administrator  
Recreational Public Forum  
June 24, 2024



# Green Heart of the Everglades

## Project Lands

- Approximately 11,053 acres near Everglades City, Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Picayune Strand State Forest



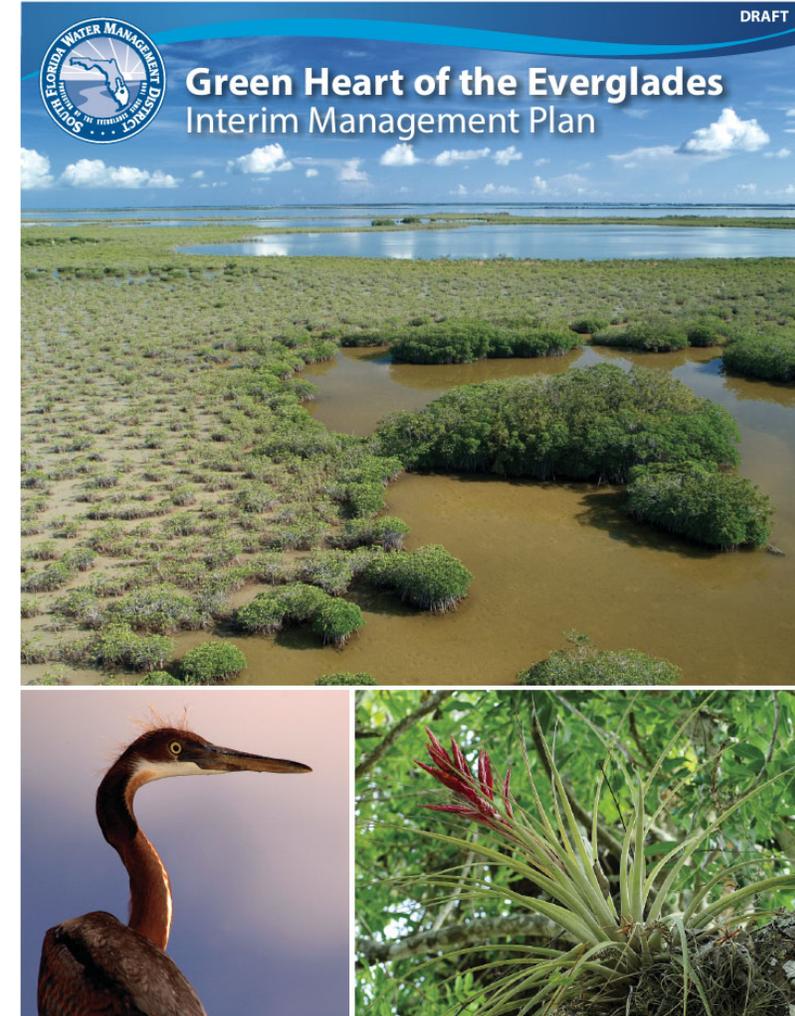
# Green Heart of the Everglades

## Main Plan Update

- South Florida Water Management District to retain all portions (north and south) of the Green Heart of the Everglades

## Next Steps

- Present to future Governing Board Meeting (August 2024):
  - Adoption of the Interim Management Plan
  - Designation of the entire property as a Management Area
  - Authorization for FWC to create a Public Small Game Hunting Area
- FWC Cooperation (summer 2025)
  - Amend the existing contract
  - Develop area regulations



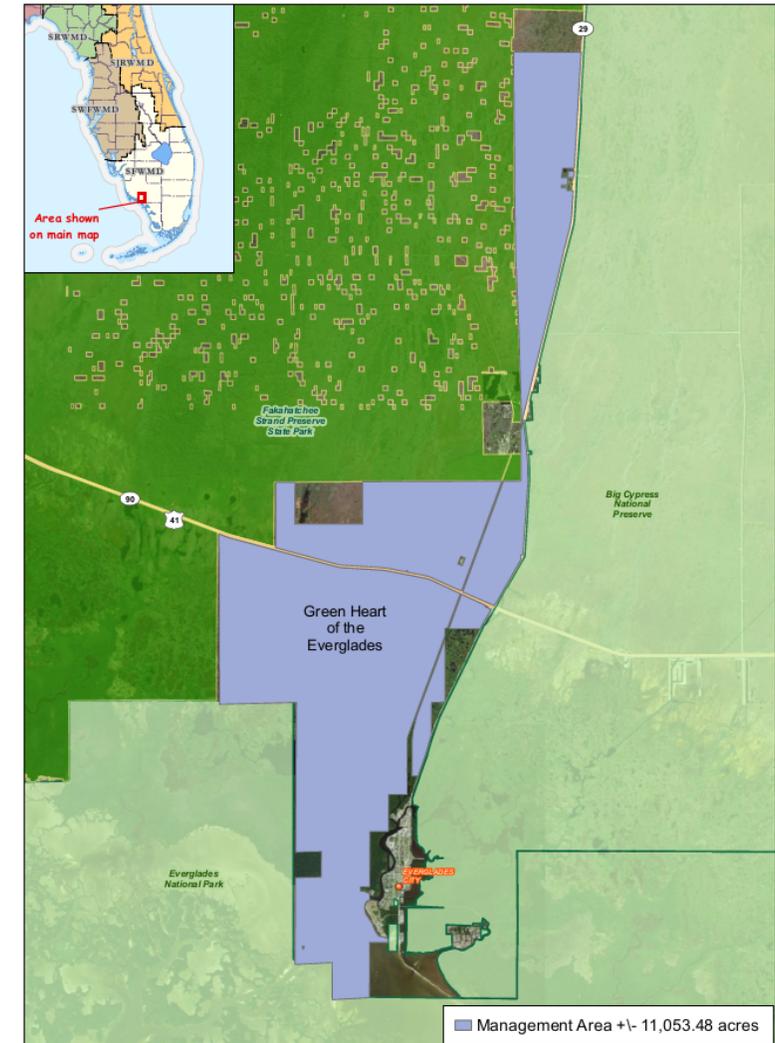
# Green Heart of the Everglades

## What this means in the near future:

- Accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Fishing, boating, and passive recreational use allowed
- Navigable waters will remain accessible in accordance with State and Federal law

## What we will be working on in the coming year:

- Identifying boundaries
- Creating public access points
- Establishing hunting seasons
- Determining other recreational use opportunities



# Green Heart of the Everglades



Questions and Comments?

[greenheartoftheeverglades@sfwmd.gov](mailto:greenheartoftheeverglades@sfwmd.gov)

# Recreational Public Forum

## June 24, 2024



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

# Agenda

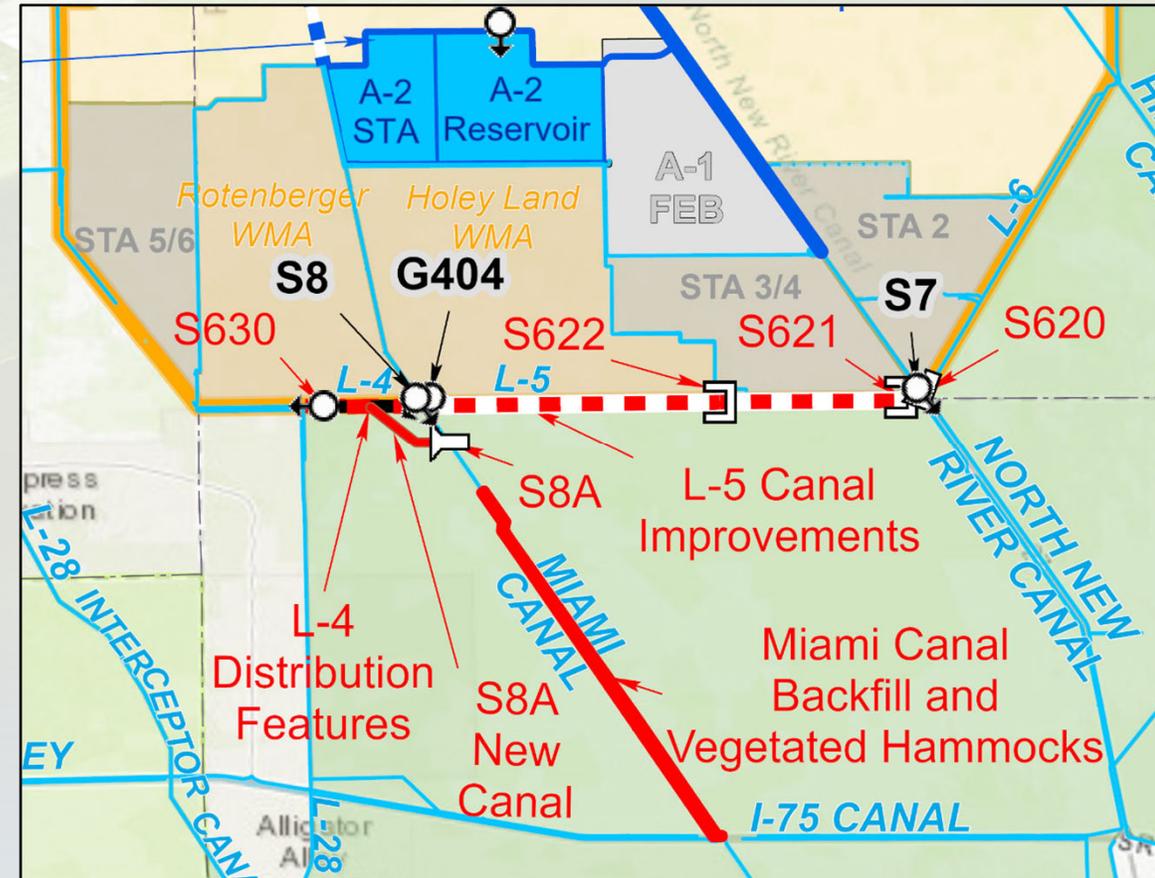
- CEPP Overview and Purpose
- Present CEPP North Features
- Updated details on L-5 Canal Improvements & S-622 Gated Culvert
- Status of future activities



# CEPP North Features

## CEPP North Features (2014 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 Connecting 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



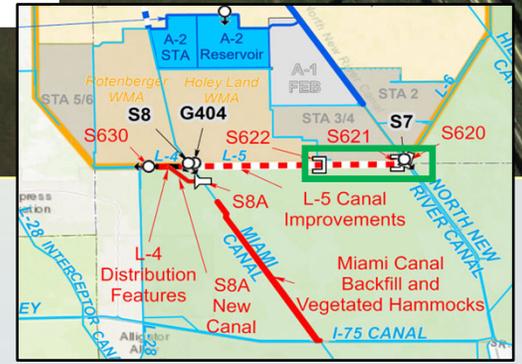
CEPP North Features

# L-5 Remnant Canal Improvements & S-622 Gated Culvert

- Designs will include a kiosk/open shelter, 2 boat ramps and parking
- S-622 will allow crossover to L-5 south levee replacing the Palmer's Crossing
- Construction targeted starts:
  - L-5 Remnant Canal – Feb 2025
  - S-622 – Apr 2025
- The L-5 Remnant south levee will be permanently closed, north levee will have temporary closures to the public and Maintenance of Traffic during construction



L-5 Remnant Canal & S-622 Gated Culvert



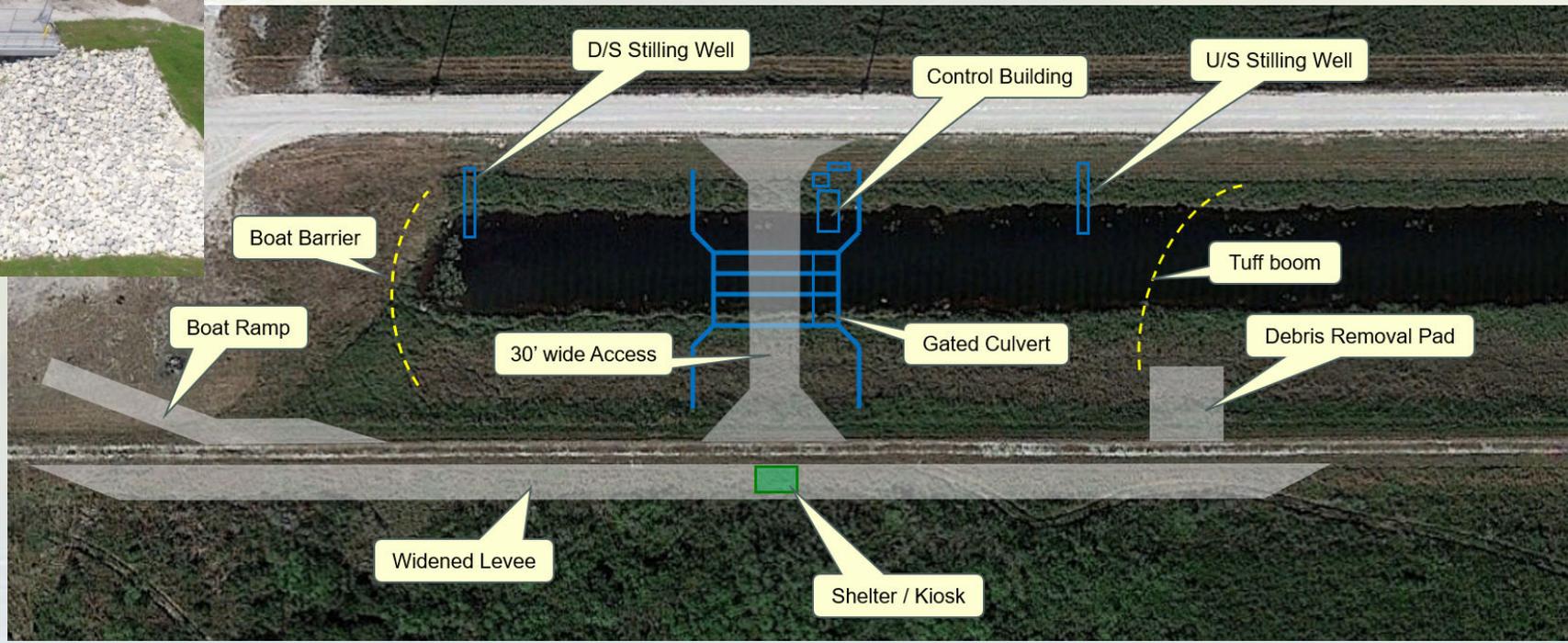
# S-622 Gated Culvert Recreation Features



Example: G-541 Gated Culvert



S-622 Gated Culvert schematic



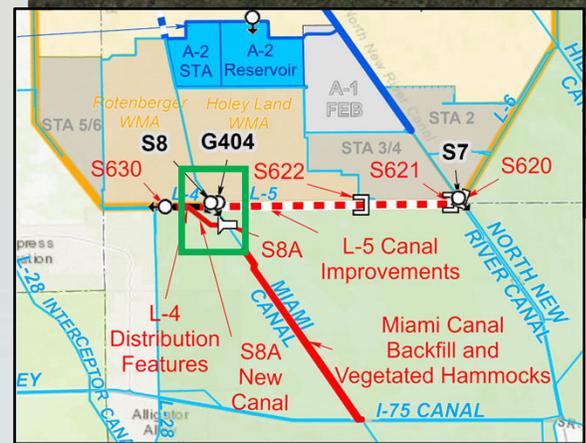
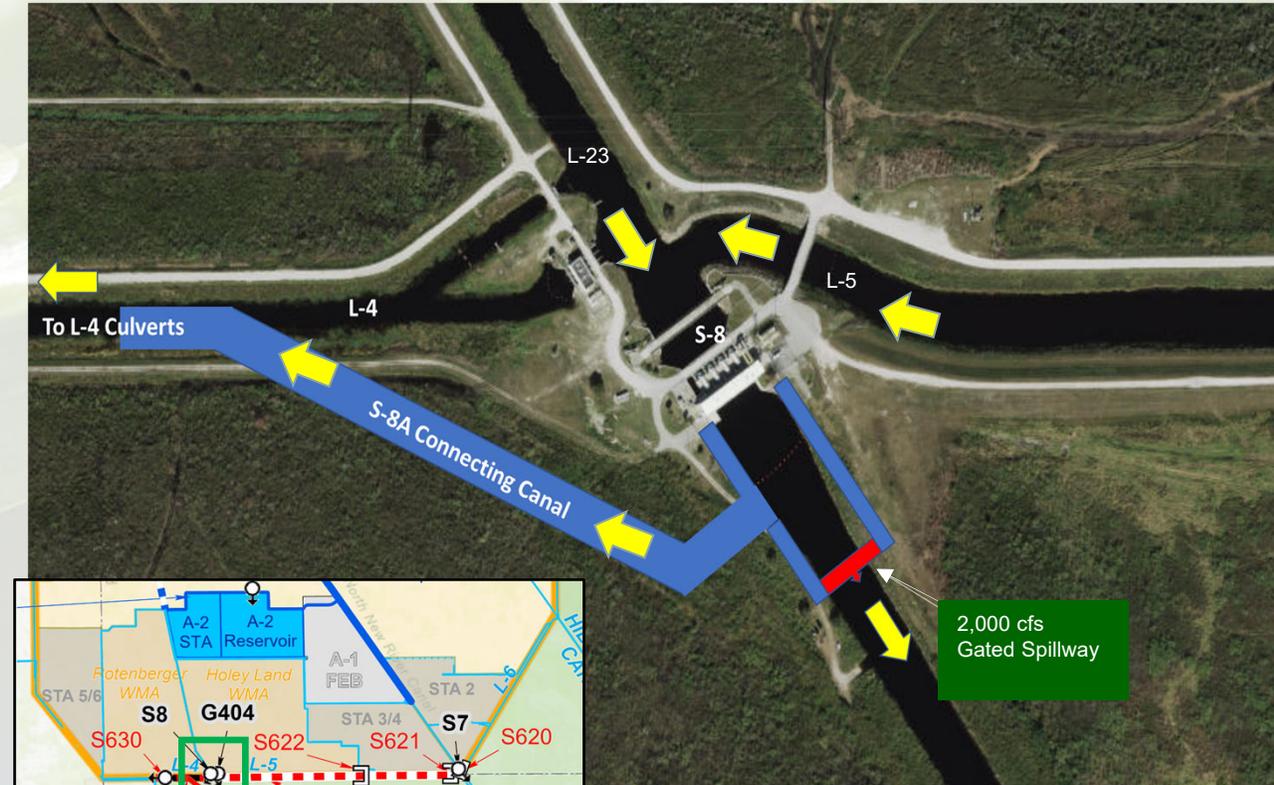
# Dredge Material Management & Stockpile Areas

- DMMA and Stockpile Area will be utilized for:
  - L-5 Remnant Canal
  - S-622 Gated Culvert
  - L-5 Canal
- Harold A Campbell Public Use Area to remain open, no planned closures
- Construction trailers site to be utilized for 3-5 years



# S-8A Gated Spillway & Connecting Canal

- Proposed S-8A Spillway (2,000 cfs) and Connecting Canal between Miami Canal and L-4 Canal (3,000 cfs)
- Detailed Intermediate Design to start Summer 2024
- Future public recreational access and use will be evaluated as part of the design process



S-8A Gated Spillway & Connecting Canal, Not To Scale

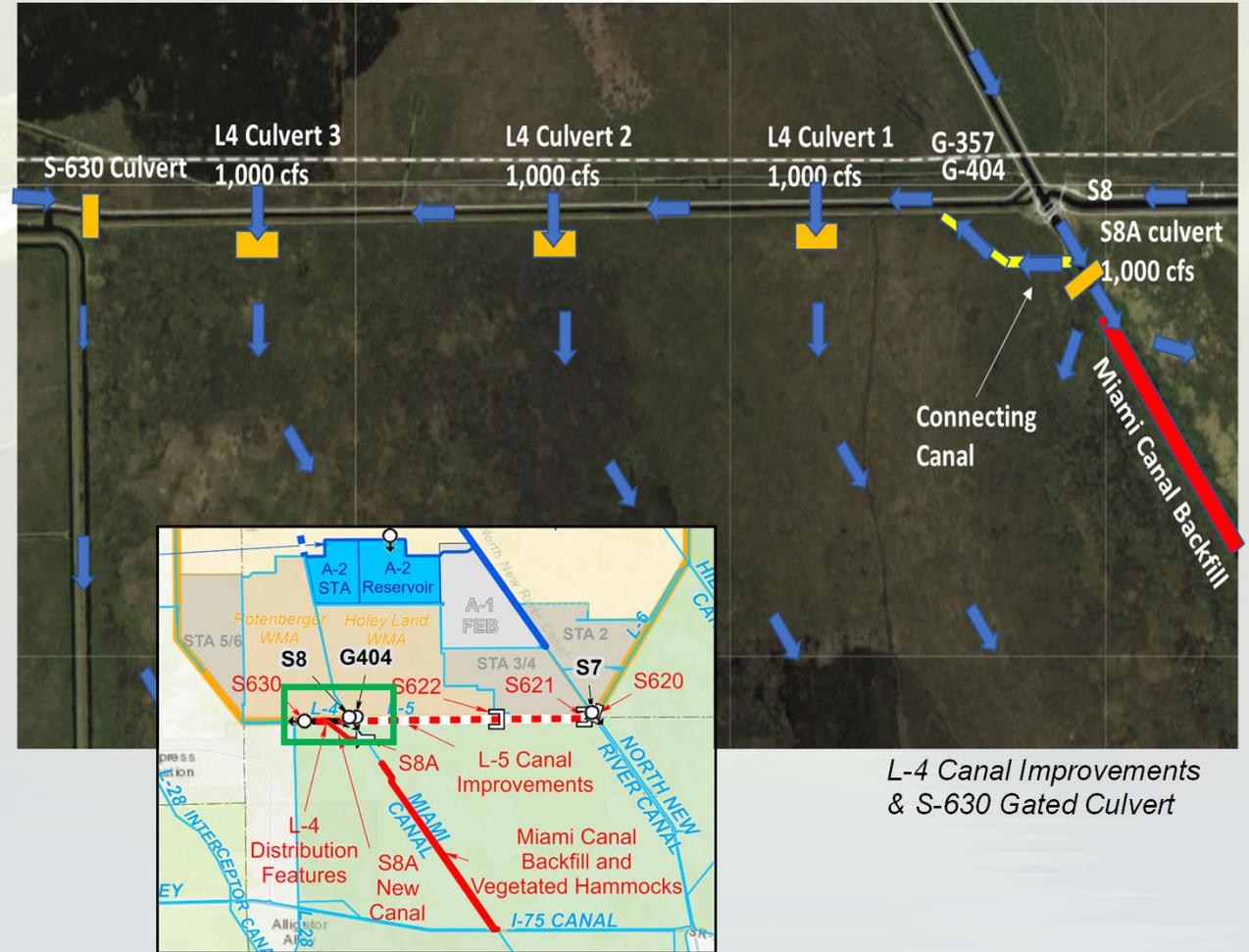
# L-4 Canal Improvements & S-630 Gated Culvert

## L-4 Canal Improvement & Distribution Features

- Detailed Intermediate Design starts July 2024
- Temporary access along north levee during construction will be coordinated during detailed design with stakeholders

## S-630 Gated Culvert

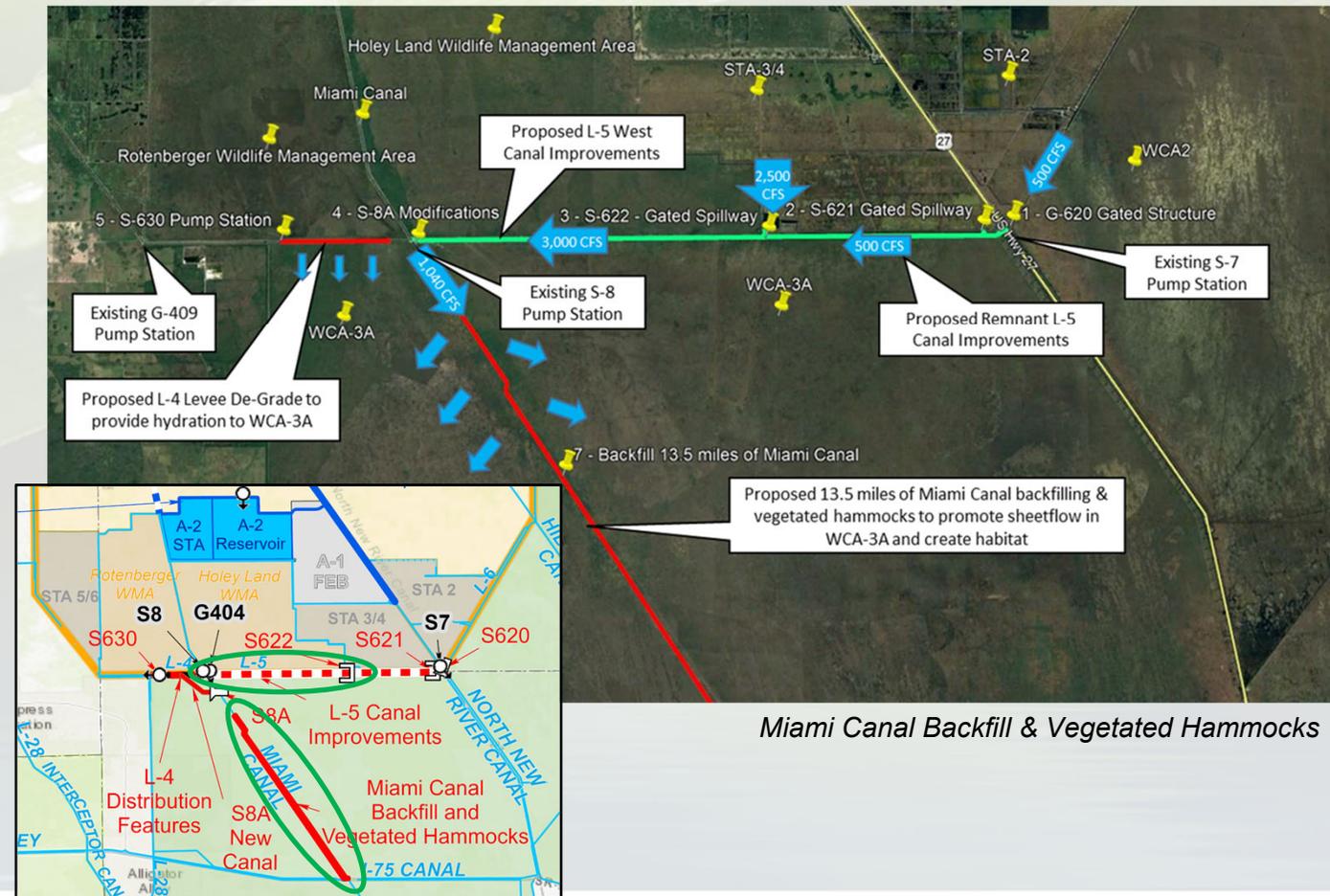
- Provides water supply to Tribal Nations
- Detailed Intermediate Design starts July 2024
- Future public recreational access and use will be evaluated as part of the design process, following the proposed recreational facilities in the authorized PIR



L-4 Canal Improvements & S-630 Gated Culvert

# Miami Canal Backfill & Vegetated Hammocks

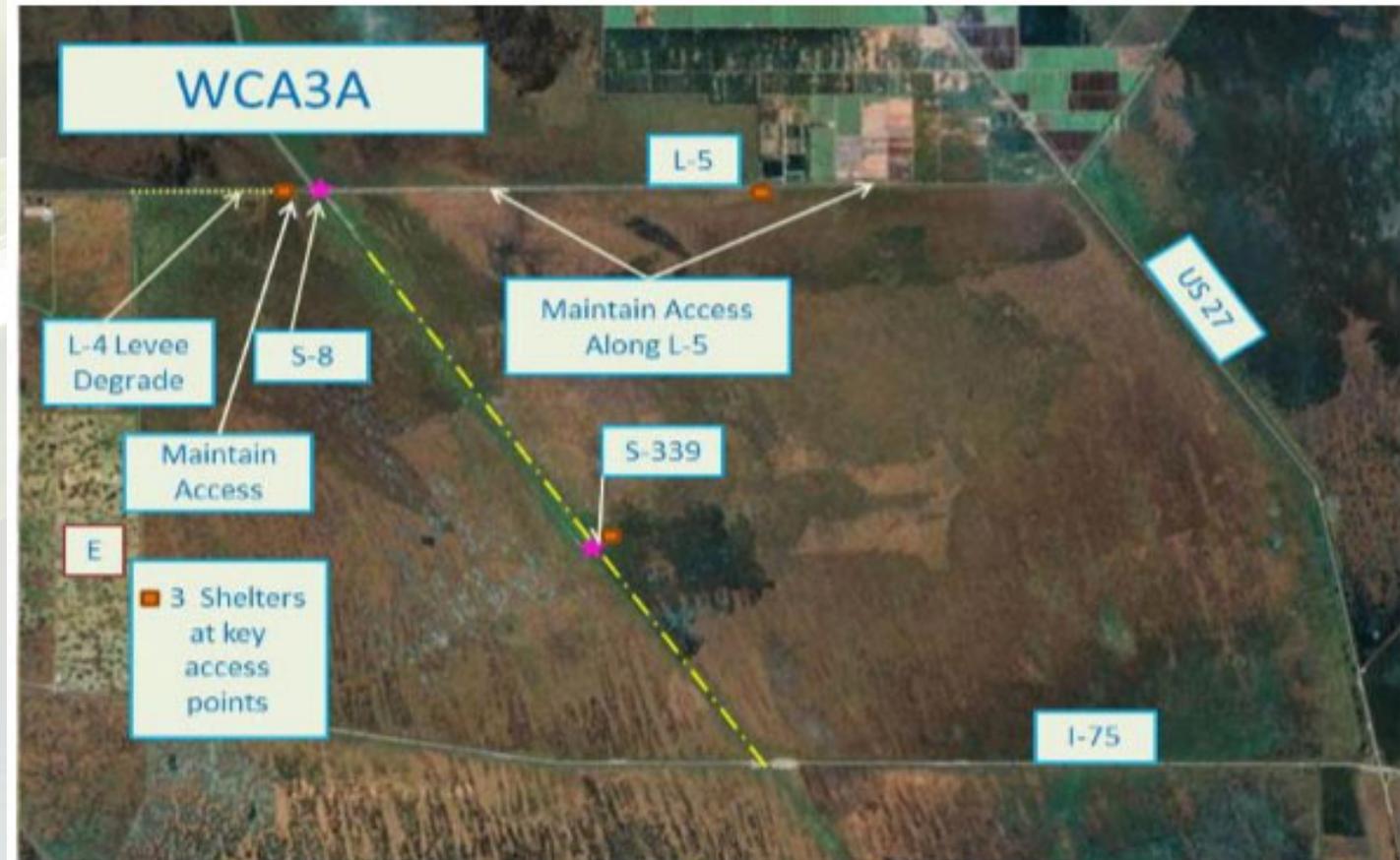
- RECOVER design planning workshop was held, July 2022
- Conceptual design of Miami Canal Backfill and Vegetated Hammocks to start July 2024
- Additional workshops and stakeholder outreach during conceptual level design of Vegetated Hammocks
- Project will be constructed with the L-5 Canal Improvements



Miami Canal Backfill & Vegetated Hammocks

# CEPP North Recreation Plan

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

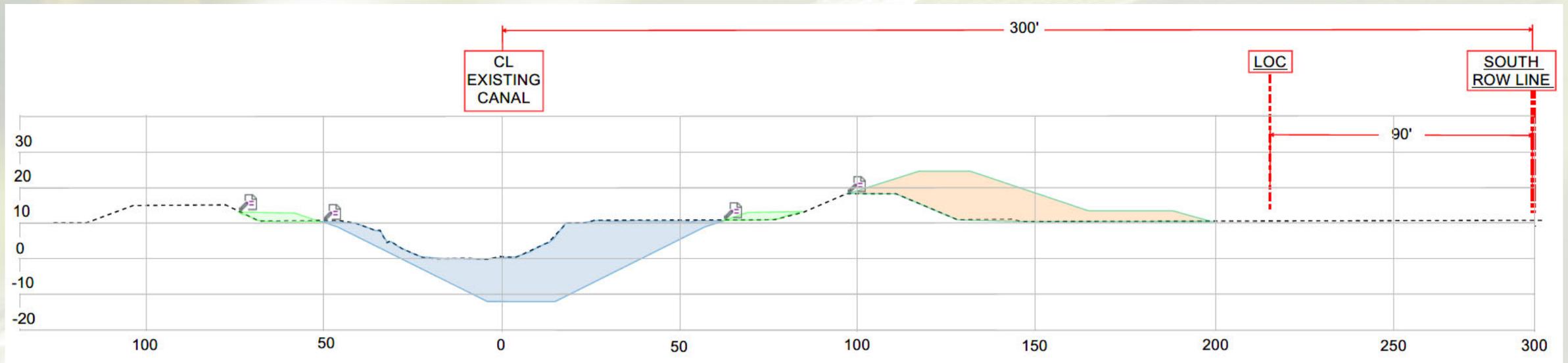


USACE and SFWMD, 2014. CEPP Final PIR and EIS. Appendix F Recreation

# Questions



# 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*

# STA Waterfowl & Alligator 2024-2025 Hunting Season

Recreation Public Forum  
June 24, 2024

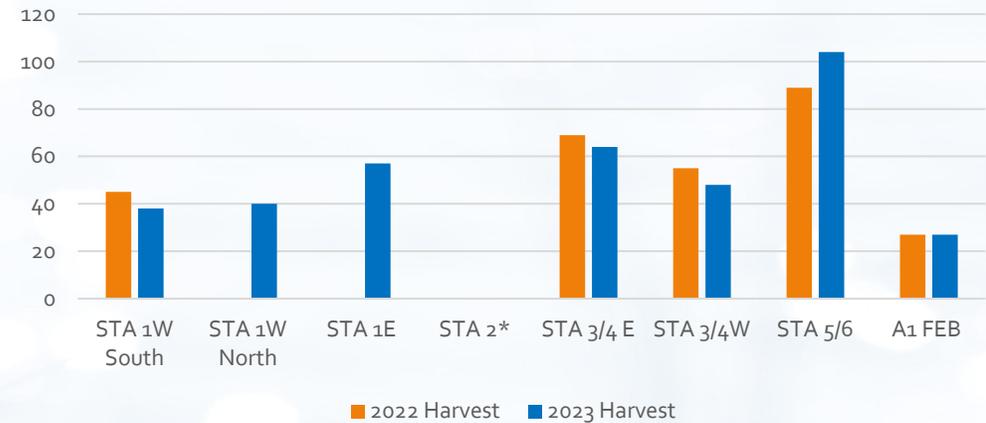
James Harbaugh  
Recreation Project Manager  
[jharbaug@sfwmd.gov](mailto:jharbaug@sfwmd.gov)



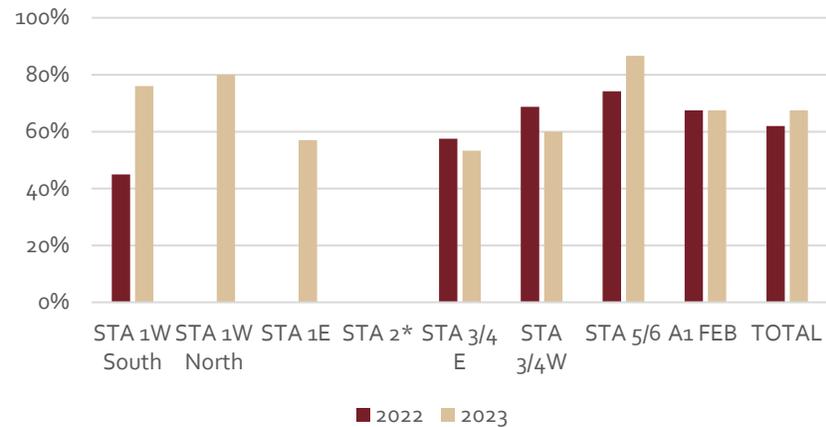
# Alligator Data 2023 vs 2022

- Overall - slightly higher alligator harvest
- STA 1E and STA 1W North added to this increase

STA Alligator Harvest



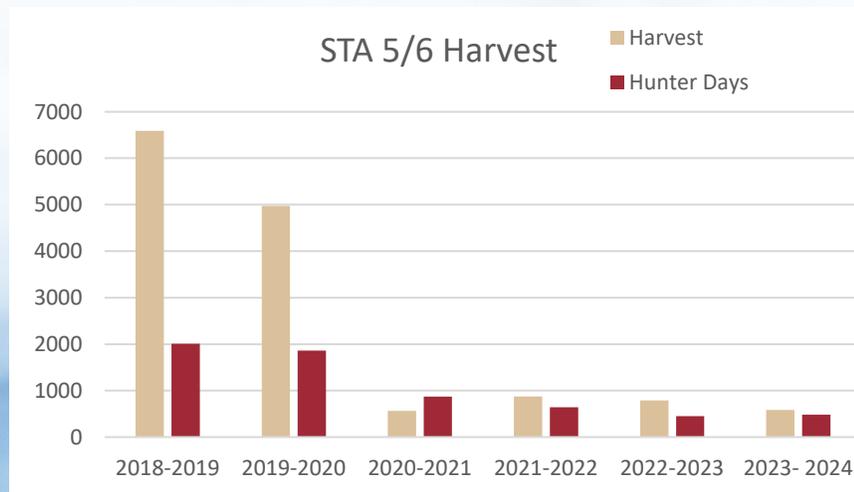
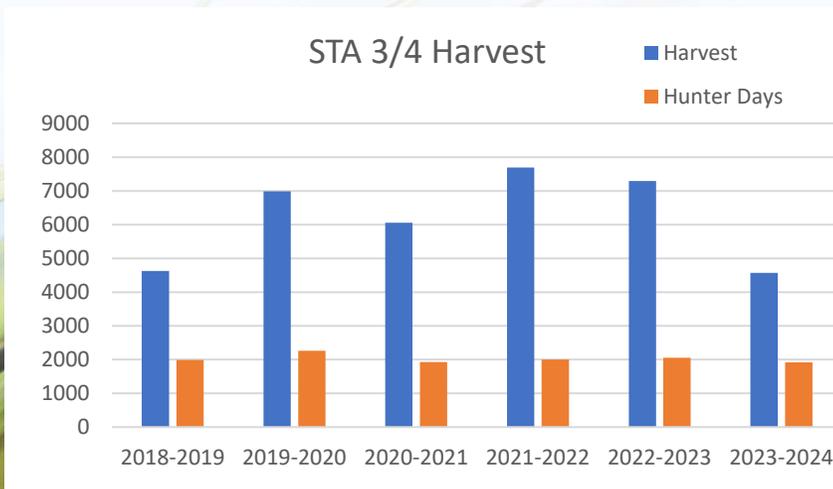
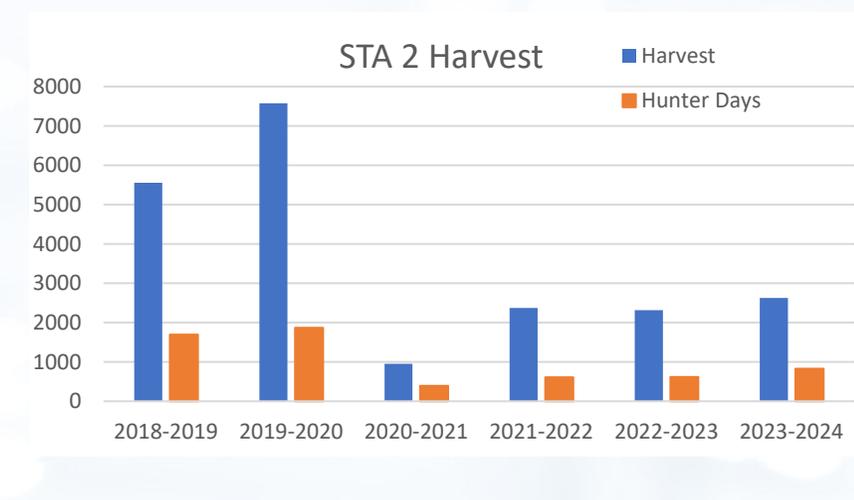
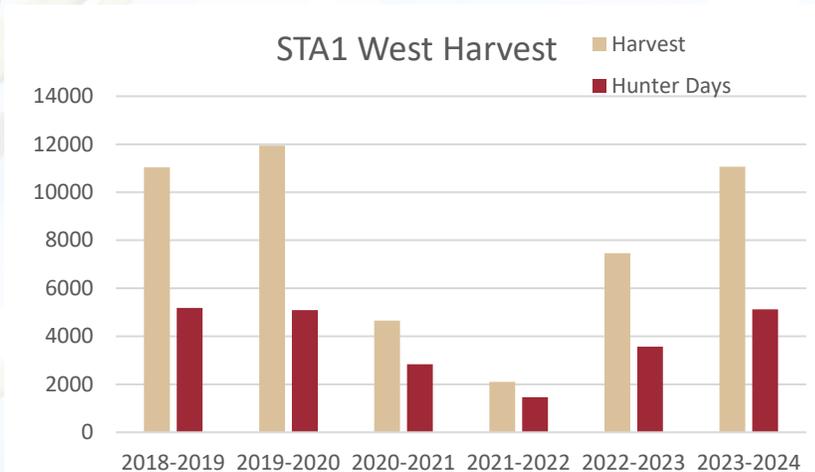
% of Quota Harvested



AMU Name	2022 Harvest	2023 Harvest
STA 1W South	45	38
STA 1W North	0	40
STA 1E	0	57
STA 2*	0	0
STA 3/4 E	69	64
STA 3/4 W	55	48
STA 5/6	89	104
A1 FEB	27	27
TOTAL	285	378

# Waterfowl Data 2023- vs 2022

- Harvest and effort

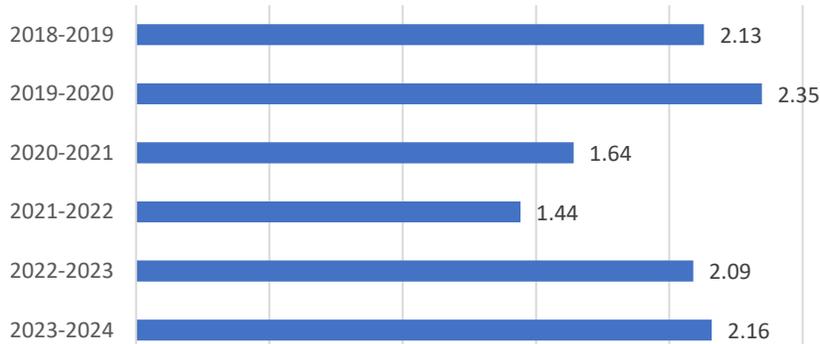


# Waterfowl Data 2023- vs 2022 cont.

- Hunter success average

Average =  
Harvest  
/Hunter days

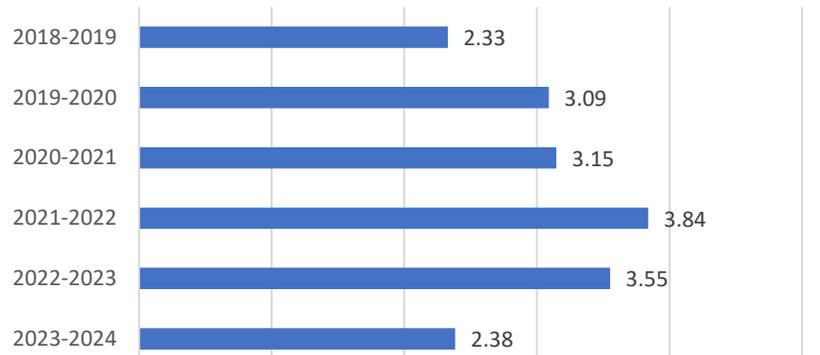
STA 1 W Ducks per hunter



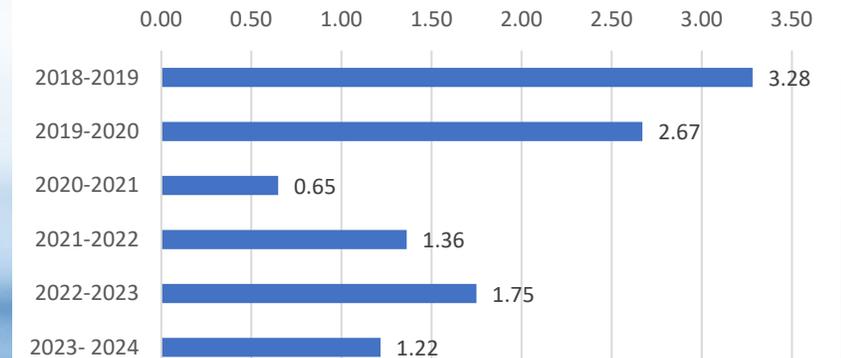
STA 2 Ducks per hunter



STA 3/4 Ducks per hunter

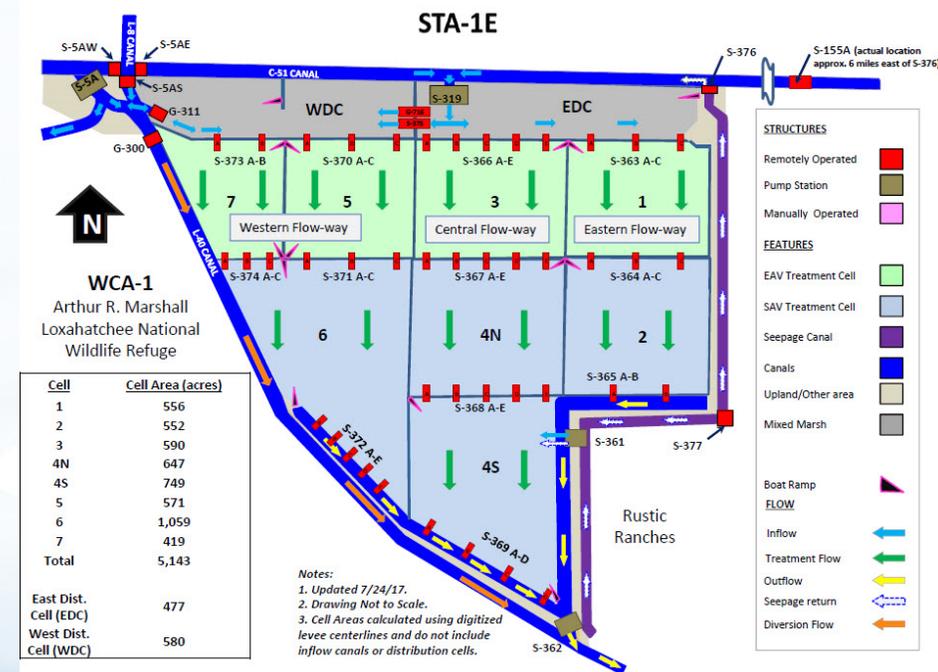


STA 5/6 Ducks per hunter



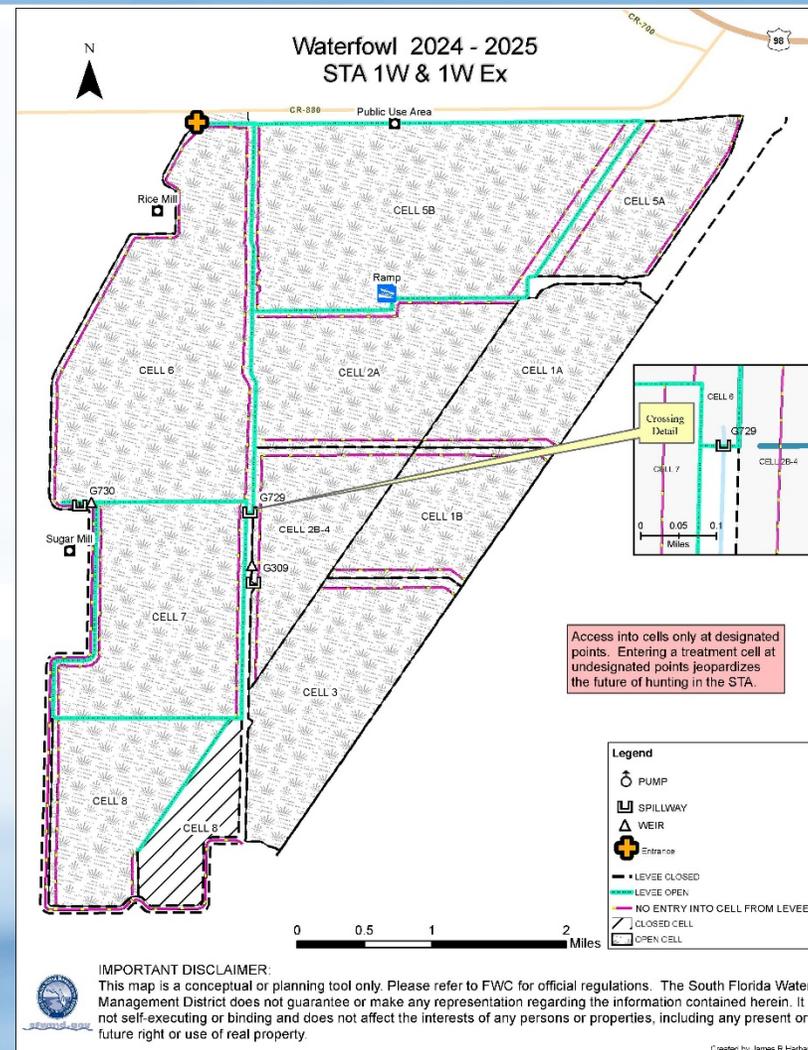
# STA 1E Alligator 2023

- 2024 No hunting
  - 2026 earliest reinstate
- Construction on Central Flow Way
  - Reset is similar to previous projects
  - Improve project effectiveness
  - Haul routes and draw down



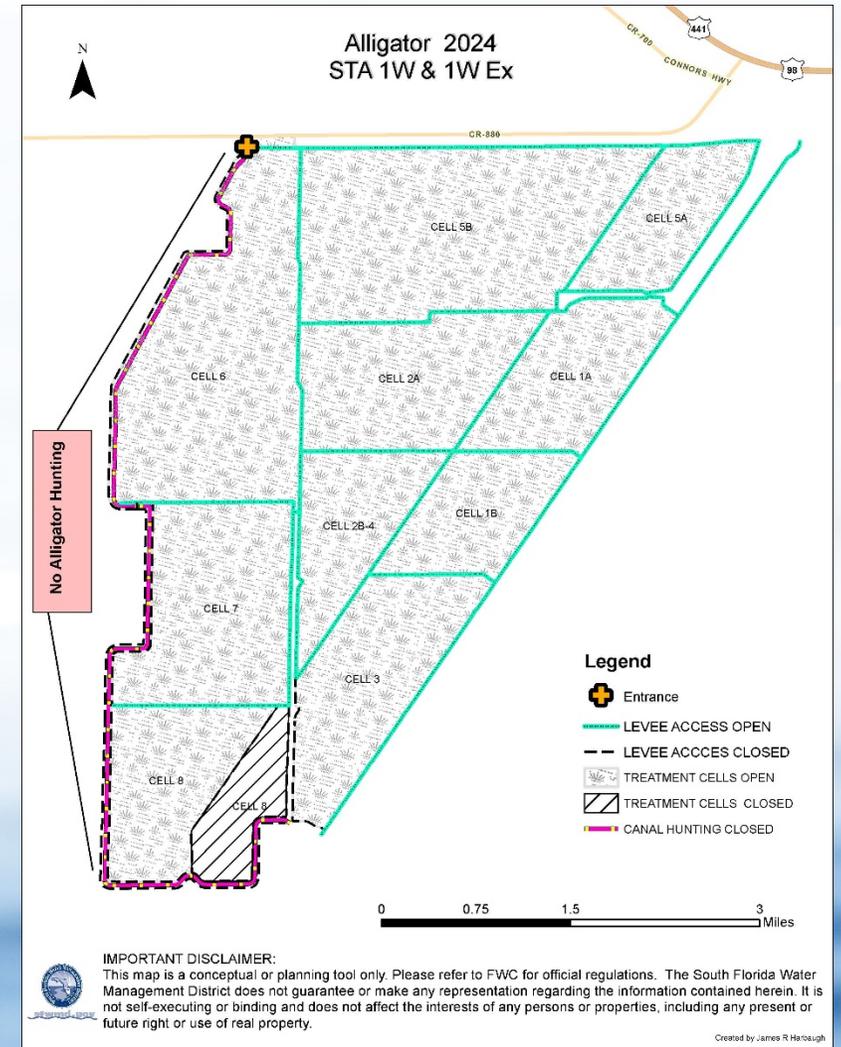
# STA 1W Waterfowl

- Quota reduction from 40 to 35
  - Overcrowding issues
- SE Cell 8 still closed
  - G780 project – near completion
- Closed levees logistical reasons
  - No cell access/suitable hunting
  - No crossing G730 structure
    - Posted with signage
- Expansion 2 – still under construction
  - no access planned for this year
- Cell 5B new plantings
  - Posted with signs



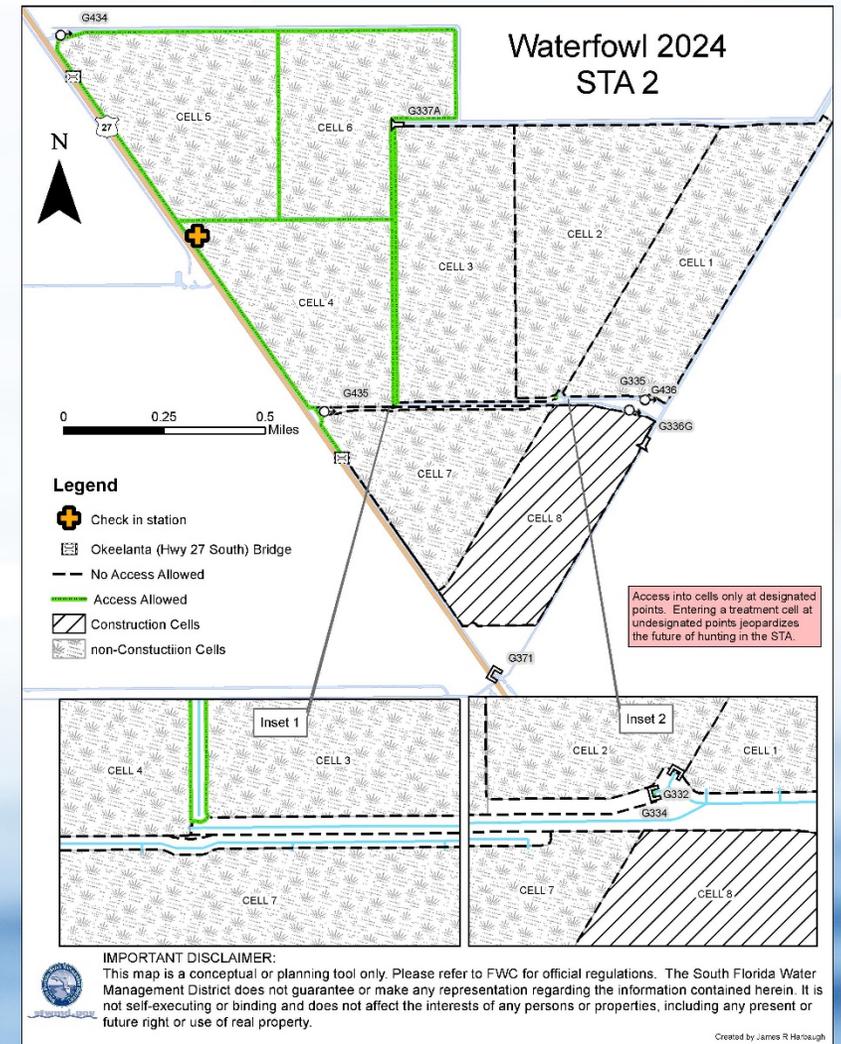
# STA 1W Alligator

- Quota total 50 (25 North and 25 South AMU)
- Monitoring canals - no hunting
- Levees/canals are posted



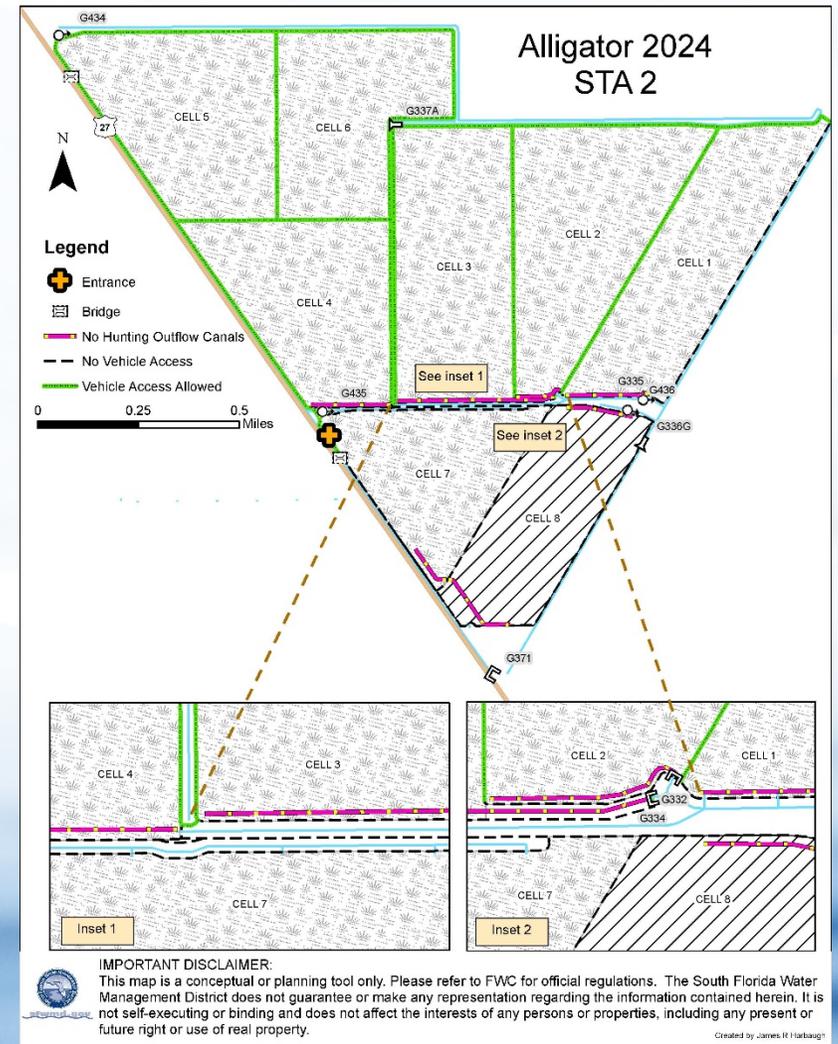
# STA 2 Waterfowl

- Hunt day back to Saturday
- Sunday hunts in 2023
- Access from HWY 27 at Okeelanta Bridge
- Check-in station levee 4/6
- Quota increase 30 to 35
- Cells 2 and 3 plantings
- Posted with signs



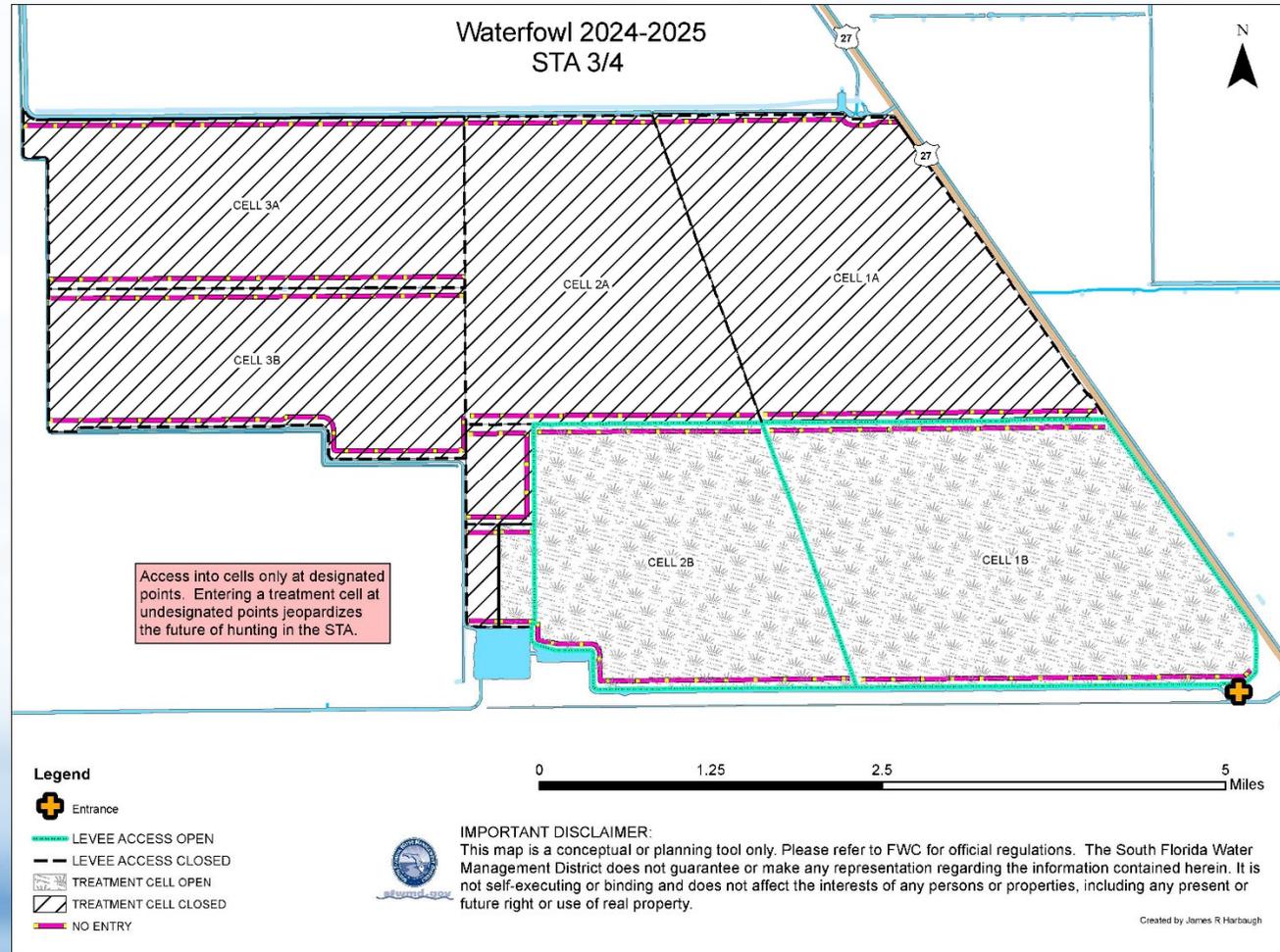
# STA 2 Alligator

- Alligator harvest will occur 2024
- Last hunt season was 2020
- Monitoring canals - no hunting
  - South end of cells 1 – 4
  - Levee will be posted
- Quota 35 – harvest up to 70



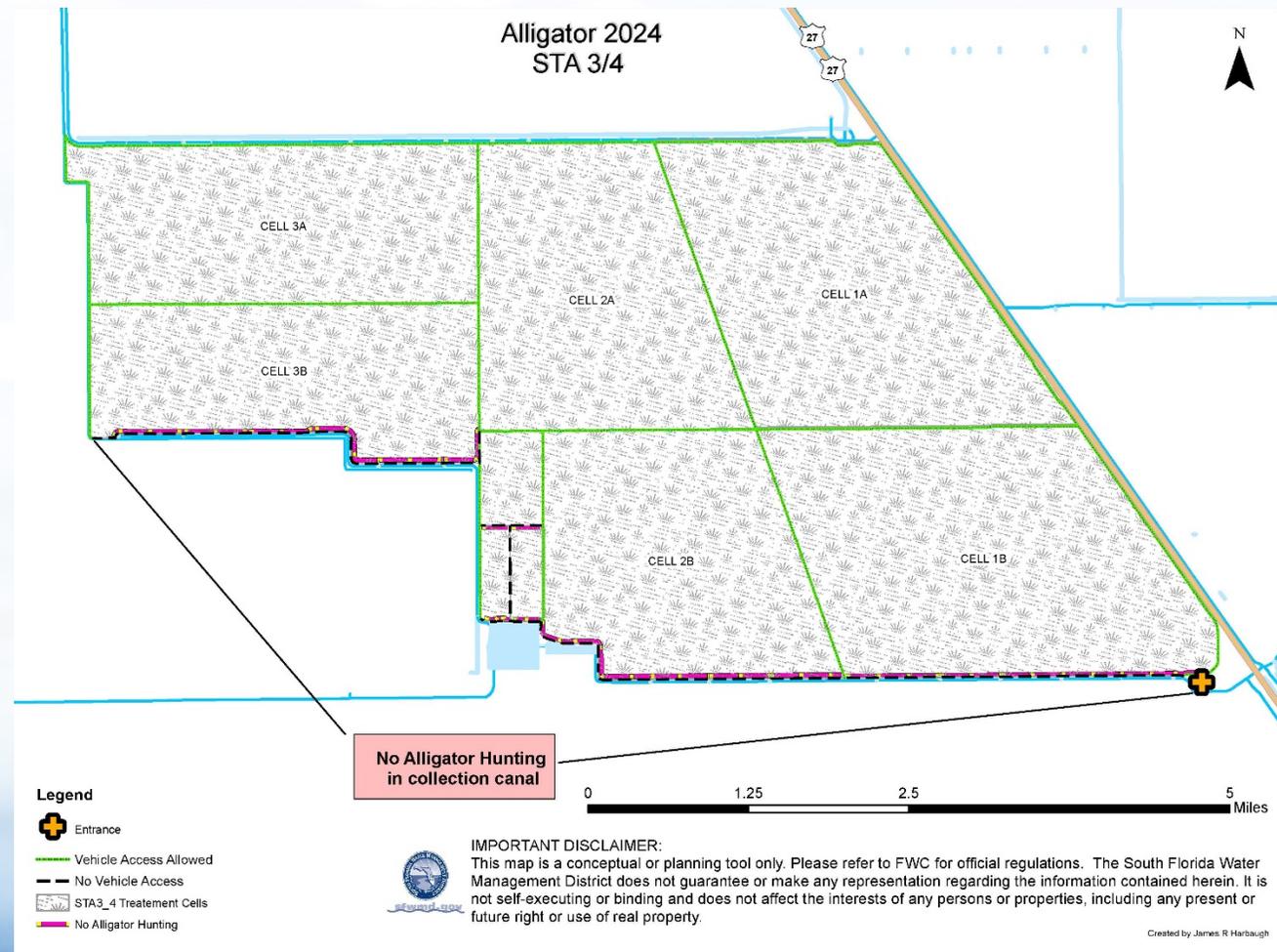
# STA 3/4 Waterfowl

- No quota change (40)
  - Continuing work in cells 1A and 2A
- Trail creation was successful – no negative feedback



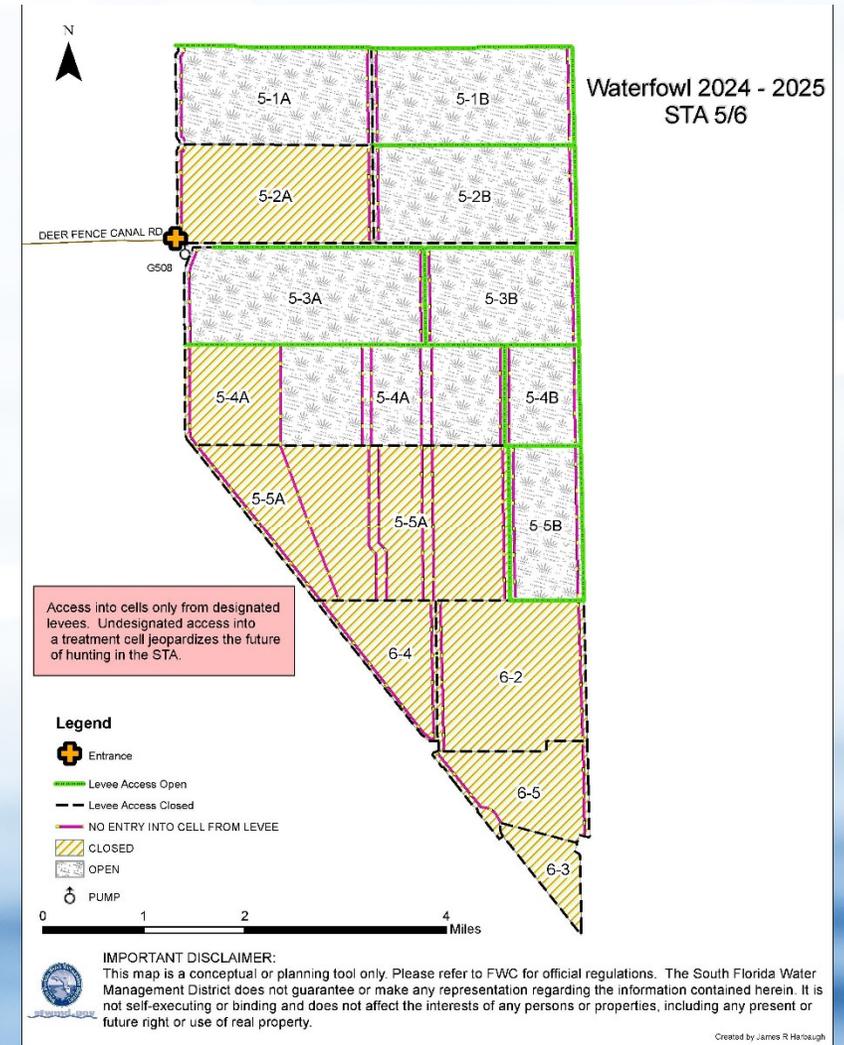
# STA 3/4 Alligator

- Quota 100 total
  - 50 North and South
- Monitoring canals - no hunting
  - Levees posted



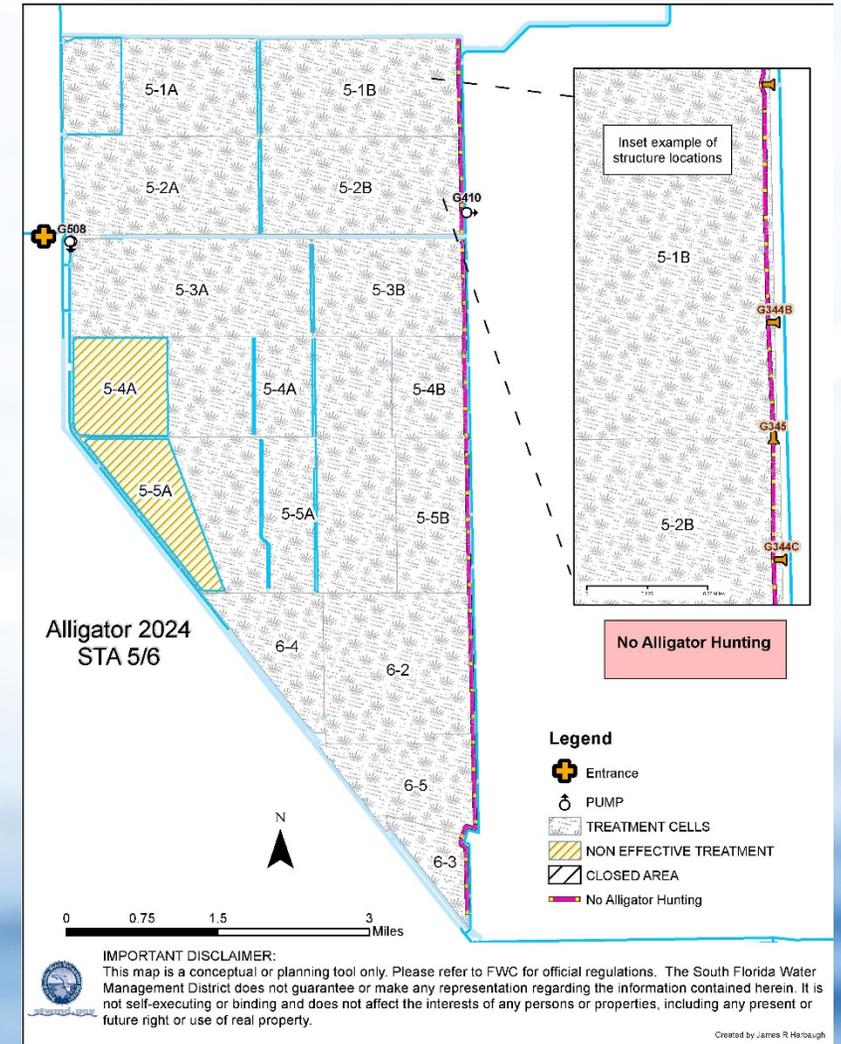
# STA 5/6 Waterfowl

- Likely reduced Quota
  - from 15 to 10
  - Vegetation challenges
    - Spatterdock/FAV
  - Deer Fence Canal Rd
    - Access reopened
  - Levee Access hunting



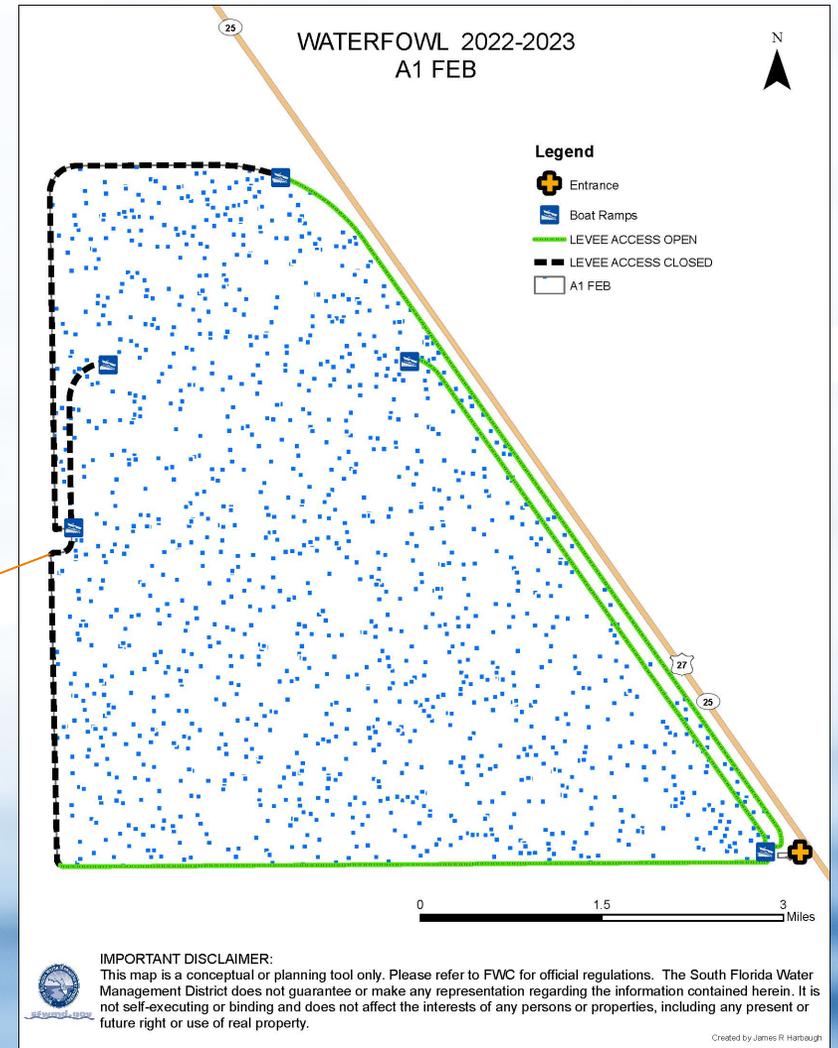
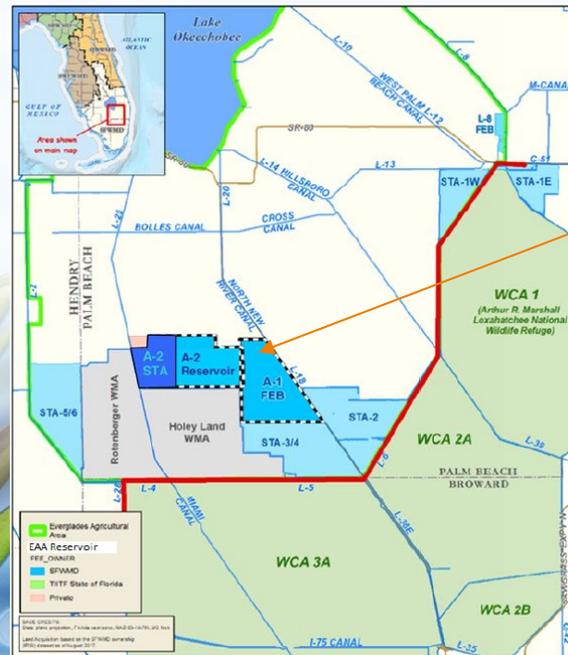
# STA 5/6 Alligator

- Quota total 60
- Same access as waterfowl
  - Deer Fence Canal Rd
- Monitoring canals - no hunting
  - Levees posted



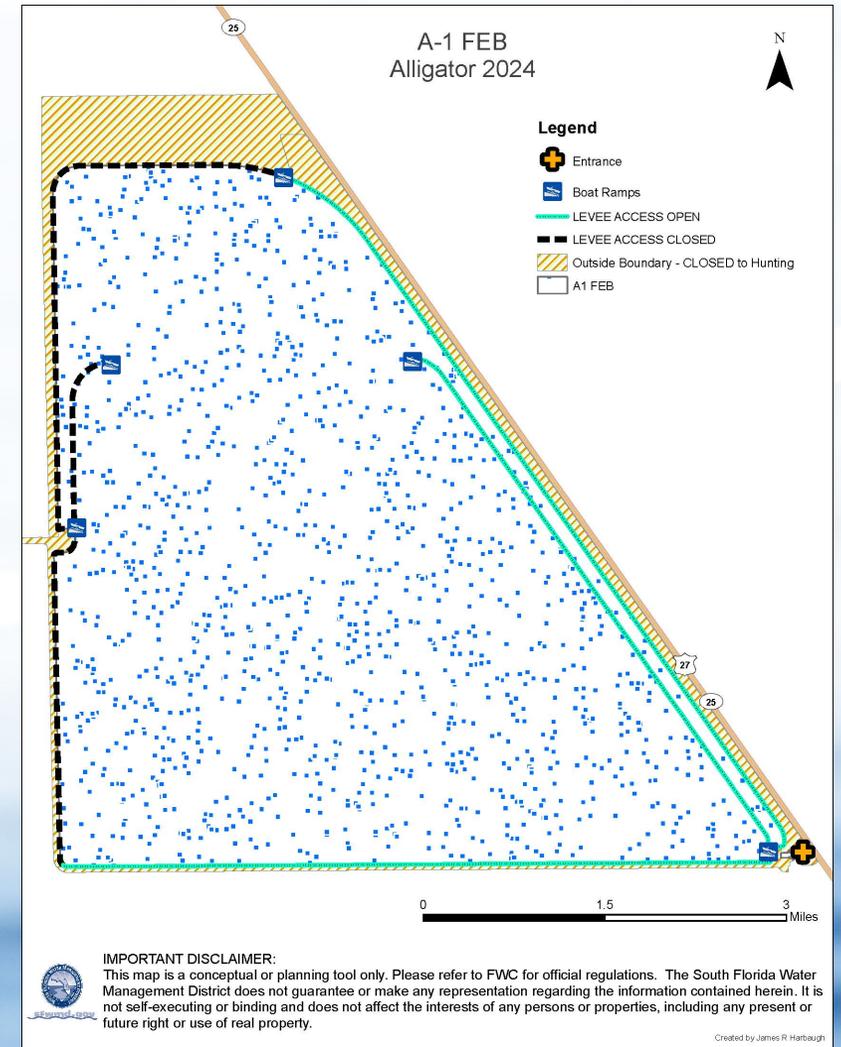
# A1 FEB Waterfowl

- No foreseeable quota change (100)
- W & N levee closed due to A2 construction



# A1 FEB Alligator

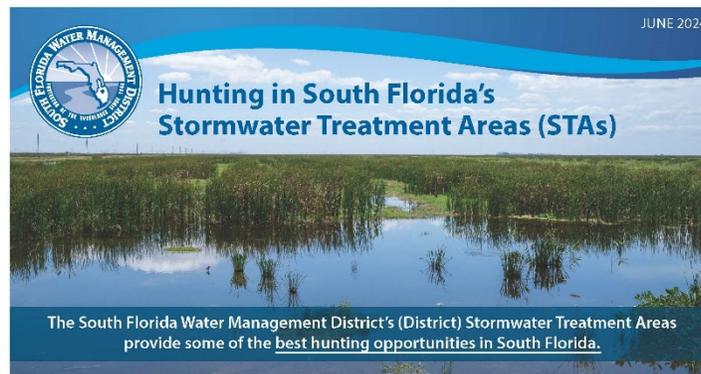
- Quota total 20
- Same levee access as waterfowl
- Hunting hours consistent with STA's – not 24 hour



# Recreational Webpage

- New link to recreation STA Hunter fact sheet

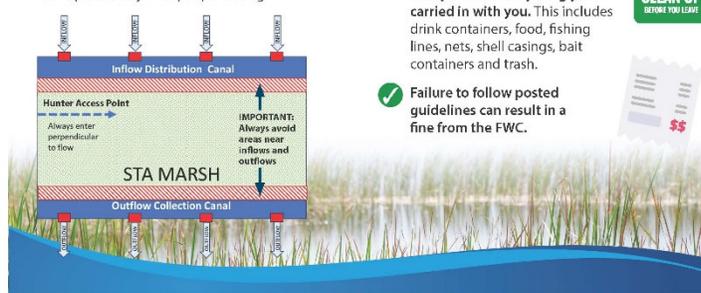
[https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet\\_STAs\\_Hunters\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet_STAs_Hunters_FINAL.pdf)



### Know Before You Go!

Follow these important reminders every time you enter an STA to go hunting.

- ✓ Only enter and exit from designated areas. These areas have been selected to have the least impact on the treatment process and sensitive environmental areas. Avoid impacting any vegetation restoration efforts.
- ✓ Entering at designated areas into the water is only for hunters who have an FWC permit to hunt. The District strongly prohibits any other recreators from entering the waters within the STAs, particularly with people fishing.
- ✓ Hunting for alligators and waterfowl is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Visit [myfwc.com](http://myfwc.com) for hunt dates, regulations, and directions to check stations to ensure the most accurate and latest information.
- ✓ When you leave the STA, make sure you take everything you carried in with you. This includes drink containers, food, fishing lines, nets, shell casings, bait containers and trash.
- ✓ Failure to follow posted guidelines can result in a fine from the FWC.



### Keeping Stormwater Treatment Areas Healthy

#### Purpose

STAs are built specifically for improving water quality in the Everglades. Their vast shallow waters and rich plant life also make them an outstanding habitat for wildlife such as alligators, birds and various mammals including deer, bobcats and foxes. The purpose of STAs is to remove phosphorus flowing into the Everglades.

Too much phosphorus alters the habitat that Florida's native plants and animals need to thrive. When visiting an STA, almost all of what you see is by design. Different types of vegetation serve different roles to achieve optimal performance.

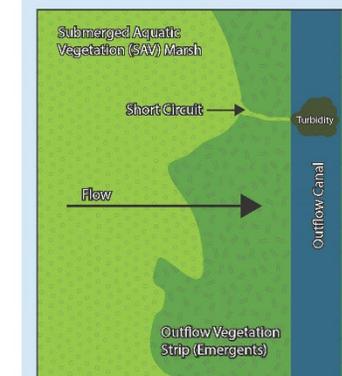
#### EMERGENT VEGETATION

Emergent vegetation such as cattail will be found at the inflows and outflows to help reduce particulates and encourage sheet flow.



#### SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION (SAV)

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation plays a critical role in phosphorus reduction. They are one of the most productive habitats on Earth.



### Keep STAs Healthy

- ▶ Water quality improvement is largely determined by soil stability and the health and resiliency of aquatic vegetation.
- ▶ Manual disturbances to vegetation and soil, such as non-motorized boating, repeated walking or removing vegetation can interrupt the nutrient uptake process and can permanently damage the vegetation, leading to short circuits in water flow.
- ▶ A short circuit is a damaged area in an STA where water can bypass the vegetation and therefore the treatment process. Water moving through this area will travel at a higher speed and cause scouring of the peat soil, which adds phosphorus to the water entering the Everglades.

Do your part to keep our STAs healthy. Follow all posted guidelines.

SFWMD.gov/Recreation

# Questions

James Harbaugh

[jharbaugh@sfwmd.gov](mailto:jharbaugh@sfwmd.gov)



Gator hunt STA 5/6 - 2023



# Recreation Project and Facility Design Update

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



Recreational Public Forum  
June 24, 2024  
West Palm Beach, FL

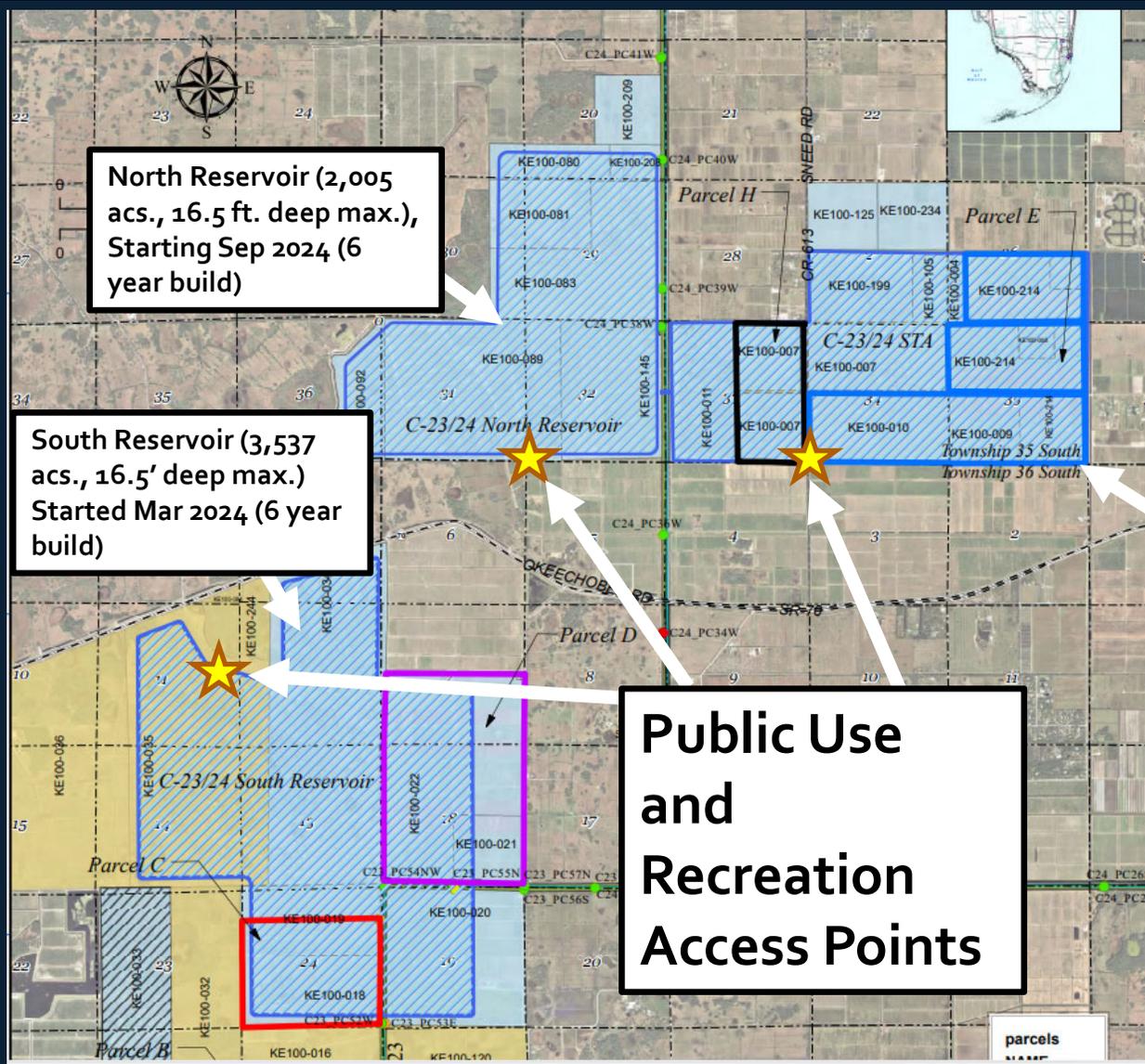
# Indian River Lagoon South C-23/24 Reservoirs/STA

## Features

- parking area
- kiosks
- shelters
- restrooms
- boat ramp

## Activities

- Motorized/non-motorized boating
- fishing
- hiking
- biking
- wildlife viewing
- limited entry waterfowl and alligator hunts



**North Reservoir (2,005 acs., 16.5 ft. deep max.), Starting Sep 2024 (6 year build)**

**South Reservoir (3,537 acs., 16.5' deep max.) Started Mar 2024 (6 year build)**

**STA (1,970 acs.) currently under construction (end Oct 2025)**

**Public Use and Recreation Access Points**



# Indian River Lagoon South C-23/24 Reservoirs/STA

Information kiosk with shelter



Concrete vault bathroom



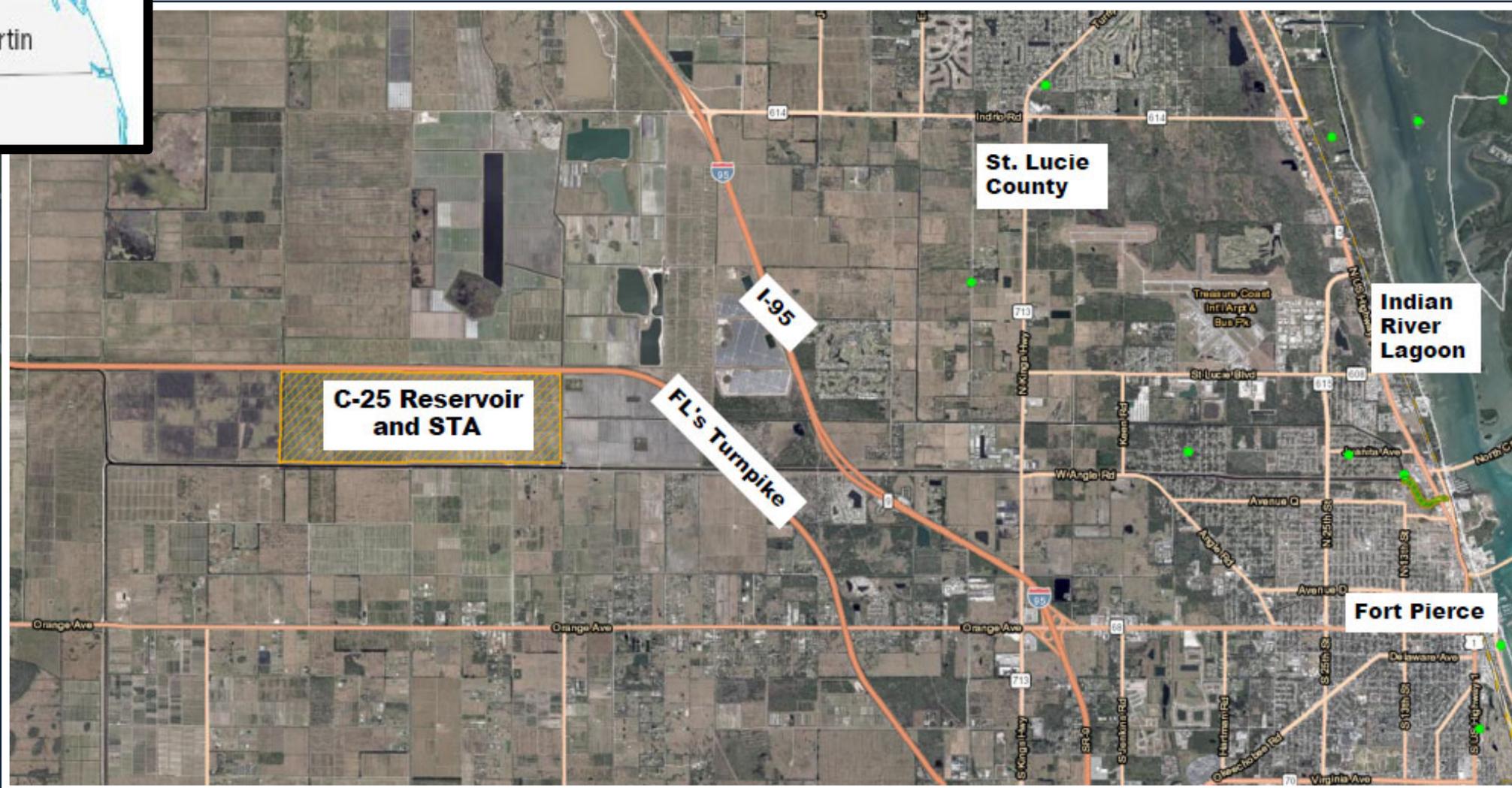
# Indian River Lagoon South C-23/24 Reservoirs/STA

Filled STA cell corner with shelter

Large shelter with picnic tables



# Indian River Lagoon South C-25 Reservoir/STA



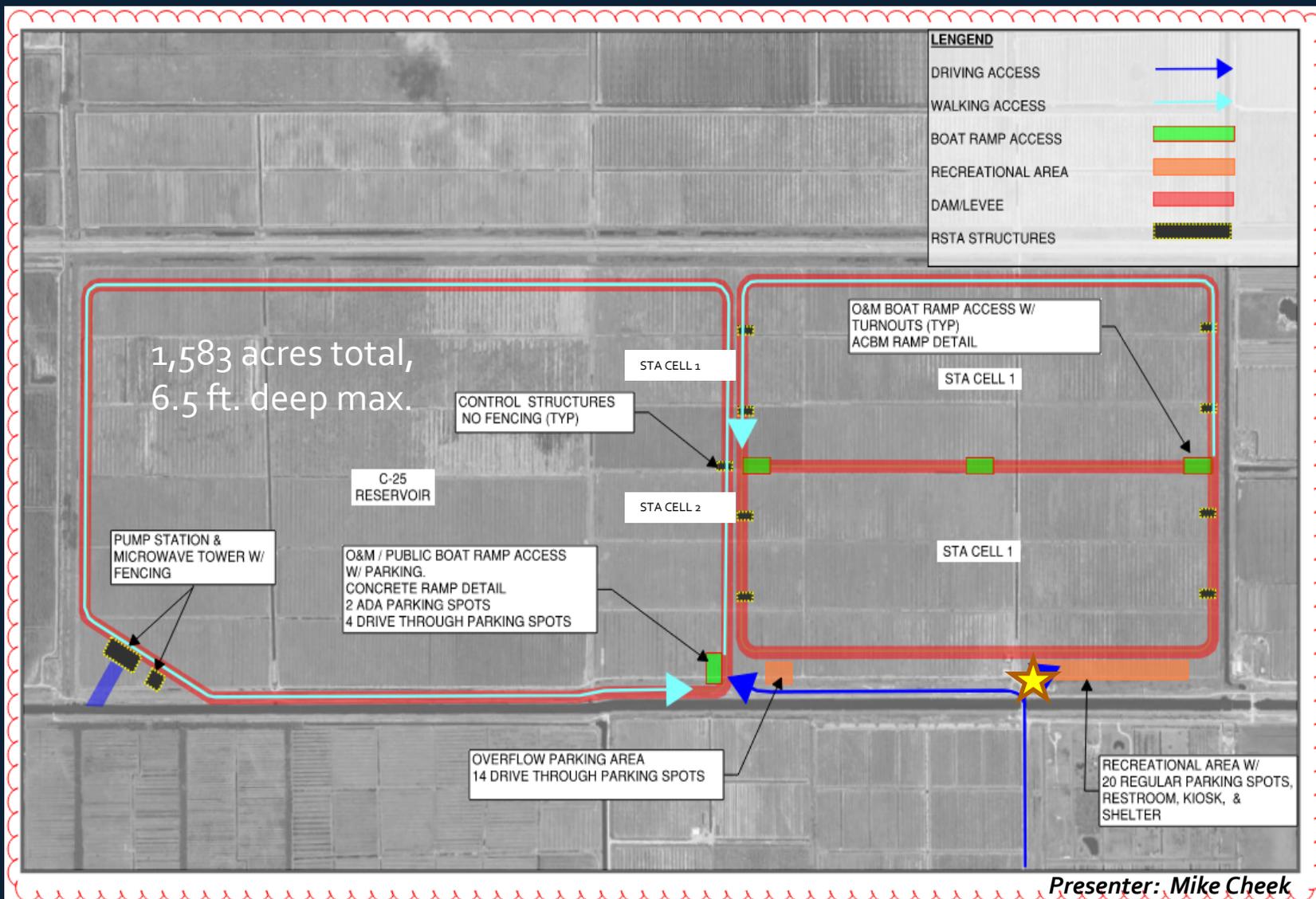
# RECREATION & PUBLIC ACCESS C-25 Reservoir/STA

## Features

- parking area
- kiosks
- shelters
- restrooms
- boat ramp

## Activities

- Motorized/non-motorized boating
- fishing
- hiking
- biking
- wildlife viewing
- limited entry waterfowl and alligator hunts





MAY 2024



## C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area Future Public Use for Recreational Activities

On May 9, 2024, the SFWMD Governing Board Officially Declared This Area as a Stormwater Treatment Area

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) completed design plans for a public parking trailhead which includes a stabilized parking area with ADA access, interpretive kiosks, shelters, benches, restrooms, and signage.



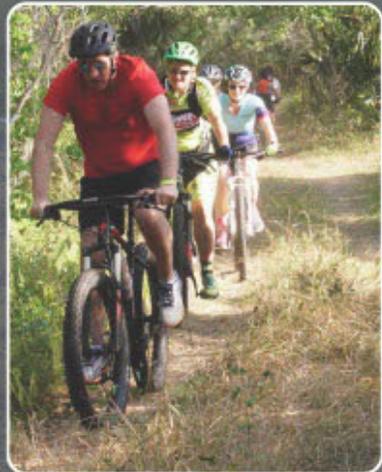
Audubon-led birding tours will also likely be conducted. Birdwatchers may be able to spot sandhill cranes, snail kites, great blue herons, great egrets, mottled ducks and black-bellied whistling ducks, along with roseate spoonbills, white pelicans, wood storks, and migratory shorebirds.



This area will soon be open for regularly scheduled public access and nature-based recreation that is compatible with the goals of the project. Activities will likely include hiking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and photography.



Hours: Sunrise to Sunset  
Friday through Monday  
except during hunting season  
(September to November 15).



Limited entry waterfowl and alligator hunts managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).



# C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area/STA

May Governing Board Site Visit

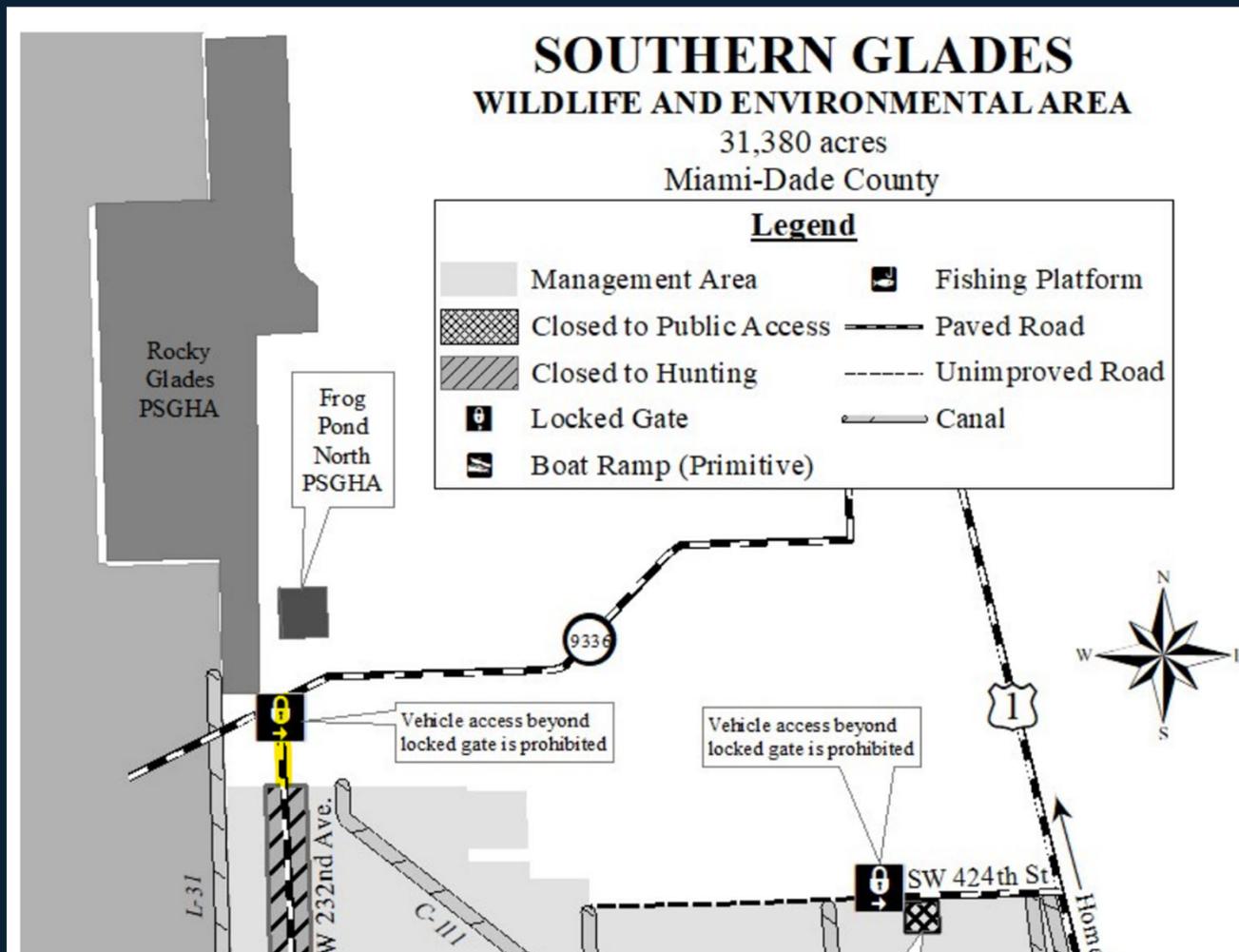


# C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area/STA

Audubon Martin County inaugural birding tour (6/15/24)

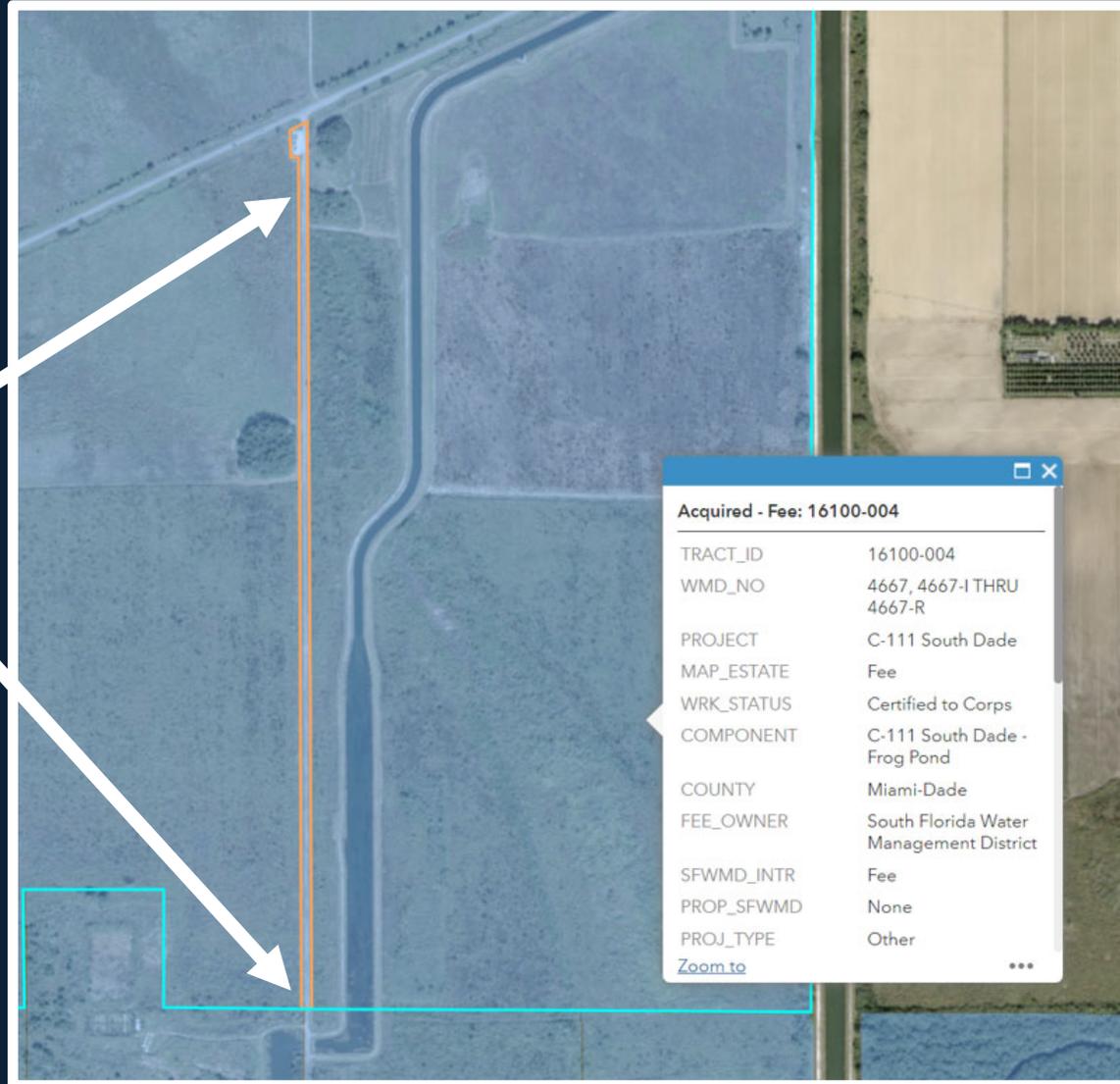


# Southern Glades WMA Entrance Expansion



# Southern Glades WMA Entrance Expansion

≈5 linear acres added to WMA entrance (previously designated Vacant Lands)



-Allows for legal access with firearms before and after legal shooting hours



# Western Everglades Restoration Project (WERP) Public Use and Recreational Features

**LEGEND**

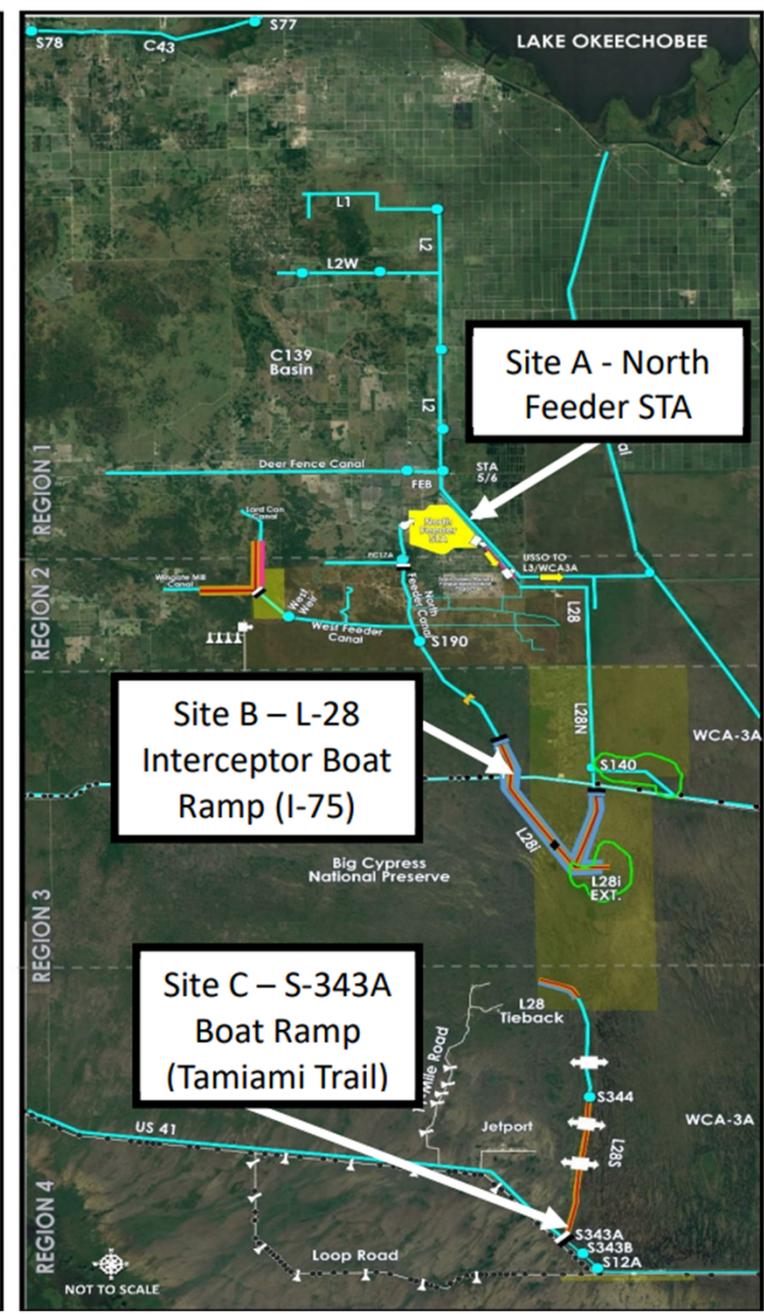
- Seminole Tribe of Florida Reservation
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida Reservations
- Existing Culverts
- Existing Structures
- Existing Canals
- Existing Roads

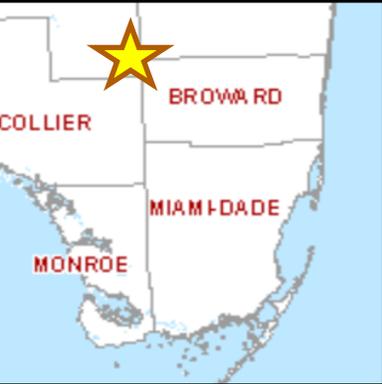
**Features\***

- Water Treatment
- Inline Weir
- Embankment
- Pump
- Bi-Directional Control Structure
- Gated Culvert
- Culvert
- Plug
- Plug with Levee Tie-In
- Treated Water
- Canal Backfill
- Canal Backfill/Degrade Levee
- Vegetation Restoration
- McCormack's Landing Restoration

\*Features are not to scale and do not represent final placement

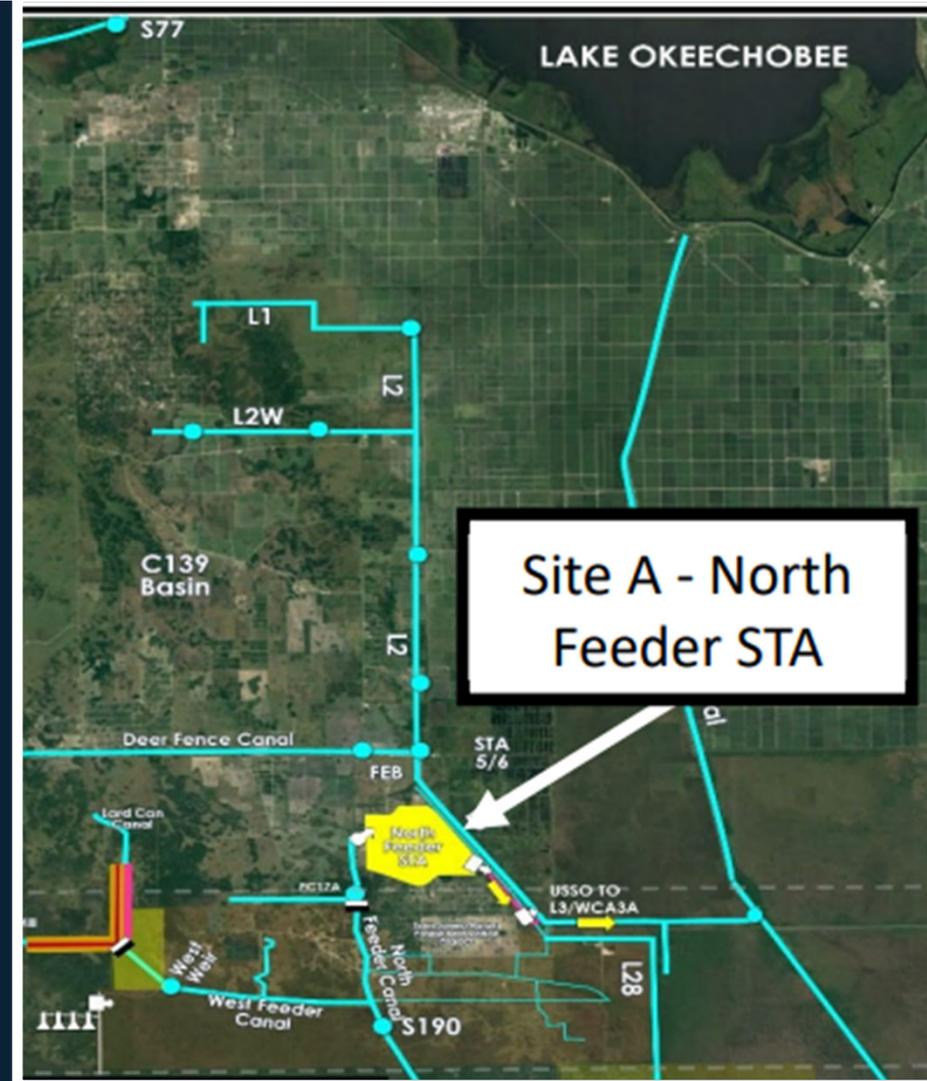
Last Updated: 06-JUN-2023





# WERP Recreational Features Site A North Feeder STA

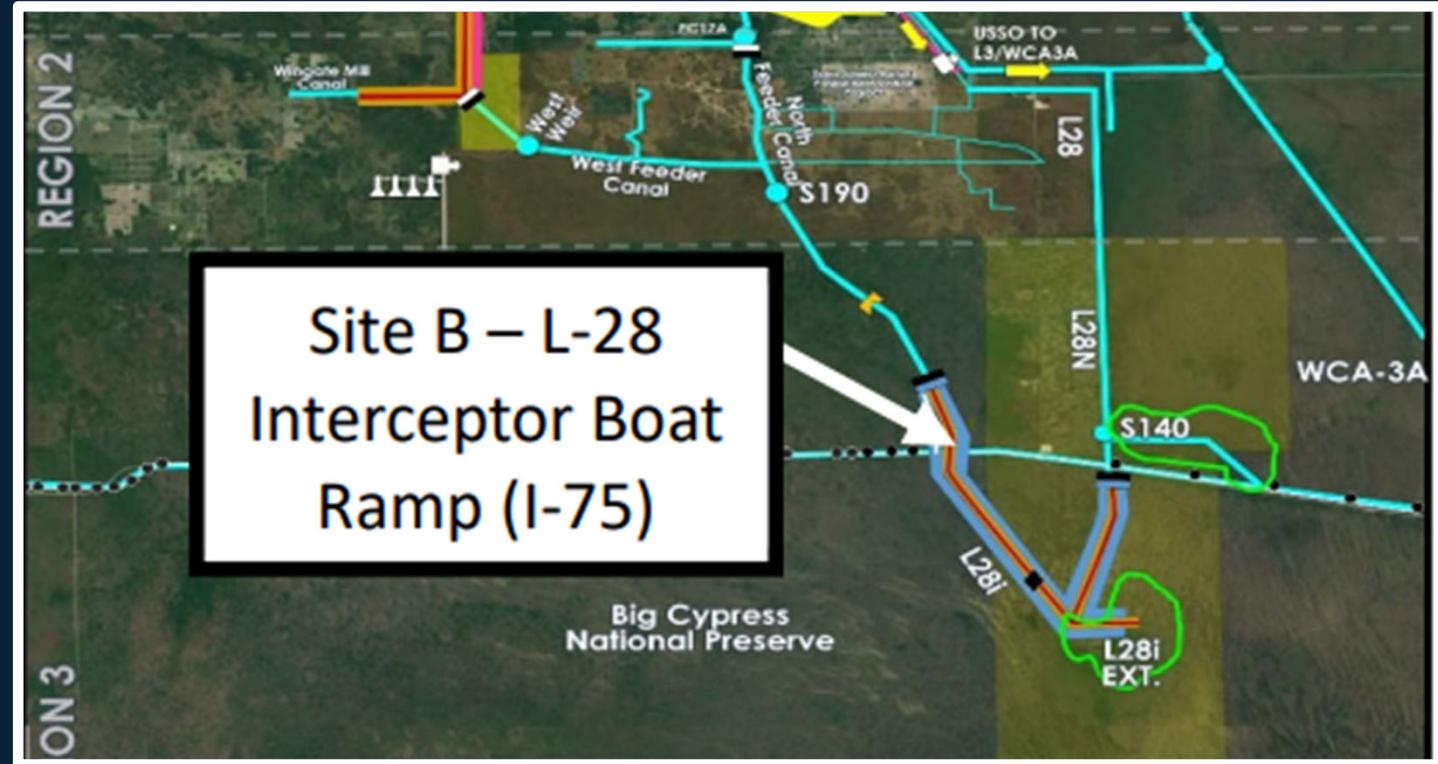
- Large shelter
- Stand-alone kiosk
- Dual-vault bathroom
- Bike rack



# WERP Recreational Features Site B I-75 (MM 51)



- Existing boat ramp
- L-28i canal will be backfilled

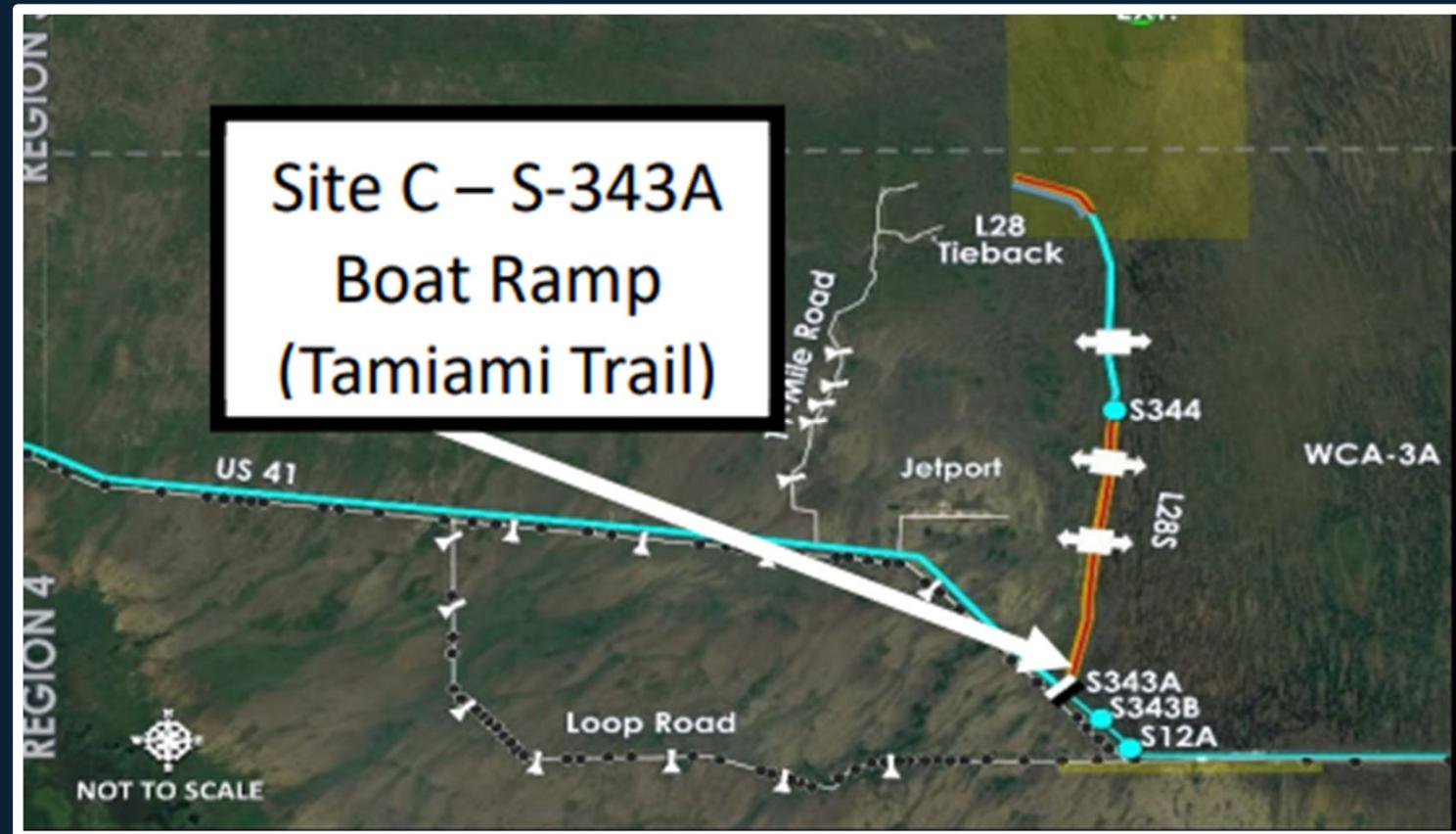


# WERP Recreational Features

## Site C - S-343A Boat Ramp (Tamiami Trail)



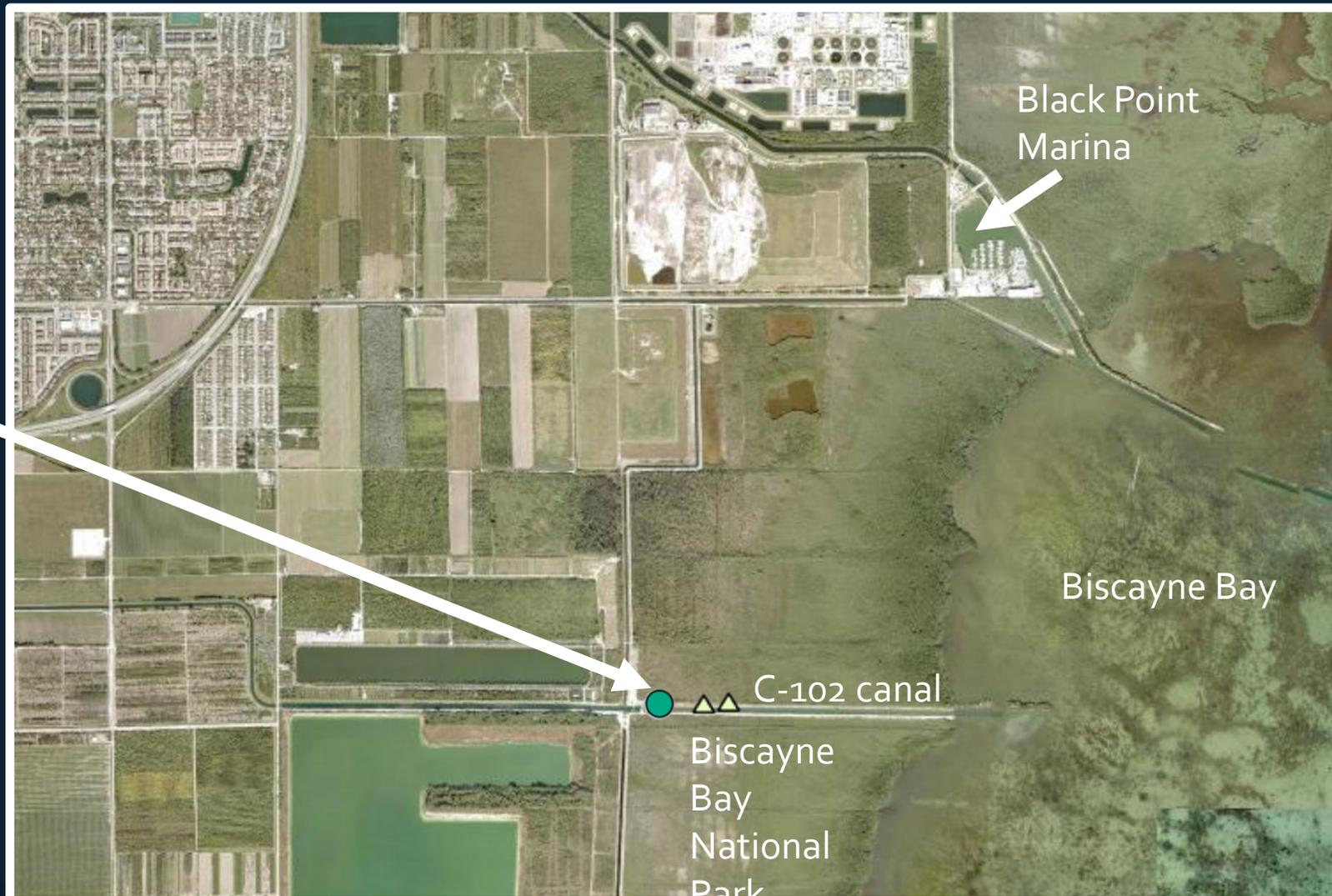
- Large shelter
- Stand alone kiosk
- Bike rack
- Dual-vault bathroom
- Articulated block boat ramp
- Canoe/kayak launch
- Two turning lanes off Tamiami Trail



**WERP  
Recreational  
Features  
Site C - S-343A  
Boat Ramp  
(Tamiami Trail)**



# Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Recreational Features



Informational  
kiosk and 2  
day-use areas

# Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Recreational Features

Picnic table pad

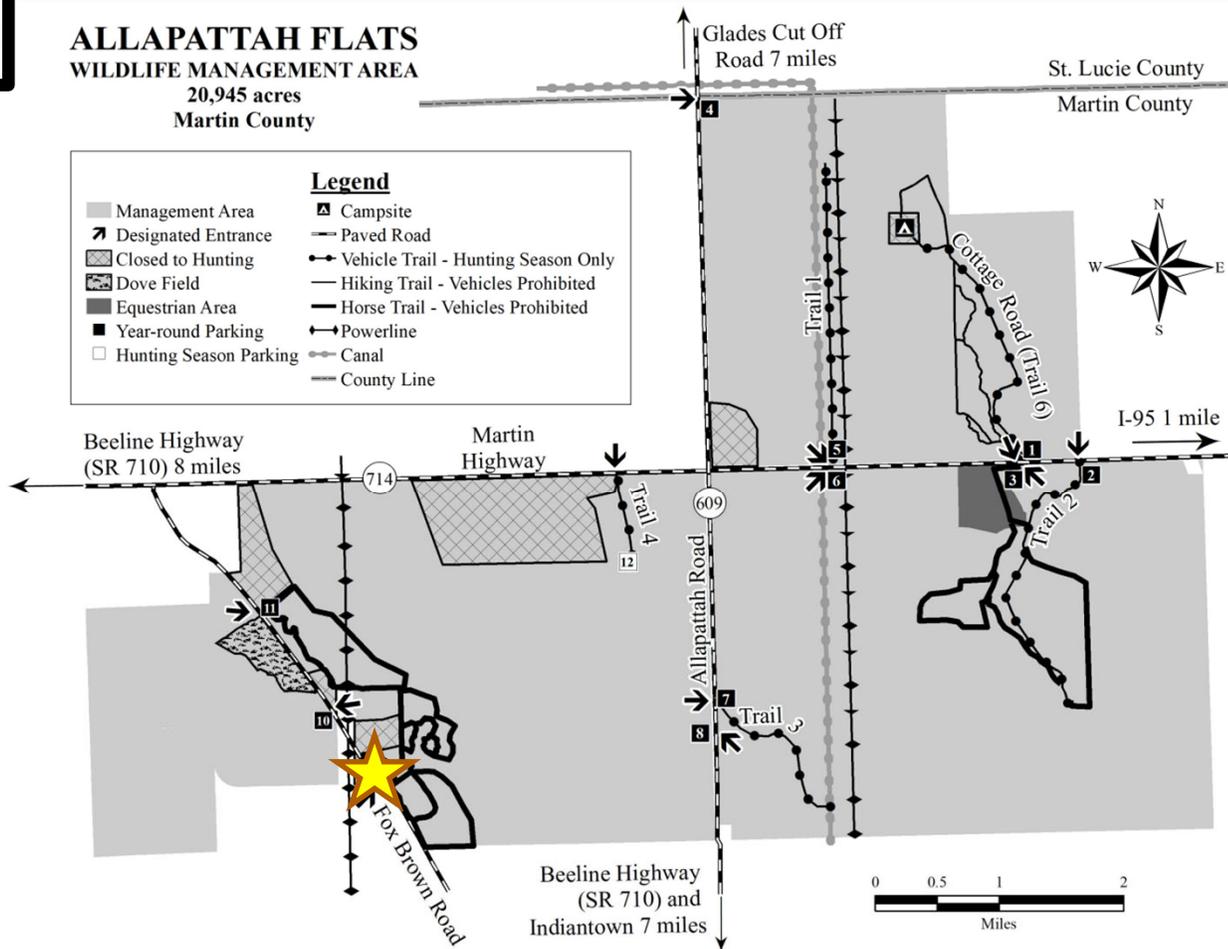


Information kiosk with shelter

# New Kiosk at Allapattah Flats WMA



**ALLAPATTAH FLATS**  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA  
20,945 acres  
Martin County

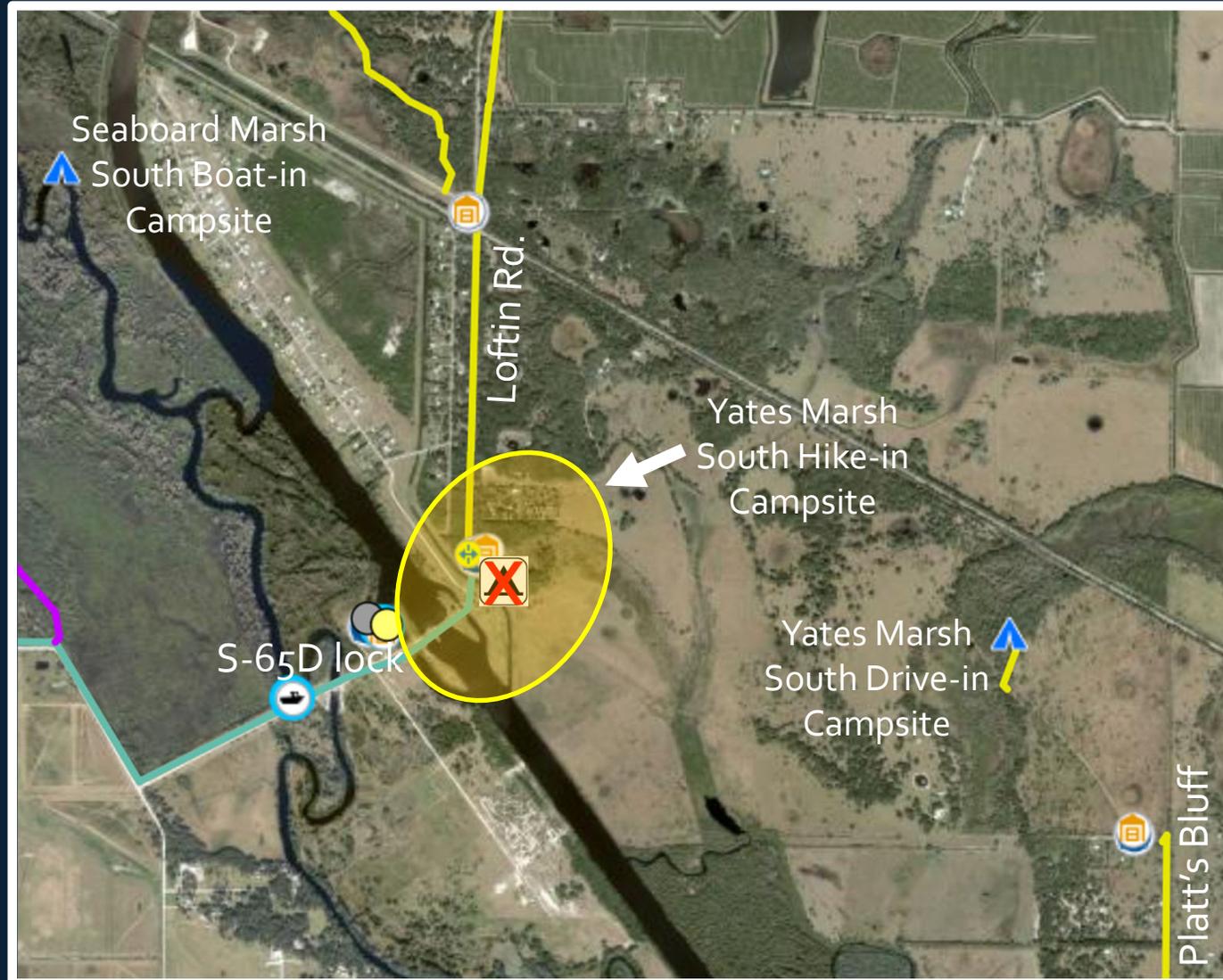


DISCLAIMER: This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and





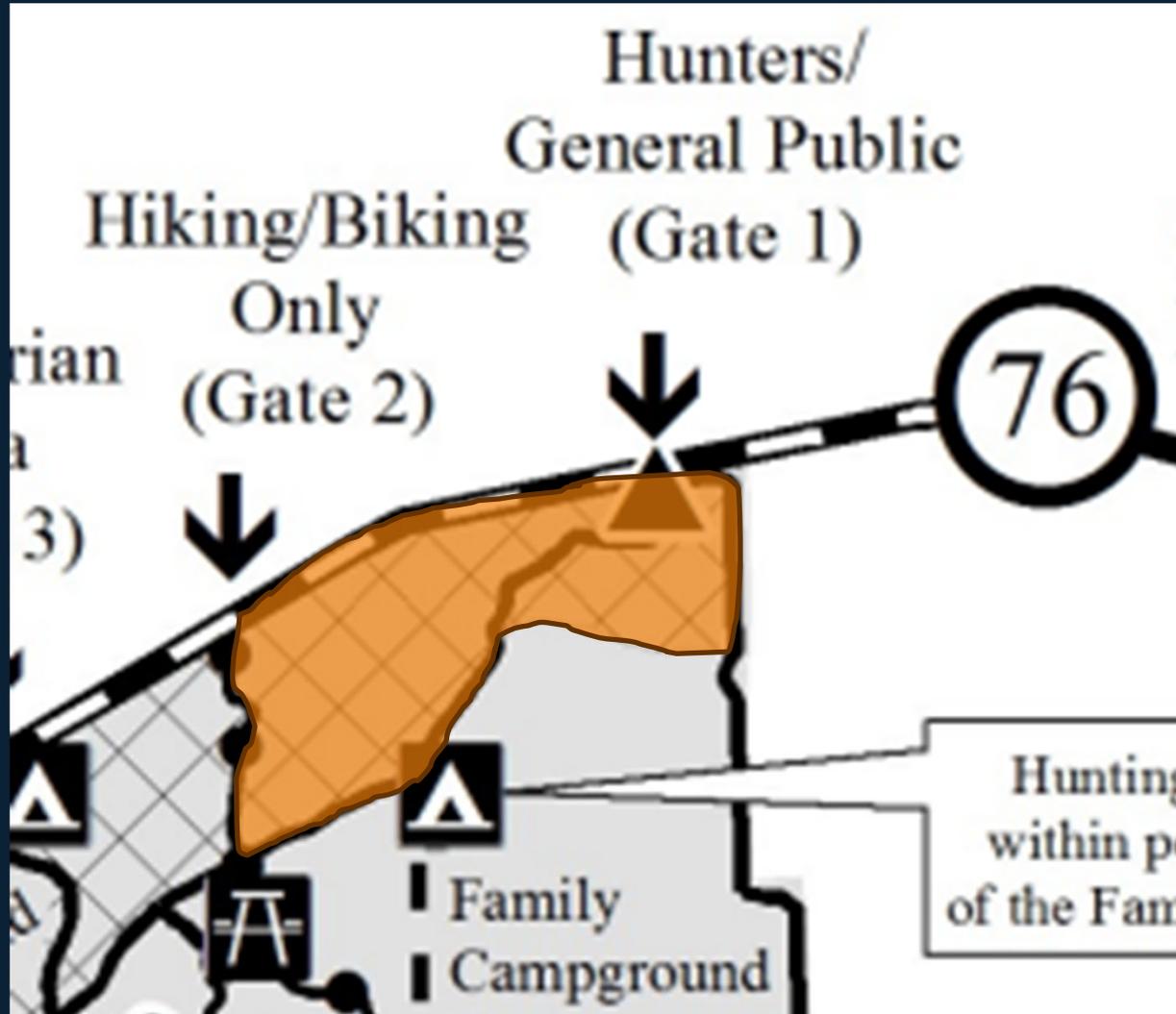
# Kissimmee River Yates Marsh South Campsite Removed





# Dupuis WMA Archery Hunting Expansion

-Open 282 additional acres for archery



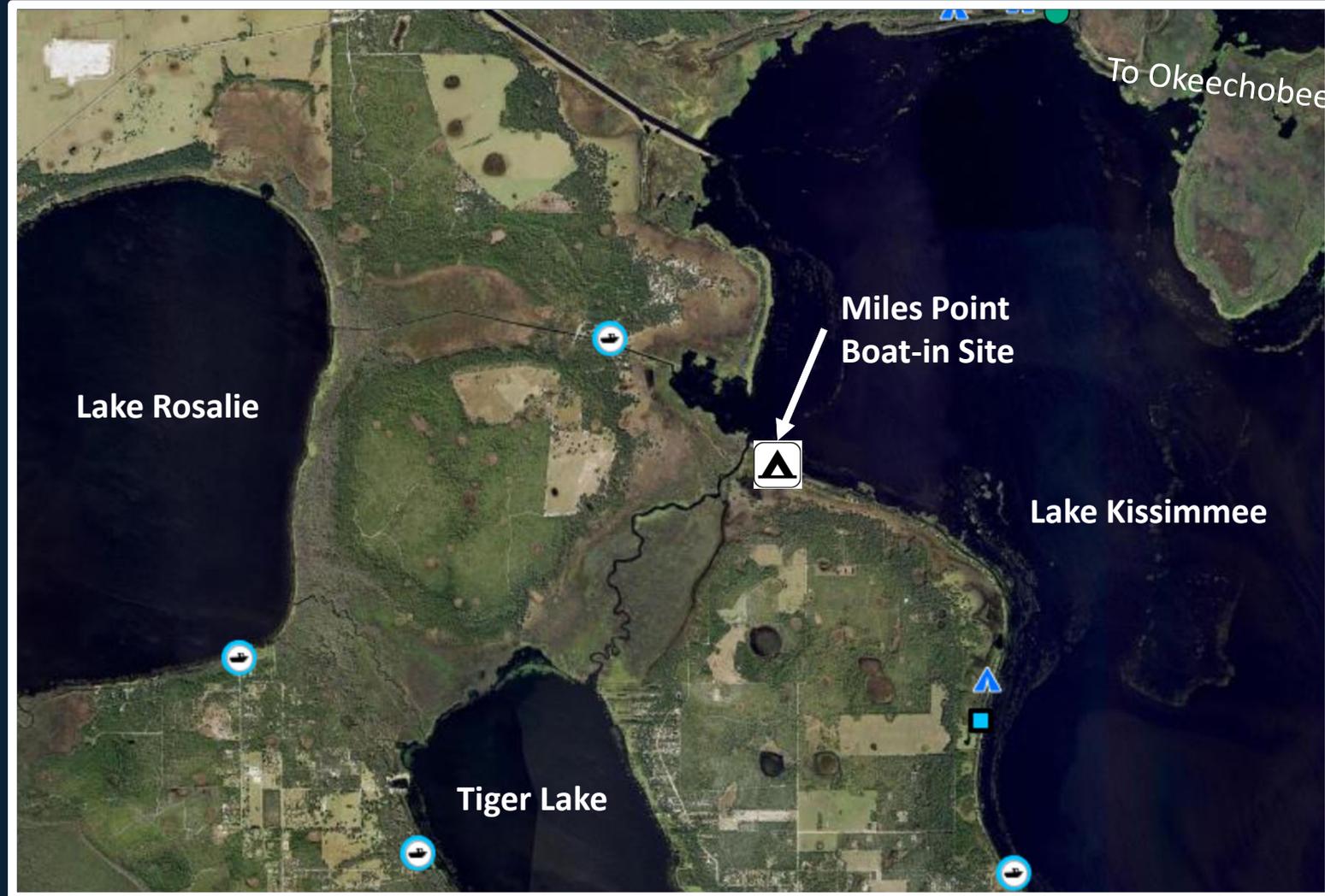


# Dupuis Archery Hunting Expansion

-Open 282 additional acres for archery



# Proposed new campsite on Kissimmee Chain of Lakes WMA



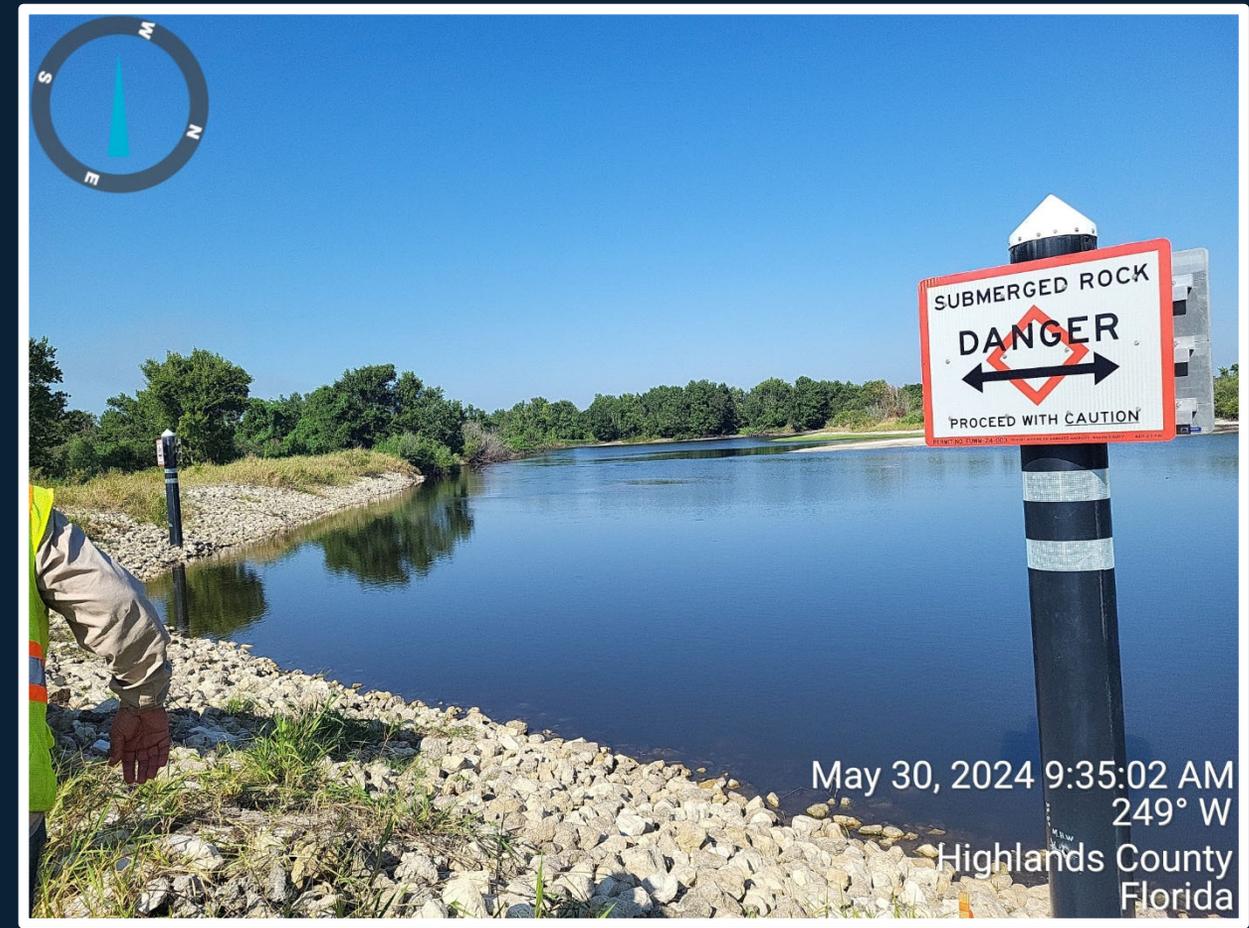
# Kissimmee River Restoration Area Navigation Signage (USACOE)



-Sign Installation began ca. 4 weeks ago



# Kissimmee River Restoration Area Navigation Signage



**Limestone rocks (riprap)**



**Danger**



**Submerged Rocks and Weir**  
**PROCEED WITH CAUTION**



US Army Corps of Engineers



sfwmd.gov

**Istokpoga canal boat ramp**

**Kissimmee River Main Channel**

**4E's boat ramp (Cornwell)**

**Limestone rocks (riprap)**

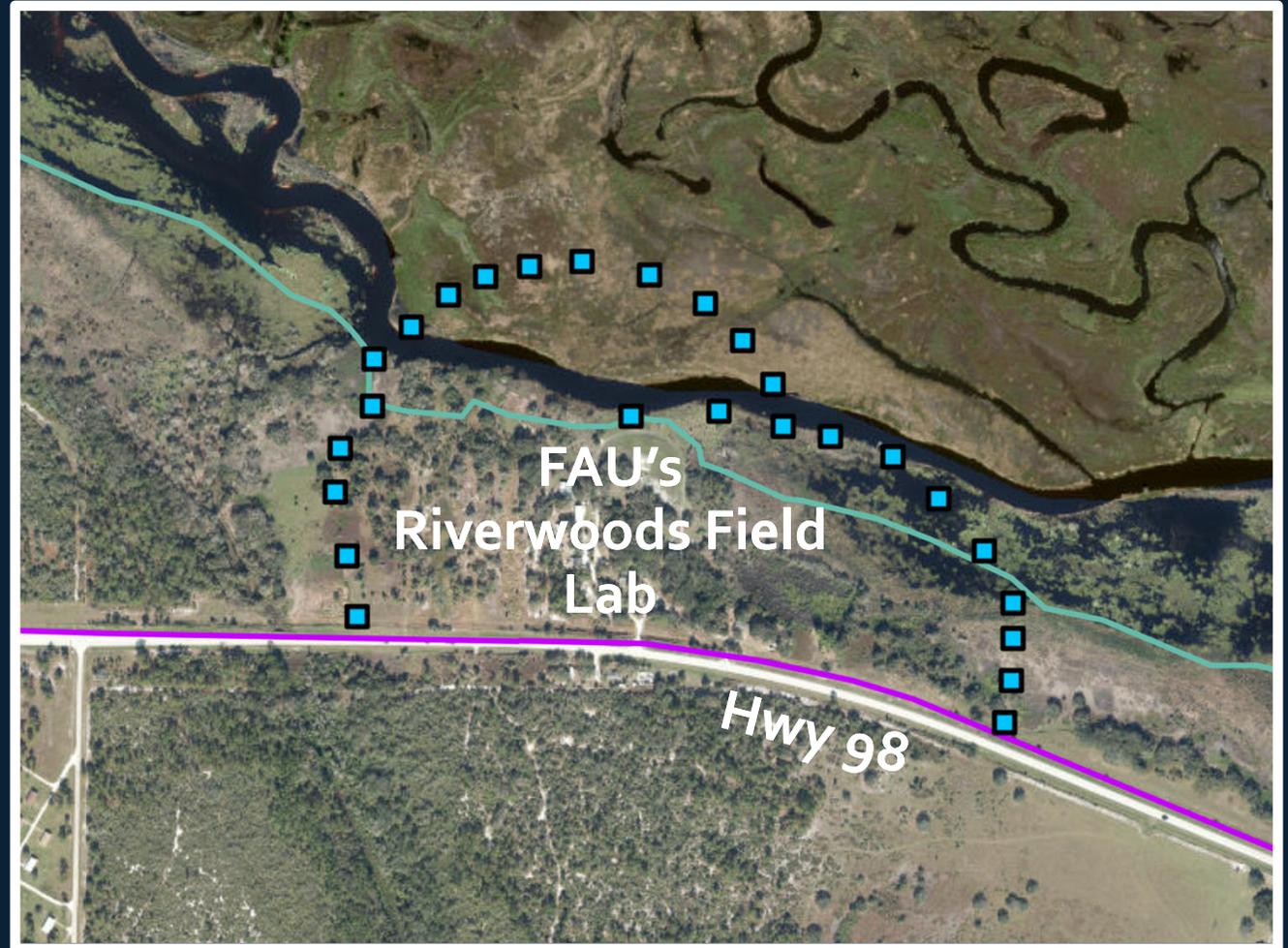
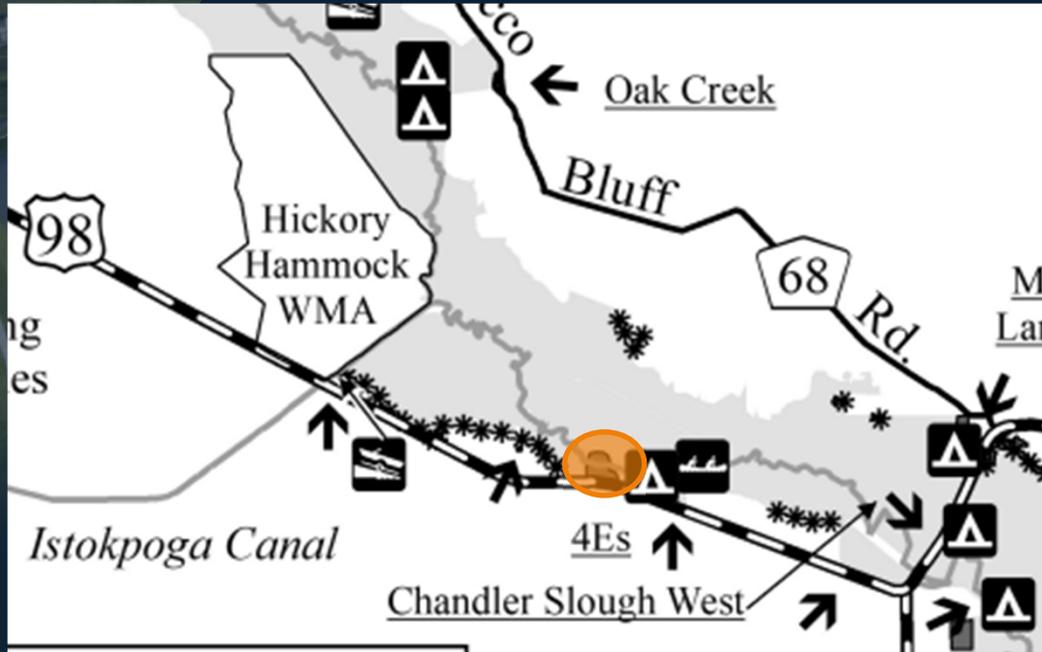
**S-69 Weir**

**S-65D boat ramp**



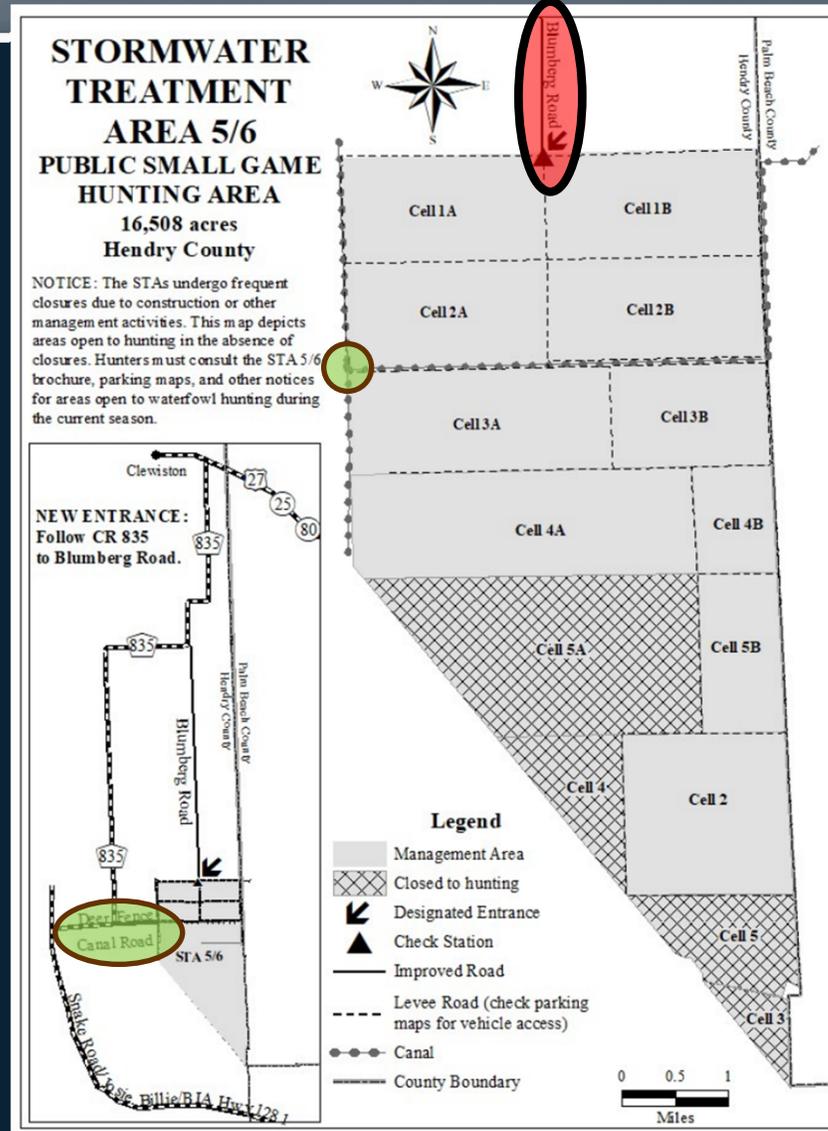
CSX railroad

# Riverwoods Field Lab Expanded No Hunting Zone, Kissimmee River PUA



# STA 5/6 Deer Fence Canal Rd. reopening July 1

- Current Blumberg Rd. north entrance will be closed
- Access will return to Deer Fence Canal Rd. from west



# Public Use and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects

Replacing dilapidated composting bathrooms with concrete vault Restrooms in 3 STA's



# New Bathrooms in STA ¾, Harold A. Campbell Public Use Area, and STA 1W

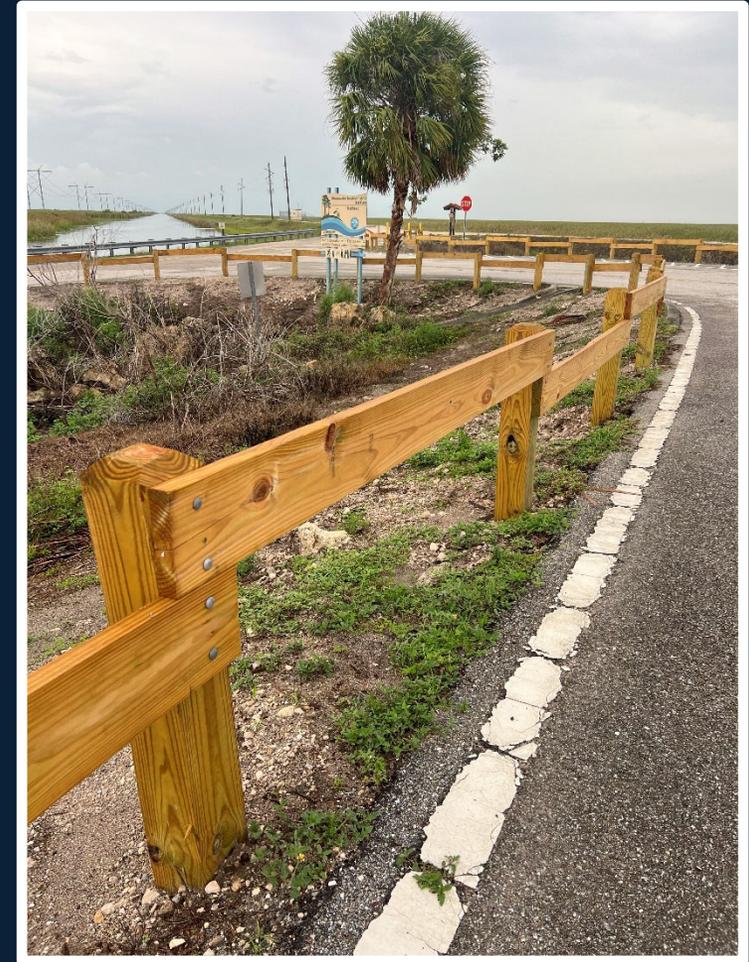
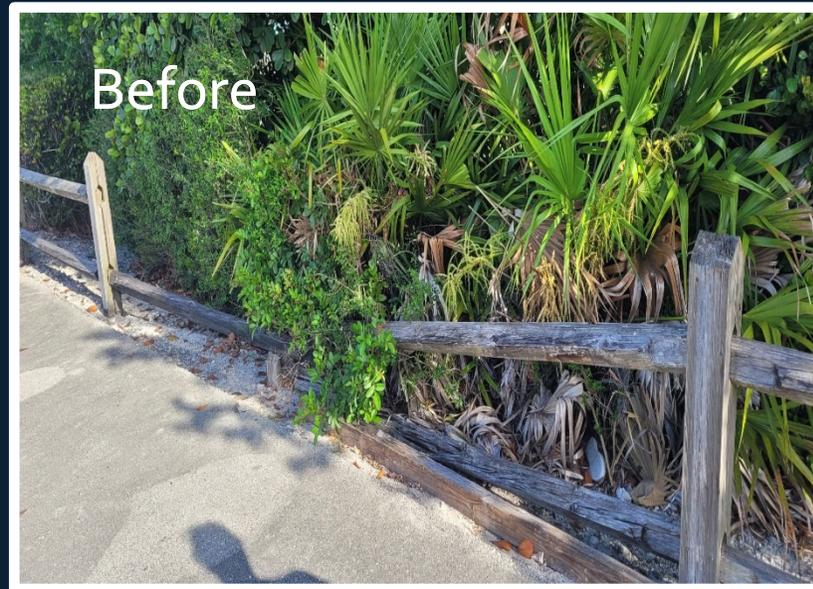


Installing bathroom  
on vault at STA1  
West

[Enhancing Recreational Facilities at STA 1W on Vimeo](#)

# Public Use and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects

-Parking area post-and-rail fencing replacement and resurfacing at 3 STA's





## Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA Orlando) Volunteer Event Shingle Creek Management Area

- 9 volunteers
- 2 days of work (5/31 and 6/1)
- Total = 84 volunteer hours
- Total in-kind services valued at \$2,478.00

### Accomplishments:

- Repaired erosion/wash outs along trail using a wheelbarrow and shell rock
- Replaced old bridge along trail



# Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Restoration Group Volunteer Event (4/6/24)



## Accomplishments:

- Weeded planting area
- Planted native grasses, ground cover, shrubs/small trees
- Positioned rocks along hiking trail edge



# Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Restoration Group Volunteer Event

- 63 volunteers
- 6 hours
- Total = 378 volunteer hours
- Total in-kind services valued at \$11,151.63



# Volunteer Camp Hosts going above and beyond

Accomplishments:

- Repairing shower stall at Hickory Hammock Equestrian Center, Kissimmee River



# Volunteer Camp Hosts going above and beyond

Clearing  
vegetation  
and debris  
from around  
wellhead at  
Dupuis  
Equestrian  
Campground



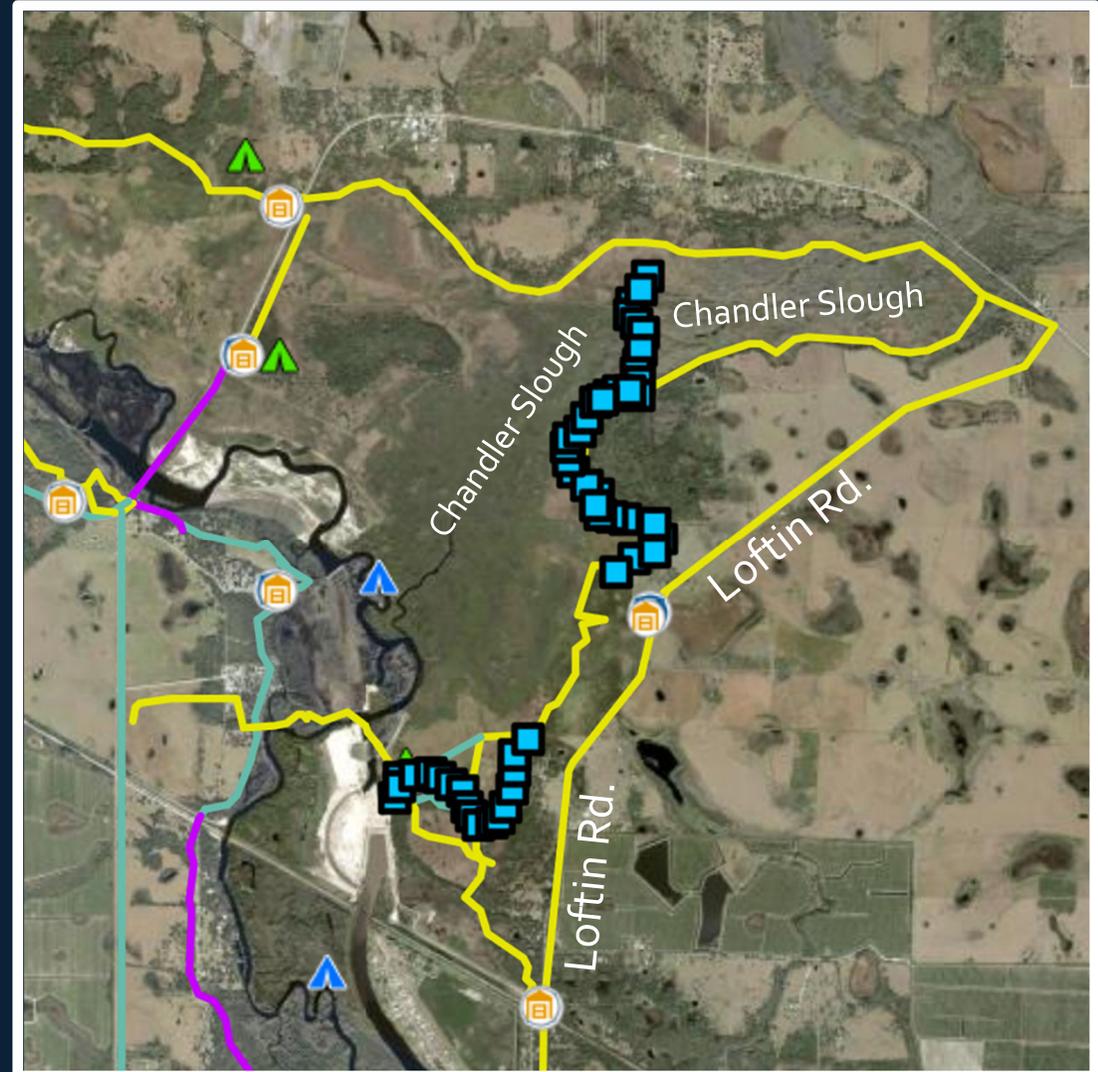


# Kissimmee River (Chandler Slough) Volunteer Clean-up Event (May 4, 2024)

- Florida Sportsman’s Conservation Association (FSCA) and Lake Okeechobee Airboat Association (LOAA)

Accomplishments:

- Removal of fencing/hazardous debris from the floodplain
- Installed over 60 rules signs



# Kissimmee River (Chandler Slough) Volunteer Clean-up Event (May 4, 2024)





# Kissimmee River (Chandler Slough) Volunteer Clean-up Event (May 4, 2024)



## Kissimmee River Volunteer Clean-up Event (May 4, 2024)

•Florida Sportsman's Conservation Association (FSCA) and Lake Okeechobee Airboat Association (LOAA))

- 58 volunteers
- 8+ hours
- Total = 480 volunteer hours
- 10 Swamp buggies
- 6 side-by-sides
- 2 mini-excavators
- Array of battery-powered saws, drills, impact guns, chainsaws, hammers, and pry bars
- Total in-kind services valued at **\$14,160.80**

