

Sarasota County's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program (ESLPP)

North Port Environmental Advisory Board

**Brie W. Ondercin, Land Acquisition Coordinator
Monday, June 3, 2019**

Environmental Land Acquisition



- First referendum passed by 66% majority of voters on March 9, 1999
 - Authorized a 20-year 0.25 mil ad valorem tax to fund the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program through 2019
 - Authorized up to \$53 million in bond funding for the course of the program
 - Established the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Oversight Committee to advise Board of County Commissioners
 - Established 18 Protection Priority Sites, of which now there are 31.

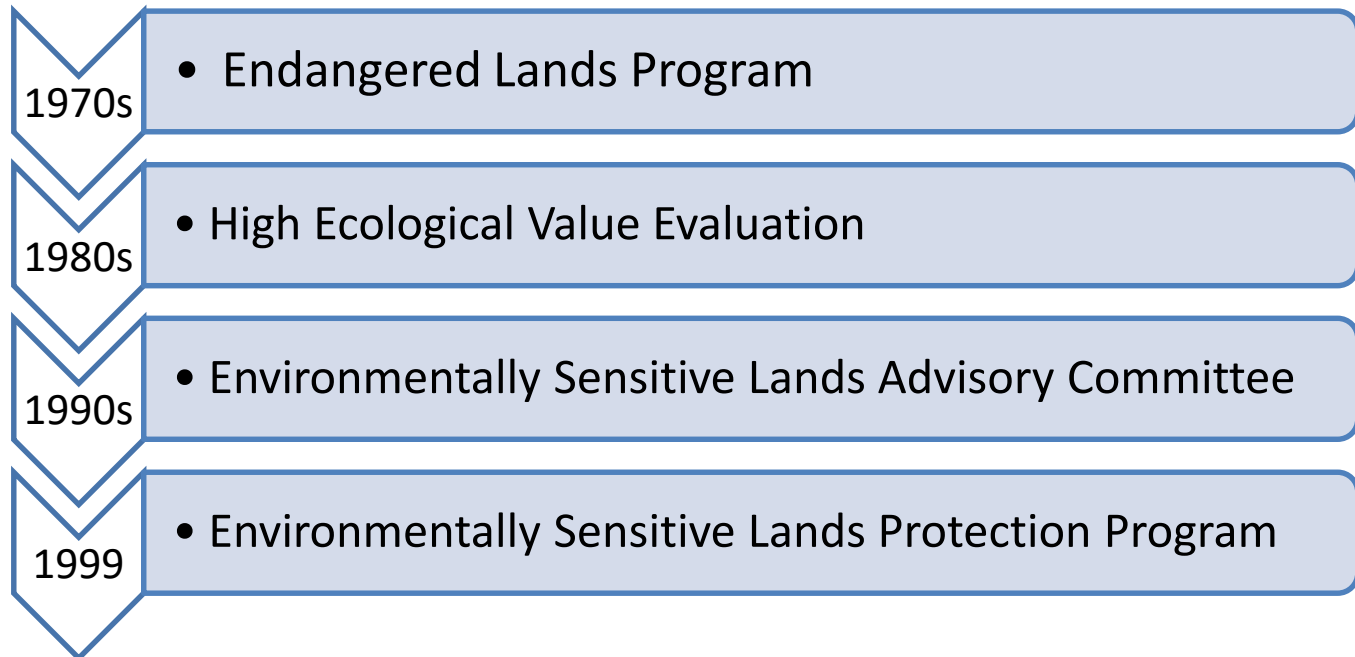


- A second referendum passed by 80% majority of voters on November 8, 2005
 - Authorized a 10-year extension of the environmental lands 0.25 mil ad valorem funding through 2029
 - Authorized up to \$250 million in bond funding for the course of the programs
 - Adopted a Neighborhood Parkland Acquisition Ordinance to parallel the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Ordinance
 - Authorized expansion of the program's scope to include acquisition of Neighborhood Parklands

How did we get here?



Decades of planning!

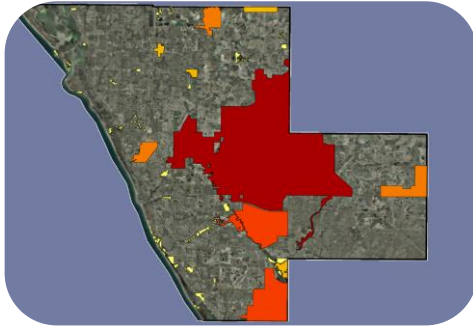


Land referenda in Sarasota County



Referenda – past 30+ years	Bond Amount (up to)
1973 Bond Referendum	\$34,219,250
<i>(South Lido & Caspersen Beach areas)</i>	
1977 Bond Referendum	\$4,380,724
1982 Bond Referendum	\$60,859,063
<i>(T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve)</i>	
1985 Bond Referendum	\$7,222,872
<i>(Pinelands Reserve)</i>	
1986 Bond Referendum	\$37,685,859
<i>(Blind Pass, Phillippi, Shamrock, Woodmere & other parks)</i>	
1999 ESLPP Bond Referendum	\$60,447,698
2005 ESL & Parklands Bond Referendum	<u>\$250,000,000</u>
TOTAL	\$454,845,466

Five Environmental Criteria



Connectedness



Water Resources



Quality



Manageability



Rarity

Five Environmental Criteria

- **RARITY**

Sites containing rare community types, listed species, or other special features.

- **CONNECTEDNESS**

Sites adjacent to existing public lands or waterways.

- **QUALITY**

Sites of high ecological quality with species diversity and ecosystem integrity.

- **WATER RESOURCES**

Sites that maintain water quality in either a natural stream system, recharge area, or estuarine environment.

- **MANAGEABILITY**

Sites that have the potential to provide long-term viability and maintaining habitat functions.

ESLPP Acquisition Priority Attributes

Connectivity for wildlife
Under protected habitat
Rarity of habitat and species
Build on existing acquisitions (in-holdings or aggregate parcels)
Further protection of the Myakka River corridor
Water resources, 100-year floodplain passive flood protection, and headwaters
Collaborative projects (i.e. habitat value, stormwater, cultural, recreation)
Connectivity for public use and potential access
Parcel size (quality vs. quantity)
Legal public water access
Compatible lands within Greenway Resource Management Area of Sarasota County's 2050 Plan
Land within municipalities

Habitat Types	Priority
Maritime hammock (coastal hammock)	High
Scrub	High
Riverine	High
Mesic hammock	High
Scrubby flatwoods	Medium
Mesic flatwoods (pine flatwoods)	Medium
Rosemary scrub	Medium
Dry prairie	Medium
Wet prairie	Low
Hydric flatwoods	Low
Freshwater and/or salt marsh	Low

2nd Tier Review

Categories	Ranking (High, Medium and Low)		
Boundary Connection	2/3 or > of boundary shared with protected lands	1/3 – 2/3 boundary shared with protected lands	Less than 1/3 or site isolated
Local Initiatives	Protects or adds to 3 or more local initiatives (flood protection, water supply, greenways, etc.)	Protects or adds 1 or 2 initiatives	Does not protect or add to any initiative
Fiscal	Below market value or bargain sale	Assumed market value	Higher than market expectations
Individual Species Recovery or Protection Plans	Adds to 3 adopted local/state/federal recovery or protection plans	Adds 1 or 2 adopted local/state/federal recovery or protection plans	Not in any recovery or protection plan
Funding Partners	Committed partners	Potential partners	No partners
Accessibility	Easily accessible AND connects to trails	Accessible OR connects to potential trails	Difficult to access and no trails

ESLPP Status

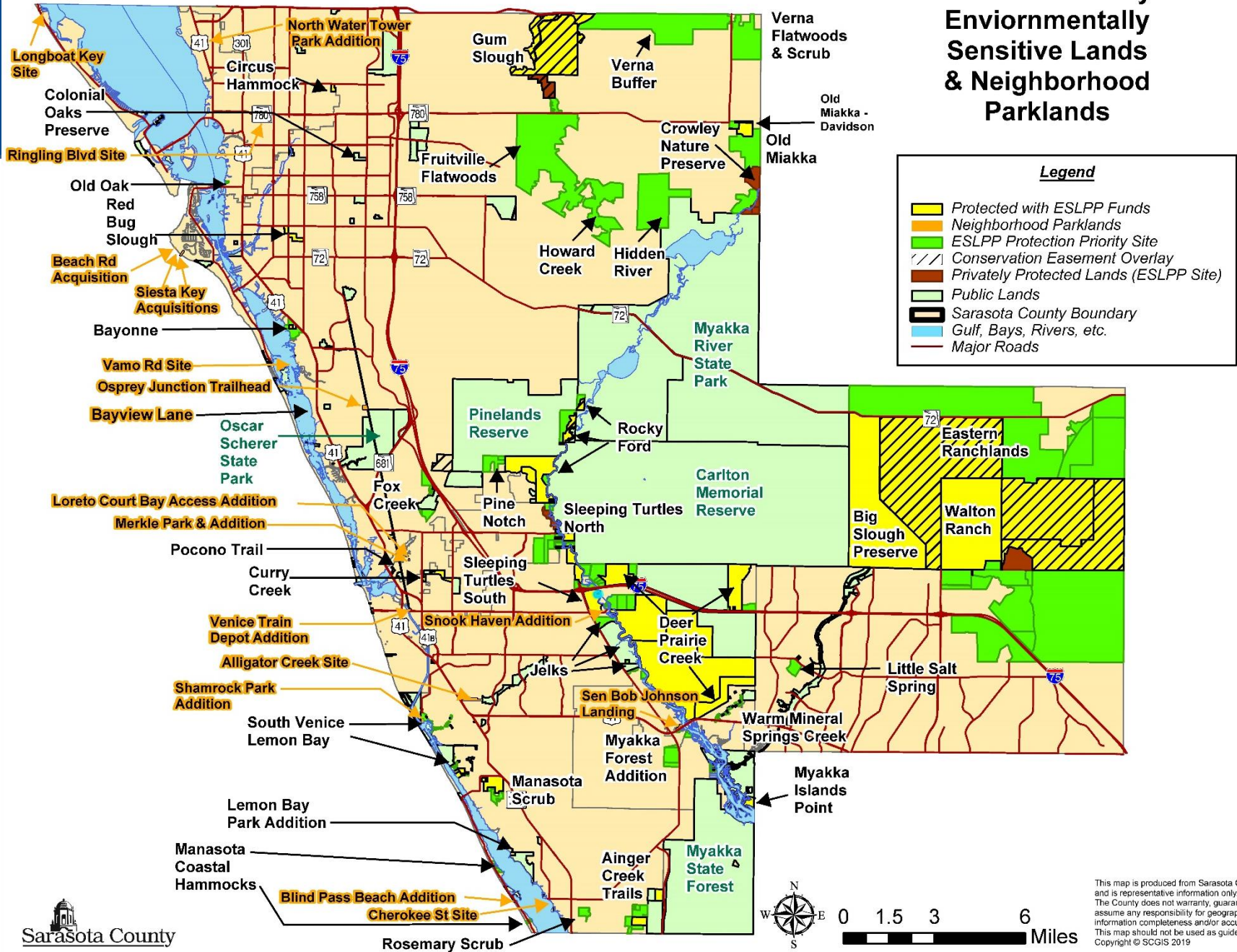


- To date, ESLPP has acquired/protected 75 properties totaling approximately 35,420 acres for \$135,000,835 (5 of which are protected through conservation easements equaling approximately 17,000 acres).
- Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources (PRNR) currently manages more than 50,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands (ESLPP and non-ESLPP).

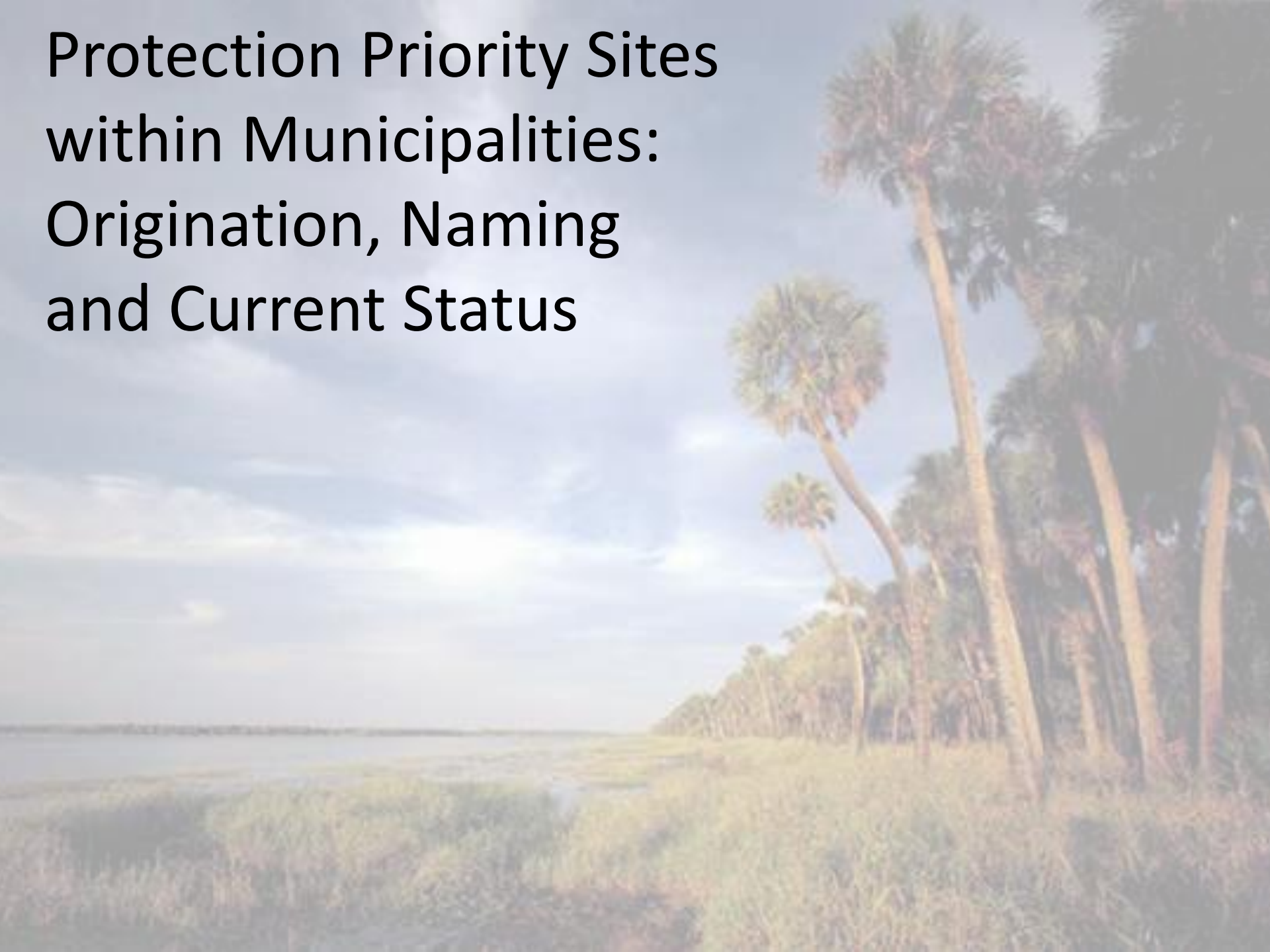


Majestic oaks at Sleeping Turtles Preserve North

Sarasota County Environmentally Sensitive Lands & Neighborhood Parklands

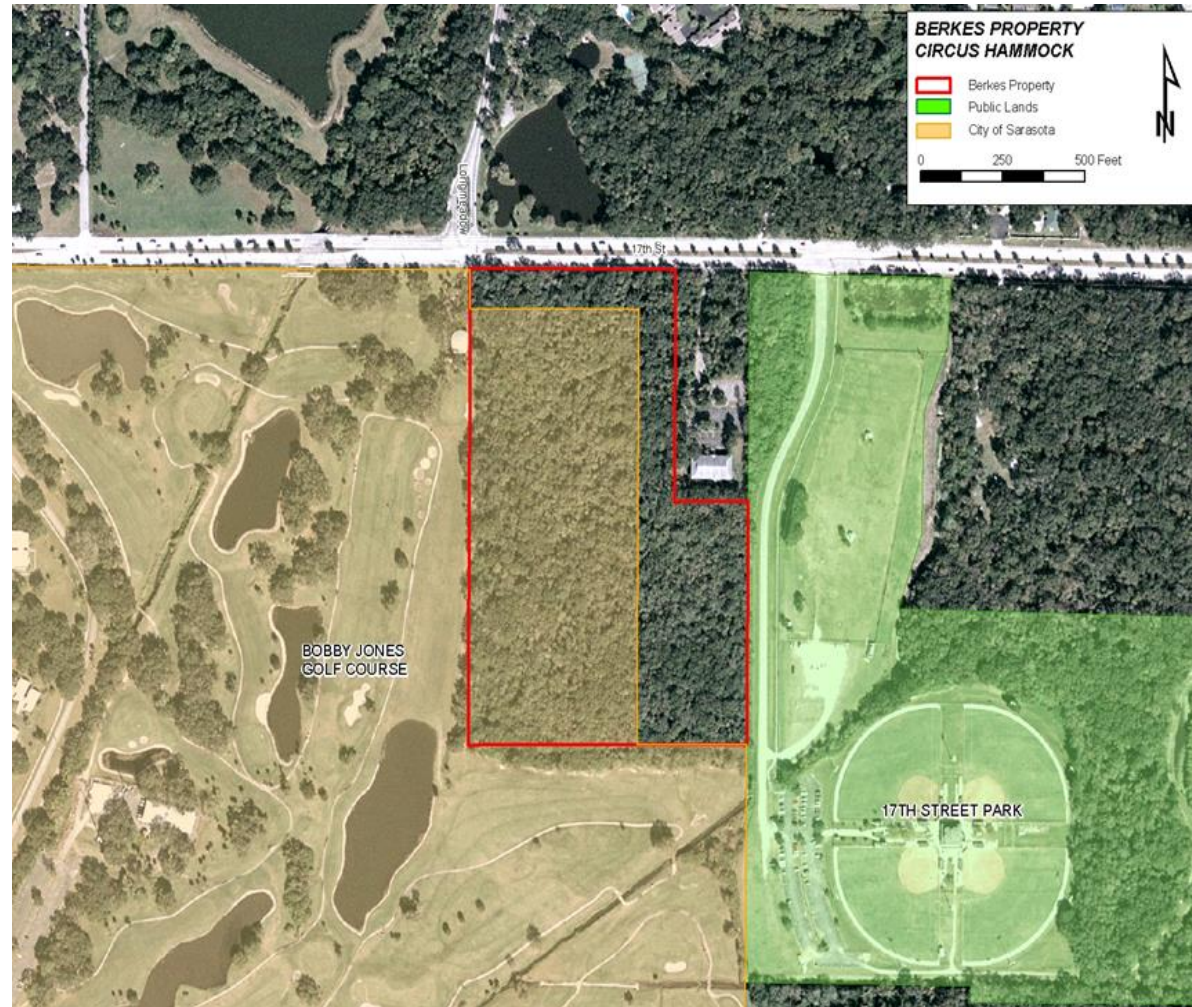


Protection Priority Sites within Municipalities: Origination, Naming and Current Status



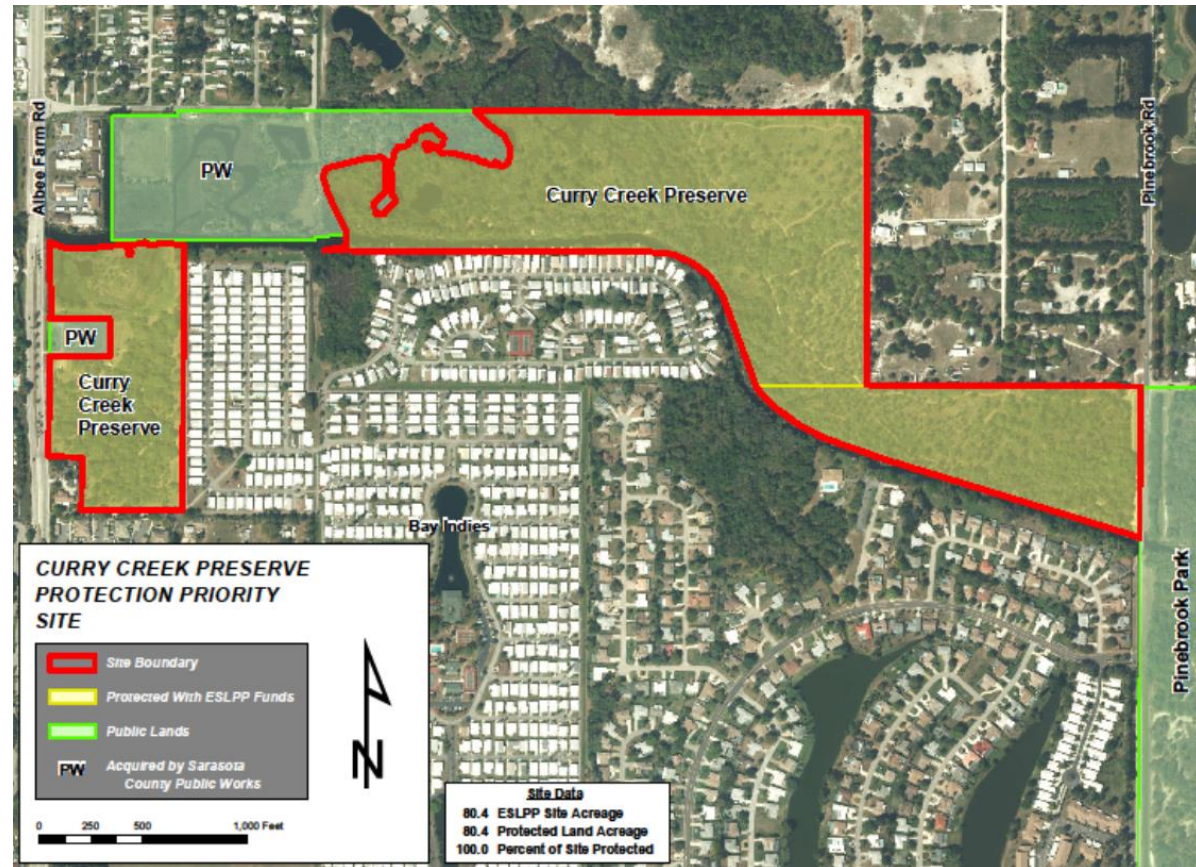
Circus Hammock

- 100% protected
- Site protects 21 acres, some of which is within the City of Sarasota



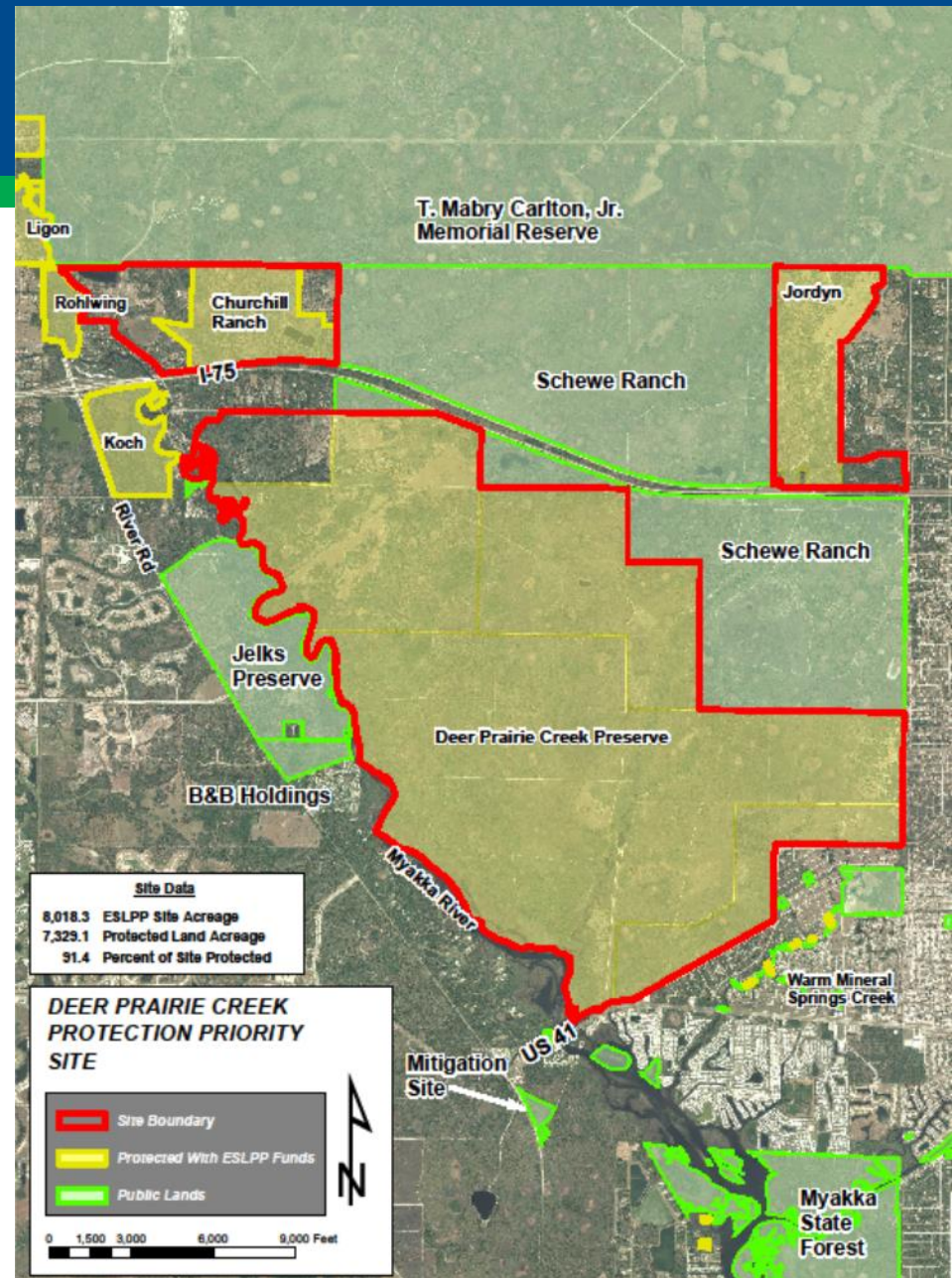
Curry Creek

- 100% protected
- FCT partially funded
- In the City of Venice
- Officially named by County Commission



Deer Prairie Creek

- South of I-75 and west of Myakka River
- Joint acquisitions with SWFWMD
- Officially named Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
- Oak Cathedral Preserve has cattle grazing agreement

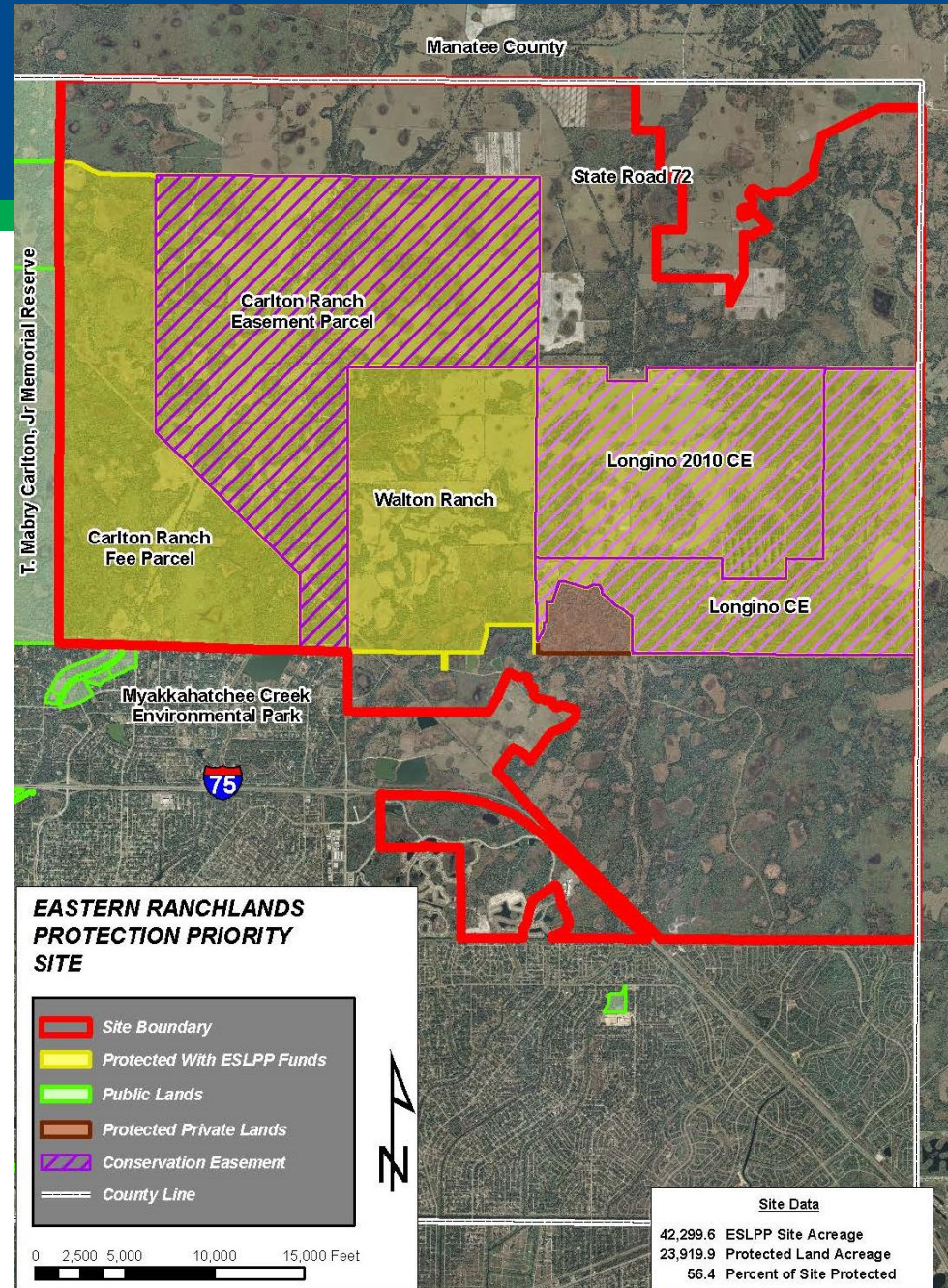




Deer Prairie Creek Preserve pond

Eastern Ranchlands

- County partnered with SWFWMD on 4 conservation easements
- County owns Walton Ranch fee simple
- SWFWMD owns conservation easement over Walton Ranch

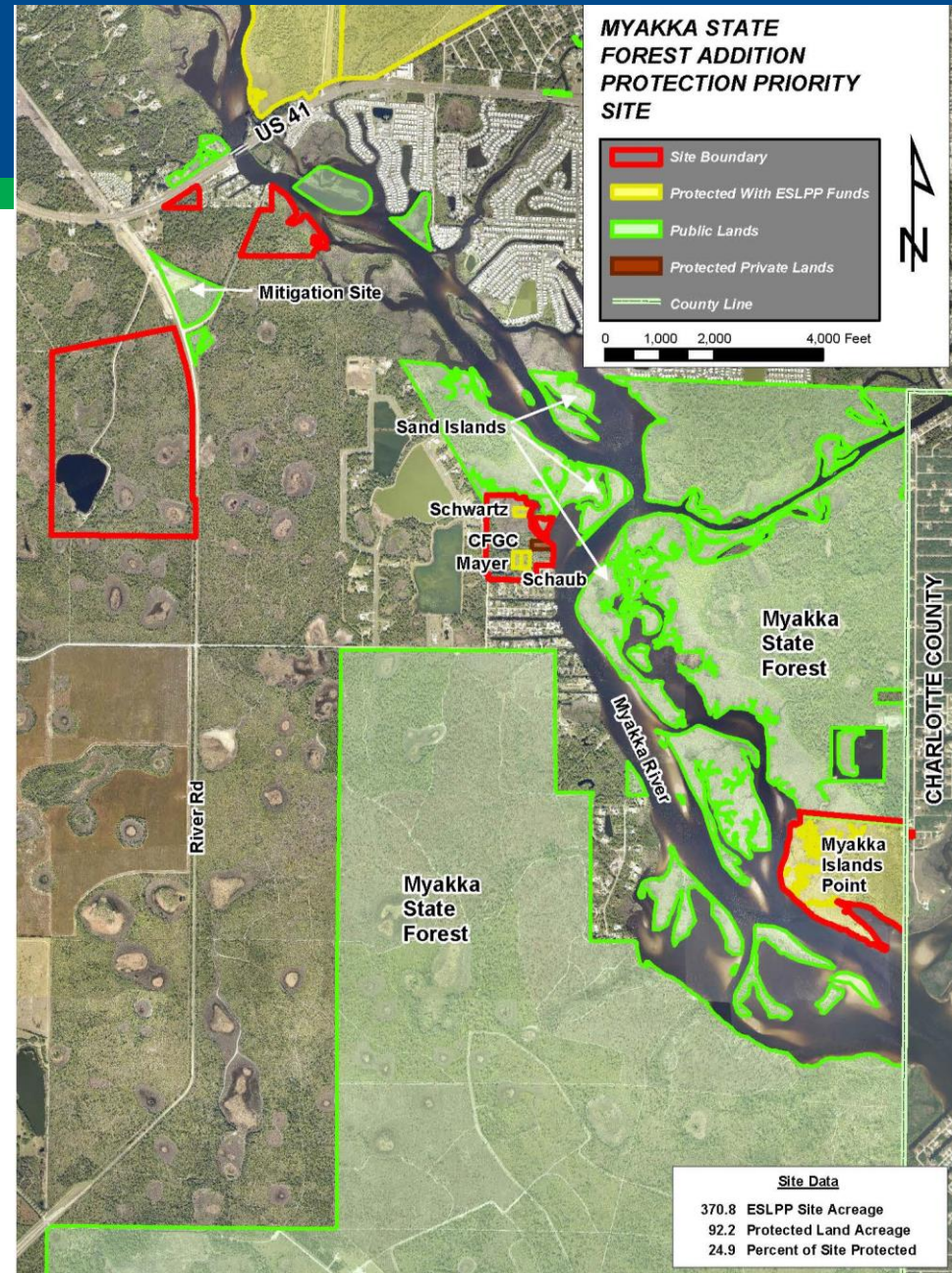




Blackburn Grade at Carlton Reserve, Lincer and Oak Cathedral Preserve

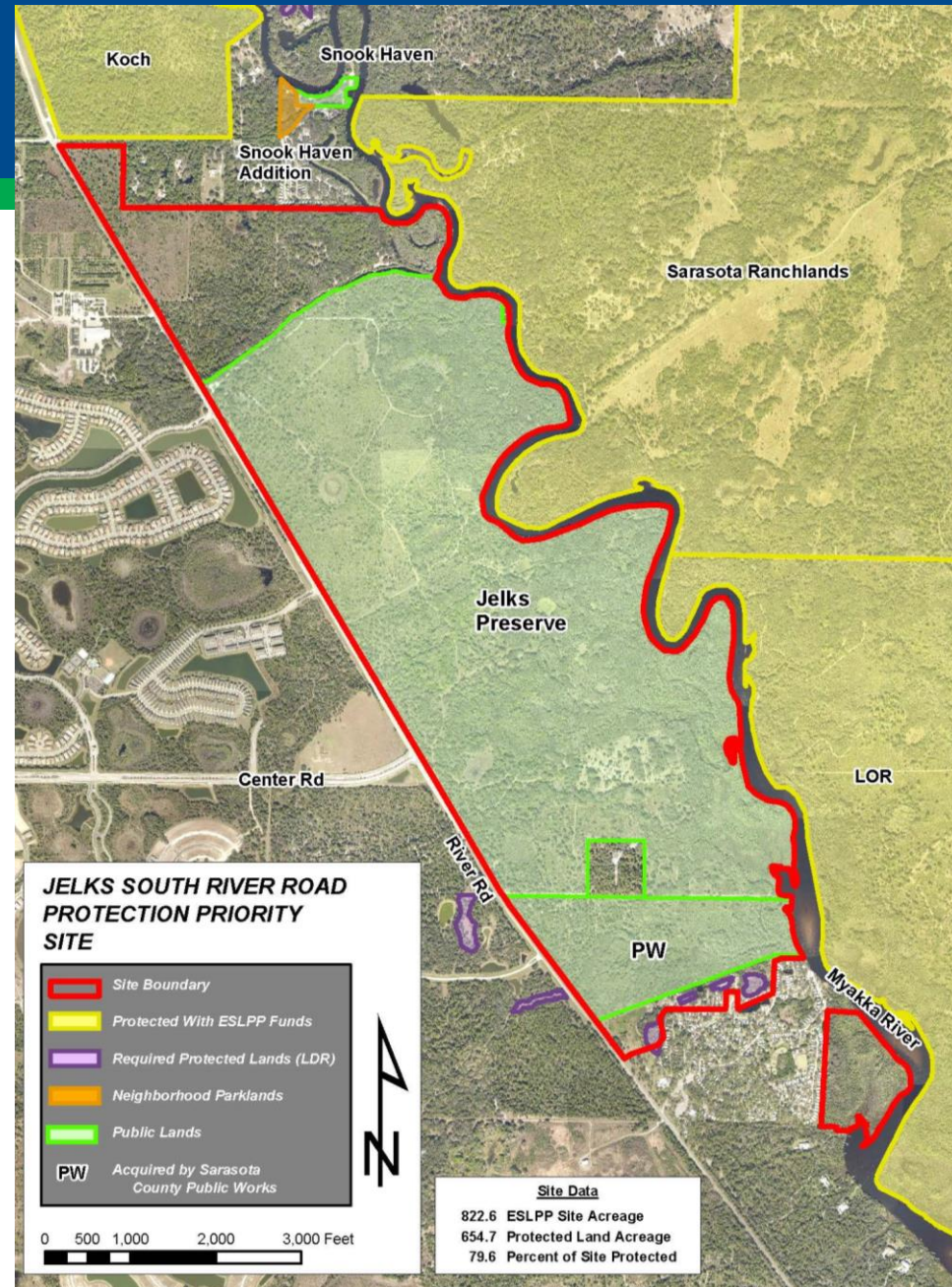
Myakka State Forest Addition

- One large 100-acre parcel plus few small lots all along the river
- Officially named Myakka Islands Point by the County Commission



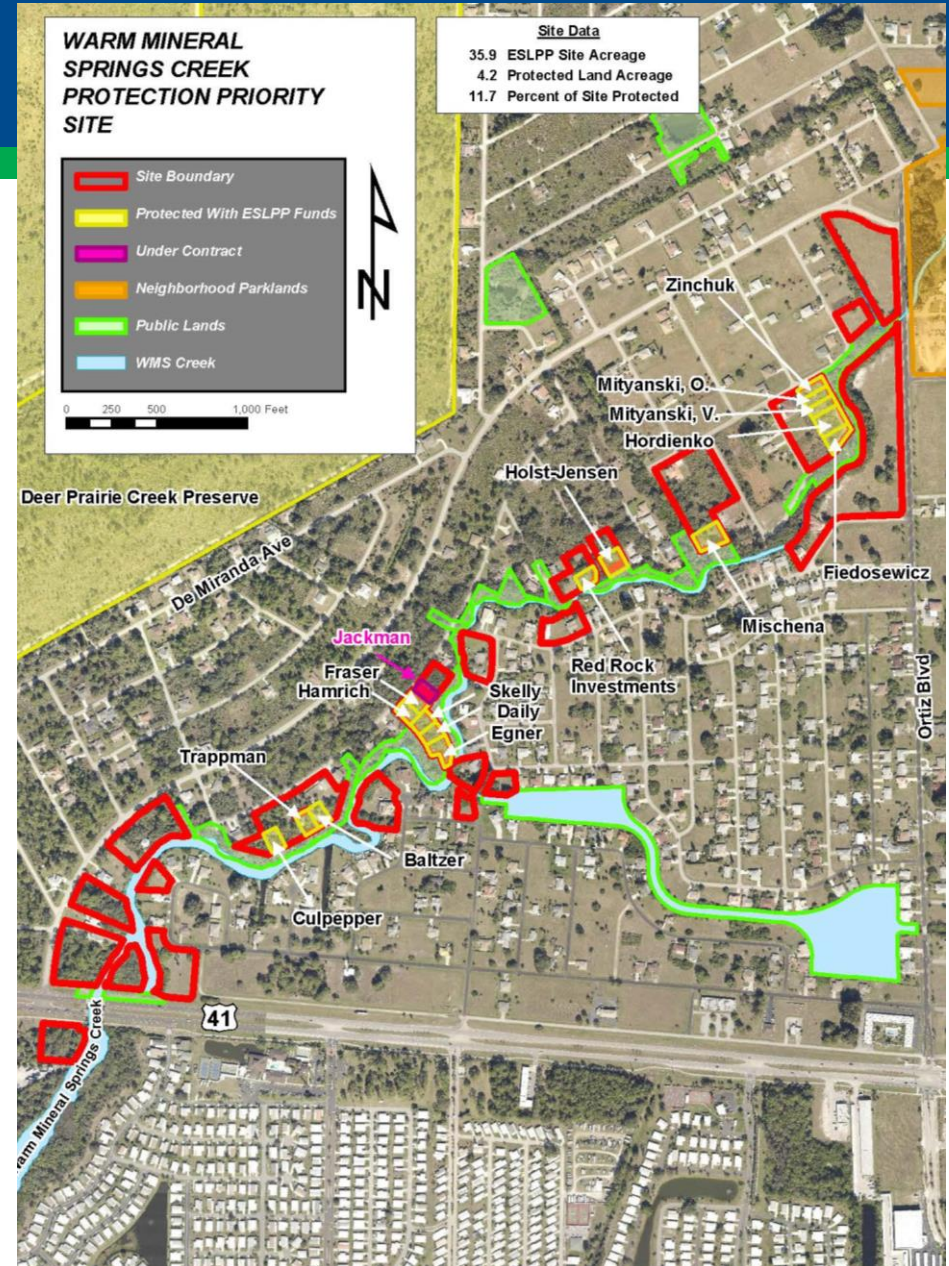
South River Road

- Officially named Jelks Preserve by County Commission.
- East of the Myakka River and across from Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
- County Public Works purchased southern property for ROMA



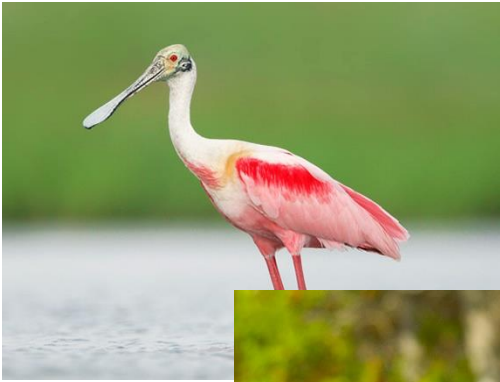
Warm Mineral Springs Creek

- Added to program in 2002.
- Protects creek habitat and shoreline.
- 17 closings; 5 acres acquired, 2003-2015



Current Acquisition Efforts

Property	Acreage
South Venice – Shamrock Drive	39 acres
Myakka River – Landis	45 acres
River Road – Nelson	21 acres
River Road – Southern Sixty Five	65 acres
Eastern Ranchlands - Gant CE	700 acres
Eastern Ranchlands - Panning CE	1,300 acres
Myakka River – Venice Campground	21 acres (6 ESLPP)
Rocky Ford - Lazy Dollar	20 acres
Sleeping Turtles – Olsson	16 acres
Eastern Ranchlands – Orange Hammock	5,775 acres





Blue Flag Iris



Blazing Star



Cinnamon Fern



Shoestring Fern



Pine Lilly



Butterfly Orchid



Questions?



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White pelicans at Lemon Bay