

MRMCC CHAIR'S REPORT New Updates

- **Recreational Alligator Harvest**
- **Wellen Park Village H**
- **Land Protection Efforts**
- **Sarasota Magazine**
- **River Conditions**

Jono Miller

August 8, 2025

RECREATIONAL ALLIGATOR
HARVEST
ON THE MYAKKA RIVER

I called Dwayne Carbonneau, Assistant Alligator Management Program Coordinator, and based on previous discussions at MRMCC, told him the Council wanted to understand the what would be involved in getting FWC to prohibit the recreational take of alligators in Myakka River in Sarasota County for the following reasons:

- The Myakka is a known gator viewing location
- Alligators =resource value of the W&S River
- People are poaching alligators in the park
- We now have crocodiles in the river

The Myakka River is
famous for its alligators

The Palm Beach Post

Most alligator-infested rivers in Florida: Here's a list of the top 5 most gator-filled

Lianna Norman and Jennifer Sangalang, USA TODAY NETWORK - Florida

Wed, July 30, 2025 at 1:25 PM EDT

6 min read



33

5. **Myakka River:** The Myakka River is a state-designated wild and scenic river, estimated to have more than 230 alligators living in it. Some reports say the river is around 68 miles long, while others say it's closer to 72 miles long. The river starts near the Manatee-Hardee county line and empties out into the Gulf of America (previously Gulf of Mexico) through the Charlotte Harbor.

BEST PLACES TO SEE ALLIGATORS IN FLORIDA

By [Mike Miller](#) Updated July 30, 2025

This beautiful 37,000 acre park is in Sarasota County and Manatee County.

No one knows for sure how many alligators call this park home, but at least 120 have been counted at one time on one viewing.

There is a place on the lower lake called Deep Hole where an amazing number of alligators like to congregate. It sometimes look like a gator family reunion.

It requires a special permit to visit Deep Hole that you have to obtain at the ranger station.

13208 State Rad 72
Sarasota, FL 34241
Tel: 941-361-6511



Myakka River State Park, Alligators in Deep Hole

Myakka River State Park, Alligators in Deep Hole

Alligators are a resource
value of the State
Wild & Scenic River

Section 258.501 Myakka River; wild and scenic segment.

(1) SHORT TITLE.--This section may be cited as the "Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act."

(h) "Resource value" means any one or more of the specific economic, scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or ecological features associated with the river area as determined by the coordinating council.

- 1. "Resource value" means any one or more of the specific economic, scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or ecological features associated with the river area as determined by the Coordinating Council and as set forth in the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Management Plan.

People are poaching
Alligators in Myakka
River State Park !

2019	SARASOTA COUNTY 6 ft. 11 in.	10/10/2019	
2019	SARASOTA COUNTY 6 ft. 0 in.	10/08/2019	
2019	SARASOTA COUNTY 12 ft. 2 in.	10/26/2019	COW PEN SLOUGH
2019	SARASOTA COUNTY 11 ft. 2 in.	09/29/2019	LOWER MYAKKA LAKE
2019	SARASOTA COUNTY 10 ft. 8 in.	10/05/2019	LOWER MYAKKA LAKE
2020	SARASOTA COUNTY 9 ft. 8 in.	10/17/2020	VENICE INLET
2020	SARASOTA COUNTY 8 ft. 6 in.	08/27/2020	

2022	SARASOTA COUNTY 8 ft. 2 in.	09/20/2022	HATCHETT CREEK
2022	SARASOTA COUNTY 7 ft. 4 in.	08/22/2022	BIG SLOUGH
2022	SARASOTA COUNTY 7 ft. 10 in.	12/14/2022	CURRY CREEK
2022	SARASOTA COUNTY 6 ft. 5 in.	08/16/2022	LOWER MYAKKA LAKE
2022	SARASOTA COUNTY 10 ft. 1 in.	12/14/2022	LOWER MYAKKA LAKE

We now have crocodiles
In the Myakka River

Range Map

American crocodile
Crocodylus acutus



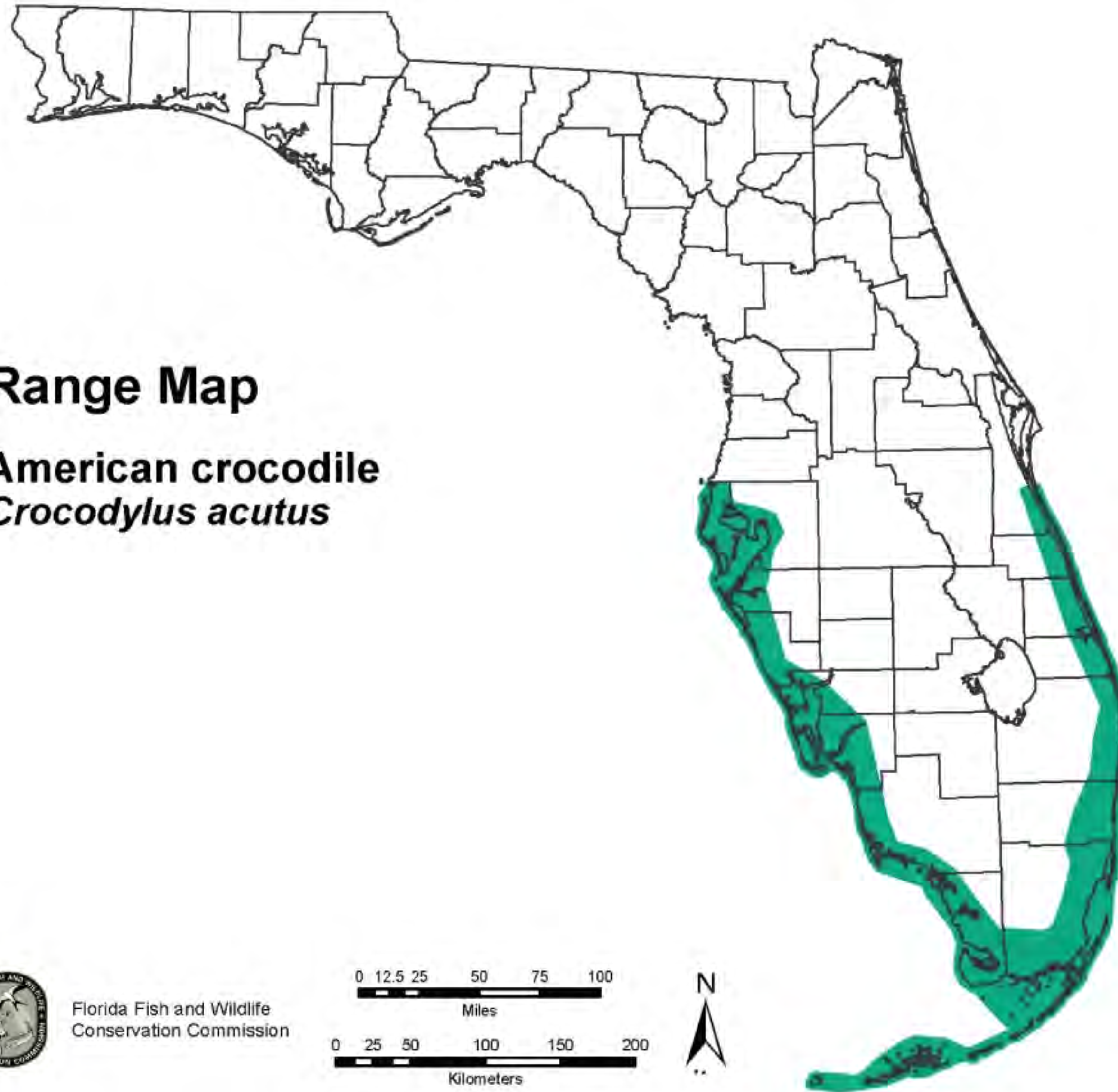
Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

0 12.5 25 50 75 100

Miles

0 25 50 100 150 200

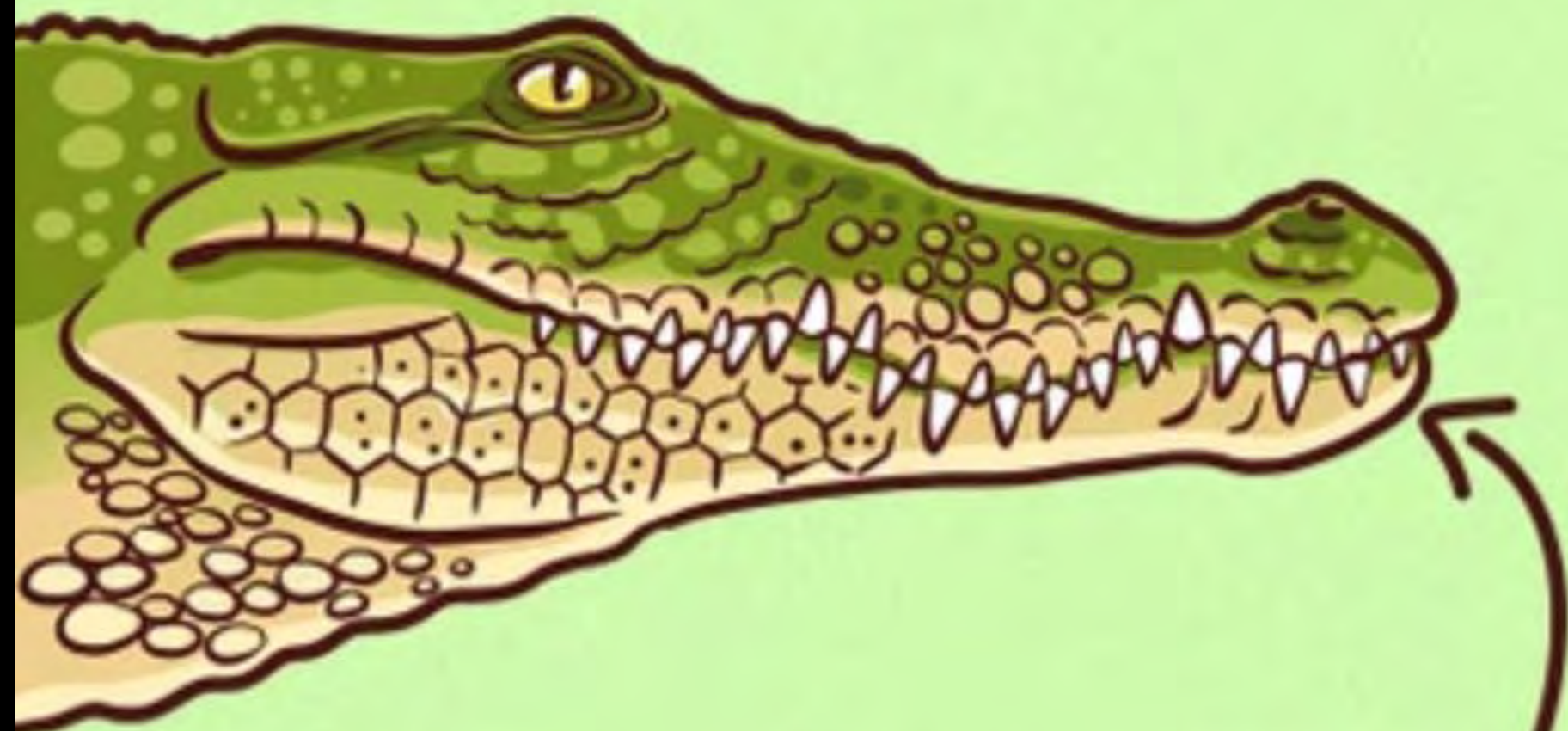
Kilometers



A CROCODILE



V-shaped snout



Lower teeth are visible

AN ALLIGATOR



U-shaped snout



Lower teeth are hidden



Sees you later



In a while











~~ALLIGATORS~~ CROCODILE!



American Crocodile Photo taken "near Border Road" on the Myakka River
Photo taken 2021. Photographer unknown at this time.

~~ALLIGATORS~~ CROCODILE!

American Crocodile in the Myakka River in Charlotte County.



Biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission were surprised to find

Credit: ReAnna Montwheler, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission



**FOR THE PERIOD 2015>2024
(10 YEARS)**

**81 ALLIGATORS TAKEN
In Sarasota County**

His assumption was virtually all In the Myakka River

Mr. Carbonneau:

It was very helpful to talk with you last week. I understand your concern that eliminating the Myakka River from recreational alligator harvest would virtually eliminate recreational take in Sarasota County.

But when I reviewed data available online from 2008 through 2022, here's what I found:

The most common location listed in Sarasota County was blank. I'm puzzled how FWC can pursue data-based management, if you don't know where alligators are being harvested. There were 35 instances of people failing to record where their alligator was taken.

The second most common location was Curry Creek with 17. Myakka River was third with 12. (That's not counting the four taken in Lower Myakka Lake, which is inside Myakka River State Park).

One form said private, one was a country club, but the rest seemed to be public waters, such as Shakett Creek (1), Blackburn Canal (2) **Deer Prairie Creek (5) [This may be inside a County Preserve]** , Big Slough (3) , Venice Inlet (1), Hatchett Creek (1).

To summarize There were 16 instances (at least four illegal) of harvest in the State Park, compared with 37 from other named locations. And then there's the ambiguous 35. Based on the available data, it looks like a little more than a quarter were taken in the Myakka (27%).

So, while eliminating the Myakka would be a reduction, it would not mean the end of recreational harvest in Sarasota County.

Can you provide me with the **alligator management objectives** for Sarasota County (and/or the Myakka River)? I'm curious to understand how the designation of the Myakka in Sarasota County as the first state-designated Wild and Scenic River factors into your management goals.

Mr. Carbonneau: The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council is meeting this Friday and I would like to be able to tell the Council members something about the alligator management objectives for the Myakka River in Sarasota County. Can you forward what you have on that topic?

To be continued.....

WELLEN PARK VILLAGE H



My name is Shanell Bosch. We previously met when I worked as an Environmental Specialist for the DEP South District Office. I am now the Environmental Planner for the City of North Port.

I wanted to inform you that we have recently received a Master Concept Plan application for Villages H and L of Wellen Park. A majority of the proposed project falls within the Myakka River area and, from what I understand, encompasses all wetlands that are hydrologically connected to the river itself. I have attached the proposed site plans, as well as the SWFWMD's formal wetland delineation for Village H. Currently, a delineation for Village I has not been completed.

I would appreciate your input on the proposal and the development limitations these properties may face. If you have time, I am available to set up a Teams meeting. Alternatively, if you prefer to address your concerns via email, that would be great as well. The due date for this project in our system is August 20, 2025, and I will need to submit my comments by this date. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

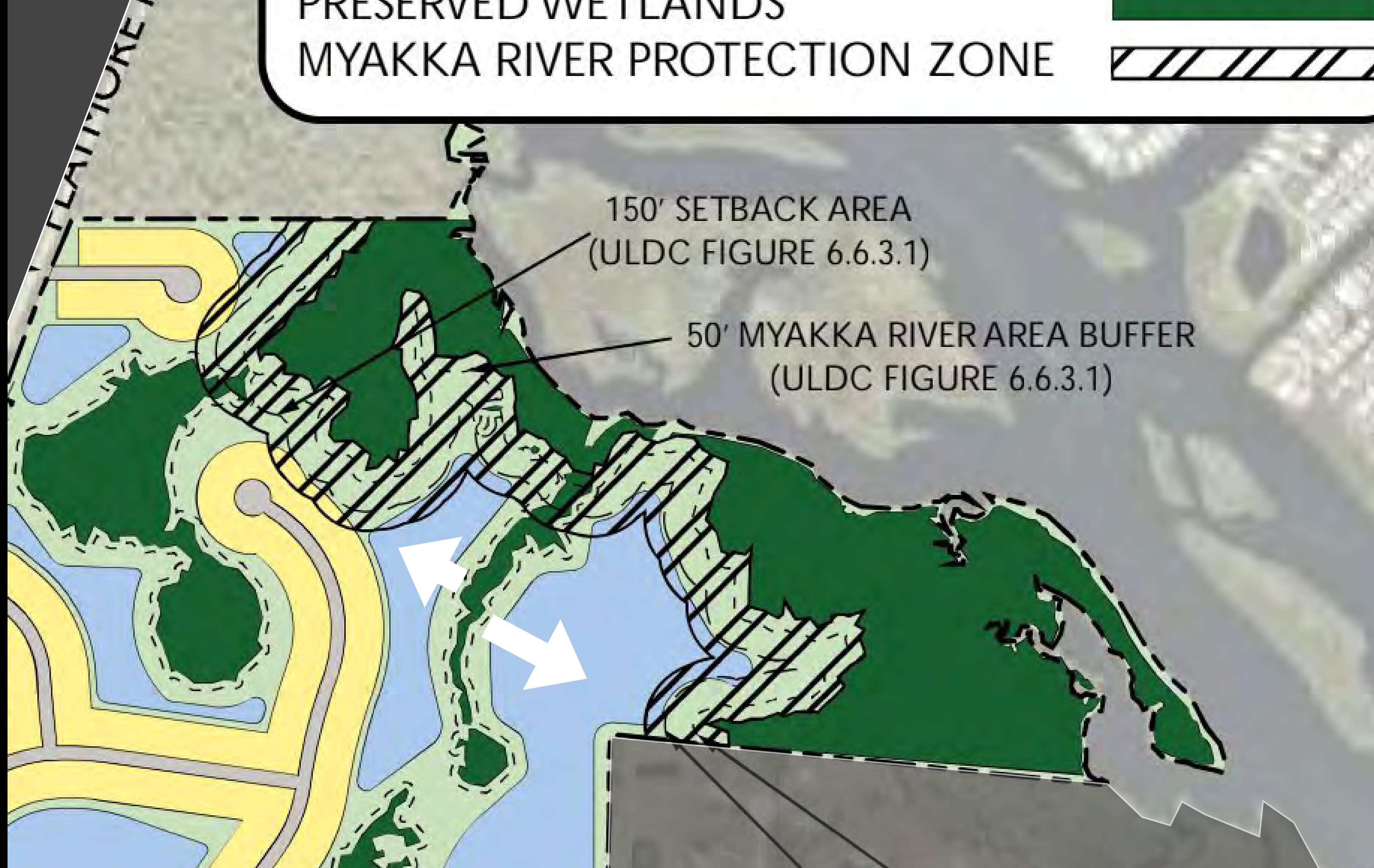
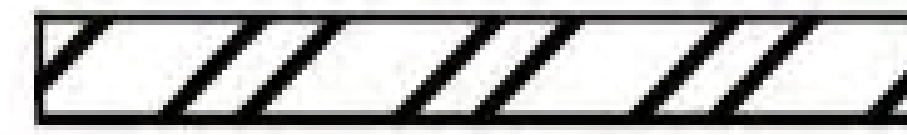
sbosch@northportfl.gov

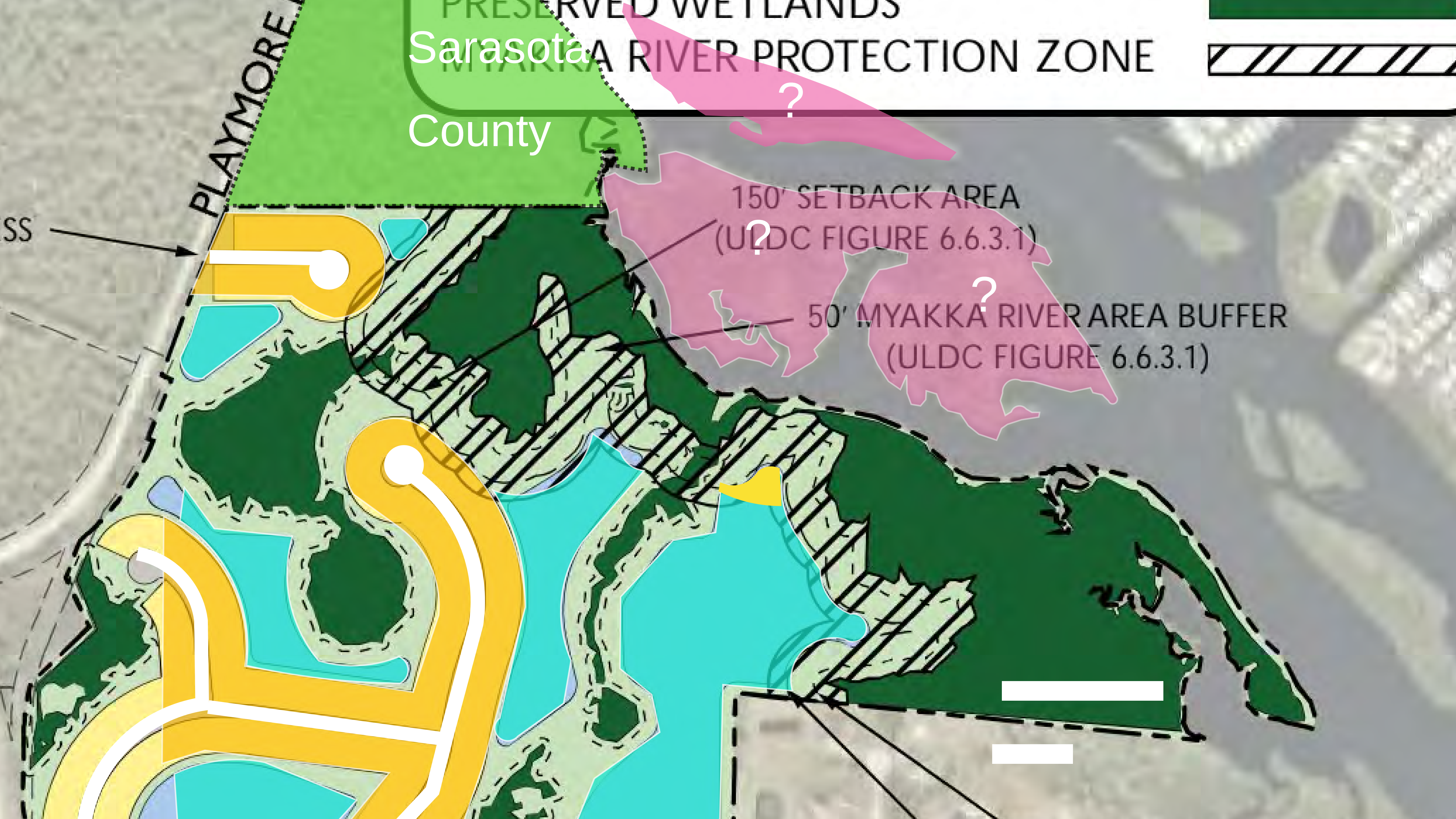




PRESERVED WETLANDS

MYAKKA RIVER PROTECTION ZONE





Myakka Land Protection

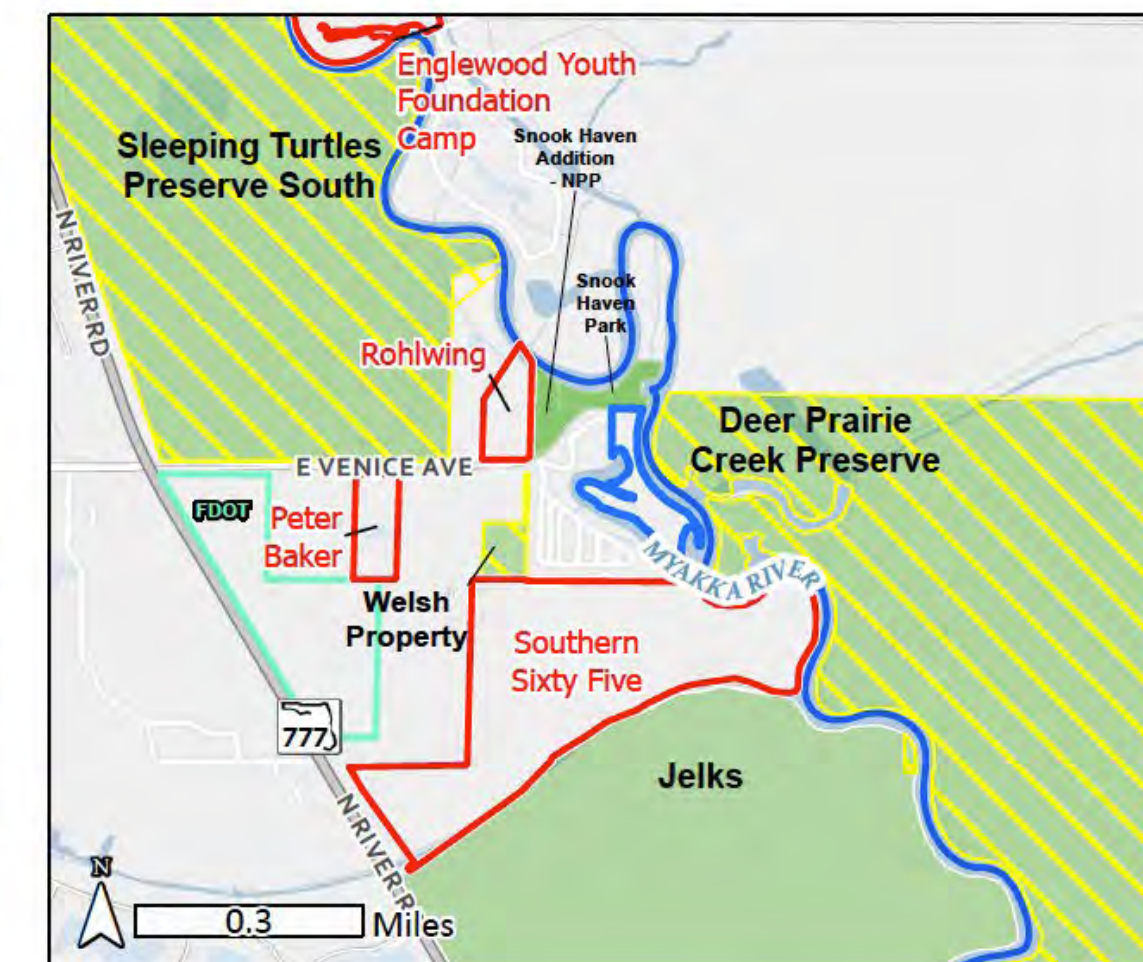
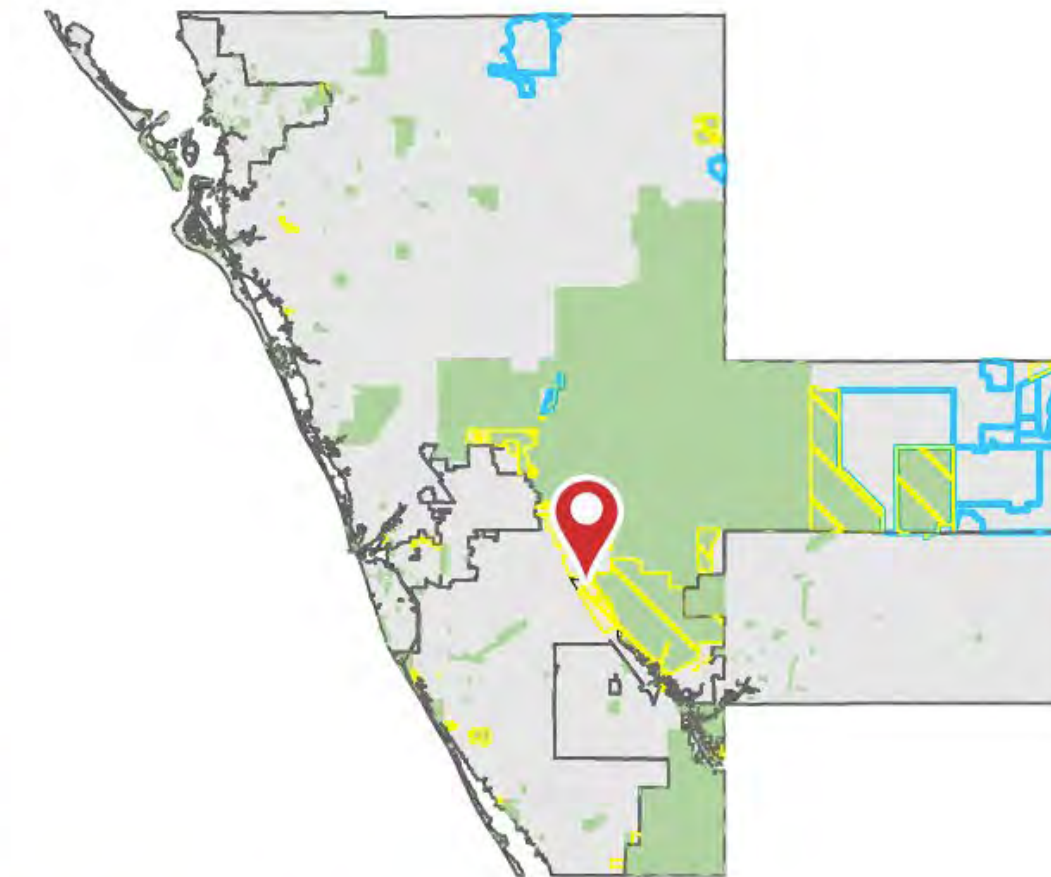
Camp Venice Campground

Due Diligence

Late '25, Early '26



- 6.5+/- acres Myakka River Peninsula of the Camp Venice LLC property
- ESLPP Land Acquisition Project
- Sarasota County Boundary
- Parks
- ESLPP Acquired Properties
- ESLPP Conservation Easements



- Paddle Trail
- ESLPP Land Acquisition Project
- 6.5+/- acres Myakka River Peninsula of the Camp Venice LLC property

SLEEPING TURTLES
SOUTH

SNOOK HAVEN

DEER

PRAIRIE
SLOUGH

E VENICE AVE

CAMP

VENICE

CAMPGROUND

DOT

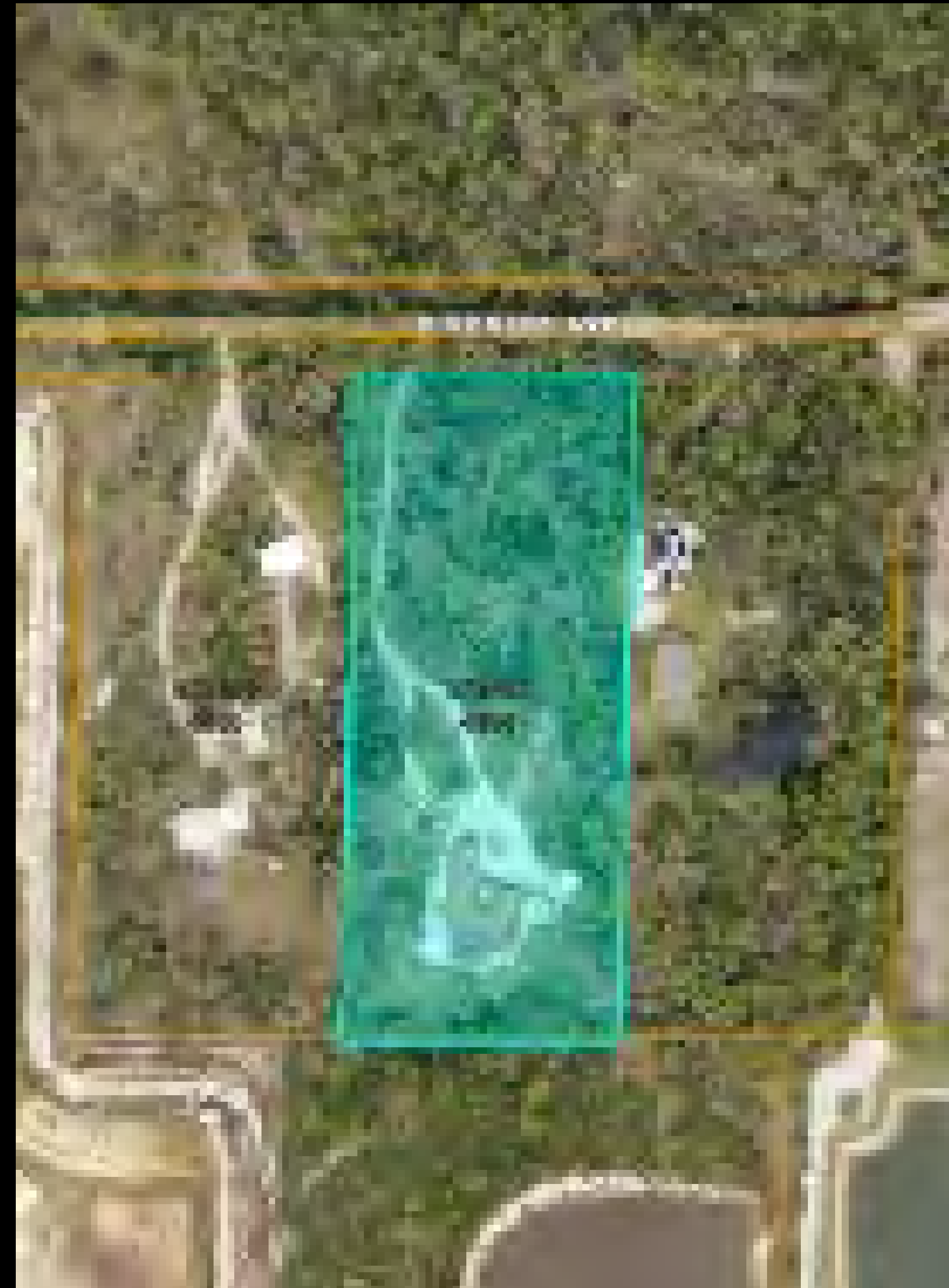
Southern 65

JELKS

POWER

Westbrook Parcel

Due Diligence



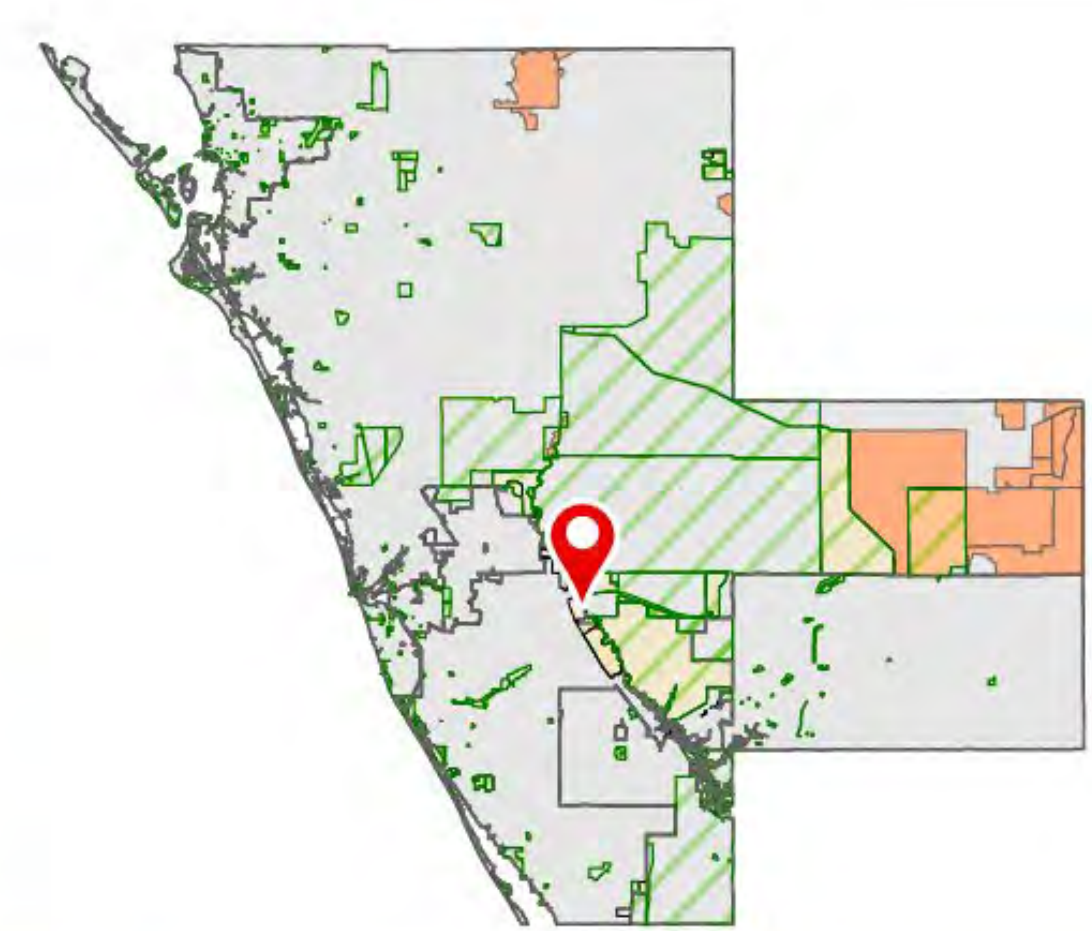
ENGLEWOOD YOUTH FOUNDATION 9.58 ACRES



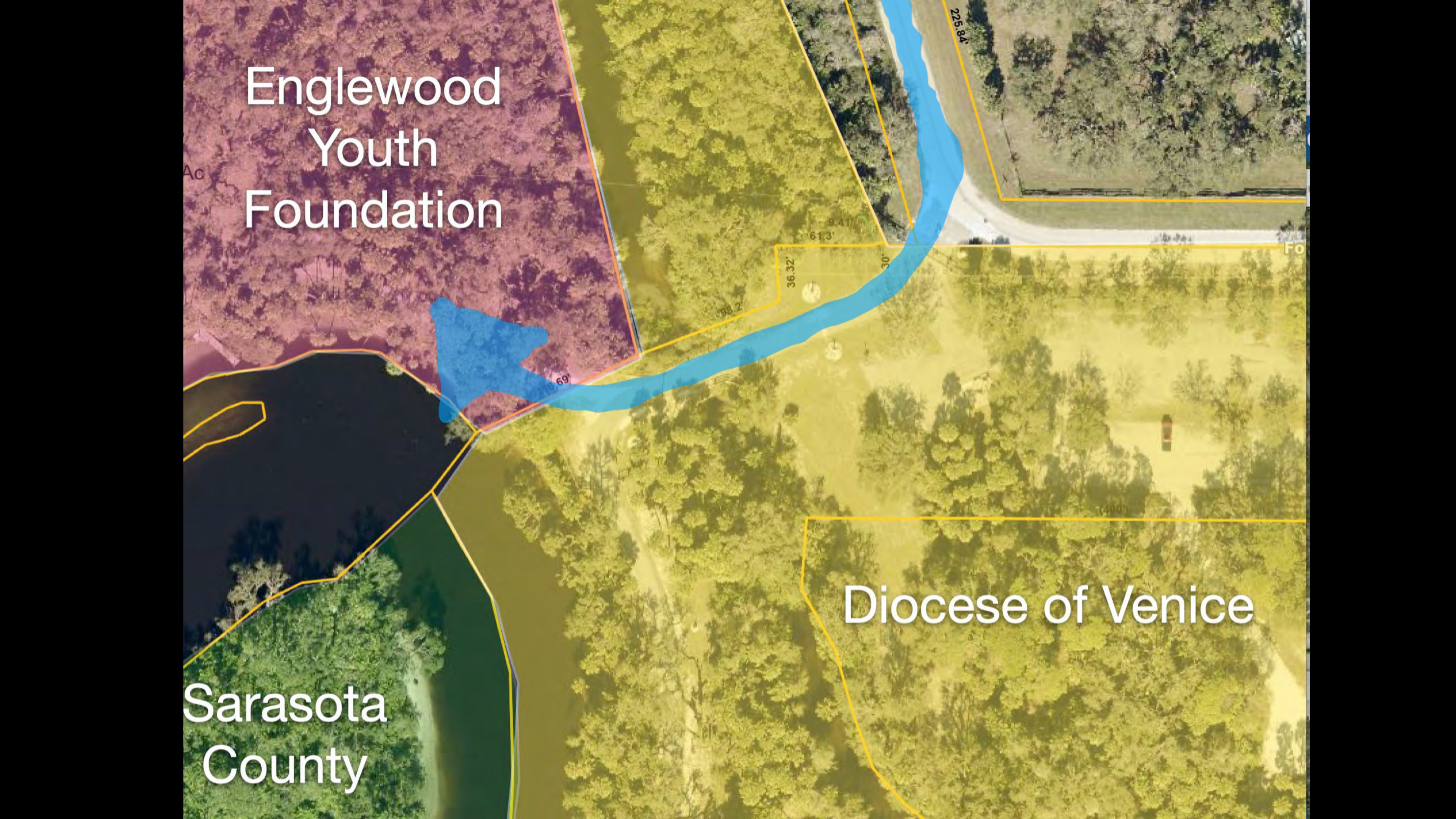
Parcel ID: 0732004130
Status as of August 2023:
Under Review by Staff -
Appraisal Phase

ESLPP Land Acquisition
Parcels
Parcels

Sarasota County Boundary
Parks
ESLPP Acquired Properties
ESLPP Conservation Easements



Paddle Trail
ESLPP Land Acquisition Parcels



Englewood
Youth
Foundation

Diocese of Venice

Sarasota
County



Rocky Ford, Nokomis

- Adjacent to Myakka Rivers Trust and across from Carlton Reserve
- No structures and utilities present
- Zoned OUE (*Open Use Estate 1 unit/5 acres*)
- Future Land Use Designation: Public Conservation/Preservation and Rural
- Outside the Urban Service Area
- FEMA Flood Zone A (*river floodplain*)



Rocky Ford, Nokomis

- 3,000 linear feet of river frontage
- Features an historical oxbow and tributary from Cowpen Slough
- Mesic hammock habitat with oaks and cabbage palm
- Accessible from Myakka River or by foot trails via Myakka River Trust and Pinelands Reserve



Sarasota Magazine

WILD AND SCENIC HISTORY

Decades Ago, Visionary Sarasota County Commissioners Saw the Value of Protecting the Myakka

Their efforts led to the adoption of Florida's Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act.

By [Susan Burrs](#) • July 24, 2025 • Published in the [July-August 2025](#) issue of *Sarasota Magazine*

Sarasota Magazine

In 1975, Sarasota County commissioners lobbied to have [the Myakka](#) added to the National Wild and Scenic River System. This designation was created by Congress in 1968 to preserve “certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.” At the time, only a small portion of the Myakka was public and protected (the portion in Myakka River State Park), and Congress was concentrating on rivers in large national parks that allowed for federal management of the rivers. The Myakka did not fit that model.

Sarasota Magazine

That's why, in the 1980s, the late state Sen. Bob Johnson, a Sarasota resident and passionate supporter of the environment, pushed for designation at the state level. In 1985, Florida's legislators agreed, adopting Florida's Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act. This provided for the Myakka River Coordinating Council and adoption of rules to protect the river from development, improper use or other adverse impacts. Since then, additional lands have been purchased along the Myakka River, including the Jelks Preserve, Deer Prairie Creek Preserve and many other properties, so that a much greater length of the river enjoys protection of the shoreline and watershed.

Sarasota Magazine

Fast forward to 2025 and the Myakka has another chance to make the national list. Rep. Greg Steube sponsored a bill in January 2025 that would make the 34 miles of the Myakka in Sarasota County a national Wild and Scenic River. The river would remain locally managed, but if enacted, the bill could make the Myakka eligible for federal grants and funding (for example, partnership rivers can receive \$200,000, which can be used to study the river, its resources and to maintain its quality). The national designation also provides recognition and status for the river so that elected officials consider its importance when new development projects come before them.

WILD AND SCENIC

Kayaking the Myakka River

Our Gulf beaches are world famous, but Sarasota has another great body of water—the Myakka, celebrating its 40th anniversary as Florida’s only “Wild and Scenic River.”

By [John McCarthy](#) • July 10, 2025 •
Published in the [July-August 2025](#) issue of *Sarasota Magazine*

All the Wildlife You’ll Spot on the Myakka River

You’ll see alligators, for sure—but also fish, turtles, river otters, manatees, bobcats, deer and raccoons.

By [Miri Hardy](#) • July 17, 2025 • Published in the [July-August 2025](#) issue of *Sarasota Magazine*

Continuous data

Myakka River Near SR 72 Near Sarasota, FL - USGS-02298830

[Subscribe to WaterAlert](#)

August 7, 2024 - August 7, 2025

Gage height, feet

5.49 ft - Aug 04, 2025 04:30:00 PM EDT



END