

MRMCC CHAIR'S REPORT OLD BUSINESS

- **Chair Motion Follow-up**
- **Waterfalls of Venice/ AKA Landis**
- **Snook Haven (Camp Venice)**
- **National W&S Partnership**

MRMCC CHAIR'S REPORT

OLD BUSINESS

- **Chair Follow-up**
 - Diocese of Venice Retreat Center Seawall
 - Flood Plain/Conservation Subdivisions
 - Curry Creek/Hidden Hammock
 - Light Pollution
 - Conservation Easements
 - Waterfalls of Venice AKA Landis
 - National Wild & Scenic River Partnership

Retreat Center Myakka Seawall

Glenn Compton motioned that the Florida Statute 258.501 (7)(a) authorizes the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council to render non-binding advisory opinions to local governments. Sarasota County's Myakka River Protection Code (MRPC): Chapter 54-Environmental and Natural Resources Article XXXIII, which in Section 54-1047 "prohibits construction and development within the 50-foot River Area Buffer or wetlands, "and riverfront landowners are entitled to seek a variance if they meet criteria established by the County. The current variance request advanced by the Diocese of Venice contains 379 feet of buried retaining wall within the Myakka River Buffer Area to address undocumented significant erosion and it contains an exorbitant amount of paving within the Myakka River Protection Zone and consequently, it should be denied to achieve the purposes set out in 54-1047. The prudent approach would be to relocate the drive and then assess the actual rate of erosion before incurring the expense and disturbance of a retaining wall. [Becky Ayech seconded. Sarina Weiss, Howard Berna and Emily Barnett abstained.]



July 24, 2020
Four Years,
Four Months and
Nineteen Days

Ralf Brookes,
Miri Hardy,
John Lambie,
Becky Zarem,
Nancy Edmondson,
Susan Schoettle,
Thomas Matrullo,
Julie Morris,
Rob Patten,
Jono Miller, and
Ray Westbrook

(09:58 a.m.)

41. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Continued public hearing to consider a proposed Resolution relating to Myakka River Area Variance Request No. 2021-163022-RL for the proposed installation of two retaining walls and re-alignment of a driveway within the 50-foot River Area Buffer of the Myakka River Protection Zone at 3989 S. Moon Drive, Venice.

Staff Presenters: County Attorney Joshua Moya and Planning and Development Services Environmental Protection Division Environmental Permitting Manager Howard Berna

Public Presenters: Michael Delate, Mark Yavarone, Wayne Arnold, Kierian Day, Carol Miller, Dave Murray, Shawn Rotodus, Ralf Brookes, Miri Hardy, John Lambie, Becky Zarem, Nancy Edmondson, Susan Schoettle, Thomas Martullo, Julie Morris, Rob Patten, Jono Miller, and Ray Westbrook

Items submitted: A copy of correspondence, copies of resumes, copies of presentations, and copies of photographs

11:34 a.m. Board Action: **Denied a proposed Resolution relating to Myakka River Area Variance Request No. 2021-163022-RL. Moved by Smith, seconded by Mast, carried by a 5-0 vote.**

Note: Oath/Signature Cards Filed for Record.

December 17th after 1 hour and 36 minutes

11:34 a.m. Board Action: Denied a proposed Resolution relating to Myakka River Area Variance Request No. 2021-163022-RL. Moved by Smith, seconded by Mast, carried by a 5-0 vote.

Retreat Center Myakka Seawall

In response to your voicemail earlier today, we have received no new applications or correspondence since the hearing. If that changes before Friday, I'll let you know.

Flood plain/ Conservation Subdivisions

Bob Clark motioned that that the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council write the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners recommending a pause in consideration of developments within the Myakka River floodplain that would increase the currently allowed building density until such time as the County has undertaken a thorough review of existing standards relating to stormwater management in light of recent catastrophic flooding and the increased severity of weather incidents impacting Sarasota County. Furthermore, the council recommends denial at this time of Comprehensive Plan Amendments 2024-B and CPA-2024-C (PLN-AMEND-24-000003 and PLN-AMEND-24-000004), amendments that would allow Conservation Subdivisions as a new rezoning designation in South County in what has been Rural or OUE-1 zoning. Becky Ayech seconded it.

**Jono Miller** <jonosarasota@gmail.com>

to commissioners, Jonathan, bcc: Miri, bcc: James, bcc: Jon ▾

Thu, Dec 26, 2024, 11:24 AM ☆ ☺ ↶ ⋮

As you may know, the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) was envisioned by Senator Bob Johnson and created by the Florida Legislature in 1985 (F.S. 258.501), as a unique citizen/agency amalgam. Despite Senator Johnson's intentions, the wild and scenic designation only applies in Sarasota County. The Council he imagined and created has worked for nearly four decades to provide management guidance regarding the Myakka River in general and the State-designated Wild and Scenic River in particular. The Council was charged by the Legislature to provide non-binding advisory opinions. This letter is just such an opinion.

At our most recent (December 13, 2024) meeting, members reflected upon this year's storms: Debby, Helene, and Milton.

This morning (December 26th) the USGS stream gauge on the Myakka near Laurel Road indicated the current water elevation there is now 2.2 feet. During Debby it reached 12.83' and 12.12' during Milton -- so ten feet higher than today.

These storms, and their associated high water events, have generated renewed interest in questioning whether intensive uses should be allowed in areas that both recent photographs and models used by the County and FEMA demonstrate a propensity for flooding.

According the the draft minutes, Bob Clark motioned *that the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council write the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners recommending a pause in consideration of developments within the Myakka River floodplain that would increase the currently allowed building density until such time as the County has undertaken a thorough review of existing standards relating to stormwater management in light of recent catastrophic flooding and the increased severity of weather incidents impacting Sarasota County. Furthermore, the council recommends denial at this time of Comprehensive Plan Amendments 2024-B and CPA-2024-C (PLN-AMEND-24-000003 and PLN-AMEND-24-000004), amendments that would allow Conservation Subdivisions as a new rezoning designation in South County in what has been Rural or OUE-1 zoning.* Becky Ayeche seconded it. Stefan Kaley, Lee Amos, Sarina Weiss, Frank Gargano & Howard Berna abstained.

Thanks in advance for considering the Council's concerns.

Sincerely,

Jono Miller

2024 Chair, Myakka River Management Coordinating Council

Dec. 26 2024

Flood plain/ Conservation Subdivisions





Oct. 21 2024

RE: CPA 2024B & CPA 2024C  



Jono Miller <jonosarasota@gmail.com>

to commissioners, Adam.Maio, Colin.Pember, Cullen.Morgan, Donna.Carter, Emmalee.Legler, John.Lacivita, Jordan.Keller, Justin.Taylor, Andrew.Stultz, diane.cominotti, Chris, James, Nadine

Mon, Oct 21, 2024, 5:14 PM    

Commissioners:

As you may know, the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) was envisioned by Senator Bob Johnson and created by the Florida Legislature in 1985 (F.S. 258.501), as a unique citizen/agency amalgam. Despite Senator Johnson's intentions, the wild and scenic designation only applies in Sarasota County. The Council he imagined has worked for more than three decades to provide management guidance regarding the Myakka River in general and the State-designated Wild and Scenic River in particular. The Council was charged by the Legislature to provide non-binding advisory opinions. This letter is just such an opinion.

At its most recent meeting (September 20, 2024) Debbie Musallam motioned that the council send letters to the Sarasota County Planning Commission and the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners requesting that they deny the comprehensive plan amendments CPA 2024B & CPA 2024C.

Becky Ayech seconded. Stefan Kaley, Alissa Powers, Howard Berna, Steve Giguere, Jamie Richardson, Bruno Kapacinskis and Emily Barnett abstained.

The following content is from our draft minutes and provides context.

"Nancy Edmondson is a year-round resident of Sarasota County and a great fan of the Myakka River, as she has lived in Venice on North Jackson Road for over 35 years. Two different petitioners are submitting amendments to the comprehensive plan which would allow the conversion of roll properties in south county from OUE1 and OUR to become conservation subdivisions. Potentially the housing density can increase 10 times the current density and roll parts of south Sarasota County. The petitioners are requesting a comp plan amendment to permit conservation subdivisions possessing certain characteristics to be developed with up to two units per acre, pursuant to the transfer of development rights program. Specifically, the petitioners are requesting the addition of the south county area to be included under TDR Policy 2.2, meeting the criteria that the land developed is at least 75 acres. The land is south of the southern terminus of the countryside line. The land is entirely located within 3,000 feet of the urban service boundary. The land is served by Sarasota County's central water and wastewater facilities. There are other sections of the amendment which relate to the north county area and of an area titled Proximity to Economic Development RMA. Her concern is directed toward the potential rezoning of property in the Myakka River floodplain as a conservation subdivision. Concurrently, a rezone petition is being drafted, which is contingent upon the acceptance of this comprehensive plan amendment. The rezone petition targets a property of 100 plus or minus acres on North Jackson Road, which was platted in 1927 as open use rural. It was part of the original dairy in North Venice Farms.

Early on, the land was converted to an agricultural use. What is being proposed by the petitioner is a conversion to conservation subdivision, which instead of supporting livestock will be supporting 200 single family homes. This is a dramatic change from the 17 homes currently zoned for the land. The land is in the Myakka River watershed. Nearly 75% of the land is within the hundred-year flood plain, and 40% of the property is in FEMA zone A. There are potential problems with this specific increase in housing density, 200 homes on these 100 acres, and the infrastructure required to support it threatening the Myakka River. Negative impacts to consider include increases in stormwater, flooding, pollution, and modification to the riverine system. If the CPAs are not accepted, then the rezoning of this property is ineligible as a conservation subdivision.

She asks that the council share their expert opinion on the detrimental impacts of adopting the comp plan amendments to the county planning commission and BCC in a written advisory note."

Sincerely,

Jono Miller

2024 Chair, Myakka River Management Coordinating Council

Conservation Subdivisions

- RZ 24-16 | MI Homes Rezone Cons. Subdivision Curry Creek (PLN-REZSE-24-000036)
- RZ 24-17 | Hidden Hammocks Rezone (PLN-REZSE-24-000037)

Notice of Public Hearings on Proposed Amendments to the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Code – CPA 2024-B, UDC Amendment No. 52

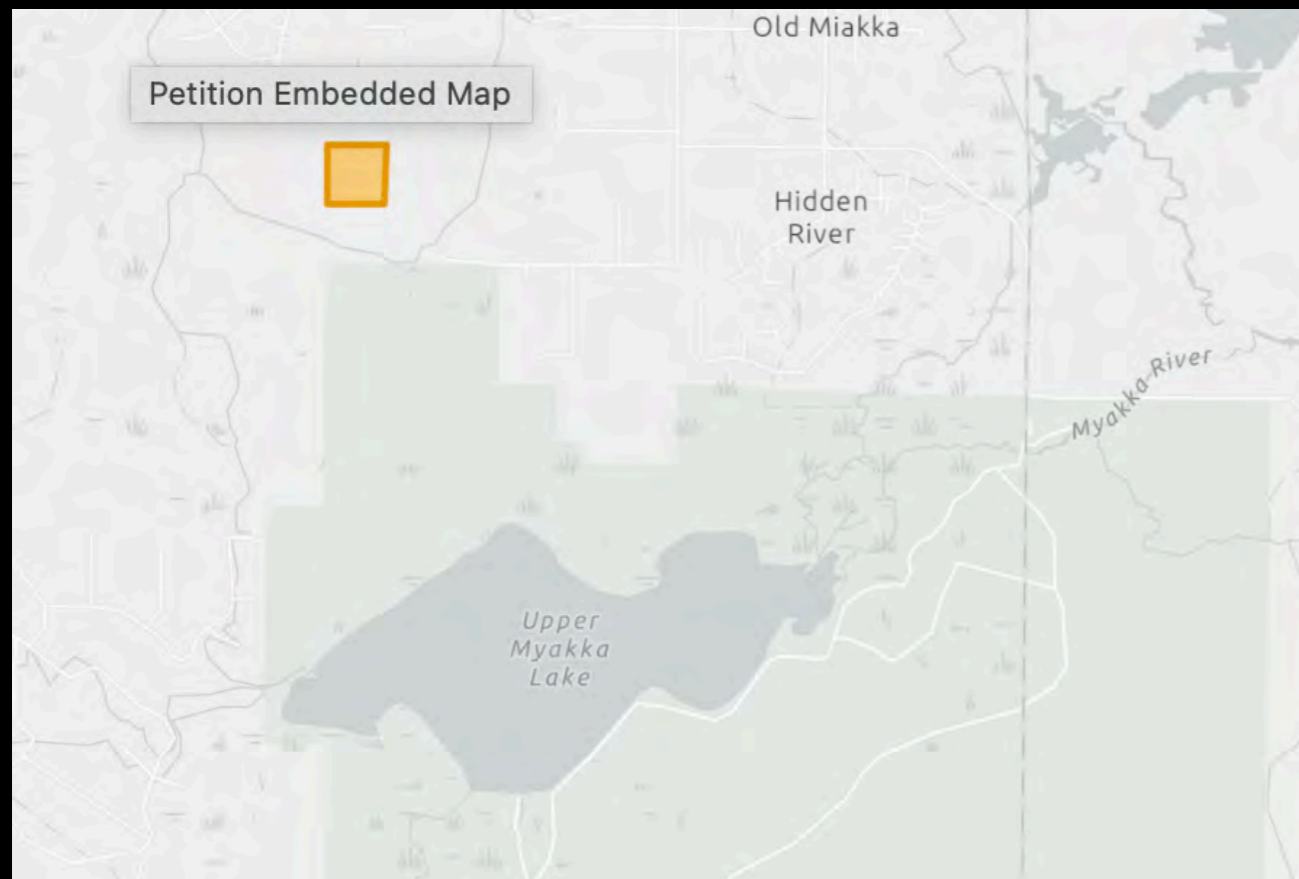
Post Date: 04/30/2025 8:00 AM

The Sarasota County Commission will hold a Public Hearing on [May 20, 2025](#), at the Sarasota County Administration Center, County Commission Chamber, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, Florida, at 9:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as possible, to consider 1) Transmittal of proposed CPA No. 2024-B, a privately initiated text Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Chapter 8 – Sarasota 2050 RMA, amending VOS Policy 2.1, VOS Policy 4.1 and TDR Policy 2.2 to expand the applicability of Conservation Subdivision type developments with increased density, to the Florida Department of Commerce for review and comment, and 2) UDC Amendment No. 52, a privately initiated Unified Development Code amendment to section 124-102 (b) (6) Conservation Subdivision (CS) to implement the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes.

The proposed amendments seek to add a new location criteria option for areas within the County Rural Heritage/Estate 2050 Resource Management Area (RMA) overlay for conservation subdivisions that can qualify for a 2 units/acre density incentive.

Curry Creek

Hidden Hammock



Petition: 24-16

Petition Type: Rezone
Petition Embedded Map

Cons. Subdivision Curry Creek
Applicant Name: Joseph Medred,
Genesis Planning and Development,
Inc.
Case Status: Under Review

Description: A Rezone of approximately 100 acres, for property located north of Interstate 75 and east of Jackson Road, from OUE-1 and OUR to OUE-1/CS, to allow for the proposed development of a 200-lot Conservation Subdivision.

[Active Rezone Documents](#)

For CPA 2024-B, the applicant has reached out to staff and has let us know that they intend to revise their proposal and remove the option for development in South County. I have not yet received any revisions, but they have also requested to be tentatively scheduled for a May 20, 2025, BCC Transmittal Hearing. Ultimately if they do move forward all materials and associated revisions would be available online by May 13th.

Curry Creek & Hidden Hammock

Curry Creek/Blackburn Canal corridor.

Inbox x



Ronald Doering <ronald.doering@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 11, 12:14 PM



to james.oliver, me, President, Barbara, Katharine

Good morning Gentlemen. I am on the Executive of the Central Venice Coalition (a federation of HOAs) and longtime co-chair of the Friends of Pinebrook Park. In the latter capacity with others I led the push to have Pinebrook Park re-zoned as conservation in perpetuity. I am writing a pamphlet for distribution to park walkers. A key feature of our park(Venice's only natural park) is that it is divided by Curry Creek.

Over the last 12 years I have come to realize how little information and how much misinformation is out there on the corridor. I have been to the Venice archives, Sarasota County History Centre, read the Matthew's books and the Burger Report etc, but I have been unable to determine who, how, when and why the final ditch at the eastern end was completed joining it to the Myakka River near the south west corner of Sleeping Turtle. As you know, it was originally Nolan's idea to have a transportation corridor from Robert's Bay to the river for recreational and commercial purposes. Instead today, it has become an increasingly critical drainage ditch for the whole region with stormwater pipes being added to it regularly. There is a lack of jurisdictional oversight because there are a half dozen private and public entities that are very selective in their assertion of responsibility or denial of responsibility resulting, among other things, in a failure to adequately clean up from recent hurricanes , exposing our area to unnecessary flooding risk. Buckpassing is endemic.

I was given your names from senior Sarasota County Parks officials. I would very much appreciate your help. Thank you.

Ron Doering, Venice

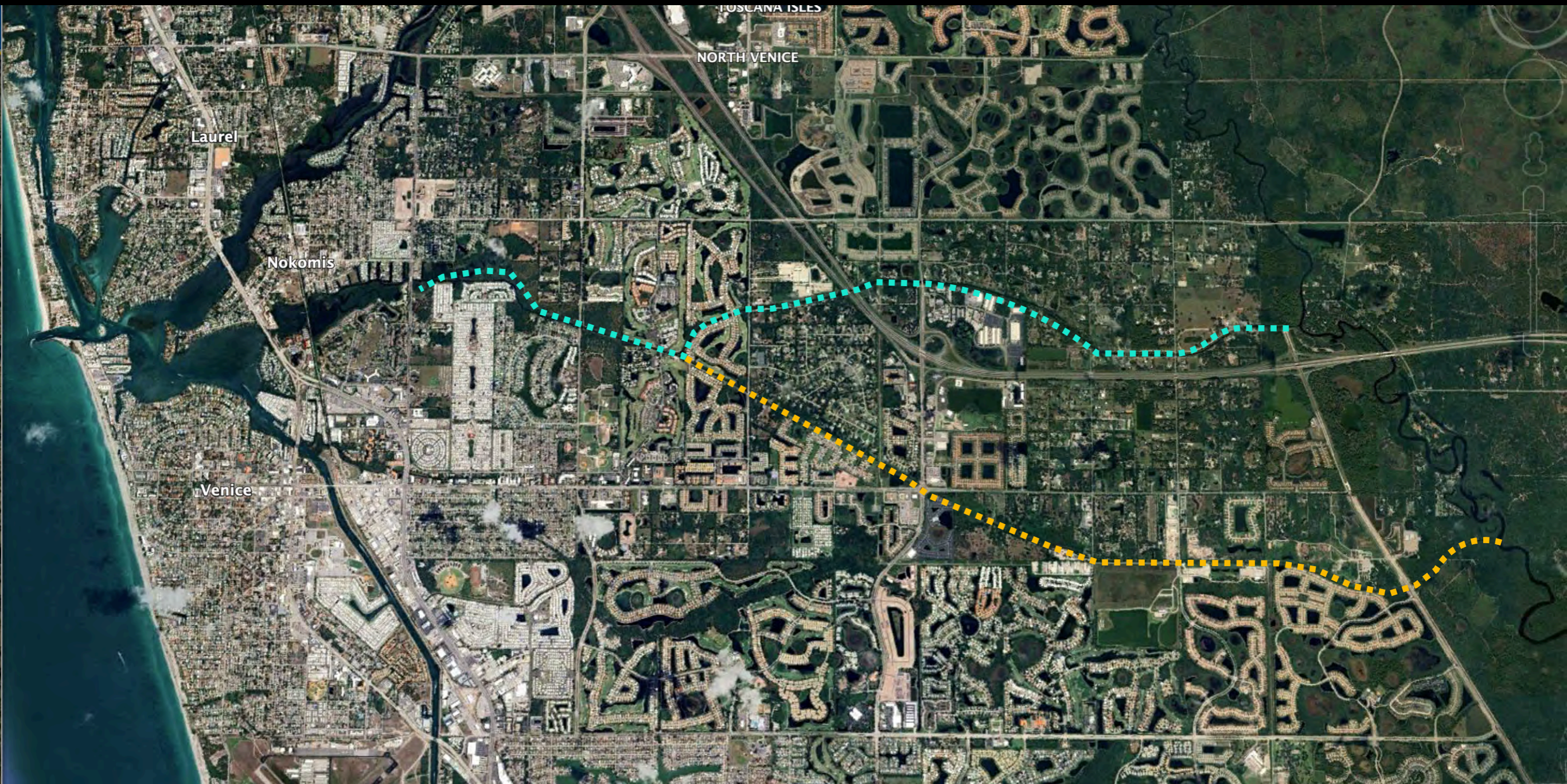
Sent from my iPad

Curry Creek Ronald Doering

Good morning Gentlemen. I am on the Executive of the Central Venice Coalition (a federation of HOAs) and longtime co-chair of the Friends of Pinebrook Park. In the latter capacity with others I led the push to have Pinebrook Park re-zoned as conservation in perpetuity. I am writing a pamphlet for distribution to park walkers. A key feature of our park(Venice's only natural park) is that it is divided by Curry Creek.

Over the last 12 years I have come to realize how little information and how much misinformation is out there on the corridor. I have been to the Venice archives, Sarasota County History Centre, read the Matthew's books and the Burger Report etc, but I have been unable to determine who, how, when and why the final ditch at the eastern end was completed joining it to the Myakka River near the south west corner of Sleeping Turtle. **As you know, it was originally Nolan's idea to have a transportation corridor from Robert's Bay to the river for recreational and commercial purposes. Instead today, it has become an increasingly critical drainage ditch for the whole region with stormwater pipes being added to it regularly. There is is a lack of jurisdictional oversight because there are a half dozen private and public entities that are very selective in their assertion of responsibility or denial of responsibility resulting, among other things, in a failure to adequately clean up from recent hurricanes , exposing our area to unnecessary flooding risk.Buckpassing is endemic.**

Curry Creek



Blackburn Canal

Light Pollution

Stacey Mazza-Gilkison motioned that in light of the concerning increase in light pollution at Myakka River State Park and on the Wild and Scenic Myakka River Corridor as illustrated in Friends of Myakka River's presentation to the Council, the Council directs the chair to write a letter supporting Friends of Myakka River's efforts to seek necessary action by the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners, to control and reduce negative impact to the park and the river from light pollution. Becky Ayech seconded. Caroline Ritchey, Howard Berna, Sabrina Weiss, Emily Barnett and Frank Gargano abstained. (Motion passed after discussion.)



Jono Miller <jonosarasota@gmail.com>

to commissioners, Jonathan, Miri, bcc: James, bcc: me

Fri, Dec 27, 2024, 3:02 PM



Commissioners:

As you may know, the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) was envisioned by Senator Bob Johnson and created by the Florida Legislature in 1985 (F.S. 258.501), as a unique citizen/agency amalgam. Despite Senator Johnson's intentions, the wild and scenic designation only applies in Sarasota County. The Council he imagined and created has worked for nearly four decades to provide management guidance regarding the Myakka River in general and the State-designated Wild and Scenic River in particular. The Council was charged by the Legislature to provide non-binding advisory opinions. This letter is just such an opinion.

On December 13th, Miri Hardy, representing Friends of Myakka River, made a presentation to the Council documenting the damaging effects of light pollution and she showed dramatic satellite imagery demonstrating the increase in light pollution in the Myakka watershed. She outlined the following next steps:

- To seek necessary action to control and reduce negative impact and growing threats to the park and the river from light pollution, Friends of Myakka River plan to meet with Sarasota County Commissioners to share the attached presentation (shared with the MRMCC on 12/13/24) with their concerns.
- Per feedback from SC staff, Friends of Myakka River plan to request actions necessary for implementing enforceable protections for the park and river as per policies outlined in the UDC and the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan.

Following her presentation, Stacey Mazza-Gilkison (Friends of Myakka River's council member) motioned that in light of the concerning increase in light pollution at Myakka River State Park and the Wild and Scenic Myakka River Corridor, as illustrated in Friends of Myakka River's presentation to the Council, she moves *that the council directs the chair to write a letter supporting Friends of Myakka River's efforts to seek necessary action by the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners to control and reduce negative impact to the park and the river from light pollution.* Becky Ayeche seconded. Caroline Ritchey, Howard Berna, Sabrina Weiss, Emily Barnett and Frank Gargano abstained. The motion passed.

Commissioners, the Wild and Scenic Myakka River Designation Act and the DEP approved management plan call for "preserving and enhancing" the natural resources values of the Myakka River.

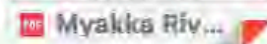

- For example, the Act states: *"Permanent protection and enhancement of the ecological, fish and wildlife, and recreational values within the river area, primary emphasis being given to protecting agricultural, aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features."*
-

In light of the attached presentation, The Council shares Friends of Myakka River's concerns about the growing detrimental impact of light pollution and supports Friends of Myakka River's efforts to to seek necessary action by the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners to control and reduce negative impact to the park and the river from light pollution.

Sincerely,

Jono Miller

2024 Chair, Myakka River Management Coordinating Council

One attachment • Scanned by Gmail 

Light Pollution Dec 27

Conservation Easements

Ayech motioned that the Council requests that the legislators amend FS 704.06, to make the conservation easement release a judicial process that includes the Florida Attorney General, as representative of the public interest, as a party to the release proceedings and require that any monies paid for a conservation easement be repaid with legal interest. Victor Dobrin seconded. Emily Barnett, Lee Amos, Howard Berna, Sabrina Weiss, Chuck Johnston, Frank Gargano, Caroline Ritchey, Stevan Kalev and Steve Giguere abstained. (Motion passed after discussion.)Becky

Conservation Easements

Conservation Easements

Inbox x

Jan. 7

Jan 7, 2025, 8:46 AM



Jono Miller <jonosarasota@gmail.com>

to commissioners, Jonathan, James, bcc: me, bcc: Jon

As you now know, the **Myakka** River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) was envisioned by Senator Bob Johnson and created by the Florida Legislature in 1985 (F.S. 258.501), as a unique citizen/agency amalgam. Despite Senator Johnson's intentions, the wild and scenic designation only applies in Sarasota County. The Council he imagined and created has worked for nearly four decades to provide management guidance regarding the **Myakka** River in general and the State-designated Wild and Scenic River in particular. The Council was charged by the Legislature to provide non-binding advisory opinions. This letter is just such an opinion.

At our December 13th meeting, and following a presentation on Conservation Easements by attorney, Leslie Blackner, Becky Ayech motioned that the Council requests that the legislators amend FS 704.06(2) to provide a conservation easement release judicial process that includes the Florida Attorney General as a representative of public interest as a party to release proceedings and to require all money paid for the conservation easement to be repaid with legal interest. Victor Dobrin seconded. Emily Barnett, Lee Amos, Howard Berna, Sabrina Weiss, Chuck Johnston, Frank Gargano, Caroline Ritchey, Stefan Kalev and Steve Giguere abstained. Motion passed.

There are many conservation easements in the **Myakka** watershed, making this an important topic. The arguments for the proposed changes are summarized in the attached article: **Keeping the Perpetual in Florida's Conservation Easements**.

Sincerely,

Jono Miller
2024 Chair

One attachment • Scanned by Gmail



KEEPING THE PERPETUAL IN FLORIDA'S CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Nancy A. McLaughlin*

FIU Law Review

Volume 18
Number 2 *Symposium, The 2023 FIU
Environment Forum: From Science to Public
Policy (Miami, Florida, March 2023)*

Article 9

Spring 2024

Keeping the Perpetual in Florida's Conservation Easements

Nancy A. McLaughlin

University of Utah SJ Quinney College of Law, nancy.mclaughlin@law.utah.edu

However..

I didn't write to legislators

I was waiting for draft minutes to summarize the discussion,

and I was waiting to identify draft legislation that I could reference as something to support

then, once the session started, I contacted and Rep. David Smith's office and was told he would not be introducing legislation this year.

ENVIRONMENT

Conservation easements don't always protect land 'forever' in Florida

Florida law lets conservation easements happen



Jim Waymer

Florida Today

March 25, 2024, 5:02 a.m. ET

Conservationists have fought for years to get Florida to close loopholes in state law that make it easy — relative to many other states — to release conservation easements. Blackner wrote an Oct. 23 letter on behalf of Bear Warriors United, a nonprofit based in Oviedo, urging state legislative leaders to strengthen the law. So far, at least one legislator has taken up the cause, vowing to introduce a bill next session to close those loopholes: **David Smith, R-Winter Springs.**

Indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration.

[Home](#) > [Session](#) > [2025](#) > Senate Bill 1142

[< Previous Senate Bill](#)

SB 1142: Release of Conservation Easements

GENERAL BILL by [Rodriguez](#)

Release of Conservation Easements; Requiring certain water management districts, upon application by the fee simple owner of a parcel subject to a conservation easement, to release the conservation easement if specified conditions are met; providing for the valuation of the property upon such release; specifying that land released from the conservation easement may be used for development consistent with certain zoning, etc.

Effective Date: 7/1/2025

Last Action: 5/3/2025 Senate - Indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration

Bill Text: [Web Page](#) | [PDF](#)

Senate Committee Refer

1. [Environment and N](#)
2. [Judiciary](#) (JU)
3. [Rules](#) (RC)

[≡ View By Bill V](#)

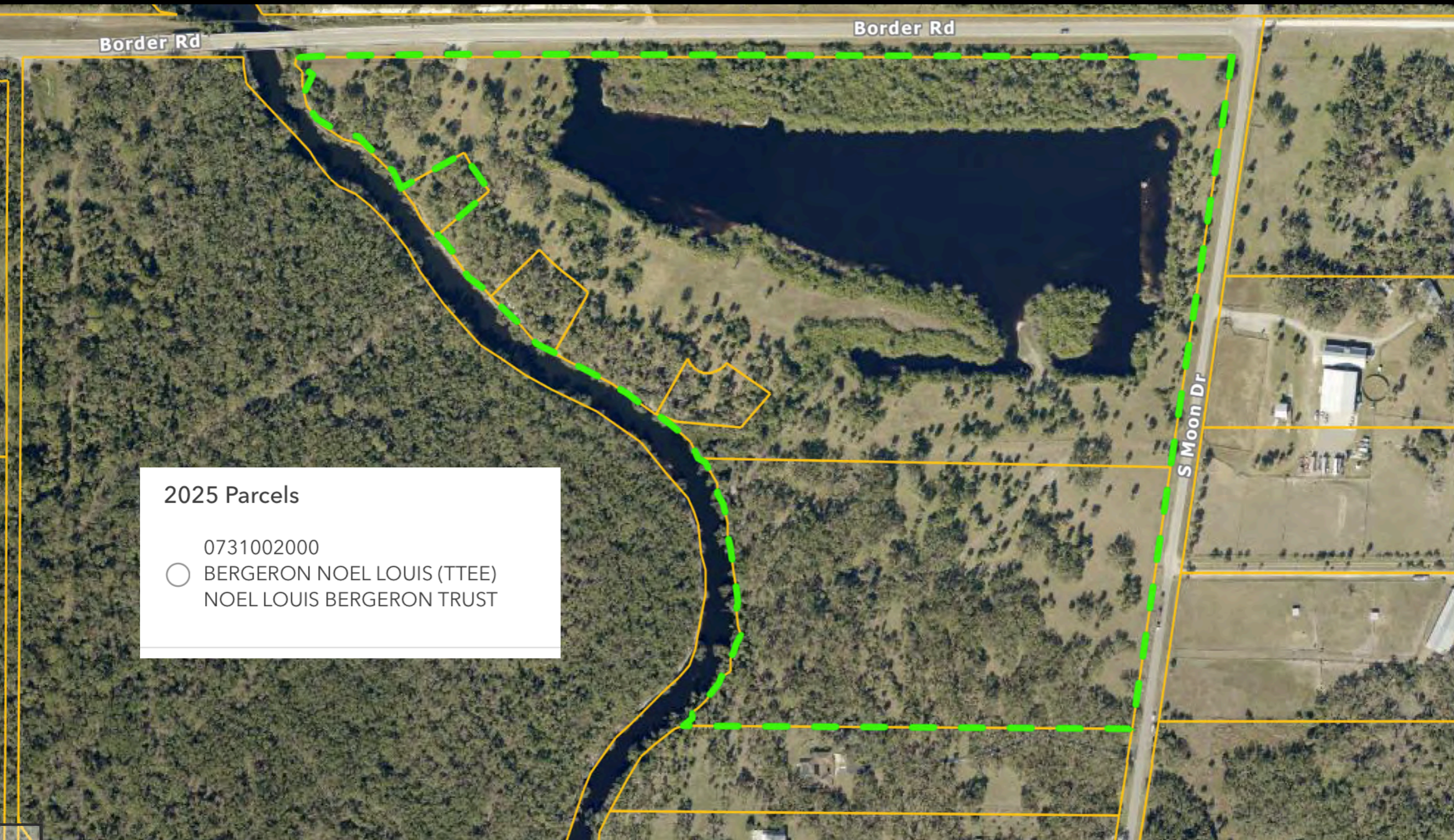
Florida Statutes, to read:

704.06 Conservation easements; creation; acquisition; enforcement.—

(14)(a) Upon application by the fee simple owner of a parcel of land subject to a conservation easement to a water management district, a water management district must release the conservation easement if the following conditions are met:

1. The land subject to the easement is less than 15 acres and is bordered on three or more sides by impervious surfaces;
2. Any undeveloped adjacent parcels of land are less than 15 acres and similarly bordered on three or more sides by impervious surfaces;
3. The land contains no historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance; and
4. The applicant has secured sufficient mitigation credits using the uniform mitigation assessment method from a mitigation bank located in this state to offset the loss of wetlands located on the land subject to the conservation easement.

Waterfalls of Venice/Landis



Waterfalls of Venice/Landis

RV park near Myakka River question  Inbox x

Kirk Crane

to me ▼

RV park near Myakka River

Received your voice mail message. No application filed. Nothing new to report since last time you asked.

Kirk Crane, AICP

Planner III

Sarasota County Planning Services

1001 Sarasota Center Blvd.

Sarasota, FL 34240

kcrane@scgov.net

telephone: 941-861-5157

fax: 941-861-5593

NATIONAL WILD & SCENIC PARTNERSHIP

May 9, 2025

Jono Miller

The Partnership Model works locally with the communities and the federal entity that is a partner with your community is not managing the land. It is managed at the local levels. Under the Partnership Model **federal ownership and management are not authorized**. There will not be a superintendent at a Partnership Wild and Scenic River. There will not be an arrowhead on the signage. There will not be a park ranger, either. **It is locally managed and controlled by a local council with broad representation guides that management just like it is being done now, with all the partners at the table**. Land use is locally controlled. The NPS role is limited.

Jamie continued saying there is a fair amount of work to become a Partnership NWSR. What are the advantages? National recognition and prestige are important. There is funding through the Partnership Wild and Scenic River Coalition around the country, **up to about \$220,000 per year (per river)** through a cooperative agreement that they work with a local nonprofit, and the river and the committee, on dispersing those funds for projects and programs. They are using that funding on the Wekiva for staffing, outreach, stewardship, exotic control, maintenance, and monitoring studies.

Chris offered if we take this course, and if we got in the Partnership Program and received the annual funding. We can grow that funding. The MWSR Program was able to turn \$200,000 to around \$800,000 for the Upper Lake Weir removal by partnering with SWFWMD and FWC. **The MWSR Program currently has no direct funding. Money must be pulled from other areas, which is hard especially when he is working outside of MRSP.** He must make a big justification. When there are unfunded state park projects, how can I get money outside MRSP? This would be a big financial input from this program.

Ad Hoc Myakka Partnership Wild and Scenic River Steering Committee

Five members:

Dr. Miri Hardy Friends of Myakka

Jono Miller Myakka River Management Coordinating Council

Chris Oliver FDEP Myakka Wild and Scenic River Program

Jaime Doubek-Racine National Park Service

Jon Thaxton Gulf Coast Community Foundation

- Over 150 years combined experience with the Myakka
- Volunteer, nonprofit, and state & federal agency representation



119th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. R. 642

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 23, 2025

Mr. Steube (for himself and Mr. Buchanan) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the portion of the Myakka River lying within Sarasota County, Florida as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes.

1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025.

2. Findings

The Congress finds the following:

(1)

Public Law 95–625 amended section 5 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276) to require the study of the Myakka River for potential inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system.

(2)

The study determined the Myakka River, was eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

(3)

The State of Florida has demonstrated its commitment to protecting this river by the enactment of the Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Protection Act (Florida Statute Chapter 258.501).

(4)

The Florida county of Sarasota and the cities of Venice and North Port have demonstrated their commitment to protect this river in their comprehensive land use plans, local ordinances, and land development regulations.

(5)

The desire for designation of this river as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System has been demonstrated through strong public support, State and local agency support, and the endorsement of designation by the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council, which represents a broad cross section of State and local agencies, agricultural interests, landowners, environmental, and nonprofit organizations.

(6)

A 12-mile segment of the Myakka River is within the Myakka River State Park with an additional 22-mile segment containing conservation lands held in public ownership or conservation easements within the Myakka River Watershed.

SECTION 3.

Designation of Myakka River, Florida, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

(a)

Section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

(____) Myakka River, Florida

The 34-mile segments, within Sarasota County referred to in this paragraph, to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior, in partnership with the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council.

Rivers designated under Section 3(a) of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, and most designated under Section 2(a)(ii), are classified in one of three categories depending on the extent of development and accessibility along each section. Designated river segments are classified and administered under one of the following, as defined in Section 2(b) of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act:

Wild River Areas: Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic River Areas: Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Note: These segments are usually more developed than wild and less developed than recreational. This classification may or may not include scenery as an outstandingly remarkable value.

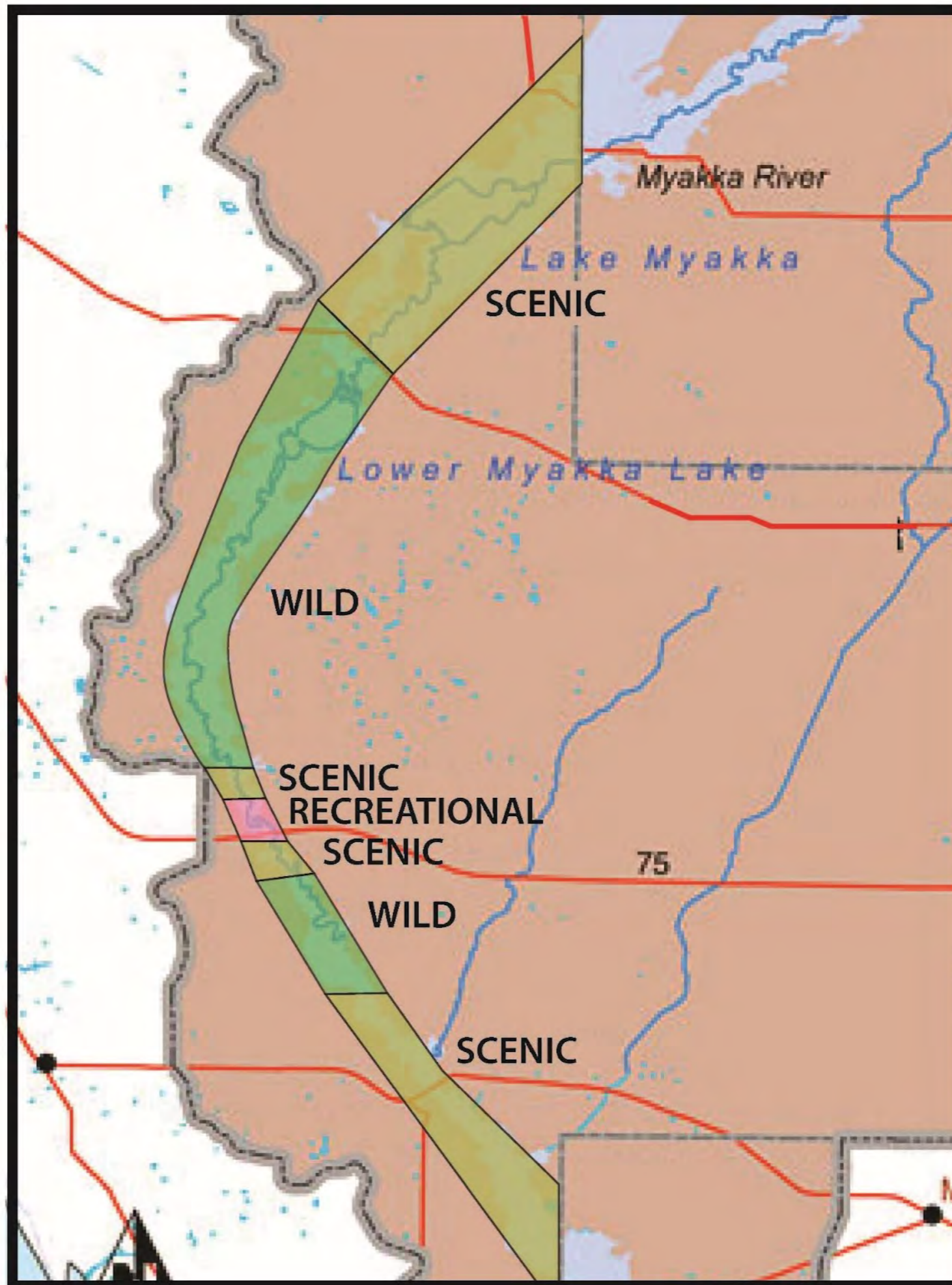
Recreational River Areas: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shoreline and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

Note: This classification, however, does not imply that recreation is an outstandingly remarkable value or that the segment must be managed or developed for recreational activities.

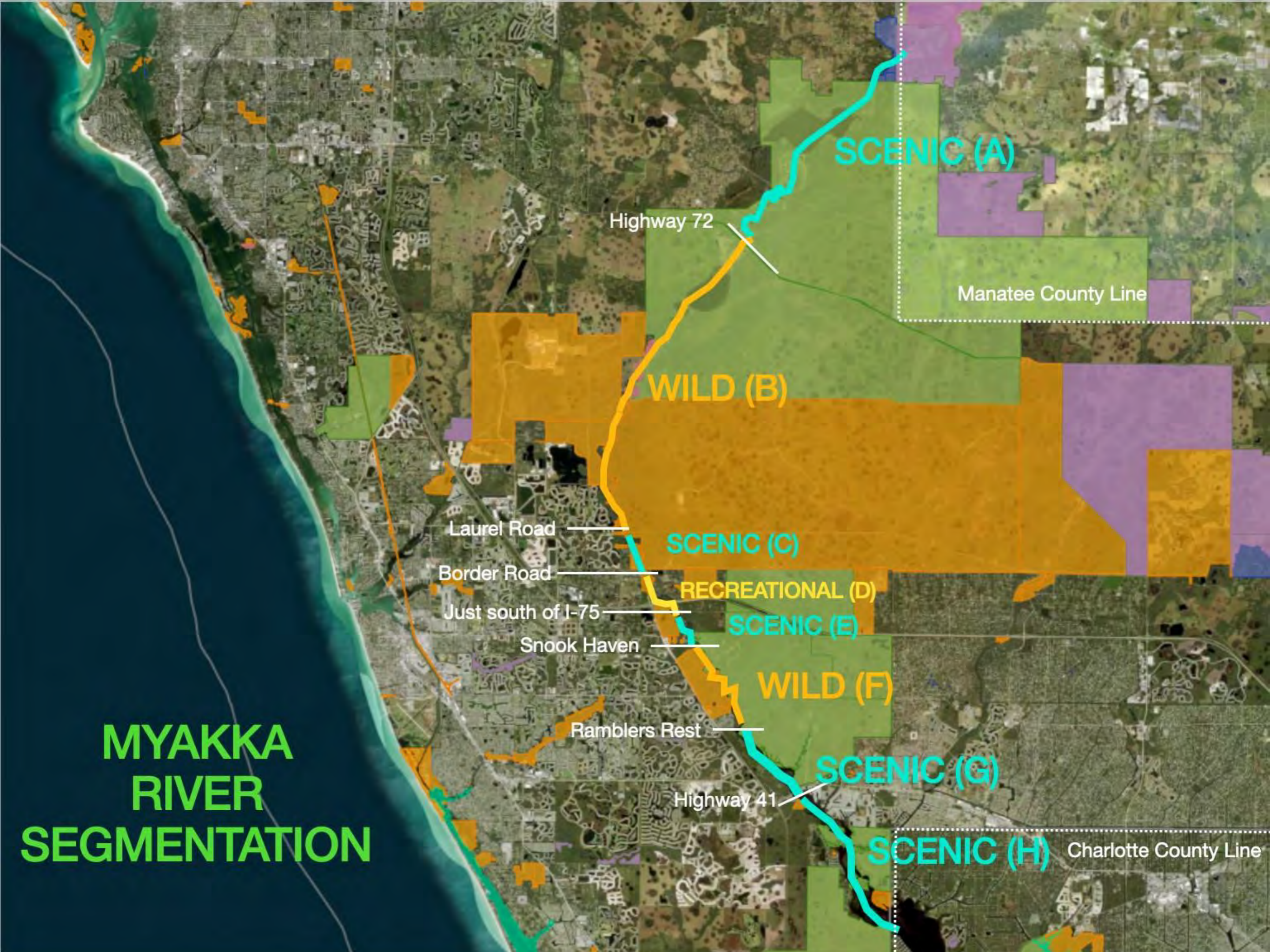
(b) In general—

The following segments of the Myakka River, within Sarasota County, to be administered in the following classifications:

- (A) The approximately 8.0-mile segment from the Manatee County/Sarasota County line to S.R. 72, as a scenic river.
- (B) The approximately 11.2-mile segment, from S.R. 72 to Laurel Road, as a wild river.
- (C) The approximately 1.9-mile segment, from Laurel Road to Border Road, as a scenic river.
- (D) The approximately 1.5-mile segment, from Border Road to just south of the I-75 Bridge, as a recreational river.
- (E) The approximately 1.5-mile segment, from south of the I-75 Bridge to Snook Haven, as a scenic river.
- (F) The approximately 3.2-mile segment, from Snook Haven to Ramblers Rest, as a wild river.
- (G) The approximately 2.7-mile segment, from Ramblers Rest to U.S. 41, as a scenic river.
- (H) The approximately 4.0-mile segment, from U.S. 41 to the Charlotte County Line, as a scenic river.



MYAKKA RIVER SEGMENTATION



MYAKKA RIVER SEGMENTATION

ORIGINAL PROPOSED SEGMENTATION

Southern Boundary
State Park

First Houses

WILD

SCENIC

RECREATIONAL

SCENIC

RECREATIONAL

Manatee County Line

SCENIC

Highway 72

CURRENT PROPOSED SEGMENTATION

WILD (B)

Laurel Road

Border Road

Just south of I-75

Snook Haven

Highway 41

Charlotte County Line

SCENIC (A)

SCENIC (C)

RECREATIONAL (D)

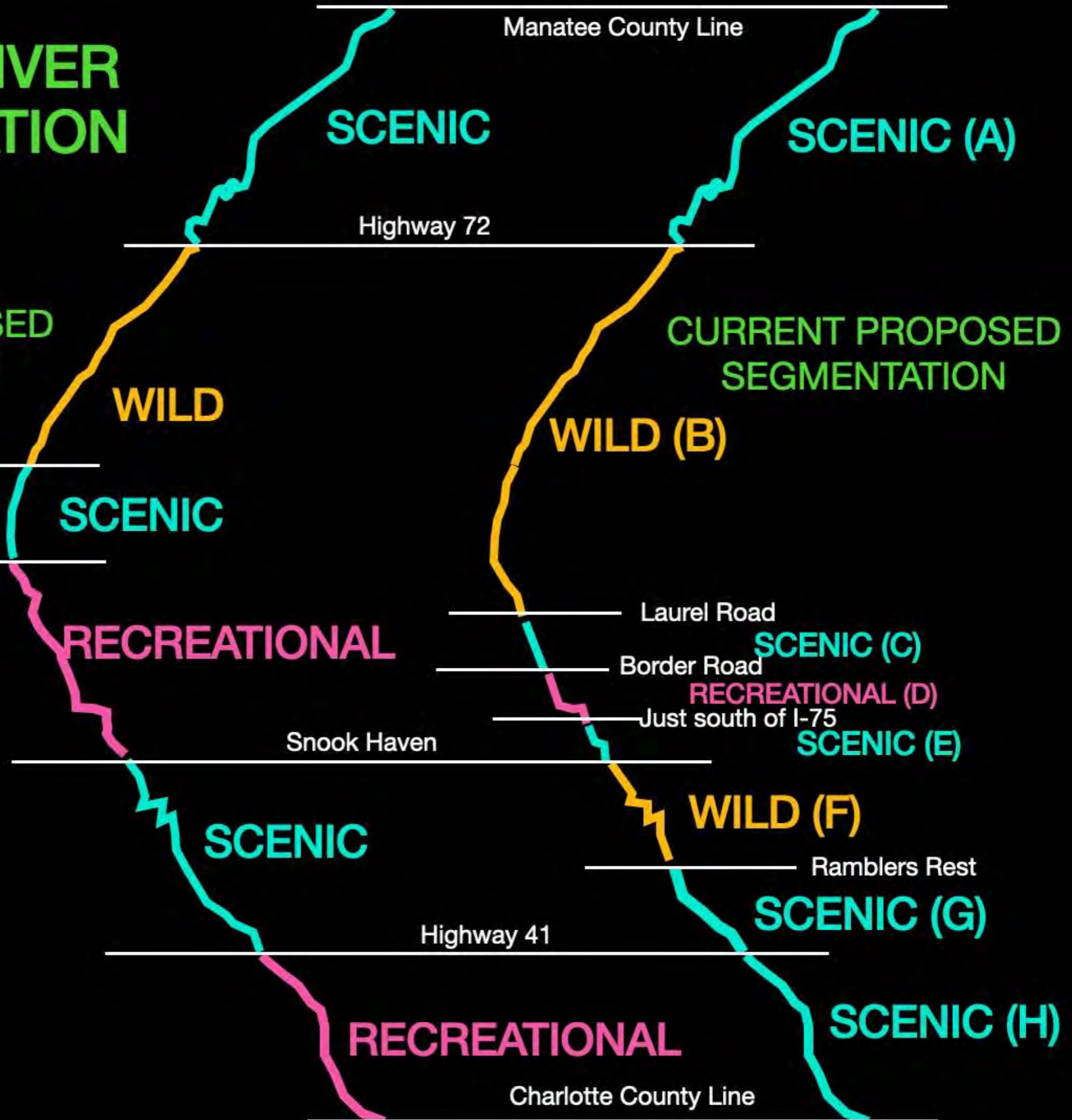
SCENIC (E)

WILD (F)

Ramblers Rest

SCENIC (G)

SCENIC (H)



Sec 4.Special requirements applicable to Myakka River

(a)Definitions

In this section and section 5:

(1) Myakka river

The term Myakka River means the segments of the Myakka River in the State of Florida designated as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by paragraph () of section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)), as added by this Act.

(2) Council

The term Council means the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council established pursuant to Florida Statute Chapter 258.501.

(3) Comprehensive management plan

The terms comprehensive management plan and plan mean the Myakka River Wild and Scenic Management Plan developed by the Council shall be considered to satisfy the requirements for the comprehensive management plan under section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(d)).

(4) Secretary

The term Secretary means the Secretary of the Interior.

(b)Cooperative agreements

(1) Use authorized

In order to provide for the long-term protection, preservation, and enhancement of the Myakka River, the Secretary shall coordinate administration responsibilities under this section, and may enter into cooperative agreements pursuant to sections 10(e) and 11(b)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1281(e), 1282(b)(1)) with the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, appropriate local political jurisdictions of the State, the county of Sarasota, City of North Port, City of Venice and appropriate local planning and non-profit organizations.

(2) Effect of agreement

Administration of the Myakka River by the Secretary of the Interior through the use of cooperative agreements shall not—

(A) constitute National Park Service administration of the Myakka River for purposes of section 10(c) of such Act (U.S.C. 1281(c)); or

(B) cause the Myakka River to be considered a unit of the National Park System.

(3) Publicly owned lands

Nothing in this Act or an agreement under this Act shall affect the management of publicly or privately owned lands within the boundaries of the Myakka River watershed by the agencies having jurisdiction over the lands, in accordance with the statutory authority of Florida Statute 258.501 and the mission of such agencies.

(4) Technical assistance and other support

The Secretary may provide technical assistance, staff support, and funding to assist in the updating and implementation of the comprehensive management plan.

(5) Acquisition of land

the authority of the Secretary to acquire land for the Myakka River segments shall be limited to acquisition by donation or acquisition with the consent of the owner thereof.

(6) No condemnation

No land or interest in land may be acquired for the Myakka River segments by condemnation.

5. Myakka River Management Council

(a) Existing structure

the Secretary shall coordinate the management responsibilities of the Secretary with the Council in the updating and implementation of the comprehensive management plan for the Myakka River.

(b) Representative from DOI

The Secretary shall select a representative who shall be added to the Council to represent the National Park Service.

(c) Additional members

Other interested parties may be added to the Council, in accordance with the statutory authority under Florida Statute 258.501.

(d) Coordination with council

The Secretary shall coordinate the management responsibilities with the Council in the updating and implementation of the Management plan for the Myakka River, to assist the Secretary in carrying out the management responsibilities of the Secretary under this Act.

Dr. Miri Hardy

Leading coordination with Representative Steube's office

Overseeing dozen's of phone calls, zoom calls, summaries for use for outreach, conversations with national W&S support, as well as document production and review including:

- a one page overview of the Myakka as a partnership river
- a 40-page evaluation of the river
- a 37-page map series showing lands protected since the original federal study
- a seven minute narrated PowerPoint
- soliciting support letters

Additional Partners:

- **American Rivers**: A half-century of experience reconnecting rivers and reconnecting communities to those rivers.
 - Strategic direction and support for river conservation, restoration and enhancement
 - Wild & Scenic Rivers Division
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition**: An alliance of over 60 river and wildlands organizations. Protects and defends existing and potential Wild and Scenic Rivers and broadens the movement for their conservation by raising awareness about their value.
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers Hill Week
 - Biennial Wild and Scenic Rivers Meeting

Key Partners Congressman Greg Steube's staff



Ronnie Carabbia
DC Legislative Assistant

Reed Powell
DC Legislative Director

H.R.642 - Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025

119th Congress (2025-2026) | [Get alerts](#)

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Sponsor: [Rep. Staube, W. Gregory \(R-FL-17\)](#) (Introduced 01/23/2025)

Committees: House - Natural Resources

Latest Action: House - 01/23/2025 Referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources. [\(All Actions\)](#)

Tracker: 1 Introduced Passed House Passed Senate To President Became Law

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Subject — Policy Area:
Public Lands and Natural Resources
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Summary (0) Text (1) **Actions (2)** Titles (2) Amendments (0) Cosponsors (1) Committees (1) Related Bills (0)

All Actions: H.R.642 — 119th Congress (2025-2026)

[All Information](#) (Except Text)

[Bill History — Congressional Record References](#)

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- ☐ All Actions Except Amendments (2)
- ☒ All Actions (2)
- Action By
- ☐ Check all
- ☐ House (2)
- House Committees

Date	All Actions
01/23/2025	Referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources. Action By: House of Representatives
01/23/2025	Introduced in House Action By: House of Representatives

Next steps for supporting efforts to get the bill past the committee and enacted:

1. Continue to provide technical assistance.
2. Provide statements of support from the community:
 - CHNEP - Completed
 - Sarasota BCC - Approved and being drafted
 - Other community partners and private landowners
3. Provide endorsement and support from the MRMCC.

POSSIBLE MOTION

In appreciation of Congressman Steube and his staff's efforts, I move that the council officially endorses H.R.642 - the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025 and authorizes the Chair to assist in actions furthering the designation of the Myakka in Sarasota County as a National Partnership Wild and Scenic River, which would provide prestige and support while avoiding additional regulation.

Further, I move that the Council encourages others to support this important legislation.