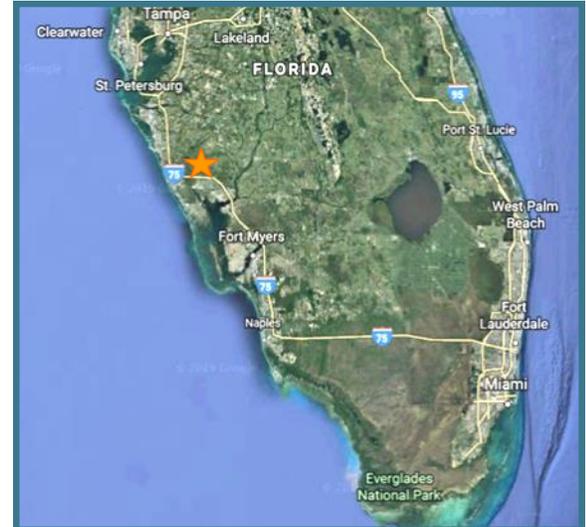


Gateway to Myakka Marsh Restoration

FISH, WILDLIFE, & HABITAT RESTORATION



Summary

The 66-mile Myakka River flows from headwaters in Manatee and Hardee counties, following a narrow floodplain forest corridor, then entering a series of lakes in Myakka River State Park. Deer Prairie Creek and Big Slough feed the river as it widens and enters Charlotte Harbor. A portion of Myakka River in Sarasota County is designated a “Florida Wild and Scenic River.” A wide variety of habitats including wetlands, prairies, hammocks, and pinelands are found along its shores.

Many entities including Myakka River State Park, Conservation Foundation, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) are working to acquire and restore habitats within the Myakka River basin with focus on the marsh areas feeding into Myakka Lake in the State Park. The Conservation Foundation recently acquired one mile of riverfront upstream of Myakka Lake, and is working to restore its shorelines and adjacent properties. The stretch of riverfront at this location is heavily infested with invasive species which can prevent native vegetation from growing in the area.

CHNEP provided funding for the removal of invasive vegetation and planting of over 12,000 native plants in this area.

Location: Sarasota and Manatee Counties, FL

Partners: Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, Beautiful Ponds, Inc., Myakka River State Park, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Disney Conservation Fund, and Selby Foundation

Implemented: 2019

Status: Completed

CHNEP Cost: \$25,764

Funding Source: Environmental Protection Agency

2019 CHNEP Plan Activity: 

Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Protection 2.2: Encourage management of public lands and public conservation easements to protect, restore, and create native plant and animal communities.

Results and Benefits

Enhanced Habitat:

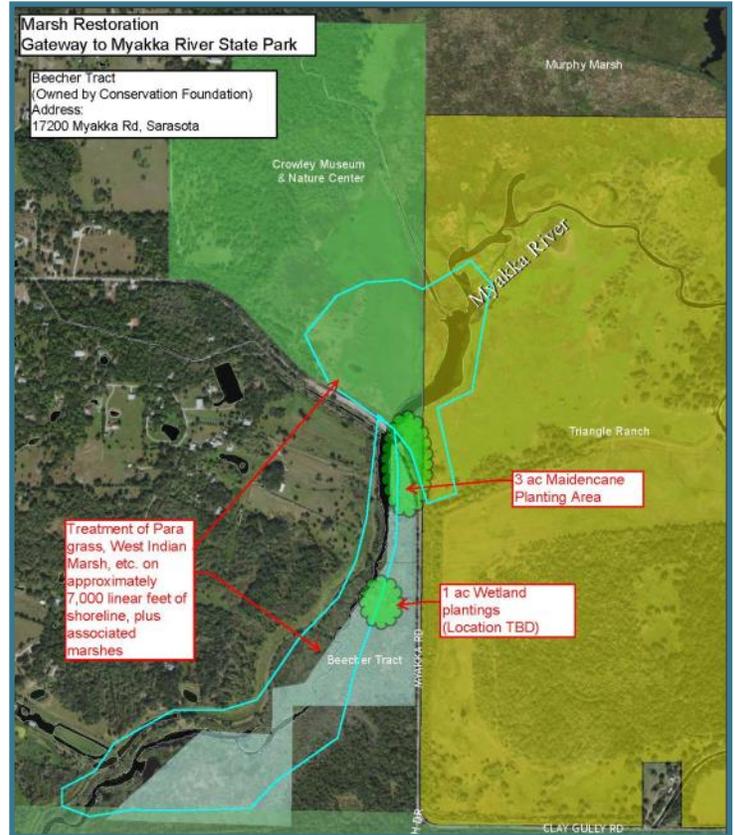
The removal of exotic invasive vegetation and the planting of native vegetation worked to restore the natural balance of this area. The most important part of this restoration was to remove the invasive grasses which physically impeded the growth of native vegetation and physically excluded wildlife. Not only did this improve wildlife habitat within the project area, it also removed a source of exotic plant contamination for Myakka River State Park and created a buffer between the park and private property upstream.

Recreational and Educational Benefits:

Restoration of habitats and water quality upstream benefit recreational opportunities on the entire Myakka River including fishing, boating, and eco-tourism. Myakka River State Park is open to the public and provides a natural environment for educational and recreational activities. This park and its surrounding areas have opportunities for hiking, fishing, camping, boating, horseback riding, bicycling, as well as educational programs for children and adults.

Economic Benefits:

Myakka River State Park plays a vital role in attracting tourists to Manatee and Sarasota counties. The Myakka River is a destination for fishing, boating, and eco-tourism as well as being a desirable place to live!



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water and wildlife