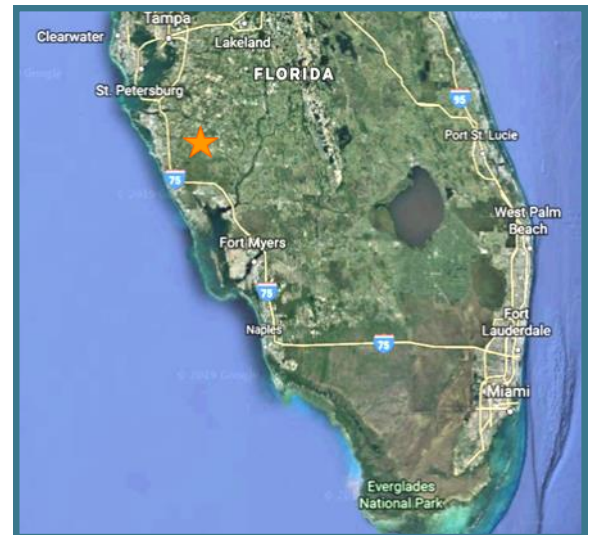


Myakka Headwaters Preserve Enhancement

FISH, WILDLIFE, & HABITAT RESTORATION



Summary

The 66-mile Myakka River flows from headwaters in Manatee and Hardee counties along a narrow floodplain forest corridor, then enters 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 wide variety of habitats including wetlands, prairies, hammocks, and pinelands are found along its shores.

Many entities including Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast (CFGC), 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. CFGC acquired 363 acres within Flatford Swamp, the river's largest forested wetland, located at the headwaters of the Myakka River. The Myakka Headwaters Preserve as it is known, is home to a diverse array of rare species including orchids, air plants, and lowland loosestrife. This area has also been heavily-infested with invasive species that were preventing native species from thriving.

The CHNEP funded a project to restore and monitor 20 acres of floodplain wetlands and buffering uplands on the preserve, by removing exotic invasive vegetation and planting additional native wetland vegetation.


Location: Manatee County, FL

Partners: Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast and the Southwest Florida Water Management District

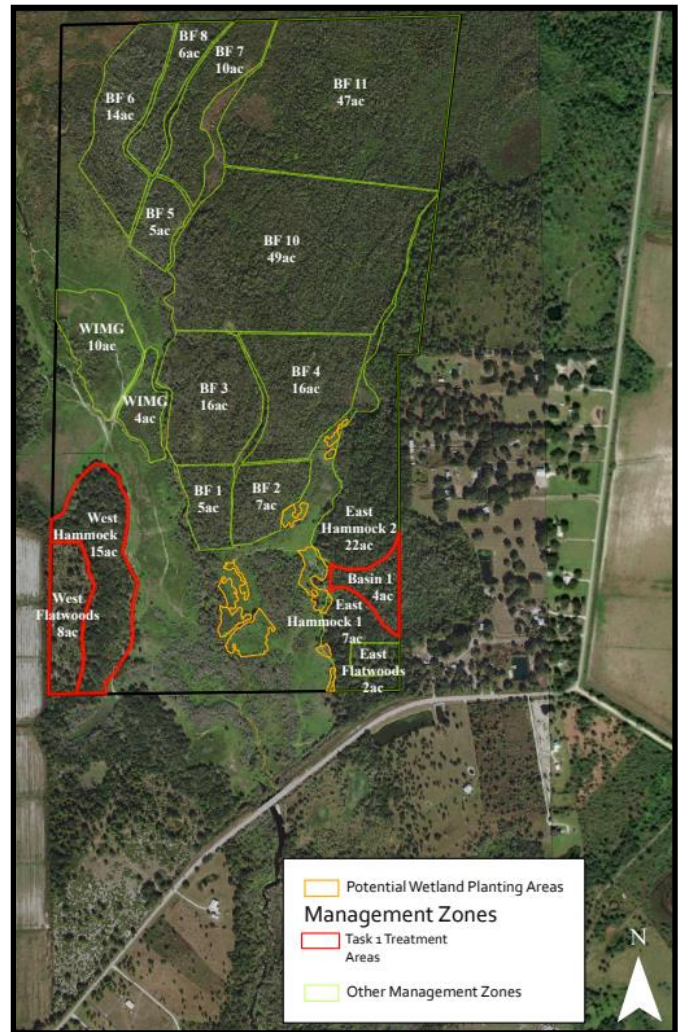
Status: Completed 2024

CHNEP Cost: \$56,000

Funding Source: Southwest Florida Water Management District

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.

COASTAL & HEARTLAND NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Results and Benefits

Enhanced Habitat:

The removal of exotic invasive vegetation and the planting of native wetland vegetation restored and enhanced the native habitats on site. Invasive grasses which physically impede the growth of native vegetation and physically exclude wildlife were removed.—remove a source of exotic plant contamination for the Myakka River.

Protection of Natural Flow Regimes:

Non-native vegetation that was impeding natural flow was removed. This restored more natural water levels to a crucial floodplain forest along the Myakka River. This in turn provides more aquatic habitat, flood protection, and improved water quality in the headwaters of the Myakka River.

Development of New Restoration Techniques:

This project also entailed the use of innovative restoration and management techniques, that were publicly reported as their efficacy to inform land restoration and management on other properties in the area. Overall, this project completed an identified priority regional hydrologic and natural systems restoration project within the Charlotte Harbor Watershed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

1050 Loveland Blvd.
Port Charlotte, FL 33980
(941) 833-6580
CHNEP.org



Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water and wildlife