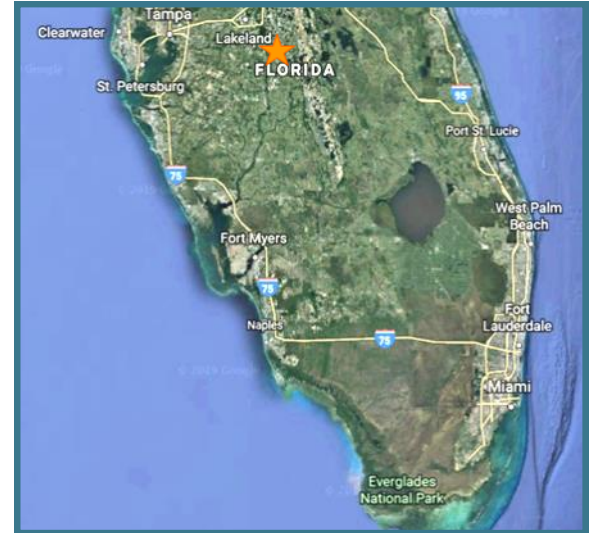


# Lake Hancock Shoreline Restoration

## HYDROLOGICAL RESTORATION



### Summary

Recently, a portion of the Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP) area was damaged in the wake of devastation left by Hurricane Irma. One impacted area was Circle B Bar Reserve in Polk County. Circle B is home to Lake Hancock, which feeds into the Upper Peace River. The western shoreline of this lake, known as the Alligator Alley wildlife viewing trail, was damaged due to increased water levels and winds caused by the storm, especially in areas where vegetation was absent.

Along with being a public walking trail, the Alligator Alley trail serves as a berm, playing an important environmental role by separating the water between Lake Hancock and Banana Creek Marsh. This marsh aids in the natural filtration of water before discharging it into Lake Hancock and the Upper Peace River. The lack of shoreline vegetation in this particular area caused erosion pressures to increase, resulting in a much narrower separation between Lake Hancock and Banana Creek.

CHNEP provided funding for the restoration of sixteen shoreline sites along Alligator Alley. The restoration included repairing trail berms to pre-hurricane width, depositing clean fill to match previous shoreline dimensions, installing erosion control blankets and logs, and planting aquatic and shoreline stabilizing vegetation.

**Location:** Polk County, FL

**Partners:** Polk County and Southwest Florida Water Management District

**Implemented:** 2018

**Status:** Completed

**CHNEP Cost:** \$88,490

**Funding Source:** Southwest Florida Water Management District and Mosaic funds managed by CHNEP

**2019 CHNEP Plan Activity:** 

Hydrological Restoration 3.2: Support implementation of projects to reestablish and protect wetlands and hydrologic watersheds, to build or remediate flowways, barriers, and water storage that mimic and restore natural flow conditions necessary to support healthy ecosystems and account for climate change stressors.





*New Shoreline Plantings*

## Anticipated Results and Benefits

### Improved Water Quality:

The berm between Lake Hancock and Banana Creek Marsh acts as a hydrological separator, allowing more time for the natural filtration of water to continue in the marsh before entering the lake. The addition of shoreline vegetation stabilizes this berm and prevents chemicals, pesticides, and fertilizers from entering directly into waterways. Planting more vegetation also prevents erosion, meaning less sediment entering the water and traveling downstream. This improves water quality in both the lake and downstream Peace River.

### Maintained Aquatic Habitat:

Adding a vegetative element along the Alligator Alley trail is beneficial to the surrounding aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Many animals depend on native vegetation for food, foraging, mating, nesting, and shelter from predators. This makes for great wildlife viewing on a popular recreational trail!



*Lake Hancock*



*Damage from Hurricane Irma*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water and wildlife*