



CONSERVANCY
of Southwest Florida
OUR WATER, LAND, WILDLIFE, FUTURE.

**Protecting Southwest Florida's unique natural environment
and quality of life ... now and forever.**

www.conservancy.org

The Significance of the Estero River for the Village of Estero

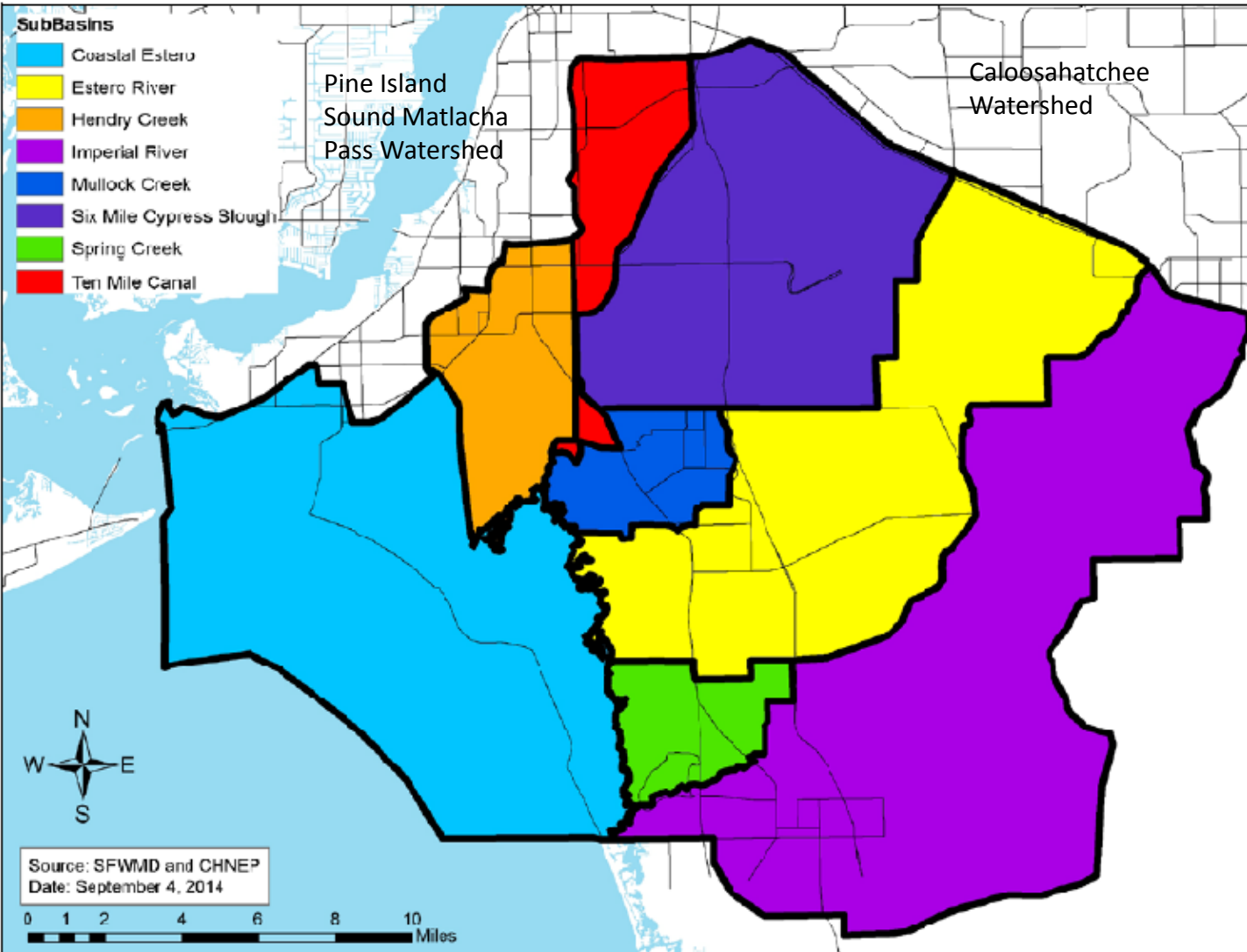


Photo: Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Estuary = “*Estero*”



Estero Bay Watershed



Estero Bay Watershed:
360 square miles

Estero River Basin: 66 square miles (45,000 acres)

Estero River:
Approximately 8 miles long

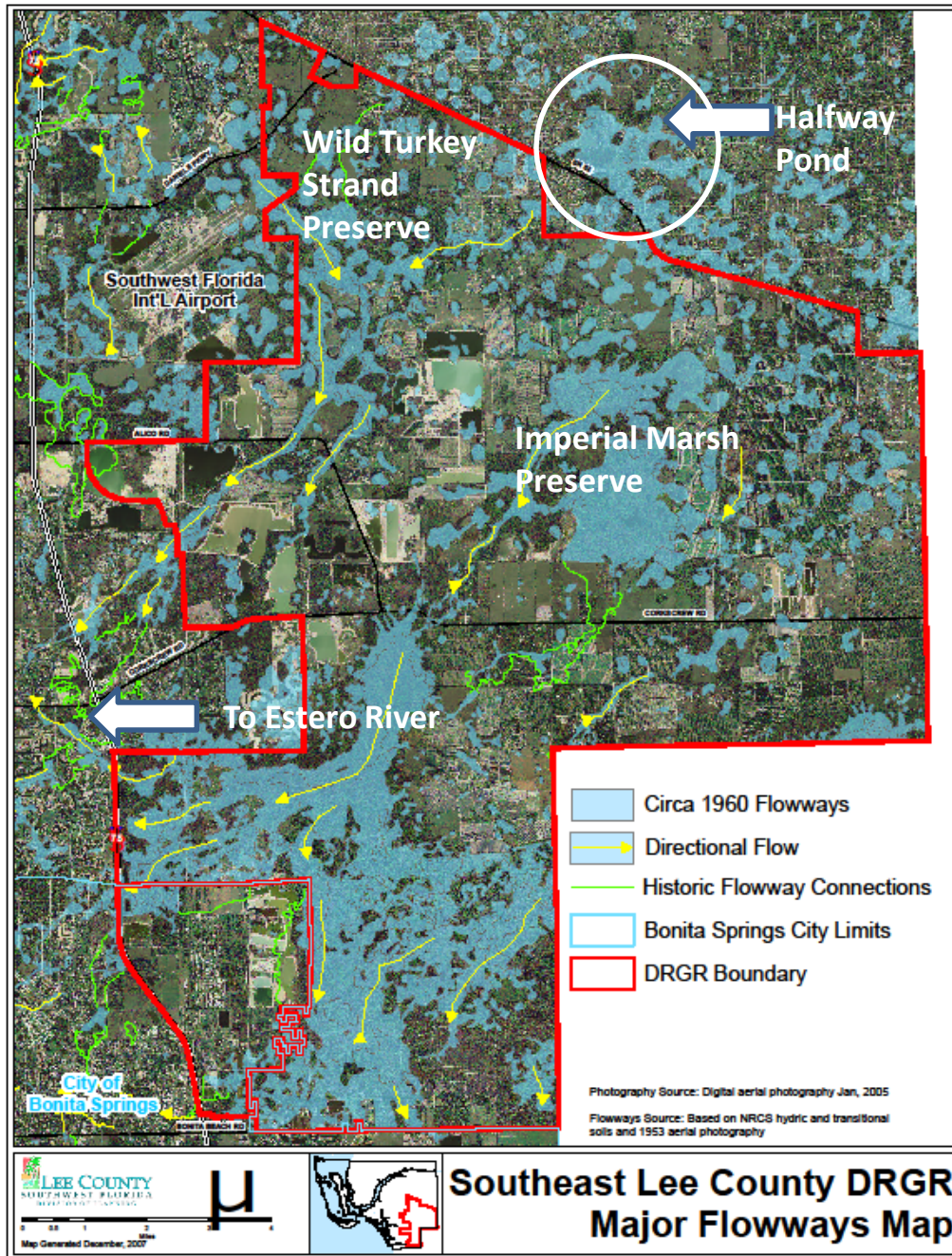
Mean depth of 3.99 feet and a max depth of 12.06 feet (USF, 2013)

Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve:
18,829 acres

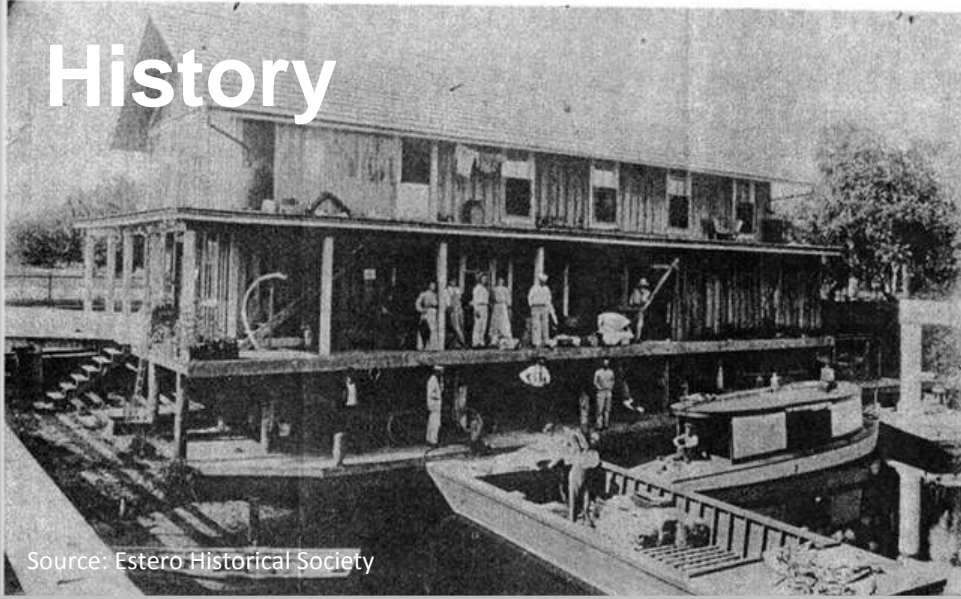
Source: Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management, State of the Bay Update 2014



Headwaters



History



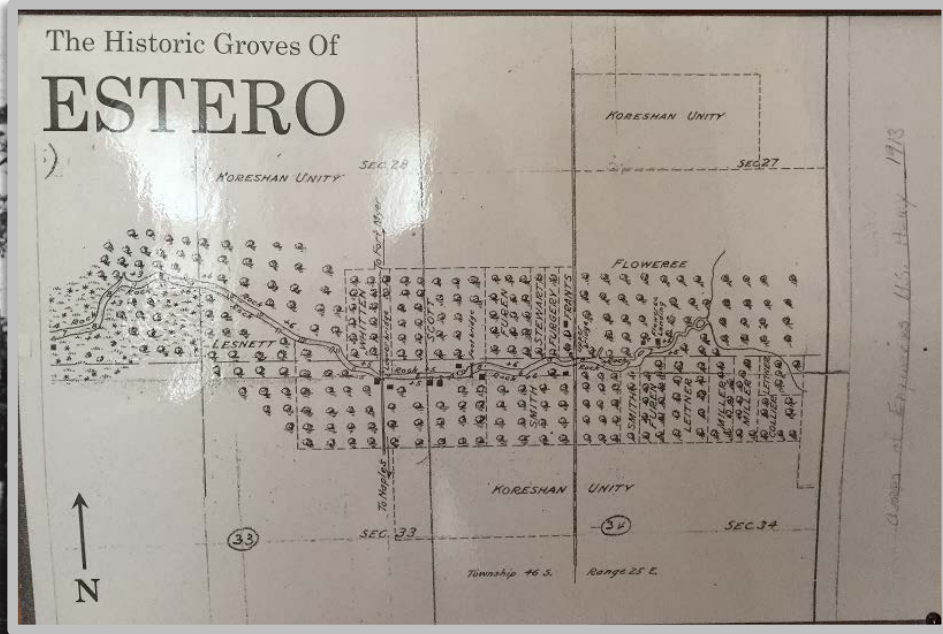
Source: Estero Historical Society



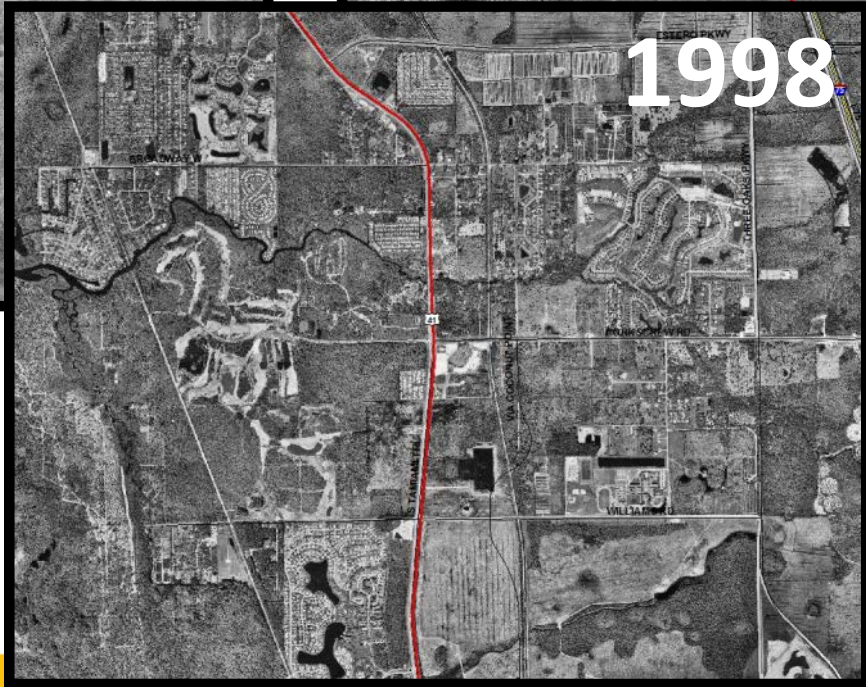
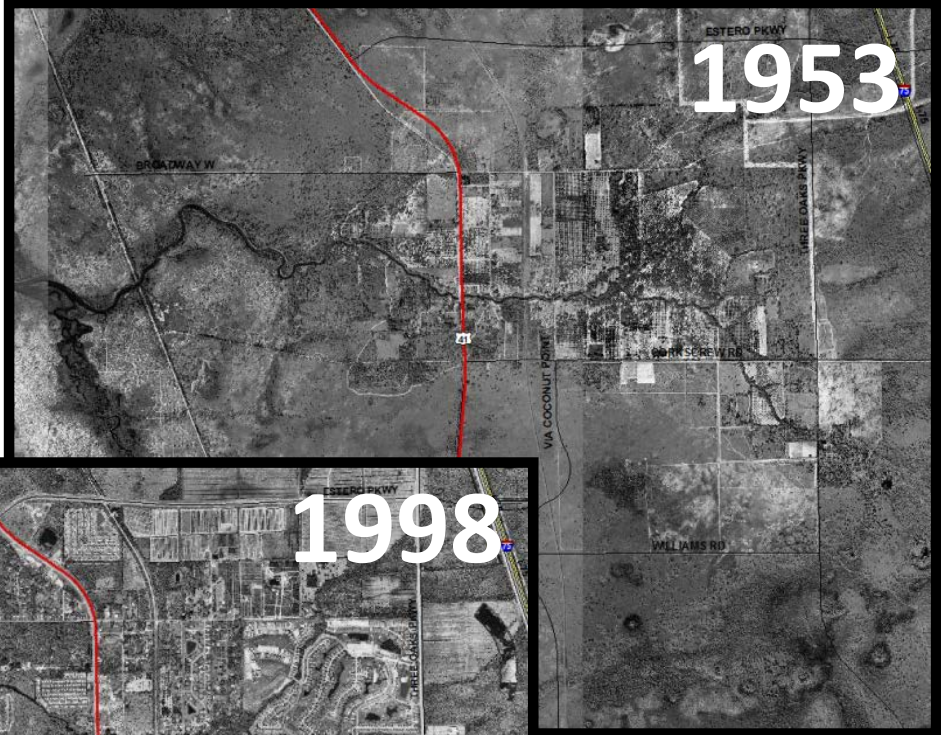
Estero River 1957, State Archives of Florida



Estero River, Circa 1900
"A Historical Geography of Southwest Florida Waterways , Vol. II



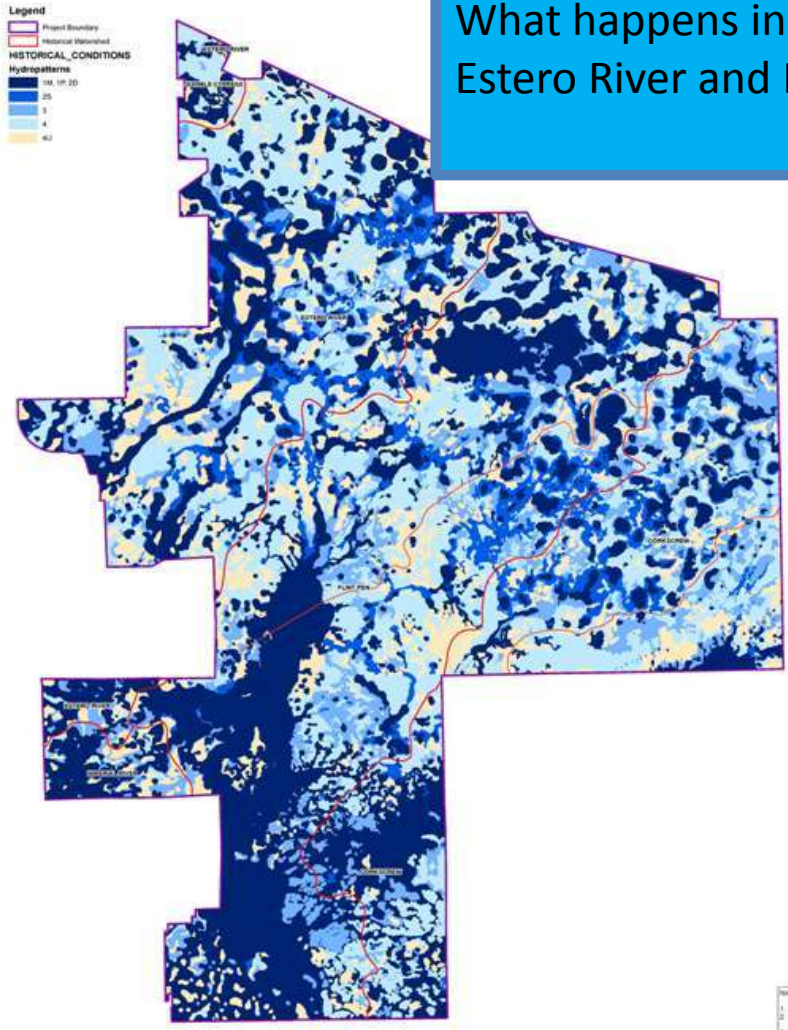
Pre-Development Conditions



Courtesy: Lee County Natural Resources



What happens in the DRGR affects Estero River and Estero Bay



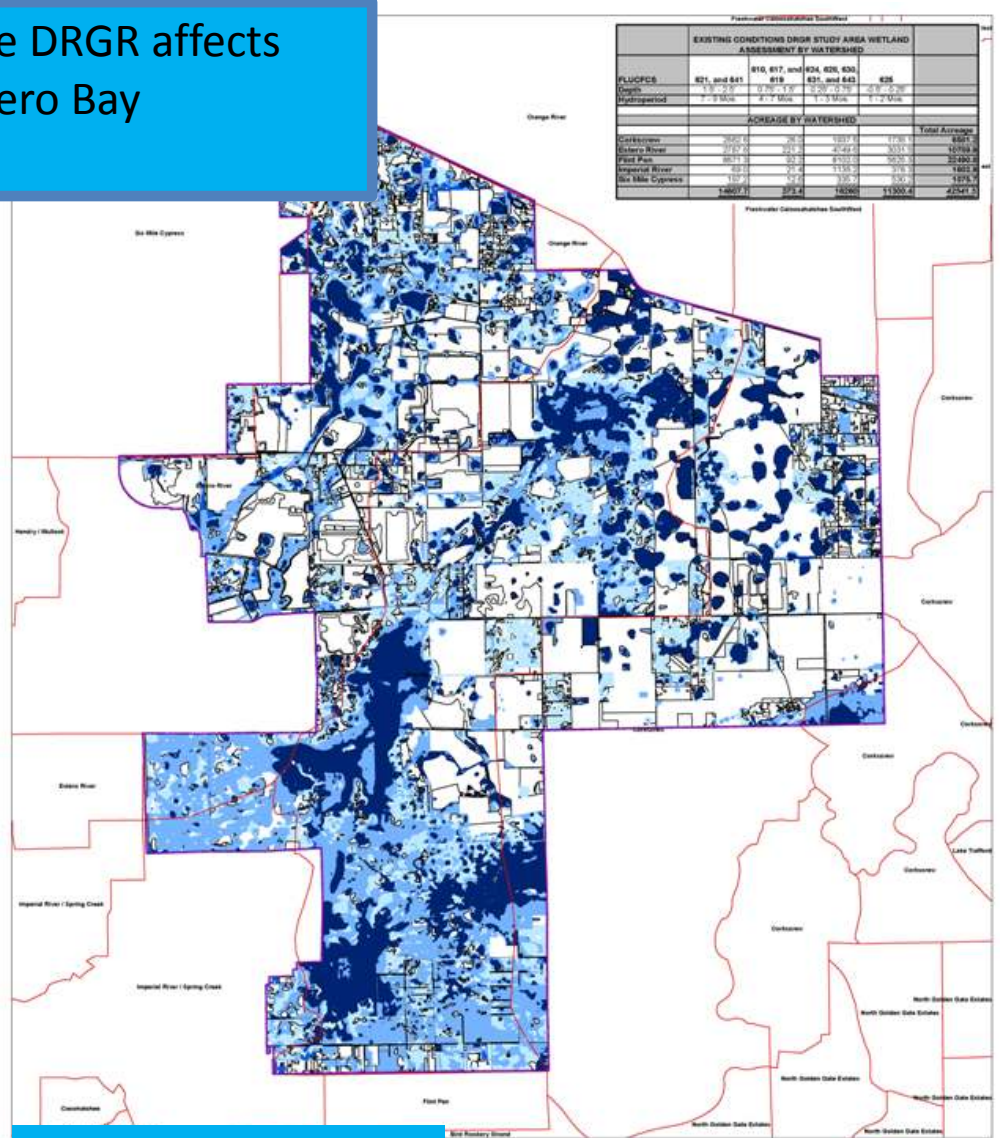
1953 Hydropatterns



0 2,600 Feet

2017 Bayport Parkway, Ft. Myers, FL

Date:	7/2/18	Drawn:	Historical Hydropatterns
Author:		Checked:	
Comments:			



2007 Hydropatterns



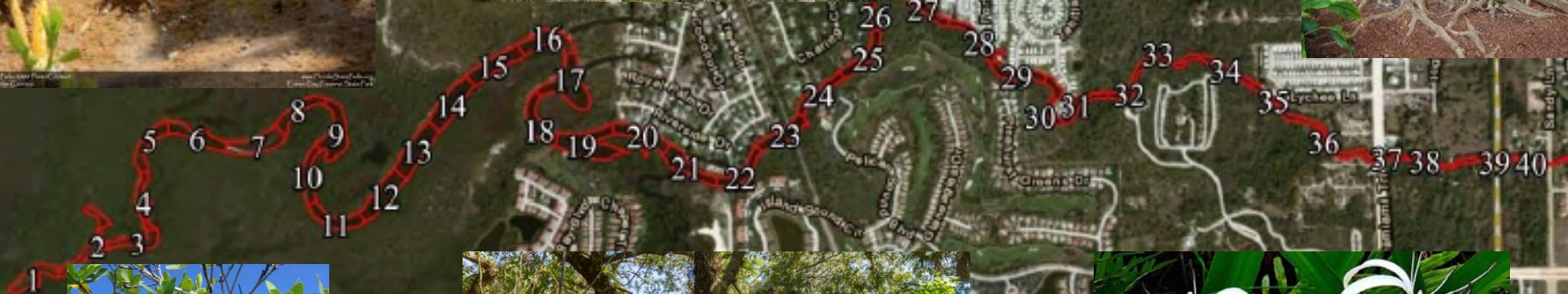
0 2,600 Feet

2017 Bayport Parkway, Ft. Myers, FL

Date:	7/2/18	Drawn:	Historical Hydropatterns
Author:		Checked:	
Comments:			

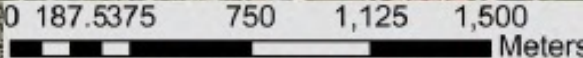


Vegetation



Legend

Vegetation Assessment Regions



(Source: USF, West-Central Florida Tidal Stream Assessment Study, p. 123)



Wildlife

Listed Animal Species

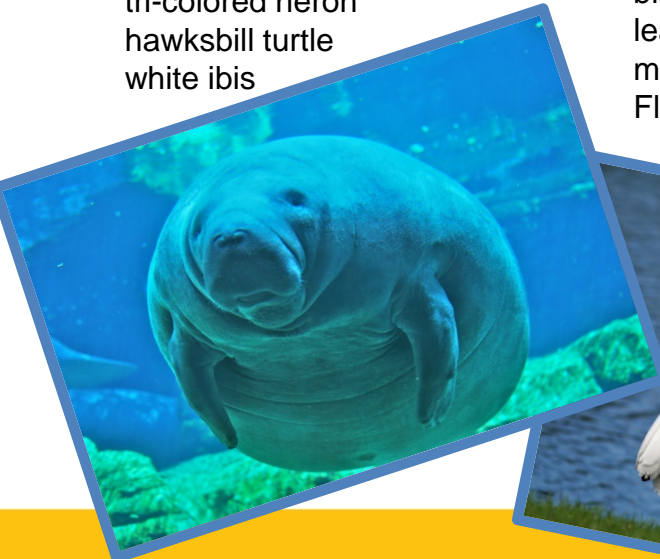
Gulf sturgeon
roseate spoonbill
American alligator
loggerhead turtle
common snook
Atlantic green turtle
leatherback
eastern indigo snake
little blue heron
reddish egret
snowy egret
tri-colored heron
hawksbill turtle
white ibis

peregrine falcon
southeastern American kestrel
gopher tortoise
American oystercatcher
bald eagle
Kemp's Ridley turtle
wood stork
brown pelican
snail kite
black skimmer
least tern
manatee
Florida black bear

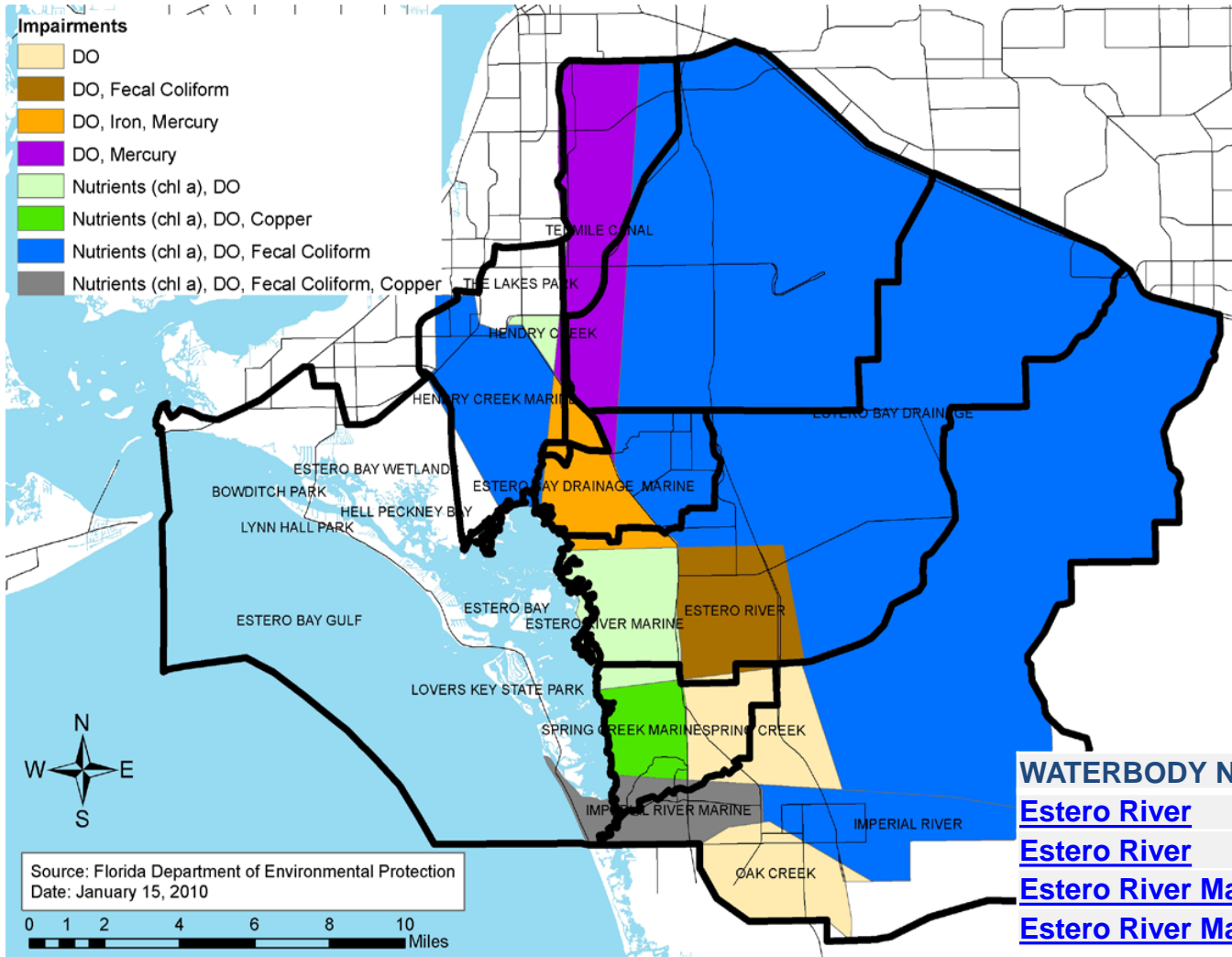


Number of Known Native Species

Mammals:	37
Birds:	135
Amphibians:	21
Reptiles:	56
Fish:	137



Water Quality



WATERBODY NAME:	IMPAIRMENT:
Estero River	Dissolved Oxygen
Estero River	Fecal Coliform
Estero River Marine	Dissolved Oxygen
Estero River Marine	Mercury in Fish Tissue

Source: Lee County Division of Natural Resources

Source: Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management, State of the Bay Update 2014



Watershed Problems



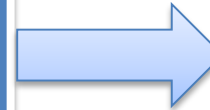
Conversion of natural habitats



Filling, dredging and draining of wetlands



Construction of roads, ditches, berms, canals, & coastal hardening



1. Altered flows
2. Increased nutrient and total suspended solids loading
3. Lowered water tables
4. Altered hydroperiods
5. Loss of wetland, upland, and aquatic habitats
6. Downstream Flooding

(Sources: SFWMD, 1999 and Lee County Natural Resources)



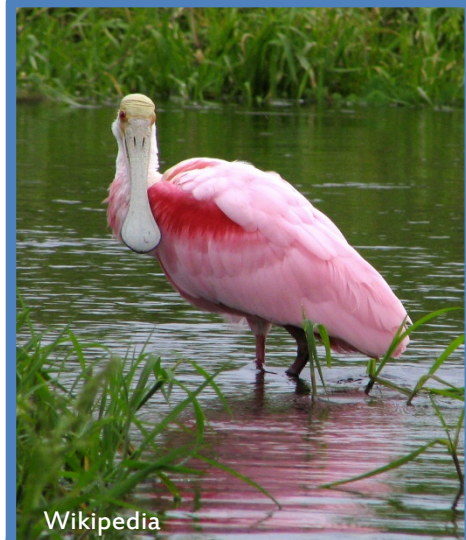
Economic Significance

TOURISM:

- ❖ 5 million tourists to Lee County (2014);
-contributed \$2.87 billion
- ❖ Top reasons why tourists travel to Lee County:
 - *Warm weather (87%)*
 - *Peaceful/relaxing (83%)*
 - *White sandy beaches (78%)*
 - *A safe destination (72%)*
 - *Clean, unspoiled environment (69%)*
- ❖ Wildlife viewing – 2nd most popular outdoor activity in Florida.
- ❖ Tourism in the Estero Bay Watershed generates 18,974 jobs.

REAL ESTATE VALUES:

- ❖ Consistent poor water quality in Lee County has suppressed property values by \$541 million.

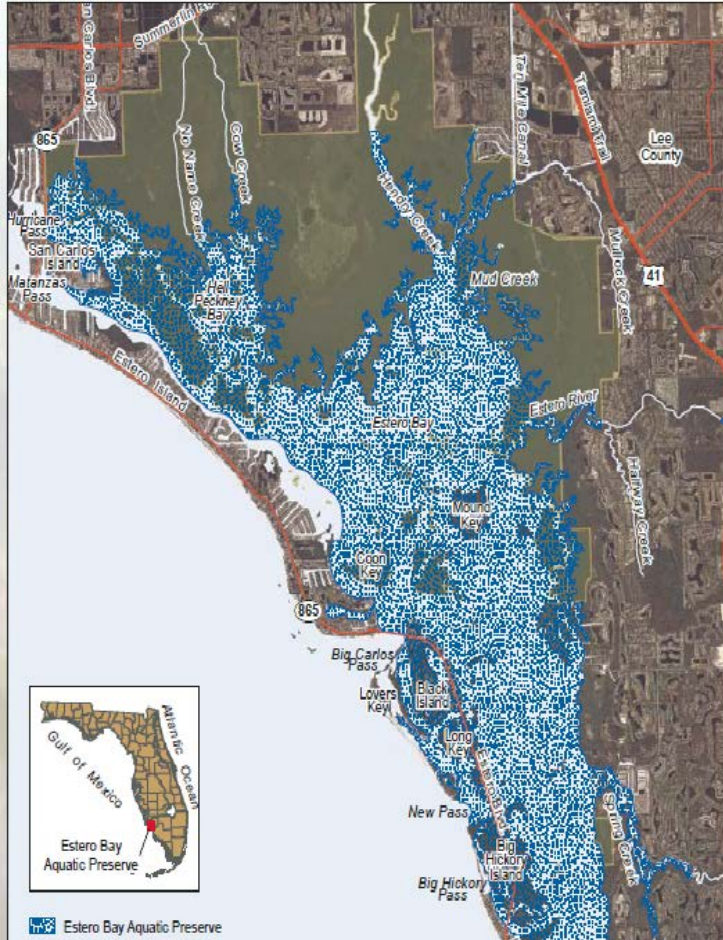


(References: 2014 Annual Visitor Profile and Occupancy Analysis; FWC Economic Benefits of Wildlife viewing in Florida, 2011; National Park Service, Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors, 1999; Florida Realtors (2015) The Impact on Water Quality on Florida's Home Values; Weisskoff; (2011) An Economic Look at Lee County and Estero Bay Basin Conservation Lands: Acreage, Jobs, Value.)



Trails and Parks

Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve



Estero Bay Preserve State Park

(Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection)



A scenic sunset over a body of water with a silhouette of a bird in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and water. The water reflects the sun, creating a shimmering path. In the foreground, a silhouette of a bird, possibly a heron or egret, stands on the left side, facing right. The background shows a dark line of trees on the horizon.

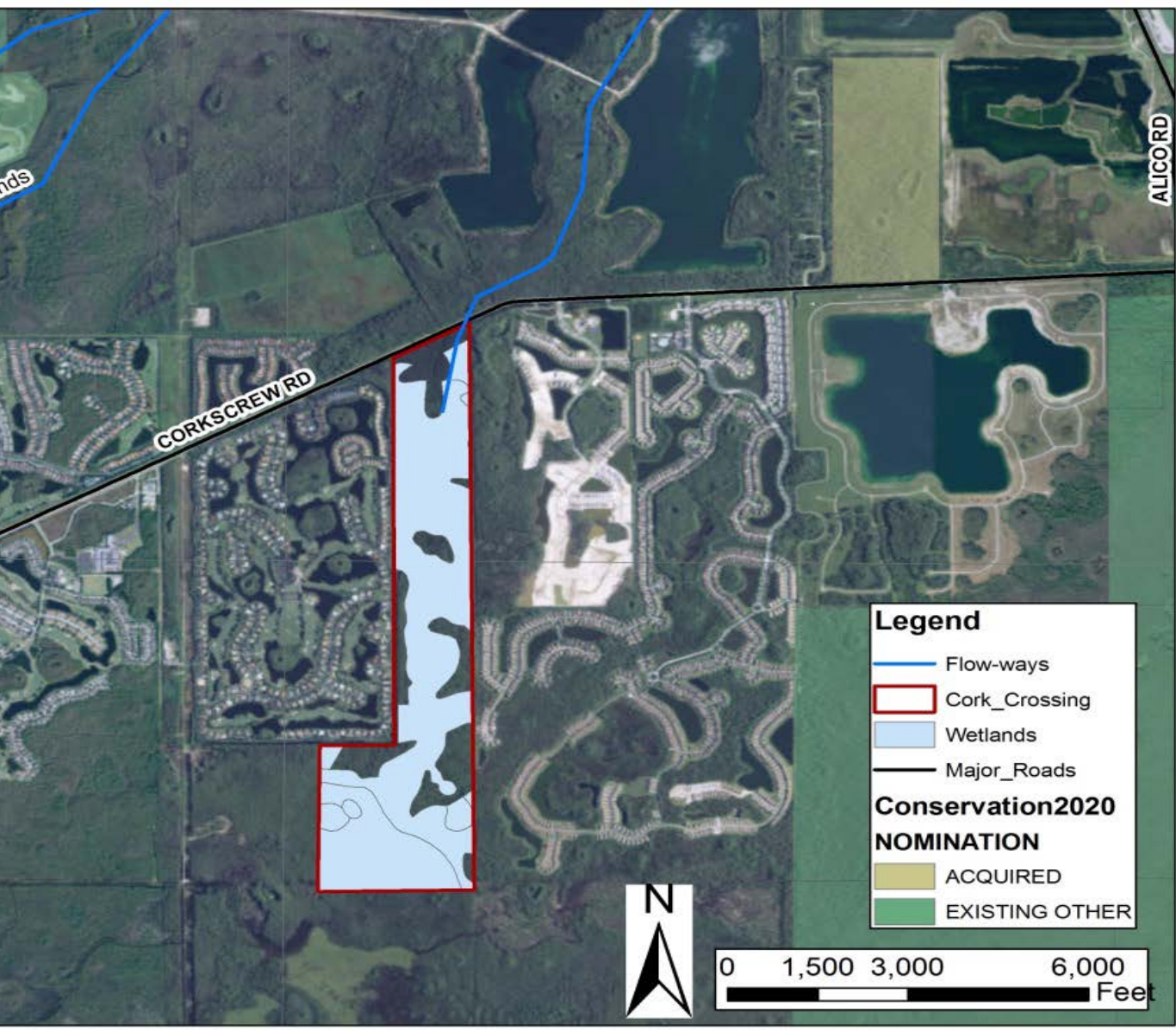
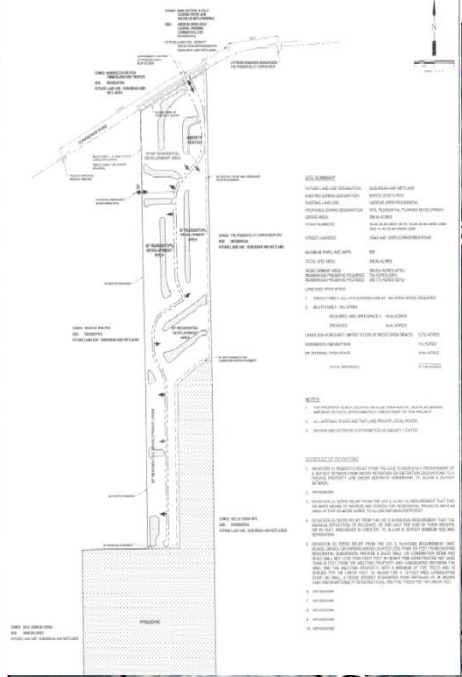
The Village of **ESTERO**

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE. WITH THE WEAKENING OF STATE LAND PLANNING LAWS, MORE AUTHORITY, AND MORE RESPONSIBILITY, IS PLACED ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE THEIR REGULATIONS AND DECISIONS PROTECT THEIR RESIDENTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

Recommendations

1. **Advocate** for restoration & protection of lands in the DRGR.
2. **Adopt** Ordinances and Land Development Codes that protect the Estero River and the Estero River Watershed.
<http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/>
3. **Assemble** Estero River task force
4. **Consider** land acquisition and conservation easements.
5. **Coordination:** Interagency, Intergovernmental, & NGOs





Proposed Corkscrew Crossing development could affect flows to Estero River



Tourism / Economy



Environment



Culture /History



Thank you!!



Quality of Life



References

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