



Florida Department of Environmental Protection South Florida Habitat Assessment Benchmark Sites

**Aquatic Ecology and Quality Assurance
February 2024**



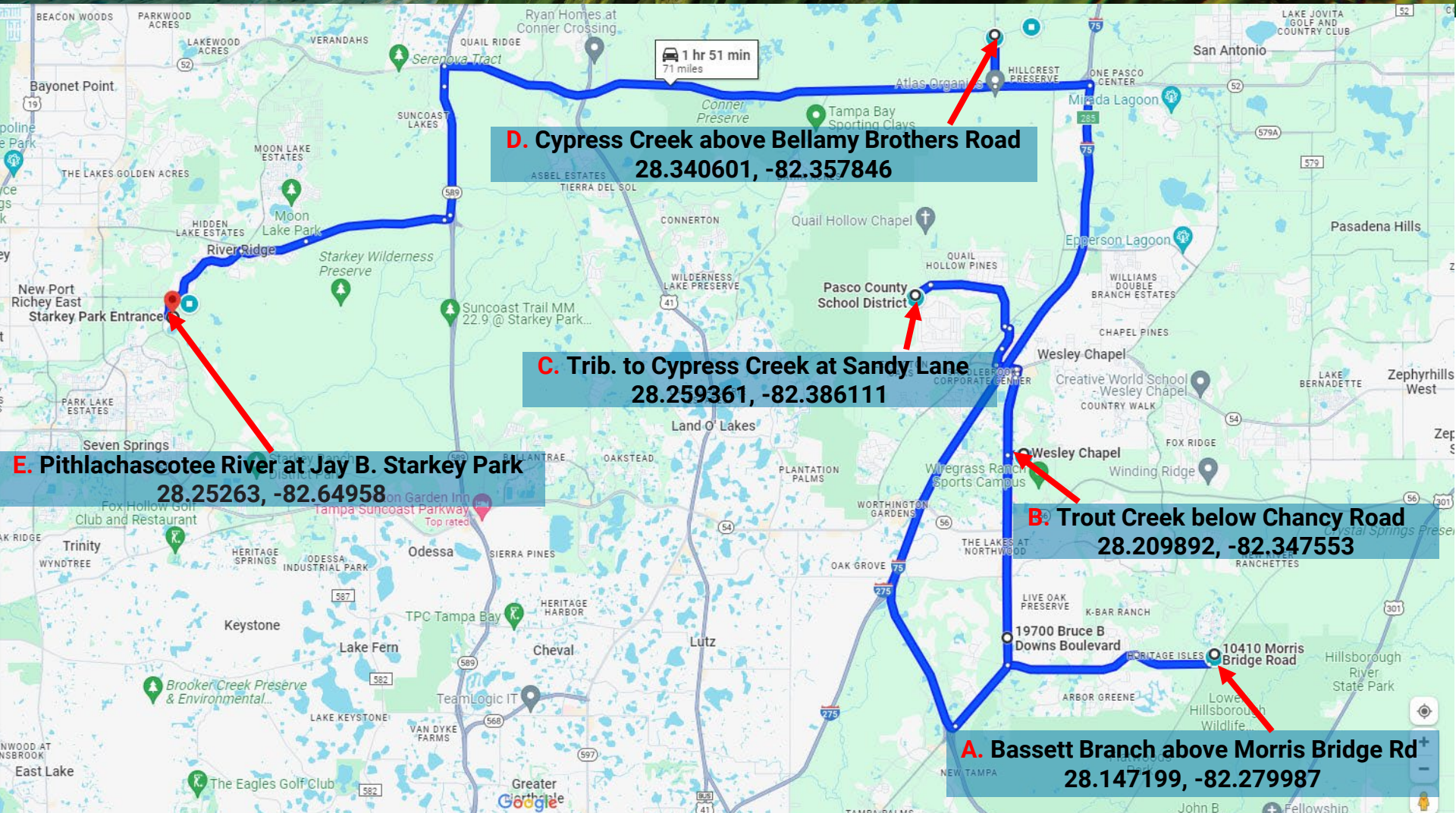
Procedure

- Evaluate each site per SOP FT3100, "Stream and River Habitat Assessment," using forms FD 9000-3, FD 9000-4, and FD 9000-5. It is recommended that you use the most current editions of the forms and the SOP, found here: <https://floridadep.gov/dear/quality-assurance/content/sop-forms>
- **Work independently.**
- Analysts are strongly encouraged to conduct assessments within 6 months of the testing event announcement and at flow conditions akin to those when DEP established the benchmark sites.
- Submit all completed forms to the DEP Aquatic Ecology and Quality Assurance section (AEQAs) in Tallahassee.
- The range for a passing score is +/- 10 points from the predetermined consensus score. However, consideration will be given to scores outside this range if they were caused by different conditions at the time of sampling compared to conditions when the consensus score was decided (*i.e.*, higher/lower water level, velocity, etc.) and sufficiently documented.
- Analysts must pass 3 Habitat Assessments but must test at all 5 sites.
- Once scores have been reviewed, analysts will receive notice of passing or failing from AEQAs.
- Analysts should take photos to document stream conditions at the time of assessment. Photos may be submitted to AEQAs after initial determination of passing/failing if an analyst believes their score for a given site is out of the +/- 10-point range due to justifiable reasons.



Overview Map of the South Habitat Testing Sites

Order shown is from the east and south and work north and west, but sites can be completed in any order.

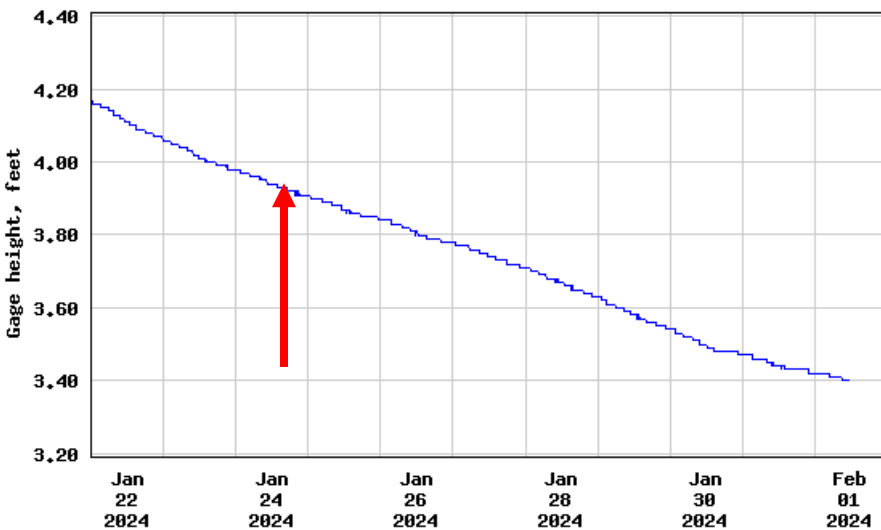




Area Hydrographs

USGS

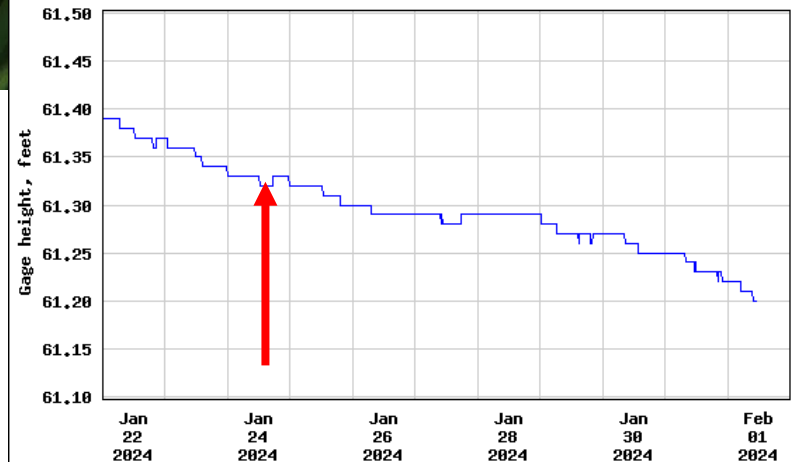
USGS 02303420 CYPRESS CREEK AT SR 54 AT WORTHINGTON GARDENS, FL



----- Provisional Data Subject to Revision -----

USGS

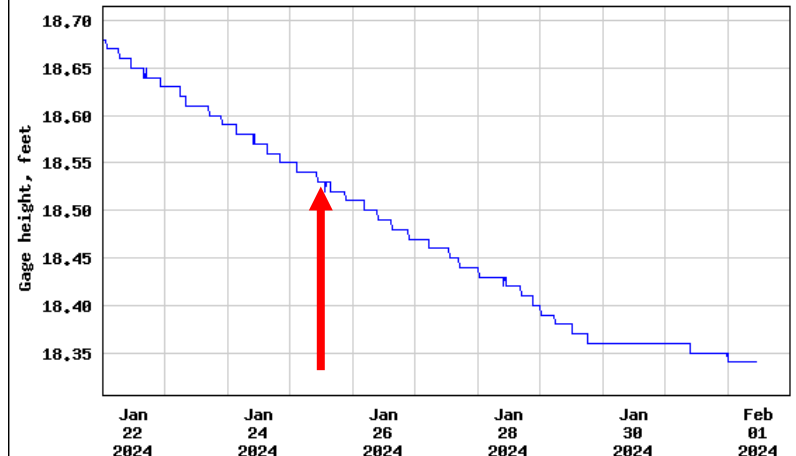
USGS 02303346 TROUT CREEK AT CHANCEY RD AT WESLEY CHAPEL FL



----- Provisional Data Subject to Revision -----

USGS

USGS 02310300 PITHLACHASCOTEE RIVER NEAR NEW PORT RICHEY FL



----- Provisional Data Subject to Revision -----

The consensus scores for these sites were established on January 24 and 25, 2024. Graphs show the gage height data for streams in the area during that time. If you conduct habitat assessment at these sites at different water levels, be sure to document the conditions.



Bassett Branch at Morris Bridge Rd

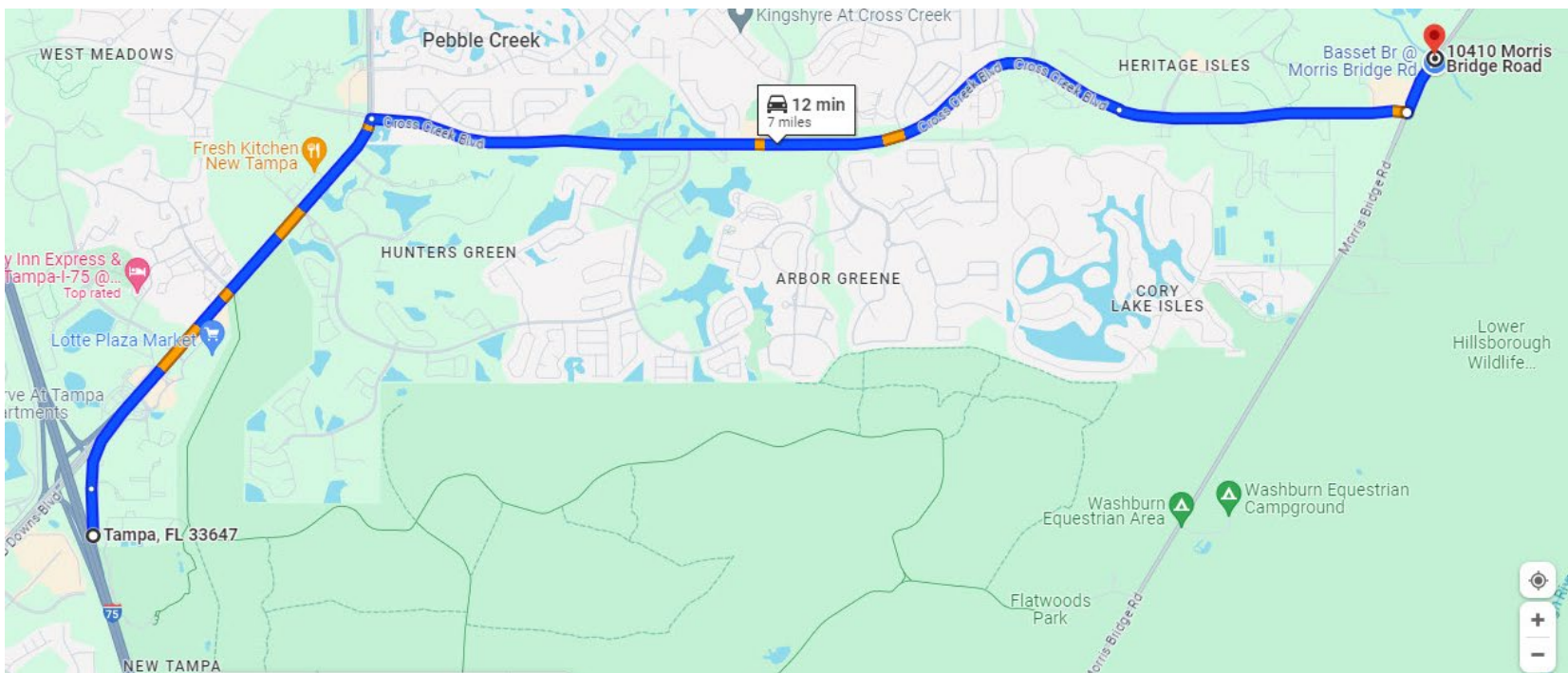
Coordinates: 27.147199, -82.279987

Region: South

County: Pasco

Date Analyzed: 1/24/2024

Directions: From I-75, exit east onto Bruce B Downs Blvd, go 2.0 miles, turn R onto Cross Creek Blvd, go 4.5 miles, turn L onto Morris Bridge Rd, go 0.3 miles, park along the left side of the road.





Bassett Branch at Morris Bridge Rd

Directions: Park on the left (west) side of the road (in front of the Islamic Society of New Tampa). Walk along the road (inside the guard rail) to the creek, this will bring you to about 10m below the 0m flag. Go upstream, look for two blue and white striped flags at the 0m on the right bank.



Park along the north and west side of the road.



Walk along road (inside the guard rail) until you come to the creek, go to your right (head upstream) about 10m to reach the 0m flags.⁶



Trout Creek at Chancy Road

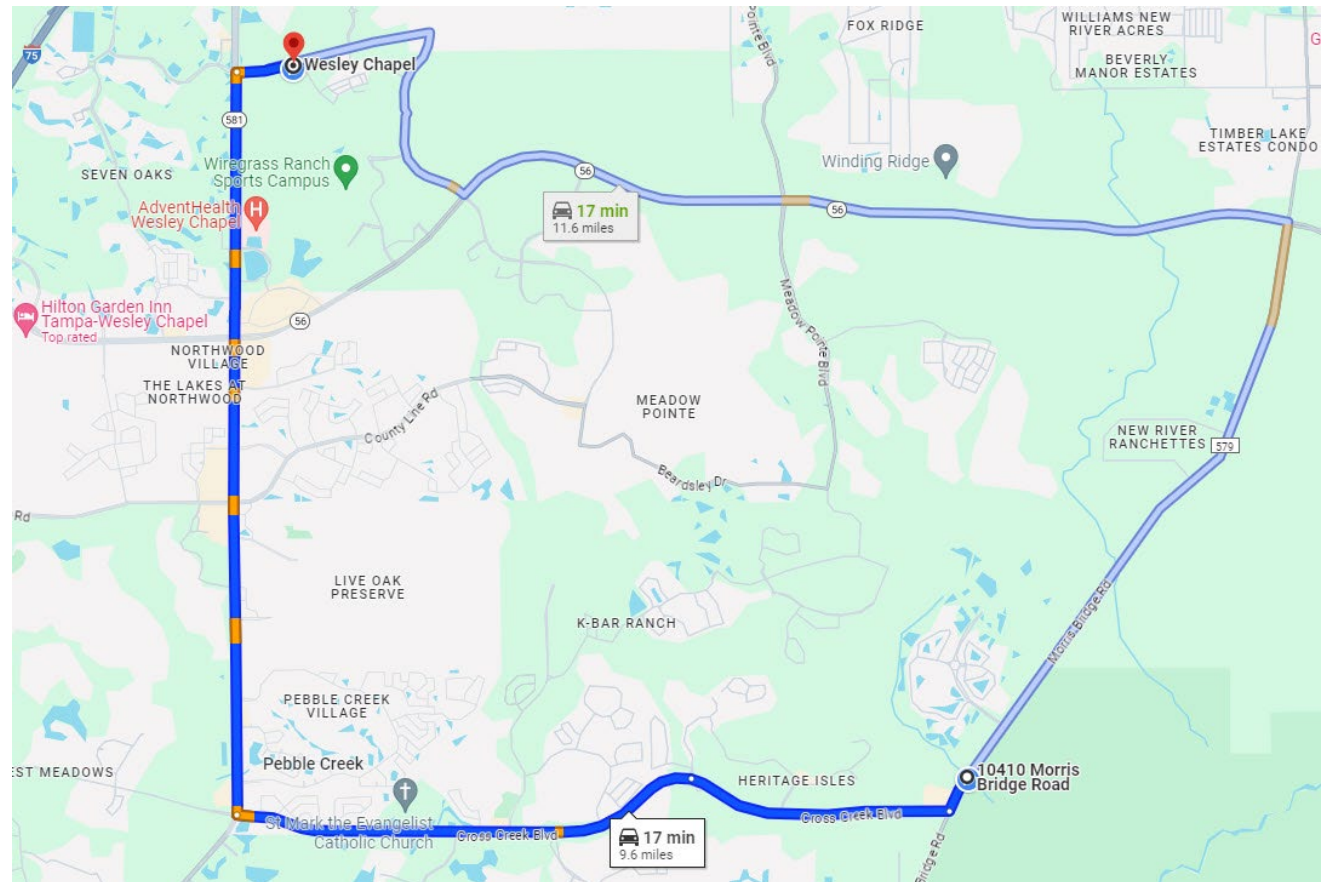
Coordinates: 28.209892,
-82.347553

Region: South

County: Pasco

Date Analyzed:
1/24/2024

Directions: From Bassett Branch, go 0.2 miles, turn R onto Cross Creek Blvd, go 4.5 miles, turn R onto Bruce B Downs Blvd, go 4.5 miles, turn R onto Chancey/Chancy Rd, go 0.4 miles, park along left side of road. See next page for parking details.





Trout Creek at Chancy/Chancey Road

- **Directions:** There are two options for parking at this site. If you're in a high clearance vehicle and it's safe to do so, carefully cross over the sidewalk and park adjacent to the stormwater retention pond. Otherwise, park in the spur across from San Vito Drive and walk along the sidewalk 0.1 mi to the creek.
- See next slide for details about where to access 100m stretch.



Drive across curb/sidewalk and park alongside stormwater retention pond. Enter woods, about 20m below the bridge. This is 100m flag.



Park at spur across from San Vito Drive and walk 0.1 mi along sidewalk to creek.



Trout Creek at Chancy/Chancey Road



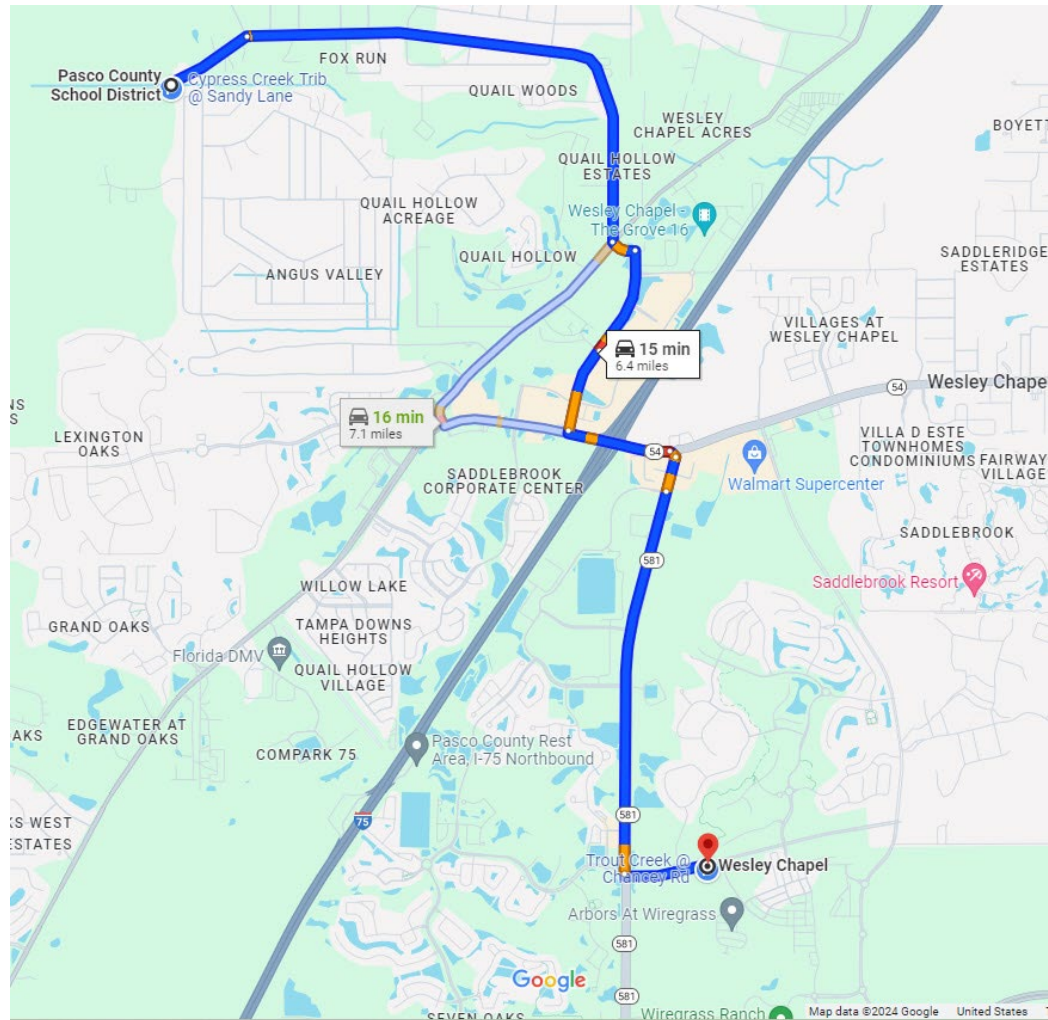
Enter system about 20m downstream of bridge. This will bring you to about the 90m flag. Walk downstream to the 0m flags.



0m flags



Directions: Do a U-turn and take Chancy Rd to Bruce B Downs Blvd (581), turn R, go 2.4 mi, turn left onto Wesley Chapel Blvd, go 0.5 miles, turn R onto Quail Hollow Blvd, go about 3.7 miles. Sandy Lane is a spur off to the left. Park along the left side of the road in front of the green dumpster. If you get to the bridge, you've gone too far.





Tributary to Cypress Creek at Sandy Lane



Park along the left side of the road in front of the green dumpster.



Enter system at the USGS gage. This is the 0m.



Cypress Creek at Bellamy Brothers Road

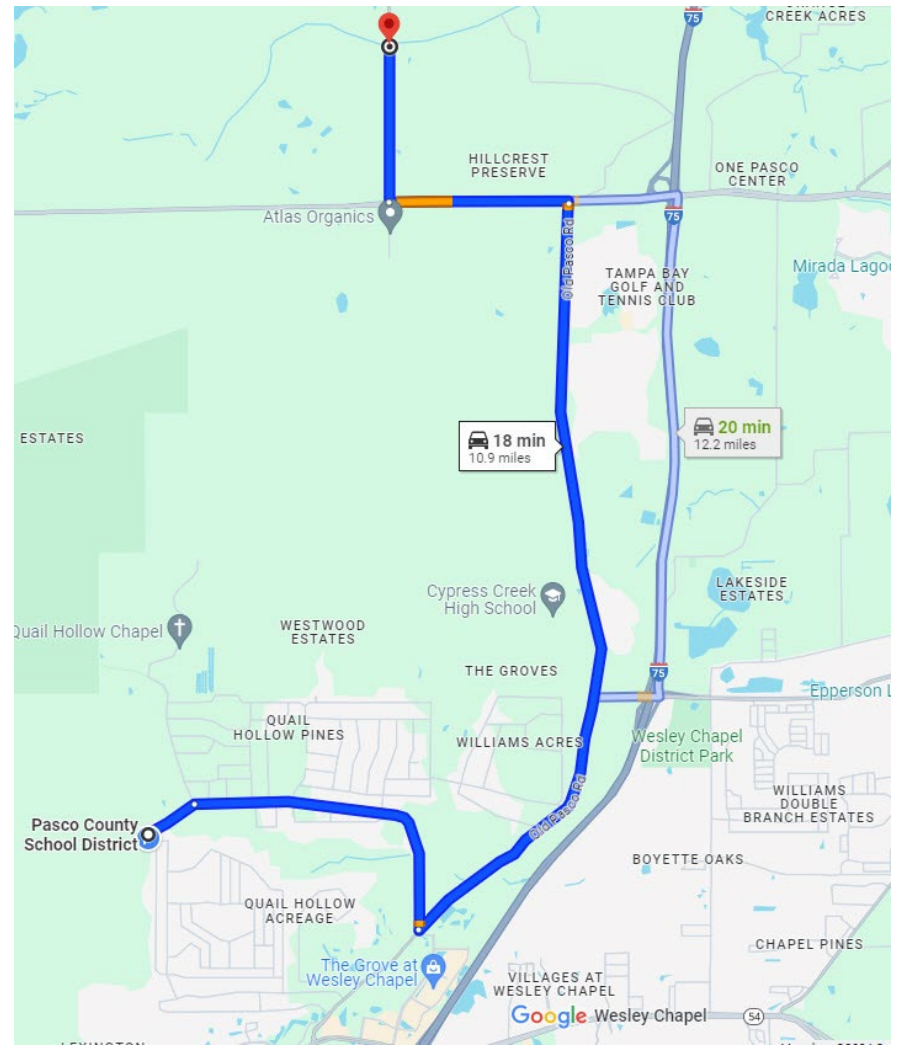
Coordinates: 27.766675, -82.141194

Region: South

County: Pasco

Date Analyzed: 1/25/2024

Directions: Take Sandy Lane back to Quail Hollow Blvd, go 2.3 mi and take a sharp L onto Old Pasco Rd, go 5.8 miles, turn L onto SR 52 W, go 1.3 mi, then R onto Bellamy Brothers Rd, go 1.1 miles, park on the left side of the road before reaching the bridge.





Cypress Creek at Bellamy Brothers Road

Directions: Park along left side of road. Enter to the right, 0m flags are +/- 20 m from bridge.



Park along the west side of road and access is to the right.

Note: Use caution along the road as it can be busy.



Flags are along right bank. System is dark and mucky. You may have to make observations from the bank.

Note: Two 4' alligators were on the left bank during event.

**0 m
flags**



Pithlachascotee River at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park

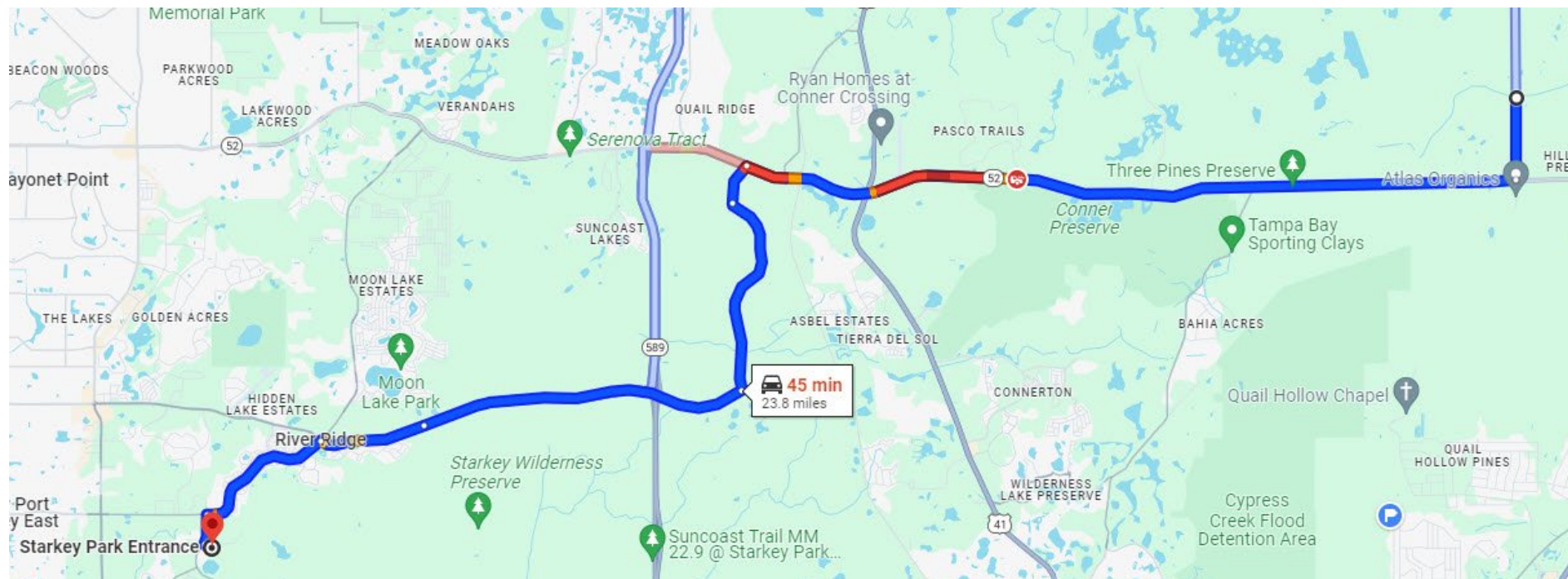
Coordinates: 28.256972, -82.642983

Region: South

County: Pasco

Date Analyzed: 1/25/2024

Directions: From Cypress Creek, go back to SR 52 W. Turn R, go 11.8 mi. Turn L onto N Sunlake Blvd, go 9.4 mi to Decubellis Rd. Continue on Decubellis Rd to Wilderness Park Blvd. Turn L and follow into the park, turn left just beyond the education center. Park on the side of the education center.





Pithlachascotee River at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park

Directions: Park along the side of the education center. Do not block gate. Enter site through gate along dirt road on foot.



Education Center

parking

Do not park in front of gate. Enter gate on foot and close it behind you to prevent visitors from driving on the road.

parking



Pithlachascotee River at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park



Enter on foot. Close gate behind you to prevent visitors from driving on the road. Walk a few hundred meters to bridge.



Replace chain on nail to keep gate closed while at the site and after leaving for the day.



Pithlachascotee River at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park



Walk along dirt road and enter woods just before the bridge.



Om flags are about 30m below bridge along right bank (facing away from bridge/upstream).