



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

South Florida Habitat Assessment Benchmark Sites

Aquatic Ecology and Quality Assurance

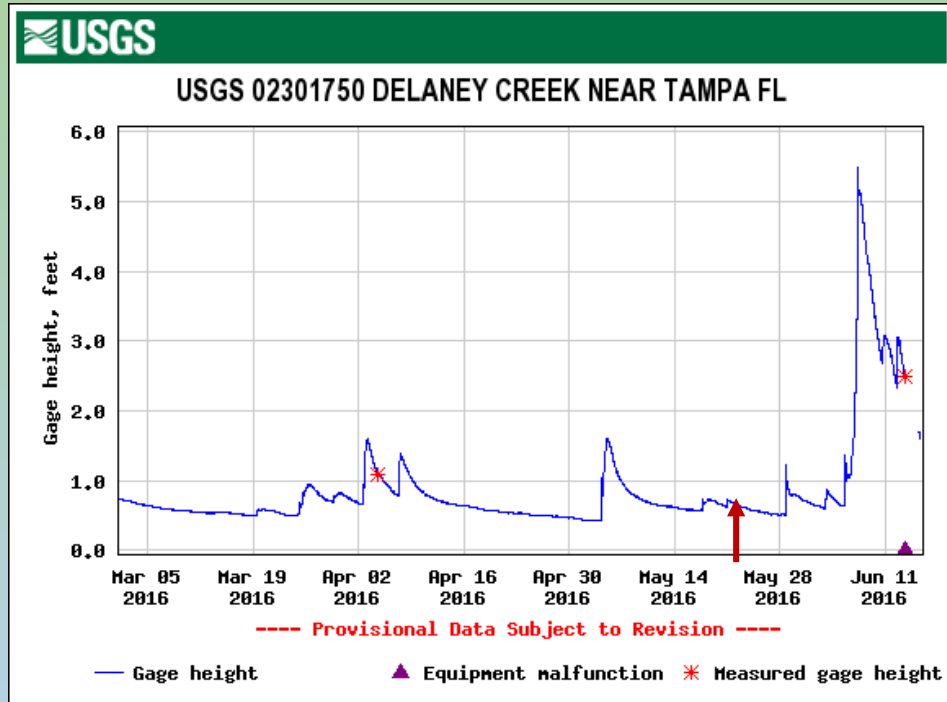
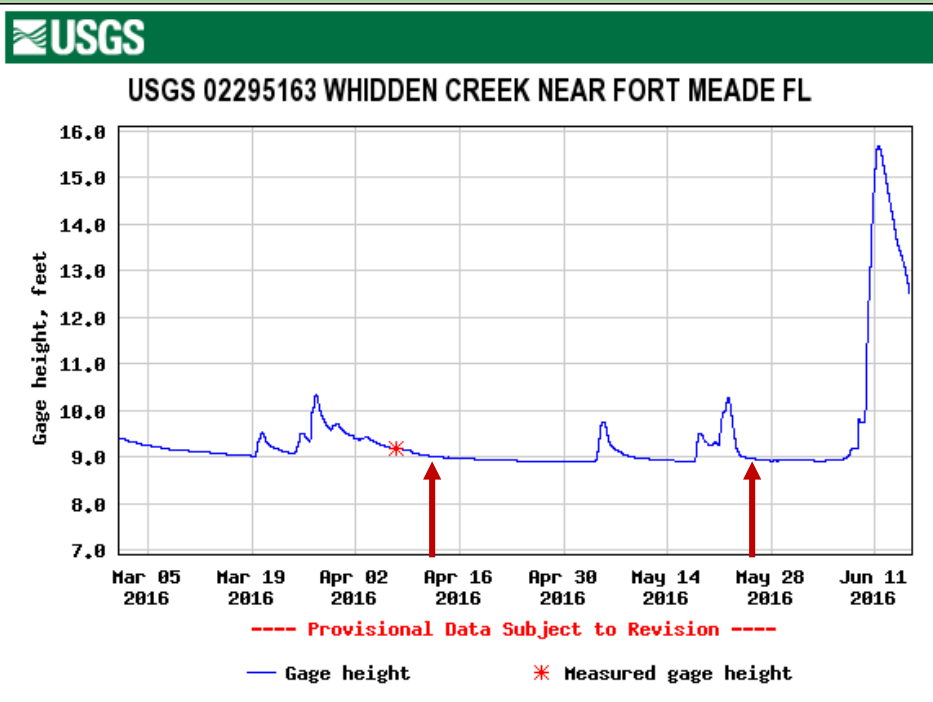
April and May 2016



Procedure

- Evaluate each site per SOP FT3100, “Stream and River Habitat Assessment,” using forms FD9000-3, FD9000-4, and FD9000-5. It is recommended that you use the most current editions of the forms and the SOP, found here: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/sas/qa/forms.htm>
- **Work independently.**
- Submit all completed forms to your QA officer, who will send the forms to the FDEP Aquatic Ecology and Quality Assurance (AEQA) Section 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 legitimately 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.).
- Analysts must pass 3 out of 5 Habitat Assessments every 2 years .
- Once scores have been reviewed, analysts will receive notice of passing or failing from the AEQA Section.
- QA officers will be given access to detailed explanations of how consensus scores were reached for each site, which can be distributed to analysts *after* their scores have been submitted.
- Analysts should take photos to document stream conditions at the time of assessment. Photos may be submitted to AEQA after initial determination of passing/failing if an analyst believes his/her score for a given site is out of the +/- 10 point range due to justifiable reasons.

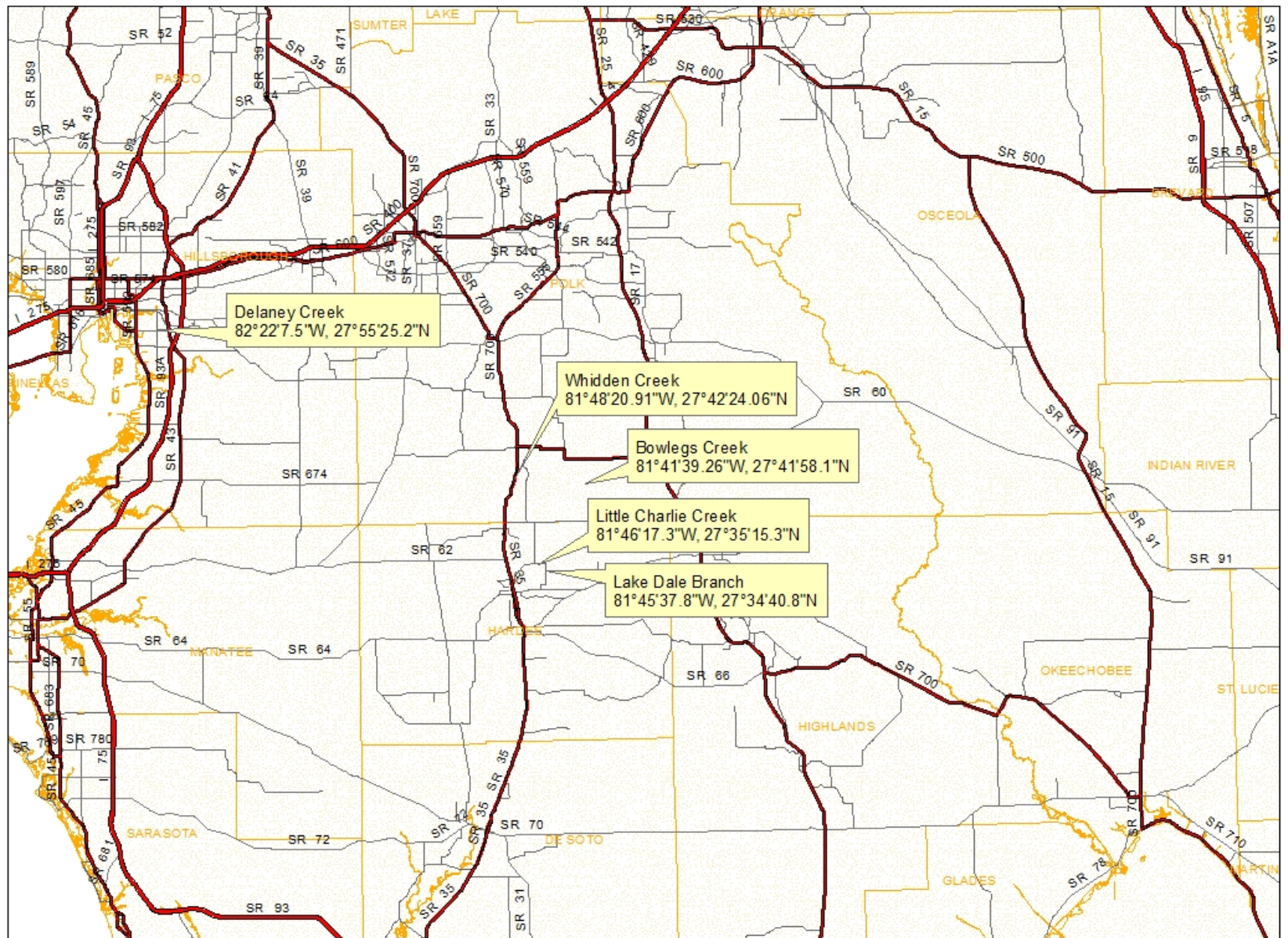
Hydrographs of Benchmark Streams



The consensus scores for these South sites were established on April 13, 2016 and May 24, 2016. Above are the gage height data for streams in the area during that time period. *If you conduct habitat assessments at these sites at different water levels, be sure to document current conditions.*

Graphs courtesy of the US Geological Survey.

Overview Map of South Sites



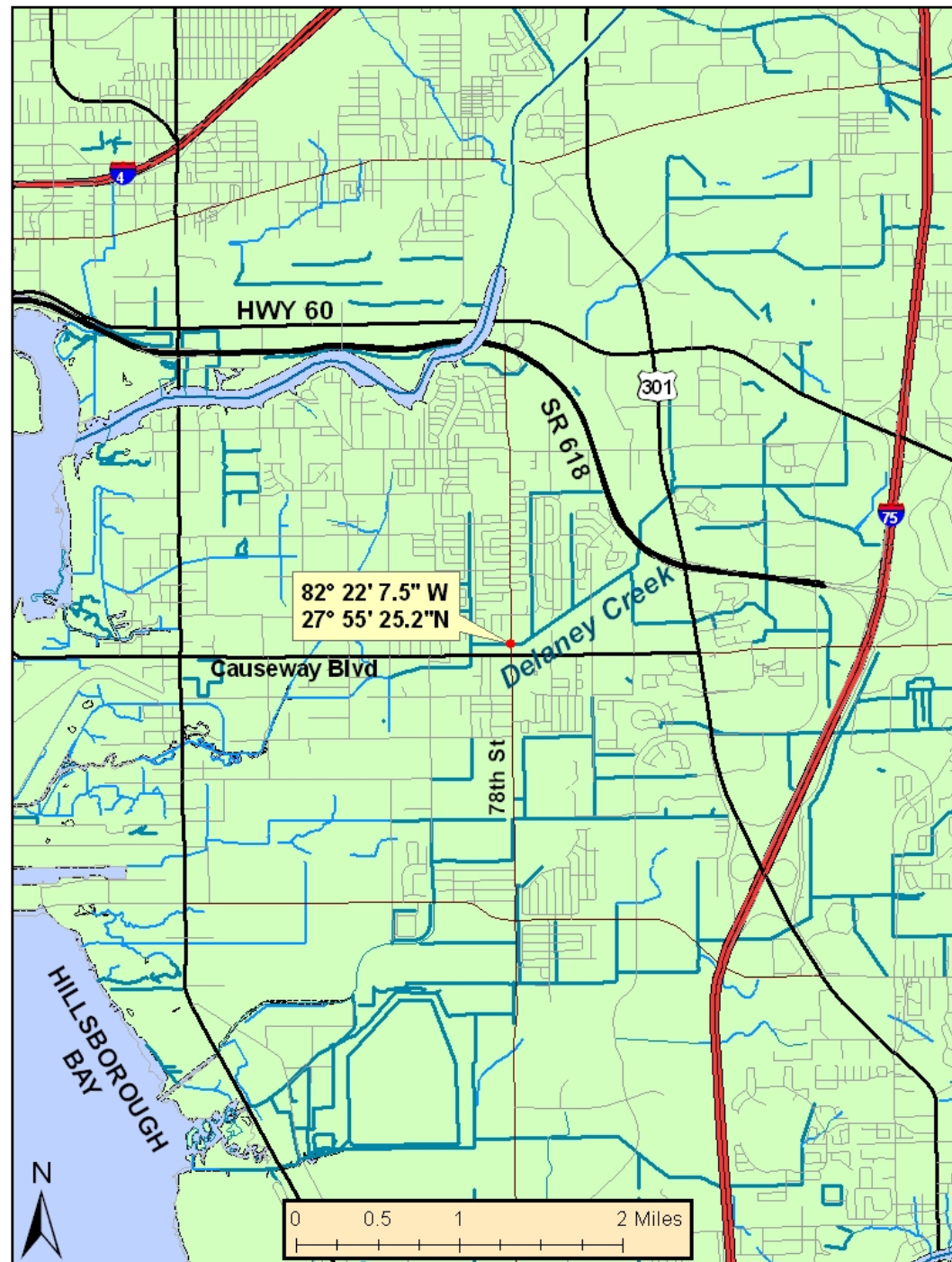
South Habitat Benchmark Sites - 2016

0 5 10 20 Miles



Delaney Creek @ 78th Street

- **Region:** South
- **County:** Hillsborough
- **Date Analyzed:** 5/24/2016
- **Location:** 78th Street, downstream of bridge
- **Directions:** From Hwy 60, go south on US 301 for 2 mi. Turn west (rt) onto Causeway Blvd. Go 1 mi to 78th St and turn north (rt). Go 100 m and cross creek. Turn left into driveway and park on left. Segment begins ~10 m downstream of bridge.



Delaney Creek

Below: 0m looking upstream



Above: 100m looking downstream

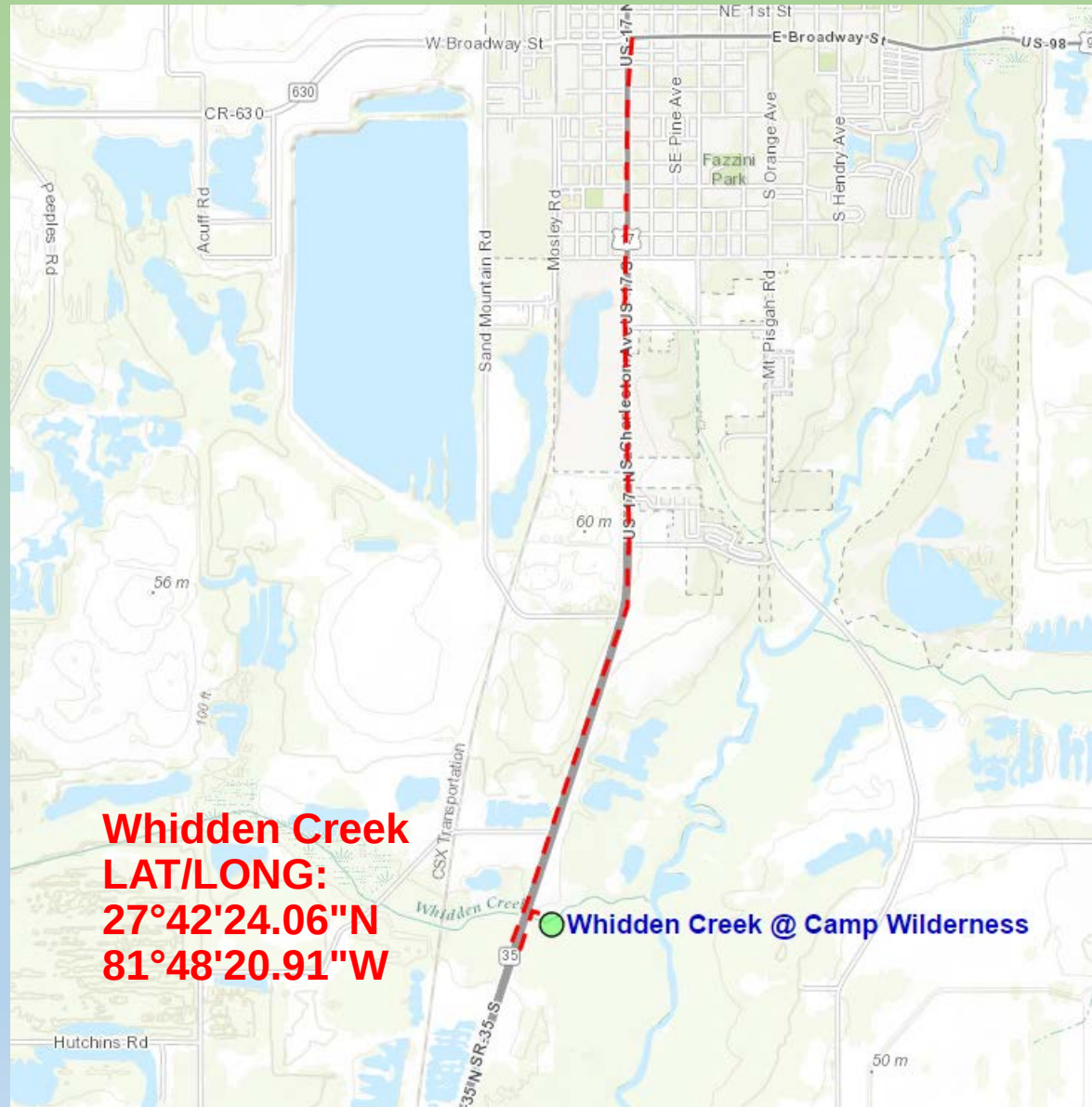
Delaney Creek at 78th Street



Whidden Creek @Camp Wilderness

- **Region:** South
- **County:** Polk
- **Date Analyzed:** 4/13/2016
- **Directions:** On US17 in Polk County, travel approximately 3.2 miles south of Ft. Meade, where you will cross Whidden Creek. Do a U-turn after the stream crossing, go north, and turn right immediately after crossing Whidden Creek again. Take your first right, where you will see an entrance for "Camp Wilderness."

NOTE: Please contact the landowner Doug Moon (863-441-2086), to let him know you will be on the property



Whidden Creek @ Camp Wilderness

- **Accessing the site:** Look for the Camp Wilderness entrance and turn right before the archway and sign. Park to the right. Cross the wooden bridge on foot and turn right to enter the stream. The stretch begins immediately upstream of the camp's waterslide.



Entrance to Camp Wilderness. Drive to the right of the sign and park to the right



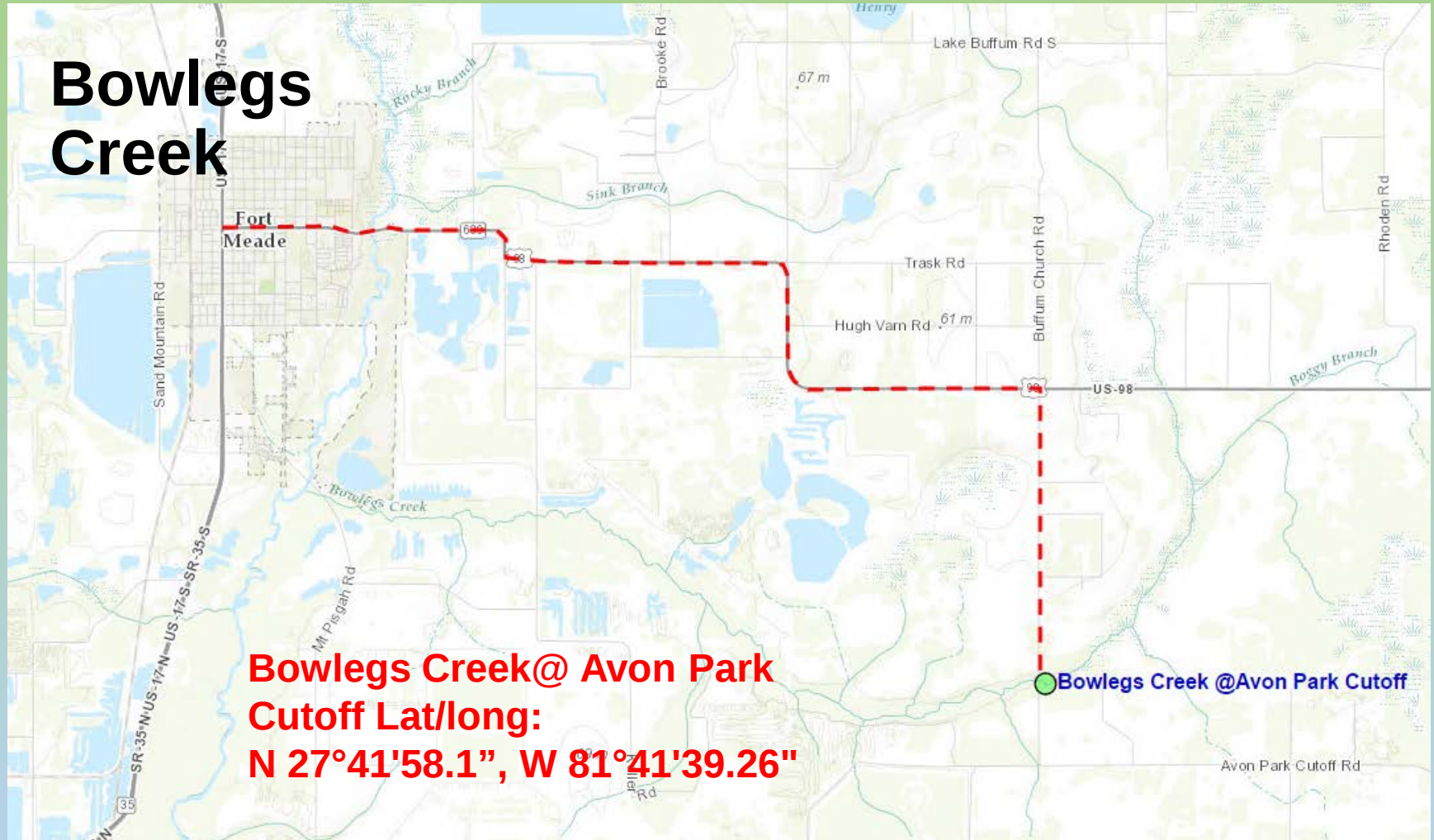
Entrance to Whidden Creek

Whidden Creek @ Camp Wilderness



Whidden Creek @ Camp Wilderness, looking upstream from the 0m mark.

Bowlegs Creek



**Bowlegs Creek @ Avon Park
Cutoff Lat/long:
N 27°41'58.1", W 81°41'39.26"**

- **Region:** South
- **County:** Polk
- **Date Analyzed:** 4/13/2016
- **Directions:** From the intersection of US 17 and US 98 in Ft. Meade, travel east on US 98 approximately 7.5 miles to Avon Park Cutoff Road (to the left the road is called Buffum Church Road). Turn right onto Avon Park Cutoff Road, and travel approximately 2.3 miles to where Avon Park Cutoff Road crosses Bowlegs Creek.

Bowlegs Creek @Avon Park Cutoff

- **Accessing the site:** Park on the west side of Avon Park Cutoff Road, and access the stream downstream of the bridge. The 100m mark is approximately 20 m downstream from the bridge.



Bowlegs Creek@ Avon Park Cutoff, park on the west side of the road, entrance is to the west.



Bridge crossing at Bowlegs Creek. Site is downstream of bridge.

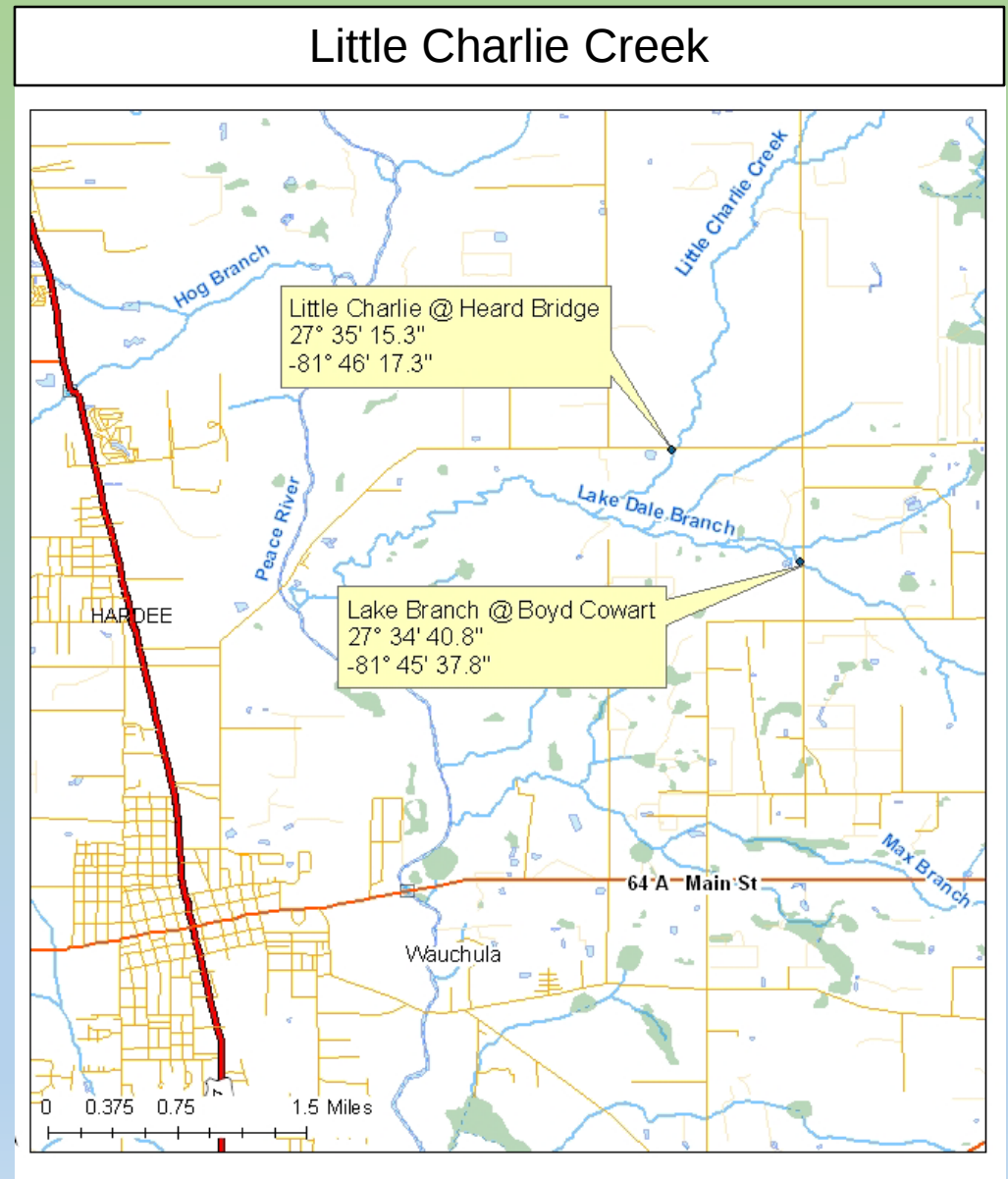
Bowlegs Creek @ Avon Park Cutoff



Looking upstream at the 100m mark on the right bank, and the bridge crossing beyond

Little Charlie at Heard Bridge

- **Region:** South
- **County:** Hardee
- **Date Analyzed:** 5/24/2016
- **Directions:** From Wauchula, head north on US 17 for a two blocks before turning right (east) on E. Oak St. Go two blocks and turn left (north) on Heard Bridge Rd. Go about 3 miles to bridge over the creek. Park and enter on the south side of road. The trail starts at utility pole (this may be overgrown at times and hard to find - the pole is at least a landmark. The 100m mark starts about 30m downstream from bridge.



Little Charlie Creek at Heard Bridge



Near 100m looking upstream

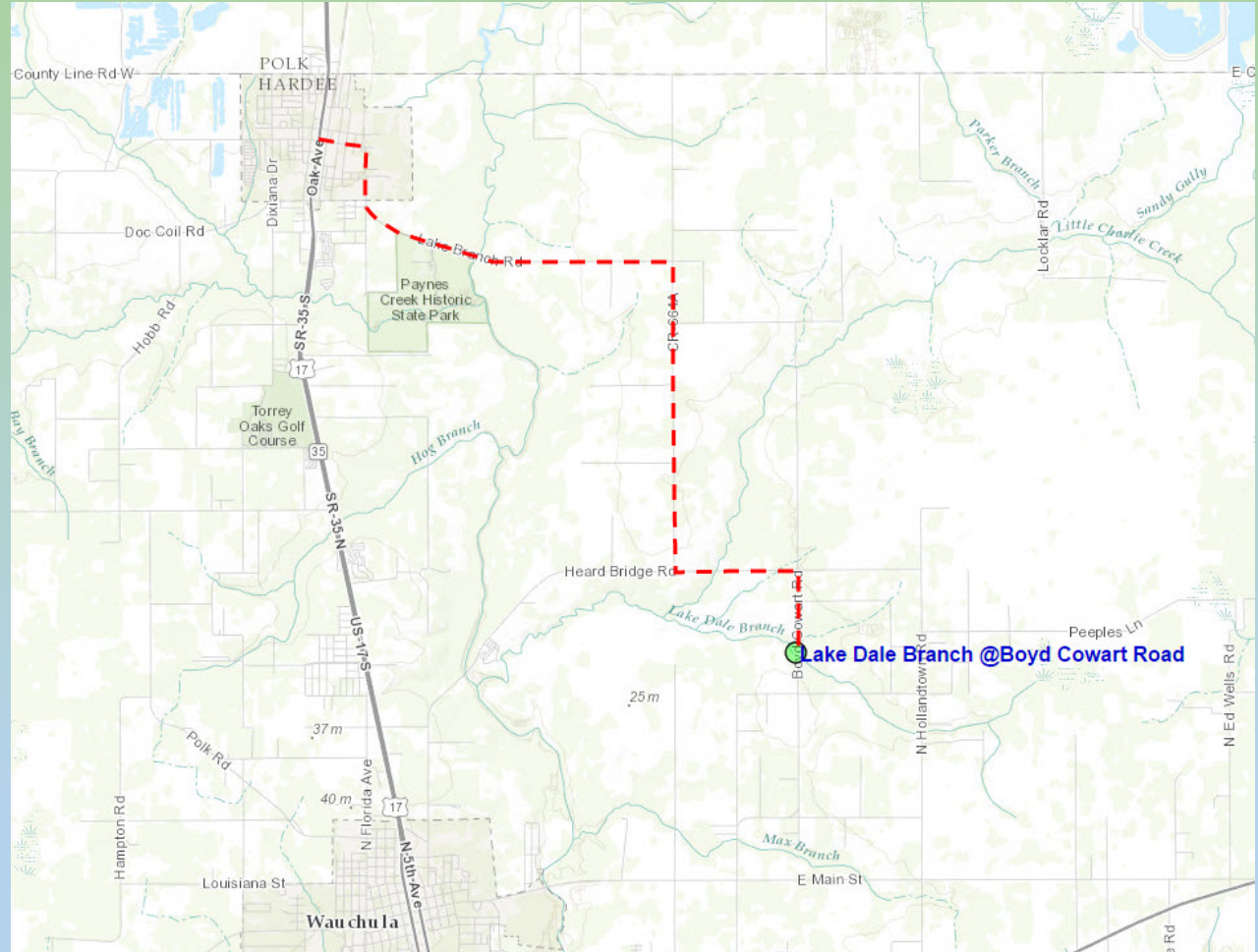
Little Charlie Creek at Heard Bridge



Near 50m looking downstream

Lake Dale Branch @ Boyd Cowart Road

- **Region:** South
- **County:** Hardee
- **Date Analyzed:** 4/13/2016
- **Directions:** From the intersection of US 17 and Main Street in Bowling Green, travel east on E Main St. 0.3 mi. Turn right on Lake Branch and travel 3.0 mi to 664A. Turn right on 664A and travel 2.5 mi to Heard Bridge Rd./Perdue. Turn left on Heard Bridge/Perdue, and travel 1.0 mi to Boyd Cowart Rd. Turn right on Boyd Cowart, and travel 0.7 mi. to where Boyd Cowart crosses Lake Dale Branch.



Lake Dale Branch @ Boyd Cowart Rd.

Lat/long: N 27° 34' 40.8", W 81° 45' 37.8"

Lake Dale Branch @Boyd Cowart

- **Accessing the site:** Park on the west side of Boyd Cowart Road, just before the bridge crossing. The site is on the downstream (west) side of the road (to the right).



Boyd Cowart Road crossing Lake Dale Branch. Park on the west side of the road in the right of way, and access the site from the west (downstream).



Looking downstream, near the 100m mark, near the entrance to the site. The entrance is steep. Be careful!

Lake Dale Branch @Boyd Cowart



0m mark at Lake Dale Branch@ Boyd Cowart Road