



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

South Florida Habitat Assessment Benchmark Sites

Pithlachascotee River at Jay B. Starkey
Wilderness Park

Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration
Water Quality Standards Program

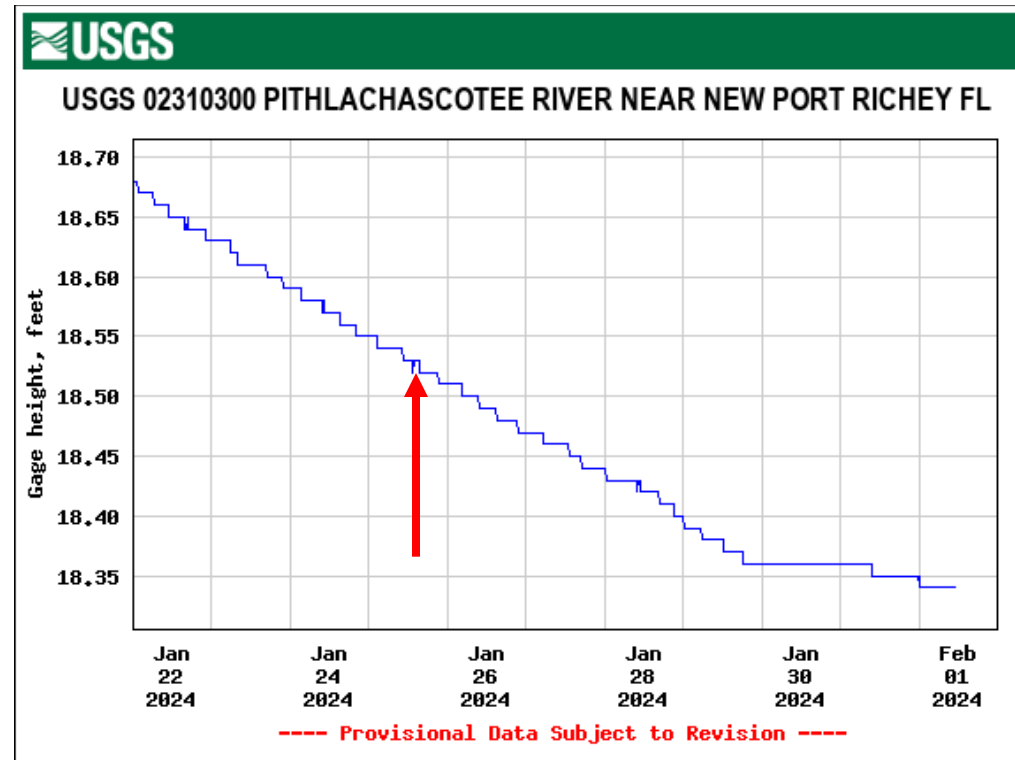


PROCEDURE

- 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.
- **Work independently.**
- Submit all completed 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).
- Analysts must pass 2 out of 3 Habitat Assessments every 5 years.
- Once scores have been reviewed, analysts will receive notice of passing or failing from the AEQA Section.
- 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.



AREA HYDROGRAPH



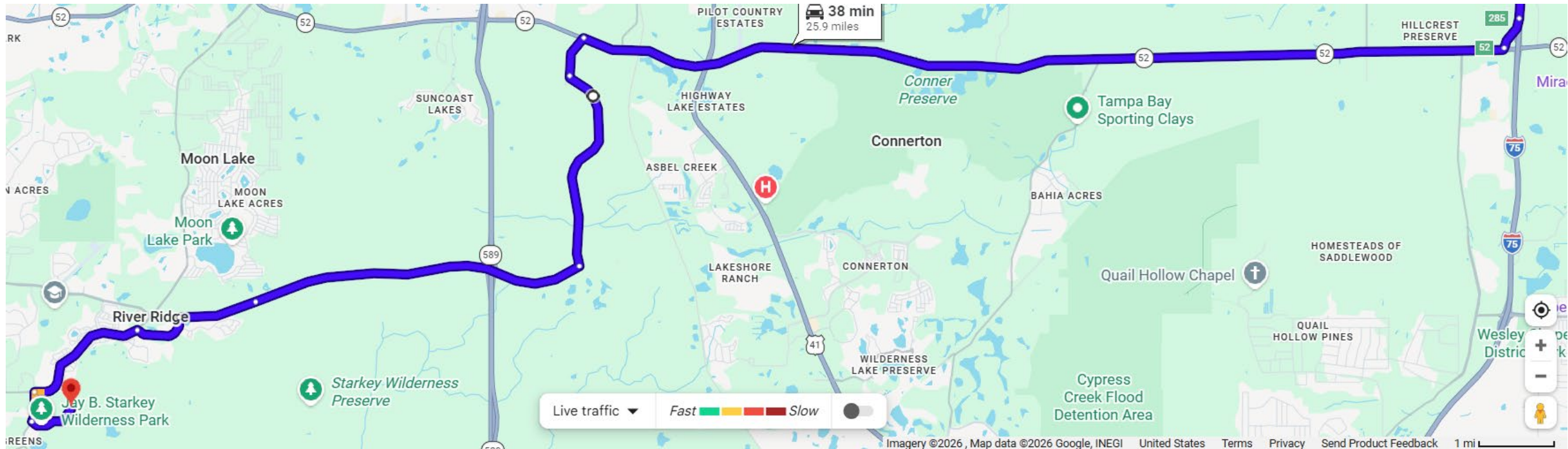
The consensus score for this site was established on January 25th, 2024, and was revisited on February 24th, 2026. The above graph shows the gage height data for a nearby Pithlachascotee River site during the original visit. If you conduct a habitat assessment at this site at different water levels, be sure to document the conditions.

Graph courtesy of the US Geological Survey.



PITHLACHASCOTEE RIVER AT JAY B. STARKEY WILDERNESS PARK

- **Region:** South
- **County:** Pasco
- **Lat/Long:** 28.256972, -82.642983
- **Parking:** 28.255530, -82.642733
- **Directions:** From I-75 going south, take exit 285 and continue right onto Hwy 52, then drive W for 12.5 miles. Turn left onto N Sunlake Blvd and take the 2nd exit at the traffic circle. Continue for 2.9 miles and then turn right onto Ridge Rd. Continue W for 5.5 miles before turning left onto Town Center Rd. After 0.8 miles turn left onto Decubellis Rd, and after 1.8 miles turn left onto Starkey Blvd, and then turn left to enter the park on Wilderness Park Blvd. Continue down to the education center and park on the side.





PITHLACHASCOTEE RIVER AT JAY B. STARKEY WILDERNESS PARK

- **Accessing the site:** Park along the side of the education center. Do not block gate. Enter site through gate along dirt road on foot. Walk along dirt road and enter woods on the right just before the bridge. The 0m flags are about 30m upstream of the bridge.



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



0m flags



100m flags