RESTORE Act Ecosystem Restoration Project Proposals

for consideration in the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's Comprehensive Plan 2012

Contact Information: Cathy Olson, Lee County Conservation 20/20 program, colson@leegov.com 239 533-7455	**Date of Submittal:** 11/1/12
Name of Project: Caloosahatchee Creeks Preserve creek and wetland restoration	**Org and Rank**: Lee County C20/20 #1

Project Description: When the Caloosahatchee River was dredged during the 1960s spoil was pumped over natural areas along the river. On Caloosahatchee Creeks Preserve approximately 330 acres (primarily wetlands) were negatively impacted by this process. Wetlands were covered in spoil and tributaries were completely lost. Now the flow goes through a channelized canal. The wetlands and spoil uplands now are dominated by invasive exotic plants. This project will reintroduce a creek near the location of the filled one, cut through a berm to return water flows into the impacted wetlands and treat exotic invasive plants within the project area. The new creek will return flow through wetlands that are currently stagnant and will likely make it too wet for Brazilian pepper and Australian pines (invasive exotic plants) to grow. The berm cuts also will allow water to flow better and the removal of exotic plants will enhance the area for better fish and wildlife habitat. Approximately half of the project has already been completed by Lee County and its funding partners (USFWS, FDEP, CHNEP, SFWMD).

Project Location: Lee County (26.70498 lat / -81.81364 long)

Responsible Party: Lee County Conservation 20/20	**Partners**: SFWMD, Lee County Natural Resources	
NEP:CHNEP	**Project Cost**: $550,000	**Dollars Needed**: $500,000
Start: FY 13/14; depending on permit speed	**Completion**: 3 year project (2016)	

Status of Project Design and Permitting: In progress. An engineer/ecologist has been hired. Pre-application meetings have been held with the SFWMD and Corps and permitting has begun.

What Date or Year could Construction Feasibly Begin:2013-2014

Your Proposed Timing of Funding (given permits, phasing, staging, etc.)

FY	Previous	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	Total
	$700,000		$300,000	$100,000	$100,000		

Quantify Environmental Results and How to Measure Them: Re-hydrated wetlands, linear feet of berm removal and linear feet and area of newly cut stream bed. The actual acres of restoration and linear feet of stream bed and berm cuts will be determined during the permitting process and is not yet available.

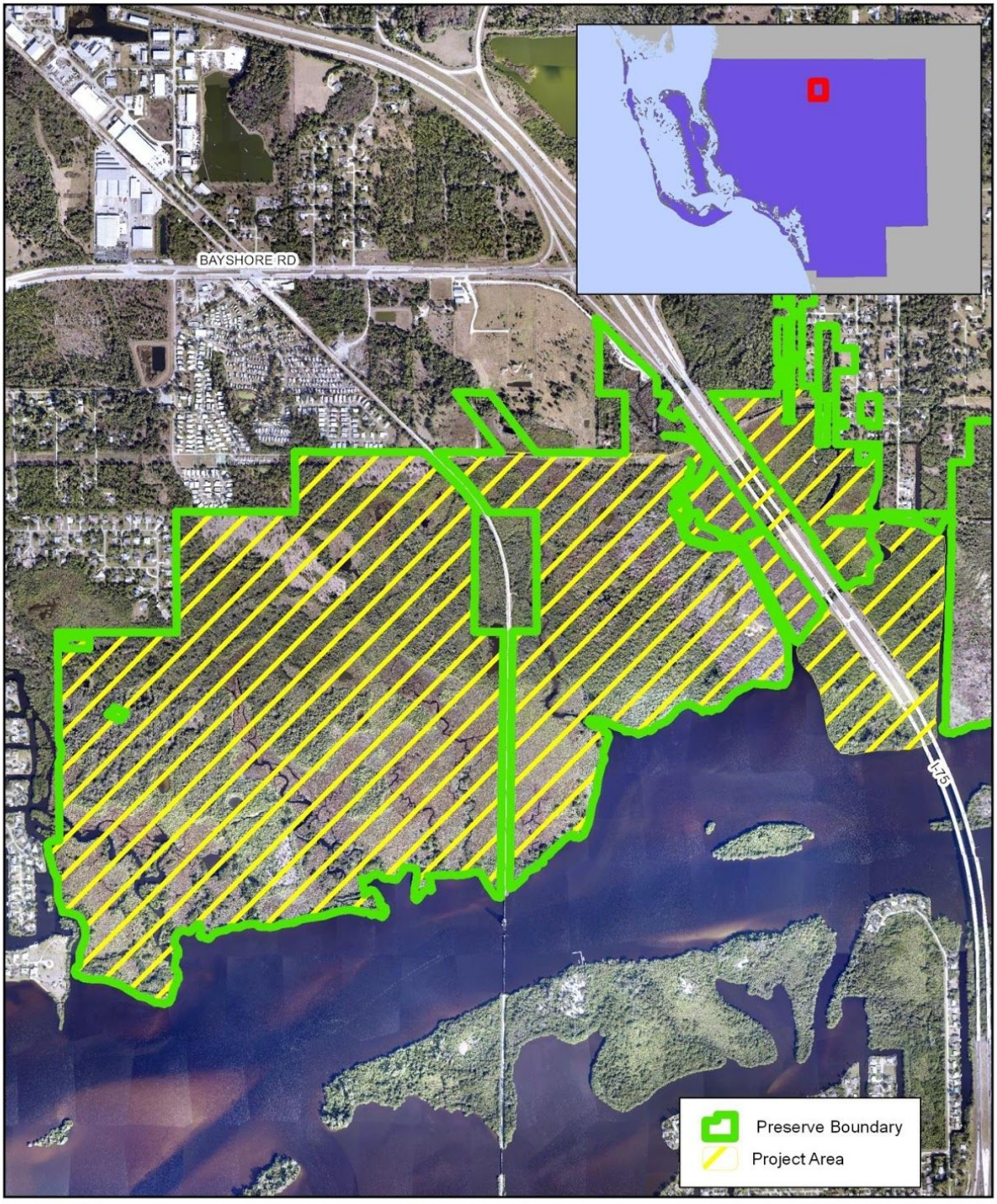
Economic Benefits (including ecosystem services): Additional wetland filtration, additional fish and wildlife habitat.

Estimated number of Jobs Created or Preserved: 5.5

How much Habitat will be restored and conserved?: 210 acres of upland and wetland spoil that will be directly enhanced and the surrounding 150 acres will further enhanced by exotic plant removal. The berm cut and the tributary will enhance the surrounding areas and provide for better wildlife habitat.

Quantify pollutant reductions: Some of the water from the channelized canal will be further filtered through the created creek and wetlands, thus cleaning the water before it enters the Caloosahatchee River and the Gulf of Mexico.
What living coastal/marine resources will be improved and by how much?: The 210 acres of partially restored spoil will further be enhanced by the creek project and the berm removal project. The exotic monocultures on SFWMD owned land (managed by Lee County) and Lee County Conservation 20/20 owned land will be removed. This removal enhances the whole preserve since the seed source immediately adjacent to the restored areas will be removed; reducing the number of seeds reaching the restored areas. Species likely to benefit include wood storks, roseate spoonbills, little blue herons, tri-colored herons, great egrets, snowy egrets, white ibis, smalltooth sawfish, as well as commercially and recreationally important fish. These species will benefit by increasing and enhancing the wetlands and by removing the invasive exotic plants.
How will community resilience be enhanced? Restoring wetlands will help the shoreline change with higher tides as sea level rise occurs. The shoreline will become important wildlife habitat as additional shoreline is hardened.
Additional Justification: This project adds on to an already successful restoration effort within critical habitat for the smalltooth sawfish. Earlier phases have produced dramatically improved wildlife habitat and increased use by listed wading birds.

Add any photos or maps that explain project:



Caloosahatchee Creeks Preserve

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