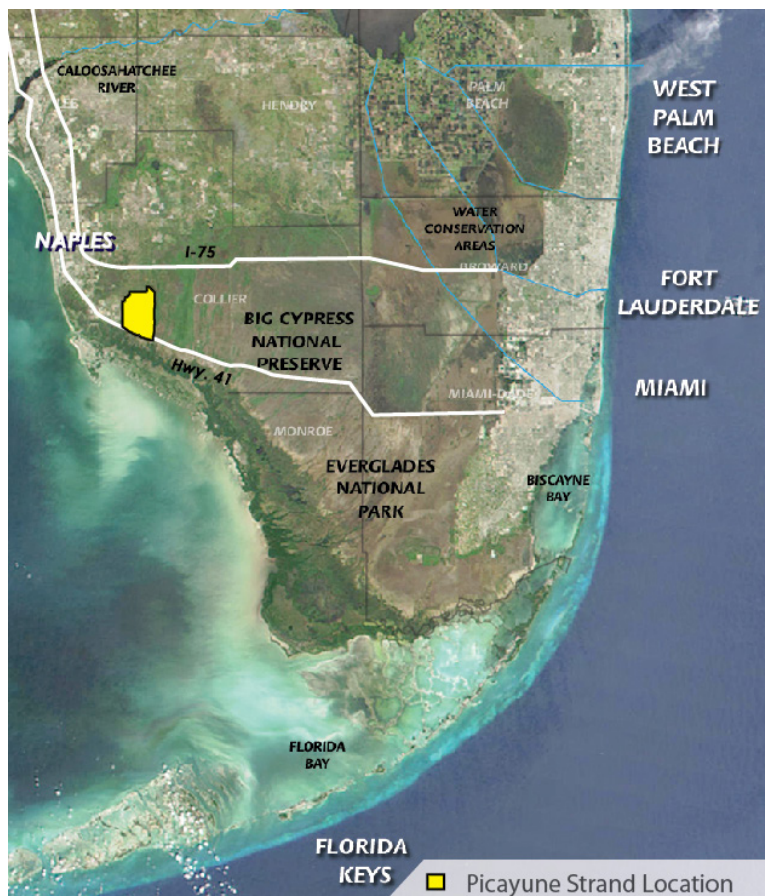




NOVEMBER 2019

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A bold journey is underway to restore America's Everglades. Led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), this landmark effort is based on the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). CERP provides a framework for restoring, preserving, and protecting the south Florida ecosystem, which surrounds the Everglades, while providing for other water-related needs of the region. CERP calls for a series of over 60 ecological and water system improvements that will be made over the next three decades. The Picayune Strand Restoration Project was the first CERP project to begin construction. The project area includes 55,000 acres of native Florida wetlands and uplands located between Alligator Alley (Interstate 75) and the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41) in the southwestern corner of the state.



RESTORATION PROGRESS

To expedite restoration, the SFWMD moved ahead with an effort to plug the northern seven miles of the Prairie Canal, remove about 65 miles of roadways adjacent to the canal, and clear exotic plant species from the canal banks. This work was completed in the fall of 2007. Restoration benefits are already being seen with the reemergence of foraging wading birds and native flora that have been absent in the area for decades. The full implementation of the Merritt Pump Station contract is providing 30% of the hydrologic and 38% of the biological benefits of the Picayune Strand Restoration Project.



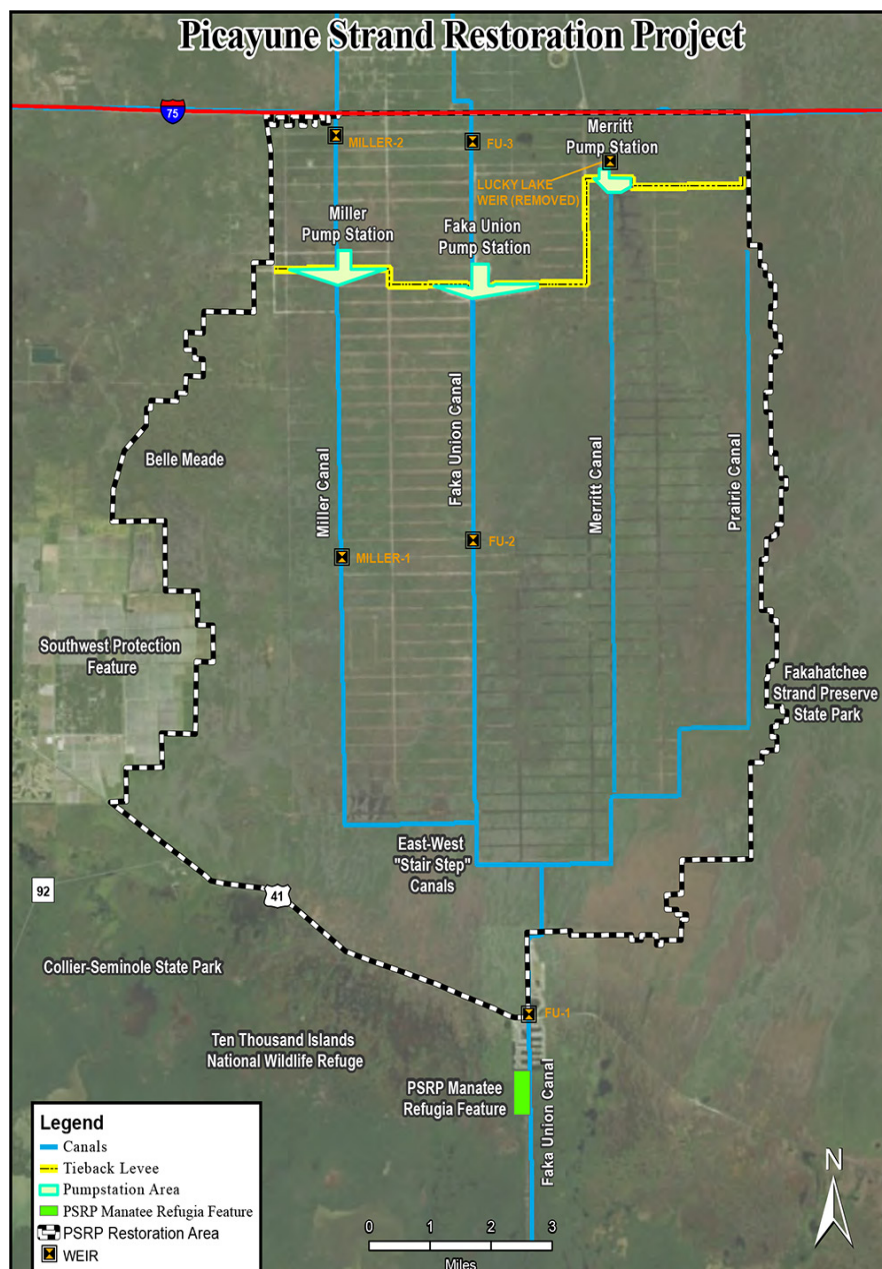
FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION

The USACE has awarded three major construction contracts for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project. Future work will include:

- Southwestern Protection Feature
- Road and Spoil Pile Removal North of the Tie-back Levee
- Miller Blvd. Road and Tram Road Removal
- East-West “Stair-step” Canal Plugging
- Faka Union and Miller Canal Plugging

STATE OF FLORIDA CONSTRUCTION

The SFWMD has built the Prairie Canal, Port of the Islands, Port of the Islands Protection Features, and Manatee Mitigation Features.



MERRITT CANAL PUMP STATION AWARDED

October 2009

FEATURES

- Build an 810-cubic feet per second (cfs) pump station, spreader canal, and tie-back levee.
- Plug 13.5 miles of canals to block flow.
- Remove and degrade 95 miles of roads and tram roads.

CONSTRUCTION START

Winter 2009

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

Fall 2014

TRANSFER TO SFWMD

May 2016

FAKA UNION PUMP STATION AWARDED

November 2010

FEATURES

- Build a 2,650-cfs pump station, spreader canal and tie-back levee.
- Plug 12 miles of canal to block flow.
- Remove 100 miles of roads.

CONSTRUCTION START

Winter 2011

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

Summer 2017

TRANSFER TO SFWMD

January 2018

MILLER PUMP STATION AWARDED

September 2013

FEATURES

- Build a 1,250-cfs pump station, spreader canal, and tie-back levee.
- Plug 13 miles of canal to block flow.
- Remove and degrade 65 miles of roads.

CONSTRUCTION START

Winter 2013

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

May 2019

TRANSFER TO SFWMD

December 2019

RECLAIMING LOST WETLANDS RESTORATION

Restoring the Picayune Strand involves plugging 48 miles of canals — originally dug to provide flood protection for a sprawling residential area that was never built — and removing roads that impede sheet flow. Building and operating pump stations will allow natural resource and water managers to direct fresh water to drained wetlands, as well as maintain current levels of flood protection on adjacent land. Removing 260 miles of crumbling roads and management of non-native vegetation will further enhance restoration efforts.

These features will restore historic sheet flow that will bring back the native ecosystem by increasing the groundwater levels. Along with restoring freshwater wetlands, the Picayune Strand Restoration Project will improve estuarine water quality and reduce unnatural freshwater inflows.

In 2007, the SFWMD completed plugging the Prairie Canal. This successfully reduced drainage of the adjacent Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve. SFWMD also completed road removal between the Prairie and Merritt canals.

The project's Record of Decision for the Integrated Environmental Impact Statement was signed by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works in April 2007, and Congress authorized the Picayune Strand Restoration Project in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

Congressional appropriations in 2009 provided the Corps with funds to start the federally funded construction project. The first construction contract was awarded in October 2009 to build the Merritt Pump Station. The contract included construction of the pump station, spreader basin, and tie-back levee; the removal and degrading of 95 miles of roads and tram roads; and plugging the Merritt Canal. About \$40 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) accelerated the construction schedule and helped create much-needed jobs.

Following the success of the Merritt Pump Station contract, the Faka Union Pump Station contract was awarded in November 2010; it is the largest pump station in Picayune Strand. The construction contract included construction of the pump station, spreader basin, and tie-back levee, and removal and degrading of nearly 100 miles of roads and tram roads.

The Corps awarded the construction contract for the third and final pump station, Miller Pump Station, in September 2013. The contract includes construction of the pump station, a tie-back levee system, and a spreader basin, and road removal and canal plugging.



RESCUING AN ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEM THE JOURNEY TO RESTORE AMERICA'S EVERGLADES

Together, the federal government and state of Florida are transforming this area into an ecological gem, where the endangered Florida panther and other native plants and animals may once again thrive. Plugging the canals and removing the roads will enable overland water flow that will benefit the coastal estuaries and surrounding parks and wildlife preserves, and will recharge the aquifer.



PROTECTING FLORIDA PANTHER HABITAT

In a report called a Biological Opinion, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service quantified the long-term beneficial effects of the Picayune Strand Restoration Project for the Florida panther. The Corps provided funding for a panther-prey study that documented the use of Picayune Strand by the Florida panther and its primary prey — white-tailed deer and feral hogs. The study included placing infrared remote cameras at regular intervals across the site. Biologists will reference the panther-prey study data collected over two years as a scientific benchmark for monitoring and evaluation after restoration is complete.



PROJECT PURPOSE & BENEFITS

- Improve aquifer recharge to protect water supply and prevent saltwater intrusion.
- Restore and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife resources, including threatened and endangered species.
- Maintain existing level of flood protection for Northern Golden Gate Estates and adjacent private properties.
- Reduce drainage of the adjacent Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve.
- Reduce or eliminate over-drainage of adjacent sensitive ecosystems.
- Reduce freshwater releases (point discharges) to improve the health and productivity of downstream estuaries.
- Preserve upland habitat.
- Control invasive exotic plants.
- Provide resource-based recreational opportunities.
- Provide comprehensive habitat conservation for the greater Everglades ecosystem, including the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, 10,000 Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Collier Seminole State Park, and the Belle Meade Conservation and Recreation Lands.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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