



2025 - 2030

HABITAT RESTORATION PLAN

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Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

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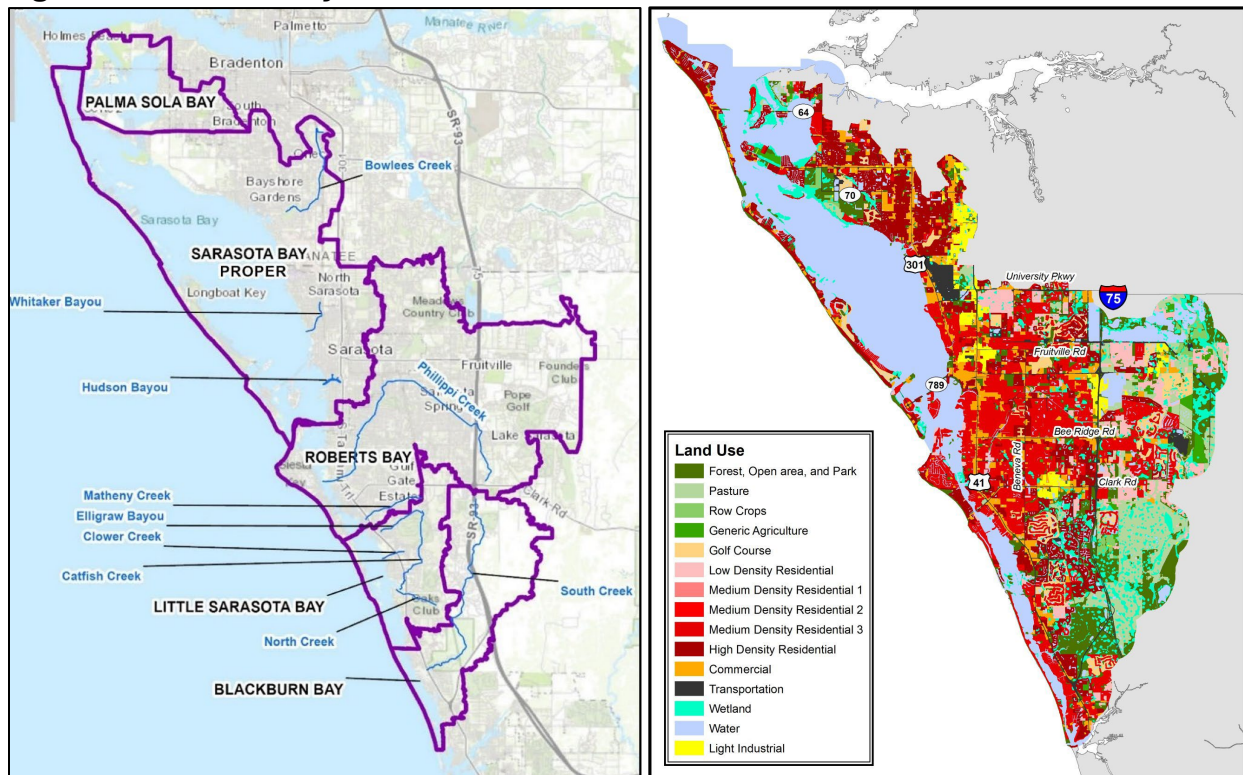
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Executive Summary

The Sarasota Bay Estuary is a series of five coastal lagoons located on the southwest coast of Florida. The watershed of this region is over 85% developed into an urban landscape (Figure 1) with shorelines that are over 80% hardened with seawalls. This results in limited opportunities for large-scale restoration projects within this estuary. Restoration opportunities are limited due to the private ownership of most of the properties along the coast and within the watershed. The remaining habitats are largely state submerged lands, state and county parks, municipal park properties, and stormwater conveyances in the watershed. The remaining habitats are under constant pressure from rising tides that compresses the habitats against hardened infrastructure that is mostly under private ownership. The habitats within the bay and watershed represent a rich mosaic that includes seagrass meadows, hardbottom, oyster reefs, beaches, saltwater wetlands, freshwater wetlands, and upland habitats.

Figure 1 – Sarasota Bay Watershed and Land Use Classification.



Source: 2025 Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan; Jones Edmunds, ESA and SWFWMD.

These remaining iconic ‘Florida’ habitats are animated with a great diversity of fish and wildlife that underpin ecosystem integrity and function while providing foundational ecosystem services that drive the cultural identity and economies of our coastal communities. Recreational fishing is an industry that creates an enormous economic impact in Florida each year. In 2025, the Florida recreational fishing industry supported 120,000 jobs and generated \$9.2 billion in total sales (FFWC, 2025). Additionally, the non-

consumptive benefits of the ecosystem are difficult to measure, but a healthy bay and watershed system supports the “Florida lifestyle” that attracts tourists who spent over \$6 billion vacationing annually ([Sarasota Herald Tribune, 2024](#)) and attracts people moving to the region that supports a multi-billion dollar real estate market. Therefore, these habitats are vital in providing the ecosystem services that attract people to the region, resulting in a robust economy. However, these habitats are bound in their expanse by urban development, and under constant pressure, with limited opportunities for large restoration of functional habitat to historic levels.

The SBEP uses Habitat Restoration Plans to focus its finite resources on restoration and conservation projects that are impactful. This planning process is currently being used to guide the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) funding (\$4,530,000) awarded to SBEP in 2022. Preplanning by SBEP resulted in shovel-ready projects that were rapidly implemented with IIJA funding. Of the ten IIJA projects, five have been completed, three are in progress, two will be started in FY 2026, and one was reprioritized by stakeholders. All IIJA projects are anticipated to be completed before the expiration of this plan in 2030. As a result, these projects make up a significant portion of the projects listed in the 2025-2030 plan. Once IIJA projects are completed, we will implement a strategy that uses our base funding from Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, contributions from our local partners, or seek State Resiliency Grants, Local Capital Improvement funds, and other grant sources to continue to implement the remaining projects on this five-year plan that will cost from \$2,850,000 to \$6,700,000 to complete.

Background

Estuarine health in our region is dependent upon the quantity, quality, and timing of freshwater inputs (Olsen, Padma, & Richter, 2006). Freshwater wetlands, sawgrass marshes, and ponds were once the predominant freshwater features within the Sarasota Bay watershed. The watershed has been historically impacted by widespread dredge and fill operations in the 1950s and 1960s, draining large tracts of land for agricultural purposes. A large portion of the inland watershed was previously comprised of isolated sawgrass wetlands that have since been either connected to one another, diverted to drain into the freshwater creeks, or filled. As a result, much less water is being retained within the landscape of the watershed, thus reducing the natural storage and groundwater recharge which causes rainfall to rush to the bay through a drainage system that expedites its removal from the land.

To compensate for the increased water quantity flowing toward the bay, most creeks have been modified, both naturally and artificially. Some larger order systems, such as Phillippi Creek, have been channelized and dredged, with large water control structures installed to maximize the flow of water to the bay during high flows events. The increases in freshwater volume entering the bay and resulting sediment loads reduce water clarity, affect the quality of existing estuarine habitats and aquatic productivity. Watershed managers are tasked with finding ways to manage erosion, sediment transport, and deposition, and, more specifically, to remove total suspended solids and nutrients from non-point source

discharges to Sarasota Bay. The recent intensification of focus on these areas for flood control represents potential opportunities for SBEP and watershed managers to collaborate and focus on the creation of dual-purpose projects of water control and habitat development, where those opportunities exist.

Many historic saltwater and freshwater wetlands within the Sarasota Bay watershed have been lost over time starting with the dredge-and-fill projects of the late 1800's and early 1900s and continuing a course of conversion to an urban landscape. The urbanization process that started in the latter half of the 20th Century, converting agricultural land on the fringe of the bay and within the watershed to housing development and its associated infrastructure, is now being threatened by higher tidal stages, storm surge, increased average rainfall, and intensive individual rain events. The response to this is the further hardening of infrastructure and facilitation of stormwater movement off the landscape; the combination of which has significantly impacted many of the remaining wetlands and their ability to move up slope because of further hardening of shorelines around them, thus, reducing the landscape, which limits the opportunity for fish and wildlife to fulfill their life history requirements.

Habitat fragmentation from the almost complete urbanization of the landscape within the watershed (Figure 1) has degraded the ecological strength of the estuary. The elimination of intact landscapes inevitably impacts habitat corridors and wildlife movement. While the need for habitat restoration, both upland and wetland, is immense, the availability of large tracts of land for restoration has become rare throughout the Sarasota Bay watershed because most of the watershed has been converted to an urban landscape (Figure 1). Thus, large-scale SBEP restoration projects (e.g. FISH Preserve, Appendix B) will be more difficult to accomplish because of the lack of open public spaces available for restoration. In some ways, we are the victims of our own success at completing large-scale restoration projects. For over 35 years, SBEP has been instrumental in the successful completion of many habitat restoration projects within Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

Habitat Restoration Plan (2025 – 2030)

The current 2025-2030 Five-Year Habitat Restoration Plan was developed as a continuation of the comprehensive [FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan](#) with the addition of IJA Projects (Figure 2 & 3; Appendix A & B). Because of the time sensitive nature of the funding and large scale of the IJA projects, those have become the primary focus of our restoration efforts through 2030.

Figure 2 – Restoration Projects in the Upper Bay.

Upper Bay

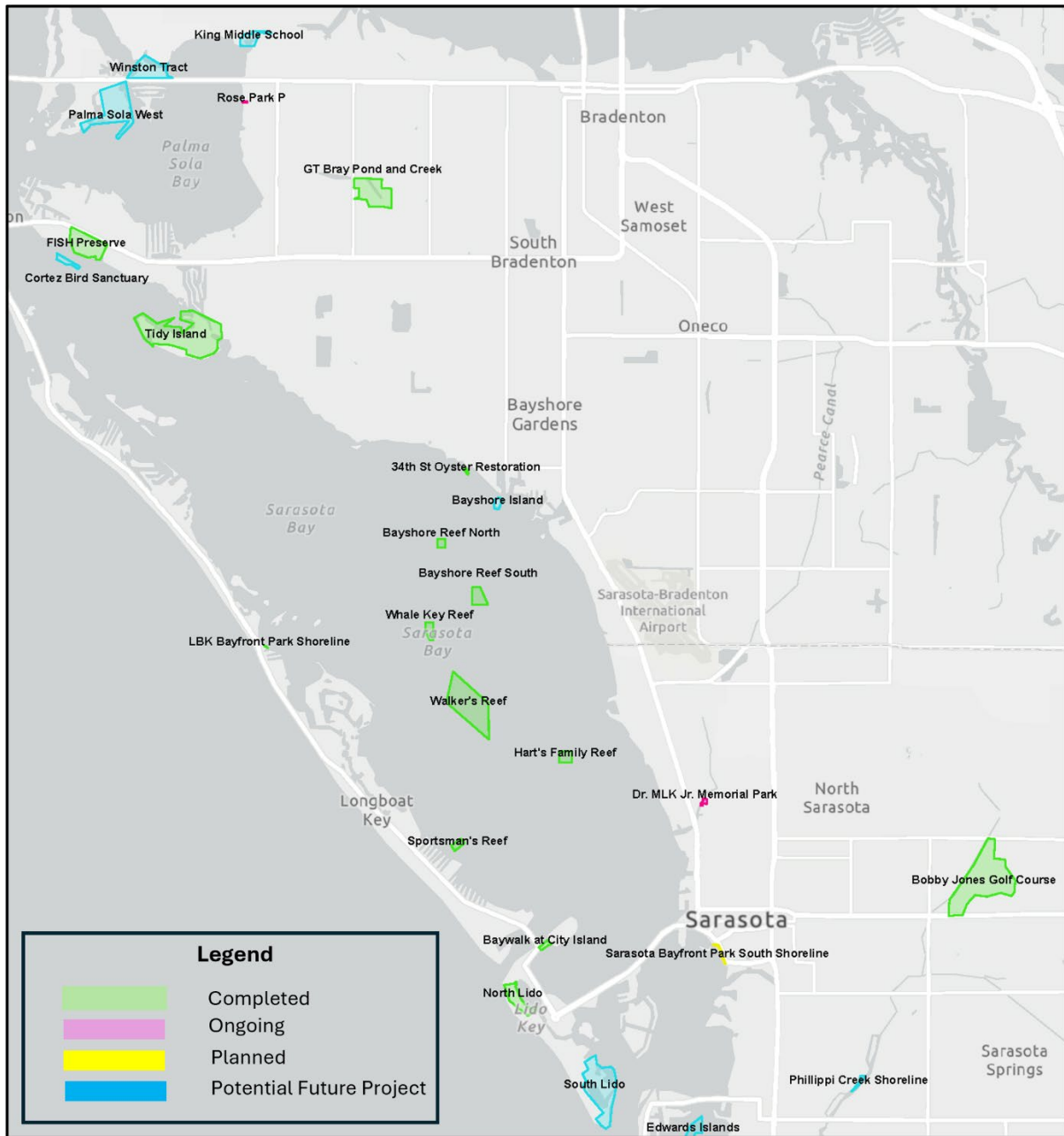
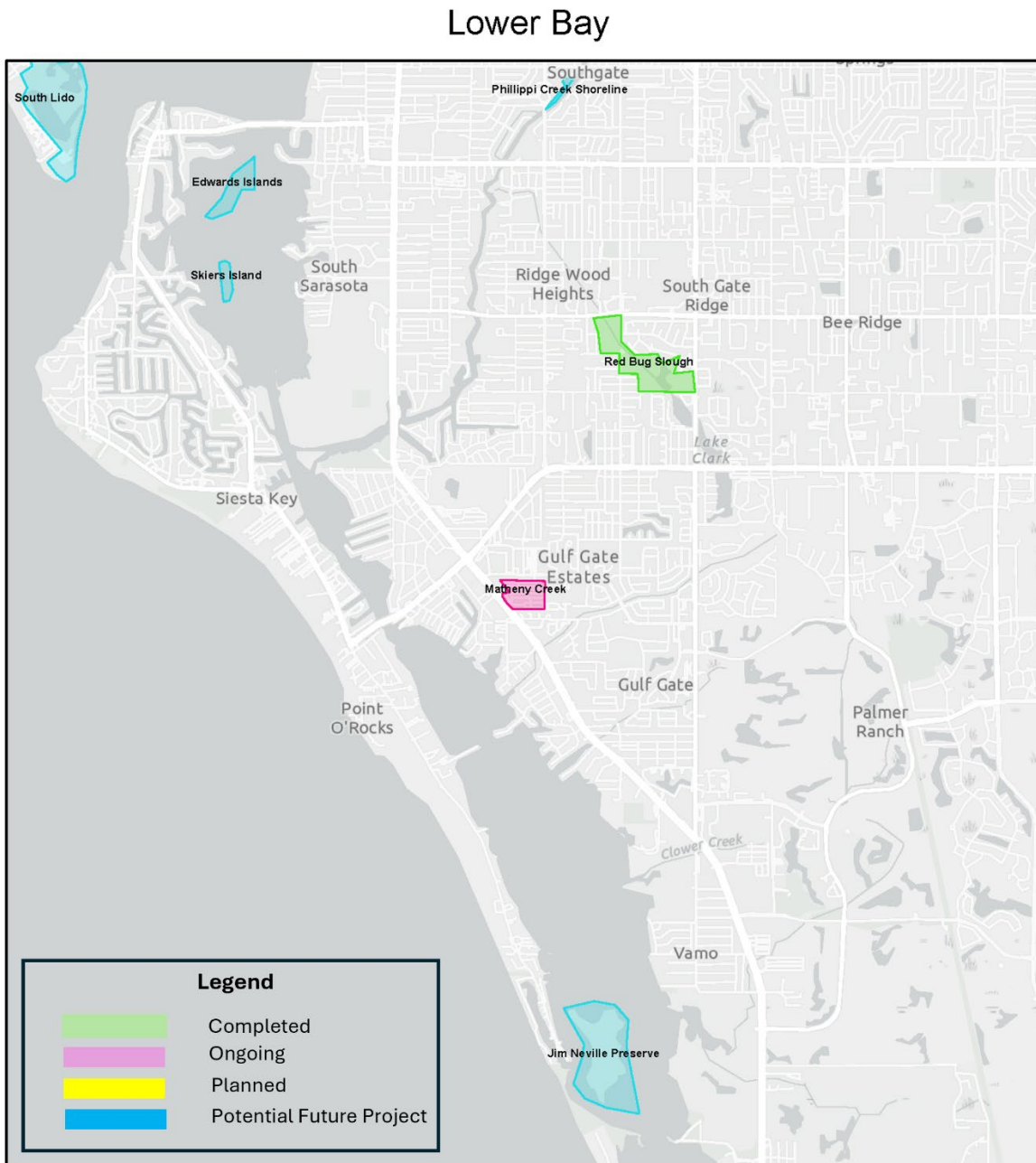


Figure 3 – Restoration Projects in the Lower Bay.



Site Selection Objectives

The limited number of large-scale restoration sites in our region and the comprehensiveness of the selection methodology used in the FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan provides the structure from which the current plan was developed. Sites were evaluated based on their potential to achieve overall SBEP and regional partner goals. Objectives encompassing those goals were defined in such a way that sites which meet all objectives provide comprehensive ecological benefits to the Sarasota Bay estuary. A site's location within the watershed was considered to assess potential secondary benefits such as proximity to environmentally significant areas. Primary restoration objectives of that prioritization process were grouped into three categories:

1. Essential habitat restoration and/or creation.
2. Water retention and water quality improvements.
3. Habitat restoration and/or adaptation to future conditions.

Together, these objectives help to achieve our current goal of adaptation to future conditions in the Sarasota Bay watershed. For selected sites, the process considers both the primary restoration objectives as well as the logistical constraints. Each of the three primary restoration objectives is discussed below.

Green Infrastructure and Project Resiliency Focus

Habitat restoration projects within the Sarasota Bay watershed are increasingly designed to incorporate green infrastructure principles that anticipate and adapt to adverse weather and climate conditions. These projects prioritize nature-based solutions such as living shorelines, mangrove migration corridors, and stormwater retrofits that provide multiple benefits—improving water quality, reducing pollutant loads, and enhancing flood control while creating resilient habitats for fish and wildlife. By integrating features like softened shorelines, tidal wetland restoration, and stormwater filtration systems, these efforts not only restore ecological function but also buffer communities against sea-level rise, storm surge, and extreme rainfall events. This multi-purpose approach ensures that restoration investments deliver long-term resiliency outcomes alongside near-term habitat and water quality improvements, supporting the sustainability of coastal ecosystems under changing climate conditions.

Essential Habitat

Essential habitat is defined as habitat which consists of accessible areas that contain the physical and biological features that are vital to a species' existence. For example, low-salinity environments, seagrass flats, and mangrove shorelines are essential for certain species of fish. Essential habitat may vary between season, geographic region, and stage of life. Some fish frequent lower salinity creeks and bays during the colder winter months, but spawn off the beaches and passes during the summer months. Seagrass is essential for gag grouper during the first 1-2 years of their lifecycle, whereas offshore hard bottom habitats in the Gulf of America are critical for adults. Each species has its own set of physical and biological parameters which constitute essential habitat. Sites which contain areas with the potential to provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife are preferred.

Water Retention and Water Quality Improvements

Stormwater improvements through water retention and retrofitting of dated stormwater infrastructure are critical to improving water quality and clarity within Sarasota Bay. In a region with limited habitat restoration opportunities, stormwater systems are also available to serve a dual purpose of water quality improvement and habitat when adequately restored (See FISH Preserve and GT Bray in Appendix B). Historically, water quality has been impacted through untreated stormwater discharges, point source discharges from wastewater treatment plants, septic tank leachate, and increased freshwater flows from development and agricultural activities within the watershed (Dillon & Chanton, 2005).

Degraded water quality reduces marine productivity, vertebrate and invertebrate species diversity, and seagrass coverage. This was evident during the period of degraded water quality (2013-2019) that resulted in a 30% decline in seagrass coverage. Watershed managers developed methods to identify, monitor, and improve water quality and quantity within coastal watersheds during this period. Results of that effort were found during the recovery period of water quality (2020-2024) that resulted in a 1,913 acre or 20% increase in seagrass coverage in the area where most of the seagrass was lost during the degraded period. Therefore, an emphasis on dual-purpose wastewater and stormwater projects that improve water quality within the watershed are resulting in the restoration of habitats like seagrass in our region. SBEP considers these dual-purpose restoration projects on par with large-scale restoration in our region because they directly restore water quality vital to seagrass beds and coastal ecosystems and provide additional habitat within the watershed.

Over the past twenty years, improvements to point source discharges to Sarasota Bay have occurred through upgrades to the City of Sarasota's wastewater treatment plants to Advanced Wastewater Treatment Standards (AWT), reuse of reclaimed wastewater, and the ongoing elimination of package plants throughout Sarasota County. This will result in the eventual elimination of discharging directly into creeks and/or Sarasota Bay. This, combined with the improvements to septic systems within the Phillippi Creek watershed, has reduced nutrient loading and bacteria counts in Roberts Bay. SBEP and its partners have been thinking forward in implementing and designing projects to improve non-point source discharges by installing stormwater retrofit infrastructure, sediment removal structures, bioswales, and enhancing shoreline, among other activities. Large-scale wastewater improvement projects are captured in the recently completed (FY25) Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP). The municipal wastewater projects in the WQPP improve in-stream conditions near the former point source discharge and may lead to increases in habitat in areas previously impacted by point source discharges. Therefore, restoration sites identified in the FY2025-2030 Habitat Restoration Plan that may complement municipal projects in the WQPP are considered more important especially when they occur near point sources and projects to eliminate them.

Habitat Restoration and/or Adaptation to Future Conditions

The final objective(s) identify projects that will restore habitat, where appropriate, to historic conditions or aid the habitat in its adaptation to future conditions. SBEP recognizes that some habitats have been lost in greater percentages than others, and that restoration projects may not be able to restore these habitats to their historic proportions due to lack of available land. Additionally, these habitats may not exist under future conditions and therefore may not be a good expenditure of time and resources given the rapid changes to our system (see Appendix B - Flamingo Cay). Coastal development is widespread and long established in our region and occurs from the bay water’s edge through the inland reaches of our watershed thus making it more difficult to restore all types of marsh habitats (e.g., high/low marsh and mangrove fringe). Projects that provided the opportunity to restore a more heterogeneous habitat mosaic are preferred but limited in opportunity.

It is important to recognize the relationship between upstream freshwater habitats and estuarine habitats. Natural water storage within the watershed has been reduced by the filling and draining of isolated freshwater wetlands along with increases in impervious surface. Because this has altered the timing, quantity, and quality of freshwater flows into Sarasota Bay, the restoration or creation of freshwater wetlands within the drainage basin of a tidal creek are considered a priority. Projects that would restore the historic habitat composition of a site are also high priority. However, land available for such restoration is limited and we do consider stormwater retrofit projects that use natural habitat in their construction to help achieve this goal and serve multiple purposes of cleaning stormwater, slowing delivery of water to the bay, and providing habitat (see Appendix B - FISH Preserve and GT Bray Park) and (Table 1.). We believe this multi-purpose approach is where many future restoration opportunities exist within our watershed.

Table 1. SBEP 2022 CCMP – Five-Year Habitat Goals & Targets (FY2026–FY2030)

Objective	Goal	Metrics	Location	Target (by FY2030)
WH Obj. 4: Coastal Wetlands & Shoreline Resiliency	Expand nature-based shorelines and allow mangrove migration in high-visibility public sites.	Linear feet of hardened shoreline converted to living shoreline; # of living shoreline projects completed	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park Shoreline (~200 ft); Rose Park (~150 ft); Bayfront Park (~1,500 ft)	≥1,850 ft of new living shoreline; 3 completed projects; include upslope migration corridors
WH Obj. 2: Uplands & Freshwater Wetlands	Restore/enhance mangrove/salt and freshwater wetland/upland edges that support estuary function and wildlife habitat.	Acres restored/enhanced; % invasive cover removed and replanted	F.I.S.H Preserve (10 ac); (GT Bray Park (8.2 ac)	≥18 acres of enhancements
WH Obj. 2: Tributary Habitats	Rehabilitate priority tributary reaches to restore hydrology and habitat complexity.	Linear miles improved; Sediment/TSS removal	Matheny Creek concept benefits (1,600–2,300 lbs TSS/yr; 85–100 lbs TN/yr)	≥1.0 mile improved; achieve documented TSS/TN reductions
WH Obj. 5: Seagrass & Benthic Habitats	Maintain or increase bay-wide seagrass	Net change in seagrass acreage; # benthic	Report Card baseline (FY2024)	No net loss of seagrass;

	extent while enhancing benthic EFH.	habitat projects (oyster/reef modules)		maintain/expand in ≥3 of 5 segments
FW Obj. 2: Native Shellfish	Increase filter-feeder habitat and shoreline protection using oyster-friendly structures.	300 ft of settlement panels installed, and breakwater structures	Longboat Key mangrove panels; Bayfront Park; Rose Park	Install ≥1 settlement or breakwater project; measurable recruitment of sessile organisms within 24 months
FW Obj. 3: Native Fish	Improve juvenile fish EFH within the bay through structural/benthic enhancements.	24 reef modules added; Species richness/CPUE at reef sites	Six artificial reef complexes constructed	Maintain all 6 complexes
CE Obj. 2: Public Understanding	Pair restoration with access/education to build long-term stewardship.	# sites with new/updated habitat signage & boardwalks	City Island Boardwalk modernization completed	≥4 habitat sites with signage/access

Methodology

The projects in this SBEP Habitat Restoration Plan must fall within the categories of the [2022 CCMP Update](#) sections on the Water Quality and Quantity (WQQ) Action Plan, as well as the Watershed Habitats (WH) and Fish and Wildlife (FW) Action Plans. Specifically, those projects that include elements associated with stormwater treatment fall within the CCMP categories of WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters” as well as WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater.” Those projects that mostly focus on restoration and/or maintenance of habitats (rather than stormwater treatment) implement WH Objective 4 – “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency,” WH Objective 5 – “Protect, enhance and restore seagrass and other benthic habitats,” and FW Objective 3 – “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish.” Projects also include both public access and educational signage, thus acting on the CCMP category of the Community Engagement (CE) Action Plan Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues.”

Given the limited opportunities for restoration in our region, the list of restoration sites generated from the prior [FY2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan](#) are regarded as a comprehensive list of priorities for SBEP as outlined in the three previous five-year plans and are maintained in the current plan. For details on the ranking process of the FY2016-2020 plan, please refer to the [FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan](#). This detailed plan used GIS analysis for each site to generate the information needed to score and determine whether viable restoration options were available based upon existing conditions. In some cases, the percentage of natural or exotic vegetation and degree of disturbance were digitized based on aerial photointerpretation. Field verification of site conditions was conducted for sites that had not yet been visited and/or for areas where existing conditions were difficult to discern from aerial imagery. Approximate property acreage and an estimate of the area within the property boundaries that could be restored were calculated

from GIS-based maps. Restoration scientists developed conceptual design plans for each viable site. These conceptual designs are relatively general; the actual restoration design can only be determined through closer site inspection including topographic survey, geologic assessment, other pertinent data collection efforts, and coordination with the landowner prior to implementation. To plan for future tide heights and conditions, these conceptual plans intentionally incorporate designs that consider future conditions. For instance, where appropriate land exists, designs include softening hard edges for more high marsh and upland areas which will allow plant communities to naturally migrate as gradual inundation occurs. To promote the living shorelines initiative, SBEP continually investigates potential locations for demonstration of living shoreline projects, especially in highly visible areas. Additionally, it should be recognized that some concepts and ideas that were proposed in previous Habitat and Restoration Plans or by stakeholders were not considered viable for this five-year period. Reasons for non-viability included, but were not limited to: projects not in our watershed; inability to locate publicly owned parcels; idea not sufficiently developed to plan its initiation; field visit determined impacts to native habitat would outweigh benefit of restoration activity; increased tide heights and tropical storm impacts negating the need to act; lack of public support or political will; and change in the site conditions.

Therefore, the current FY2025-2030 plan maintains this long-term list except for projects determined to no longer be appropriate or viable. It should be noted that in the current plan we were unable to maintain the priority order established in the FY2016-2020 plan because of funding source constraints, landowner/stakeholder priorities, availability of the property, and cost, amongst other factors. When the IJJA funding became available, ten additional projects were identified as priorities by municipal stakeholders who owned the lands, these were added to that long-term list of priority projects following extensive coordination with regional experts and SBEP partners (Manatee and Sarasota Counties, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, City of Holmes Beach, FDEP, SWFWMD, and the EPA) see [FY 2022-2023 IJJA plan](#) and [FY 2024-2026 IJJA plan](#). Those projects were further reviewed and the project list supported by our Citizens Advisory Committee and our Technical Advisory Committees prior to being funded through the IJJA (Appendix A and B).

IJJA Funded Restoration Projects

It was agreed upon at SBEP's February 11, 2022 Policy Board meeting that SBEP would spend all IJJA funds on project implementation rather than salaries, office expenses and/or additional studies or report writing. To facilitate this, SBEP tracks IJJA funds separate from our normal operating funds and expenditures. Staff time spent managing these additional projects does not come from IJJA funds but is part of our regular job descriptions. In this manner, SBEP anticipates that IJJA funds will be spent entirely on paying for consultants and contractors needed to implement specific restoration and education/outreach efforts, as well as monitoring project success. This approach maximizes the funding available for habitat restoration and/or stormwater retrofit projects that require significant design, permitting, construction management, and construction efforts.

The IJJA projects have been listed in prior short-term documents, [FY 2022-2023 IJJA plan](#) and a [FY 2024-2026 IJJA plan](#). Together, those plans contain ten projects totaling \$4,530,000 that should be completed before 2030. Details on each of the IJJA projects: their status, relevance to the CCMP goals, budget, a brief description of the project, and the partners involved in the project can be found in Appendix B. It should be noted that specific details for ongoing and upcoming project implementation may change over time, as projects move through the phases of community input, design, permitting and then construction.

SBEP and its partners continue to pursue additional funding sources for non-IJJA projects in the comprehensive list (Appendix A). Nonetheless, these projects represent a series that are consistent with implementation of the [2022 CCMP \(update\)](#) and derived from the [FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan](#). All of these plans have been vetted through SBEP's Citizens and Technical Advisory Committees, and they have been developed with input from our local government partners who own the land (in all cases) on which these projects occur.

Actions

Habitat Restoration Plan are used as guidance and planning documents by SBEP and its partners to identify, prioritize, and implement restoration projects throughout Sarasota Bay and its watershed (Appendix A). When funding became available through the IJJA in 2022, this comprehensive document, pre-planning by SBEP, and approval of the project list by our Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee resulted in ten projects (Appendix A) totaling \$4,530,000. Projects were integrated into prior short-term Habitat Restoration plans ([FY 22-23 IJJA plan](#) and [FY 24-26 IJJA plan](#)). Of the ten IJJA projects, three were 'shovel ready' and were rapidly implemented by SBEP. To date, five projects have been completed, three are in progress, one was reprioritized by stakeholders, and two will be started in FY 2026. All IJJA projects are anticipated to be completed by the expiration of this plan in 2030. Once IJJA projects are completed, we will implement a strategy that uses our base funding from Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, contributions from our local partners, or seek State Resiliency Grants, Local Capital Improvement funds, and other grant sources to continue to implement the remaining projects on this five-year plan that will cost from \$2,850,000 to \$6,700,000 to complete.

SBEP staff charged with overseeing the implementation of the CCMP, the Five-Year Restoration Plan, and the IJJA include:

- Ryan Gandy, Ph.D., Executive Director
- TBD, Program Scientist
- Heather Moody, Operations Manager
- Megan Barry, Public Outreach Manager
- Cheryl Dexter, Executive Assistant

Appendix A. 2025-2030 Projects, Crosswalk to Other Plans, and Project Details

CCMP goals referenced below are in the [2022 CCMP Update](#) and in the table referenced as:

Water Quality & Quantity Action Plan – (WQQ 1-8); Watershed Action Plan – (WH1-5); Wildlife Action Plan – (FW 1-3); Community Engagement Action Plan – (CE 1-4).

2025 – 2030 Action Item	Relationship to Prior Plan	Relationship to CCMP Goals	Current Status	Budget	Owner	Location	County	Size	Land Classification	Partners
IJA Projects										
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WQQ-3; WQQ-4; WH-4; CE-2	Ongoing Awaiting Construction	\$200,000	City of Sarasota	2523 Coconut Ave, Sarasota, FL 34234	Sarasota	2.7 Acres	Upland/Wetland	City of Sarasota
Matheny Creek Stormwater Modification	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WQQ-3; WQQ-4; WH-4; CE-2	Ongoing Awaiting Sarasota County	\$600,000	Sarasota County	6741 S Tamiami Trl, Sarasota, FL 34231	Sarasota	30 Acres	Upland	Sarasota County
Rose Park Phase I	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WH-4; CE-2	Ongoing In contracting with Design/Engineering firm	\$150,000	Manatee County	714 Palma Sola Blvd, Bradenton, FL 34209	Manatee	Planning	Upland	Manatee County
Rose Park Phase II	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WH-4; CE-2	Planned FY26 Pending FY26 Federal funding	\$500,000	Manatee County	715 Palma Sola Blvd, Bradenton, FL 34209	Manatee	0.6 Acres	Upland	Manatee County
Sarasota Bayfront Park South Shoreline	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WQQ-3; WQQ-4; WH-4; CE-2	Planned FY26 Pending FY26 Federal funding	\$400,000	City of Sarasota	On Mound Street between Selby Gardens and Bayfront Park	Sarasota	1,500 ft	Wetland	City of Sarasota
F.I.S.H Preserve	FY 22-23 IJA plan	WQQ-3; WQQ-4; WH-4; CE-2	Completed FY23	\$700,000	Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage	11655 Cortez Rd W, Bradenton, FL 34210	Manatee	10 Acres	Upland/Wetland	FISH, FWC, and SWFWMD
GT Bray Park Stream and Pond Restoration	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan FY 22-23 IJA plan	WQQ-3; WH-4; CE-2	Completed FY24	\$900,000	Manatee County	5502 33rd Ave Dr W, Bradenton, FL 34209	Manatee	8.2 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Manatee County City of Bradenton
Artificial Reefs	FY 22-23 IJA plan	WH-5; FW-3; CE-2	Complete FY24	\$220,000	State of Florida	Sarasota Bay	Sarasota/ Manatee	10 Acres	Bay Bottom	Manatee County Sarasota County FWC
Longboat Key Bayfront Park Shoreline	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WQQ-4; WH-3; CE-2	Completed FY25	\$500,000	Town of Longboat	4052 Gulf of Mexico Drive Longboat Key, FL 34228	Manatee	300 ft	Wetland Shoreline	Town of Longboat
Sarasota Baywalk at City Island	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WH-4; CE-2	Completed FY25	\$200,000	City of Sarasota	1500 Ken Thompson Pkwy. Sarasota, FL 34236	Sarasota	4.5	Wetland	City of Sarasota
Flamingo Cay	FY 24-26 IJA plan	WH-4; CE-2	Rescinded FY25	\$150,000	Manatee County	Northwest corner of Palma Sola Bay	Manatee	100 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Manatee County

CCMP goals referenced below are in the [2022 CCMP Update](#) and in the table referenced as:

Water Quality & Quantity Action Plan – (WQQ 1-8); Watershed Action Plan – (WH1-5); Wildlife Action Plan – (FW 1-3); Community Engagement Action Plan – (CE 1-4).

Non-IIJA Projects										
2025 – 2030 Action Item	Relationship to Prior Plan	Relationship to CCMP Goals	Current Status	Cost \$ (< 25 K) \$\$ (25-99 K) \$\$\$ (100-500 K) \$\$\$\$ (500 K - 1 M) \$\$\$\$\$ (> 1 M)	Owner	Location	County	Size	Land Classification	Partners
South Lido	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; FE-1; FW-3; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$\$\$	City of Sarasota	2201 Benjamin Franklin Drive, Sarasota County	Sarasota	31.5 Acres	Upland/Wetland	City of Sarasota
Palma Sola West	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; FE-1; FW-3; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$	Manatee County	Western Palma Sola Bay southeast of Perico Bay Club, Manatee County	Manatee	11.12	Upland/Wetland	Manatee County
King Middle School	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; FE-1; FW-2; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$	School Board of Manatee County, William Eller, Wilmington Land Company	600 75th St Manatee County	Manatee	2.83 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Manatee County
Phillippi Creek Shoreline	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-2; WH-3; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$	West Coast Church of the Cross, South Gate Community Association	Phillippi Creek south of Webber Street, Sarasota County	Sarasota	1.3 Acres	Wetland	Sarasota County
Jim Neville Marine Preserve	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; FE-1; FW-2; FW-3; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$\$	Sarasota County	Little Sarasota Bay east of historic Midnight Pass, Sarasota County	Sarasota	31.4 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Sarasota County
Edwards Islands	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$\$	Sarasota County	Roberts Bay west of ICW, Sarasota County	Sarasota	9.5 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Sarasota County
Skiers Island	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$\$	Sarasota County	Roberts Bay west of ICW, Sarasota County	Sarasota	5.99 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Sarasota County
Bayshore Island	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; FW-3; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$	Manatee County	Northeastern Sarasota Bay at Cedar Hammock Creek	Manatee	6.14 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Manatee County
Cortez Key Bird Sanctuary	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; FW-2; FW-3; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$\$\$	State of Florida	Sarasota Bay south of Cortez Fishing Village and the FISH Preserve	Manatee	0.49 Acres	Wetland	Manatee County
Winston Tract	FY 2016-2020 Habitat Restoration Plan	WH-4; CE-2	Potential Future Project	\$\$	State of Florida	Palma Sola Bay	Manatee	5.12 Acres	Upland/Wetland	Manatee County

Appendix B: 2025-2030 Project Detail

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park – FY24

Status: In Progress

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$200,000

Owner: City of Sarasota

Location: 2523 Cocoanut Ave, Sarasota, FL 34234

County: Sarasota

Size: 2.7 Acres

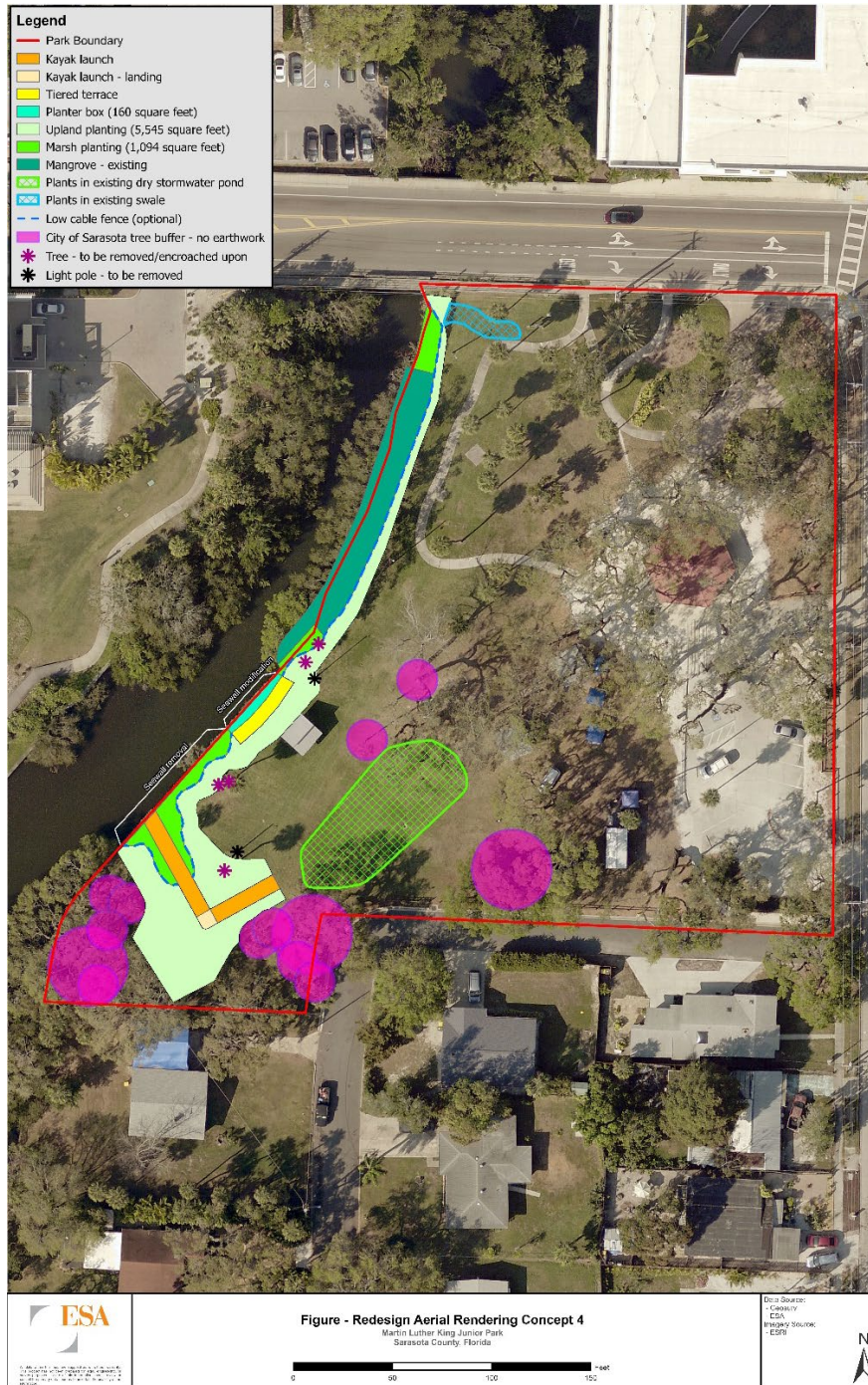
Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: City of Sarasota

Project Description

The ongoing project involves several different project components (Figure 5), including: 1) removal of exotic vegetation along a stretch of shoreline bordering Whitaker Bayou, 2) improving public access to the bayou by building and kayak launch, and 3) removal of a dilapidated seawall along the shoreline and replacing it with a living shoreline with water access. Public access to the site is via the existing infrastructure of the park itself, and community input has been sought as to what features are desired for park users. The project includes signage, public access, and educational opportunities. Project implementation will be coordinated with SBEP and other sources to bring students out to the site for educational field trips.

Figure B1 – Overall site plan for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park



This project has completed the design and permitting stages, and construction is expected to initiate in January 2026.

Project Partners

The property is owned and managed by the City of Sarasota. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with neighborhood groups, local schools and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of the environmental curriculum. SBEP funds help school districts and other partners carry out such field trips and will be included in SBEP's Citizens' Action Plan (CAP) budget.

Matheny Creek Stormwater Project – FY25

Status: In Progress

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project is in progress and addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - "Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters"
- WQQ Objective 4 - "Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater"
- WH Objective 4 - "Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency"
- CE Objective 2 - "Improve public understanding of bay-related issues"

Budget \$600,000

Owner: Sarasota County

Location: 6741 S Tamiami Trl, Sarasota, FL 34231

County: Sarasota

Size: 30 acres

Land Classification: Upland

Project Partners: Sarasota County

Project Description

The project involves several different project components, including: 1) improving water quality in Matheny Creek, a tributary to Sarasota Bay, 2) reducing local flooding concern via removal of accumulated sediments, and 3) removal of exotic vegetation along the banks of this tidal tributary (Figure 8). This project treats stormwater runoff from a high-density, fully developed portion of Sarasota Bay's watershed that lacks stormwater treatment. The project is anticipated to remove 1,600 to 2,300 pounds of total suspended solids per year, and 85 to 100 pounds of total nitrogen per year.

Figure B2 – Overall site plan and potential benefits of Matheny Creek stormwater retrofit project



The water quality benefits of the project have already been quantified by Sarasota County, based on a conceptual project design. Awaiting approval from Sarasota County Stormwater Division.

Project Partners

The property has been identified by Sarasota County as a high-priority stormwater project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be completed by the County to ensure that the expectations for project performance are met.

Rose Park Phase I – FY25

Status: In Progress

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project is in progress to addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$150,000

Owner: Manatee County

Location: 714 Palma Sola Blvd, Bradenton, FL 34209

County: Manatee

Size: 0.6 acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The project is in a small public park on the eastern shoreline of Palma Sola Bay, owned and managed by Manatee County (Figure 10). This project is the first phase of a two-phase process to implement a living shoreline project at Rose Park that enhances coastal resilience, restores intertidal habitats, improves water quality, and filters stormwater entering Palma Sola Bay. The project will prioritize improvements that soften the shoreline to enhance estuarine, shellfish, and fisheries habitat using nature-based resiliency techniques. This first phase will focus on obtaining final design for the project and gaining permits for later construction (Phase II), which would be funded with FY26 IJA funds.

SBEP will work with local stakeholders to seek out ways to increase educational opportunities for the public to understand the need for better management of stormwater runoff in nearby neighborhoods. SBEP will use information from this and similar living shoreline projects as examples in public outreach and education efforts that are designed to demonstrate the methods used in living shorelines and highlight the benefits to surrounding communities and the bay.

Figure B3 – Overall site plan and potential benefits of Rose Park shoreline restoration project



Project Partners

The property has been identified by Manatee County as a high-priority habitat restoration project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be closely coordinated between SBEP and the County, to ensure that the County’s expectations of project performance are met by the final project.

Rose Park Phase II – FY26

Status: Planned for FY26

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This pending project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: \$500,000

Owner: Manatee County

Location: 714 Palma Sola Blvd, Bradenton, FL 34209

County: Manatee

Size: 0.6 acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The project is in a small public park owned and managed by Manatee County, on the eastern shoreline of Palma Sola Bay. This project is the second phase of a two-phase process to implement a living shoreline project at Rose Park (Figure 10), to enhance coastal resilience, restore intertidal habitats, improve water quality, and filter stormwater entering Palma Sola Bay. The project will prioritize improvements that soften the shoreline to enhance estuarine, shellfish, and fisheries habitat using nature-based resiliency techniques. This second phase is to cover the costs of construction of the shoreline restoration and stormwater retrofit project, pending the completion of Phase I, which will focus on obtaining final design for the project, and gaining permits, using FY25 IJJA funds.

SBEP will work with local stakeholders to seek out ways to increase educational opportunities for the public to understand the need for better management of stormwater runoff from nearby neighborhoods.

Project Partners

The property has been identified by Manatee County as a high-priority habitat restoration project. All efforts for design, permitting and construction will be closely coordinated between SBEP and the County, to ensure that the County’s expectations of project performance are met by the final project.

City Of Sarasota Bayfront Park South Shoreline Restoration – FY26

Status: Planned for FY26

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This pending project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$400,000

Owner: City of Sarasota

Location: On Mound Street between Selby Gardens and Bayfront Park

County: Sarasota

Size: 1,500 ft of shoreline

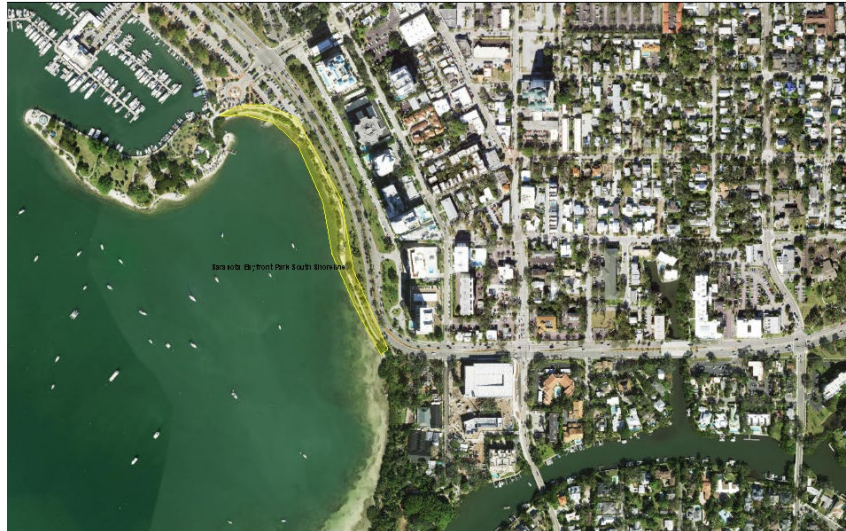
Land Classification: Wetland

Project Partners: City of Sarasota

Project Description

The project involves several different project components, including: 1) removal of exotic vegetation along a stretch of shoreline bordering Sarasota Bay, 2) improving public access to the shoreline by clearing away non-native plants, 3) removal of a portion of compromised seawall along the shoreline between Bayfront Park and Selby Gardens, and 4) creating of a living shoreline that would allow mangroves to migrate upslope with anticipated higher tides over the next few decades. Public access to the site is via the existing infrastructure of the park itself, and community input will be sought as to what features are desired for park users. The project will include signage, public access, and educational opportunities. Project implementation will be coordinated with SBEP and other sources to bring students out to the site for educational field trips.

Figure B4 – Overall site plan of efforts for City of Sarasota’s South Bayfront Park shoreline restoration project



Project Partners

The property site is owned and managed by the City of Sarasota. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with neighborhood groups, local schools, and school districts, so that field trips could serve as a part of the environmental curriculum. SBEP helps school districts and other partners carry out field trips. If partners are interested in this site, and the subject is applicable to the curriculum, then it may be included in SBEP’s Citizens’ Action Plan (CAP) budget.

F.I.S.H Preserve Phase IV – FY22

Status: Complete

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This completed project addressed the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$700,000

Owner: Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage

Location: 11655 Cortez Rd W, Bradenton, FL 34210

County: Manatee

Size: 10 acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage , Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)

Project Description

This project built on three prior habitat restoration phases on the property of the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (F.I.S.H.) located just east of the village of Cortez, on the south side of Cortez Road in Manatee County, FL. Project components include the removal of invasive exotic species and the restoration of tidal influences via expansion of existing wetland features. An additional feature, added in the fall of 2023, routed stormwater runoff from an adjacent 30-acre mobile home community (located on the east side of the property) into a sediment sump, with overflows providing a source of freshwater for the created wetlands that merge with enhanced tidal creeks in the eastern half of the project site. This addition provides stormwater filtration where none existed and a freshwater source for the wetlands. Public access is provided via an entrance on the west side of the property, which connects with hiking trails. The project includes signage, public access, and educational opportunities. Ongoing efforts bring students to the site for educational field trips on the value of restored wetlands for the Sarasota Bay Estuary.

Figure B5 – Phase IV of the FISH Preserve stormwater retrofit, and habitat restoration project



Project Partners

The property is owned by the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (F.I.S.H.), a local non-profit dedicated to promotion, education, and preservation of the historical commercial fishing village of Cortez and promotion of “traditional maritime cultures” and the natural environment. Environmental education and outreach efforts are coordinated with local schools and school districts, providing opportunities for field trips to serve as a part of the environmental curriculum.

Prior restoration efforts on the property (Phases 1, 2, and 3) were completed through the coordinated efforts of various entities, including Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).

GT Bray Park – FY23

Status: Complete

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This completed project addressed the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 3 - “Improve and manage hydrology for a more natural pattern of timing, quantity and distribution of surface waters”
- WH Objective 4 – “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$900,000

Owner: Manatee County

Location: 5502 33rd Ave Dr W, Bradenton, FL 34209

County: Manatee

Size: 8.2 acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Manatee County, City of Bradenton

Project Description

This project involved habitat restoration for a section of Cedar Hammock Creek (Figure 2) that is within the boundaries of GT Bray Park. The park is owned by the City of Bradenton and operated by the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department. Project components include the removal of invasive exotic species, regrading the stream bed, expansion of the creek to allow for wetland creation, and public access and educational signage.

The project is in an area not susceptible future higher tides, but educational signage stresses the need for enhancement of water quality by acting on watershed pollutant loads to increase the resiliency of the bay and its natural resources. The project is in a highly visible and high-use public park. Enhanced public access to the creek is matched with educational signage to allow visitors to understand the value of such habitats, and the need to restore the creeks and waterways that eventually flow to Sarasota Bay. SBEP will use the project site for outreach and education efforts.

Figure B6 – Stream restoration of Cedar Hammock Creek at GT Bray Park



The second component of the GT Bray Park project is a retrofit of an former wastewater holding pond at GT Bray Park (Figure B7). This component involves the removal of exotic invasive species along the shoreline, replanting the shoreline, and establishment of both a “no mow zone” along the upland fringe and an enhanced littoral fringe. Educational signage includes the benefits of properly functioning stormwater ponds.

Figure B7– Former wastewater holding pond at GT Bray Park



Project Partners

The property is owned by the City of Bradenton and managed by the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department. The project design and permitting efforts for this project have been paid for and overseen by SBEP staff. When environmental education and outreach opportunities present themselves, these are coordinated with local schools and school districts, to facilitate field trips that serve as part of the environmental curriculum.

Sarasota Bay Artificial Reefs – FY23

Status: Complete

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This completed project addressed the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 5 – “Protect, enhance and restore seagrass and other benthic habitats”
- FW Objective 3 - “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$220,000

Owner: State of Florida

Location: Sarasota Bay

County: Manatee/Sarasota

Size: 10 acres

Land Classification: Bay Bottom

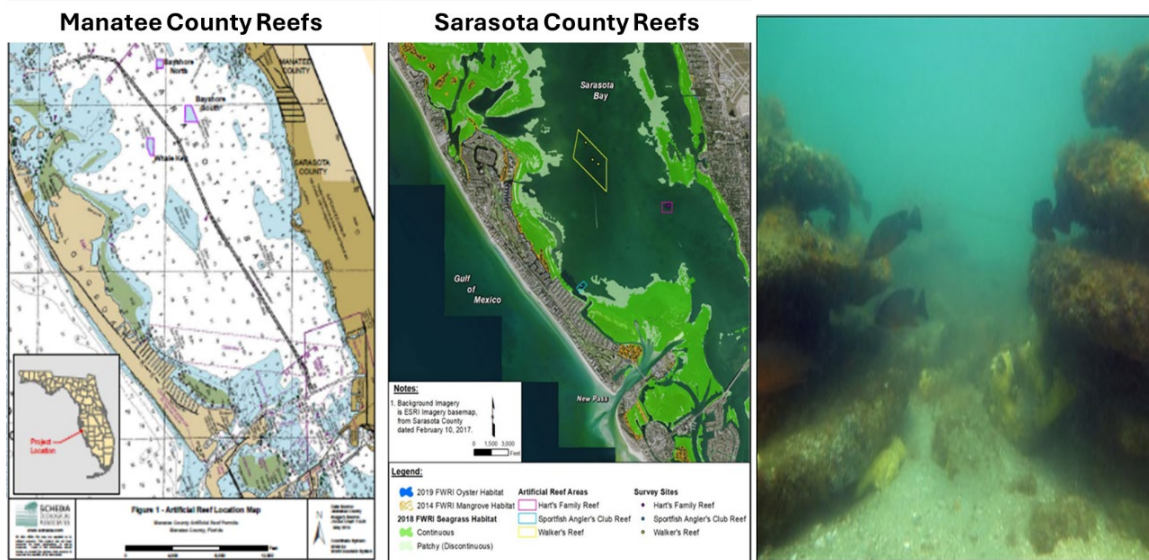
Project Partners: Manatee County, Sarasota County

Project Description

Artificial reefs within Sarasota Bay offer fishing opportunities for residents and visitors who don't have the means to travel offshore to catch fish. Also, these reefs can provide shelter and habitat for juveniles of recreationally important finfish (e.g., gag grouper and grey snapper) that live within the estuary the first few years of their lives before entering the offshore fishery. Prior research in Sarasota Bay ([SBEP Study Confirms Economically Important Fish Use New Artificial Reef Designs](#)) has resulted in the development of specially designed reef modules that can support juvenile stages of recreationally important species for the portion of their lives that occurs within the bay.

The artificial reef project was built upon prior efforts, which involved a series of individual artificial reef deployments located in six geographically distinct locations (three each in Manatee and Sarasota County waters) (Figure 4): Bayshore North, Bayshore South and Whale Key reefs in Manatee County and Walkers Reef, Hart's Family Reef, and Sportfish Anglers' Club Reef in Sarasota County.

Figure B8 – Location of artificial reef complexes in Manatee and Sarasota portions of Sarasota Bay and Underwater photo of artificial reef at Hart’s Family Reef complex



The Walker’s Reef and Hart’s Family Reef complexes are in the open waters of Sarasota Bay and can be easily visited by small boats. In contrast, the Sportfish Anglers’ Club Reef complex is located much closer to shore and can be easily accessed by kayakers as well as small boats. Research conducted in Sarasota Bay has determined that these artificial reefs provide habitat for both adult and juvenile stages of recreationally and commercially important species of finfish, as illustrated in Figure 2, 3, and B8.

Project Partners

The artificial reef project was overseen by SBEP staff, in full consultation with staff from both Manatee and Sarasota Counties, as well as the FWC.

Longboat Key Bayfront Park Seawall – Shoreline Restoration – FY24

Status: In Progress

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WQQ Objective 4 - “Reduce pollutant loading from stormwater”
- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget \$500,000

Owner: Town of Longboat

Location: 4052 Gulf of Mexico Drive Longboat Key, FL 34228

County: Manatee

Size: 300 ft of shoreline

Land Classification: Wetland

Project Partners: Town of Longboat Key

Project Description

This project is in progress on the east side of Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park in the Town of Longboat Key. The project involves the installation of “mangrove panels” (Figure 6) on the outside of an existing fiberglass seawall. The installation of concrete panels on the outside of the seawall will facilitate the settlement and growth of oysters and other filter-feeding organisms, compared to the general lack of flora and fauna observed on fiberglass and vinyl seawalls. The project is in a highly visible and much-used public park. Educational signage will allow visitors to understand the value of filter feeding organisms and the need to provide habitat for them along the bay’s shorelines.

Figure B9 – Shoreline at Bayfront Park, with 300’ of fiberglass seawall amended with mangrove panels.



Project Partners

The property is owned and managed by the Town of Longboat Key. The project design and permitting efforts were paid for using Clean Water Act 320 funds and overseen by SBEP staff.

City Island Boardwalk and Signage – FY24

Status: Complete

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget

\$200,000

Owner: City of Sarasota

Location: 1500 Ken Thompson Pkwy. Sarasota, FL 34236

County: Sarasota

Size: 4.5 Acres

Land Classification: Wetland

Project Partners: City of Sarasota

Project Description

This project was completed in September of 2025. The project involved three different components: 1) removal of a dilapidated boardwalk through one of SBEP’s oldest habitat restoration projects, 2) replacement of degraded sections of the boardwalk with a new boardwalk, and 3) increased signage and educational materials. Public access to the site is via existing infrastructure, and the project includes signage, enhanced public access, and educational opportunities.

Figure B10 – Completed Boardwalk



Project Partners

The property is owned and managed by the City of Sarasota. Environmental education and outreach efforts will be coordinated with neighborhood groups, local schools, and school districts, so that field trips can serve as a part of the environmental curriculum. SBEP funds to help school districts and other partners carry out such field trips are included in SBEP's Citizens' Action Plan (CAP) budget.

Flamingo Cay – FY25

Status: Rescinded

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - "Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency"
- CE Objective 2 - "Improve public understanding of bay-related issues"

Budget

\$160,000

Owner: Manatee County

Location: Northwest corner of Palma Sola Bay

County: Manatee

Size: 100.0 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The Flamingo Cay Conservation Area is approximately 100 acres of mangrove swamps and areas of former mangroves that were used for the disposal of spoil materials from the dredging of nearby residential areas. The project involves several different project components, including: 1) removal of exotic vegetation in upland spoil disposal sites, 2) replanting these degraded upland habitats with native species, and 3) where appropriate, reestablishing a more natural intertidal fringe in areas also impacted by spoil disposal. The area is not easily accessed, except by boat, kayak or other forms of transport, and the project is located along a very busy boating channel, all of which preclude easy public access. SBEP will use information from this and similar projects as examples in public outreach and education efforts that are designed to demonstrate the methods used in restoration and highlight the benefits to surrounding communities and the bay.

Project Partners and Decision to Rescinded and Reallocate

The property was identified by Manatee County for habitat restoration. However, the excessive damage to the area following the hurricanes of '24, the loss of an eagle nesting trees, the logistics of managing primitive camp sites, and observations that higher tides are beginning to overtake the site caused Manatee County to rescind the project. Funds will be reallocated to other IJA projects that might have shortfalls in funding due to increased costs.

South Lido

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- FE Objective1 – “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish”
- FW Objective 3- “Monitor and protect threatened, endangered and vulnerable wildlife”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated >\$1,000,000

Owner: City of Sarasota

Location: 2201 Benjamin Franklin Drive, Sarasota County

County: Sarasota

Size: 31.5 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: City of Sarasota

Project Description

The South Lido site consists of approximately 153 acres that are owned by the City of Sarasota and operated by the Sarasota County Parks and Natural Lands Department. It is on Lido Key and is bordered by Big Pass, Sarasota Bay, and beachfront development. The park provides a mosaic of habitat and foraging opportunities for wildlife. Since 2001, several successful habitat restoration, enhancement, and creation projects have been completed at this location. The remaining project phases included high and low marsh creation, tidal creek creation, exotic removal, and dune restoration. This final phase of the project includes the removal of N/E vegetation (primarily Australian pine (*Casuarina equisetifolia*), excavation of spoil within the mangrove swamps, and the creation of coastal hammock near the park entrance (Potential Restoration Options). The spoil material was originally generated by historic dredging and filling associated with the mosquito ditch. This material will be removed either by hand or by hydroblasting techniques. This project would reduce the seed source of N/E species, improve hydrology within the mangrove swamps, increase the habitat value for wildlife, and enhance a popular recreational amenity for the community.

Palma Sola West

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- FE Objective1 – “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish”
- FW Objective 3- “Monitor and protect threatened, endangered and vulnerable wildlife”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$100,000-\$500,000

Owner: Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources

Location: Western Palma Sola Bay southeast of Perico Bay Club, Manatee County

County: Manatee

Size: 11.12 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The Palma Sola West project site is approximately 78 acres of estuarine wetlands owned by Manatee County. The project is located in western Palma Sola Bay and abuts the Perico Bay Club residential community along its western edge. This area is surrounded by seagrass and EFH and could provide roosting and nesting habitat for protected bird species. This site was historically mangrove swamp with a central area of saltern. Mosquito ditching in the 1960s altered the hydrology and severely degraded and reduced the size of the saltern. Of all estuarine habitats in this region, salterns have been most disproportionately impacted by development. Spoil from mosquito ditching and nearby dredging of the ICW was deposited on the project site and these spoil areas are now infested with N/E vegetation such as Australian pine. The project proposes strategically-located ditch blocks to restore a hydrology which will support the natural regeneration of the saltern. Additionally, the project proposes the removal of N/E species from a peninsula of spoil that extends into Palma Sola Bay, and from within the former saltern. Following removal of N/E vegetation, the peninsula would be replanted to create coastal maritime hammock habitat (Potential Restoration Options). This project would reduce the N/E seed source, improve habitat for wildlife, and regenerate critical saltern habitat.

Figure B12. Palma Sola West



King Middle School

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- FE Objective1 – “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish”
- FW Objective 2 – “Protect, restore, and enhance the diversity and abundance of native shellfish”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$100,000-\$500,000

Owner: School Board of Manatee County, William Eller, Wilmington Land Company

Location: 600 75th St Manatee County

County: Manatee

Size: 2.83 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

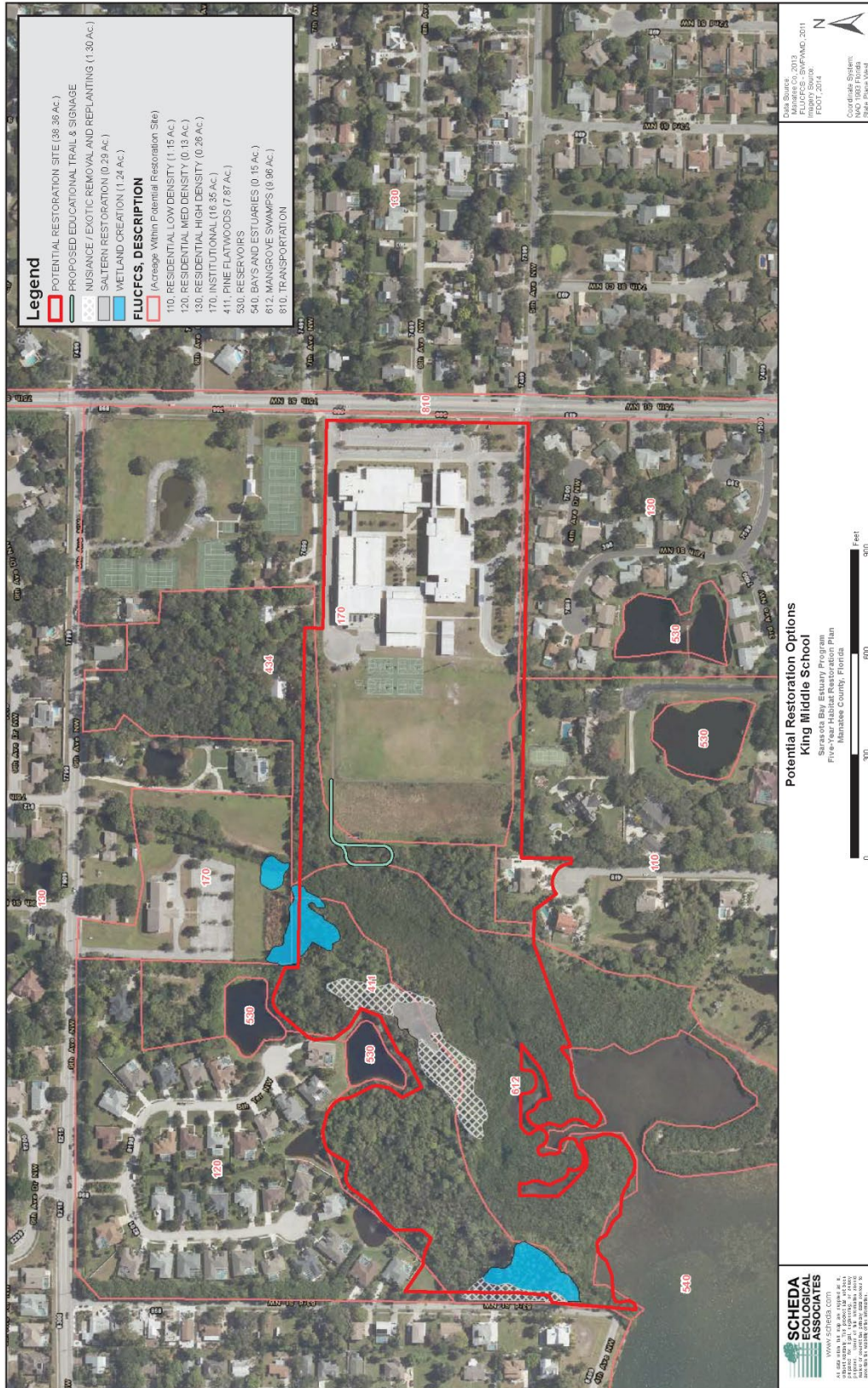
Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The King Middle School project site is approximately 38 acres of mixed publicly and privately owned land. It is at the northeastern corner of Palma Sola Bay. The site is primarily mangrove swamp with some relict saltern habitat, both of which have been invaded by melaleuca, Australian pine, and other N/E species. This project includes the removal of N/E vegetation, the creation of estuarine wetlands, and the restoration of coastal hammock (Potential Restoration Options). The installation of an educational trail with signs is proposed from the middle school into the mangrove swamp. This project would reduce the seed source of N/E species, increase the habitat value for wildlife, and provide an educational and recreational resource for students of the school and the local community. King Middle School has expressed support for this project; however, because portions of this site are owned by private entities, it would be essential to receive the approval of all property owners prior to initiating this project.

**Project has not been designed or proposed by all owners.*

Figure B13. King Middle School



Phillippi Creek Shoreline

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 2- “Protect, enhance and restore uplands and freshwater wetlands”
- WH Objective 2- “Improve tributary habitats with a special emphasis on fisheries”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated <\$25,000

Owner: West Coast Church of the Cross, South Gate Community Association, Sarasota County

Location: Phillippi Creek south of Webber Street, Sarasota County

County: Sarasota

Size: 1.30 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Sarasota County and Church of the Cross

Project Description

The Phillippi Creek shoreline project site covers approximately six acres of mixed publicly and privately owned land. Phillippi Creek is listed as an impaired waterbody according to the State of Florida’s Impaired Waters Rule Chapter 62-303 FAC.. The project is downstream from the recently-restored Pinecraft Park and upstream of Roberts Bay. The site is along Phillippi Creek’s channelized northwest bank and consists of a freshwater marsh which has a dense cattail (*Typha* sp.) interior. Both the marsh and surrounding uplands contain high densities of N/E species, primarily Brazilian pepper, carrotwood, guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*), and airpotato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*). This project proposes the removal of dense cattail and other N/E species to restore areas of low and high marsh, the removal of N/E species from onsite uplands, and the preservation of existing native vegetation such as giant leather fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*) and oaks (Potential Restoration Options).

This project would increase habitat value and decrease the seed source of N/E species downstream of the marsh. Sarasota County has expressed support for this project; however, because portions of this site are owned by private entities, it would be essential to receive the approval of all property owners prior to initiating this project. Additionally, N/E species would be very likely to recolonize the marsh without an aggressive maintenance regimen. Therefore, the proposed project is contingent upon two factors: the approval of all property owners, and a commitment from Sarasota County to maintain the proposed restoration efforts. *Project has not been designed or proposed by all owners.*

Figure B14. Phillippi Creek Shoreline



Jim Neville Marine Preserve

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- FE Objective 1 – “Protect, restore and enhance the diversity and abundance of native fish”
- FW Objective 2 – “Protect, restore, and enhance the diversity and abundance of native shellfish”
- FW Objective 3- “Monitor and protect threatened, endangered and vulnerable wildlife”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$500,000-\$1,000,000

Owner: Sarasota County

Location: Little Sarasota Bay east of historic Midnight Pass, Sarasota County

County: Sarasota

Size: 31.42 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Sarasota County

Project Description

The Jim Neville Marine Preserve is a mangrove island located within Little Sarasota Bay, just east of historic Midnight Pass. It was present in the historical imagery when Midnight Pass was open to the Gulf of Mexico (1948 aerial). The Jim Neville Preserve is surrounded by intact seagrass beds and sand flats that are important habitat and foraging areas for fish and wildlife. The island is dominated by mature mangrove swamp that is embedded with saltmarsh and salt flats. However, as the total area of uplands has increased over time, the percent coverage of N/E vegetation has also increased. The proposed project would remove N/E vegetation from areas which would subsequently be augmented with native coastal hammock species (Potential Restoration Options). There is potential to expand or create saltmarsh and/or saltern in these areas as well, although the plan should not preclude the public from using the site for recreation.

**Project has not been designed or proposed by owner.*

Figure B15. Jim Neville Marine Preserve



Edwards Islands

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$500,000-\$1,000,000

Owner: Sarasota County

Location: Roberts Bay west of ICW, Sarasota County

County: Sarasota

Size: 9.49 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Sarasota County

Project Description

Edwards Islands are a series of small spoil islands within Roberts Bay located just south of the Siesta Drive Bridge. The islands are surrounded by intact seagrass beds and sand flats that are important habitat and foraging areas for fish and wildlife. Habitat improvements are proposed for the two larger islands locally referred to as Big Edwards (north) and Little Edwards (south) Islands. Both islands are commonly used by the public for recreation. The majority of the combined land area is occupied by mature stands of Australian pine and other N/E vegetation. Several habitat improvement projects have been previously planned for these islands that primarily included the removal of N/E vegetation. However, there has been local opposition to these activities from the community for a number of reasons. This proposal is to enhance upland areas on both islands by removing N/E species and replanting with native coastal maritime species. On both islands, the plan creates a tidal lagoon which would be exposed at low tide and connect to the bay and existing mangrove swamp. The proposed open water features would be surrounded by created estuarine marsh (Potential Restoration Options). As the Edwards Islands are in a normal operating speed zone, future improvement projects may include shoreline stabilization and enhancement projects to reduce erosion caused by wave energy. The overall plan will not preclude the public from using the site for passive recreation.

Figure B16 Edwards Islands



Skiers Island

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$500,000-\$1,000,000

Owner: Sarasota County

Location: Roberts Bay west of ICW, Sarasota County

County: Sarasota

Size: 5.99 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

Project Partners: Sarasota County

Project Description

Skiers Island is a dredge spoil island which covers approximately nine acres and is owned by Sarasota County. It is located near the entrance of Siesta Key’s Grand Canal, just south of Edwards Islands. Like Edwards Islands, a large majority of the Skiers Island is covered by dense, mature stands of Australian pine and other N/E vegetation. This project proposes the complete removal of existing N/E vegetation and enhancement of the two upland areas to create coastal maritime hammock using oaks, myrsine (*Myrsine cubana*), seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera*), and buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*). Excavation of an open water area surrounded by low marsh is proposed in order to provide tidal flow between three outlets to the bay (Potential Restoration Options). This project will reduce the seed source of N/E species, improve tidal flushing, create EFH within the island, and increase the value of wildlife habitat on the island. As Skiers Island is located in a normal operating speed zone and is also a designated water sport area, additional improvements include shoreline stabilization and enhancement features to reduce erosion caused by wave energy. The overall plan will not preclude the public from using the site for passive recreation.

Figure B17. Skiers Island



Bayshore Island

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- FW Objective 3- “Monitor and protect threatened, endangered and vulnerable wildlife”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$100,000-\$500,000

Owner: Manatee County

Location: Northeastern Sarasota Bay at Cedar Hammock Creek outfall

County: Manatee

Size: 6.14 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

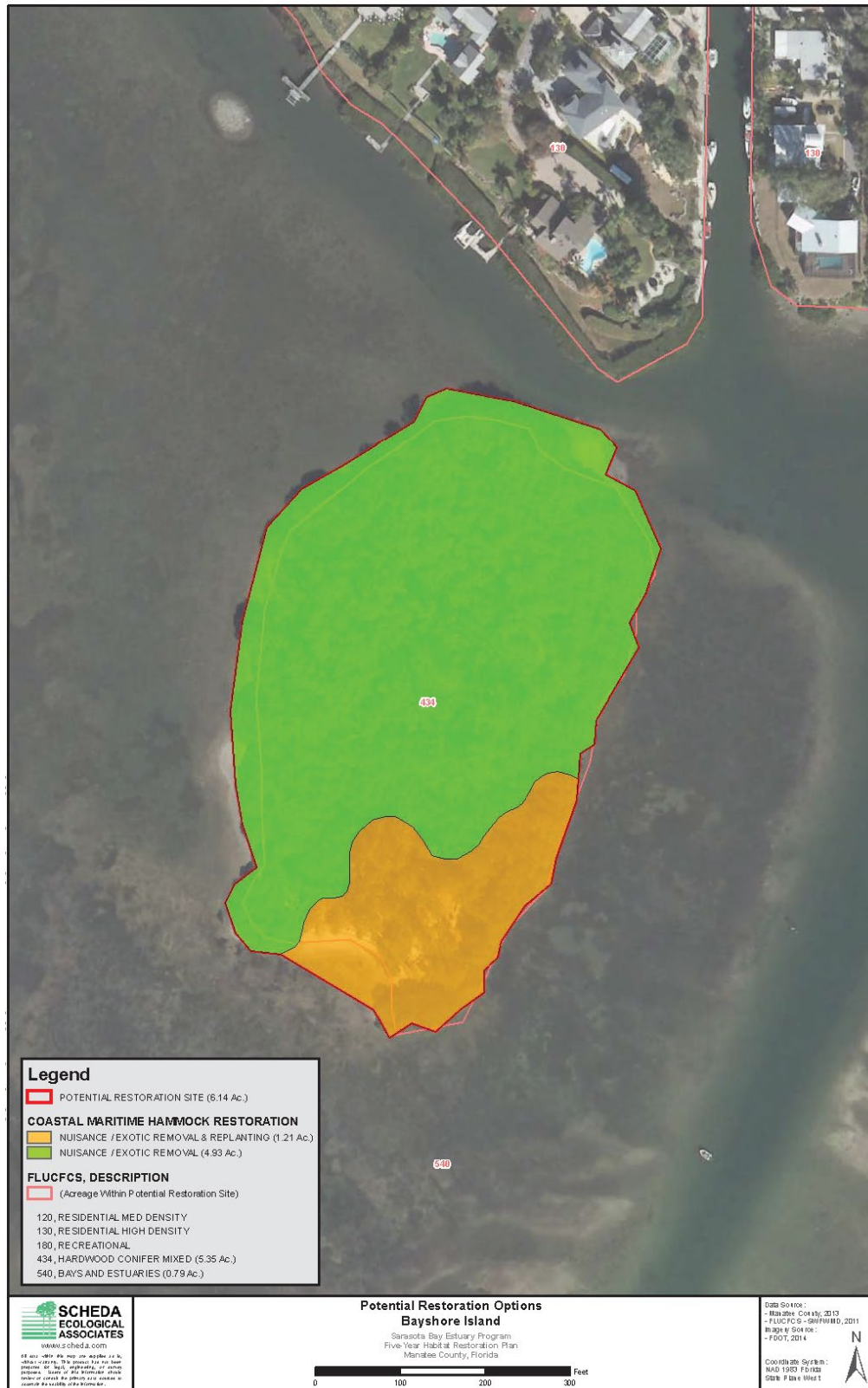
Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The Bayshore Island project site consists of approximately six acres of sovereign submerged land owned by the State of Florida. The project is in northeastern Sarasota Bay, at the outfall of Cedar Hammock Creek. Bayshore Island is surrounded by seagrass and EFH and could provide roosting and nesting habitat for protected bird species. This spoil island has a small area of higher elevation and a larger area of lower elevation with estuarine wetland; both contain dense Australian pine, carrotwood, and Brazilian pepper. This project proposes the 100 percent removal of N/E species from the higher elevation area and replanting with native vegetation to restore the area to coastal maritime hammock. Within the estuarine wetland, the project proposes selective N/E removal (Potential Restoration Options). It is possible to bring heavy equipment on the island so chipping, kill-in-place, and manual removal/burn are all viable options for N/E removal; specific techniques would be chosen to ensure minimal impacts to native vegetation. This project would reduce the N/E seed source and improve habitat for wildlife.

**Project has not been designed or proposed by owner.*

Figure B18 Bayshore Island



Cortez Key Bird Sanctuary

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- FW Objective 2 – “Protect, restore, and enhance the diversity and abundance of native shellfish”
- FW Objective 3- “Monitor and protect threatened, endangered and vulnerable wildlife”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$500,000-\$1,000,000

Owner: State of Florida

Location: Sarasota Bay south of Cortez Fishing Village and the FISH Preserve

County: Manatee

Size: 0.49 Acres

Land Classification: Wetland

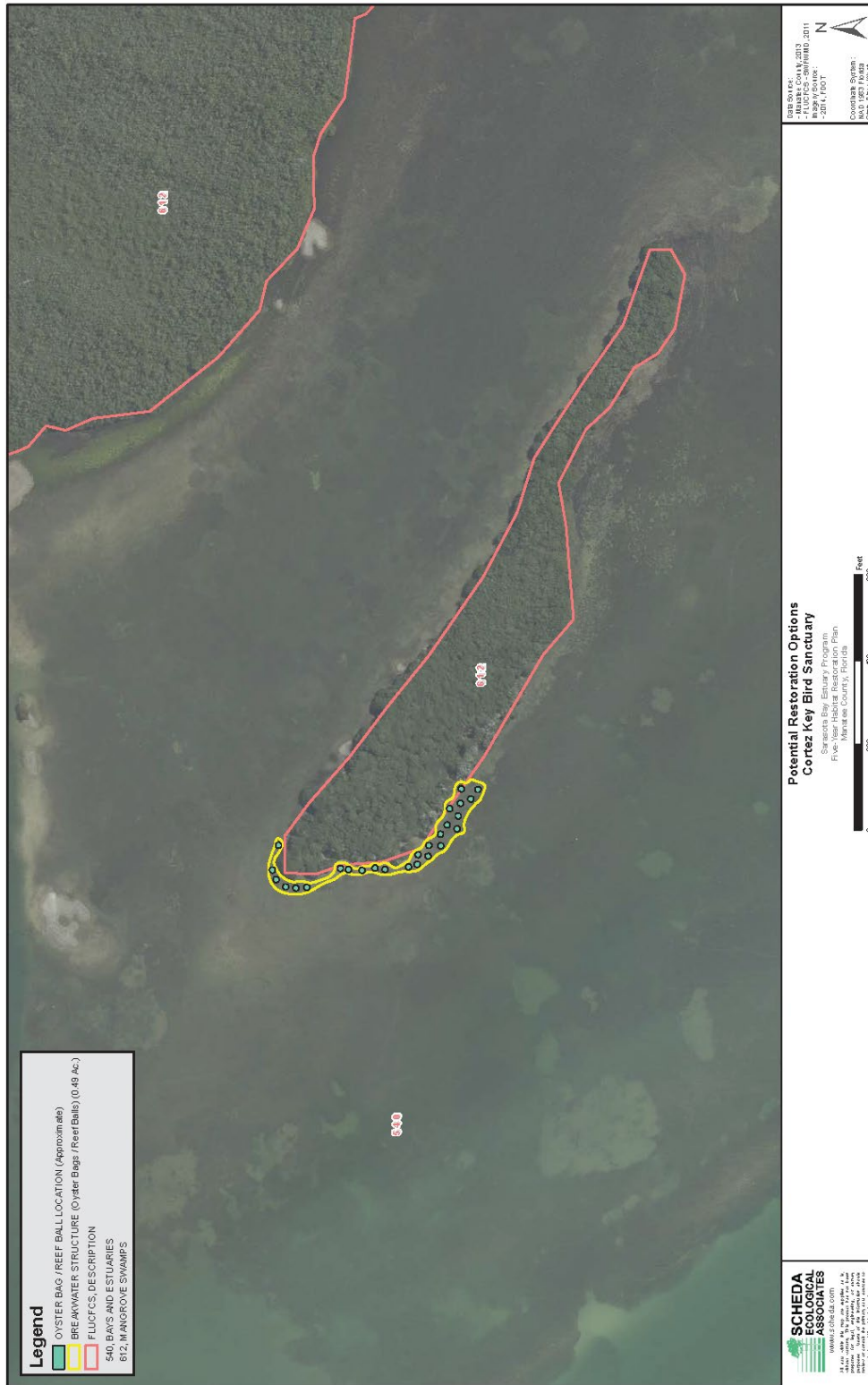
Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The Cortez Key Bird Sanctuary island is approximately eight acres of sovereign submerged land owned by the State of Florida and managed by the Audubon Society. The project is in northern Sarasota Bay, east of the ICW, and south of the Cortez Fishing Village and the F.I.S.H. Preserve within an embayment locally referred to as “The Kitchen”. This is a natural mangrove island which is surrounded by seagrasses and oyster reefs. The island is an important roosting and nesting location for many protected bird species. The island’s northwestern edge currently shows signs of erosion from wave action generated in the ICW and is at further risk of land mass loss due to higher tides. The proposed plan is to install a series of breakwater structures to dissipate wave action and to protect the shoreline (Potential Restoration Options). The breakwater structure could be constructed of either oyster bags or pH-balanced artificial reef balls. Oyster bags are less expensive, easier to install, and easier to permit while reef balls more effectively dissipate wave energy and attract larger fish species. Both options occupy the same footprint which may include seagrass beds and will require appropriate permitting. Installation of the breakwater structure would not occur during the breeding season. These are both viable breakwater components which will protect the vulnerable mangrove island shoreline while increasing EFH in the bay.

**Project has not been designed or proposed by owner.*

Figure B19 Cortez Bird Sanctuary



Winston Tract

Status: Potential Future Project

Relevance to CCMP Goals

This project addresses the following CCMP objectives:

- WH Objective 4 - “Protect, enhance and restore coastal wetlands and improve shoreline resiliency”
- CE Objective 2 - “Improve public understanding of bay-related issues”

Budget: Estimated \$25,000-\$100,000

Owner: FDEP/State of Florida

Location: Palma Sola Bay

County: Manatee

Size: 5.12 Acres

Land Classification: Upland and Wetland

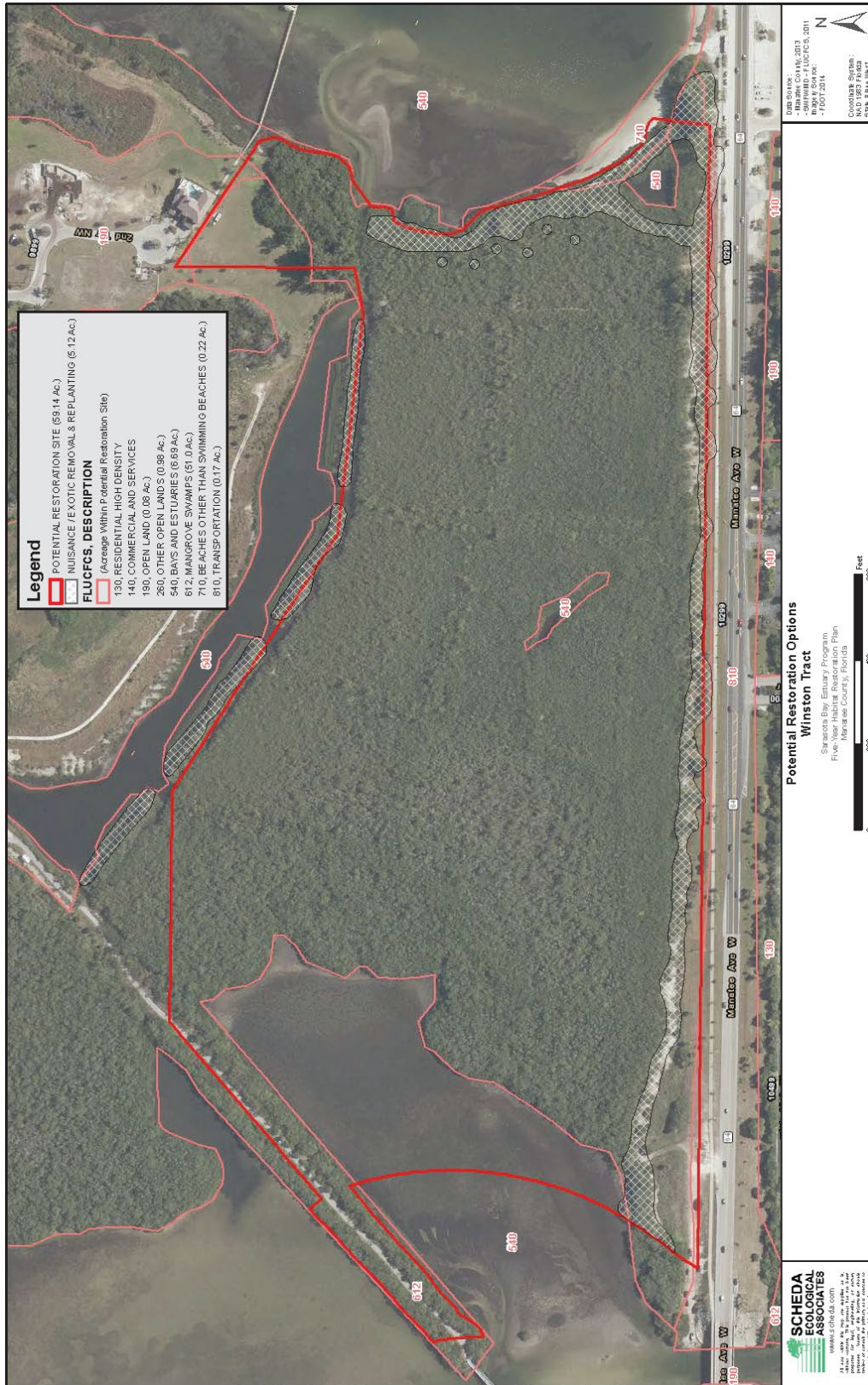
Project Partners: Manatee County

Project Description

The Winston Tract consists of approximately 60 acres, is owned by the State of Florida/TIITF, and is managed by TNC. The project abuts the Manatee Avenue roadway and is centrally located amongst four other natural areas: Perico Bayou, Robinson Preserve, Palma Sola Bay, and Neal Preserve. The site is primarily an estuarine wetland that was historically ditched for mosquito control. Ditch spoil was deposited in sporadically-located mounds, on upland ridges, and along the roadway. The site is dominated by mangroves; however, disturbed upland areas contain Australian pine, Brazilian pepper, and carrotwood (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*). This project proposes the removal of these N/E species from disturbed uplands (Potential Restoration Options). This project would increase habitat value, decrease the seed source of the N/E species, improve wildlife habitat value, and increase visibility and personal safety of visitors to the area.

**Project has not been designed or proposed by owner.*

Figure B20 Winston Tract





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