

Caloosahatchee Regional Park Land Stewardship Plan Amendment, August 2021

Lee County, Florida



Introduction:

Located in southwest Florida in northeastern Lee County, Caloosahatchee Regional Park (CRP) encompasses approximately seven hundred sixty-eight (768) acres and is located on the north side of the Caloosahatchee River. Seven hundred eighteen acres (718) of the site are leased from the TIITF. Lee County obtained a lease from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD; District) for fifty (50) acres on April 20, 2004 and is currently operating under lease number 3410E-009 effective starting February 2021, to be renewed every year.

CRP was opened to the public in March 1999. The south side (portion of CRP south of County Road 78) includes picnic shelters, restrooms, hiking trails totaling 5.25 miles, a campground, a lodge, an overlook, fishing pier, a canoe/kayak launch, parking and offices. The campground area of the park features 28 primitive tent camping sites. Group and equestrian camping options are available, as well as special use areas for large events. The north side (portion of CRP north of County Road 78) has 11.30 miles of mountain bike trails and 6.25 miles of equestrian trails as well as a picnic shelter, parking and restroom facilities.

While in the process of conducting the second 10-year update of the Caloosahatchee Regional Park Land Stewardship Plan, staff has recognized the need to amend sections of the plan to include managing and restoring the small Oxbow Island's eroding shoreline, as well as the land to the north and northwest of the island currently held by TIITF. This Oxbow Island is identified within the boundaries of the state properties.

Location:

CRP is located in southwest Florida within Sections 17, 18, 19 and 20 of Township 43 South, Range 27 East and is entirely within the northeastern portion of Lee County. It is divided by County Road 78 (North River Road) and is approximately two miles west of the town of Alva. CRP is bordered by private residences to the east and west, the Bob Janes Preserve (Lee County portion of the Babcock Ranch Preserve) to the north and Caloosahatchee River to the south.

Acquisition History:

The State of Florida began purchasing the lands currently known as the Caloosahatchee Regional Park (CRP) in 1969. Lee County obtained a 50-year lease to the property in 1989 to offer and promote appropriate, resource-based, recreational activities while maintaining the over-arching goal of natural and cultural resource protection.

The 50-year TIITF lease agreement (Lease No. 3698) with the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) directs the BoCC (via Lee County Parks and Recreation, LCPR) to manage the leased premises only for the conservation and protection of natural and historical resources and resource-based, public outdoor recreation which is compatible with the conservation and protection of these public lands, as set forth in subsection 253.023(11), FS. The lease agreement

further directs the BoCC (via LCPR) to "implement applicable Best Management Practices for all activities under this lease in compliance with paragraph 18-2.018(2)(h), FAC, which have been selected, developed, or approved by lessor, lessee, or other land managing agencies for the protection and enhancement of the leased premises."

Management Authority:

Board of County Commissioners of Lee County, Florida (Department of Parks and Recreation).

Land Cover and Vegetation:

Providing scenic vistas, the approximately 6,700 linear feet (1.3 miles) of undeveloped frontage on the Caloosahatchee River is a unique feature of the park. Approximately 52% of CRP consists of areas disturbed by deposit of dredge spoil in the 1960s, while 24% is in upland, and 24% is in wetland communities. The diverse plant communities of the site include pine flatwoods, palmetto scrub, cypress, hardwood bottomland, and oak hammock. Wildlife observed include bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), eastern diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*), gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), barred owl (*Strix varia*), swallow-tailed kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) and Audubon's crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*).

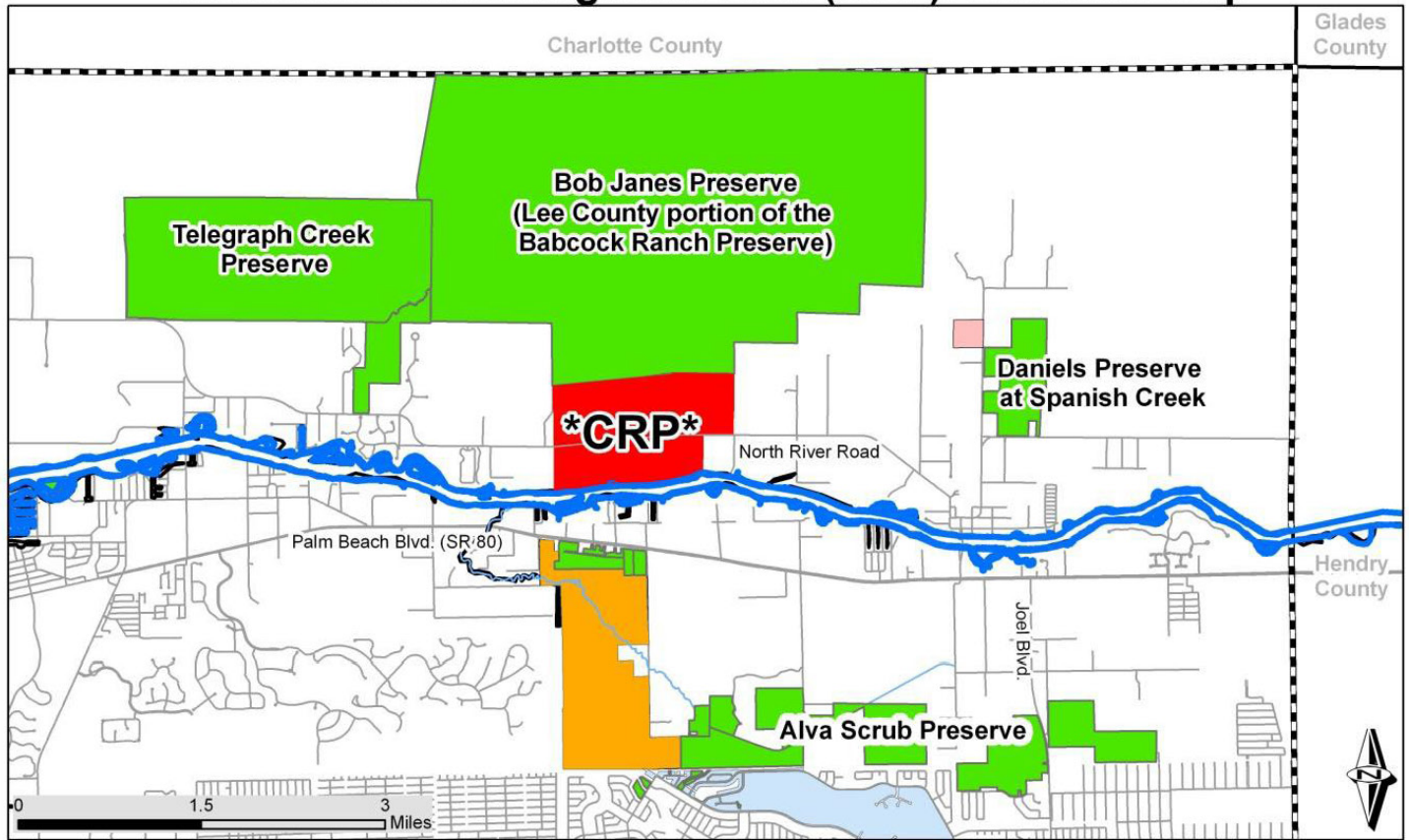
Management Plan:

An update to the Caloosahatchee Regional Park Land Stewardship Plan is due October 2021. However, at this time, Lee County is submitting this amendment to the management plan to include environmentally sound management practices on and around the small oxbow island that is adjacent to the shoreline and within the Caloosahatchee Regional Park boundary, as well as the land to the north and northwest of the island currently held by TIITF, as seen in Figure 2.

Project:

The shoreline at Caloosahatchee Regional Park has eroded due to wave action from boats and tidal influences at a rate of approximately one foot per year. The installation of rip-rap, filter fabric and wetland vegetation will restore and prevent the continuous erosion along 3,235 linear feet of the western shoreline in Phase III of the project. This project will harden the remaining stretch of exposed shoreline at the park. Phase I and II of this project have been completed. This phase will include the stabilization of the Oxbow Island and the shoreline to the north and northwest (Figure 2). A modification to the approved South Florida Water Management District ERP No. 36-103161-P is in the process of being submitted for the inclusion of the Oxbow Island. The United States Army Corp of Engineers has approved work within navigable waters south of CRP, Permit No. SAJ-2020-01210 (SP-RWR). The work is slated to be completed by the current contractor, T.S.I. Disaster Recovery.

Caloosahatchee Regional Park (CRP): Location Map



This map is not a survey; it is intended for informational purposes only.

Conservation Lands in Northeastern Lee County

- Caloosahatchee Regional Park
- Conservation 20/20 Preserves
- Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park
- Hickey's Creek - Greenbriar Connector Preserve
- Caloosahatchee River
- Hickey's Creek
- Lee County Boundary

Map created by Annisa Karim (AKarim@LeeGov.com) OCTOBER 2011
 C:\Documents and Settings\akarim\Annisa Karim\Caloosahatchee Regional Park\Maps\Maps for 2010 Revision of Management Plan\CRP_Location.mxd



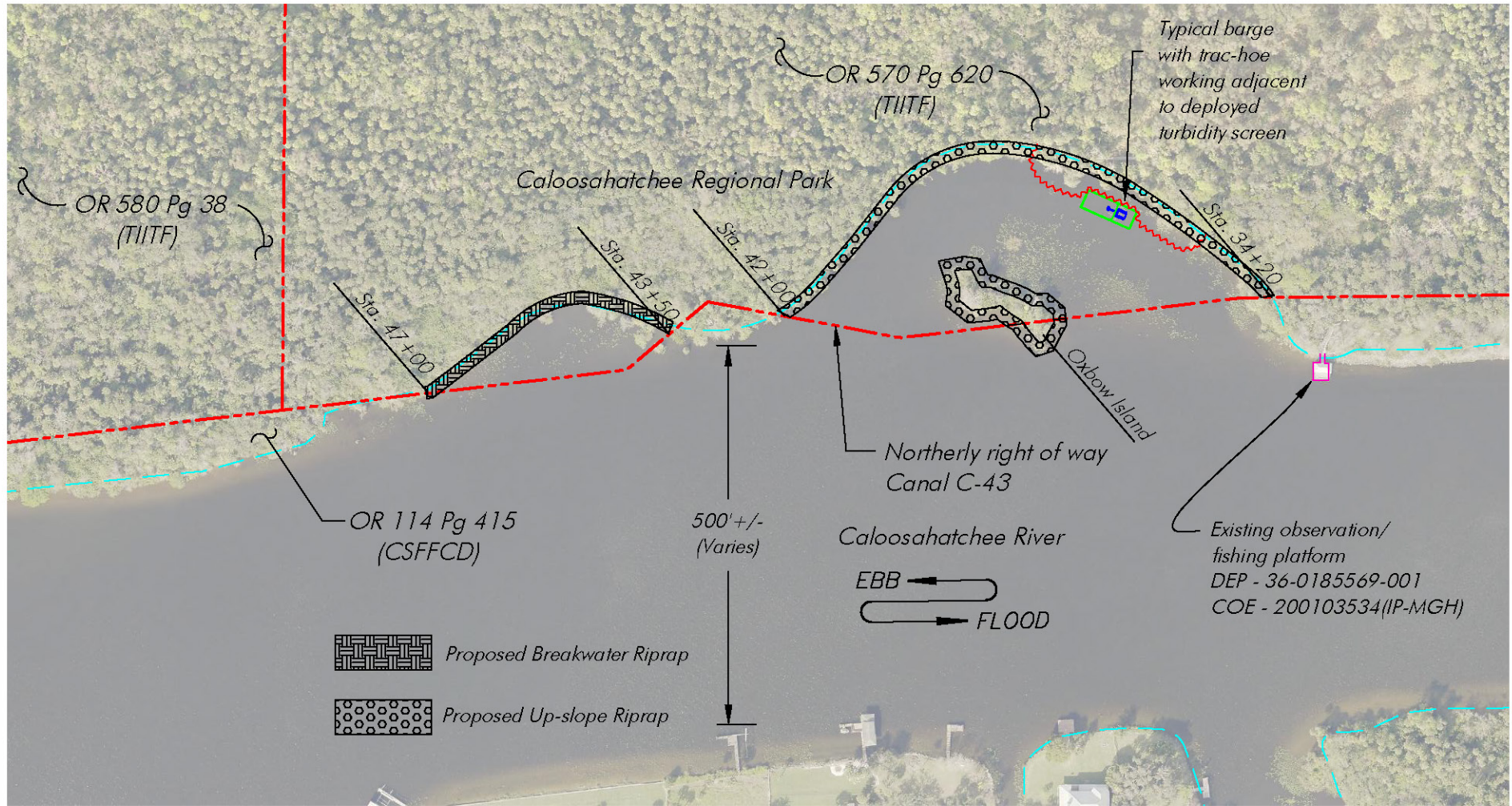
Figure 1: Caloosahatchee Regional Park and surrounding conservation areas.

Figure 2: Site plan Depicting Proposed Shoreline Stabilization Improvements along TIITF Lands.

SECTION: 19
TOWNSHIP: 43
RANGE: 27

0 100' 200'
SCALE FEET

Lee County Aerial 2019



Attention is directed to the fact that electronic reproduction may alter the apparent scale of this plan set.

Site Plan - State Sovereign Submerged Lands

DISCUSSION PLANS, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

SCALE: 1" = 200'

June 11, 2021 9:27:14 a.m.
Drawing: LEE28MASTER.DWG



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**Caloosahatchee Regional Park
Shoreline Stabilization**

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