

South Venice Citizens Tackle their Waterways, Swales, and Lakes: Research, Restoration, and Stewardship

Water Quality Task Force of South Venice

CHNEP Watershed Summit
March 27, 2014

Harrison Fox, Steve Suau, Laraine Jansen
with assistance of Rob Wright and John Ryan, Sarasota County

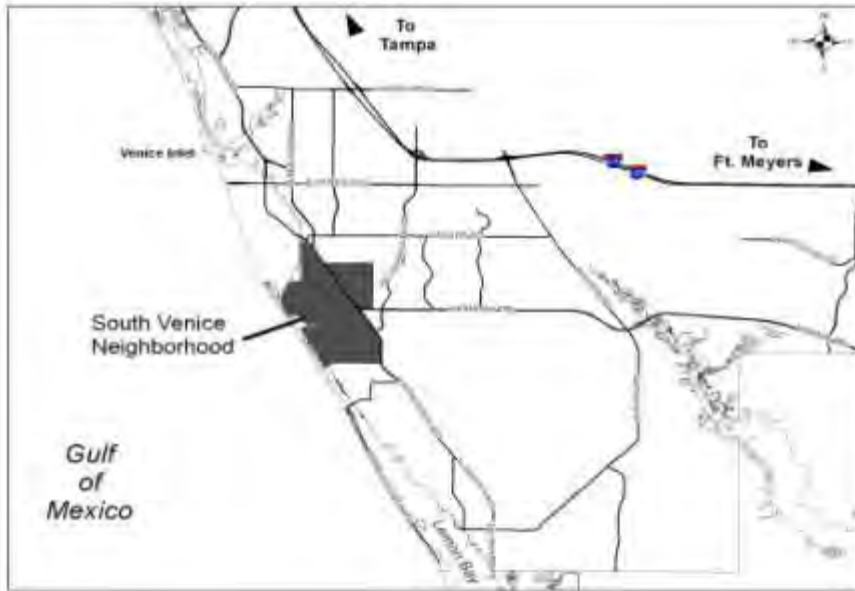
STEWARDSHIP

Workshop with over 60 neighbors and friends



Citizen based “bottom up” neighborhood action!!!!

South Venice Today



Largest neighborhood in Sarasota County – over 8,000 homes/businesses



South Venice Stewardship goals will require many years to complete.

The goals are:

1. **Inventory** and complete **biological assessments** for South Venice **waterways, lakes, and swales**,
2. Complete Siesta, Briarwood, and Woodmere **waterway rehabilitation** and complete Datura waterway project construction which are improving drainage into Alligator Creek as funded by Sarasota County, SWFWD, and others,
3. **Restore South Venice lakes and parks**,
4. Develop manuals, encourage conservation and recreation features, pilot tests and demonstrations i.e. **gardens** -- native, produce, and butterfly; **swale and yard** restoration; develop neighborhood **gathering places** – shelters/benches/tables; and bike/walking **trails** construction.

South Venice Waterway Restoration

Includes

1. **Alligator Creek**, within the boundaries of South Venice;
2. Approximately 21 **lakes and ponds**;
3. **Drainage waterways** (Four miles including: Siesta, Datura, Briarwood, Woodmere and others) that empty into Alligator Creek and Lemon Bay; as well as
4. Nearly 150 miles of **swales** and adjoining **home owner's yards**

Cooperation

South Venice Waterway Rehabilitation is a major undertaking that involves the cooperation of:

1. South Venice citizens,
2. South Venice Civic Association (SVCA),
3. South Venice Beach Endowment Trust (SVBET),
4. Sarasota County,
5. Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD),
6. State of Florida,
7. Federal government,
8. Foundations,
9. Conservation organizations, as well as
10. For profit and not for profit corporations.

RESEARCH



The History - Alligator Creek, circa 1950



The History – Water Quality 1850-1977

Date	Event	Estimated Resident Population
1850-1870	First settlers bring "woods cows" and razor back hogs	
1850-1900	Woods cows in herds roam Englewood area.	
1866	Grove City first laid out in woodlands.	
1870	Goff family raised rice in slough at head waters of Oyster Creek.	
1883	Hamilton Disston purchased 600 acres of Grove City area for 25¢/acre. Subsequently land went through eight different owners.	
1886	January freeze one of the worst known.	
1894-95	Freezes on December 29-30, 1894 and February 9, 1895 after 2-3 weeks of rain.	
1896	Lemon Bay Company filed a plat for town of Englewood. 2000 acres, 24 city blocks and 96 ten acre "grove" lots. Residential lots were 1 acre (two city lots). Before this, area called Vineland.	
1903	Summer rainy season, ground between Englewood and Venice covered with water, especially in the area called Woodmere.	
1911	June, 14 days of rain, Myakka River was 10 feet higher than ever recorded, high water line on trees 10-20 feet above ground.	
1890-1919	Englewood had a small sawmill and turpentine stills.	
1917-18	Englewood road (S.R. 775) to Sarasota built with local rock from Deer (Gottfried) Creek.	
1918	Manasota Lumber Company established a mill town near junction of S.R. 775 and U.S. 41 and clear cut the pine flat woods of Cape Haze peninsula.	
1921	In the hurricane of that year the water in Lemon Bay reached the second story of the present-day Tate Buchanan House and flooded for blocks inland	
1926	Hurricane-storm resulted in extensive flooding.	
1926	Englewood incorporated as a 13 square mile tract, 12 miles of water frontage of which 4 miles were on Gulf; 2 years later was again unincorporated.	300
1928	The Tamiami Trail (Highway 311, now SR775) passed through Englewood.	

Sources: Josephine O. Cortes, 1976. The History of Early Englewood. Mr. Beryl Chadwick, Englewood, Dr. Stewart Springer, Placida. Newspaper articles on file in public libraries of Grove City and Englewood.

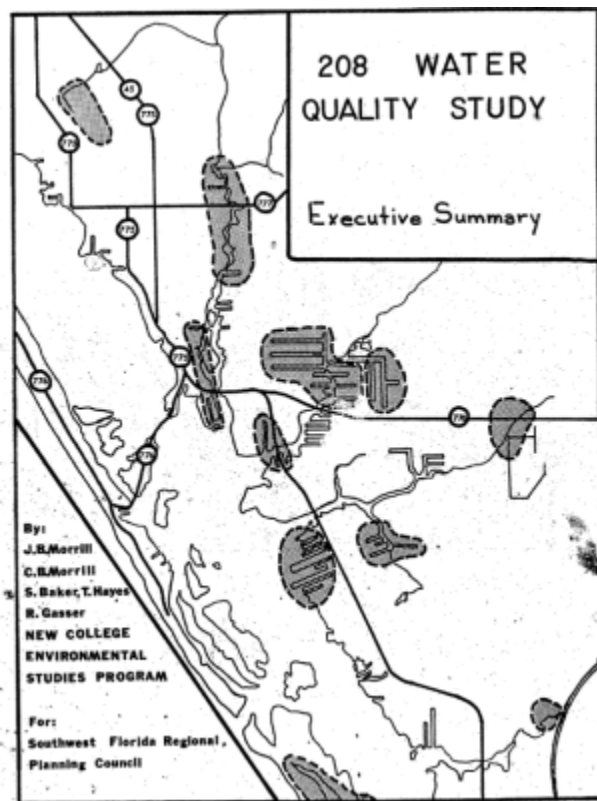
The History – Water Quality 1850-1977

Date	Event	Estimated Resident Population
1930's-1940's	The deforested Cape Haze Peninsula became open range cattle land. Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41) re-routed to by-pass Englewood.	
1939	Local red tide with thousands of fish washed ashore in Englewood.	
1940	Grove City over 1000 acres acquired by Grove City Land Realty Corp, Samuel Spinosa, President. Between then and early 1950's, small lots (many with 30 foot frontage) were consolidated and the whole area was replatted into 100 x 100 foot lots.	
1948	Florida Fence Law abolished open range land.	
1948	West Branch of Gottfried Creek with drainage ditch as far as S.R. 775. Subsequently the sloughs of north and east branch linked to creek by drainage ditches.	
1948-1952	Sloughs at head waters of Ainger Creek connected by drainage ditch. Subsequently a drainage ditch linked sloughs of Buck Creek basin to Ainger Creek.	
1951	E. Vanderbilt purchased 54 square mile tract (35,000 acres) on Cape Haze peninsula.	
1952	E. Vanderbilt opened Two V Ranch with 1,000 certified cattle. At one time an estimated 5,000 head of cattle roamed this ranch land. Vanderbilt also purchased land along Lemon Bay (Cape Haze) and on Manasota Key. He and his family were instrumental in promoting the area for seasonal residents.	
1954	Residential restrictions placed on development in Grove City by Grove City Land Realty Corporation.	
1955	Following this year canals and electric lights added to Grove City area.	
1956	Population reported to double in winter tourist season.	1,400
1960		5,000
1961	Lemon Bay hardshell clam industry had been declining for 15 years because of gradual siltting.	
1963-68	Englewood Water District and central well water plant established.	
1963-65	Intracoastal waterway dredge and dredge spoil placed on mangrove islands, submerged grass flats, fringe mangrove shores and uplands the length of Bay. Residents determined not to have spoil islands in the Bay but willingly accepted spoil on submerged lands adjacent to shores.	

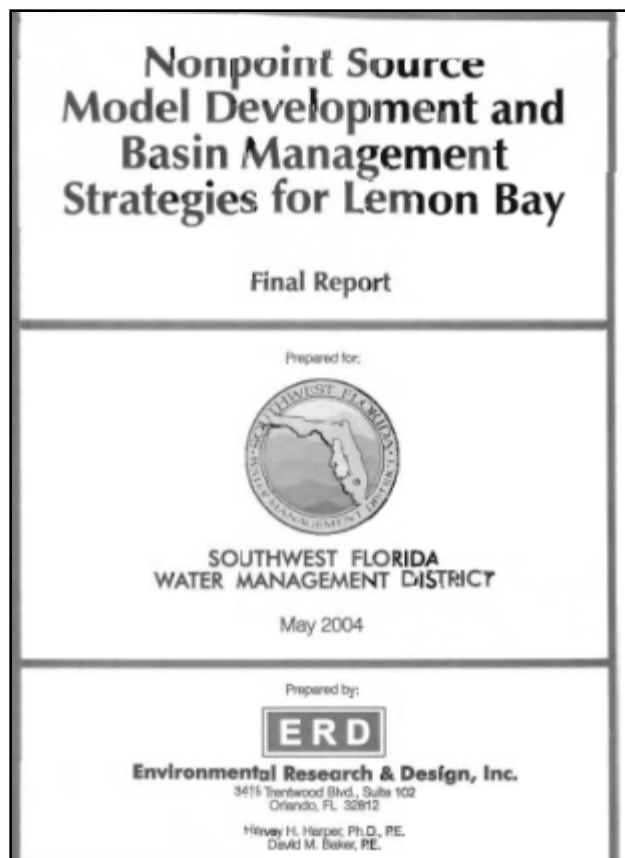
The History – Water Quality 1850-1977

Date	Event	Estimated Resident Population
1964	<p>Paulson Point (Furbeck's Point), Englewood, site of Indian Mounds. Diked and filled with dredged spoil.</p> <p>Blind Pass Island, Manasota Key. 30 acres of uplands created by placing spoil on grass flats and 17 acres of mangroves.</p> <p>In the Manasota Key section south of Manasota Key Bridge a dike of spoil parallel to Waterway outlined the proposed future shoreline of the Key and an area of grass flat to be filled with spoil thereby doubling the width of the Key.</p>	7,500
1965(?)	<p>Venice Cut opened, linking the waters of Lemon Bay with Roberts Bay and Venice Pass. The result was a marked change in tidal circulation and seasonal salinity gradients in upper Lemon Bay.</p>	
1965-67	<p>Rotunda West began to be developed intercepting Buck Creek and Coral Creek drainage basin systems.</p>	
1968	<p>Buck Creek and west branch of Coral Creek intercepted by a segment of proposed circular canal with overflow wiers placed on each creek.</p>	10,000
1969		12,000
1970		13,000
1971	<p>Rotunda West Circular Canal or River partially completed.</p>	14,000
1972		15,864
1972-73	<p>Oyster Creek channelized between S.R. 45A (776) and Sarasota-Charlotte County line with drainage basin north of county line intercepted by an east-west canal and spoil dike.</p>	
1973		17,906
1974	<p>Gasparilla Pines Golf Course intercepted Lemon Creek drainage basin east of S.R. 775. Control wier and dike across the creek just east of S.R. 775.</p>	
1975	<p>Spring, large outbreak of blue-green algae. GDC received D.E.R. permit to place a wier on the upper reaches of Ainger Creek.</p>	18,803
1976		18,880
1977	<p>Cape Cave Corporation received D.E.R. permit to dike Buck Creek and construct two retention ponds and "grassy" filters in pine flatwoods along Buck Creek, west of Rotunda West.</p>	

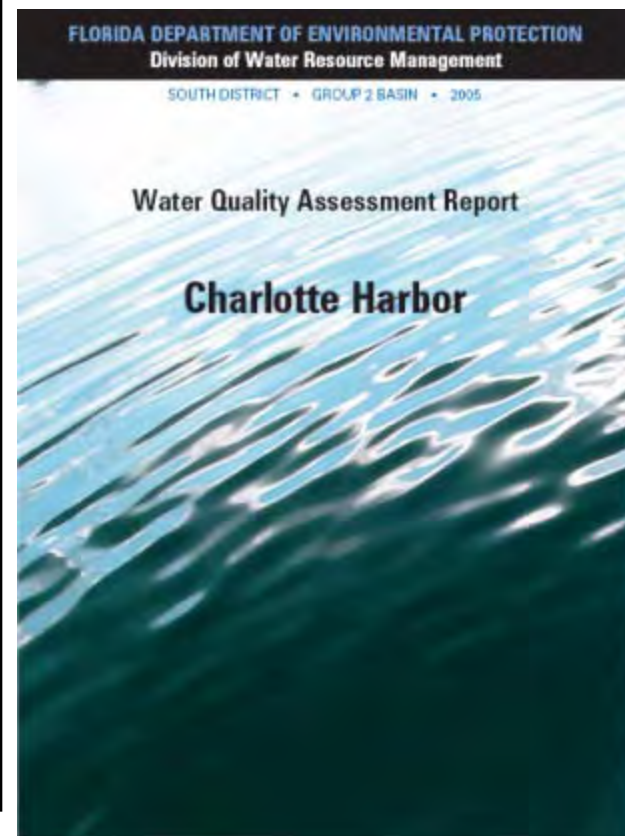
The Science – Water Quality Studies



November, 1977



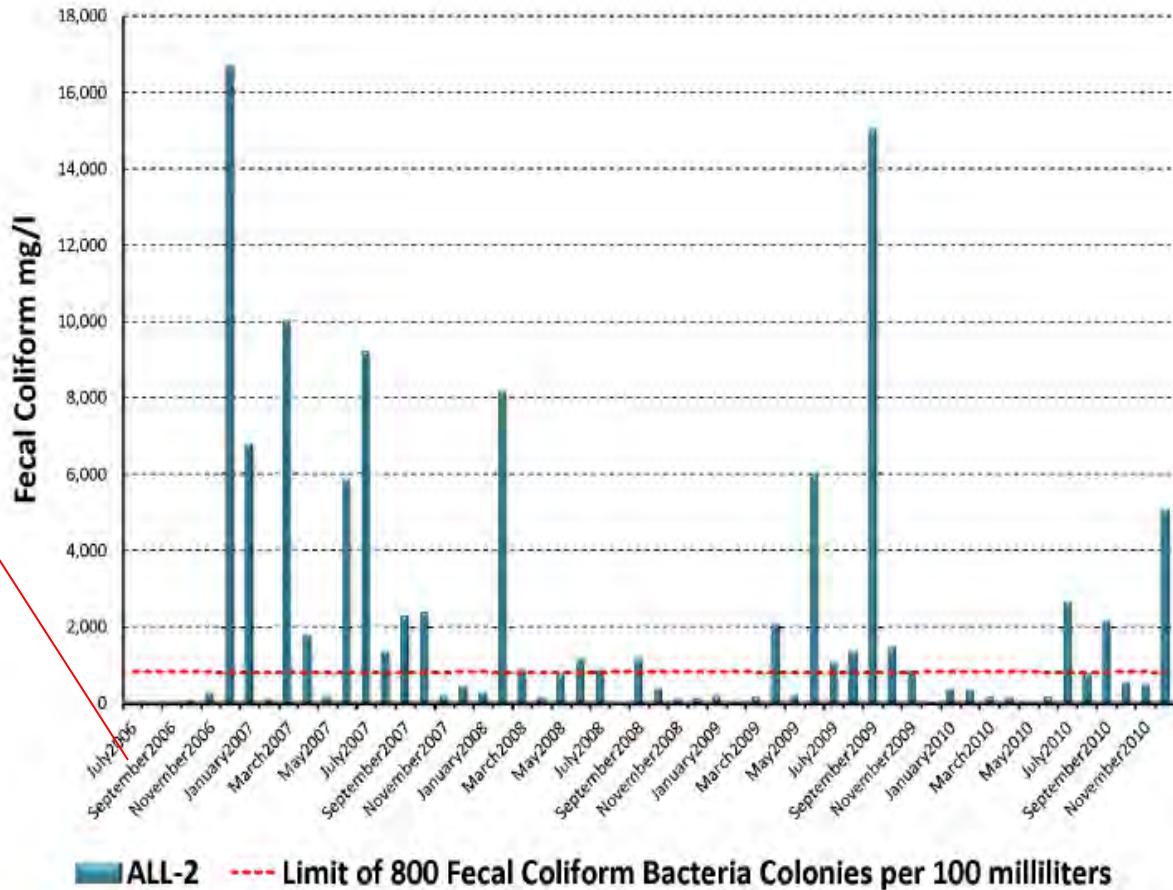
May, 2004



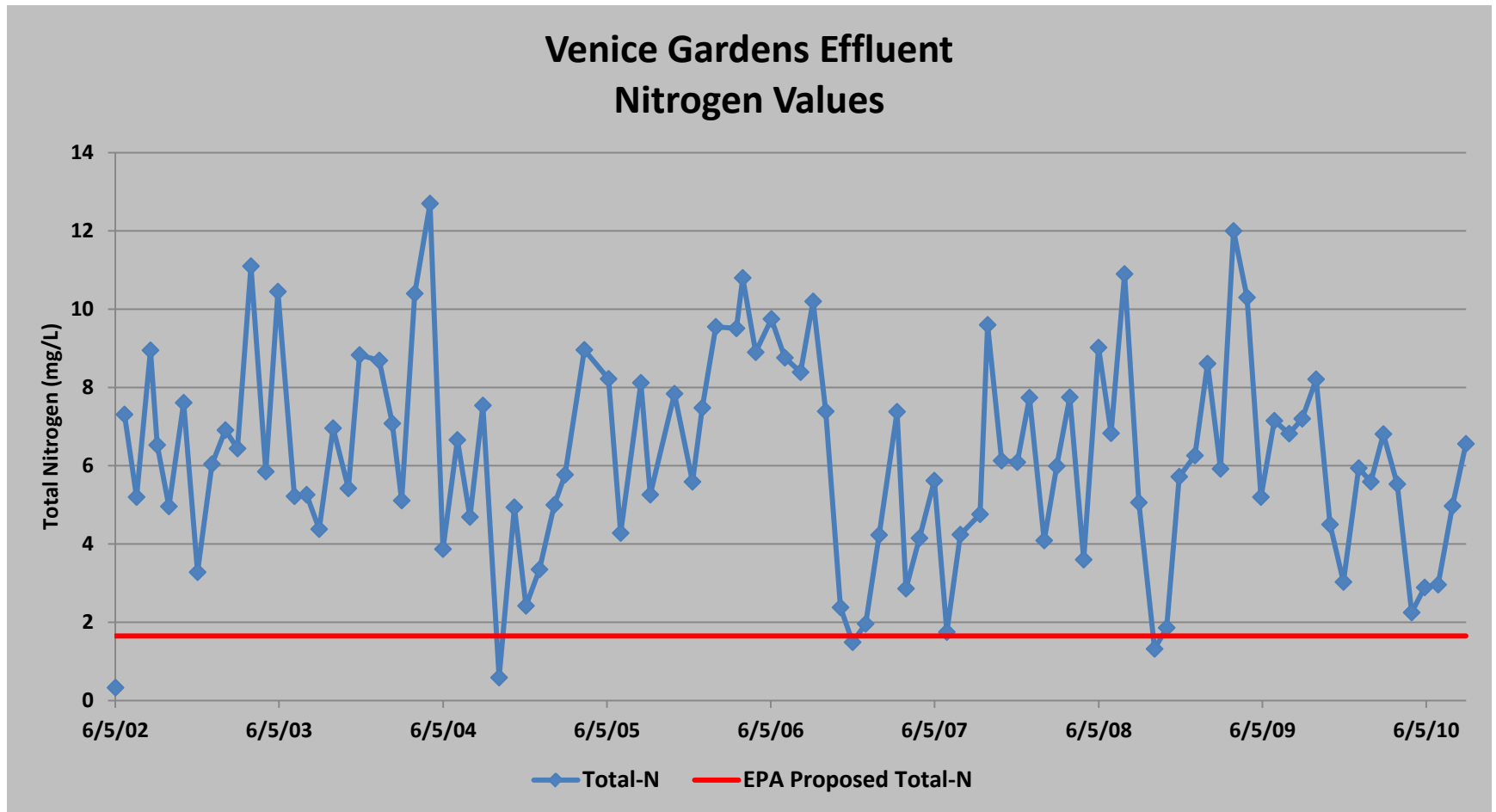
2005

The Science – Water Quality Studies

Sarasota County Sampling Sites



The Science – What about Nutrients?



RESTORATION

Before (County Maintenance) and After



Waterway County “Maintenance” Before



Swales

County Maintenance - Before



2014:
South Venice
Waterway Project Overview

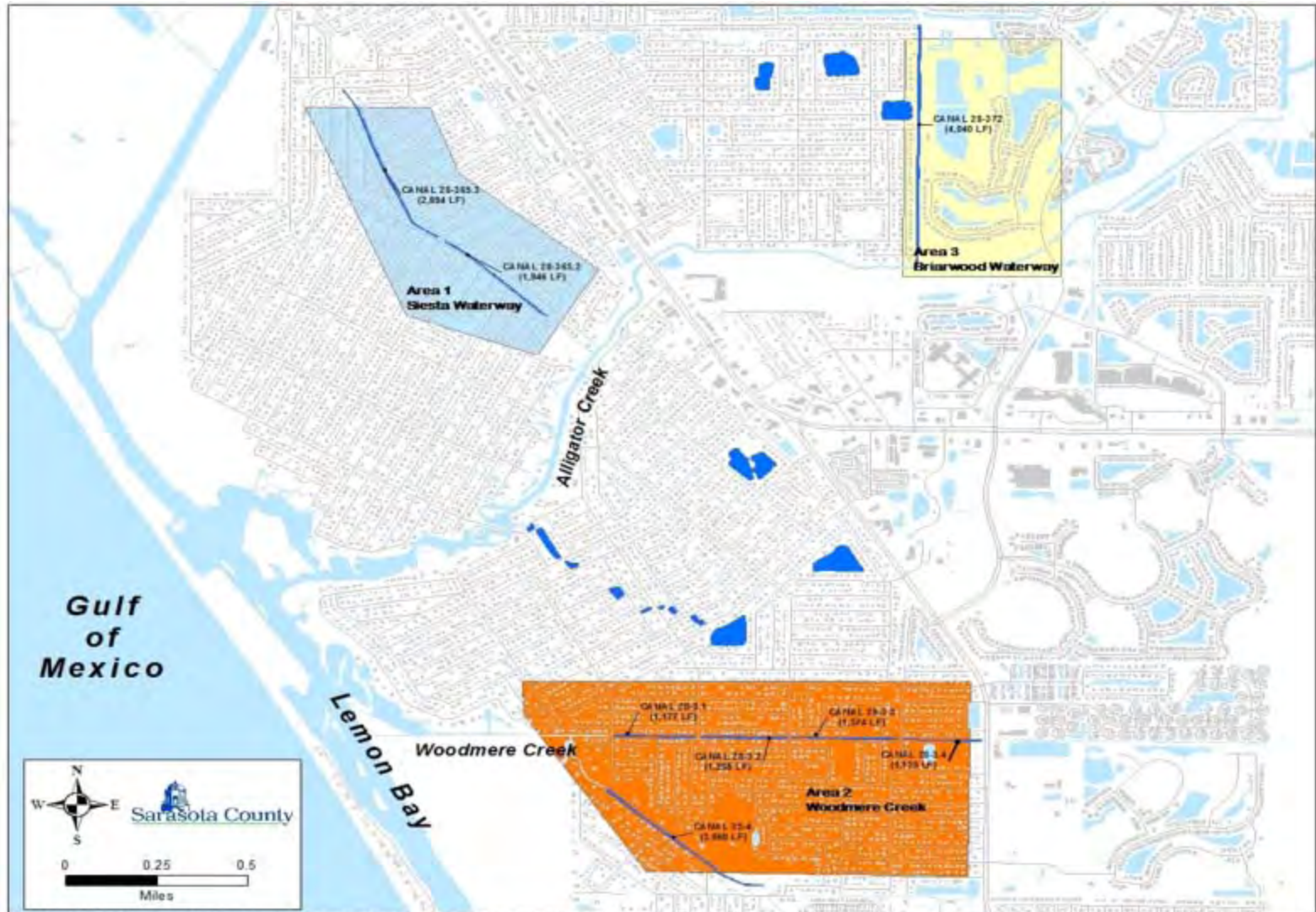
1. Description
2. Objectives
3. Benefits

Description

Rehabilitation of the waterways in the South Venice Community by

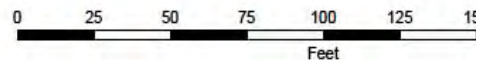
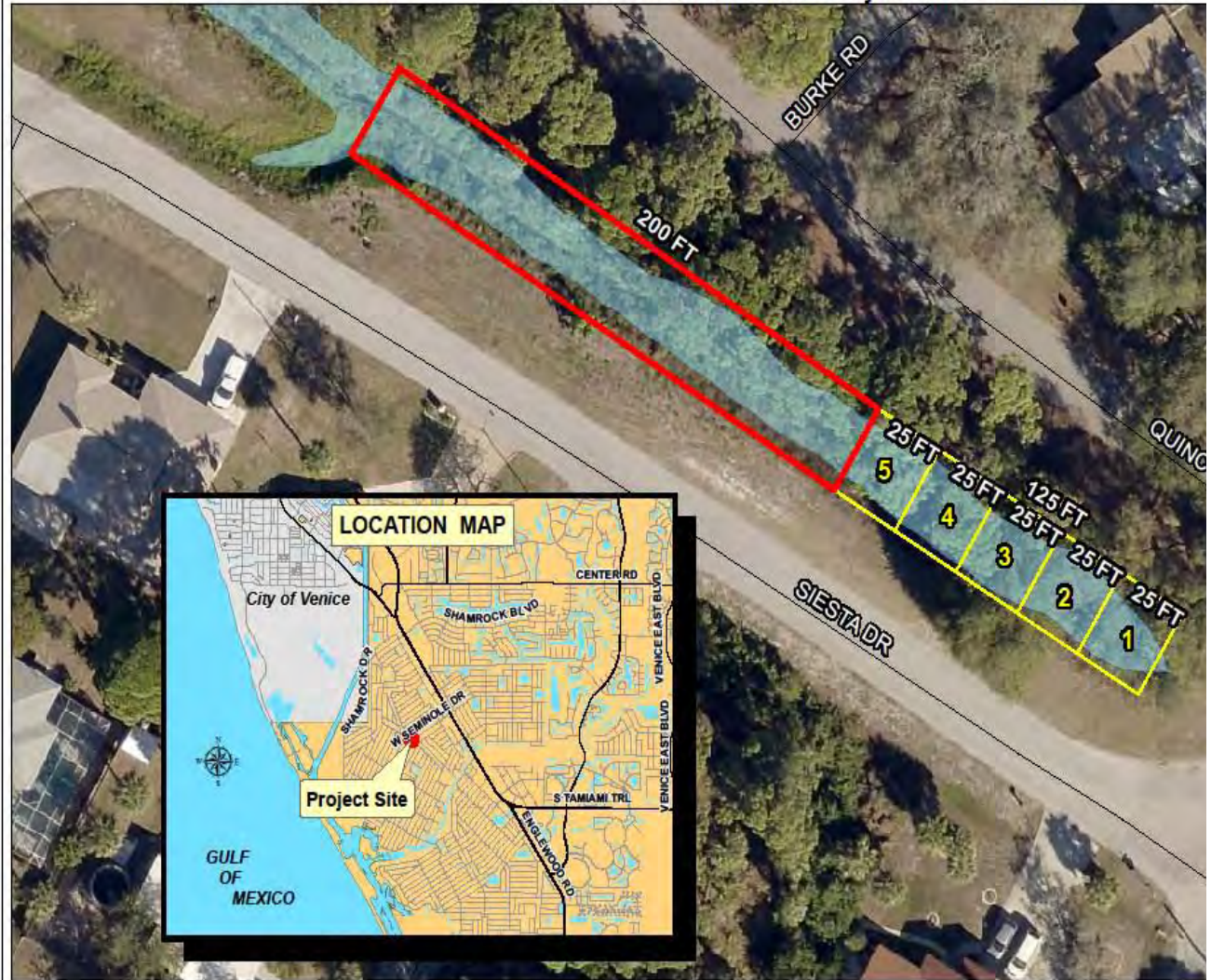
- Moving muck from flow channel and used in bank preparation along with mulch and compost,
- Removing invasive plant species,
- Re-grading/stabilizing channel slopes, and
- Re-planting with site appropriate vegetation.

SVCA Waterway Rehabilitation Project Area: 2014



Siesta Waterway Pilot Test

SVCA Siesta Ditch Pilot Project Area 1 and 2



Objectives

1. Enhance waterway habitat through bank stabilization and Florida Friendly/native planting to improve waterway biodiversity and water quality (dissolved oxygen and nutrients).
2. Standardize Best Management Practices for waterway maintenance that reduce bank erosion, sediment scouring, and channel maintenance costs.

South Venice WQ Initiatives Waterway Restoration



Hydroseeding



South Venice WQ Initiatives Swale Restoration - During



Benefits

- Restore at least 7,500 linear feet of waterway,
- Move over 278 cubic yards of muck to bank,
- Remove non-native vegetation,
- Replant Florida friendly/native vegetation,
- Improve water quality flowing into the Alligator Creek watershed which drains to Lemon Bay, part of Charlotte Harbor, a SWIM Priority water body

South Venice WQ Initiatives

Waterway Restoration



South Venice WQ Initiatives

Waterway Restoration



South Venice WQ Initiatives

Swale Restoration - After



WILDFLOWERS

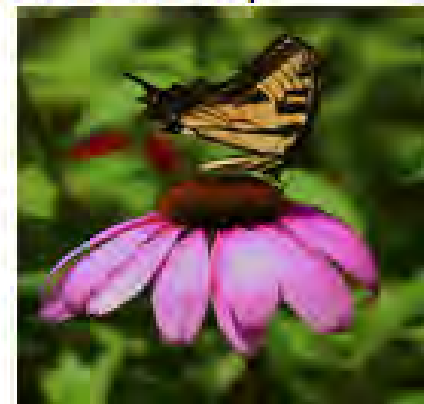
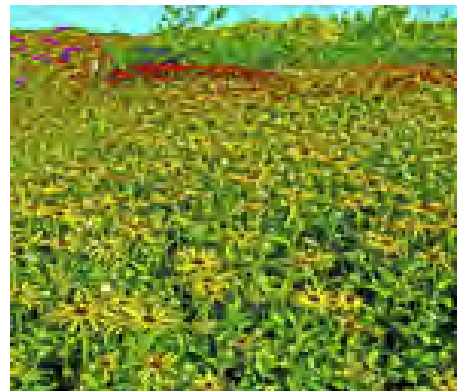
and Florida friendly and native plants

Sponsored by South Venice Civic Association's
Water Quality Task Force

and with the assistance of Sarasota County Commission,
Southwest Florida Water Management District, Sierra Club,

Univ. of Florida's IFAS, CHNEP,
and 100's of South Venice residents!!!

Do not Mow



A photograph of a narrow, shallow stream flowing through a lush tropical forest. The water is clear and reflects the surrounding greenery. The banks are lined with various plants, including large palm trees and dense foliage. The sky is bright and blue with some clouds. The text "THE FUTURE IS UP TO US!!!" is overlaid in the center in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, with horizontal lines underlining the words "THE FUTURE IS" and "UP TO US!!!".

THE FUTURE IS
UP TO US!!!