

# Myakka Wild and Scenic River Program 2012 Annual Report



## A. Myakka Wild and Scenic River Program Updates



1. The Myakka Wild and Scenic River Unit Management Plan was updated and approved by the DEP Secretary on January 26, 2012.
2. The Park Service proposal to transfer Myakka River Permitting to the DEP Regulatory Office in Ft. Myers is still under consideration. Negotiations to delegate permit authority are expected to continue after the transfer of DEP permit responsibilities for Sarasota County to the DEP South District Office in Ft. Meyers from the Southwest District Office in Tampa. Applicable ERP rules and the fee for obtaining a Myakka River permit may need to be amended as the DEP South District incorporates the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Rule into their permitting process
3. For 2013, the Agency resubmitted a proposal to decriminalize the Myakka Wild & Scenic River Rule. This would allow minor violations to be punishable by fines instead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree misdemeanor.

**B. Permitting Program**

1. Permitting process for Snook Haven dock, boat ramp, canoe launch and fishing pier has been put on hold with the acquisition of the Snook Haven addition. Sarasota County Parks and Recreation Department is still working on planning how the properties will be utilized.
2. Throughout 2012 there were many improvements to Snook Haven outside the River Area or did not require a permit. The improvements include:
  1. New fencing and native plantings around dumpsters, oil recycling and brine tank.
  1. Installation of new horseshoe game area.
  1. New shell added to existing parking area.
  1. River bank restoration/replanting following washout.
  1. New concrete pad near restaurant entryway.
3. An exemption was granted for Myakka Country HOA to construct a boardwalk over wetlands along a tributary of the Myakka River.
4. The construction of the S.R. 72 Bridge over the Myakka River was completed in November. Plantings were installed at Myakka River State Park in the area impacted by the temporary bridge, pursuant to their permit conditions. Monitoring reports are expected to follow.
5. A pre-application meeting was conducted with Sarasota County at the Myakka River Oyster Bar in March 2012 to improve the safety of their bulkhead and

the accessibility to their restaurant by boat. No further plans have been received to date.

6. Currently working with FDOT and their consultant Kissinger Campo and Associates to address the runoff from the scupper holes in the I-75 Bridge that drain water directly into the Myakka River. A meeting with FDOT, SWFWMD, MWSRP, and KCA was held on January 8, 2013 to discuss possible solutions that would satisfy the specific condition in their 2004 Myakka River Permit. KCA should be supplying the MWSRP with additional cost estimates and treatment data.
7. Working with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast to determine if a permit is needed for their proposed improvements to the Myakka River Preserve located near Tarpon Point.

### **C. Incidents**

1. During February 2012 the MWSRP was notified of the following sign attached to a Slow Speed Minimum Wake sign near Tarpon Point:



The USGC and FWC were notified of the sign and it was removed from the river.

2. In May 2012 the following vegetation clearing took place in Myakka River Estates by the owner's yard maintenance company:





A written warning letter was sent to the owner by the MWSRP. The area was visited by land by Sarasota County.

3. In August 2012, 6 alligators were shot from the S.R. 72 Bridge. The incident was reported to FWC. An additional alligator was found dead near Snook Haven. It was missing its head and tail when found. This incident was also forwarded onto FWC.
4. There have been multiple reports of illegal fires and camping during the weekends next to an old oxbow on the Carlton Reserve. Branches have been chain sawed from trees for fire wood just north of Laurel Road. It is thought they come by boat. The incident reports and campsite location was forwarded to FWC LE Officers.





5. People have been witnessed digging for fossils along the river bank south of Border Road. Dredging is defined as “excavating materials by any method in

the river area” (62D-15.002(8)). Dredging is prohibited in the river area except by permit and must clearly be in the public interest (62-D-15.008(3)(b)). FWC LE contact info was sent to Sarasota County.

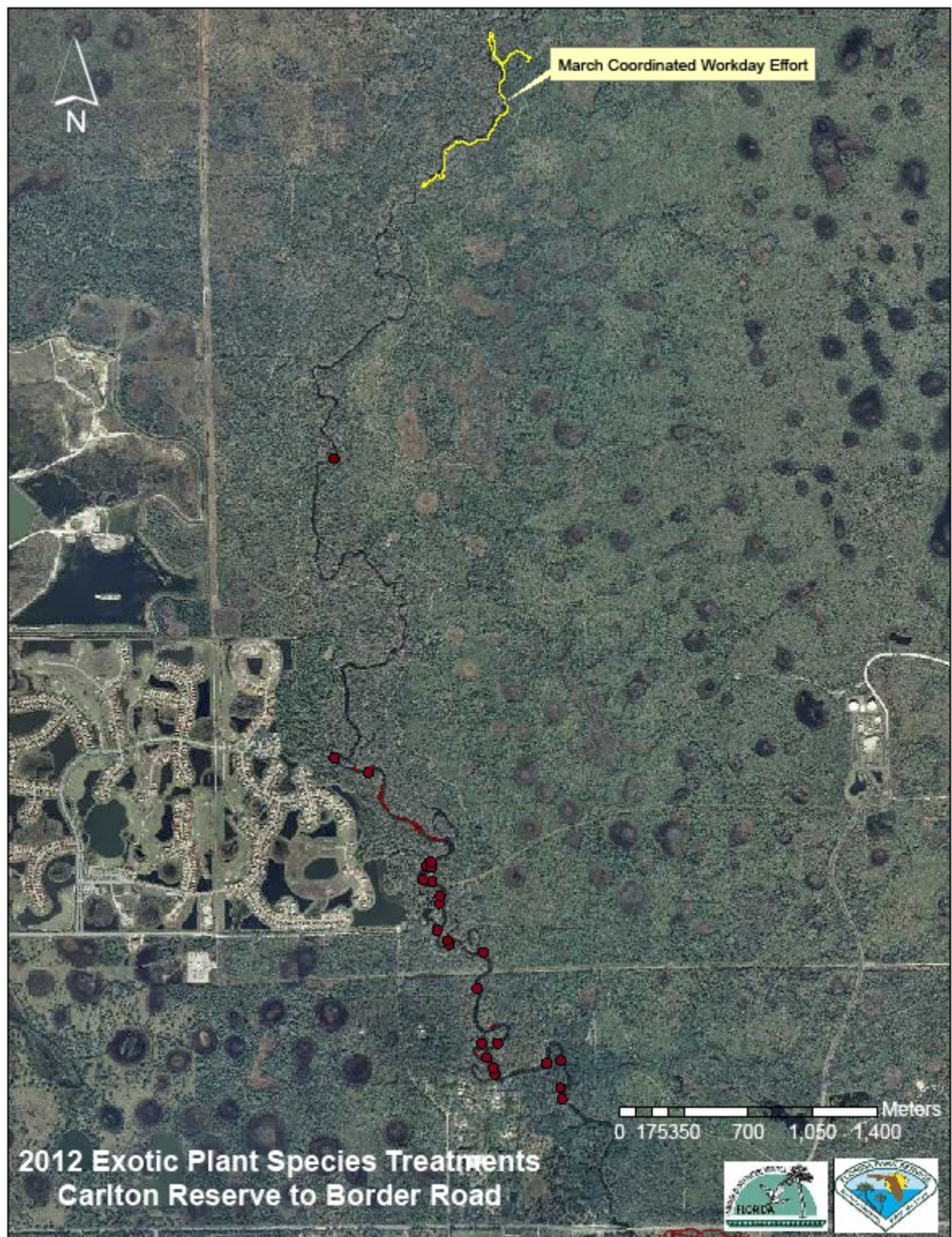
**D. Nuisance and Exotic Plants and Animals**

1. Two coordinated workdays with Sarasota County occurred during 2012. The first workday was in April. One boat worked its way up from Snook Haven to Border Road concentrating on treating Brazilian pepper, while kayaks worked their way down from the south boundary of Myakka River State Park towards Border Road treating mainly cogon grass and some Brazilian pepper.

The second coordinated workday occurred in September on the Carlton Reserve and focused on mapped cogon grass areas.

2. Island apple snail eggs began showing up on Upper Myakka Lake in September. Efforts were made to harvest all egg clusters observed to prevent the snails from spreading further downstream. No island apple snail egg clusters have been seen south of the pavilion.
3. Efforts are being made to eliminate all Old World climbing fern and prevent the spread of other invasive plants such as Brazilian pepper encountered on the river. Treatment areas of all exotic species from 2012 are attached.

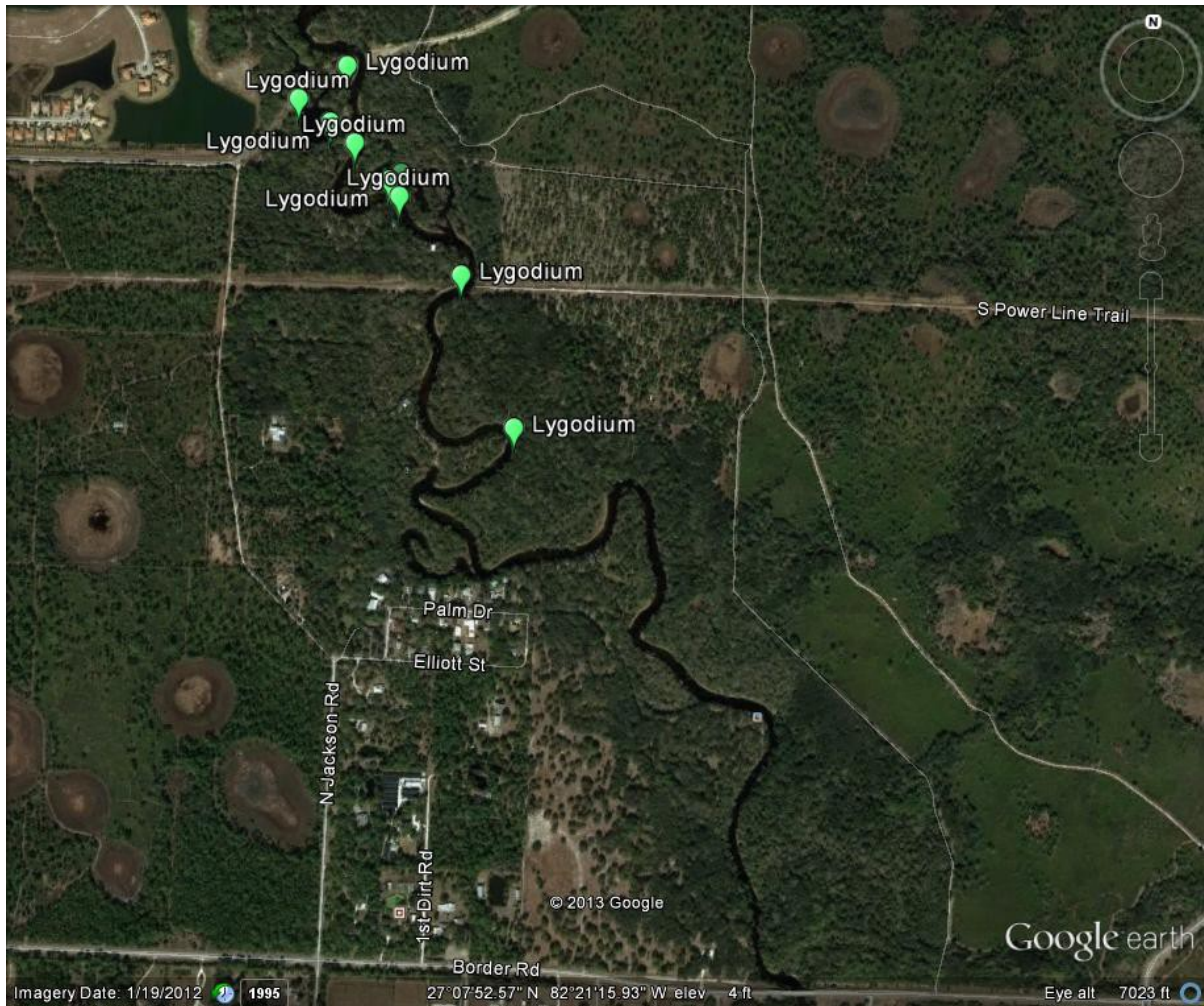


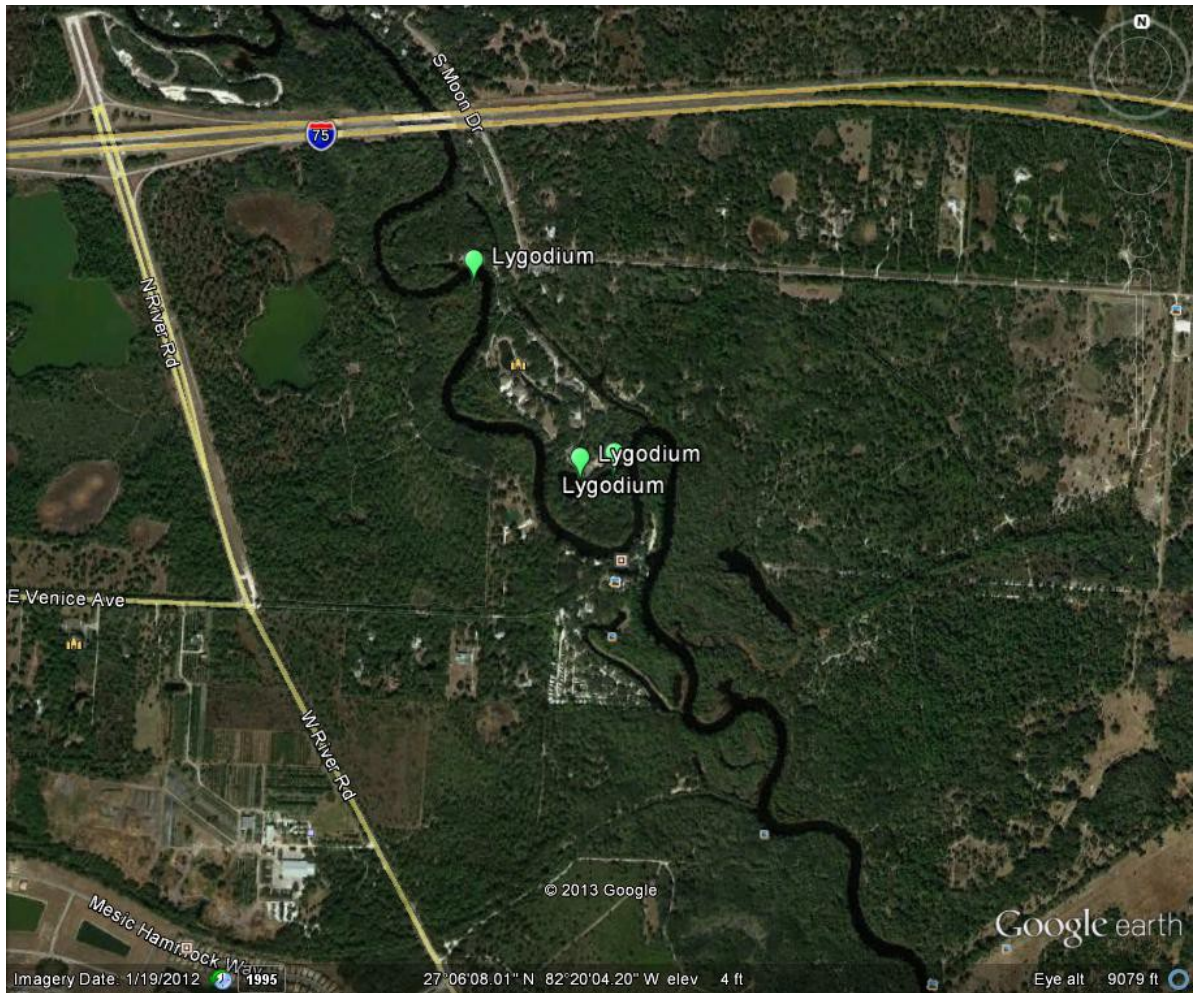












## E. Wildlife Monitoring

1. River Inspection data from 1990-2008 has been entered into the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Wildlife Database. This data will be made available on the Myakka River Water Atlas page and will also be submitted to FNAI and entered into the Element Occurrence Database.
2. Throughout the year, several interesting wildlife sightings were observed. These sightings include:
  1. January – 400 White Pelicans were seen on Lower Lake. The pelicans were seen on the lake through March and during May, November and December.
  1. February -Northern Shovelers were seen near Deep Hole for the first time on an inspection since 2000. A tagged manatee was seen near Ramblers Rest, and a peregrine falcon was seen at Deep Hole.



- ‡ March – Over 300 alligators were seen from Deep Hole to Downs' Dam. They were very concentrated in whatever water was left in the river. Northern Shovelers were seen again near Deep Hole.
- ‡ April – 2 Whimbrel were seen on a sand bar near Charlotte County. The water was too low in the upper river to paddle a canoe.
- ‡ May – The upper river was hiked and over 300 gators were observed.





- 1 June – The River was at flood stage due to tropical storm. Common Nighthawks were seen flying near US 41.
- 1 July – The River was very close to flood stage. Manatees in the Upper Myakka Lake were reported to park staff. This is the first known report of manatees in Myakka River State Park.



- 1 August – The River still above flood stage.
  - 1 November – 5 immature Bald Eagles observed in shallow water south of Deep Hole. American Avocets were also seen in this area during November and December.
  - 1 December – 5 Hooded Mergansers seen near US 41 along with a Common Loon.
3. Wood Stork nesting was down again this year at the Rookery, south of US 41, possibly due to the low water conditions observed throughout the latter part of the winter and spring. A graph depicting the number of nests by year for Great Egrets and Wood Storks, the 2 species that nest most frequently at the rookery, can be found below.

