

**Project Name:** C&SF: CERP Picayune Strand Restoration  
(F/K/A Southern Golden Gate Estates Hydrologic Restoration)  
**Project ID:** 2307 (CERP Project WBS # 30)  
**Lead Agency:** USACE / SFWMD  
**Authority:** WRDA 2007  
**Funding Source:** Corps/State

**Strategic Plan Goal(s) Addressed:** 2-A.3

**Measurable Output(s):** 55,000 acres wetlands restored

**April 1999 (Restudy) Project Synopsis:** Involves the restoration of natural water flow across 85 square miles in western Collier County that were drained in the early 1960s in anticipation of extensive residential development. This subsequent development dramatically altered the natural landscape, changing a healthy wetland ecosystem into a distressed environment. Implementation of the restoration plan would also improve the water quality of coastal estuaries by moderating the large salinity fluctuations caused by freshwater point discharge from the Faka-Union Canal at the Port of the Islands. The plan would also aid in protecting the City of Naples' eastern Golden Gate well field by improving groundwater recharge.

The project includes a combination of spreader basins, canal plugs, road removal, and pump stations located in the Western Basin and Big Cypress, south of I-75 and north of US 41 between the Belle Meade Area and the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve in Collier County,.

**Current Project Synopsis:** The plan will restore and enhance over 55,000 acres of wetlands in the former Southern Golden Gate Estates, now Picayune Strand State Forest, and in adjacent natural areas and public lands by reducing over-drainage. Implementation of the restoration plan will also improve the water quality of coastal estuaries by moderating the large salinity fluctuations caused by the freshwater point discharge from the Faka Union Canal.

The project significantly increasing the size and improve major wetland ecosystems in adjacent lands including the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, and Collier Seminole State Park; benefiting threatened and endangered species communities such as the Florida panther and the red cockaded woodpecker. In addition, the project provides public access and recreational opportunities. Features include a combination of spreader basins, tie-back levees, numerous canal plugs, miles of road removal, and several pump stations located in the Western Basin and Big Cypress, south of I-75 and north of US 41, between the Belle Meade Area and the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve in Collier County.

In 2003, the state of Florida identified this effort as a state expedited project. A PIR was completed in 2004 and the Report of the Chief of Engineers was signed September 15, 2005. The Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) completed a review and referred the project to Congress by letter dated April 2, 2007 and it was authorized for construction in WRDA 2007 for \$375,330,000, dependent upon appropriation funding from Congress.

**Current Status:** The initial phase of the project, plugging of the northern two miles of the Prairie Canal, was completed by South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and successfully reduced drainage of the adjacent Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve and restored habitat for threatened and endangered species as part of the early-start work.

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Benefits are already being realized as native vegetation is quickly covering the plugged areas and very few nuisance or exotic plant species have been observed. Ospreys and wading birds have been observed foraging in the area as were beneficial surface water flows during the wet seasons.

In August 2009, the SFWMD Governing Board approved the Master Agreement, and Amendment 2 to the Design Agreement and addressed Land Valuation and Crediting Policy for CERP projects in general. The critical Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) for the Picayune Strand Restoration project to proceed was executed August 13, 2009.

The balance of construction, along with the remaining road removal efforts, is being implemented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was initiated with the October 2009 award of the Merritt Pump Station and Road Removal Contract. The cost for the first Federally funded CERP project component was \$53 Million with \$40M in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

Faka Union Pump Station & Road Removal contract was awarded in October 2010 for almost \$79M and is the largest of the three Pump Stations planned for construction. The construction contract for the Miller Pump Station & Road Removal is currently under design by USACE and is scheduled to be awarded in FY 2013.

Hydraulic and Hydrologic (H&H) analysis for water level impact to the adjacent private lands has begun. Design of flood risk mitigation or “protection” features such is underway and the feature near Port of the Islands housing community will be awarded in 2013. The feature in the northwest area of the project to protect the private lands will be awarded in FY 2014 and the feature near 6-Ls Farm in the southwest area will be awarded in FY 2015.

**Est. Cost:                 \$ 478,854,000**

**Project Schedule:**

- 2004                 PIR completed
- 2006                 Prairie Canal expedited state construction begun.
- 2009                 Merritt USACE construction began.
- 2010                 Faka-Union USACE construction begins.
- 2013                 Merritt construction physically completed.
- 2014                 Faka-Union construction physically completed.
- 2013                 Miller construction begins.
- 2017                 Miller construction physically completed.

**Detailed Project Budget Information (rounded):**

<b>Picayune Strand</b>	<b>Expenditures Thru FY 2011</b>
USACE	\$104,672,000
SFWMD	\$170,569,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$275,241,000</b>

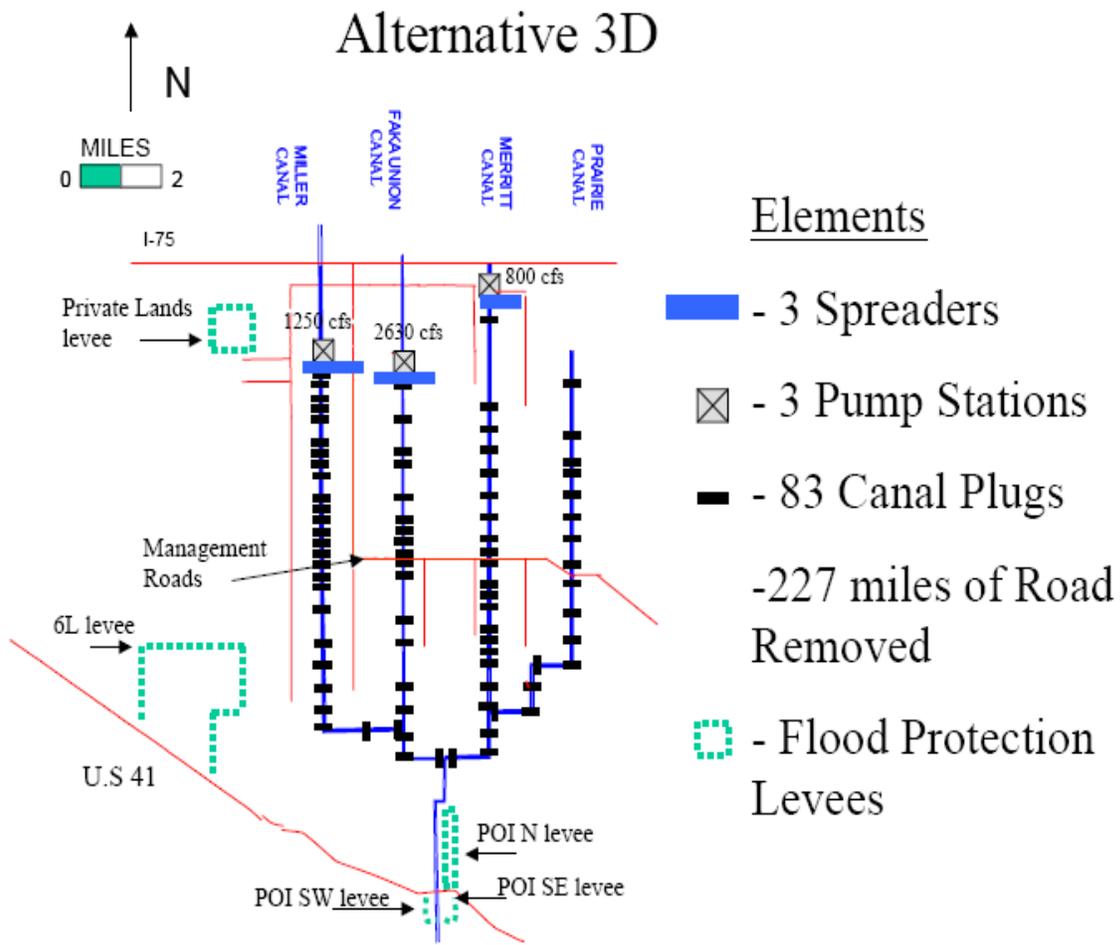
**Hyperlinks:**         [http://www.evergladesplan.org/pm/projects/proj\\_30\\_sgge.aspx](http://www.evergladesplan.org/pm/projects/proj_30_sgge.aspx)  
[https://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page?\\_pageid=1855,2831193,1855\\_2831931&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&navpage=prjsgge](https://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page?_pageid=1855,2831193,1855_2831931&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&navpage=prjsgge)

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**Source:** Original project description summarized from the *Central and Southern Florida Project Comprehensive Review Study (Restudy) (1999)*. Cost estimate information is updated to reflect current price levels in October 2011 dollars. Actual expenditures include all federal expenditures through FY11 (Sept, 2011), including real estate per the PPA; and sponsor verified and recorded in kind credit through 4th quarter FY11. Additional information was summarized from the Final PIR and EIS (2004) and WRDA 2007 authorization.

**Additional Information:**

Summary of Changes	Southern Golden Gate Estates Restoration Conceptual Source Report (1996)	Picayune Strand Restoration PIR (November 2004)
<b>Construction Cost</b>	\$ 15,500,000 (Oct 1999 Price Level)	\$ 124,946,000 (Oct 2004 Price Level)
<b>Real Estate Cost</b>	\$0 in main report; \$134,400,000 in Appendix A, Plan Formulation	\$193,043,000
<b>Components</b>	Non-specific/Conceptual Source report (1996 conceptual plan): Miller Pump Station 200 cfs Faka Union Pump Station 500 cfs Merritt Pump Station 160 cfs Prairie Canal Plugs 130 miles of roads removed. (No levees) (No culverts and levee ramps)	Miller Pump Station 1,250 cfs Faka Union Pump Station 2,630 cfs Merritt Pump Station 800 cfs Prairie Canal Plugs (same) 227 miles of roads removed. 5 ring levees for flood protection Culverts and levee ramps
<b>Feature Siting</b>	Non Specific/Conceptual	Criteria Used: Current Land Use, Topography, Hydrologic, and Ecological Connectivity
<b>Amount of Land</b>	Land between I-75, U.S. 41, Fakahatchee Strand, and Belle Meade area	59,294 acres between I-75, U.S. 41, Fakahatchee



**FIGURE 8 - 1 ALTERNATIVE 3D**