

FACTS & INFORMATION



APRIL 2019

The Loxahatchee River Watershed is part of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. Historically, the study area comprised an expansive network of uplands & wetlands of diverse habitat. Its rain-driven hydrology maintained natural communities throughout the watershed and provided unobstructed freshwater flows to the Loxahatchee River and to the Everglades. The Loxahatchee River is a blend of freshwater and estuarine environments. It was originally connected to the Everglades via the Loxahatchee Slough, where freshwater was freely exchanged with the Everglades based on water levels in the river and slough. Over time, natural areas across the watershed were converted to agricultural and urban uses, and roadway, canals, and levees infrastructure, and urbanization created barriers to freshwater flows, disconnecting the river and slough from the Everglades.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project aims to restore and sustain the overall quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of fresh waters to the federally designated “National Wild and Scenic” Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Restore wet & dry season flows of water to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River and the river floodplain.

Objective 2: Restore oysters, seagrass, and other estuarine communities in the Loxahatchee River Estuary.

Objective 3: Increase natural area extent of wetlands.

Objective 4: Restore connections between J.W. Corbett Water Management Area, Pal-Mar/Cypress Creek basin, Loxahatchee Slough, Grassy Waters Preserve, and the Loxahatchee River to improve hydrology, sheetflow, hydroperiods, natural storage, and vegetation communities.

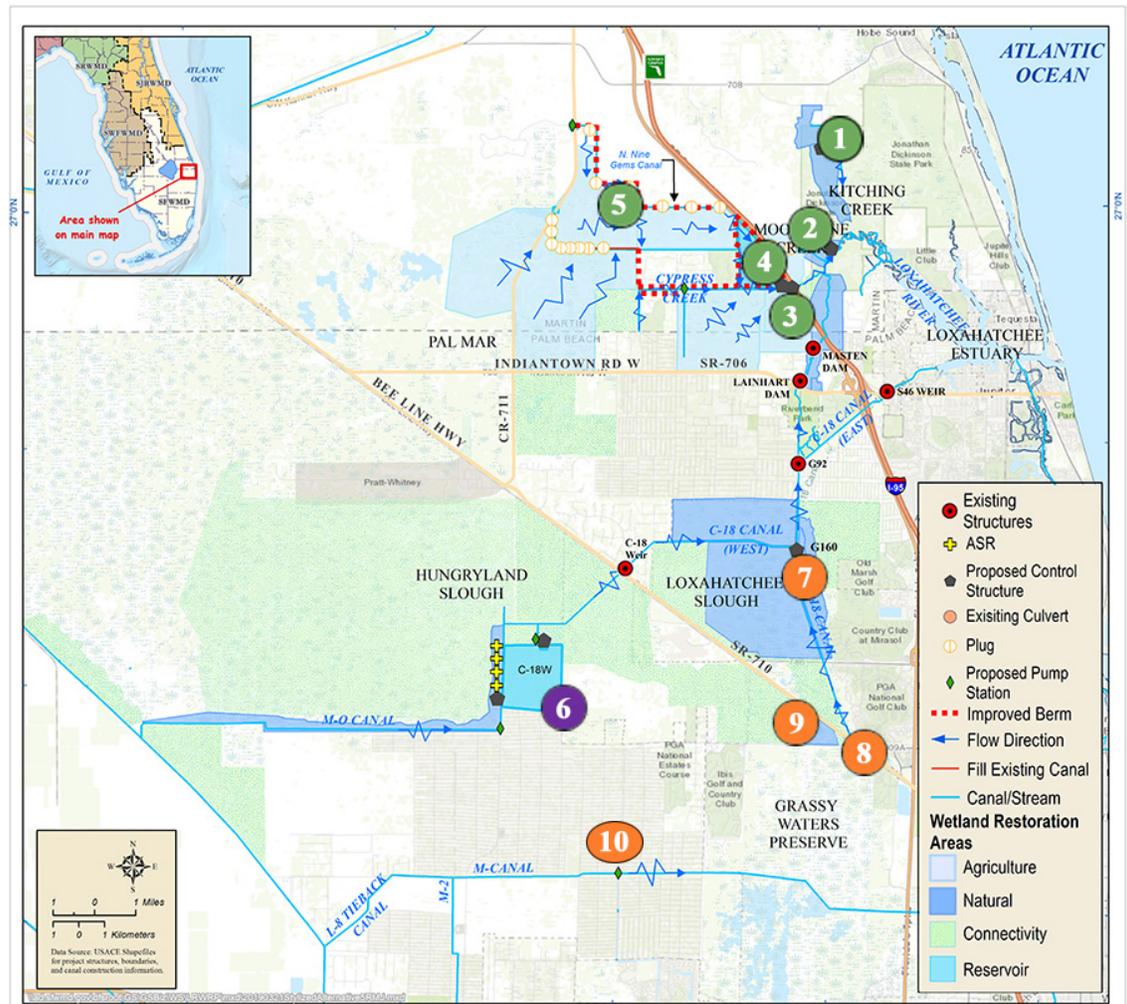
Objective 5: Restore native plant & animal species abundance & diversity in the Loxahatchee River watershed natural areas, river, and estuary.

PROJECT STATUS

After going on hold in 2011, project planning efforts were restarted in January 2016. USACE approved the tentatively selected plan on 31 July 2018. The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works approved a request for additional time and budget to complete the Project Implementation Report (PIR) and the associated Environmental Impact Statement by March 2020. On March 22, 2019, the USACE made the draft PIR available in the Federal Register for 45-day public review.

TENTATIVELY SELECTED PLAN FEATURES

1. Kitching Creek (Hydration): spreader canal; weir/plug (Jenkins Ditch).
2. Moonshine Creek (MC) & Gulfstream East (GE) (Restoration): connect Hobe-St. Lucie Conservancy District (HSLCD) ditch to MC; clear MC vegetation; weir in Hobe Grove Ditch; regrade adjacent area to historic topography.
3. Cypress Creek Canal (CCC) (Reduce Over-drainage): replace CCC weir to raise control elevation; raise berm at Ranch Colony; automate twin 84" culverts; pump and spreader swale; regrade Cypress Creek southern forks.
4. Gulfstream West (Restoration & Reduce Over-drainage): partial backfill & relocate southern end of HSLCD canal; small pump; construct flow through marsh to attenuate flow.
5. Pal-Mar East (Restoration & Connectivity) plug ditches; remove pipes; improve northern berm; construct western berm; improve eastern berm; pumps at Thomas Farm; redirect drainage to groundwater flow-through marsh via north Nine Gems canal.
6. C-18W Reservoir (9,500 ac-ft & 4 ASR Wells): aboveground reservoir; inflow pump; discharge structure; seepage control; M-O Canal Connector and pump.
7. G-160 Structure (Reduce Over-drainage): improve hydroperiod in Loxahatchee Slough.
8. G-161 Structure (Connectivity): Grassy Waters Preserve (GWP) water to Loxahatchee Slough.
9. GWP Triangle (Connectivity): grade and reconnect.
10. M-1 Pump Station (Conveyance): deliver Lower M-1 Basin water to M-Canal, GWP, and G-161.



FOR MORE INFORMATION



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<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Ecosystem-Restoration/Loxahatchee-River-Watershed-Restoration-Project>

