

**Florida Natural Resources Leadership
Institute**

Class VII

R.V. Griffin Reserve

Permitting the Reservoir Expansion

presented by:

Amanda Koonjeberry



An aerial photograph of a large reservoir expansion project. The water is a vibrant blue, and a long, narrow, winding path or canal cuts through lush green fields, leading towards the water. The sky is clear and blue.

*The
Regional
Reservoir
Expansion
Project*

Who is the PRMRWSA?

The Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (PRMRWSA) is an independent special district of the state of Florida whose mission is to provide its members with reliable supplies of high-quality water in a way that both protects and preserves the environment.

Operating as a regional partnership with its members—Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties—they work collectively to ensure adequate water supplies for an ever-growing population of more than 750,000 people in the region.



How does it Work?

Water is skimmed from the Peace River and treated at the main facility, located on the Peace River in DeSoto County, Florida.

This facility treats up to 24 million gallons per day and has been withdrawing water from the river since 1980.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Storage of treated water is accomplished in two ways:

- 1. The treated water is injected into an aquifer, which acts as a natural underground storage tank, and is then recovered as needed.*
- 2. The treated water is piped to an existing 85-acre reservoir located on the adjacent RV Griffin Reserve.*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The ability to store water is essential to the Authority as it allows them to meet seasonal water demands and allows the withdrawal water during “wet” months, and then store for use during “dry” periods when river levels are low.

Current Peace River Reservoir and Facility

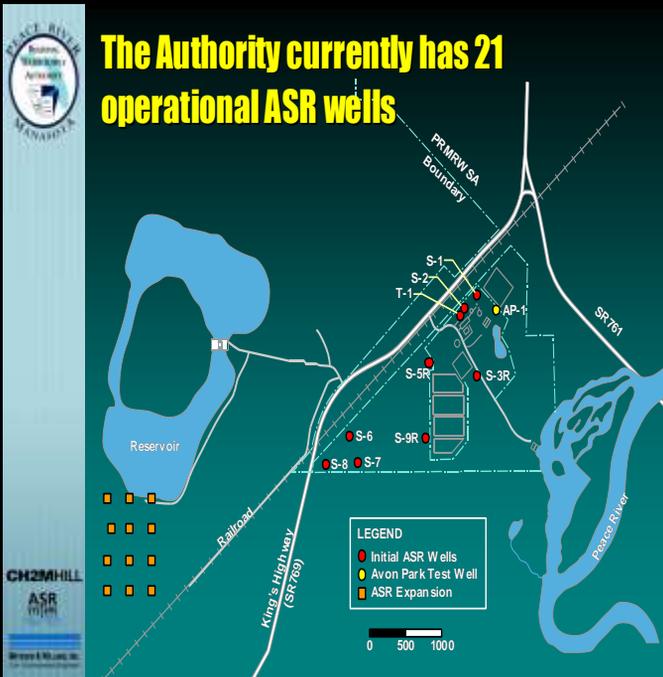
The Peace River Facility's River Diversion Pump Station



The Peace River Facility



The Authority currently has 21 operational ASR wells

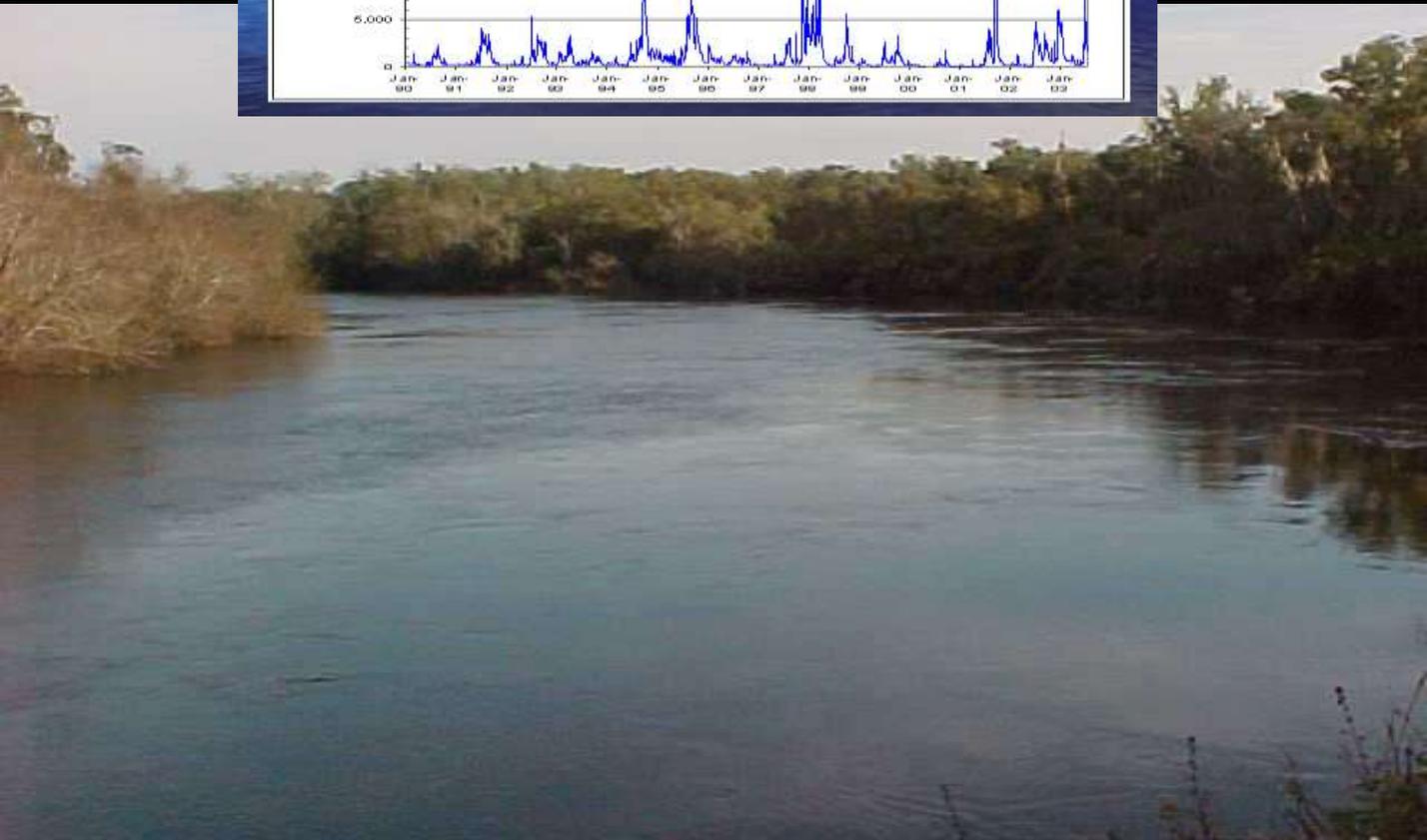
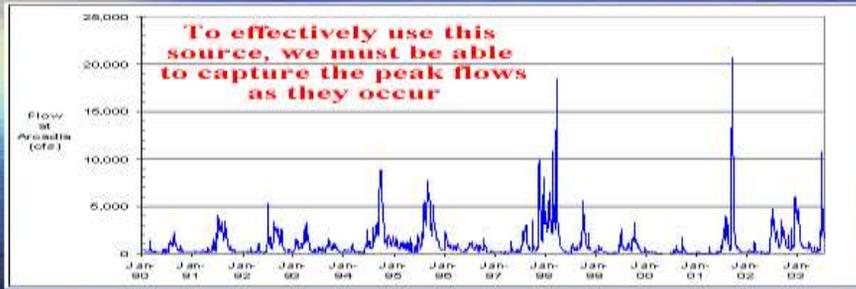


The Reservoir Holds 625 Million Gallons





The Peace River's Flow is Highly Seasonal



RV Griffin Reserve



What is the RV Griffin Reserve?

The RV Griffin Reserve is a 5,820 acre site, located in DeSoto County, which was purchased by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in 1992 for the specific purpose of increasing public water supply.

Why the Need for a New Reservoir?

- *It is projected that the populations of the 4 counties that make up the member governments of the Authority will increase to approximately 930,000 by 2010.*
- *Additional storage and treatment capacity is required to meet the growing demand for water in the region.*
- *The reservoir expansion will increase storage capacity from 625 million gallons to 6 billion gallons.*

6 Billion Gallons



RV Griffin Reserve

Mitigation Area A

Mitigation Area B

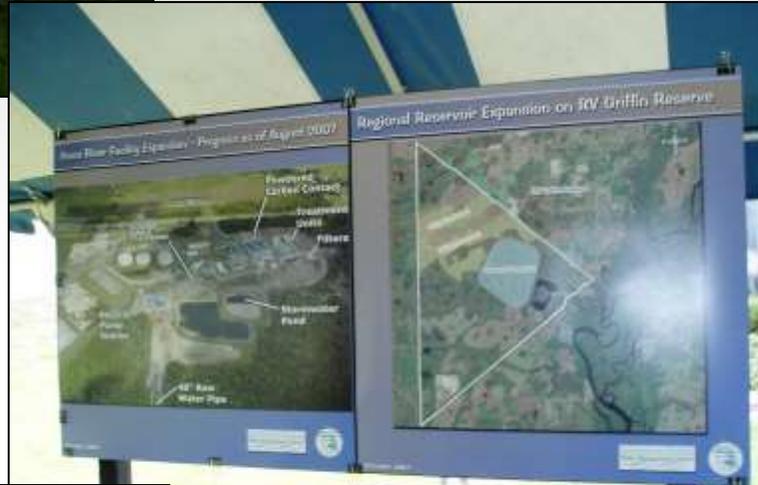
Reservoir Footprint



You Want To Build a WHAT?!!

The Authority anticipated public reaction to the new reservoir construction.

Early meetings with various stakeholder groups, including SWFWMD representatives, users of the Reserve, neighboring residents, and regulatory agency personnel were conducted in the planning and development stages of the project to help gain consensus for the Expansion.



Who Uses the Reserve?



The site is SWFWMD-owned and is currently used for water supply by the Authority (ASR and existing 85-acre reservoir), hikers, model airplane hobbyists, horse back riders, and a cattle rancher.

More Importantly....

**.....the Reserve is
home to a number of
protected wildlife
species**



...including the star of
our show.....



The Gopher Tortoise
(*Gopherus polyphemus*)

Permitting History and Timeline

Work and permitting on wetland issues began in 2003 and continue to date.....

2002 – Began BODR and feasibility study

2003 – Mitigation Options, wetland, and wildlife surveys

Timeline is critical because of the need for construction to start during the dry season and soon because we're running out of water.

2004 – UMAM analyses, pre-application meetings

Close to receiving ERP for reservoir.

2005 – Mitigation ERP Permitting

2006 – Reservoir ERP Permitting

2007 – Mitigation Construction and Wildlife Permitting

Construction must begin this year. For construction to begin gopher tortoises must be relocated first.



Gopher tortoises have to be moved before construction





Mitigation Area A

Mitigation Area B

Primary Recipient Site

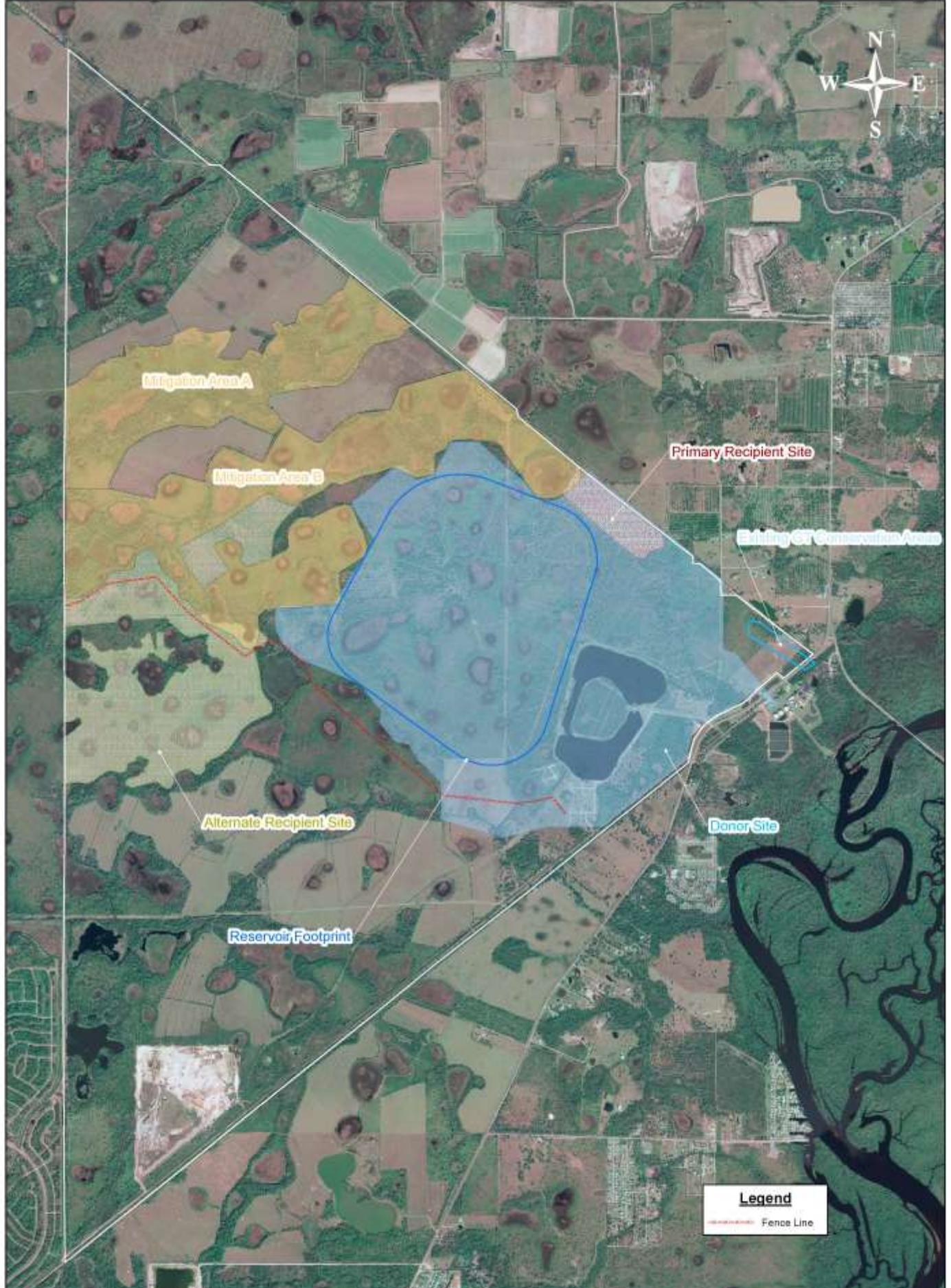
Existing or Constructed Area

Alternate Recipient Site

Donor Site

Reservoir Footprint

Legend
Fence Line



THE FACTS

- On February 5, 2007 an application for a Standard Gopher Tortoise Relocation Permit was submitted to the FWC.
- Over the months of March, May, and July several revisions of the relocation plan were required by and submitted to FWC.
- FWC requested a letter of permission from land owner (SWFWMD) to accept the gopher tortoises.
- Request made to SWFWMD resulted in renewed interest in project by Land Management Staff (LMS).
- Prior to issuance of letter LMS requested a review of the application and proposed management plan of the recipient site that was submitted to FWC earlier this year.
- Pursuant to their review LMS requested a meeting to discuss onsite gopher tortoise relocation.

Proposed Recipient Site





THE PLAYERS

- On September 14, 2007 a meeting was held at the Authority's office to discuss the proposed relocation plan and onsite recipient site.

Present at this meeting were:

- Three representatives from SWFWMD Land Management
- One Authority representative
- The Authority's Environmental Consultant.

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed gopher tortoise relocation plan and long-term management plan for the recipient site.

MEETING GOALS

Goals of the meeting were to:

- Share Information
- Obtain Input
- Improve Communication
- Build Community
- Build Capacity
- Make Decisions
- Advance the Thinking

MEETING AGENDA

THERE WAS NO AGENDA!!!!!!!

.....surprise..... Not only was LMS interested in discussing the relocation plan, they also wanted the proposed recipient site changed to “a more suitable site” of their liking and choosing.....





Mitigation Area A

Mitigation Area B

Primary Recipient Site

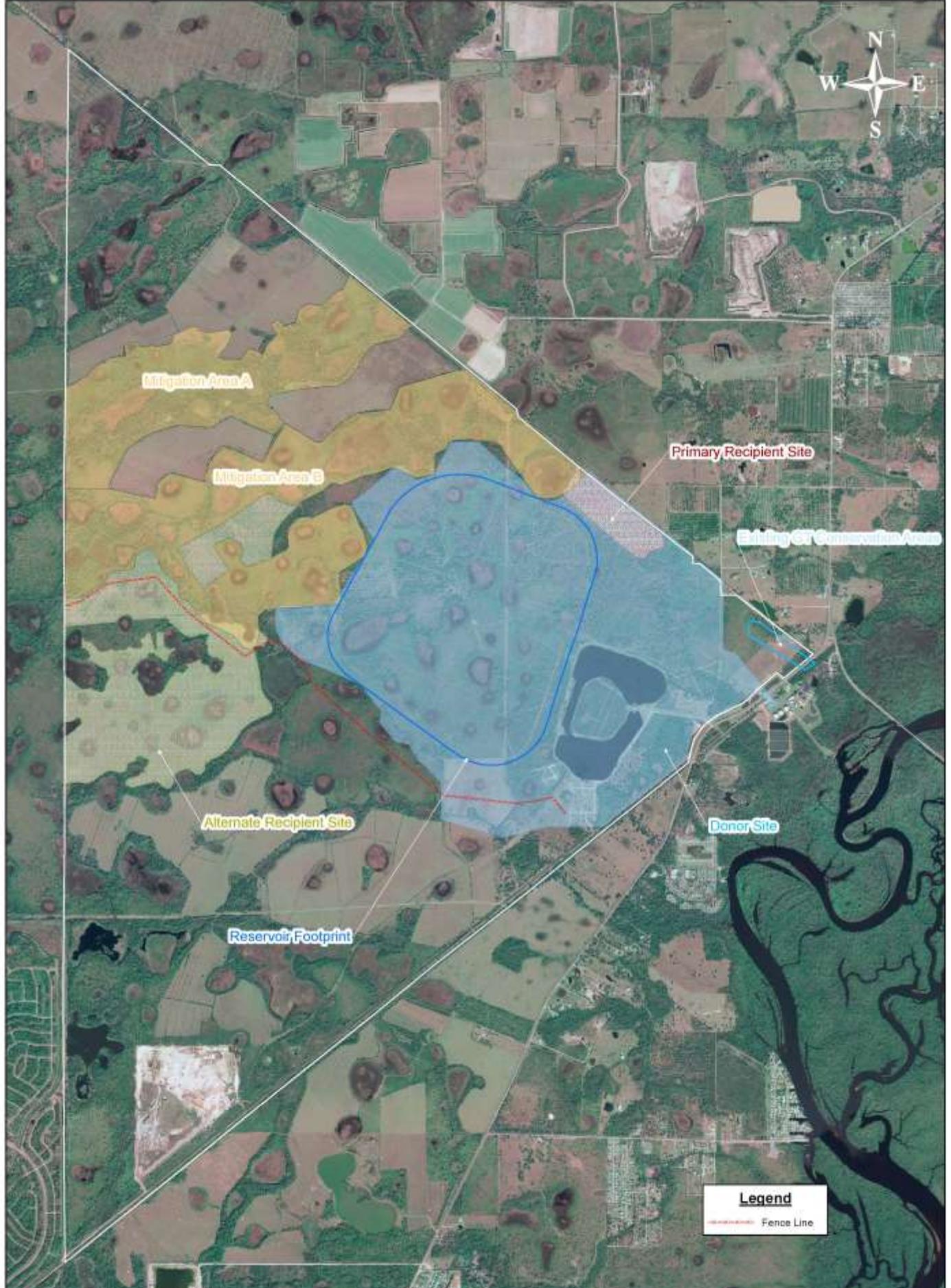
Existing or Constructed Area

Alternate Recipient Site

Donor Site

Reservoir Footprint

Legend
--- Fence Line



SWFWMD Preferred Site



THE CONFLICT

- Upon their review of the relocation permit application, SWFWMD LMS took issue some aspects of the recipient site and the proposed relocation and long-term management plan.
- There is a tremendous need for construction to begin this year.
- Fear that a change to the recipient site and submittal of new application to FWC could result in crushing delay to reservoir construction.

**BUT WE'RE RUNNING
OUT OF WATER!!!!**

.....and this isn't the
answer



THE METHOD

- Ongoing talks between head of SWFMWD LMS and Authority representative assisted in meeting progress
- The SWFWMD LM leader had prior knowledge of LMS intentions
- Was able to act as impromptu facilitator for the meeting
- Facilitated discussion between LMS, Authority, and consultant
- Allowed for compromise to be reached

THE DISCUSSION

- SWFWMD explained that they didn't think that the chosen recipient site was considered suitable gopher tortoise habitat.
- The consultant was able to point out that the site chosen was FWC inspected and approved.
- The consultant also pointed out the fact that the application process has already taken 7 months to date.
- The Authority pointed out that the reservoir construction could not be delayed any further.
- It was unknown to the consultant at the time of permit application that the alternative site chosen by SWFWMD would be available for use as a recipient site.
- The consultant pointed out that initial 15% surveys of the donor site revealed extremely low densities population.

THE SOLUTION

- It was agreed that construction of the reservoir could not be delayed any further.
- SWFWMD agreed to allow the application and relocation to continue as originally planned.
- Relocation is conditioned on the number of tortoises actually relocated.
- If the number of relocated tortoises at a density low enough to be supported by recipient site then no further action would be necessary.
- The agreed upon density is 12-15 tortoises.
- If greater than 15 tortoises are relocated the Authority will bear the expense and responsibility of again having to obtain another permit and conduct another relocation to the SWFWMD preferred site.

AND THEY
ALL LIVED
HAPPILY
EVER
AFTER.....

The image features a light gray background with a gradient. The text is centered and written in a black, serif font. Below the text, there are several decorative, wavy, light gray lines that sweep across the bottom right corner of the page.



THE END

