

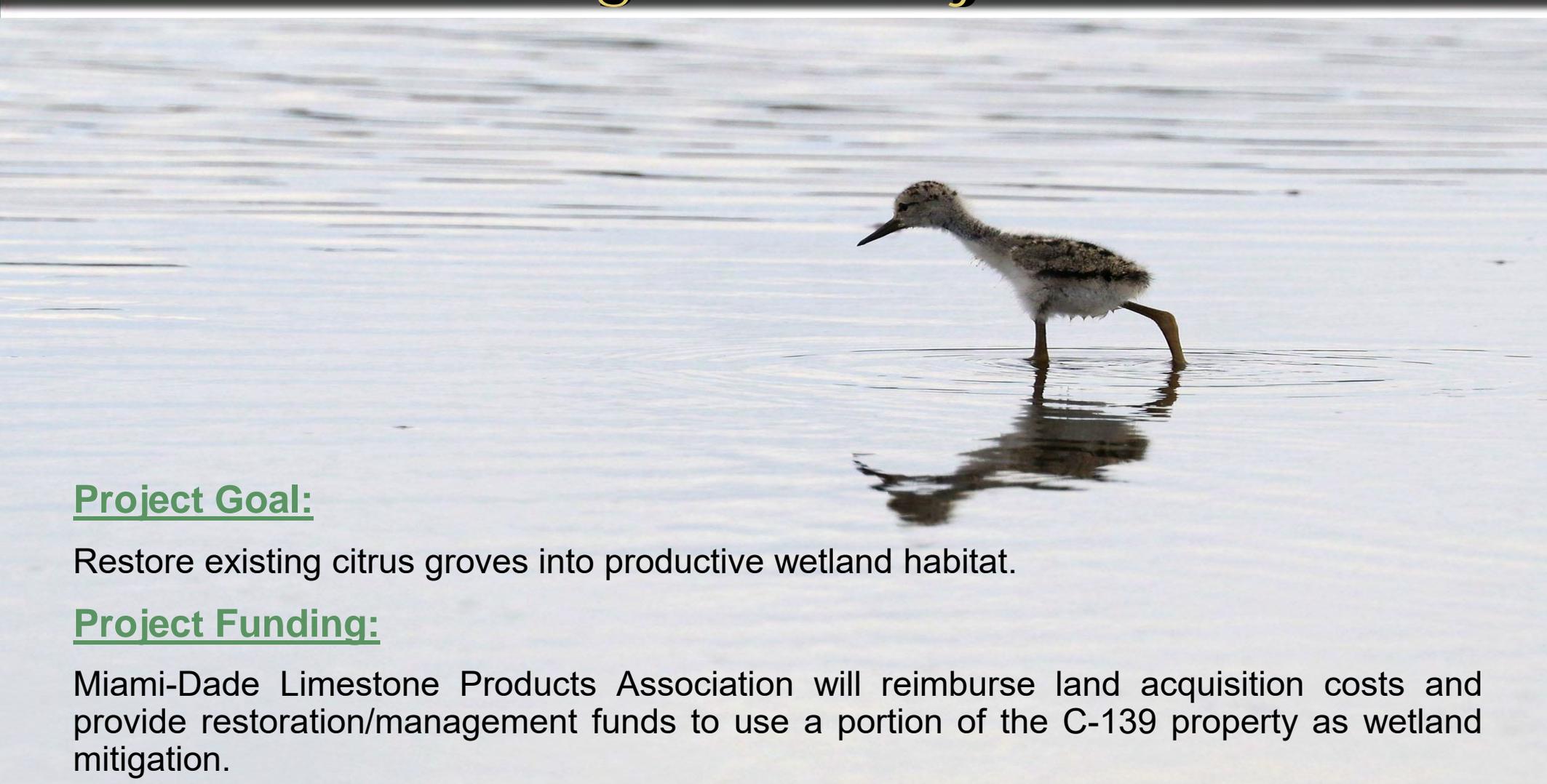


Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project Update

Robert Hopper
South Florida Water Management District

Lake Belt Mitigation Committee Meeting
August 25, 2020

Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project



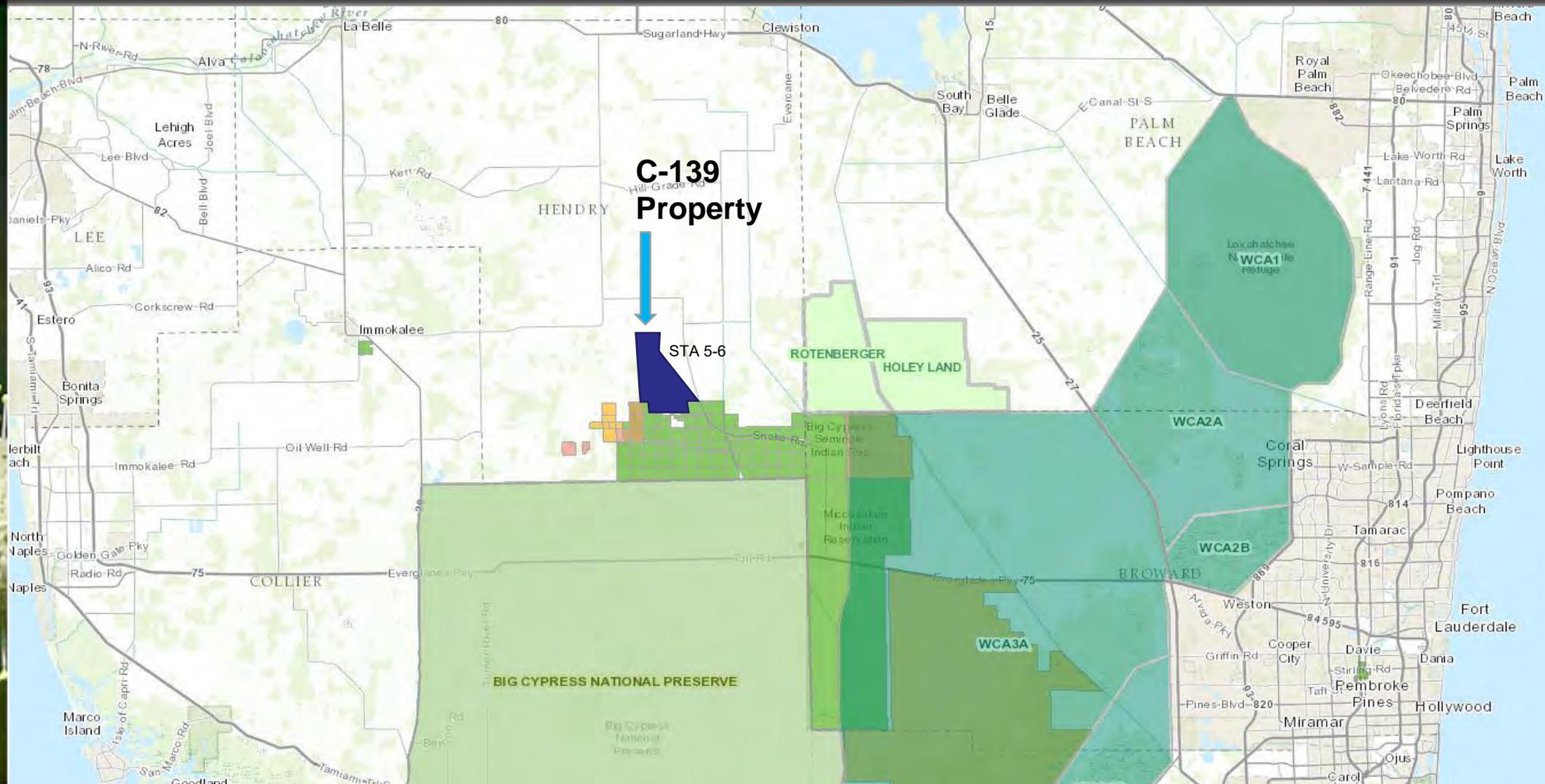
Project Goal:

Restore existing citrus groves into productive wetland habitat.

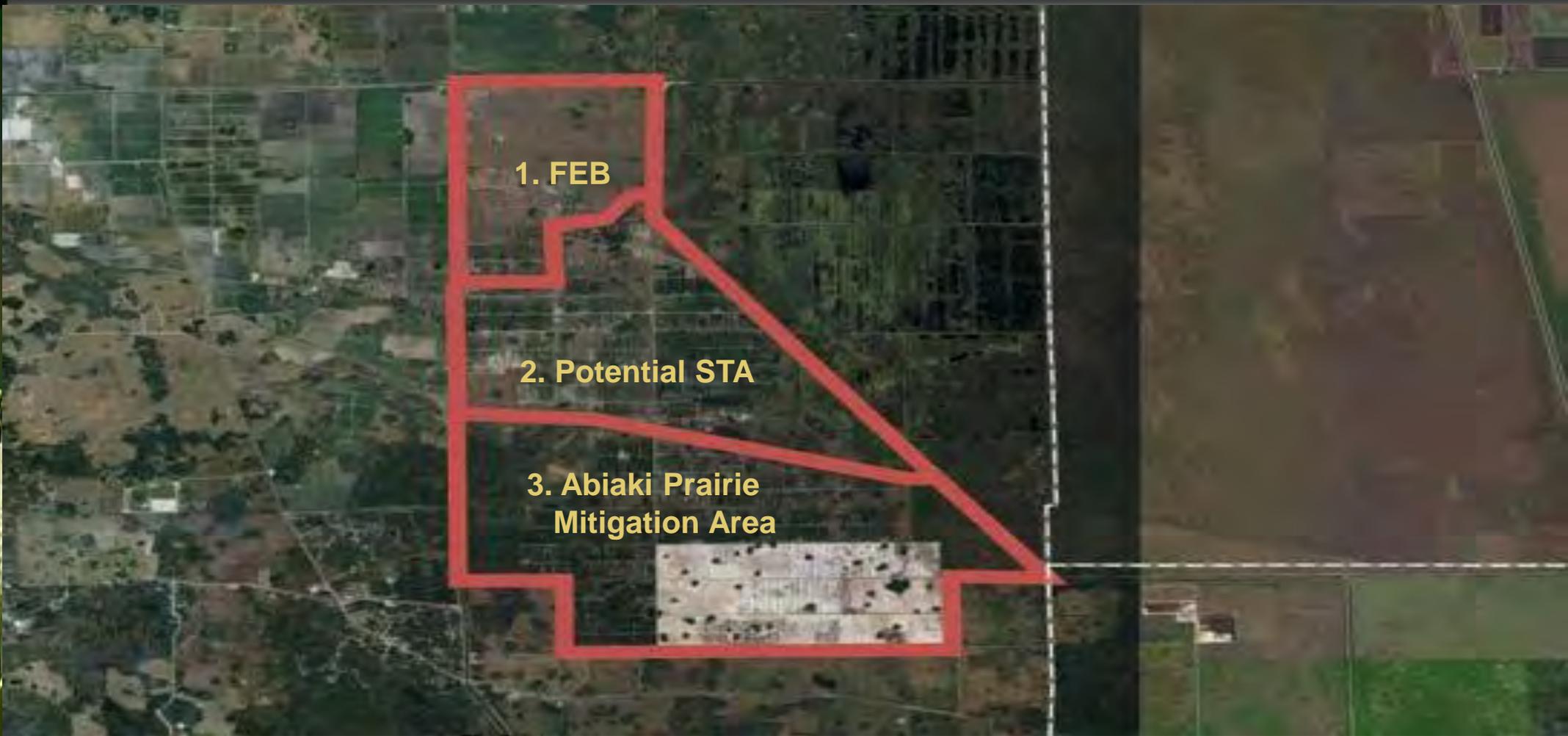
Project Funding:

Miami-Dade Limestone Products Association will reimburse land acquisition costs and provide restoration/management funds to use a portion of the C-139 property as wetland mitigation.

Property Location Map

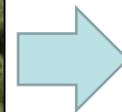


C-139 Property: 3 Project Areas



Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) north, planning area central area, Sam Jones - Abiaki Prairie south

Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project



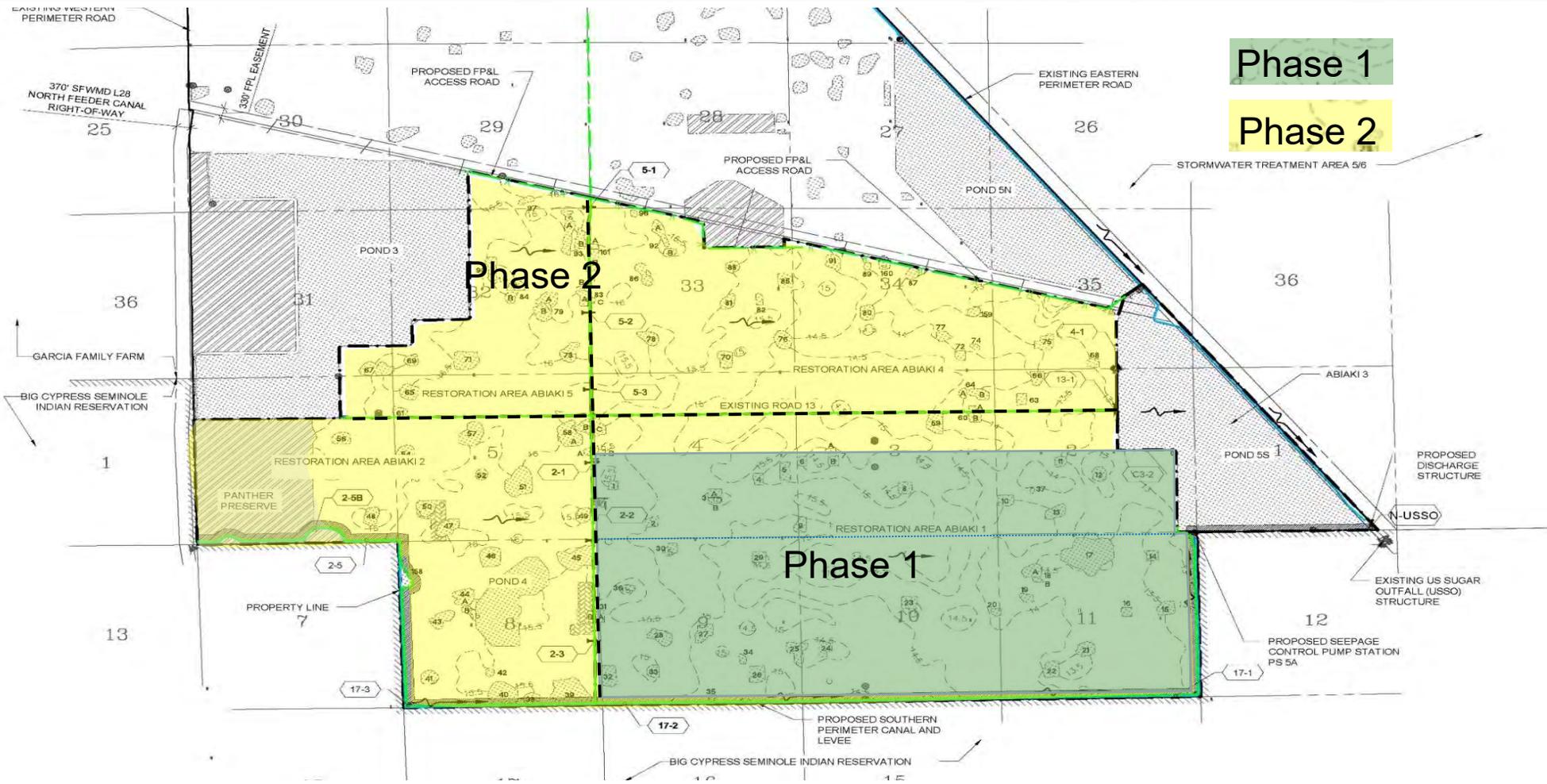
Project Goal:

Restore approximately 7,800 acres existing citrus groves into productive wetland habitat



Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project: Permitting and Functional Units

Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project Phases



Phase I federal/state permits were issued in 2015. Phase 2 federal/state applications were submitted in 2018.

Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project

All Project Area Permits Now Received:

Federal Permits

- Phase 2 Construction Section 404 Application Date : March 2, 2018
- Phase 2 Construction Section 404 Permit Issuance : June 24, 2020

State Permits

- ERP Permit Application Date: December 20, 2018
- ERP Permit Issuance: August 19, 2020



Functional Unit General Disbursement Criteria

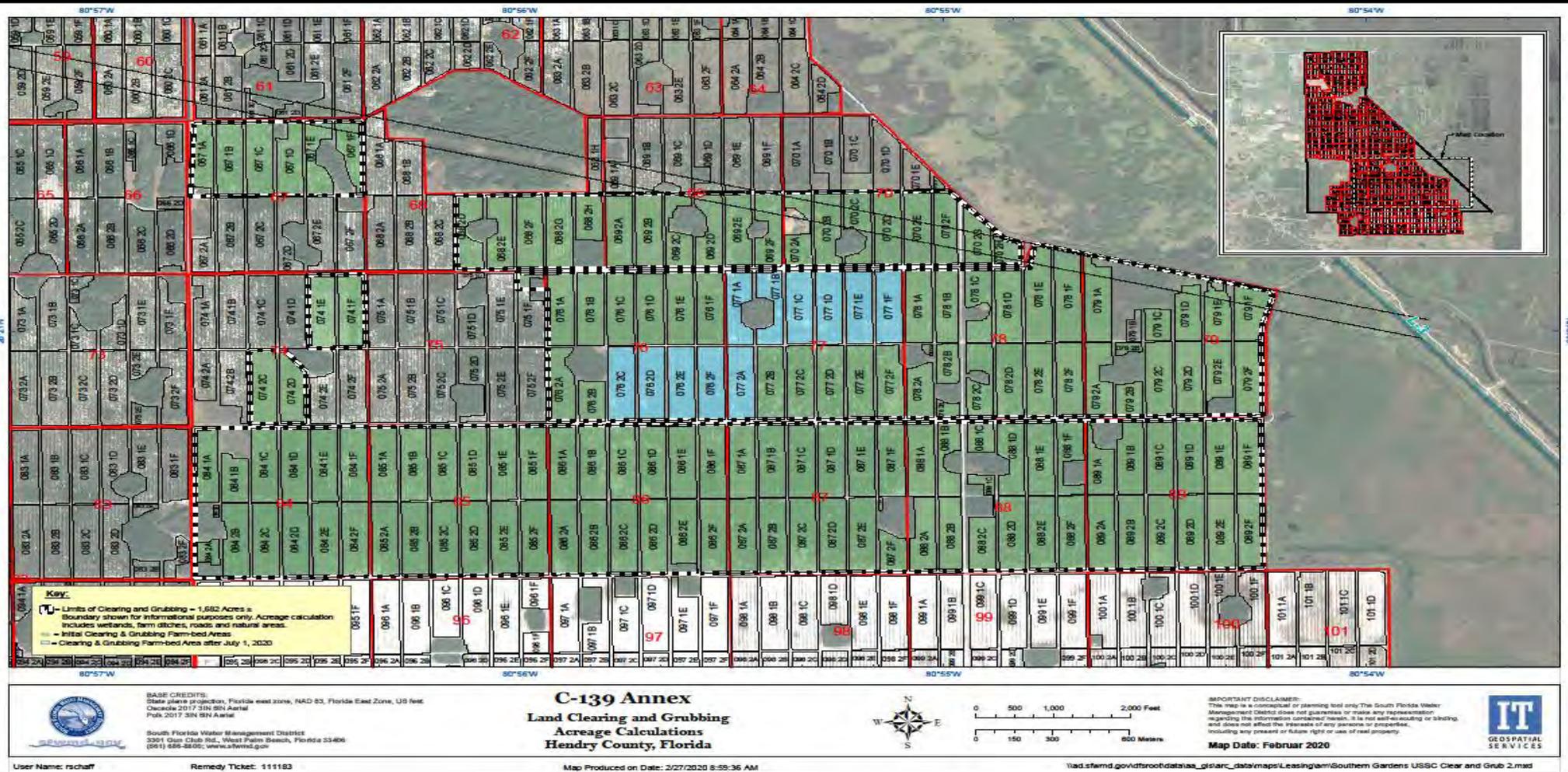
Restoration Activity	Benchmark/Percent of Units Released	
Legal	Record Permit	5%
Construction: Level 1	Clear Citrus Groves	10%
Construction: Level 2	Level Beds	15%
Construction: Level 3	Backbone Infrastructure	25%
Biological: Level 1	Restoration Planting	20%
Biological: Level 2	Ongoing Restoration Activities	15%
Biological: Level 3	Final Permit Compliance	10%
	TOTAL	100%





Sam Jones – Abiaki Prairie Mitigation Project: Current Construction

Phase 2: Current Construction Activities



Blue/Green areas: treat exotic/nuisance species and remove trees (1,682 acres)

Weed Control and Clearing/Grubbing



Refined exotic/nuisance control procedure: actively manage weeds in orange groves, use fire/mowing to prepare fallow groves, treat resulting open soils, then clear orange grove trees



Phase I – Revegetation

Mechanical Maidencane Plantings - 6 months after Installation



Native 'primer coat' for wetland restoration – approximately 2,000 acres planted to date

Littoral Plantings around Remnant Wetland Areas



23 littoral species installed around remnant wetlands – will migrate/expand throughout the site

Wildflower/Diversity Planting



'Inoculating' the restoration area: 41 species of wildflowers and 11 species of grasses installed

Wildflower/Diversity Planting



Wildflower/diversity plantings are evaluated and continue to multiply/re-seed around the project

Direct Seeding – Sunflower, Hibiscus, Saw Palmetto, Mixes etc.



Seeds harvested from District lands, bought from commercial sources, or confiscated (palmetto)

State and Federal Endangered Plants



6 federal/state listed species currently installed onsite and an additional 4 under cultivation

Natural Recruitment/Definition Plantings



Natural recruitment continues – ‘definition plantings’ to be installed as onsite habitats differentiate



Phase I – Hydrology

Phase I Hydrology - before Site Grading



2019 Interim Hydrology – Drone Images



Phase I: Restored Nuanced Micro-Topography



Post Leveling Ponding in 2017



Phase I – Wildlife

Turning Construction Areas into Wildlife Habitat



If you have to dig a hole, why not create potential roosting/nesting habitat?

Protected Habitat Islands



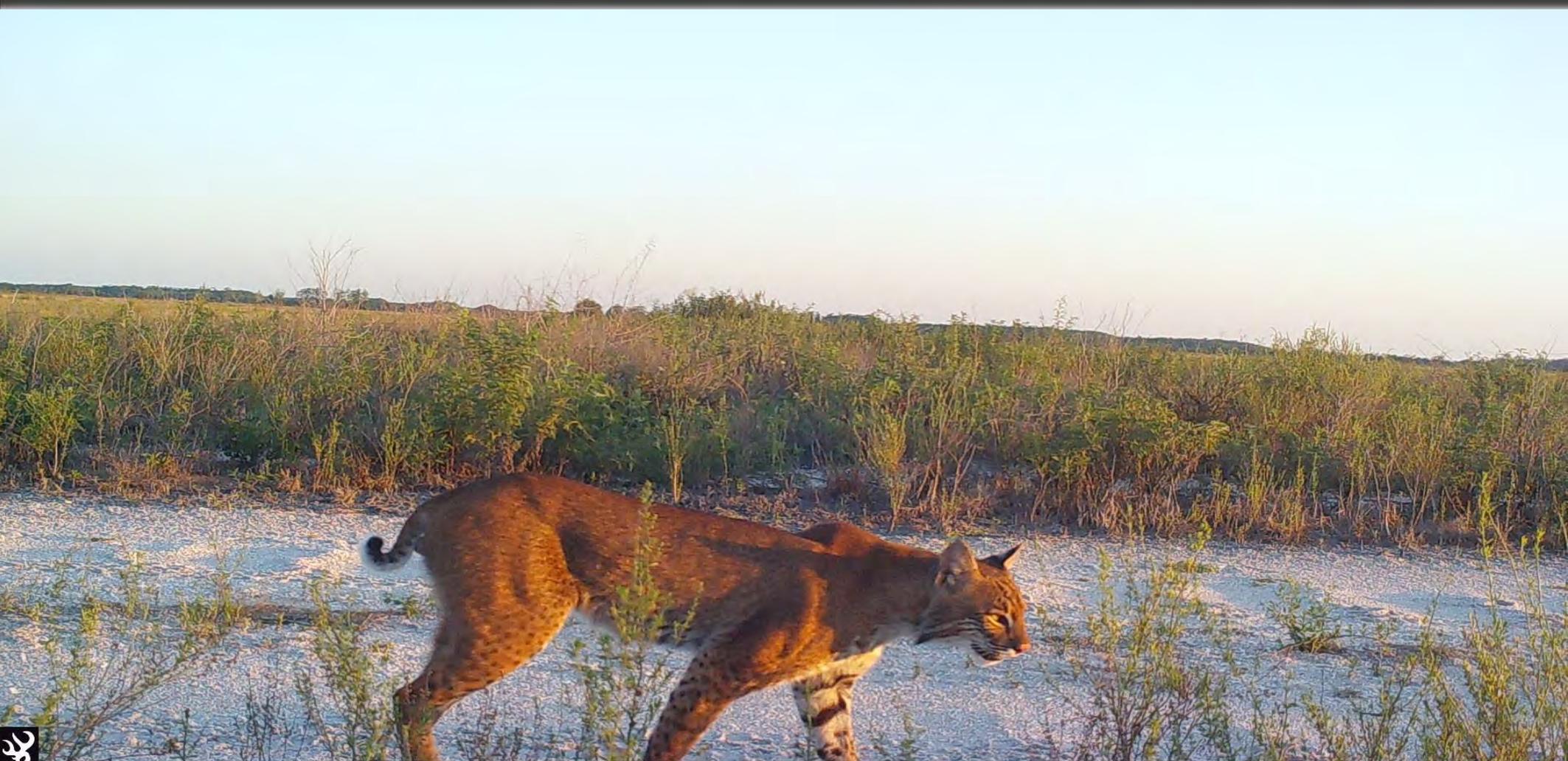
2019 Drone images provide insight into current moat residents

Wildlife Monitoring: Sandhill Cranes



72°F 11/13/2019 09:16AM CAMERA5

Bobcat



77°F) 04/27/2020 06:50PM CAMERA5

Deer



83°F 04/11/2020 11:12AM CAMERA3

Coyote



72°F 04/06/2020 08:58AM CAMERA6

Mother Bear



Mother Panther and Kittens



68°F 01/03/2020 08:59PM CAMERA4



Future Restoration Activities

Moving Forward

Remaining Construction Activities:

- Backfill remaining lateral canals
- Modify surface water system and decommission agricultural ponds
- Construct seepage management berm and pump station
- Replace USSO structure with G-771
- Clear and level agricultural beds
- Install internal water control structures
- Plant with appropriate native vegetation
- Continue exotic/nuisance vegetation control
- Monitoring and adaptive management to optimize success

Estimated construction completion date: 2027-2028



QUESTIONS ?

