

July 2010



just the FACTs

This fact sheet is provided as a reference to encourage a greater understanding of the various issues related to managing water in South Florida.

Collier County ATV Riding Site

The South Florida Water Management District is steadily increasing recreational access to public lands while continuing to manage those lands to support environmental restoration, water supply, water quality and flood control missions. The District will continue working with Collier County and other partners to provide the most appropriate and environmentally friendly public access site for ATV riders.

Background

- 2003 – Collier County required compensation from the State of Florida for roads that ran through lots acquired by the State in Southern Golden Gate Estates for the ongoing SFWMD restoration of the Picayune Strand.
- In order to resolve the dispute between Collier County and the State and make progress with the Picayune Strand restoration, the District agreed to:
 - Invest \$1 million a year for 20 years to help operate and maintain Collier County's flood control systems. *(To date, \$7 million has been paid.)*
 - Find a permanent site by Oct. 1, 2005, for ATV riders who could no longer use Picayune because of the restoration.
- Land by Lake Trafford in Collier County was offered, but the project was delayed because of the drought and environmental remediation issues.
- The District studied more than 20 sites, noting constraints such as:
 - By law, land that serves as habitat for protected species cannot be utilized.
 - Lands that are already reserved for restoration cannot be utilized.
- 2007 – The District offered and Collier County agreed to a temporary site. The county was unable to obtain a permit because of wildlife protection issues.
- 2008 –
 - The District paid Collier County \$585,000 for a boat ramp pursuant to the 2007 agreement.
 - Collier County acknowledged in writing that the District, to date on December 29, 2008, was in full compliance with the 2007 agreement.
- 2009 –
 - The District offered land at the C-43 Reservoir site in Hendry County.
 - Collier County filed a lawsuit against the District.
- 2010 – Collier County made a \$12.9 million proposal asking the District to:
 - Invest in two fishing piers on Marco Island
 - Purchase and convey a 320-acre parcel suitable for ATV and recreation in Hendry County
 - Restore and transfer to Collier County the 625-acre Lake Trafford site

Negotiations Continue

- At its July 15, 2010, meeting, the SFWMD Governing Board directed staff to continue working with Collier County officials on a reasonable agreement to find an ATV riding site.



sfwmd.gov
 South Florida Water Management District
 3301 Gun Club Road
 West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
 561-686-8800 FL WATS 1-800-432-2045
www.sfwmd.gov

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 24680
 West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Collier County ATV Riding Site

The Next Steps

- The District's offer of a temporary site at the C-43 Reservoir in Hendry County is still active and awaiting approval from the county.
- Staff will continue due diligence on other potential properties.