



## Timeline of Events

Date	Events
1978	Authorization of Golden Gate Estates Feasibility Study by Congress (first federal study).
1985	SGGE included in "Save our Everglades" portion of the CARL land acquisition program; land acquisition begins.
1986	Golden Gate Estates Final Feasibility Study completed.
1992	Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project Comprehensive Review Study (the "Restudy") authorized by Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 1992; Gov. Chiles directs the SFWMD to develop a comprehensive restoration plan for SGGE.
1996	SFWMD released a conceptual restoration plan with canal blocks, spreader channels, pump stations and road removal.
2000 - 2001	CERP, formerly known as The "Restudy," was authorized by WRDA 2000. Project Management Plan for Picayune Strand signed by USACE and SFWMD to begin PIR.
2004 - 2006	Final PIR completed and sent to South Atlantic Division and Headquarters, Washington, D.C. for Division Engineer's Notice, Chief of Engineer's Report, and review by Office of Management and Budget and Office of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil works.
2007	The Record of Decision for the Integrated Environmental Impact Statement of the Picayune Strand Restoration recommended plan was signed on April 13, 2007, and the Final Implementation Report was transmitted to Congress for authorization.
WRDA 2007	PSRP was authorized under WRDA 2007.
FY08 - TBD	Continue Pre-Construction Engineering and Design.
FY09	Construction Award of Merritt Pump Station.

## For More Information

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### The Journey to Restore America's Everglades

A partnership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District and many other federal, state, local and tribal partners. For more information about the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, please visit our website at [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org).

## Picayune Strand Restoration

## Facts & Information



US Army Corps  
 of Engineers  
 Jacksonville District



October 2008

**P**icayune Strand Restoration Project (PSRP), formerly known as Southern Golden Gate Estates (SGGE), encompasses 86 square miles of Collier County between Alligator Alley (I-75) and the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41) in southwest Florida. Today, most of the area is owned by the state of Florida and is included in the Picayune Strand State Forest. Public lands surrounding the PSRP property include Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, 10,000 Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Collier Seminole State Park.

Originally, Gulf American Corporation (GAC) set out to develop SGGE in the early 1960s. At that time, there were no state or federal laws setting drainage standards or regulating the development of wetlands. The company dredged 48 miles of canals, built 290 miles of shell-rock roads and sold thousands of lots before going bankrupt.

This development dramatically changed the natural landscape. The water table dropped by several feet, turning what was once a healthy, cypress-dotted wetland into a distressed system that became a target of invasive nuisance plants. These alterations to the natural system also caused an increase in wildfires, both in frequency and intensity. Runoff that once flowed in a broad, shallow sheet to the coastal estuary was funneled into the Faka Union Canal system. Coastal areas that historically received smaller freshwater discharges over a wide area became too salty. At the same time, the concentrated fresh water discharge from the canal reduced salinity in that area, damaging oyster reef communities and altering the composition of fish and crab species. Drinking water well fields near the estuary also became vulnerable to saltwater intrusion.

In 1974, Collier County commissioned the first study to determine how to reverse the impacts of these development activities. Today, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)/Big Cypress Basin and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with dozens of local, state and federal agencies and tribal governments, are making efforts to correct the damage. Restoring a natural water regimen in PSRP is an important component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

### The Recommended Plan

Over the course of three years, more than 20 alternatives for restoration of PSRP were carefully evaluated by a team of hydrologists, ecologists, engineers, land managers and others representing many agencies and organizations. Their task was to determine which alternative would best meet restoration goals while maintaining existing flood reduction in neighboring private lands and achieving this in the most cost effective way.

The alternatives that were retained for final analysis are the No Action Alternative, Alternative 3D (the recommended plan), Alternative 6 and Alternative 12.

The recommended restoration plan has been selected and has undergone public and agency review. Details of the plan are presented in the Picayune Strand Restoration Project Final Integrated Project Implementation Report (PIR) and Environmental Impact Study (EIS) dated September 2004. The PIR provides a comprehensive discussion of the performance and benefits of each of the alternatives that were considered and includes the related costs and impacts on the environment and people.

# Picayune Strand Restoration - Facts & Information



## Steps to Approval and Implementation

Public review of the draft PIR began May 2004 followed by a public workshop on June 17, 2004. During this time period participating agencies and the public were provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft report. The Final PIR and Integrated EIS were released by the US Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District and the SFWMD in September 2004.

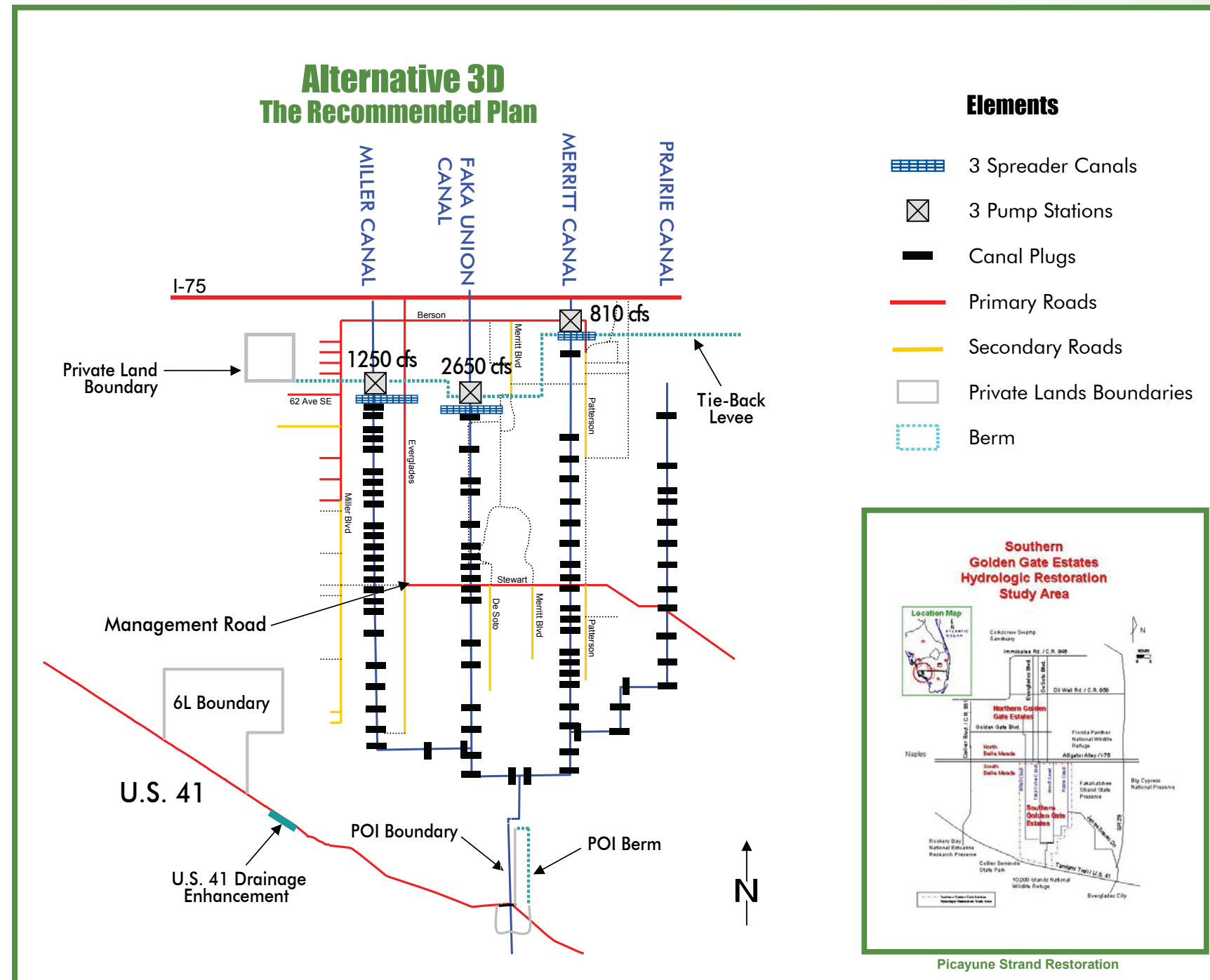
The Final PIR went through a thorough public review, cooperating agency approval and federal review and approval process

prior to being transmitted to Congress on April 13, 2007 for consideration for federal approval and funding for construction.

The total project cost for the recommended plan is estimated at \$375 million (October 2006) to be shared equally by the state and federal government. About \$250 million of the project cost is for land acquisition and has already been expended by the State of Florida. New appropriations of state and/or federal money will be utilized for design and construction.

## Restoration Goals

- Maintain drainage for developed areas north of the project.
- Improve aquifer recharge to protect the water supply and prevent saltwater intrusion.
- Restore and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife resources, including threatened or endangered species such as the Florida Panther, Florida black bear, Red-cockaded woodpecker and wood stork, as well as rare habitat such as tropical hammocks and plant species, including orchids and bromeliads.
- Reduce freshwater releases (point discharges) to improve the health and productivity of downstream estuaries.
- Preserve upland habitat.
- Control invasive exotic plants.
- Reestablish water flows in the wetland to near historic levels, including location, depth and seasonal timing of these flows.
- Improve water quality of stormwater runoff.
- Reduce or eliminate over-drainage of adjacent, sensitive ecosystems.
- Provide resource-based recreational opportunities.
- Provide comprehensive habitat conservation for the greater Everglades ecosystem, including the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, 10,000 Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Collier Seminole State Park and the Belle Meade Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) area.



## The Prairie Canal: Jump-Start

Each of the 20-plus alternatives evaluated for Picayune Strand hydrologic restoration included a common feature – plugging the Prairie Canal. The Prairie Canal is one of four large canals originally constructed to provide drainage and flood reduction for the planned residential development. These canals contributed significantly to the over-drainage of area wetlands. In an effort to expedite restoration of critical western lands and implementation of the CERP, the state of Florida moved forward with plugging the Prairie Canal and completed that work in Fall 2006. The Prairie Canal work involved plugging the northern seven miles of the canal, removing most roads adjacent to the canal and clearing exotic plant species from the canal banks. Benefits of this effort are consistent with restoration goals for the entire area, particularly in reducing drainage of the adjacent Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve and in restoring habitat for threatened and endangered species. This work is currently being integrated with the restoration project. The State of Florida, utilizing it's Acceler8 Program, also moved forward with much of the design effort for the entire project and has completed construction on one of four phases of road removal on site.