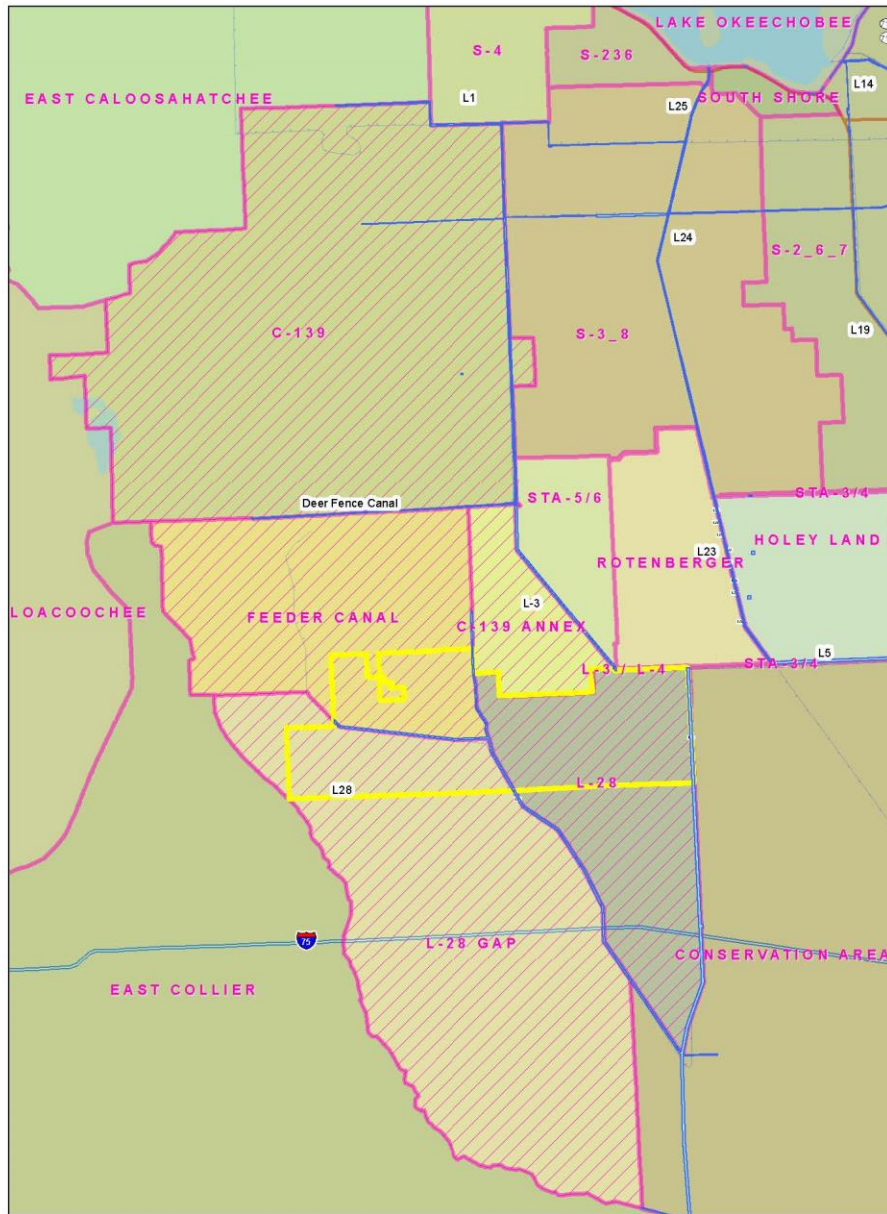






# Seminole Tribe of Florida Western Everglades



# Watershed Basins Surrounding Big Cypress



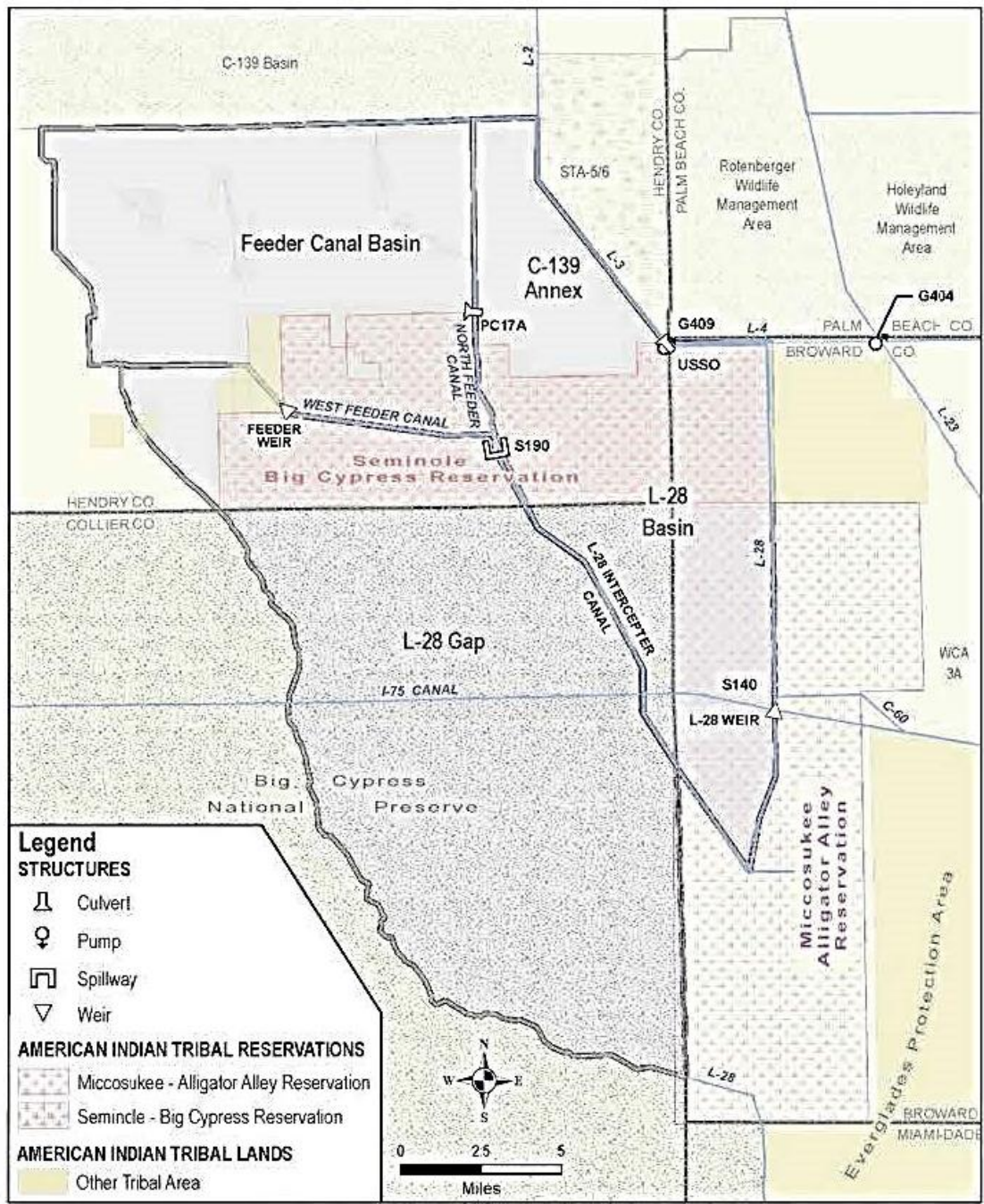
**Legend**

-  Big Cypress Reservation
-  Watersheds
-  Western Everglades
-  SFWMD ROWs

0 5 10 Miles

Not a survey. For illustration purposes only.  
Data Source: South Florida Water Management District  
Date: 1/15/2016

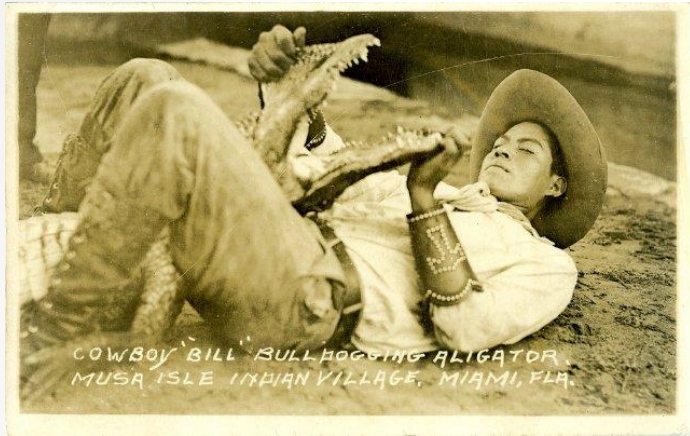






# History

- Federally recognized by Section 16 of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (25 U.S.C. § 476)
- Recognized by the State of Florida under Chapter 285 of the Florida Statutes
- In 1953, the United States Congress passed legislation terminating federal tribal programs
- The Seminole Tribe successfully argued against termination but immediately moved forward with:
  - Tribal Constitution
  - Obtained self-governance through a tribal council
  - Created the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. to oversee the tribal businesses.



COWBOY BILL BULLHOGGING ALLIGATOR,  
MUSA ISLE INDIAN VILLAGE, MIAMI, FLA.



A SEMINOLE FAMILY GROUP

132

61042



*Phillip Billy and Little Billy, (Seminole Indians)*

No. 749. National Art Views Co. N. Y. City.

# History - Water Disputes

- 1980s disputes:
  - The extent and nature of Seminole water rights and their relationship to neighboring water users
  - Land claims
- Jurisdictions involved:
  - Seminole Tribe regulates water and environmental regulation on the Seminole reservations;
  - State jurisdiction over state waters and environmental matters; and
  - Federal government jurisdiction over waters of the U.S. and other environmental matters.

# Big Cypress Reservation Surface Water Right Entitlement

- Generally, the Compact grants Tribe an amount of surface water according to the ratio of Tribe land to total land in the basins.
- This amount was quantified by the District in the 1998 Seminole Entitlement Report.
- Report recommends entitlement of 47,000 acre-feet per year, delivered in 12 equal, monthly amounts (3,917 acre-feet/month)
- During “times of adversity,” deliveries cut back by same % as other users.

# Some recent history...

- Big Cypress Seminole Indian Critical Everglades Restoration Project (PCA signed 1999) (based on 1/2 of the 1994 Plan for the Reservation)
- Yellow Book identifies a Big Cypress/L-28I project at request of Seminole Tribe
- Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (2008) changes - greater risk for delivery of entitlement from LOK
- Seminole Tribe's Initial Opposition to CEPP (2012)
- Task Force forms Western Basins Working Group in 2013 to look at the existing, missing and needed data for this region
- S-190 operational schedule study initiated (almost complete)



# Seminole Tribe Concerns

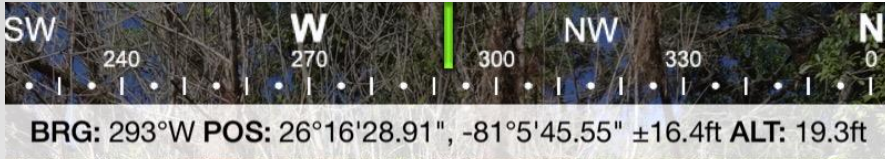
- Environmental conditions on the Big Cypress Reservation have continued to degrade as the water quality (high nutrients, impaired aquatic diversity) degraded and the quantity of the water declined.
- Not enough storage in this part of the system to handle excess water when available. Quality of the water sent through the system in pre-storm drawdowns is problematic and will need to be dealt with.
- Impacts of water flow into the Feeder Canals must be measured and evaluated, along with options for
- water storage and treatment south of Lake •  
Okechobee

# Seminole Tribe

## Objectives and Constraints

- Improve the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of water to the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation (Big Cypress Reservation) and the surrounding regions where the Tribe has beneficial rights
- Ensure delivery of the Seminole Tribe's entitlement water for irrigation, including during periods of drought.
- Maintain flood protection for Seminole Tribe's interests.
- Retain Big Cypress Reservation surface and groundwater.
- Reduce Big Cypress Reservation water loss to the regional canal system.
- Maintain groundwater elevations necessary to support current and historic Big Cypress Reservation wetlands, sloughs and old growth cypress stands.
- Isolate or better protect Big Cypress Reservation from upstream surface water pollutant passing-through the Reservation.





KBS  
Schlumberger

Big Cypress  
Reservation  
28 Jan 2015, 11:26

DATA GAPS - While we understand the needs of this part of the system better now than we did in the 1990's, we still have a lot of data gaps to address





# Constraints - Planning and Design of the Western Everglades Restoration Project must be data-driven

- Planning for project must be based on a full complement of regional and local data to provide an evidence-based foundation on which to make restoration decisions.
- Careful attention to the existing data and any data gaps must be addressed in the planning process is critically important in order for the Seminole Tribe to support this process, and the ultimate construction of the project.
- Project alternatives must be studied and modeled to ensure that they do not negatively impact the Seminole Tribe's historic land, water and cultural resources and rights and legal agreements.
-



# Seminole Tribe Studies

- Lessons learned from Big Cypress Seminole Indian Critical Project
- LiDar of the Reservation extending out one mile from boundary
- Biodiversity study
- Groundwater monitoring study
- Forestry research (USF)

# WERP should restore... Quantity



# Water Quantity

- Consider LORS schedule
- Consider Tribe's water rights entitlement for the Big Cypress Reservation and the desire for additional water from this project for ongoing restoration of wetland systems on the Reservation and in the Preserve
- Consider water uses in the area and changes that are happening to land uses in these Basins
- Consider other water restoration and storage projects in the area and how to build upon the availability of water



# WERP should restore... Quality





# Restore Water Quality

- Consider that Seminole Tribal members still live, work, play and rely on these waters and lands. Ensure that the water coming into and through their reservation and other beneficial lands are protective of human health.
- State Water Quality Standards
- Seminole Tribe's beneficial rights and uses of lands outside the boundaries of the Big Cypress Reservation - in the Everglades and Big Cypress areas
- Seminole Tribe's Water Quality Standards - under
- consideration with EPA for potential changes in

# WERP should restore...Timing







WERP  
should  
restore...  
Distribution