LOXAHATCHEE RIVER | Watershed Restoration Project

FACTS & INFORMATION

JANUARY 2015

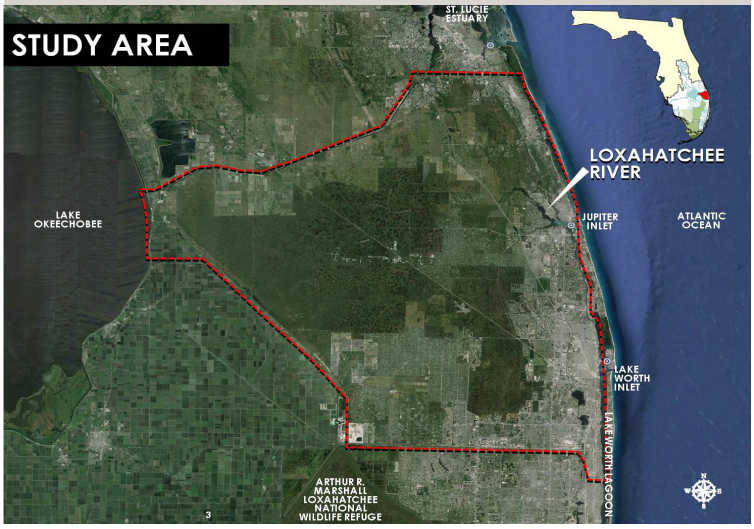
The Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project (formerly known as North Palm Beach County - Part 1) is a part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The project includes approximately 753 square miles located in central and northern Palm Beach County and southern Martin County. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), is leading the planning process.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project aims to restore and sustain the overall quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of freshwaters to the federally designated "National Wild and Scenic" Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River for current and future generations. This project also seeks to restore, sustain, and reconnect the area's wetlands and watersheds that form the historic headwaters for the river and its tributaries.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area includes Palm Beach County and southern Martin County.



PROJECT STATUS

Planning efforts for the project were put on hold in 2011 and have now been restarted. Currently, the project is being re-scoped under **USACE's New Planning Paradigm** and existing plan formulation data and analysis will be used in the development of a final plan, known as a Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement, to prepare for congressional authorization.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The objectives for the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration project are to:

- Improve water distribution and timing to restore the natural system's ecological function
- Rehydrate natural areas that have been hydrologically impacted by excessive draining and water diversion
- Re-establish connections among natural areas that have become spatially and/or hydrologically fragmented.
- Improve timing and distribution of water from the upstream watershed to increase the resiliency of freshwater riverine habitats to future sea-level changes

If implemented, these actions will:

- Help restore more natural water deliveries
- Promote improved health and functionality of wetland and upland areas
- Increase the quantity and quality of habitat available for native wildlife and vegetation

The Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project also seeks to restore, sustain, and reconnect the area's wetlands and watersheds that form the historic headwaters for the river. These areas include:

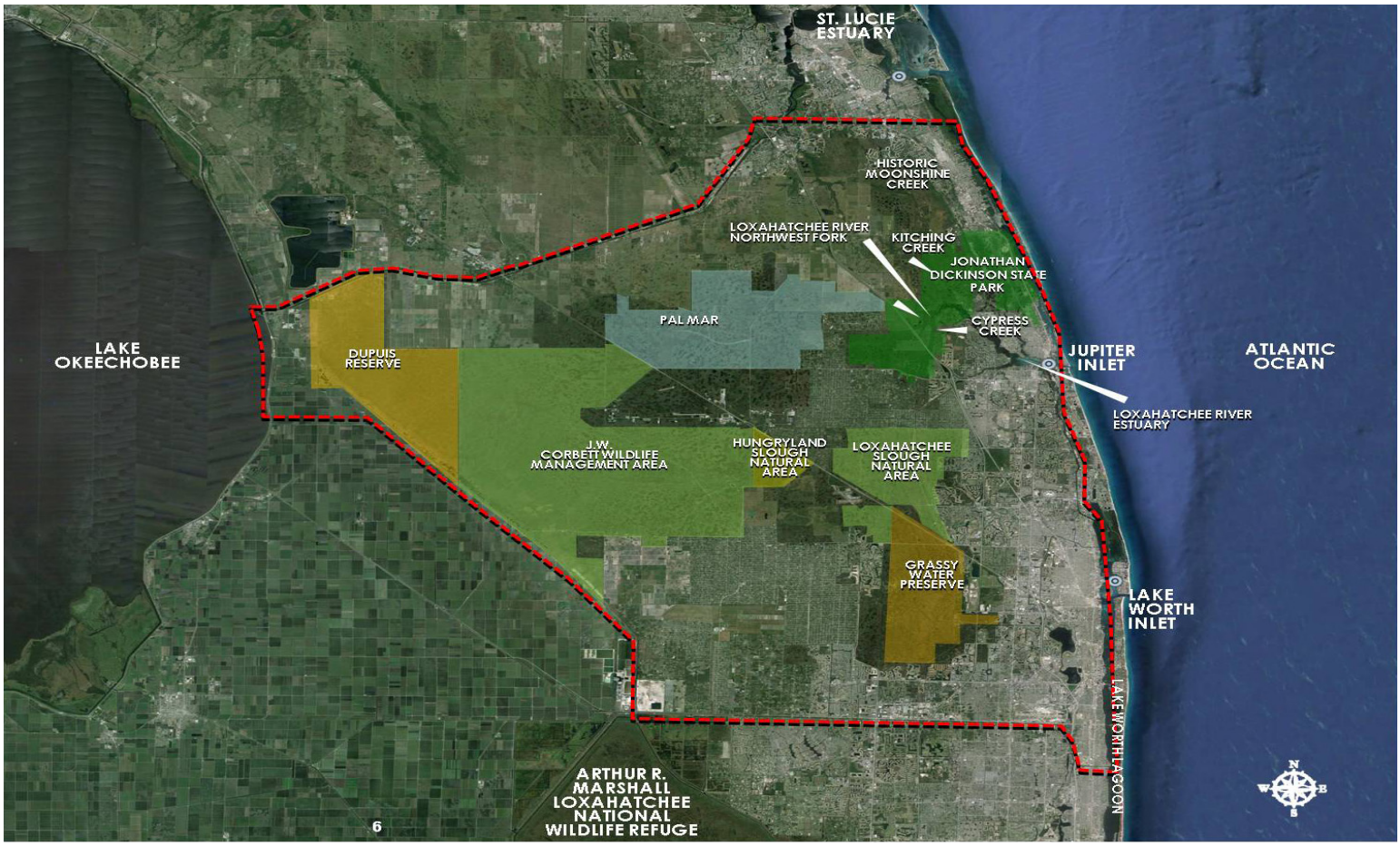
- Jonathan Dickinson State Park
- Pal Mar East/Cypress Creek
- Dupuis Wildlife and Environmental Management Areas
- J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area
- Grassy Waters Preserve
- Loxahatchee Slough
- Loxahatchee River Estuary

USACE'S NEW PLANNING PARADIGM

The USACE's new planning paradigm will involve defining the appropriate levels of detail for investigations so that recommendations for authorization can be captured, succinctly documented and completed in timely manner. Generally, studies will adhere to the 3x3x3 rule:

- Not more than $3 million
- Completed in less than three years
- Concurrent reviews/enhanced vertical team communications, involving the three levels of USACE (District, Division and Headquarters)

The revised process will ensure studies are completed in less time without jeopardizing the quality of engineering, environmental and economic analyses.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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