

PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR RESTORATION OF FORMER AGRICULTURAL LANDS AT PERICO PRESERVE IN COASTAL SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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PERICO PRESERVE LOCATION: COASTAL MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA



PERICO PRESERVE PRE-PROJECT ACARAGES

176 Acre Parcel
56 Acres of Upland (pre-restoration)
98 Acres of Wetland (pre-restoration)
22 Acres of Bay Bottom (Submerged Land)
Acquired by Manatee County on 11/26/2007
Purchase price for property was \$6,000,000

PERICO PRESERVE SITE HISTORY

Pre-Agriculture (<1930)
Pine flatwoods and coastal scrub, rimmed with mangroves and coastal wetlands
Agriculture and Mosquitoes (>1930 and <2000)
Varying crops and intensity
Extensive ditching and diking
Australian Pines!
The Fallow Years (2000 to 2007)
Largely unused
Invasive and nuisance species rule
Rebirth Begins (2007)
Manatee County acquires property



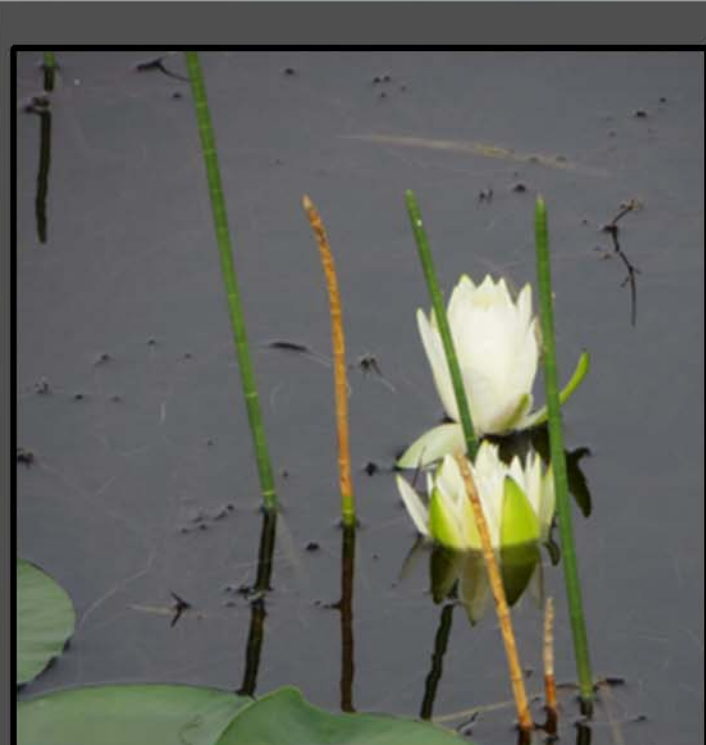
Perico Preserve - 1940



Perico Preserve - 1970

Perico Preserve - Enhancements Timeline

2009 - Begin Exotics Removal and Design Concepts Review
2010 - Phase 1 Restoration Design and Permitting
Jan 2012 - Begin Earth Moving Phase 1
Spring 2012 - Wetlands Planting
December 2012 - 1st Seeding (Thomas Ranch)
January - Feb 2012 Phase I Upland Out plantings
Spring 2012 - Begin Excavation of Rookery Island Basin
December 2013 2nd Seeding (Duette Preserve)
Spring 2015 - Phase III Basin Connection and Trails
May 2016 - Open to the Public (not dogs though)



Early Brazilian Pepper Tree Removal - 2008

Volunteers have played a major role in this habitat improvement project since the very beginning. This photo shows some of the younger restoration practitioners at work.



Early Australian Pine Removal - 2010

This photo was taken on the north side of the site in the edge of a former Australian pine monoculture. This area is now a salt marsh. Note the size of biomass piles drying before they were burned.



Primary Restoration Goals:
Restore and re-create a diversity of high quality upland habitats on the site, which could feasibly be managed by County staff. Create wetland habitats on the site with a focus on supporting wading birds. Provide excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing and passive recreation.

Perico Preserve - Acreage Goals

Habitat Creation	Habitat Restoration	Habitat Enhancement
12.4 acres - seagrass	0.08 acre - salt marsh	1.32 acres - salt marsh
4.46 acres - freshwater marsh	2.29 acres - flatwoods/salt marsh transitional	2.64 acres - upland hammock
3.79 acres - salt marsh	9.48 acres - flatwoods	
3.59 acres - scrub	3.78 acres - maritime hammock	
0.78 acre - coastal strand hammock		

Perico Preserve Work Phases

Pre-Restoration Exotic Species Management
Phase I - Habitat Restoration and Creation
Phase II - Rookery Island Basin Creation
Phase III - Basin Connection and Trails

Phase I - Habitat Restoration and Creation



Newly Created Oligohaline Marsh

This marsh was connected to existing mosquito ditches which convey saltwater into this system during high tide events.



Pre-Seeding Weed Management

Management of undesirable plants was a very large challenge on this site. Decades of agricultural uses had all but depleted seed bank of desirable native species. Preventing establishment of weeds was crucial.



Donor Site # 1 - Thomas Ranch

This site was selected as a donor because of the diversity of species within the ground cover stratum and relative distance to the coast. The hope was that this would allow for collection of an ecotype well adapted to coastal conditions.

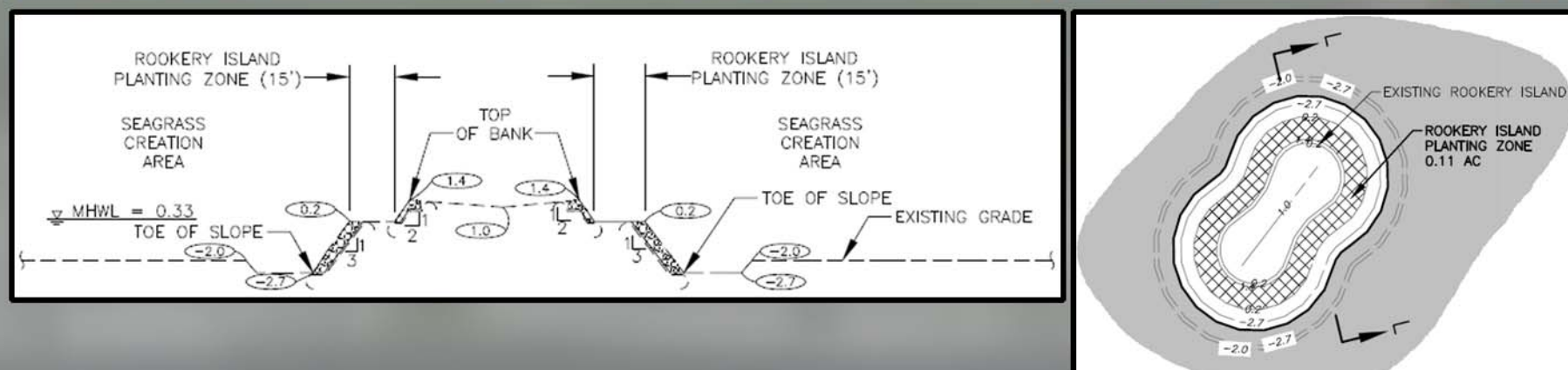


Installing Seed at Perico Preserve - Dec. 2012

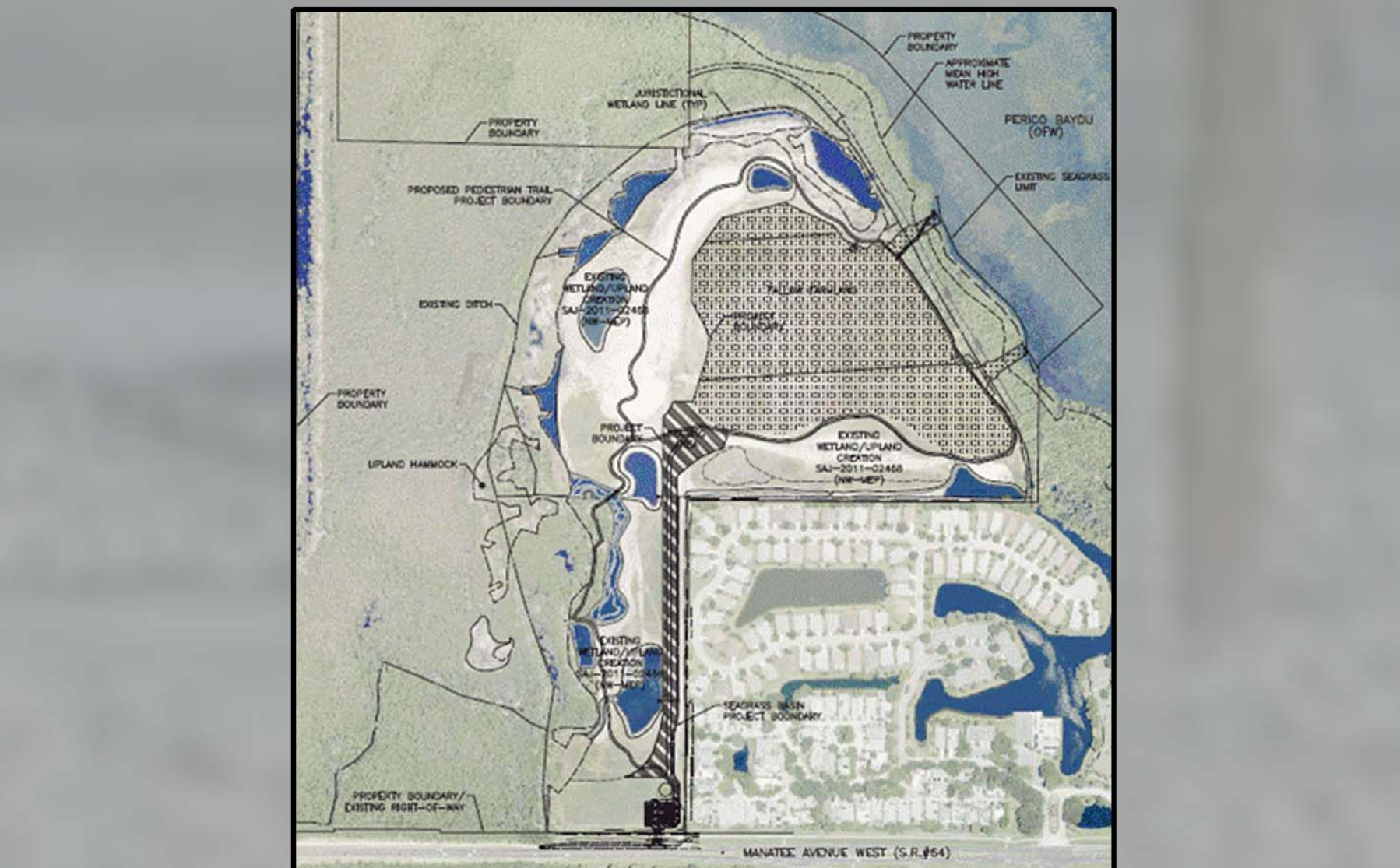
Seeds were installed after ground was prepared by numerous herbiciding events, scalp-mowing or burning, then culti-packing. Placement was semi selective with contractor placing some species in areas most likely to thrive.



Phase II - Rookery Island



Phase III - Seagrass Basin & Trails



PROJECT PARTNERS

Manatee County Board of County Commissioners
Southwest Florida Water Management District - SWIM Program
United States Fish and Wildlife Service - Coastal Program
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program - Bay Guardians
Tampa Bay Estuary Program - Give a Day for the Bay
Permitting and Engineering Design by Stantec Consulting and ICON Consultants Group

