A New Era in Ecosystem Restoration
Public–Private–Partnerships (P3s)

An Innovative Approach to Achieving Habitat Restoration Goals
Tampa Bay Case Study

Thomas F. Ries
Scheda Ecological Associates, Inc.
Mike Smith
Gulf of Mexico Foundation
Habitat Restoration has been primarily performed on public lands

- Sites of Opportunity
- Sites which may have potential matching funding sources
- Politically driven sites
These restoration sites are still critically important

- Meeting restoration goals
- Public awareness of restoration practices and their importance to the environment
- Utilizing potential matching funds
- Politically driven projects also can provide significant public exposure
- Educational opportunities
- Scientific research opportunities
Unfortunately these Sites may not be the Best Ecologically

- Target of oligohaline areas
- Nexus of critical habitats
- Critical linkage of wildlife corridors
- Coastal freshwater and upland habitats
- Unique habitats that have been disproportionately impacted
- Fisheries or avifaunal target areas
Options Other than Public Land?

- Private Land Holdings
- Institutional Landowners:
  - Schools, Audubon, Universities, NPOs
- Corporate Land
Inherent Problems:

- Public perception?
- Taxpayer funds used to restore private land holdings?
- Protection of Restored Areas?
- Public Access?
Solutions:

- Perpetual Conservation Easements
- Allowing Controlled Public Access
- Public Awareness of Ecological Benefits
Phase I - Project Partners

ecosphere
Restoration Institute, Inc.
a nonprofit organization

TECO
TAMPA ELECTRIC

SWIM Program of:
Southwest Florida
Water Management District

WATERMATTERS.ORG · 1-800-423-1476

NOAA
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Pinellas County
Environmental Foundation
Before and After
Project Overview

- Restoring Private land using Public Funds

- Tampa Electric Company placed a Conservation Easement on the parcel

- Restoration or Re-creation of 12-acres; included 24 abandoned fish ponds
  
  4 acres - Upland
  2 acres - Freshwater Wetlands
  6 acres - Estuarine Habitat
Project Overview

- Created an Open Water Connection to Tampa Bay
- Planted with Community Volunteers!
Project Overview

Stats:

- 10,000+ plants: *Spartina patens*, *S. bakeri*, *S. alterniflora*, *Paspalum vaginatum*
- 1,300+ freshwater plants
  - 835 upland plants
- Over 250 volunteers and students involved
Challenges and Triumphs

- Multi-party Agreement & Conservation Easement
- 1st P3 for SWFWMD
- TECO Uses the Parcel as an Outdoor Classroom
Challenges and Triumphs

- Important Low Salinity Fisheries Habitat
- Birds Nesting, Resting and Feeding in all Habitat Types
- Restored Tidal Flushing to Historic Creek System
**History**

Newman Branch originally was a meandering sawgrass creek lined with lush mangrove forest. In the 1950's, it was dredged, filled and channelized by the city of St. Petersburg to facilitate development.

**Newman Branch Restoration Project**

Twelve acres of critical wetland habitat were restored by creating the 34 abandoned fish ponds into a combination of freshwater and estuarine wetlands, with a major water connection to Newman Branch.

**Restoration**

In the 12 acres of newly created estuarine habitat, nearly 12,000 native plants have been planted to provide a habitat for local wildlife.

**Non-Native Invasive Plants**

A non-native invasive is a plant from somewhere other than Florida that grows aggressively into natural areas. Not all non-native plants are harmful. They become invasive when they outgrow and replace native plants in natural plant communities.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers are integral to the success of the restoration. From the initial planting to the ongoing maintenance.

**Results**

Revegetation and reestablishment of riparian forest in the surrounding area. The wetland has provided some shading of the riparian area, which helps reduce flooding and erosion of the shoreline.

**Public Private Partnership**

The Newman Branch Coastal Habitat Restoration Project is the product of an innovative, unique public-private partnership between Tampa Electric Company, the South Florida Water Management District, the Collier-Seminole State Park, and local conservation and management organizations. The partnership facilitated the partnership and implemented this project.
Newman Branch Restoration Project

- Project Partners – *An Innovative Approach*
- Award - 2008 Environmental Project of the Year
Success Breeds Opportunities
Newman Branch Phase II
Newman Branch Phase II

- Project Partners – GoMF, USFWS, SWFWMD
- Expands Habitat Restoration Opportunities
Phase II - Project Partners

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a nonprofit organization

TECO
Tampa Electric

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Gulf of Mexico Foundation

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Newman Branch Phase II

- TECO purchased additional land in 2010
- $235,000 TECO
- $182,500 Grants
- 12 Additional Acres Restored
- Creek Oxbows Restored
Initial Conditions
Success Breeds Opportunities
Phase II Expansion  (B, C, D, & E)
Phase II Expansion
Project Partners

ecoSPHERE Restoration Institute, Inc.
a nonprofit organization

TECO Tampa Electric

Gulf of Mexico Foundation™
Success Breeds Opportunities
Newman Branch Phase III Expansion
Newman Branch Phase III

- TECO purchased additional land in 2014
- $573,000 TECO
- $310,000 Grants
- Fourteen Additional Acres Restored
- Reconnection of the Creek
NEWMAN BRANCH CREEK HABITAT RESTORATION PHASE III - FINAL DESIGN PLAN
Phase III - Project Partners

Funding provided by:

ecoSPHERE
Restoration Institute, Inc.
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TECO
TAMPA ELECTRIC

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GULF of MEXICO FOUNDATION™
Summary

- 75 acres of critical habitat restored
- 100 acres under Conservation Easement
- Award Winning Project 2008 + ???
- Environment and Public Benefit
## Newman Branch Creek

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Grant $</th>
<th>Grant Entity</th>
<th>TECO Match</th>
<th>Restoration</th>
<th>CE Acreage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>$165,150</td>
<td>NOAA, WMD</td>
<td>$147,314</td>
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<td>Phase II E*</td>
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* NB II E & NB III Completed 2016  
** Primarily land value match  
*** TECO Cash

GMF: Gulf of Mexico Foundation (NOAA/EPA)  
NOAA: National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration  
USFWS: US Fish & Wildlife Service  
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency  
WMD: Water Management District (Southwest Florida)  
TBEP: Tampa Bay Estuary Program (NFWF)  
NFWF: National Fish & Wildlife Federation
Ecosphere Restoration Institute/TECO
Public Private Partnership (P3)

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Negotiating with Private Land Owners

- This project is the environmental thing to do

- This project benefits you by saving/making $$$$=

- This collaboration should provide excellent PR
Newman Branch Restoration

- P3s – An Innovative Approach
- Award Winning Projects
- Expands Habitat Restoration Opportunities
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Questions?

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