

North Port Connector Options

Proposed links that will provide access from North Port into Sarasota County's Conservation lands.

Proposed connectors that will help create an east/west recreational corridor through Sarasota County's Conservation lands.



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Introduction

Sarasota County owns and manages or co-manages several large conservation land areas between Venice and North Port and several others adjacent to North Port. These include the 24,565 acre T. Mabry Carlton Reserve, the 6,000 acre Deer Prairie Creek Preserve the 4,000 acre Schewe Tract, the Churchill Tract, the Jordyn Parcel and the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel. Deer Prairie Creek Preserve and the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel that are co-managed by the county and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The Schewe Tract that is owned and managed solely by SWFWMD.

Map 1 on the page 4 shows the extent of the public lands in Sarasota County. Improved access to these areas will provide additional multi-use equestrian, hiking and off-road biking opportunities for all residents of Sarasota County. Improved access and additional connectors will also help promote eco-tourism opportunities.

Currently the only public access to these conservation areas from North Port is via the south entrance into Deer Prairie Creek Preserve off of US41 . Additional access points into these areas from North Port would greatly enhance the recreational potential of these areas. Connections through these areas could link North Port to the rest of Sarasota County via a east/west recreational corridor. Ultimately these links could be part of a county-wide trail system and connect the Legacy/ VWP trail corridor with North Port and beyond.

On the west side of the complex of conservation lands there are several access points. These include multiple access points into the Carlton Reserve, an access point into Deer Prairie Creek and a potential access point via the unpaved section of Border Road. From the west, there is a safe, low traffic on-road corridor to the conservation area complex. This on-road corridor includes bike lanes on Colonia Lane, Albee Farm Road and Edmonson Road and a paved shoulder on Border Road. The North Port connections would serve to enhance this corridor. They would also provide an option for residents that might consider cycling as a viable transportation option between North Port and other parts of Sarasota County..

The purpose of this document is to make specific proposals for two connection options including:

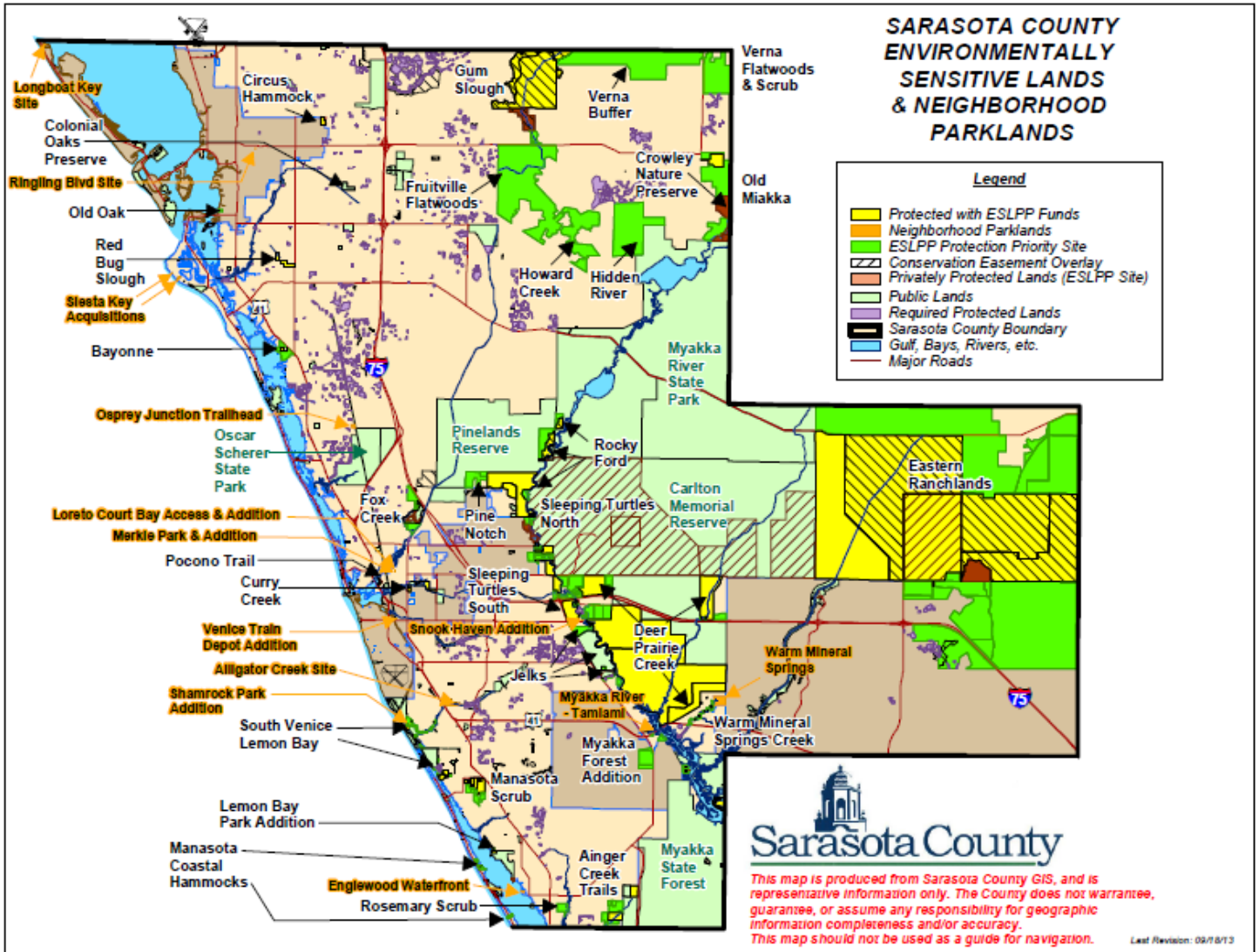
- The Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park Option
- The Deer Prairie Creek Preserve Option

It also addresses other potential links and connectors including:

- Tropicaire to the Jordyn Parcel via Woodland Estates
- West Price Blvd to the Schewe Parcel
- Border Road extension to the Jordyn Parcel
- Forbes Trail Easement

None of these connector ideas are new. Versions of these are all included in the Fall 2006, Sarasota County Trails Master Plan. More recent background information is included in a North Port Connector document dated November 19, 2012 that is available for downloading at the following location:

<http://ht5000.jimdo.com/north-port-connector/north-port-connector-update-11-20-12/>



Map 1
Sarasota County Environmentally Sensitive Lands
and Neighborhood Parklands

Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park Link

Link Description—Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park (MCEP) is adjacent to the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel. The proposed link will connect MCEP with the Powerline Road that runs along the border of the ranch property. The distance from MCEP to the Powerline Road is approximately 300 feet. There is a drainage canal on the border between the Lisa Carlton Ranch and MCEP. During the rainy season this canal can be full of water. A map of the link is detailed on Maps 2 and 3 on page 6. MCEP is owned by the city of North Port and maintained by Sarasota County

Link Access—The MCEP link will provide direct access into the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel and onto the Powerline Road. From the link, the border of the Carlton Reserve is .7 miles west on Powerline Road. From the Carlton border to the parking lot at the Carlton Reserve public use area it is an additional 10 miles. The Powerline Road is an all season gravel/shell/grass surfaced road. The Carlton Reserve has numbered posts that are located at the intersections of the nearly 100 miles of trails. Plans are to install a network of numbered posts on the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel as well. A general map of the accessible area is detailed on Map 3 on page 6. A map of the Carlton Reserve can be viewed and downloaded at:

<http://ht5000.jimdo.com/bike-maps/carlton-reserve/>

Current Status—Myakkahatchee Creek runs north to south thru MCEP. There is a drainage canal on the border between MCEP and the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel. During the rainy season the drainage canal is impassable due to high water. The canal feeds into Myakkahatchee Creek from both the east and the west but there is normally less water on the east side. Typically beginning in October the water level recedes on the eastern leg making a dry crossing possible. Just to the north of the canal is an old barbed wire fence with only two wires in some places. The distance from the canal to the existing Myakkahatchee Bridge on Powerline Road is approximately 300 feet of flat grassy terrain.

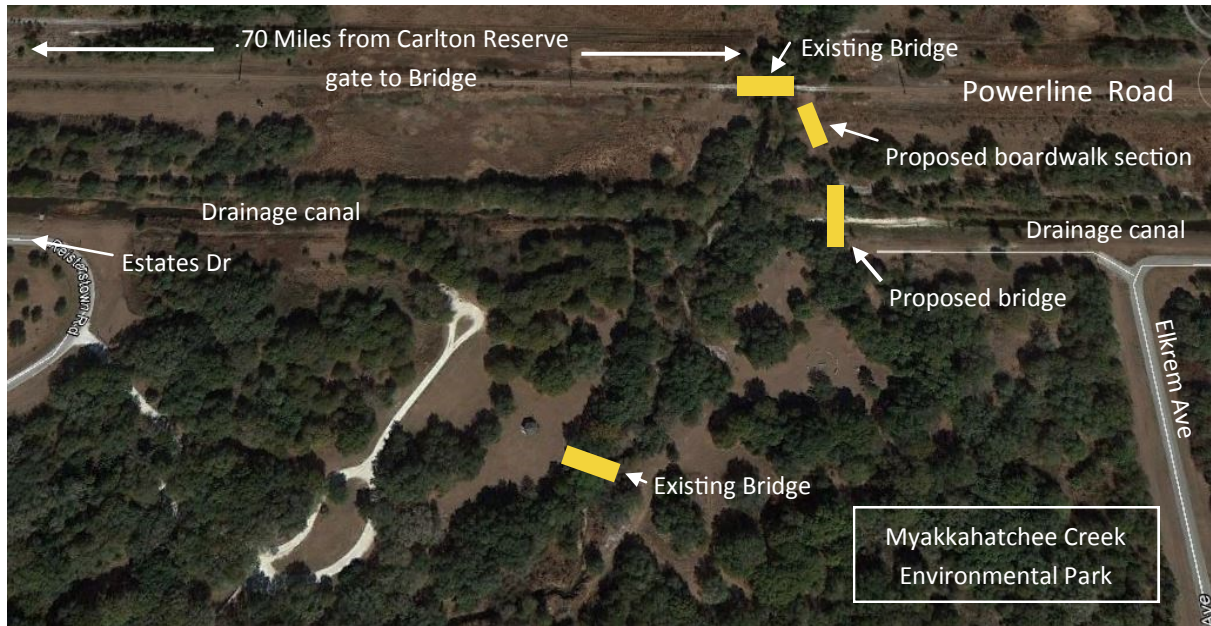
The canal, the fence and the short overland section do present some challenges for the adventurous user but are not a significant deterrent. The obstacles do discourage access by the general user. Pictures on pages 7 and 8 show the canal and the proposed route.

Interim Solution—Depending on the timeframe required to implement a permanent link solution, an interim solution should be considered. It would involve designating a consensus route between the MCEP parking lot and the Powerline Road. This should include trail signs, a walk-thru gate on the fence line and a dry season trail across the canal and between the fence line and Powerline Road. This should also include a kiosk with maps and information about the Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel and the Carlton Reserve areas.

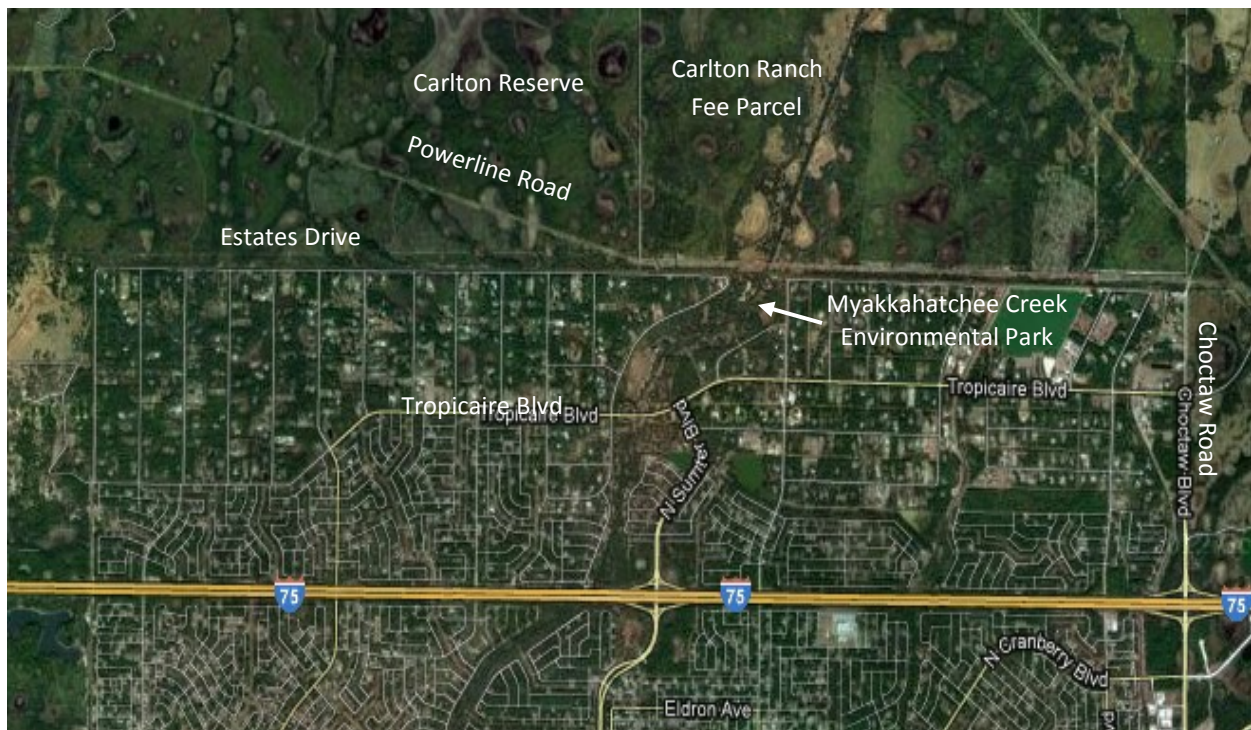
Long-Term Solution—In order for the link to be all season accessible, a bridge needs to be built over the canal and a short trail must be constructed between the bridge and Powerline Road. The bridge can be similar in design to the existing bridge in MCEP shown in the pictures on page 8. A short boardwalk section will also be required over a wetlands drainage into the creek near the Powerline Road.

Public Input—On February 5, 2013 a Sarasota County/North Port public meeting was held in North Port to consider the subject of building a recreational/nature trail connecting MCEP and the adjacent conservation lands. There was considerable public interest in the project. Its time to move beyond the investigative phase and begin the planning stage for this project.

Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park



Map 2
Proposed Link From MCEP to Carlton Ranch Fee Parcel



Map 3
Overview of Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park Location

Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park



Drainage canal east of junction with Myakkahatchee Creek. Proposed location of bridge.



Route of proposed link trail. View looking south from Powerline Road.



Location of proposed boardwalk. View looking north toward the Myakkahatchee Bridge on Powerline Road.

Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park



Fence line on north bank of drainage canal.



Existing bridge over Myakkahatchee Creek in MCEP.



West abutment of existing bridge over Myakkahatchee Creek.

North Port Connector thru Deer Prairie Creek Preserve

Route Description—The proposed route for the connector through Deer Prairie Creek Preserve (DPCP) begins at the parking lot at the east end of Forbes Trail. It consists of 2.1 miles of paved road (Forbes Trail Extension) that runs parallel to I75. Then the route turns south for 2.5 miles on a shell/rock road where it crosses Deer Prairie Creek. From the creek crossing it continues an additional 1.2 miles to US41 and the southern entrance of Deer Prairie Creek Preserve. The southern entrance into DPCP is on US41 just east of the Myakka River. The route is shown on Map 4 on page 10.

Current Status—Rainy season conditions result in wet, and in many places impassable, conditions on all but a few of the roads and trails in the preserve. However, even during the wettest of conditions, the paved section of Forbes Trail and the improved north/south road through the preserve are passable. There are a couple of places on the north/south shell/rock road that can have some standing water but some additional fill could mitigate these problems. The crossing at Deer Prairie Creek does present a significant natural barrier. The current vehicle crossing point is just upstream from a weir that forms a small lake. In the dry season the water flowing over the weir is only a few inches deep. Adventurous users get their feet wet but are able to walk across the weir. In the rainy season, depending on the flow of the water, it is not possible to cross the creek.

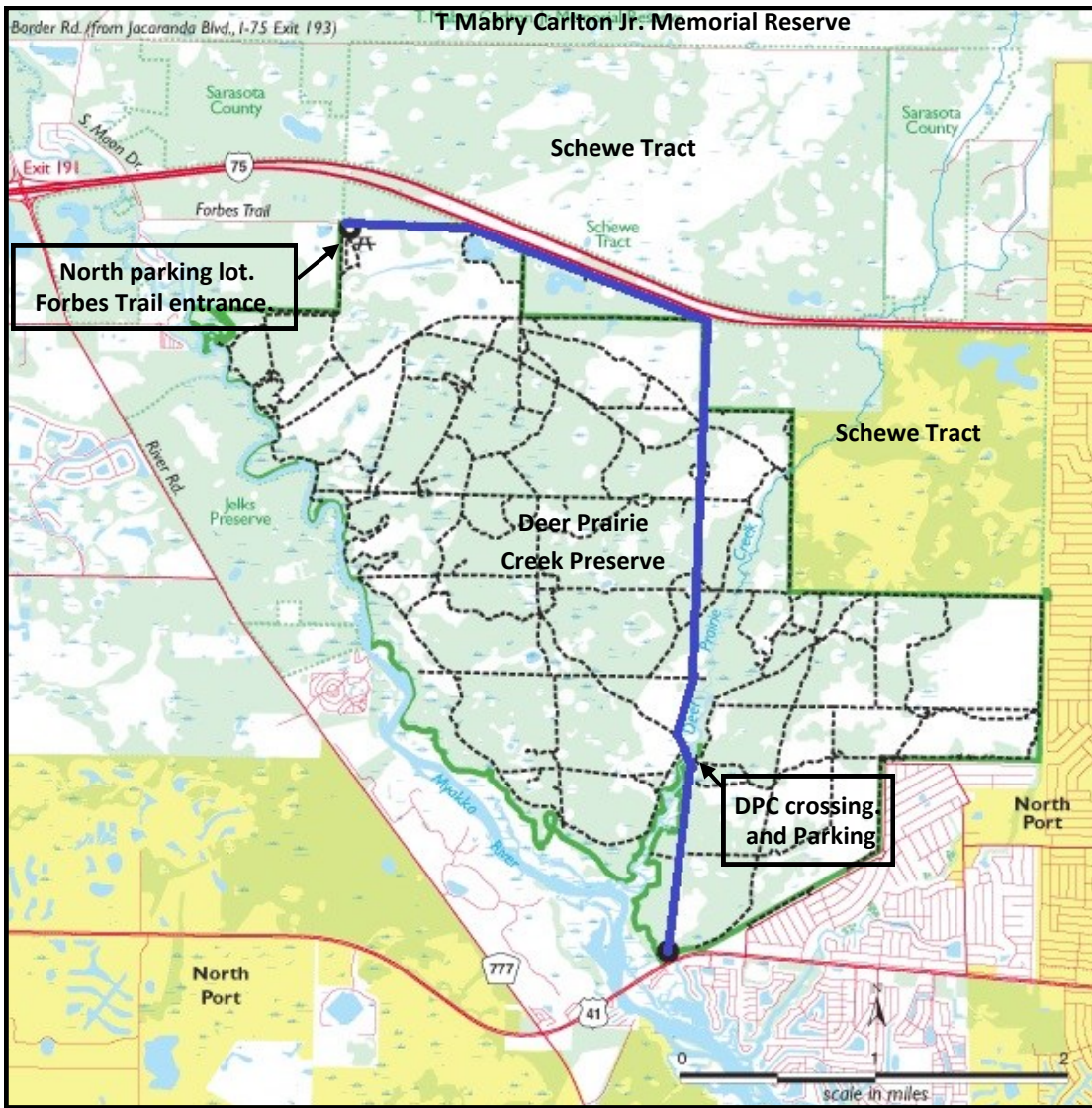
Interim Solution— A seasonal “walk across bridge” would allow users to get across the low water crossing without getting their feet wet. This could only be installed and usable during low water conditions. It would need the approval of both Sarasota County and SWFWD and would have to be removed at the end of the dry season. A picture of a possible design is on page 11. This would encourage the general users to cross the creek. Kiosks currently exist at both the north parking lot and the creek-side parking lot. Trail signs could be installed marking the route of the connector trail.

Longterm Solution—The eventual all season solution to the Deer Prairie Creek crossing could be a pedestrian/bicycle bridge. It would need to be 80 to 100 feet in length. A 4-foot wide bridge would be acceptable. A quote for a possible bridge is contained in Appendix A. The estimated cost for an 80 foot structure would be \$45,950. The estimate for a 100 foot structure would be \$63,850. These estimates do not include additional costs for engineering and installation.



**Low water crossing over
Deer Prairie Creek at the
weir.**

North Port Connector thru Deer Prairie Creek



Map 4

Proposed route through Deer Prairie Creek Preserve.



Typical view of shell/rock road north of low water crossing.



Typical view of shell/rock road south of the low water crossing.

North Port Connector thru Deer Prairie Creek Preserve

View of typical paved road surface for 2.1 mile length of Forbes Trail extension.



Low water crossing point over Deer Prairie Creek.

Example of simple bridge design for temporary seasonal low water crossing over Deer Prairie Creek



Tropicaire to Jordyn Parcel Link

Route Description—A potential access link to the Jordyn Parcel is from the west end of Tropicaire Blvd thru the private Woodland Estates development.

Current Status—There is not currently a public easement through Woodland Estates. There is a good trail infrastructure in the Jordyn Parcel. From the Jordyn Parcel there is access into the Carlton Reserve via a walk-thru gate. There is also access to the paved Border Road via a 4.5 mile shell/rock section of Border Road.

Interim Solution—None

Long-Term Solution—Sarasota County should negotiate with Woodland Estates to secure a public easement through the Woodland Estates property. This would provide access into the Jordyn Parcel from North Port.

Map 5

Access to the Jordyn Parcel from Tropicaire Blvd.



West Price to Schewe Parcel Link

Route Description—A potential access link into the Schewe Parcel is across the drainage canal at the west end of West Price Blvd near the old fire station.

Current Status—No access. There are steep banks on a drainage canal and a fence on the west side of the canal. Parking is available at this site. A picture of page 14 shows the drainage canal. It has a small amount of standing water most times of the year. During the wet season water levels are higher.

Interim Solution—Build a seasonal pedestrian low water crossing bridge over the canal. Construct a trail that goes down both sides of the canal to the bridge. On the west-side of the canal, install a walk-thru gate on the border fence. Install a kiosk in the parking lot that describes the area and the trails

Long-Term Solution—Build an all season pedestrian bridge at this location. Many of the trails in this section of the Schewe Parcel are very sandy. Improve the trail infrastructure in this section of the Schewe Parcel.



Map 6

Access to Schewe Parcel from West Price Blvd

West Price to Schewe Parcel Link

Drainage Canal near the fire station at Calera and West Price Blvd



Map 7
Overview of the south section
of the Schewe Parcel



Border Road Extension Easement

Current—There a couple of private parcels on the unpaved section of Border Road and several locked gates. The adventurous users currently use the unpaved section of Border Road to access the Churchill Parcel, the Schewe Parcel, the Jordyn Parcel and alternate entrances to the Carlton Reserve. Gates on the un-paved section of Border Road are a deterrent to the general user.

Long-term—Sarasota County should negotiate a public easement for the unpaved section of Border Road. After this is done walk-thru gates need to be installed at the locked gate locations.

Forbes Trail Easement

Current—In the past there have been access problems on Forbes Trail between South Moon Drive and the north entrance to Deer Prairie Creek Preserve. A private property owner along the road has posted signs stating “No Bikes, No Exceptions.”

Long-Term—The access problem seems to have been solved for now. Sarasota County needs to assure that there is an easement that will allow continued public use of the private road.

Map 7

Border Road Extension and Forbes Trail Easement Problems

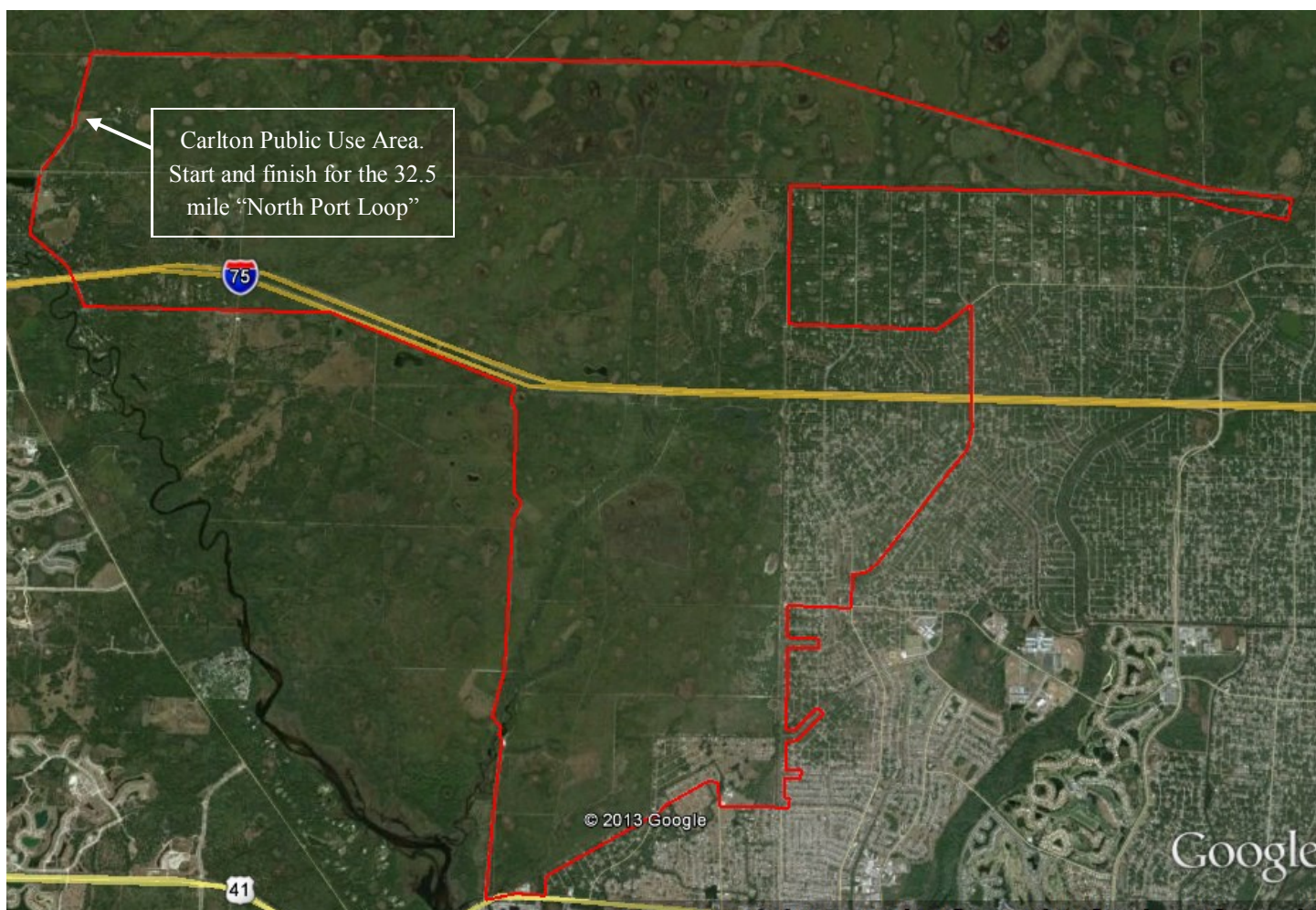


North Port Bicycle Loop Via MCEP and DPCP

By utilizing the Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park link and the North Port Connector route through Deer Prairie Creek it is possible to create a 32.5 mile loop that can be ridden on bicycles with tires that are suitable for off-road use. Approximately half of the distance of the route is hard packed shell/rock and half is paved. The route is shown on the map below is as follows:

- Carlton Reserve Public Use Area to Powerline Road.
- Powerline Road to Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park link.
- MCEP to Warm Mineral Springs via Estates, Tropicaire, De Leon, West Price Blvd and Trionfo and other low traffic streets in North Port.
- Warm Mineral Springs to South entrance of Deer Prairie Creek Preserve.
- North Port Connector thru Deer Prairie Creek Preserve Road to Forbes Trail.
- Forbes Trail to South Moon to the Carlton Reserve Parkway and back to the Carlton Public Use area.

This is one example of the recreational opportunities that the additional access links and connector options can provide.



Map 8

North Port Bicycle Loop from Carlton Reserve

Appendix A

Deer Prairie Creek Bridge

We are providing this budgetary estimate because we are either missing some important information necessary to develop a final quotation and/or you have not made a decision on the final product you want. If you would like a final quotation, please contact your CMI representative listed below to complete your project information.

Project Details

Estimate Date | November 15, 2013
Gator Representative | David Metivier
Project Name | North Port Connector Bridge

Project City | North Port
Project State | Florida
Project Contact | Steve Christian

Bridge Details

Inside Clear Width | 4'
Bridge Length | 80'

Elevation Change | NA
Loading Requirements | 90 PSF, pedestrian only

Bridge Attributes

Truss Style | Cascade
Deck Style | Slip Resistant Aluminum
Color | Mill Finish Aluminum
Cladding | NA
Light Box | NA
Enclosure / Gate | NA
Splice(s) | yes (1)

Rail Attributes

Rail Style | Combination Rail, 4" pickets
Rail Height | 42"
ADA Hand Rail | NA
ADA Toe Rail | NA
Approach Rail | add \$35 per LF

Additional Features / Comments |
Add \$17,900 to increase the length to 100'.

Bridge Structure Cost Estimate | \$43,750
Bridge Weight Estimate | 10,500 lbs
Delivery Cost Estimate | \$2200

Total Projected Cost | \$45,950

www.gatorbridge.com phone. 866.709.0034 fax. 770.933.8363

Applicable taxes are not included in the estimated cost. Unloading of products by others. Design and construction of abutments by others. This budgetary estimate is not an official quotation and cannot be used to place an order. All information presented is based on customer provided information. CMI and GatorBridge cannot and does not make any claims or recommendations related to fitness for any particular use or application. © 2013 Crane Materials International. GatorDock and GatorBridge are registered trademarks.

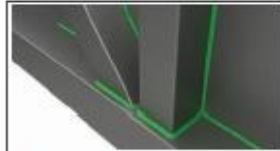


Appendix A-2

Deer Prairie Creek Bridge Quote continued

STANDARD FEATURES

Each of our GatorBridge products are expertly crafted with attention to detail. We take pride in making sure that we deliver a premium quality product for every customer. Here are some of the features that come standard in every one of our bridges.



Pully Welded

We fully weld every possible connection. This translates into maximum stability and durability. Your bridge will arrive ready to drop into place - no assembly required.



Anchor & Bearing Pads

GatorBridge anchor plates are fully gusseted, slotted and paired with UHMW bearing pads to provide a secure connection point and allow for smooth expansion and contraction.



Horizontal Truss Bracing

Hidden under the floor of every GatorBridge is an engineered horizontal truss. This provides improved performance in heavy winds and additional lateral and torsional stiffness.



Camber Offset

All GatorBridges are cambered to offset the weight of the bridge and appear flat once installed.



Combination Rail

The Gator Combination Rail is our most effective rail design. It utilizes patented technology to combine ergonomic handrail, toe rail and guard rail together into one elegant package.



Aluminum Deck Enclosed Floor System

By constructing the horizontal truss, floor beams, stringers and deck within an enclosed frame, stability is dramatically improved. The standard aluminum deck option is designed to seamlessly integrate into the GatorBridge Floor System. It is durable, slip resistant and remains cool to the touch.



Bridge Quote in its entirety is available at:

<http://jimdo.ht5000.com/north-port-connector/dpcp-bridge-quote/>