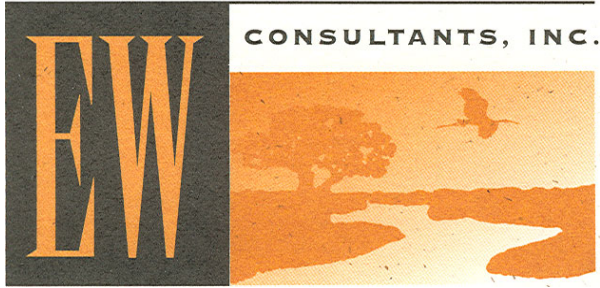


EW Consultants, Inc.

Natural Resource Management, Wetland, and Environmental Permitting Services



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

MILLCREEK

FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA

Prepared for:

DreamFinders Homes

Prepared by:

EW Consultants, Inc.

July 2024

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I. INTRODUCTION -

This Environmental Assessment details and summarizes the various natural and man-made conditions related to the Millcreek project located within the City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida. The subject site, as shown on Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix A, is 63+/- acres, and is located in Section 7, Township 35 South, and Range 40 East.

The site is located west of and adjacent to North 41st Street, south of and adjacent to residential homes, east of and adjacent to Stamm Manufacturing and undeveloped land, and north of and adjacent to Orange Avenue and vacant remnant agricultural land. Figure 3, 2023 Aerial Photograph, in Appendix A is an aerial view of the subject property and immediate surroundings.

II. GENERAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION –

Based on July, 2024, site visits conducted by staff from EW Consultants, Inc., the project area consists of various types of active cattle pasture, dense stands of the exotic Brazilian pepper tree, wet prairie wetlands, and native upland hardwood forest.

The woodland pasture contains partially cleared lands but still possesses native canopy trees; mainly laurel oak, live oak, and slash pines, with exotic vegetation mixed in, as well. The area of native upland hardwood forest is located in the northeastern portion of the site. Two freshwater wetlands occur on-site; one in the southeastern portion of the unimproved pasture and one in the north-central portion of the project site.

There is a network of unmaintained ditches and furrows throughout the subject property which are the result of the historic citrus grove operation. The entire site is currently used for cattle grazing, including the upland hardwood forest area, thereby negatively impacting native groundcover and understory plants. There is also at least one free-flowing artesian well located within the site boundaries which keep the ditches full of groundwater thus providing the cattle with drinking water and relief from the heat. The unimproved pasture is similar to the improved pasture areas but has more nuisance vegetation dominating the landscape, including Brazilian pepper and Chinese tallow.

Both wetlands on-site are in very poor ecological, essential being remnant features of the historic agricultural operations. They consist of mostly invasive and nuisance plant species.

III. SOIL TYPES –

A Soils Report produced by the United States Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service is provided in Appendix B of this report. Soil types are typical for this region of St. Lucie County. The soil types found on the project site are as follows; (11) Chobee loamy sand, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes, (16) Hilolo loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, (25) Nettles and Oldsmar sands, (31) Pepper and EauGallie sands, (48) Wabasso sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, (55) Winder loamy sand.

IV. EXISTING LAND COVER TYPES –

The following is a summary of the vegetation cover types found on the Millcreek project site. Land cover and vegetative community classifications were mapped based on the Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCCSS, FDOT). These categories have been mapped based on the recent field reconnaissance, the non-binding wetland determination, hand-held GPS points, and aerial photograph interpretation.

Figure 4 in Appendix A provides a recent aerial view with nomenclature for the various types of land covers which currently exist on-site. The land cover types found on the project include:

Native Upland Habitat – 420 Upland Hardwood Forest – 7.4± Acres

This native upland habitat is located in the northeastern portion of the subject property and possesses a crown canopy with at least a 66 percent dominance by hardwood tree species. This area consists of mature laurel oaks and live oaks with sparse slash pines in the canopy stratum, while also containing a mixture of other native trees such as red bay, dahoon holly, and cabbage palms. It is in moderate to good ecological condition, with no apparent land management activities such as burning or roller-chopping observed. Desirable understory and groundcover plants include wiregrass, saw palmetto, beautyberry, wild coffee, bluestem grasses, gallberry, wax myrtle, and various broomsedge grasses. While there is a minimal amount of exotic vegetation coverage within the native upland habitat area, species such as Brazilian pepper, yellow poinciana, Caesarweed, Java plum and Chinese tallow are scattered throughout.

Non-Native Upland Areas — 211, 212, 213, 422 – 54± Acres

Non-native upland areas cover the majority of the project site. There is a network of remnant agricultural ditches found within all of these areas as well as furrows from the historic citrus operation. The ditches contain torpedo grass (an invasive species), smartweed, pickerelweed, water lettuce, pennywort, and various sedges. Brazilian Pepper (category 422) is a monoculture of the invasive Brazilian pepper tree.

Woodland Pasture (category 213) include forested lands that are used as pastures with evidence of cattle activity. There are scattered native and non-native trees within the woodland pastures such as live oak, slash pine, laurel oak, yellow poinciana, laurel oak, Chinese tallow, Java plum, Brazilian pepper, and cabbage palm. Understory plants are generally sparse and scattered throughout due to a higher concentration of cattle activity within these areas, as well as the shading of the forest floor by the dense canopy cover. Such vegetation includes smutgrass, Bahia grass, beautyberry, Caesarweed, Surinam cherry, sword fern, tropical soda apple, Guinea grass, pink periwinkle, and pokeweed.

Unimproved Pasture (category 212) includes cleared land with major stands of trees and brush where grasses have been allowed to establish. This land cover is found in the central and western portions of the site. The vegetation within this area includes; Brazilian pepper, smutgrass, torpedo grass, various sedges, Chinese tallow, Bahia grass, tropical soda apple, Guinea grass, basket grass, and sparse native oaks and cabbage palms.

Improved Pasture (category 211) is mainly comprised of land which has been cleared, tilled, reseeded with specific grass types for both cattle feed and soil stabilization. This area is found in the southwestern portion of the site and includes, smutgrass, torpedo grass, Bahia grass, basket grass, Bermuda grass, various sedges, centipede grass, tropical soda apple, Guinea grass, Brazilian pepper, and sparse cabbage palms.

Freshwater Wetlands – 643 Wet Prairie – 1.6± Acres

The freshwater wetlands on-site are considered low-quality being remnants of the historic agricultural operation. In addition, current impacts from cattle grazing further degrade these wetlands. The approximate acreage for the wetlands can be seen on Figure 4 in Appendix A, and represent the 2022 non-binding wetland determination issued by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) as shown in Exhibit 1.

The wetlands are comprised primarily of smartweed, flatsedge, pennywort, soft rush, Mexican primrose willow, camphorweed, Brazilian pepper and Chinese tallow.

V. LISTED SPECIES DISCUSSION –

Because of the various native and man-made resources found on the subject property, the site provides potential foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of state and federally listed wildlife species, albeit minimal. In particular, the on-site water resources could provide foraging opportunities for various listed avian species, including a myriad wading birds such as wood stork, roseate spoonbill, sandhill crane and various ibis and herons. No listed wading bird species were observed during the 2024 site visits. No nesting of wading bird species is expected due to the lack of suitable nesting habitat on-site. Non-listed wading birds observed included the cattle egret and white egret.

Other protected avian species which may occur on or near the site include the bald eagle. No eagles or eagle nests were observed on-site during the recent site visits. The closest bald eagle nest to the project site is located approximately 1.5 miles to the northwest on the Eagle Bend project site (nest SL011). Figures 5 and 6 in Appendix A provide a database download of recorded eagle nests and wading bird colonies found on state agency websites.

As with most sites in south Florida, sandy uplands, pastures and ditch banks with herbaceous vegetation serve as potential burrowing and foraging habitat for the state-threatened gopher tortoise. During the site visits, several potentially occupied burrows of this species were observed within the project site's native upland area as well as along the trails and ditch banks within the woodland pasture. A systematic gopher tortoise survey will be required within the entire development footprint's upland areas prior to new construction activities. Tortoises in harm's way will have to be relocated to a state-approved receiver site accordingly.

Other wildlife observations included red-bellied woodpecker, blue jay, mocking bird, red-shouldered hawk, black vulture, coyote scat, various rodent species, marsh rabbit, black racer and brown anole.

APPENDIX A

Figure 1: Location Map

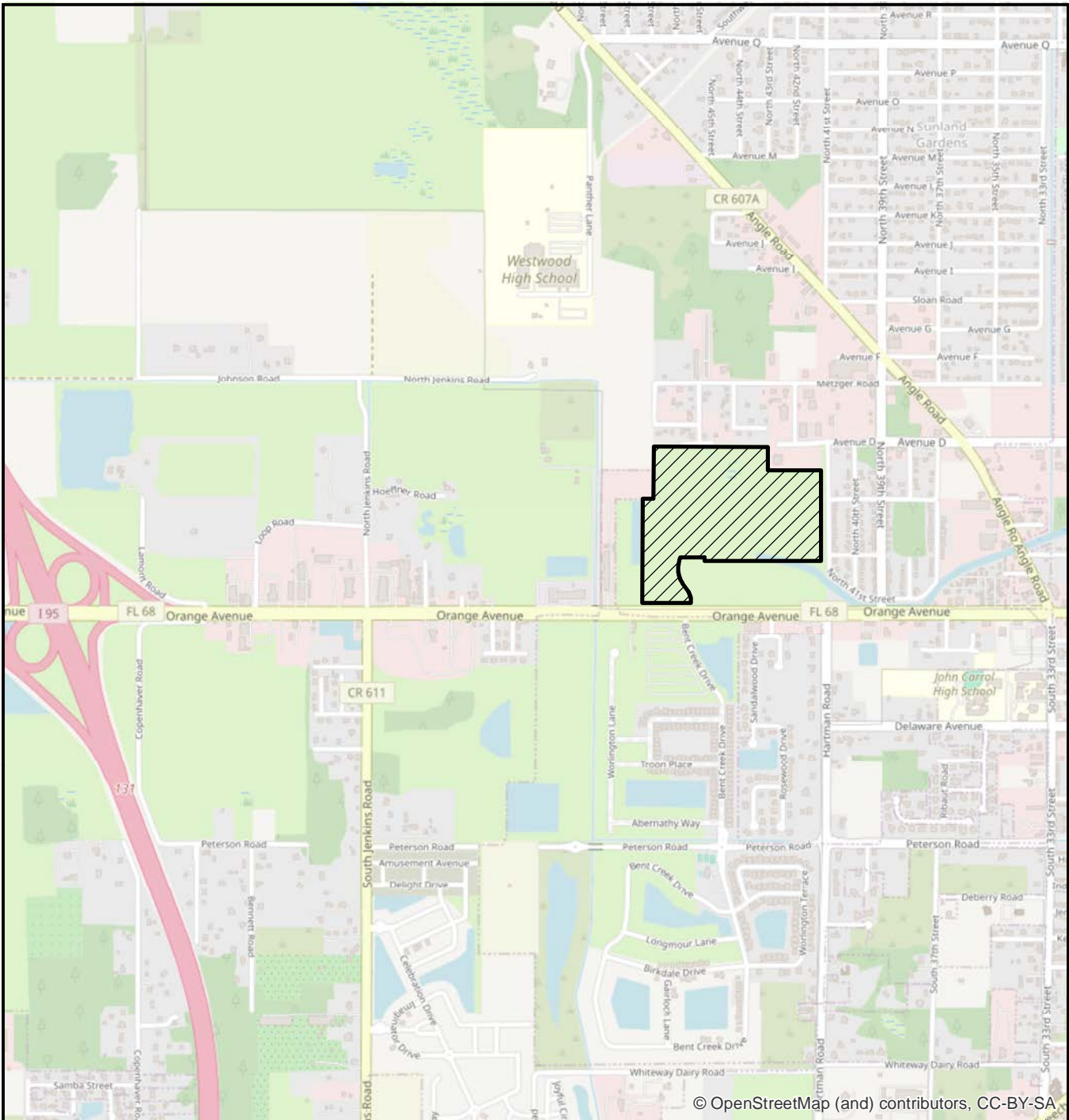
Figure 2: USGS Quadrangle Map

Figure 3: 2023 Aerial Photograph

Figure 4: Land Cover Map


Figure 5: Bald Eagle Nest Database Mapping

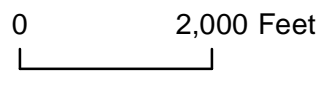
Figure 6: Wading Bird Colonies Database Mapping



© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

LEGEND

 - SITE (63.0+/- AC)

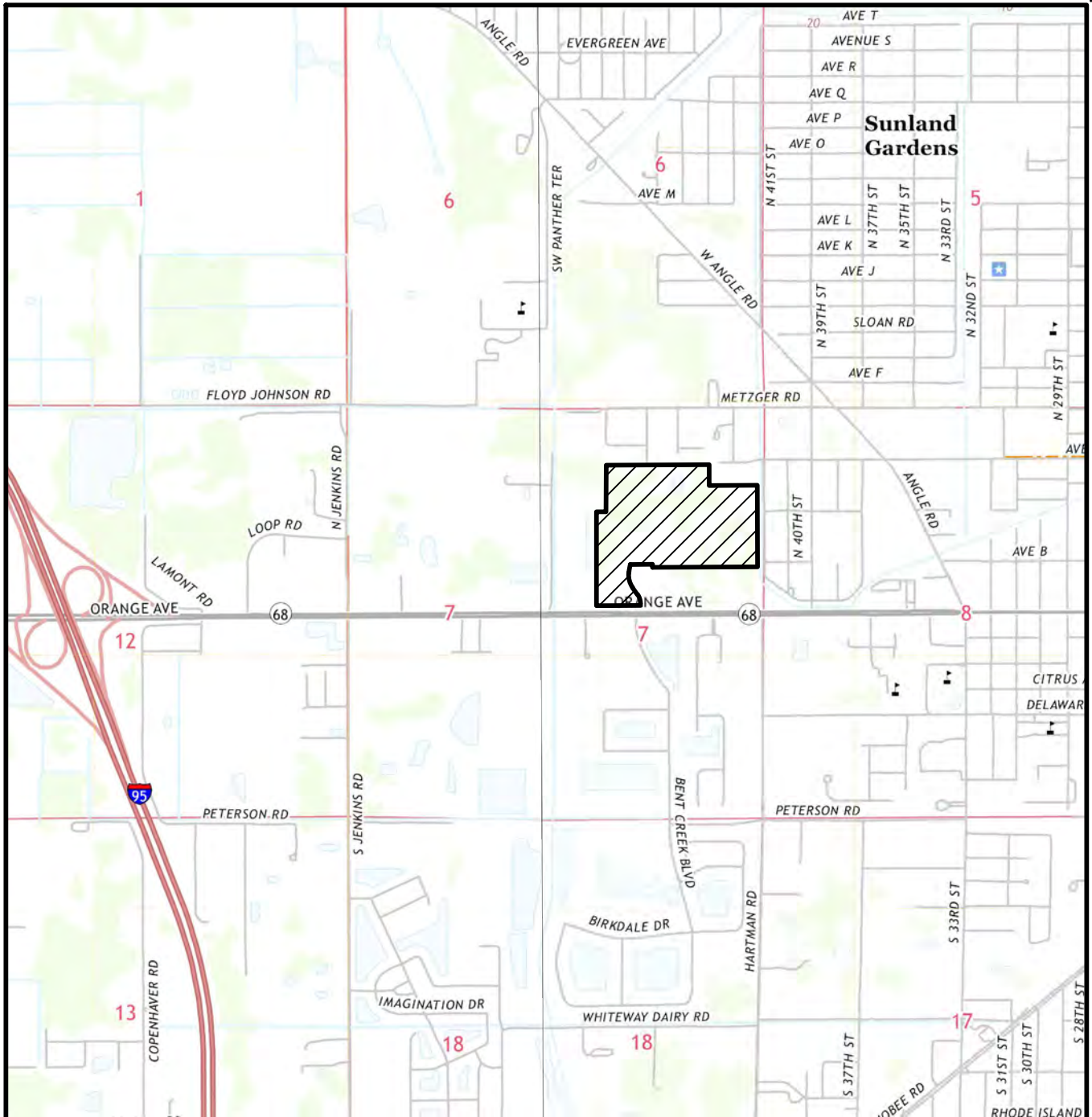


**MILLCREEK
LOCATION MAP**



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 STUART, FL 34996
 772-287-8771 FAX 772-287-2988
 WWW.EWCONSULTANTS.COM

JULY 2024
 FIGURE
1



USGS QUAD MAP "FORT PIERCE", SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 35 SOUTH, RANGE 40 EAST, CITY OF FORT PIERCE, ST LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, LATITUDE 27°27'02" LONGITUDE -80°22'10"

LEGEND

 - SITE (63.0± AC)



**MILLCREEK
QUAD MAP**

Millcreek.dwg QUAD

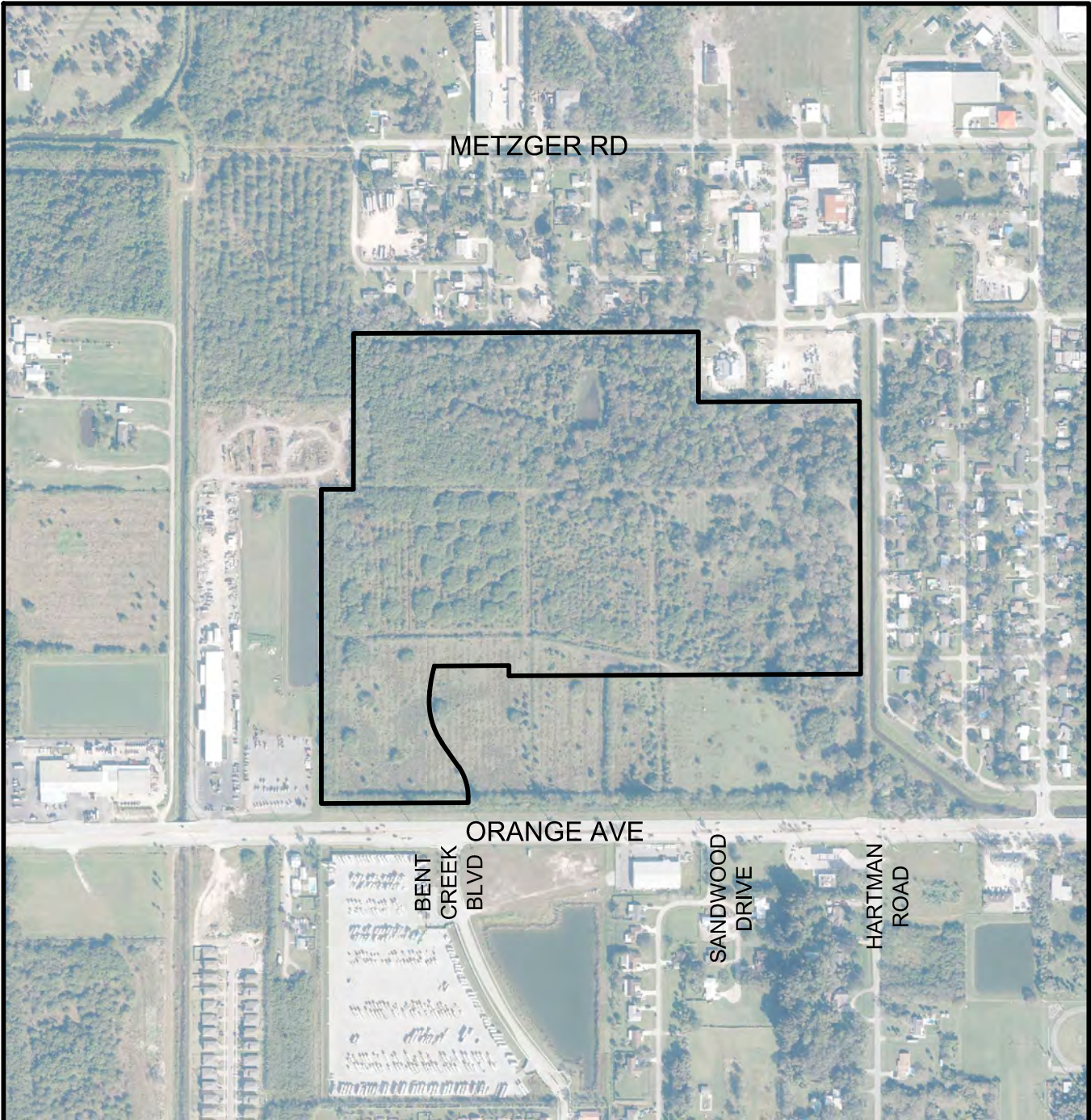


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FIGURE

2



METZGER RD

ORANGE AVE

BENT CREEK BLVD

SANDWOOD DRIVE

HARTMAN ROAD

FDOT AERIALS DATED 2023

0 600
SCALE IN FEET



MILLCREEK AERIAL

Millcreek.dwg AERIAL

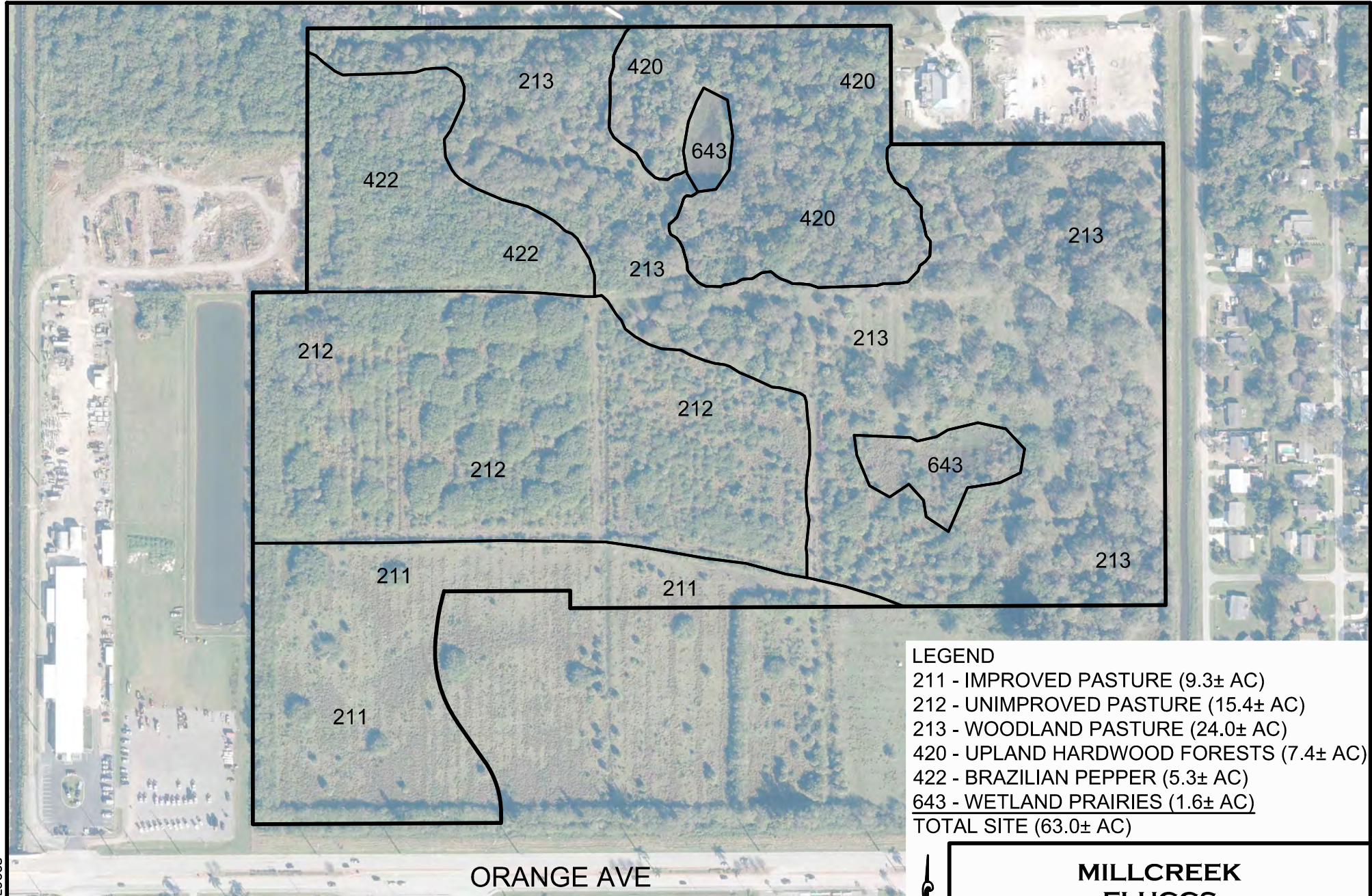


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FIGURE

3



LEGEND
 211 - IMPROVED PASTURE (9.3± AC)
 212 - UNIMPROVED PASTURE (15.4± AC)
 213 - WOODLAND PASTURE (24.0± AC)
 420 - UPLAND HARDWOOD FORESTS (7.4± AC)
 422 - BRAZILIAN PEPPER (5.3± AC)
 643 - WETLAND PRAIRIES (1.6± AC)
TOTAL SITE (63.0± AC)

FDOT AERIALS DATED 2023

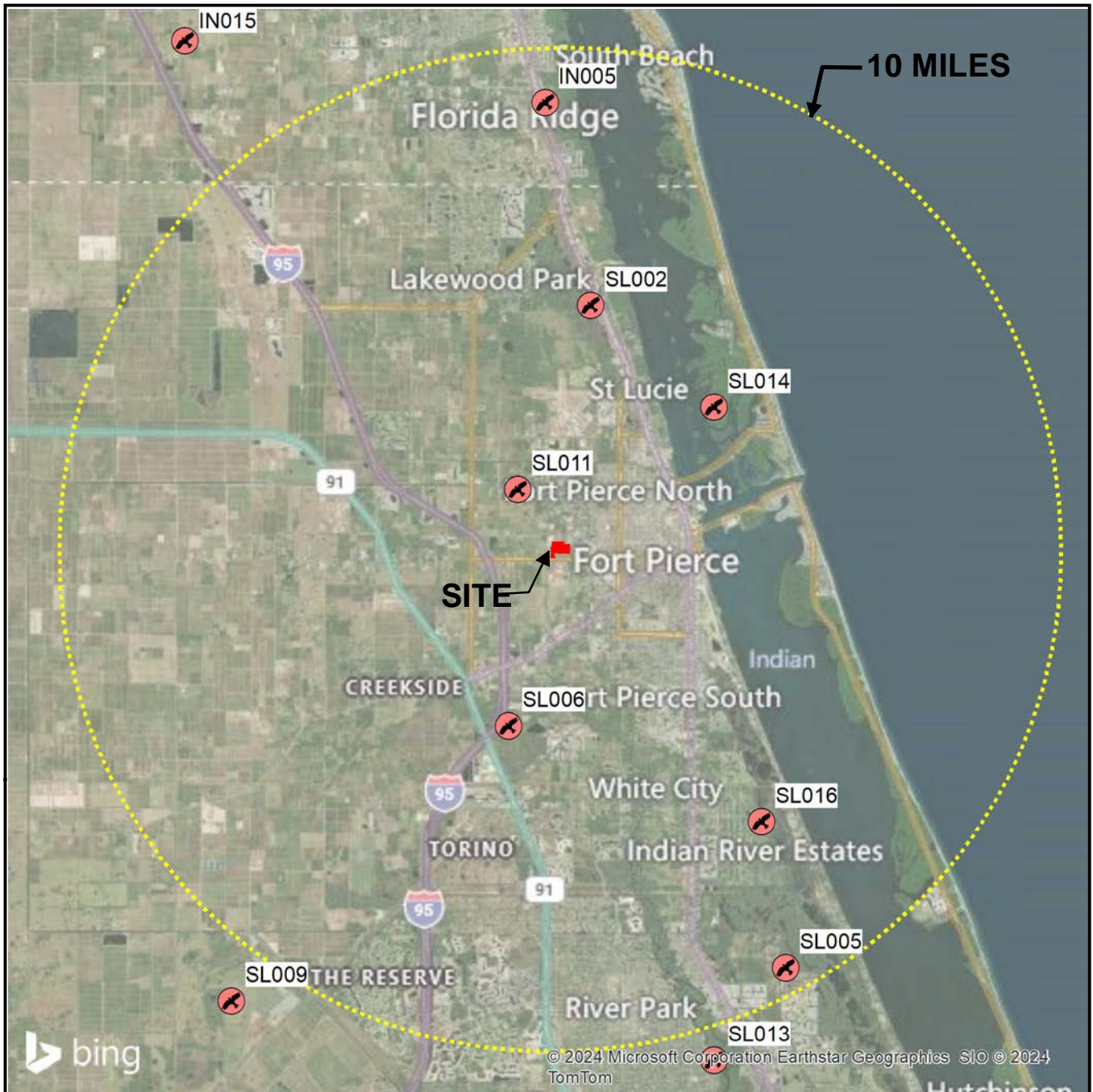
ORANGE AVE



**MILLCREEK
FLUCCS**

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JULY 2024
**FIGURE
4**



LEGEND

 FFWCC EAGLE NESTING 2016



**MILLCREEK
EAGLES**

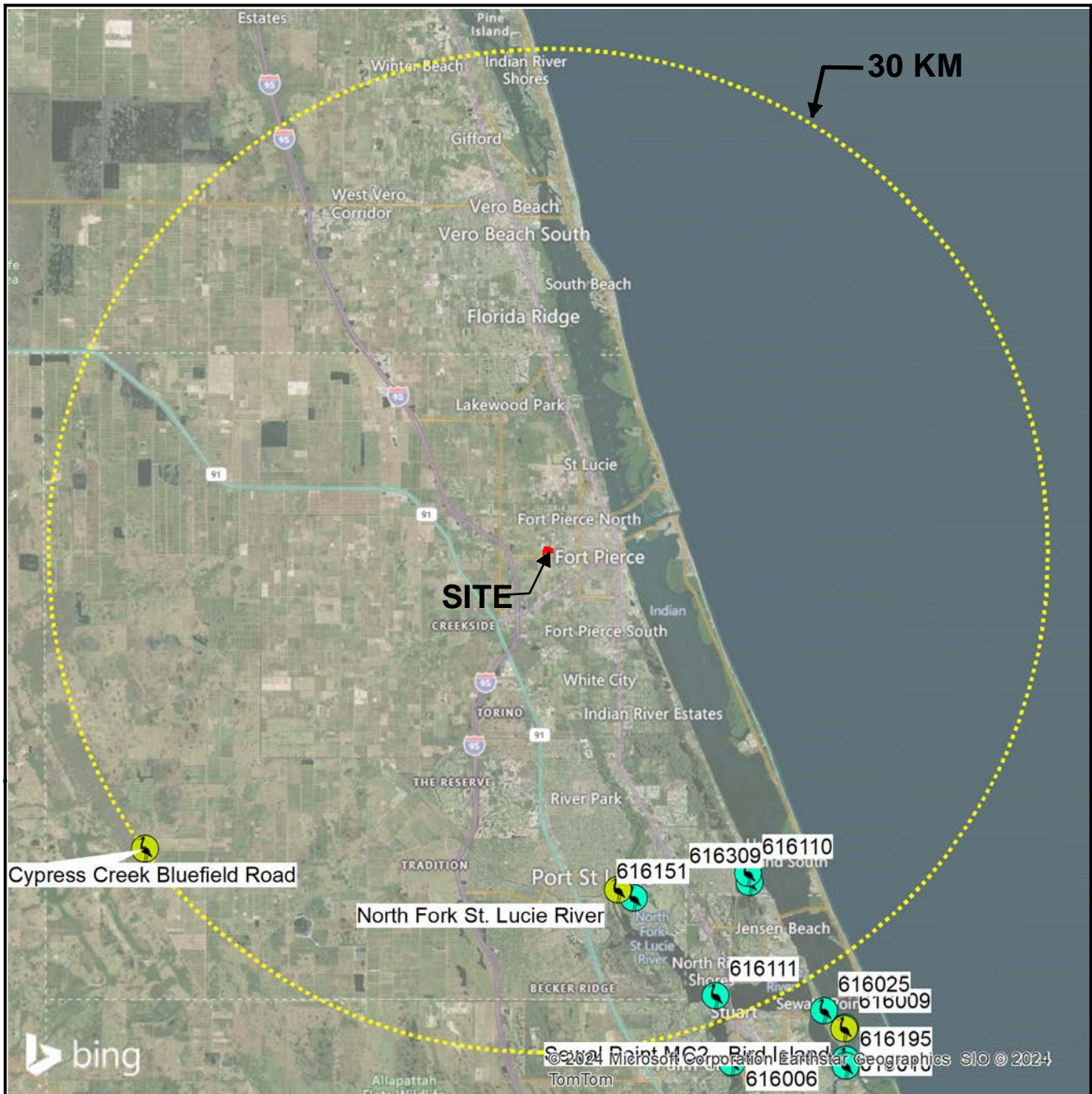


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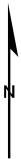
FIGURE

5



LEGEND

-  FFWCC WOST COLONIES 2009-2018
-  FFWCC 1999 WOODSTORK NESTING COLONIES & WADING BIRD ROOKERY



**MILLCREEK
WADING BIRDS**



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FIGURE

6

APPENDIX B

USDA Soils Report


Soil Map—St. Lucie County, Florida
(Millcreek)



Map Scale: 1:4,700 if printed on A landscape (11" x 8.5") sheet.
0 50 100 200 300 Meters
0 200 400 800 1200 Feet
Map projection: Web Mercator Corner coordinates: WGS84 Edge tics: UTM Zone 17N WGS84

MAP LEGEND

Area of Interest (AOI)

 Area of Interest (AOI)

Soils

 Soil Map Unit Polygons

 Soil Map Unit Lines

 Soil Map Unit Points

Special Point Features



Blowout



Borrow Pit



Clay Spot



Closed Depression



Gravel Pit



Gravelly Spot



Landfill



Lava Flow



Marsh or swamp



Mine or Quarry



Miscellaneous Water



Perennial Water



Rock Outcrop



Saline Spot



Sandy Spot



Severely Eroded Spot



Sinkhole



Slide or Slip



Sodic Spot



Spoil Area



Stony Spot



Very Stony Spot



Wet Spot



Other



Special Line Features

Transportation



Rails



Interstate Highways



US Routes



Major Roads

Background



Aerial Photography

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:24,000.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Web Soil Survey URL:

Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: St. Lucie County, Florida

Survey Area Data: Version 17, Sep 6, 2023

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Jan 18, 2022—Jan 30, 2022

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
11	Chobee loamy sand, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes	11.4	18.1%
16	Hilolo loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	0.5	0.8%
25	Nettles and Oldsmar sands	11.0	17.5%
31	Pepper and EauGallie sands	7.7	12.1%
48	Wabasso sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	9.7	15.4%
55	Winder loamy sand	22.8	36.1%
Totals for Area of Interest		63.0	100.0%

EXHIBIT 1

SFWMD Wetland Determination



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

April 18, 2022

** Delivered via email*

Larry Suchman *
Suchman Real Estate Grp
14411 S Dixie Hwy
Palmetto Bay, FL 33178

Subject: Millcreek
Application No. 220204-32957
Informal Wetland Determination No. 56-106938-P
St Lucie County

Dear Larry Suchman:

The District reviewed your request for an informal determination of the jurisdictional wetland and other surface water boundaries within the subject property, which is located as shown on the attached Exhibit 1. A joint site inspection was conducted on March 24, 2022.

Based on the information provided and the results of the site inspection, jurisdictional wetlands and other surface waters as defined in Chapter 62-340, Florida Administrative Code, exist on the property. Exhibit 2, attached, identifies the boundaries of the property inspected and the approximate landward limits of the wetlands and other surface waters.

This correspondence is an informal jurisdictional wetland determination pursuant to Section 373.421(6), Florida Statutes, and Section 7.3 of Environmental Resource Permit Applicant's Handbook Volume I. It does not bind the District, its agents or employees, nor does it convey any legal rights, expressed or implied. Persons obtaining this informal jurisdictional determination are not entitled to rely upon it for purposes of compliance with provision of law or District rules.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Layman".

Laura Layman
Section Leader

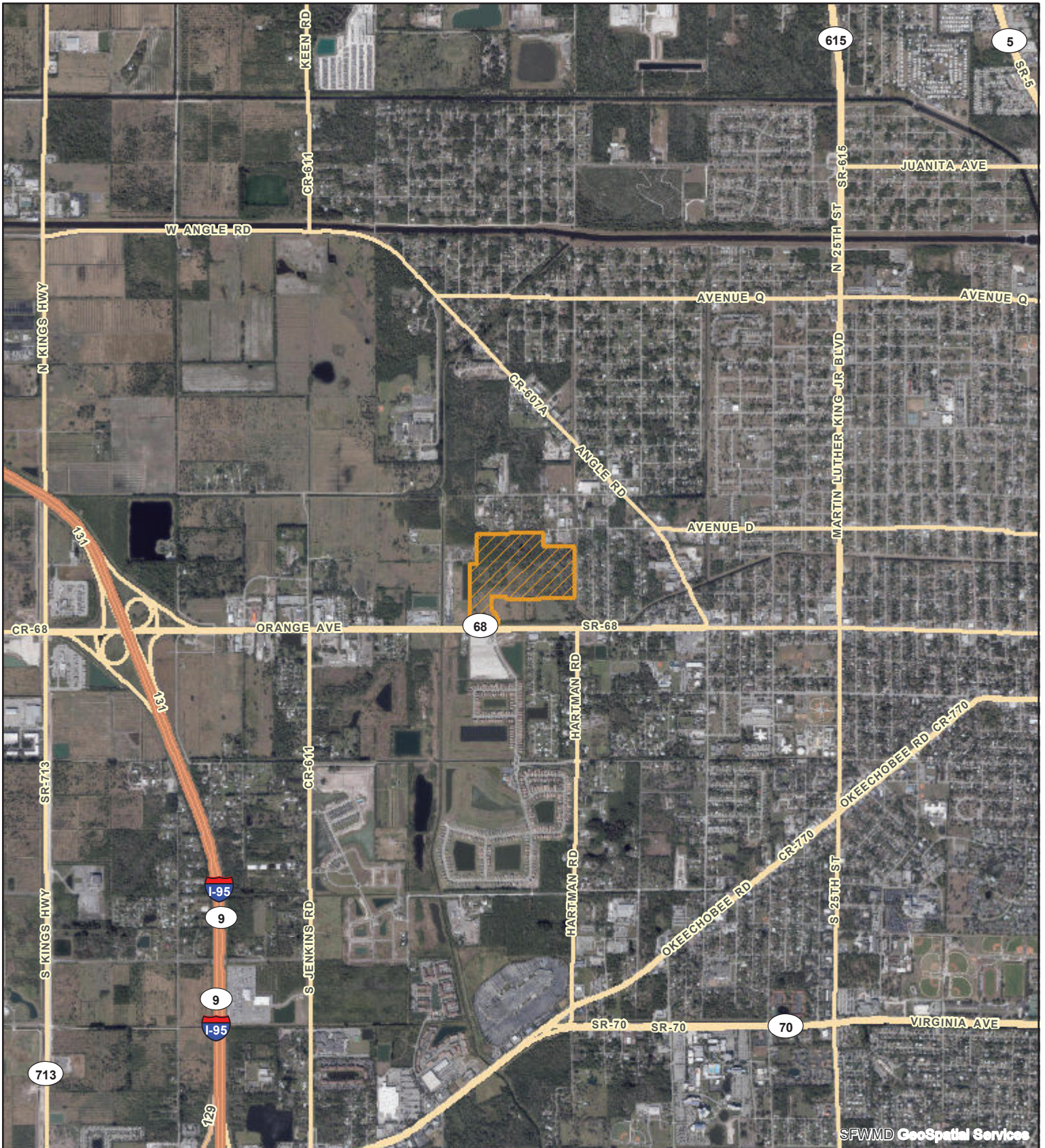
c: Anthony Adams, EDC, Inc *






Exhibits

The following exhibits to this permit are incorporated by reference. The exhibits can be viewed by clicking on the links below or by visiting the District's ePermitting website (<http://my.sfwmd.gov/ePermitting>) and searching under this application number 220204-32957 .

[Exhibit No. 1.0_Location Map](#)

[Exhibit No. 2.0_Wetland/OSW Boundary Map](#)



<p>Exhibit No:1.0</p>	<p>Exhibit Created On: 2022-02-21</p>	<p>ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FL</p>	<p> Application</p> <p>Application Number: 220204-32957</p> 
<p>REGULATION DIVISION Project Name: Millcreek</p>  <p>0 2,450 4,900  Feet</p> <p style="text-align: center;">N </p>			<p>sfwmd.gov Created by IT GIS Section South Florida Water Management District</p>

