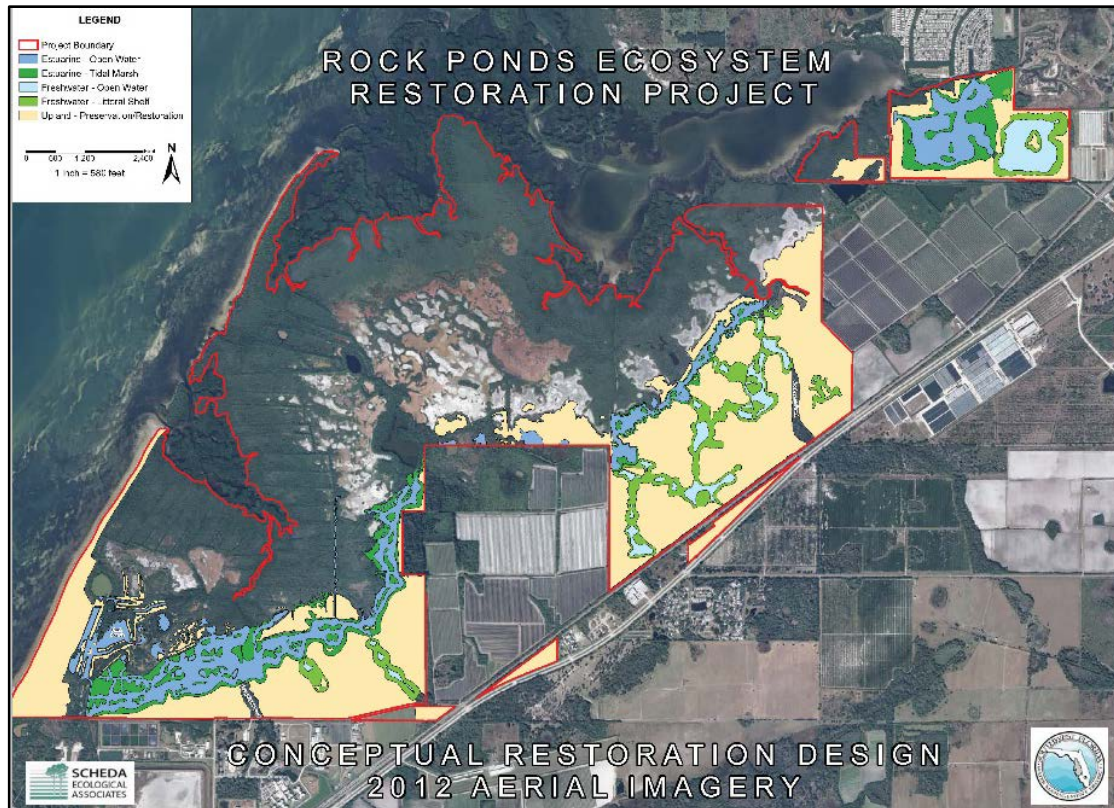


# ROCK CREEK PONDS ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION



## **Project Description**

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and Hillsborough County purchased the 2,572-acre Rock Creek Pond properties because of their poor ecological condition and the unique potential for habitat enhancement, restoration and preservation. This effort represents the SWFWMD Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program's largest habitat restoration effort for the region. This project unites the award-winning Cockroach Bay restoration project (also designed by Scheda restoration scientists) with the habitat restoration at Terra Ceia Preserve to the south.

Scheda scientists worked closely with the project partners (SWFWMD and Hillsborough County) to formulate the overall project conceptual design. Scheda's staff created the construction plans and secured the regulatory permits. Scheda's staff produced the Technical Specifications and Bid Documents so this ambitious project could be successfully put out to bid. The resulting design includes landform changes to over 980 acres of fallow farm fields and historic borrow pits. Scheda provided daily construction inspection and directed field adjustments to maximize the project's future ecological benefits. Over one million wetland plants were installed; Scheda's CEI staff inspected all plant material and oversaw plant installation process. Twenty volunteer plantings were coordinated to augment the initial planting effort. This site is now functioning as envisioned, with spectacular results in regards to the birds and fish documented using this site. This project has been recognized with awards of environmental excellence.

