ESA SCHEDA

Lemon Bay Conservancy

Lemon Bay (Wildflower) Preserve Habitat Restoration

Location
Charlotte County, Florida

ESA Scheda scientists were selected to formulate a design plan for the restoration of an 80-acre, former golf course along Lemon Bay. This site had been abandoned since 2006 and was overrun with non-native vegetation; however, this site is recognized as one of the most productive nurseries for tarpon in this region. A non-profit organization Lemon Bay Conservancy (LBC) had purchased the parcel to preserve the property for tarpon spawning as well as to create a nature preserve (Wildflower Preserve). The LBC did not have the funds nor the technical expertise to proceed with the wholesale restoration of this site. ESA Scheda's Project Manager (PM), helped the LBC secure funding from SWFWMD then designed and permitted the overall site restoration. ESA Scheda scientists conducted environmental assessments, established wetland jurisdictional limits, mapped remnant existing native habitats, and developed the overall restoration plan for the entire site.

The primary objective of this project was to expand the existing tarpon nursery areas, create oligohaline conditions for other recreationally important fish and avifaunal species, and improve the quality of stormwater runoff entering the Preserve and ultimately discharging into the bay. The stormwater improvement component included the reduction of pollutant loads from sediment transport and deposition. The project will create 8.4 acres of estuarine wetlands plus create 5.2 acres of freshwater wetlands, and enhance an additional 5.3 acres of existing freshwater wetland areas.