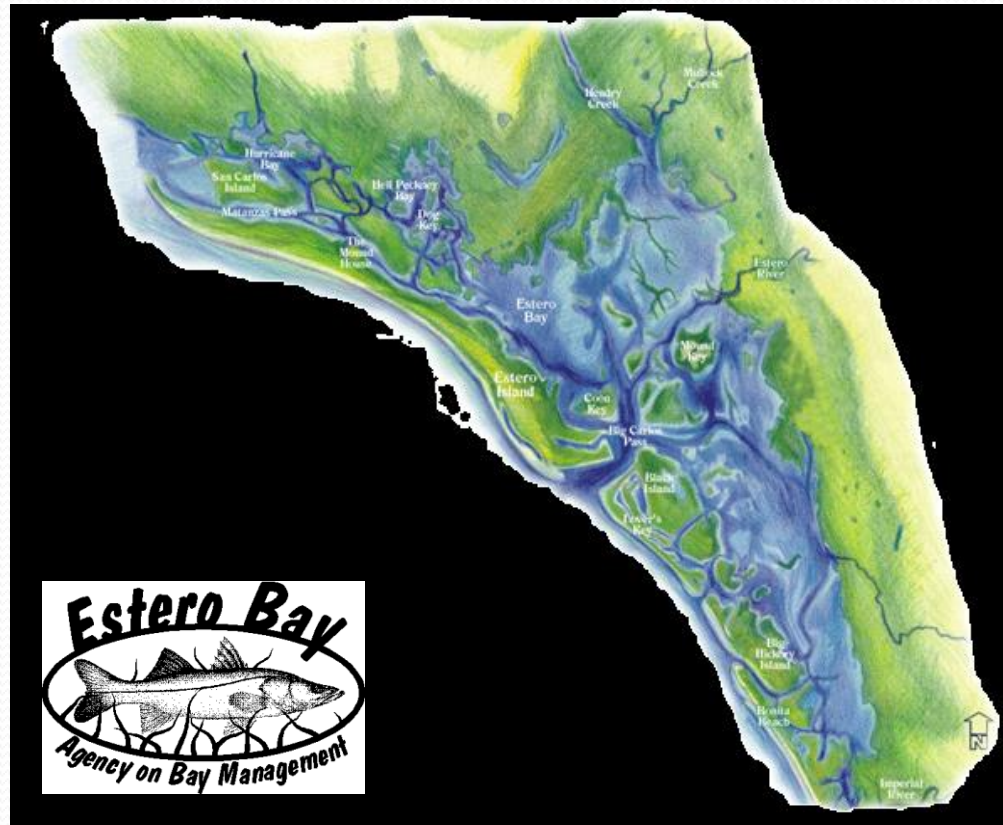


State of the Bay 2019



Funded by the City of Bonita Springs.

Prepared by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council



Introduction with Principles
Human History of Estero Bay
Water Quality
Hydrology
Wildlife
Social
Discussion and Conclusions





Major Points

Hurricane Irma had a substantial effect on water quality parameters as it flooded the Estero Bay watershed. There are multiple increases in the number of impaired estuarine water body segments for fecal coliform and nitrogen. Spring Creek is now impaired for Copper. Mullock Creek continues to be impaired for fecal coliform. Dissolved oxygen is slightly declining in both fresh and estuarine waters in association with nutrients and warmer temperatures. Significant areas in improvement in water quality associated principally with the adoption and implementation of strict local government fertilizer ordinances and construction of filter marshes in the headwaters of tributaries leading to nutrient reduction principally in phosphorous and chlorophyll-a; turbidity remains low, increases in acres of conservation lands, and increases in colonial bird nesting.

2013 Water Quality Status

	Chlorophyll -a	DO	Fecal Coliform	Total Nitrogen	Total Phosphorus	Turbidity	Total Met
Estuarine							
Estero Bay							6
Hendry Creek		V	V				4
Mullock Creek		V					6
Estero River		V					4
Spring Creek		V					4
Imperial River	V	V	V				4
Fresh							
6-Mile Cypress		V	V				4
10-Mile Canal		V					5
Hendry Creek		V					5
Mullock Creek		V	V				4
Spring Creek		V					4
Imperial River		V	V				3
Total Met	12	2	9	10	12	12	

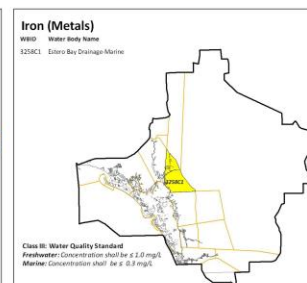
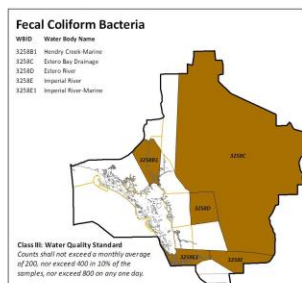
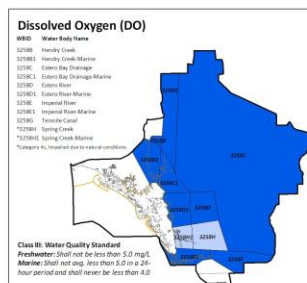
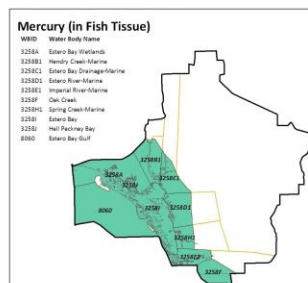
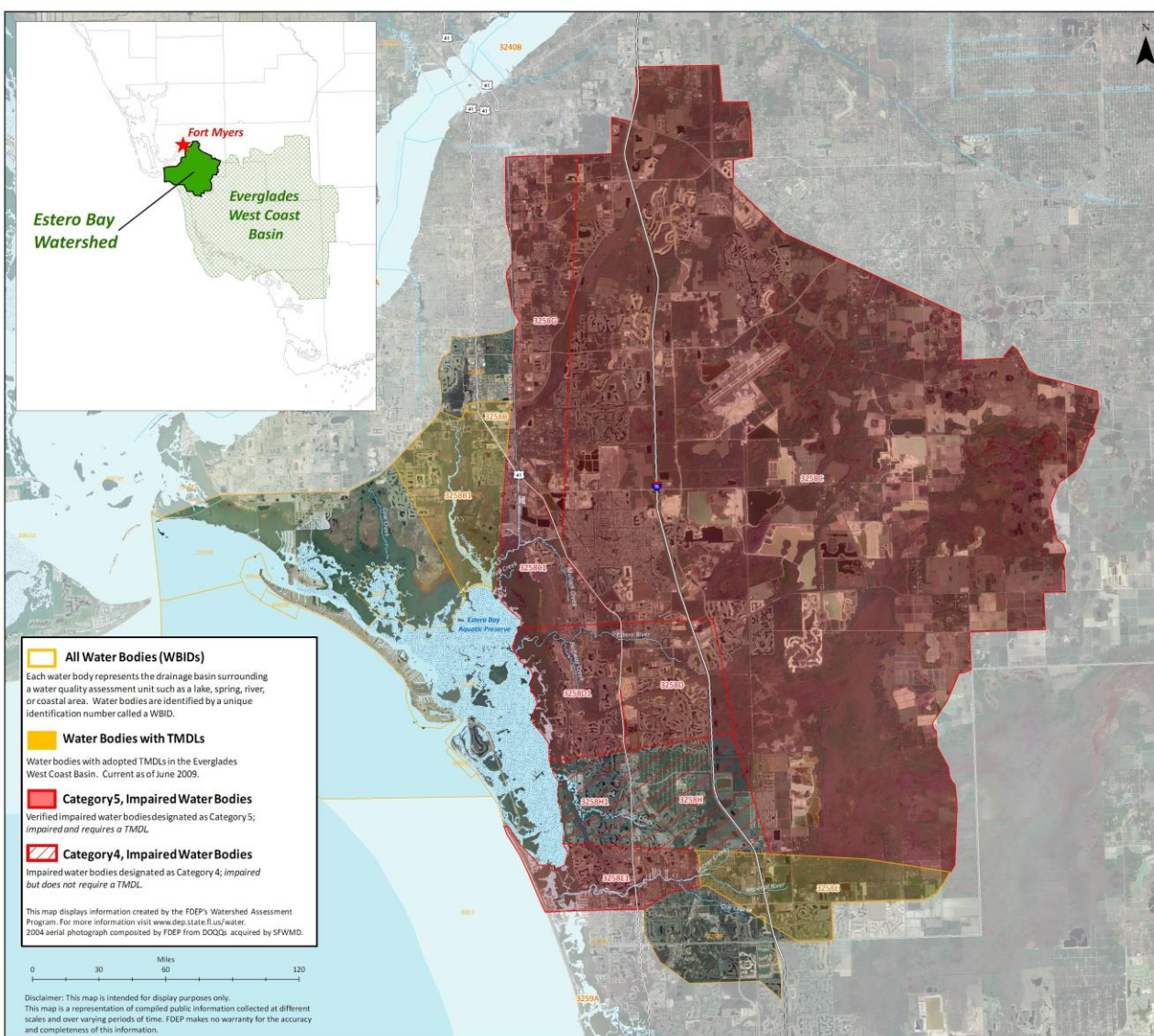
	Appears to have not met standards in 2013, based on Lee County Environmental Lab data*
	Appears to have not met standards in both 2008 and 2013*
	Appears to have not met standards in 2008 but met them in 2013*
V	Verified as Impaired in 2010 by Florida Department of Environmental Protection

2019 Water Quality Status

	Chlorophyll-a	DO	Fecal Coliform	Total Nitrogen	Total Phosphorus	Turbidity	Copper	Total Met 2013	Total Met 2018	Level of Improvement
Estuarine										
Estero Bay		V	V18					6	6	0
Hendry Creek		V	V					4	7	3
Mullock Creek		V	V18	V18				6	5	-1
Estero River		V						4	7	3
Spring Creek		V	V18	V18			V18	4	4	0
Imperial River	V	V18	V18	V18				4	4	0
Fresh										
6-Mile Cypress		V	V					4	7	3
10-Mile Canal		V						5	7	2
Hendry Creek		V						5	7	2
Mullock Creek		V	V18					4	6	2
Spring Creek		V						4	7	3
Imperial River		V						3	7	4
Total Met 2018	12*	11	7	9	12	12	11			

	Appears to have not met standards in 2013 , based on Lee County Environmental Lab data*
	Appears to have not met standards in both 2008 and 2013*
	Appears to have not met standards in 2008 but met them in 2013*
V	Verified as Impaired in 2010 by Florida Department of Environmental Protection
V18	Verified as Impaired in 2018 by Florida Department of Environmental Protection

	Chlorophyll -a	DO	Fecal Coliform	Total Nitrogen	Total Phosphorus	Turbidity	Copper	Total Met 2013	Total Met 2018	Level of Improvement
Estuarine										
Estero Bay			V18					6	6	0
Hendry Creek								4	7	3
Mullock Creek			V18	V18				6	5	-1
Estero River								4	7	3
Spring Creek			V18	V18			V18	4	4	0
Imperial River		V18	V18	V18				4	4	0
Fresh										
6-Mile Cypress								4	7	3
10-Mile Canal								5	7	2
Hendry Creek								5	7	2
Mullock Creek			V18					4	6	2
Spring Creek								4	7	3
Imperial River								3	7	4
Total Met 2018	12*	11	7	9	12	12	11			
	Appears to have not met standards in 2013 , based on Lee County Environmental Lab data*									
	Appears to have not met standards in both 2008 and 2013*									
	Appears to have not met standards in 2008 but met them in 2013*									
V	Verified as Impaired in 2010 by Florida Department of Environmental Protection									
V18	Verified as Impaired in 2018 by Florida Department of Environmental Protection									



Chlorophyll-a in Estuarine Systems

Between 2014 and 2016, average annual chlorophyll-a increased by 56%.

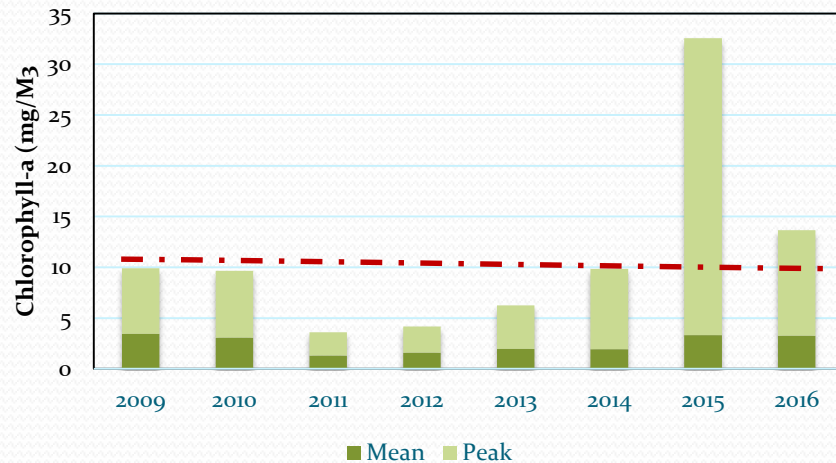
The peak monthly chlorophyll-a increased, for an average of 97%.

However between 2009 and 2016, average annual chlorophyll-a dropped in Estero Bay. The average reduction was 5.5%.

The peak monthly chlorophyll-a dropped in Estero Bay, for an average of 61% decrease.

However this still means that only Spring Creek (2014) and Hendry Creek (2016), had a mean that exceeded recommended chlorophyll-a standards.

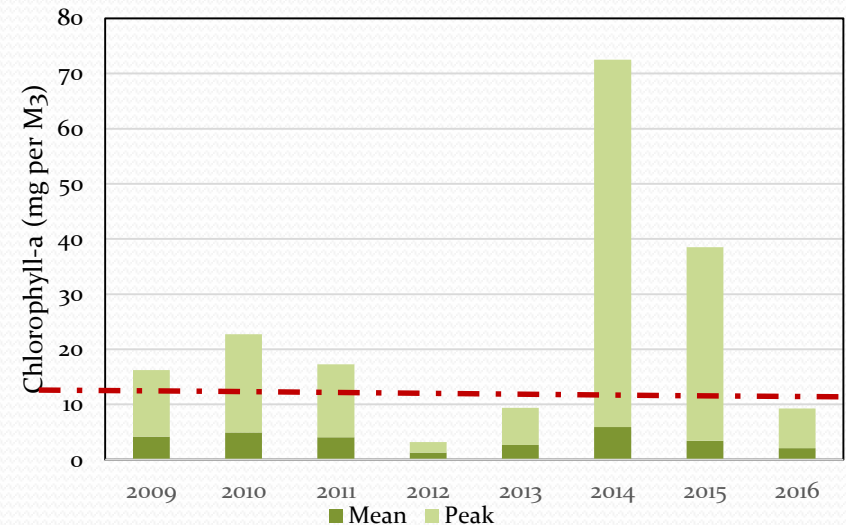
Estero Bay



average
peak

-5.5%
+61%

Estuarine Estero River



average
peak

-31%
49%

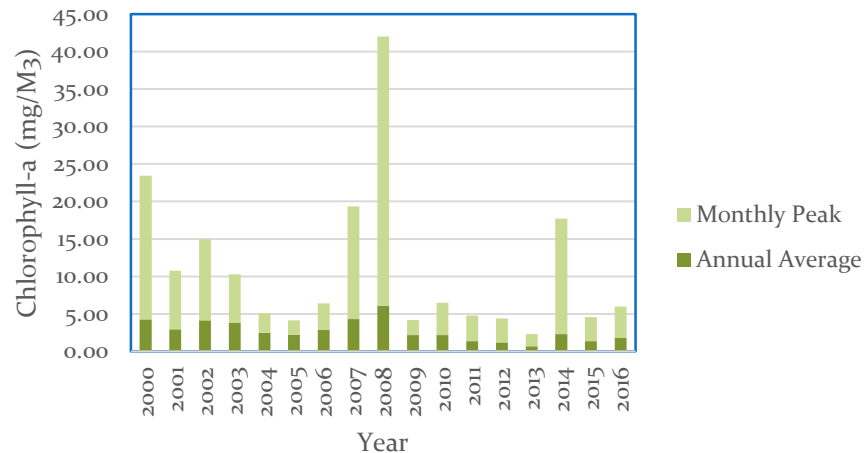
Chlorophyll-a in Fresh Systems

Between 2014 and 2016, average annual chlorophyll-a increase in freshwater segments.

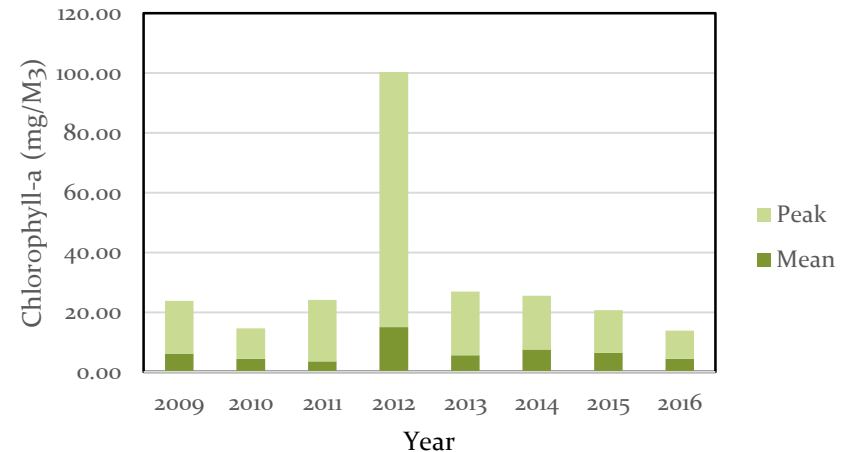
The average increase was 8%. The peak monthly chlorophyll-a dropped in all estuarine segments, for an average of 49% reduction.

The most common peak month was January, followed by May. These probably represented dry season stagnation and Spring first flush events. All months were represented.

Freshwater Spring Creek

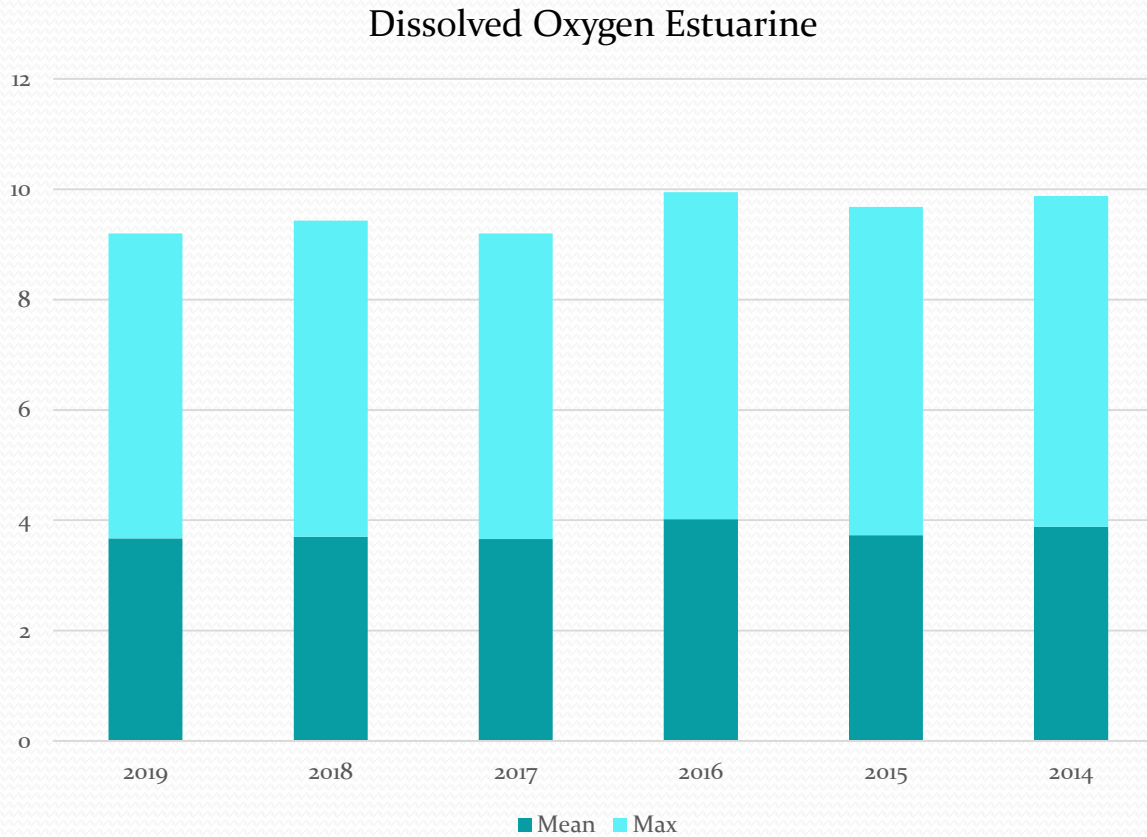


Freshwater Six Mile Cypress



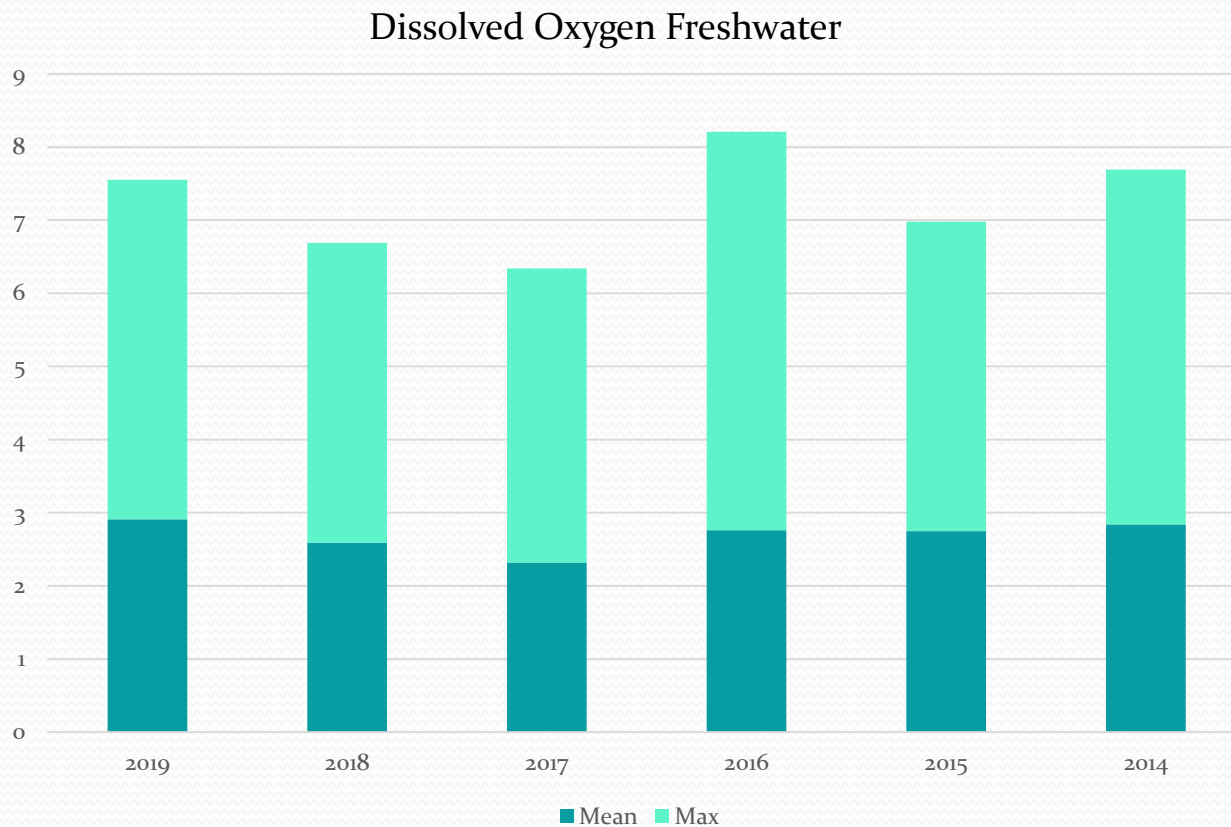
Dissolved Oxygen in Estuarine Systems

Between 2014 and 2019, average Dissolved Oxygen decreased 5.4%.
The monthly minimum Dissolved Oxygen decreased 7.8%.



Dissolved Oxygen in Fresh Systems

Between 2014 and 2019, average annual Dissolved Oxygen increased 5.8%.
The monthly Maximum Dissolved Oxygen increased by 9.7%



Fecal Coliform in Estuarine Systems

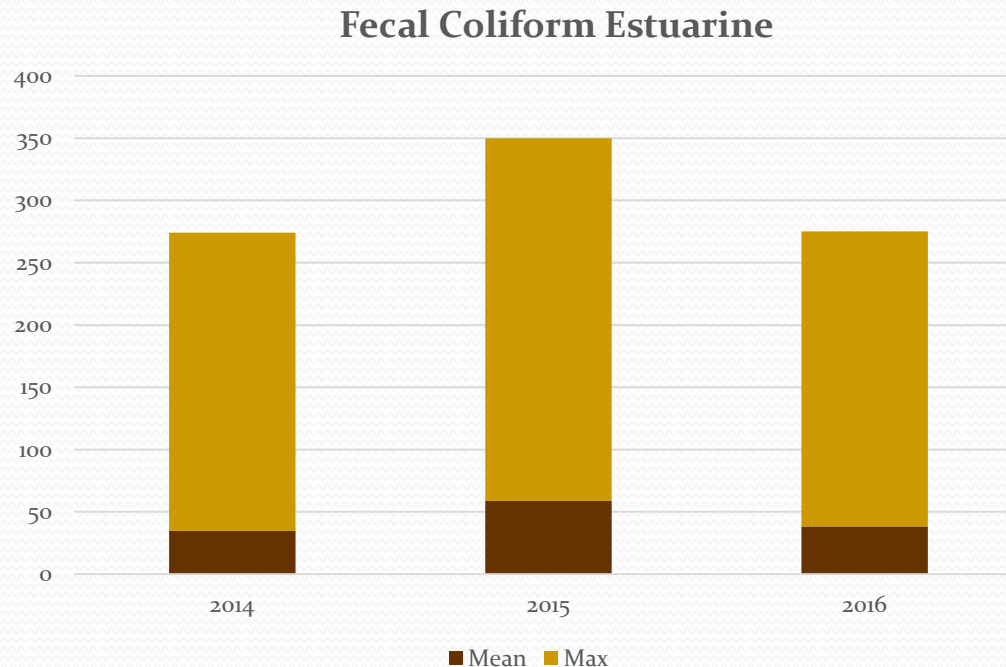
Between 2014 and 2016, average fecal Coliform increased in all estuarine segments but two:

Mullock Creek and Estero River. The average increase was negligible at %.

The peak monthly fecal Coliform also increased in all estuarine segments but two:

Estero River and Spring Creek. The average reduction was negligible at %.

The most common peak month was June (%), however, all months except January were represented.



Fecal Coliform in Fresh Systems

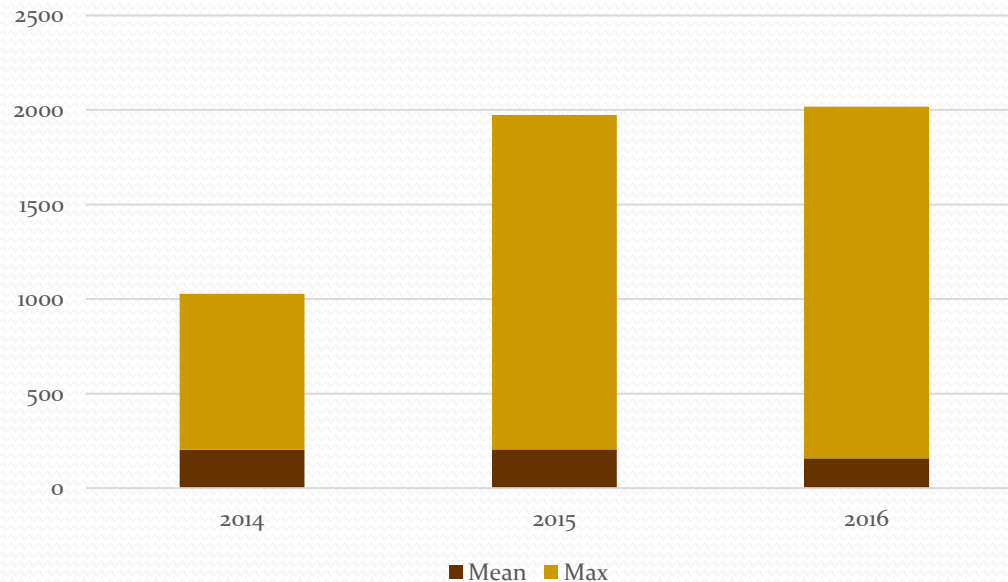
Between 2014 and 2019, average annual fecal Coliform decreased in all freshwater segments but two: Mullock Creek and Spring Creek. The average increase was %.

The peak monthly fecal Coliform increased in half of the freshwater segments, including Mullock Creek, Spring Creek and Imperial River. The average increase was %.

The most common peak month was August (%), followed by July (%).

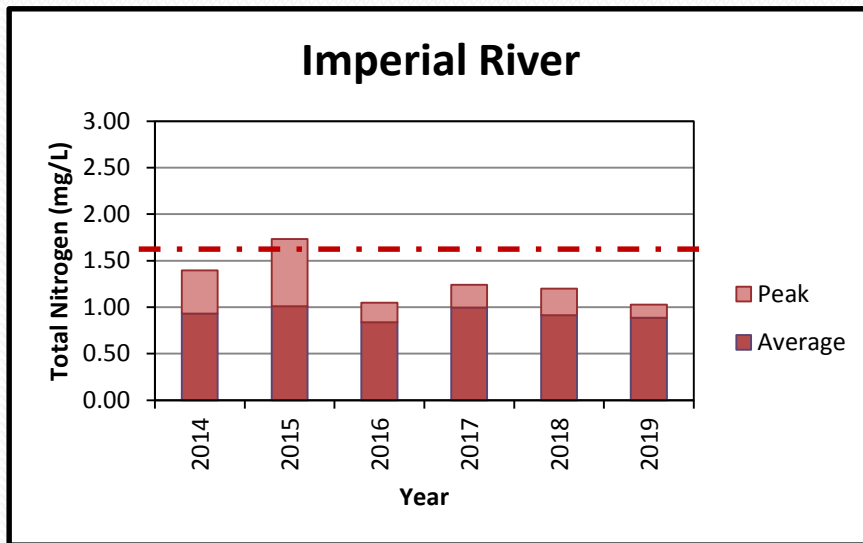
All months except June were represented.

Fecal Coliform Freshwater



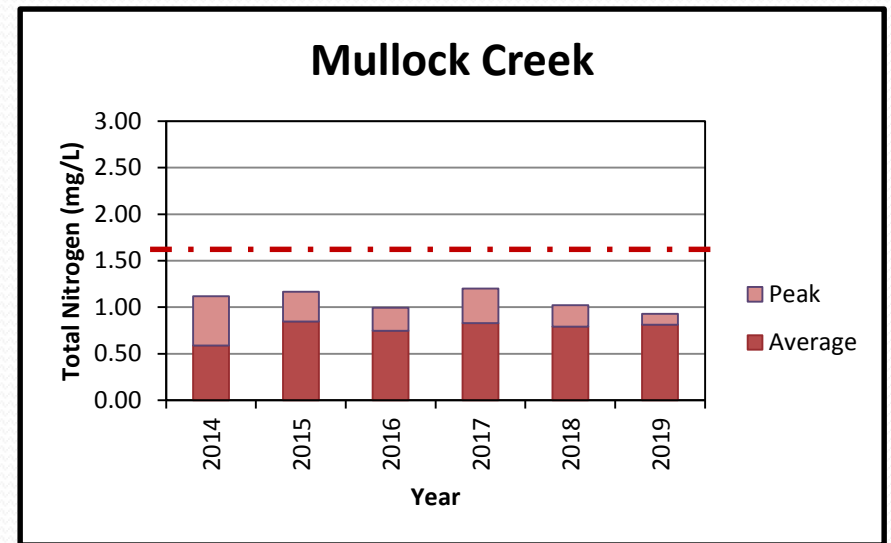
Total Nitrogen in Estuarine Systems

Between 2014 and 2019, average annual total nitrogen increased in all estuarine segments, however the geometric mean nitrogen standards were not exceeded. The average increase was 44 %. The peak monthly nitrogen decreased in all estuarine segments, for an average of 30.6%. The most common peak month was September (%), however, all months except March and April were represented.



average
peak

22%
24%



average
peak

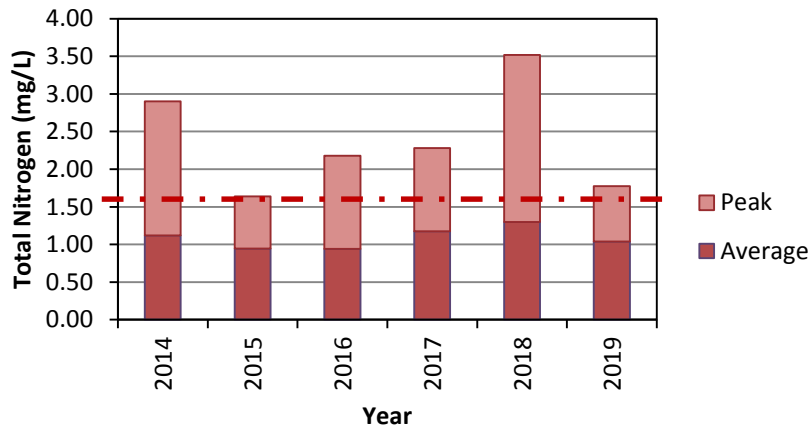
58%
8%

Total Nitrogen in Fresh Systems

Between 2014 and 2019, average annual total nitrogen decreased in 10-Mile Canal, Kehl Canal. Increased in Mullock Creek, Estero River, Oak Creek, Leitner Creek, Watershed wide the average increase was 3%.

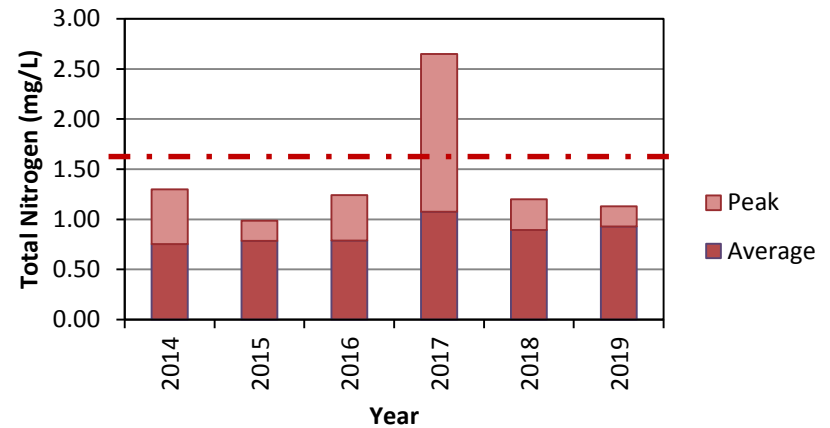
A decline in total nitrogen occurred between 2012 and 2016 but then Hurricane Irma flooding flows increased it. But then it began to decline again. It will take more years to see if this is a trend.

Six Mile Cypress



average %
peak %

San Carlos Estates



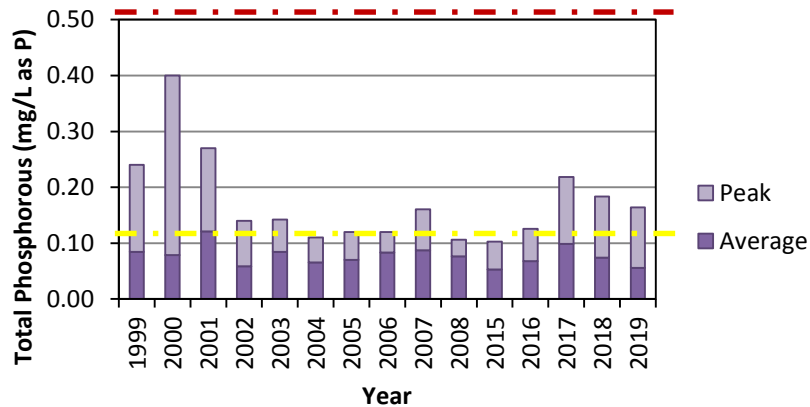
average %
peak %

Total Phosphorus in Estuarine Systems

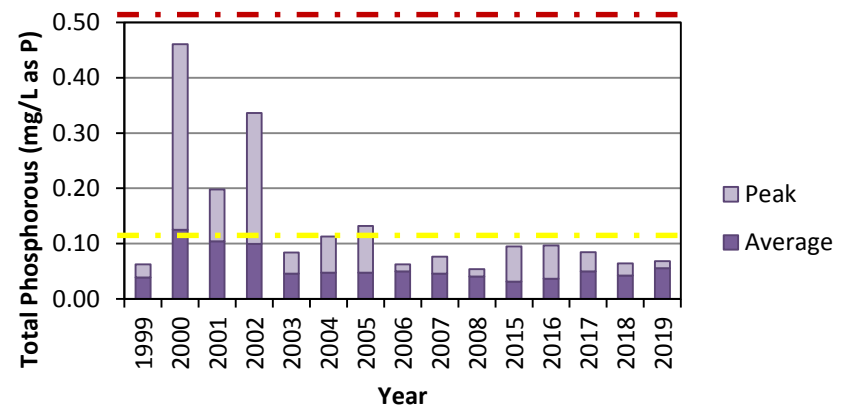
In all estuaries the geometric mean standard was achieved after adoption of the fertilizer ordinances. However between 2014 and 2019, average annual total phosphorus increased in all estuarine segments including Estero Bay.

Peak phosphorous levels corresponded with the discharges of the watershed from the flooding from Hurricane Irma.

Estuarine Hendry Creek



Estero Bay

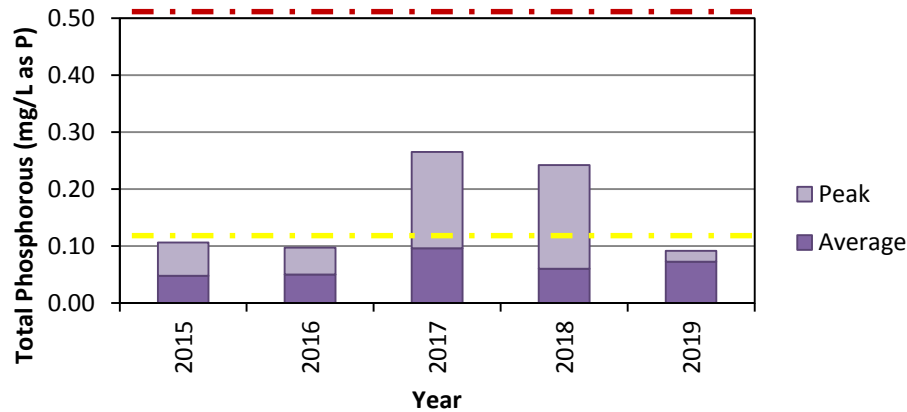


Total Phosphorus in Fresh Systems

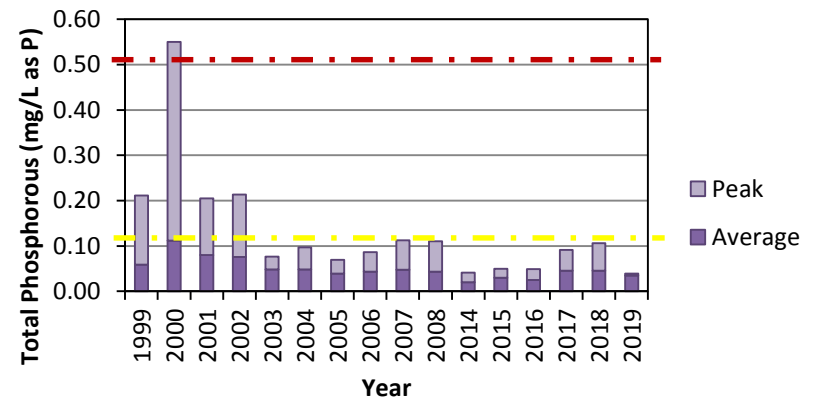
In all tributaries the geometric mean standard was achieved after adoption of the fertilizer ordinances. However between 2014 and 2019, average annual total phosphorus increased in all freshwater segments. The average reduction was 20%.

The average peak monthly total phosphorus freshwater segments also increased 21%

Six Mile Cypress

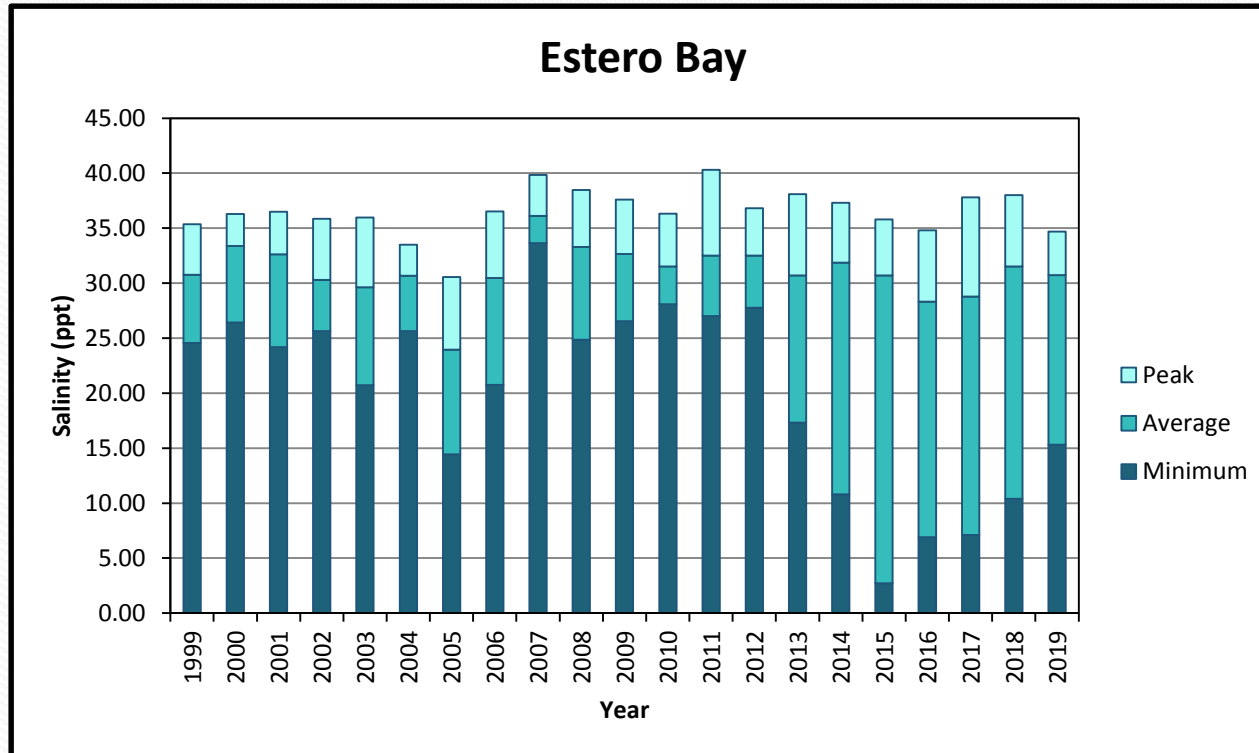


Estero River



Salinity

In the period of record, 2005 had the lowest minimum and the lowest peak, while 2007 had the highest minimum and 2011 the highest peak. In the 2009 - 2019 period, the average salinity dropped by less than 1%, the peak decreased by 1.8%. The signature of large hurricane years can be seen in the lowest minimums of 2014 to 2018.

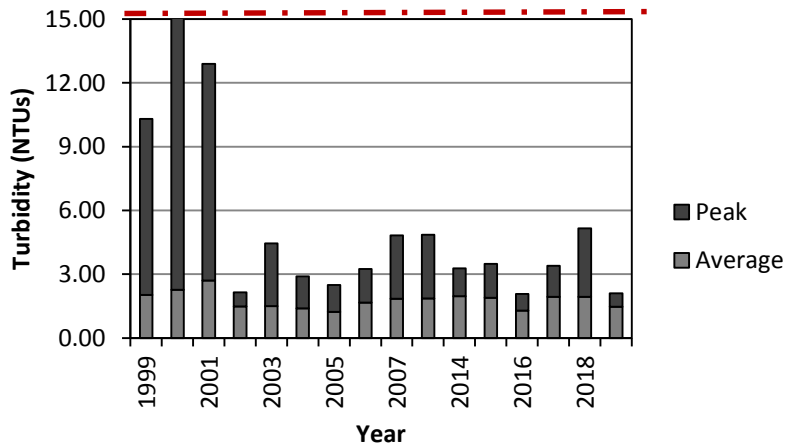


2009-2019 change
average -6%
peak 1%
minimum -35%

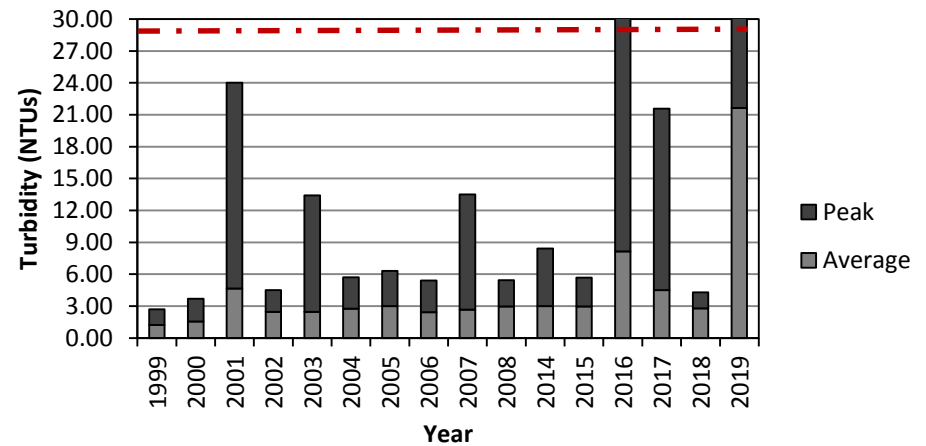
Turbidity in Estuarine Systems

Between 2014 and 2019, average turbidity increased substantially in several waterbodies. The peak monthly turbidity also increased in several tributaries.

Estuarine Imperial River



Estuarine Hendry Creek



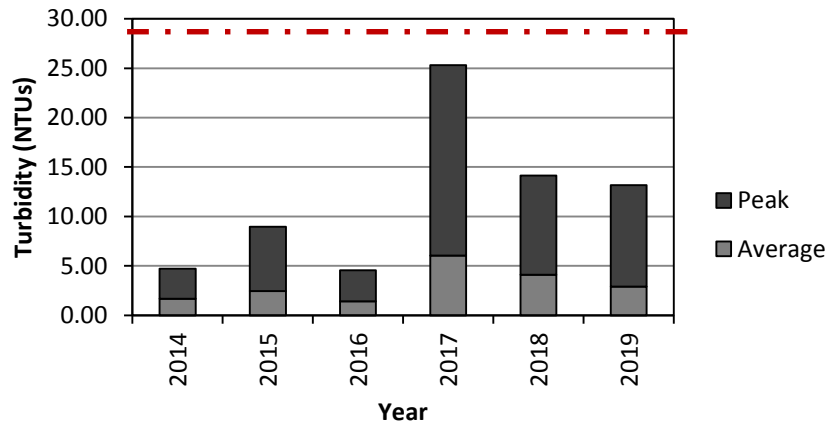
Turbidity in Fresh Systems

Between 2014 and 2019, average turbidity varied in the various freshwater segments.

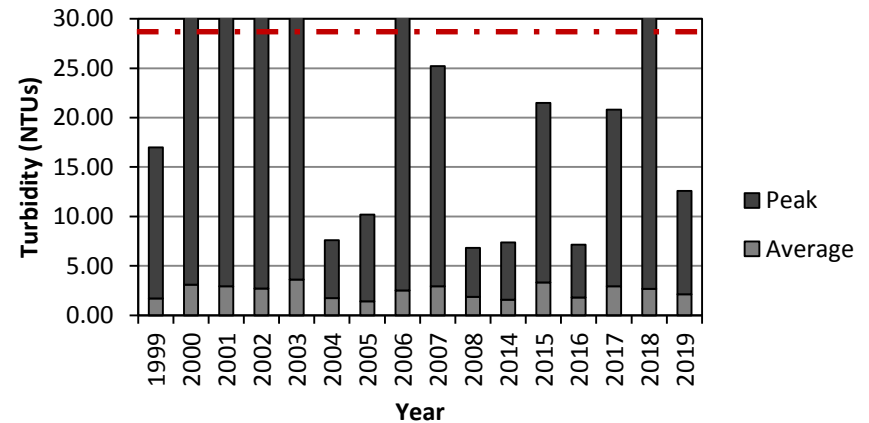
The average increase was 4.9%.

The peak monthly turbidity also increased

Six Mile Cypress

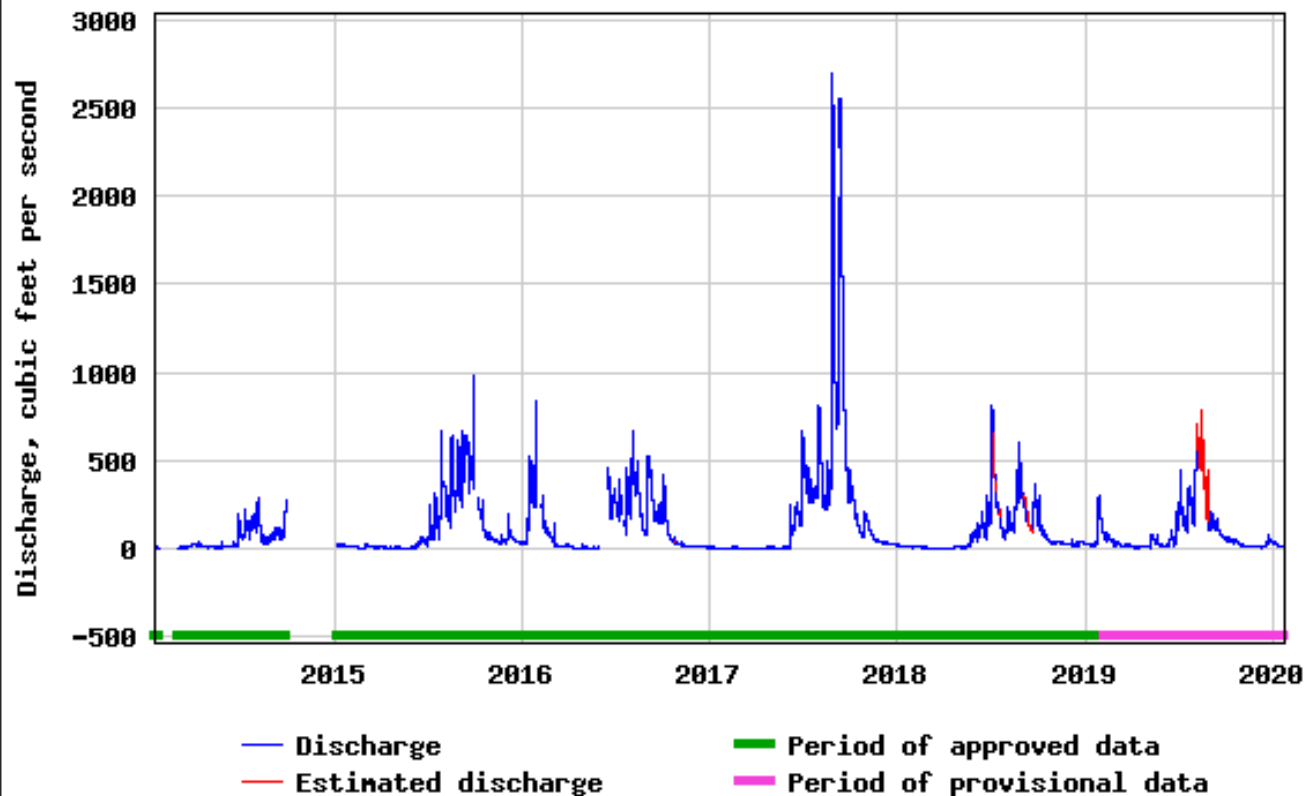


Freshwater Ten Mile Canal



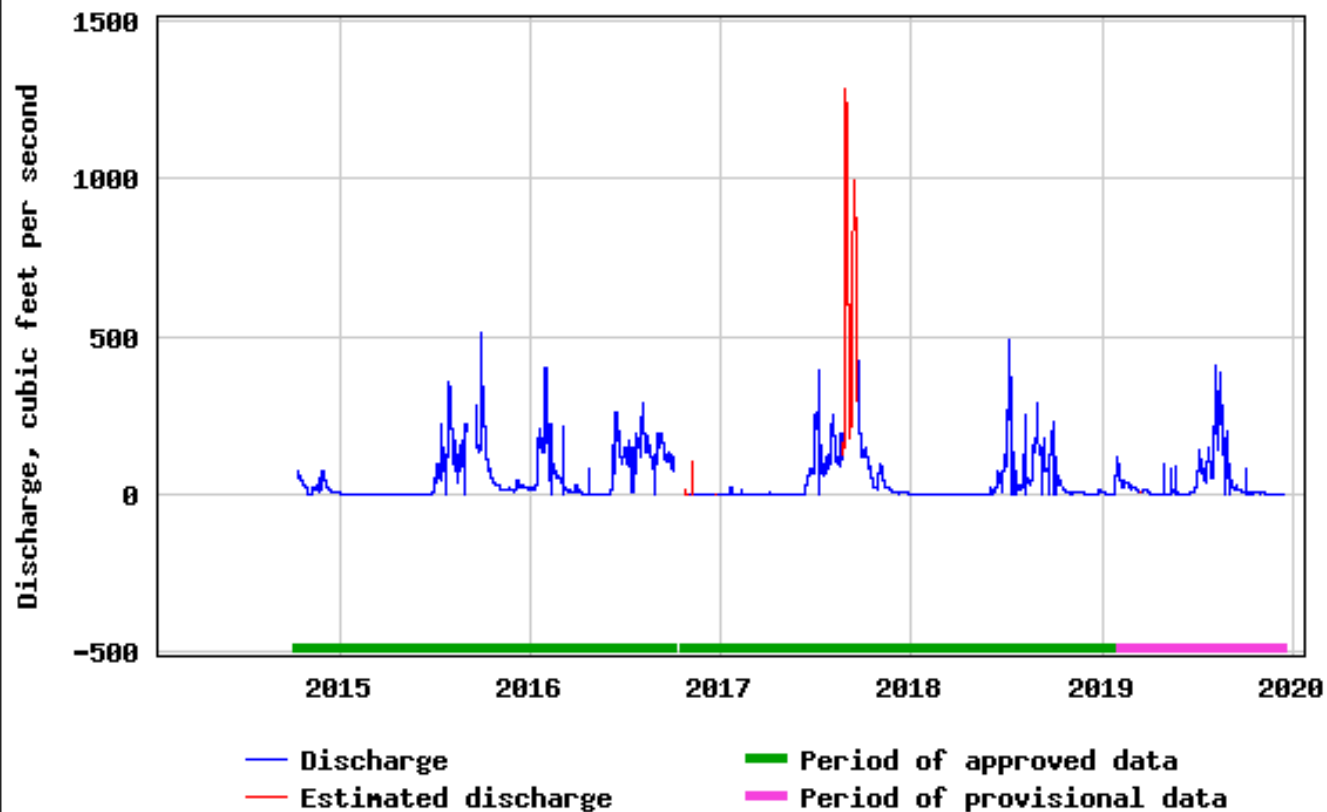


USGS 02291673 TENMILE CANAL AT CONTROL NEAR ESTERO, FL

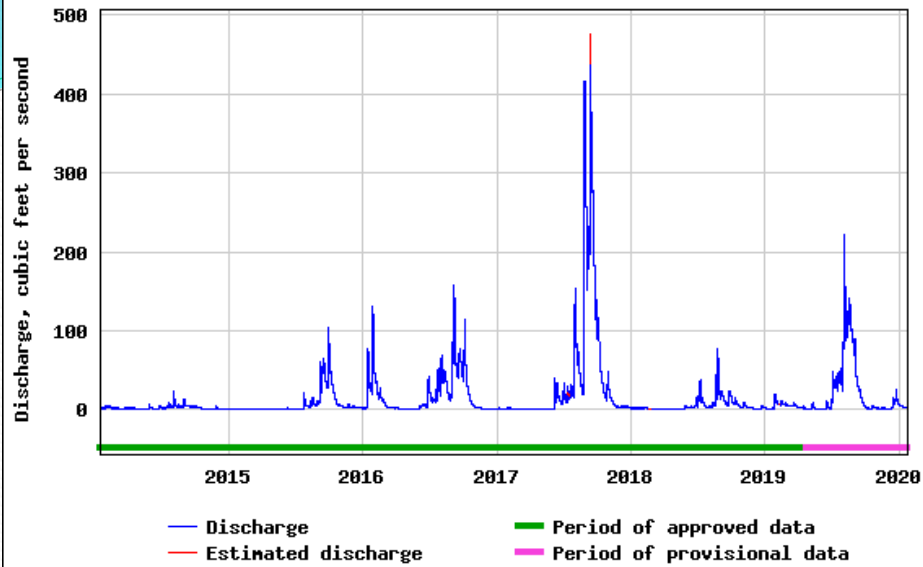




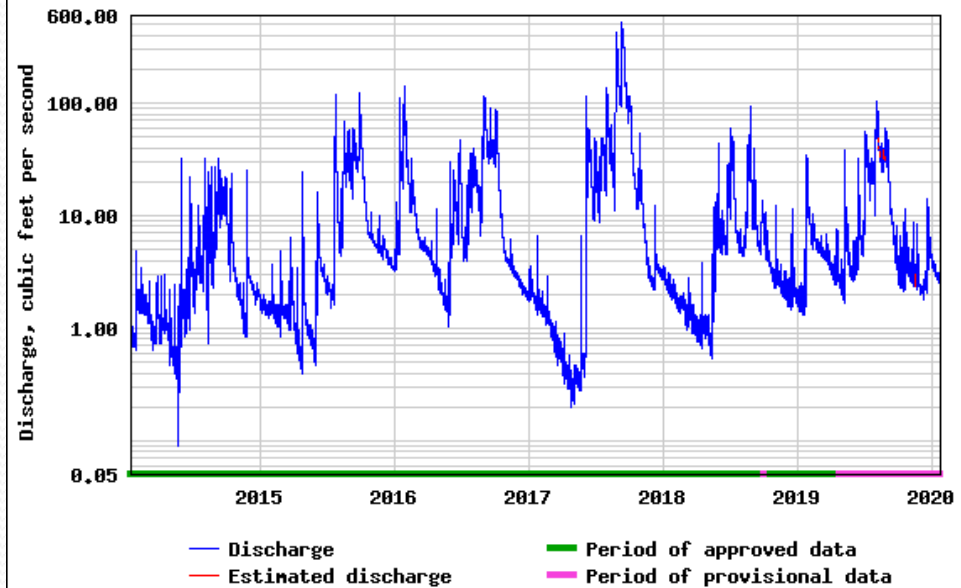
USGS 02291669 SIXMILE CYPRESS CREEK NEAR FORT MYERS, FL



USGS 02291580 NORTH BRANCH ESTERO RIVER AT ESTERO, FL

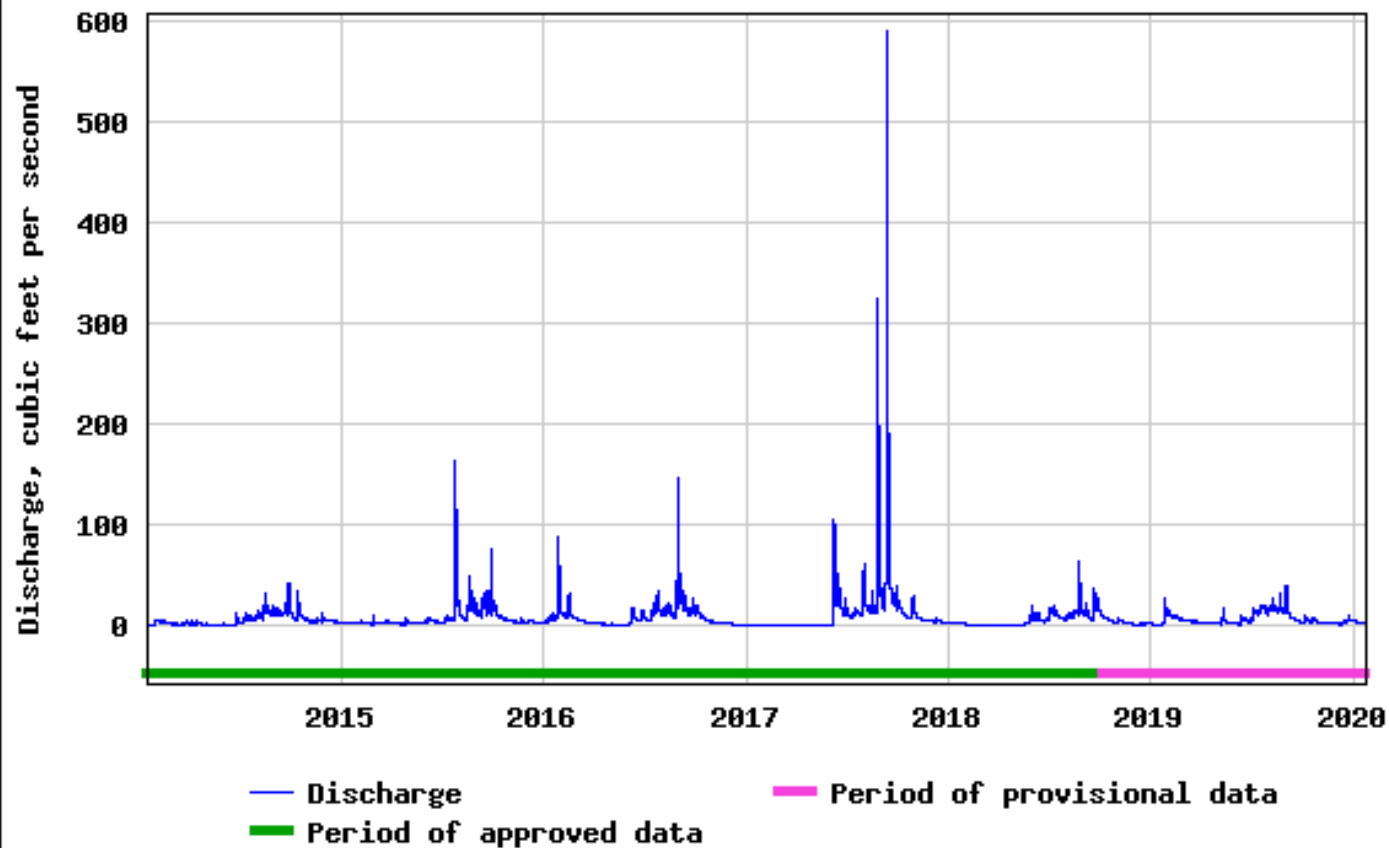


USGS 02291597 SOUTH BRANCH ESTERO RIVER AT ESTERO, FL



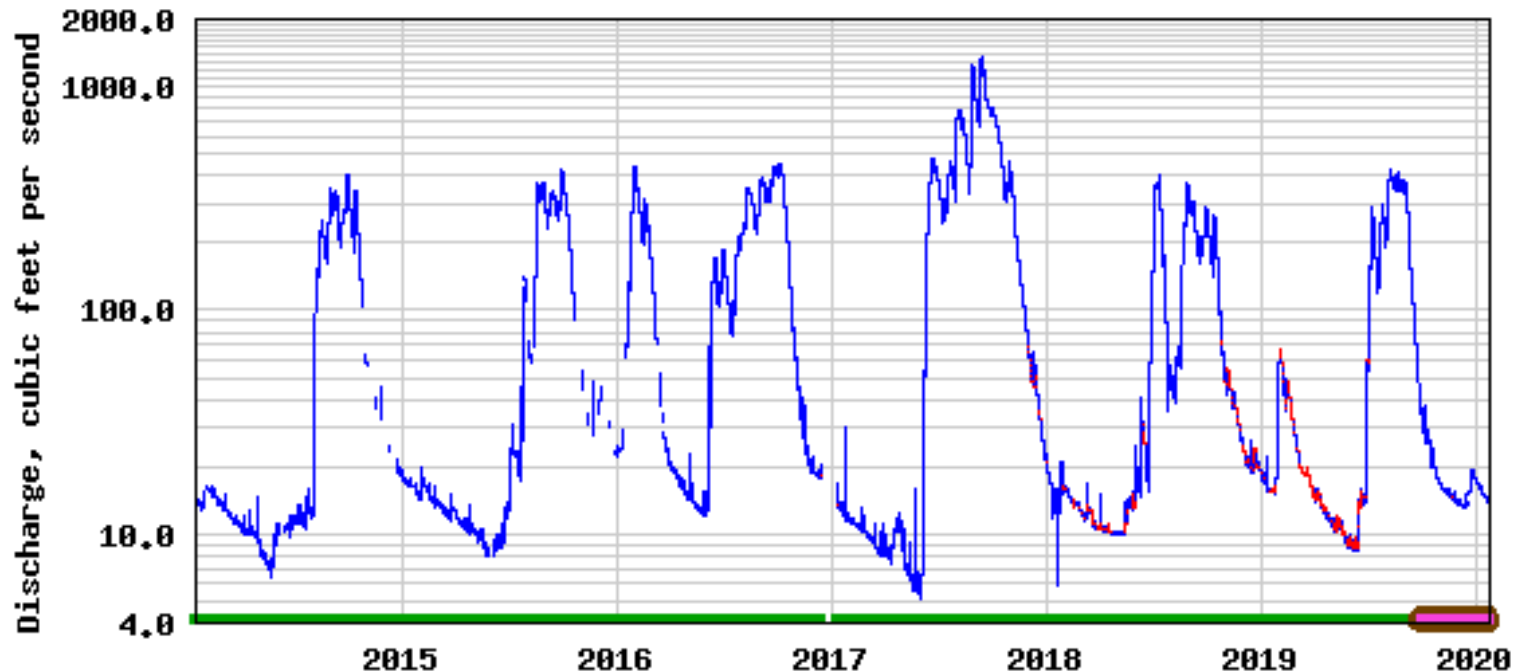


USGS 02291524 SPRING CREEK HEADWATER NEAR BONITA SPRINGS, FL



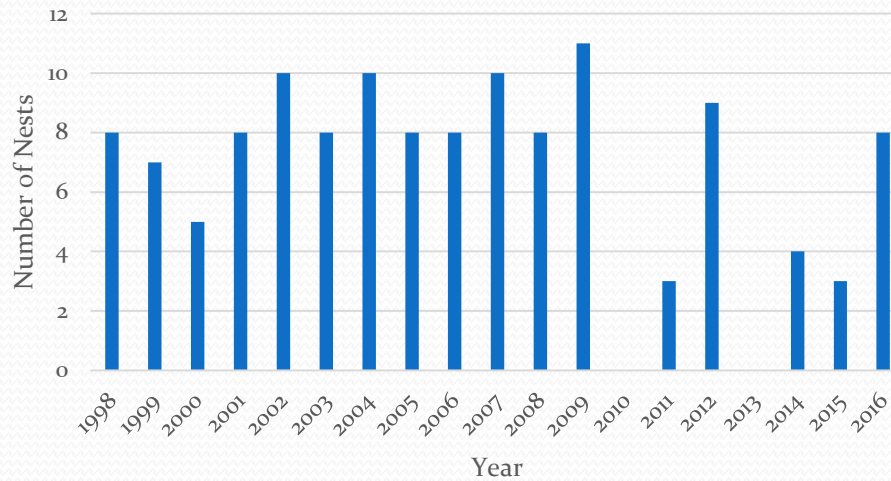


USGS 02291500 IMPERIAL RIVER NEAR BONITA SPRINGS, FL



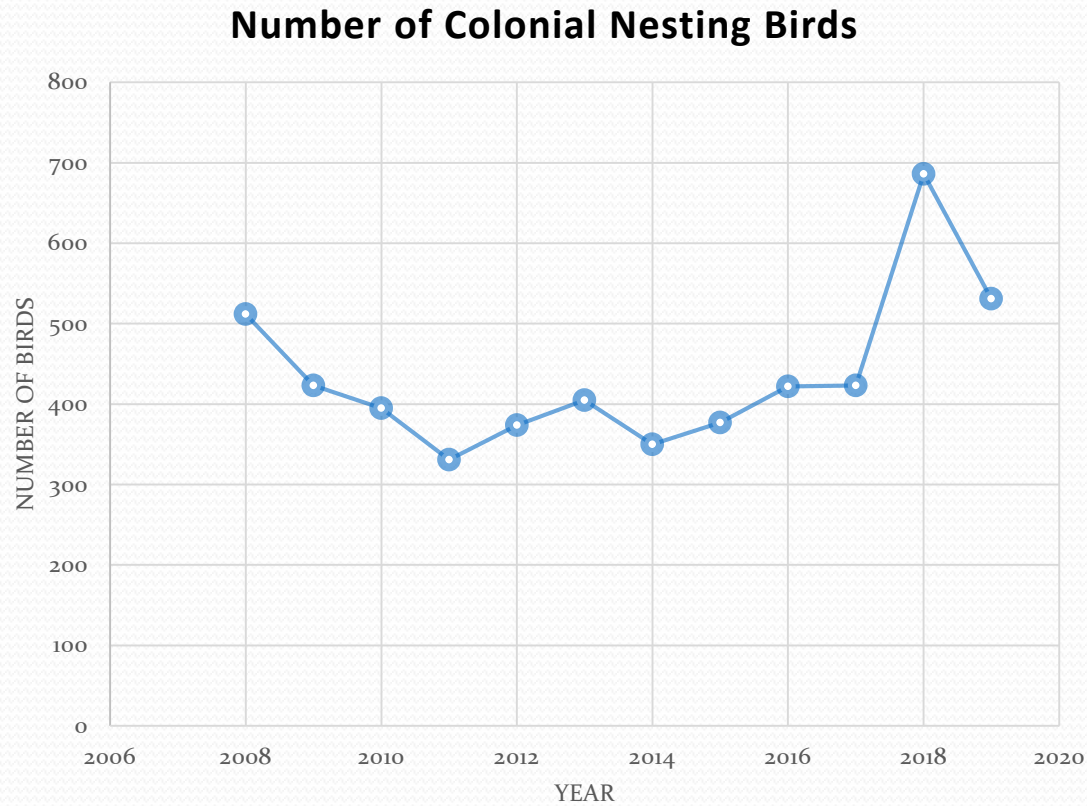
- Discharge
- Estimated discharge
- Period of approved data
- Value is affected by backwater at the measurement site.
- Period of provisional data

Bald Eagle Nests Active



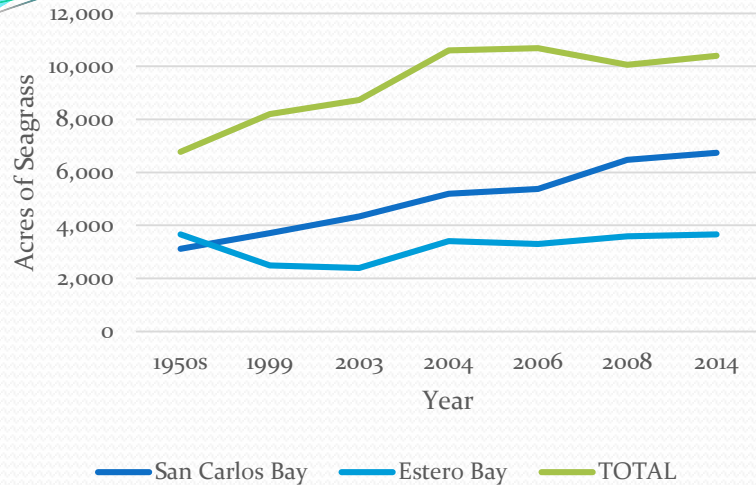
Year	Number of Nests	Success Rate
1995	9	5 (55%)
1996	10	6 (60%)
1997	10	4 (40%)
1998	11	7 (64 %)
1999	11	6 (55 %)
2000	14	?
2001	14	10(71%)
2002	11	2(18%)
2003	9	2(22%)
2004	12	6(50%)
2005	11	?
2006	10	7(70%)
2007	11	4(37%)
2008	9	6(67%)
2009	12	5(42%)
2012	6	?
2013	7	?
2014	4	?
2015	3	?
2016	6	?

Peak nest counts, by species, for surveys conducted in Estero Bay from 2008 to 2019



Source: Estero Bay Estuary Program

Seagrasses



Seagrass Acreages in the Estero Bay Segments of the CHNEP							
Harbor Segment	1950s	1999	2003	2004	2006	2008	2014
San Carlos Bay	3,118	3,709	4,338	5,192	5,376	6,469	6,740
Estero Bay	3,662	2,488	2,393	3,409	3,298	3,590	3,654
TOTAL	6,780	8,196	8,734	10,605	10,680	10,059	10,394

It is estimated that, in 1950, Estero Bay contained 3,769 acres of seagrasses.

While seagrass acreage declined between 1950 and 1999, significant gains have been made since then.

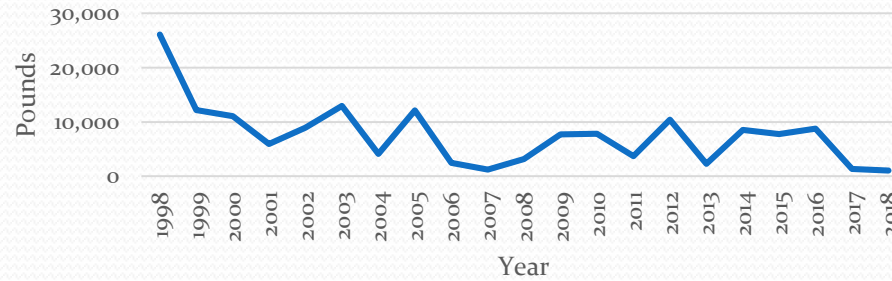
Persistence of seagrass has also been tracked. Persistence appears to be linked to water depth, with the most persistent areas being shallower and near-shore.

It is estimated that Estero Bay contains 107 acres of seagrasses that have been lost and are not restorable.

As of 2014, there were 3,654 acres of seagrasses of all species in Estero Bay and 6,740 acres in San Carlos Bay, which includes Matanzas Pass and the areas south of Bunche Beach, for a total of 10,394 acres. Apparently no surveys have been completed since then.

Commercial Fisheries Landings (Lee)

Spotted Sea Trout Landings



-95.8%

Blue Crab Landings



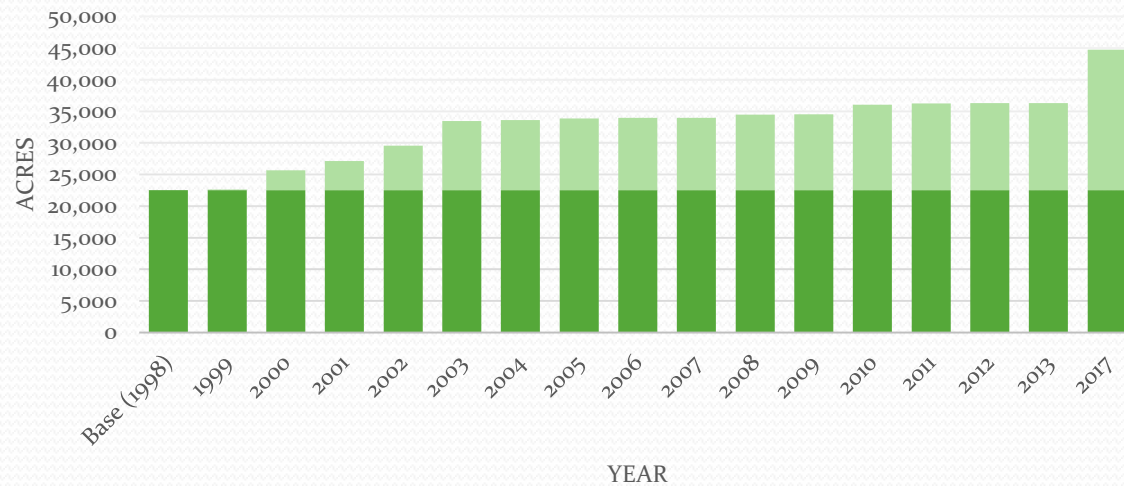
-20.9%

Mullet Landings



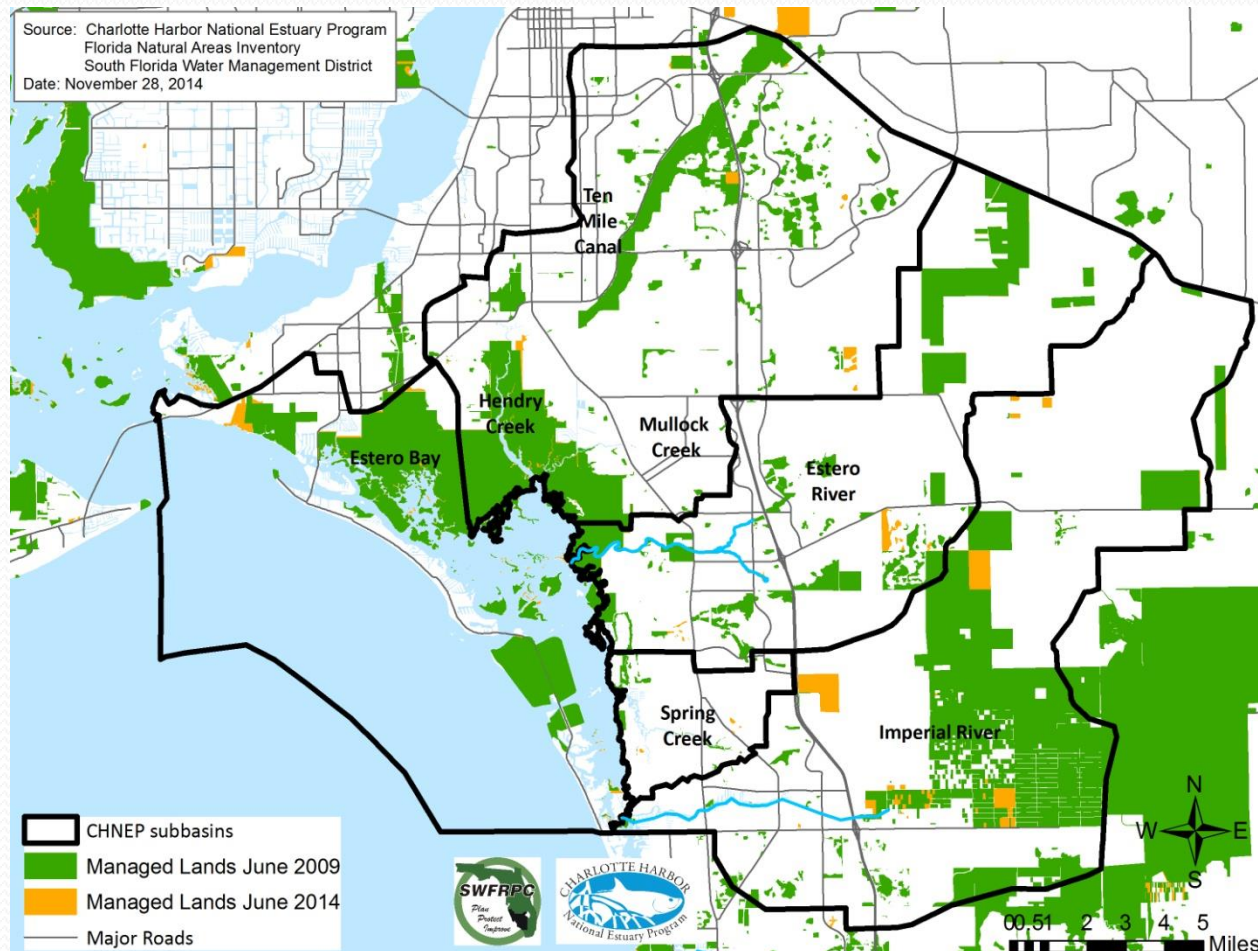
-73.3%

ACRES OF LAND IN PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION IN THE ESTERO BAY WATERSHED

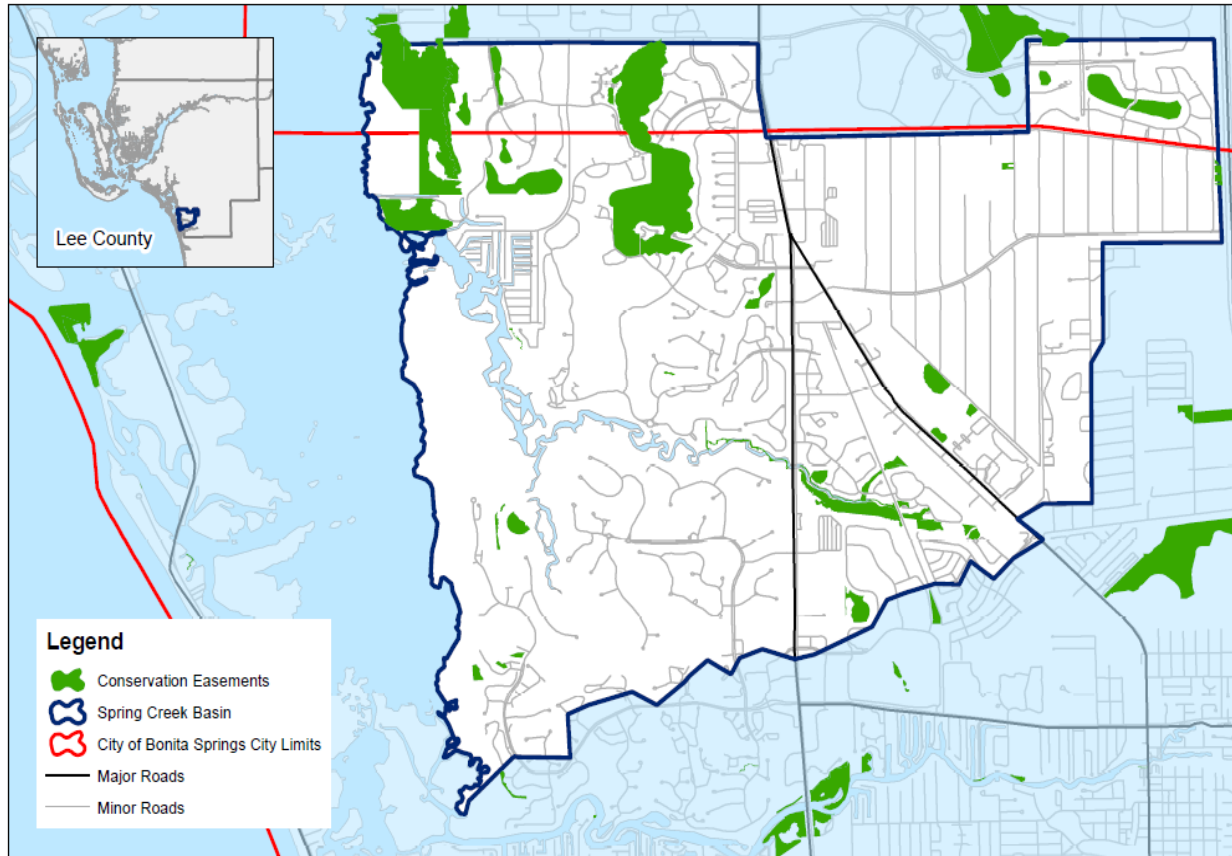


Year	Base (1998)	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Acres	22,502	122	3,032	1,491	2,429	3,887	167	238	109	1,042	511

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2017
Acres	19	1,523	210	63	0	8,425



2014 Conservation Lands of the Estero Bay Watershed with Conservation Easements



Spring Creek Basin Conservation Easements

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

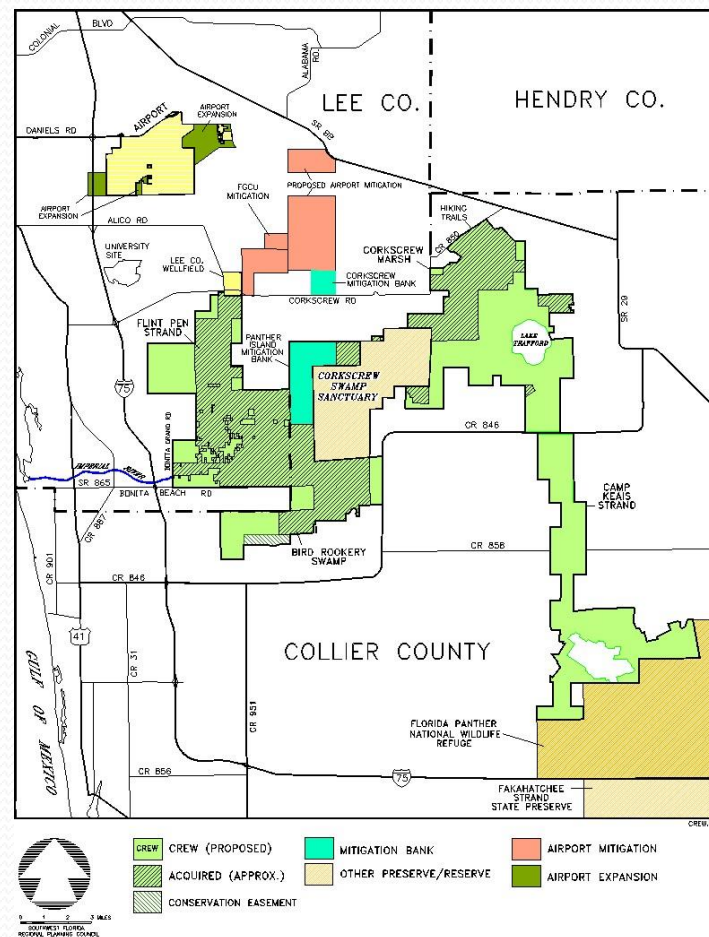
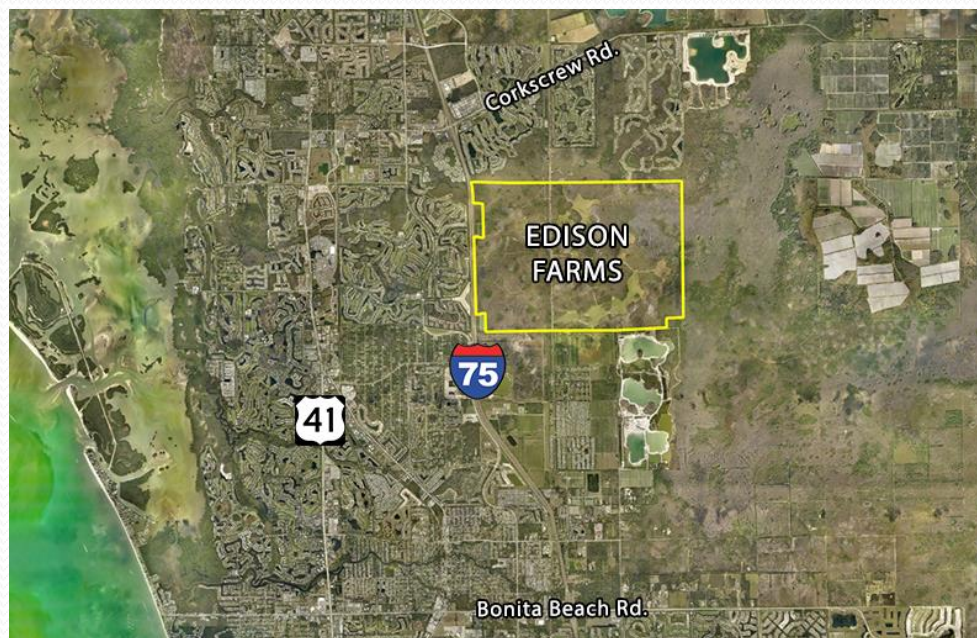


Southwest Florida
Regional Planning
Council
www.swfRPC.org

(Name: SpringCreek Watershed Study_conser_ease) Last updated by: twalker on 5/12/2015

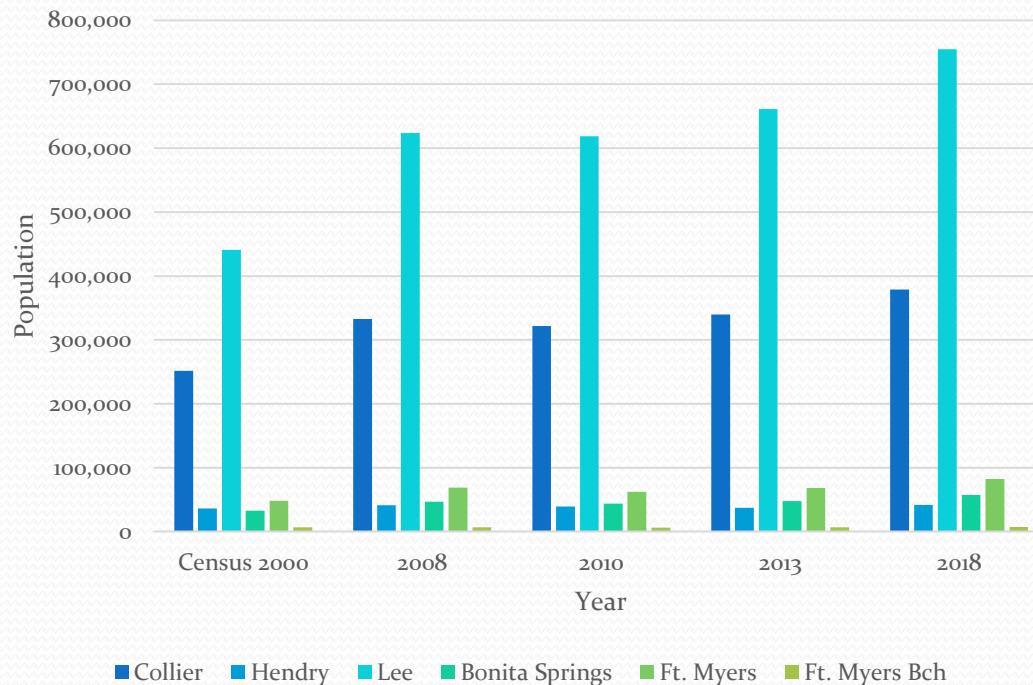
(Revised 1/16/2020)





(CREW)
CORKSCREW REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM WATERSHED

At the time of the 2000 Census, the Estero Bay Basin had nearly 145,000 people living within its boundaries. By 2010, the Estero Bay basin population had grown by a third to over 195,000. By 2018 it is estimated to be 248,000 (41.5% increase).



One solution: Nutrient pollution source reduction at the source.

We know the solutions to the harmful nutrient and human waste problems, and I learned about it when I was in high school and with more detail in college. After I joined State government in 1984, I have advocated this at all the different state agencies I worked at and at the SWFRPC. Many other scientists know this solution and have worked toward it over these many years. It is not just one thing and it is not a technological or man-made chemical fix that allows pollution with impunity and then cleaning up the mess. It is called nutrient source reduction at the source. It involves every nutrient pollution source being responsible for their own pollution and retaining and treating it themselves. It is stricter stormwater management systems than the current basis of review and Harper method standards, it is stricter fertilizer ordinances than the weak State and Federal rules. It provides no exemptions to anyone: not to agriculture; not to government; not to golf course; not to the politically connected. It involves strict monitoring, enforcement, and requires repairs and upgrades to all forms of waste treatment plants (septic, package plants, central systems). It involves moving to Advanced Tertiary Treatment of sewage. It involves not allowing reuse water used for irrigation to flow into adjacent water bodies. It involves full land-based pump-out of all vessels including private boats, cruise liners and commercial shipping with no free discharges to open waters with no exempted open water discharges including grey water. It includes the complete filtering at incinerators and power plants to scrub nitrogen and mercury emissions. It includes native landscaping of public and private landscapes. It includes conservation acquisition and protection of the river and creek floodplains and moving all forms of agriculture, particularly feed lots and land spreading of waste solids, out of those floodplains. Basically, this is sustainable agriculture, land use, and life-style in Florida with proper nutrient management.

City of Bonita Springs Flood Reduction and Watershed Restoration Plan



Source: SWFRPC 2017

James W. Beever III, Tim Walker, and Aidan Bandy
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite 1
Fort Myers, FL 33907

Contact Name and Telephone Number:
Jim Beever
(239-938-1813, ext. 224)
www.swfrpc.org

Spring Creek Restoration Plan



Source: GoogleEarth 2016

James W. Beever III and Tim Walker
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite 1
Fort Myers, FL 33907

Contact Name and Telephone Number:
Jim Beever
(239-938-1813, ext. 224)
www.swfrpc.org

1

Lee County Climate Change Resiliency Strategy (CCRS)



Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
October 6, 2010

James W. Beever III, Whitney Gray, Jason Utley, David
Hutchinson, Tim Walker, Dan Cobb

1926 Victoria Avenue
Fort Myers FL 33901
(239) 338-2550
www.SWFRPC.org



Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Development of an improved model watershed-scale master wetland mitigation strategy for restoration, protection and public projects for local governments.



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Tim Walker, GIS Analyst, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
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December 31, 2018

State of the Bay 2019



Funded by the City
of Bonita Springs.

Prepared by the Southwest Florida Regional
Planning Council

