

THE LITTLE PINE ISLAND WETLAND RESTORATION AND MITIGATION BANK Lee County, Florida



The Little Pine Island Wetland Restoration and Mitigation Bank is a joint project between the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Mariner Properties Development, Inc. Little Pine Island is a 4700 acre State owned island within the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary and the Matlacha Pass Aquatic Preserve in Lee County, Florida. The Little Pine Island Wetland Restoration and Mitigation Bank will result in a large scale regionally significant wetland ecosystem restoration which will provide state and federal permitting agencies with an environmentally sound solution for mitigating unavoidable impacts to wetland habitats.

When the restoration commenced in 1997, more than half of the 1600 acres of the active restoration area were covered with a thick impenetrable melaleuca forest with the balance being heavily infested, all as a result of prior ditching and draining. To date, exotic removal, hydrologic restoration and maintenance and monitoring have been accomplished on approximately 600 acres at Little Pine

Island. An average of 30 tons of exotic biomass are being removed from each acre. The restoration has been remarkably successful due in part to the positive response by the native seedbank, buried for decades by exotic vegetation. The reestablishment of the native wetland groundcover has provided habitat for important wildlife species that make up the historical food chain at Little Pine Island. Over 100 species of wildlife, including ospreys, otters, hawks, bobcats and nesting bald eagles have been documented on the island.



Dense melaleuca infestation in former herbaceous wetlands has greatly reduced wetland functions including wildlife habitat at Little Pine Island



All exotic vegetation is cut using chain saws and manual labor so as to minimize the impacts to wetland habitat



Temporary roads are underlain by filter cloth so as to reduce impacts to habitat and facilitate road removal

In order to assure the perpetual maintenance and monitoring of Little Pine Island, Mariner Properties has established the Little Pine Island

Preservation Trust Fund. This Fund will grow to over \$1 million which will provide \$60,000 annually for perpetual maintenance and monitoring of the restored ecosystem. In addition, the Mitigation Bank will generate in excess of \$1.5 million in user fees which are being returned directly to the Charlotte Harbor Buffer Preserve for the Department of Environmental Protection's use in acquisition and restoration of additional wetland habitats.

For more information about the Little Pine Island Wetland Restoration and Mitigation Bank, please contact us.

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