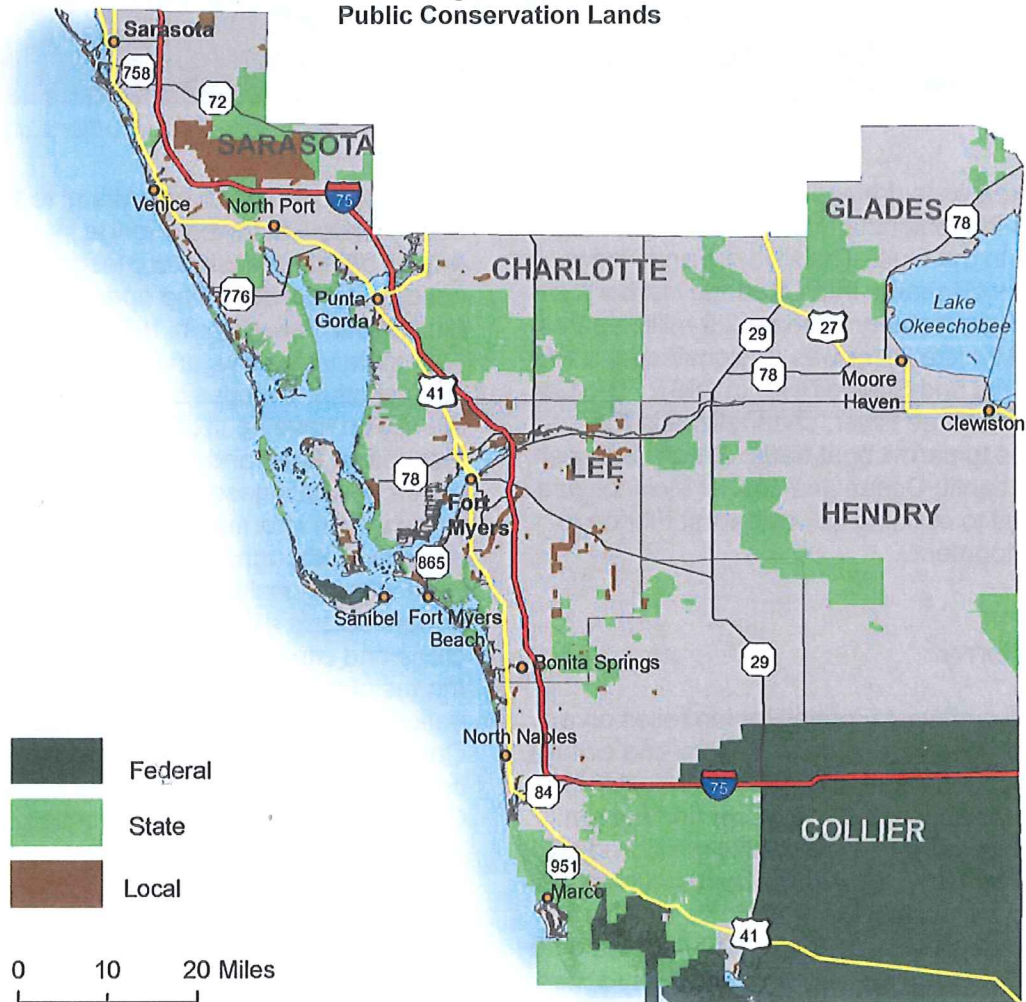


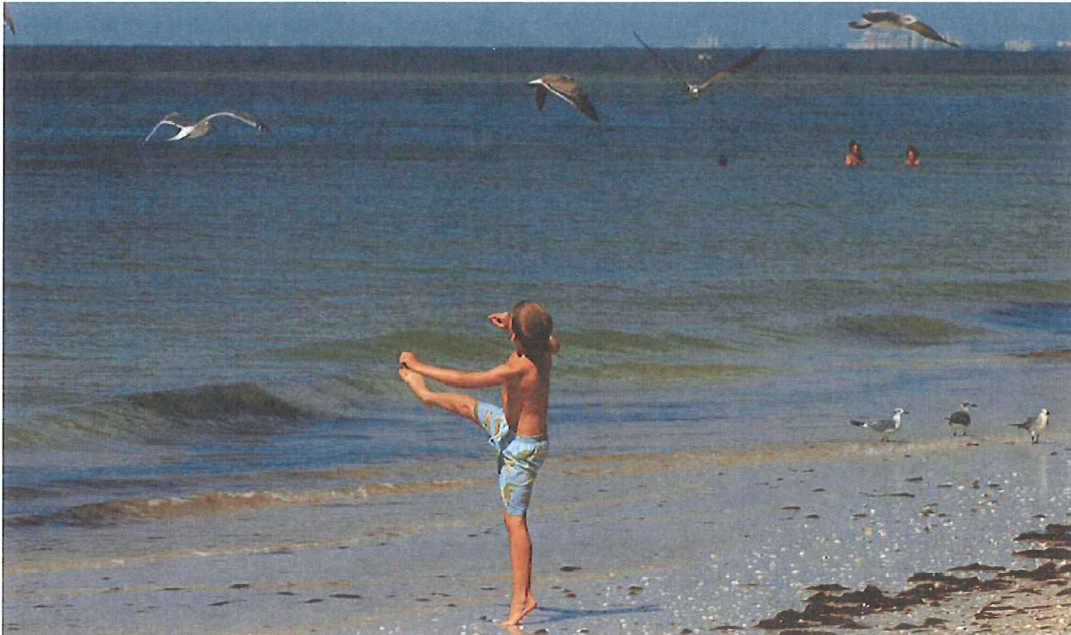
Southwest Florida Region

The Southwest Florida Region covers 7,277 square miles and contains six counties lying between Sarasota Bay, the Ten Thousand Islands and Lake Okeechobee. The coastal counties of Charlotte, Collier, Lee and Sarasota together contain 128 miles of Gulf coastline that offer miles of sandy beach access. The region's estuarine areas are among the most biologically productive in the state. The wildlife of these areas provide outstanding opportunities for non-consumptive and consumptive recreational

activities. The far southern portion of the region's coastline remains virtually undeveloped due to the protected status of the extensive federal and state public lands. The region's vast mangrove ecosystems are some of the last remaining examples of the system that once flourished along south Florida's tidal wetlands. The non-coastal counties of Glades and Hendry are bordered by Lake Okeechobee on the east. These areas are primarily agricultural and rural, but also contain many large, intact natural areas.

Figure 4.9.1
Public Conservation Lands





Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Collier County

The region is drained by several river systems that originate inland and flow southwest to the Gulf. The Myakka and Peace Rivers discharge into Charlotte Harbor forming a vast estuary of some 2.9 million acres. The Myakka River was designated as a Florida Wild and Scenic River in 1985. The Caloosahatchee River, channelized in the 1880s to permit boat traffic directly between the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, was pivotal to opening up southwest Florida to development.

Economy

The Southwest Florida Region relies on a mix of natural resources, history and culture, and a sophisticated hospitality industry to maintain its position as a premier tourism destination. The high quality of life and efficient transportation network that attracts visitors from all over the world also attracts a well-educated work force. The Interstate 75 transportation corridor provides easy access

to Tampa to the north and Miami to the south, while Southwest Florida International Airport offers extensive domestic and international air service. The opening of Florida Gulf Coast University in 1997, the state's 12th state university, and the expansion of several other colleges and universities into the region have spurred the development of technology firms and research parks that attract new business and create new jobs, especially in information technology and bio-science. Although not as widespread as it once was, agriculture continues to be an important source of income in the area. Truck crops and citrus grown on the western fringes of the Everglades supply much of the nation's winter supply of fresh vegetables. Cattle ranching continues to be a major component of the economies of Glades, Charlotte, Lee and Hendry counties.

**Table 4.9.1
Current and Projected Population
Southwest Florida Region**

County	2000	2007	Projections			Percentage Change
			2010	2015	2020	2000-2020
Charlotte	141,627	164,584	169,700	183,300	195,900	38.3
Collier	251,377	333,858	353,900	406,300	455,300	81.1
Glades	10,576	11,055	11,600	12,100	12,600	19.1
Hendry	36,210	39,651	40,800	43,800	46,700	29.0
Lee	440,888	615,741	654,600	756,700	852,000	93.2
Sarasota	325,961	387,461	400,600	436,100	468,800	43.8
Region Totals	1,206,639	1,552,350	1,631,200	1,838,300	2,031,300	68.3

Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2008

Demographics

Total population for the region reached 1.5 million in 2007. Projections estimate that an additional 825,000 people will reside in the region in 2020, a 68 percent increase from 2000. Population densities range from 14

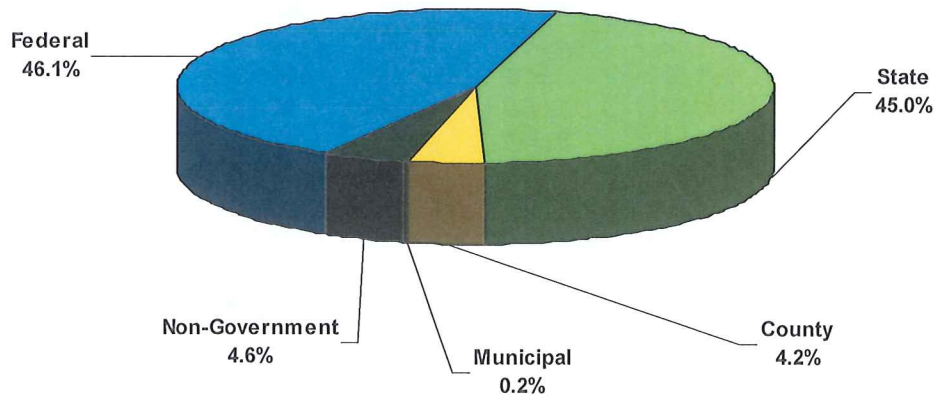
people per square mile in Glades County to 766 people per square mile in Lee County.

As in other parts of Florida, the region's eastern counties are beginning to experience increasing urban development in rural areas. As this trend continues, and as



Myakka Wild and Scenic River, Sarasota County

Figure 4.9.2
Outdoor Recreation Acreage by Category of Provider
Southwest Florida Region



coastal lands become less available for development, population is expected to shift more and more toward these inland counties.

Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities

The region's coastal natural resources and its numerous rivers and lakes provide generous opportunities for outdoor recreation. Much attention by federal, state and local governments has been focused on acquiring and protecting these areas. The region has over 1.7 million acres of land and water available for outdoor recreation use. As shown in Figure 4.9.2, 95 percent of all outdoor recreation acreage is provided by public agencies.

Federally managed lands account for 46 percent of the available recreation acres in the region. Two major national parks—Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park—and five national wildlife ref-

uges provide more than 790,000 acres. These federal lands offer most of the region's public hunting opportunities and all of its inventoried supply of off-highway vehicle trails. They also provide an important share of the region's available supply of hiking and nature trails.

State agencies administer over 770,000 acres at 60 separate areas, representing 45 percent of the regional total. This figure does not include the 73,236-acre Babcock Ranch property which was acquired under the *Florida Forever* program in 2007. Thirteen state parks provide a wide range of activities, from saltwater swimming and camping to visiting the early 20th century utopian settlement at Koreshan. Three state forests and five wildlife management areas provide the majority of the state-supplied public hunting in the region. State agencies are the largest providers of canoe, equestrian and hiking trails in the region. They play a major role as well in providing opportunities for shoreline fishing.

Local park and recreation programs in the Southwest region play a more important role in providing water and beach access opportunities than in most other regions of the state. Cities and counties are the largest providers of saltwater and freshwater beaches, freshwater boat ramps and freshwater and saltwater fishing facilities. They are major providers of recreational trails as well, providing more paved bicycle trails, jogging trails and nature trails than any other category. As in the other regions, local governments are the principal providers of user-oriented facilities.

Within the private sector, there are 404 outdoor recreation sites encompassing 78,494 acres, or four percent of total regional acreage. The commercial sector provides the majority of cabins, RV/trailer campsites and tent campsites. As in many regions, the Southwest region's non-government providers are also the largest suppliers of freshwater and saltwater marinas (a combined total of 6,668 slips) and saltwater boat ramps.

Table 4.9.2 shows outdoor recreation resources and facilities by level of provider. Table 4.9.3 lists major outdoor recreation opportunities provided or managed by federal, state and municipal entities.



Imperial River Boat Ramp, Lee County

Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 2008

Table 4.9.2
Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities by Category of Provider
Southwest Florida Region
2007

RESOURCE/FACILITY	UNITS	Federal	State	County	Municipal	Non-Government	TOTAL
OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS	Areas	19	60	417	220	404	1,120
LAND	Acres	724,705	473,831	69,533	2,508	76,117	1,346,694
WATER	Acres	65,312	304,669	2,187	324	1,887	374,378
ACRES TOTAL	Acres	790,017	778,500	71,722	2,748	78,498	1,721,486
RESOURCE-BASED							
CABINS	Cabins	0	17	0	0	191	208
TENT CAMPSITES	Sites	99	407	60	8	662	1,236
RV CAMPSITES	Sites	149	377	80	37	24,517	25,160
HISTORIC SITES	Sites	12	64	8	10	9	103
COMMEM STRUCTURES	Structures	1	3	3	7	3	17
MUSEUMS	Museums	10	8	11	8	15	52
PICNIC TABLES	Tables	94	562	2,184	791	11,820	15,451
HUNTING AREAS	Acres	525,000	246,385	0	0	0	771,385
BIKE TRAIL PAVED	Miles	71.0	5.0	49.9	29.7	35.0	190.6
BIKE TRAIL UNPAVED	Miles	9.0	89.3	50.2	116	7.5	167.6
CANOE TRAIL	Miles	51.0	58.5	30.9	20.0	51.0	211.4
HIKING TRAIL	Miles	120.5	236.0	74.8	4.8	73.0	509.1
EQUESTRIAN TRAIL	Miles	0.0	60.4	29.0	0.0	6.0	95.4
JOGGING TRAIL	Miles	9.0	0.0	60.9	5.3	7.9	83.1
OHV TRAIL	Miles	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
NATURE TRAIL	Miles	85.5	819	53.4	6.9	24.2	251.9
FRESHWATER BEACH	Miles	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.1	13	2.0
FRESHWATER BOAT RAMPS	Ramps	2	17	40	6	32	97
FRESHWATER BOAT RAMPS	Lanes	3	22	46	7	28	106
FRESHWATER CATWALKS	Catwalks	1	4	10	10	178	203
FRESHWATER CATWALKS	Feet	120	2,345	1,553	2,933	805	7,756
FRESHWATER JETTIES	Feet	0	0	0	1,340	0	1,340
FRESHWATER MARINAS	Marinas	0	0	0	1	19	20
FRESHWATER MARINAS	Slips	0	0	0	20	844	864
FRESHWATER PIERS	Piers	3	1	21	2	5	32
FRESHWATER PIERS	Feet	340	86	822	221	30,320	31,789
SALTWATER BEACH	Miles	16.8	12.7	25.7	6.7	5.4	67.3
SALTWATER BOAT RAMPS	Ramps	1	3	31	8	65	108
SALTWATER BOAT RAMPS	Lanes	1	7	48	16	67	139
SALTWATER CATWALKS	Catwalks	0	7	50	12	29	98
SALTWATER CATWALKS	Feet	0	3,180	15,465	6,534	6,842	32,021
SALTWATER JETTIES	Feet	0	0	100	7,600	50	7,750
SALTWATER MARINAS	Marinas	0	0	2	5	156	163
SALTWATER MARINA SLIPS	Slips	0	34	34	503	5,824	6,395
SALTWATER PIERS	Piers	1	0	28	15	28	72
SALTWATER PIERS	Feet	50	0	4,856	4,849	3,450	13,205
USER-ORIENTED							
BASEBALL FIELDS	Fields	1	0	231	76	6	314
BASKETBALL GOALS	Goals	0	4	267	63	39	373
EQUIPPED PLAY AREAS	Areas	0	7	178	72	39	296
FOOTBALL FIELDS	Fields	0	0	72	20	1	93
GOLF COURSES, 18-HOLE	Courses	0	0	2	4	96	102
GOLF COURSES, 9-HOLE	Courses	0	0	0	1	20	21
GOLF COURSES, EXECUTIVE	Courses	0	0	0	0	23	23
GOLF HOLES TOTAL	Holes	0	0	36	81	2,250	2,367
MULTI-USE COURTS	Courts	0	0	16	6	9	31
MULTI-USE FIELDS	Fields	0	0	57	13	22	92
OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOLS	Pools	0	0	26	11	227	264
RACQUETBALL COURTS	Courts	1	0	44	19	21	85
SHUFFLEBOARD COURTS	Courts	0	3	106	24	443	576
TENNIS COURTS	Courts	0	4	264	87	560	915
VOLLEYBALL COURTS	Courts	0	0	44	5	7	56

Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 2008

**Table 4.9.3
Major Outdoor Recreation Areas
Southwest Florida Region
2007**

Federal Areas

National Estuarine Research Reserves*	<u>Acres</u>	State Parks	<u>Acres</u>
Rookery Bay	110,000	Cayo Costa	2,458
National Parks		Charlotte Harbor	42,475
Big Cypress (Collier County portion)**	575,684	Collier-Seminole	7,272
Everglades (Collier County portion)	39,262	Delnor-Wiggins Pass	166
National Wildlife Refuges		Don Pedro Island	231
Caloosahatchee	40	Estero Bay	10,457
Florida Panther	26,400	Fakahatchee Strand	75,898
J. "Ding" Darling	6,300	Gasparilla Island	127
Matlacha Pass	512	Koreshan	164
Pine Island	584	Lovers Key	1,463
Ten Thousand Islands	31,150	Mound Key	172

State Areas

Aquatic Preserves		Oscar Scherer	1,382
Cape Haze	11,168	Stump Pass Beach	255
Cape Romano-Ten Thousand Islands	50,000	State Wild and Scenic Rivers	<u>Miles</u>
Estero Bay	11,300	Myakka River	34
Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor	149,168	Water Management District Lands	<u>Acres</u>
Lemon Bay	7,667	<i>South Florida WMD</i>	
Matlacha Pass	10,000	Corkscrew Marsh**	25,089
Pine Island Sound	50,000	Nicodemus Slough STA 5*	2,219
Florida Scenic Highways	<u>Miles</u>		5,120
Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway	69	<i>Southwest Florida WMD</i>	
Greenways and Trails		Deer Prairie Creek	10,128
Lake Okeechobee (Glades and Hendry County segment)	46	Wildlife Management Areas, Mitigation Parks and	
State Forests	<u>Acres</u>	Babcok/Webb**	65,770
Myakka**	8,593	Dinner Island Ranch**	21,714
Okaloacoochee **	32,039	Fisheating Creek**	18,272
Picayune Strand**	77,827	Spirit of the Wild**	7,000
		Hickey Creek	768

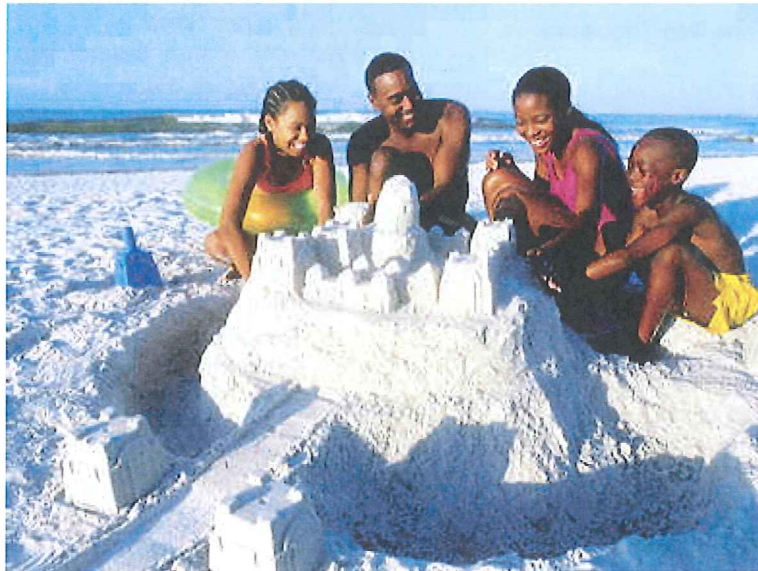
* National estuarine research reserves are designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas.

**Hunting managed by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a wildlife management area.

Table 4.9.3
Major Outdoor Recreation Areas
Southwest Florida Region
2007
(continued)

Reported County and Municipal Areas

	<u>County</u>		<u>Municipal</u>	
	Areas	Acres	Areas	Acres
Charlotte	78	4,415	11	102
Collier	54	3,144	46	57
Glades	12	502	1	2
Hendry	13	716	31	342
Lee	136	10,683	70	1,435
Sarasota	161	52,263	61	850



Ft. Myers Beach, Lee County