

APPENDIX **F**

Environmental Scan



Collier to Polk Regional Trail Environmental Scan

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Prepared for FDOT District One
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The Collier to Polk Regional Trail Master Plan was developed over a ten-month period from October 2023 to July 2024. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One prepared the Master Plan to define the initial vision for the Collier to Polk Regional Trail, a connected multi-use trail through Collier, Hendry, Glades, Highlands, Hardee, and Polk counties. For more information, please refer to the full Master Plan.

Environmental Scan

This Environmental Scan was developed as a supplement to the Master Plan to document high-level environmental considerations including wetlands, protected species, contamination, and regulatory agency coordination for each alternative within each county. The environmental considerations were assigned **low**, **moderate**, or **high** level using the system described below. Special considerations were given for conservation lands or important areas such as the Peace River. For a summary of the level of overall environmental considerations per alternative per county, see Table 1. For a further breakdown for the level of environmental considerations, see Table 2 at the end of this document.

To evaluate wetlands, several factors were considered including the size, quality, and location of wetlands. Wetland geographic information systems (GIS) data from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use, Cover, and Forms Classification System (FLUCFCS) was used as the base dataset for calculating potential impacts per mile for the Preliminary Routing Alternatives. A 30' wide corridor was used to evaluate acres of wetlands per mile of trail. The wetland acres per mile along with special considerations, such as wetlands under conservation lands or easement, within conservation lands, or wetlands along the Peace River, were used to assign a low, moderate, or high consideration for wetlands.

Similar to wetlands, several factors were considered for protected species. The main priority for consideration of protected species within each alternative was the volume of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) consultation area (CA) overlap. Other factors including habitat quality and location were also considered. A low consideration was assigned to alternatives with a combination of low volume of CA overlap, a location primarily within roadway rights-of-ways (ROW), and those not associated with conservation lands or easements. A moderate consideration was assigned to alternatives with a moderate volume of CA overlap and a combination of either a location primarily within roadway ROWs, and some association with conservation lands or easements, or a location primarily outside of roadway ROWs, and no association with conservation lands or easements. A high consideration was assigned to alternatives with a combination of high volume of CA overlap, a location primarily outside of roadway ROWs, and some association with conservation lands or easements.

To evaluate contamination, data from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) including documented underground storage tanks, solid waste facilities, groundwater contamination sites, remediation sites, etc. were overlaid with

the trail alternatives, and contaminated site densities were compared throughout the corridor. For alternatives where development was low and the density of contaminated sites was low, a low consideration was assigned for contamination. For alternatives where development or density of contaminated sites were some combination of low and moderate or both moderate, a moderate consideration was assigned for contamination. For alternatives where development was high and density of contaminated sites was high, a high consideration was assigned for contamination.

Agency coordination was generally considered low, moderate, or high based on the considerations described above along with the interface of each alternative with conservation lands or easements. Alternatives for which the above considerations were generally low or moderate and do not interface conservation lands or easements, a low consideration was assigned for agency coordination. Alternatives for which the above considerations were generally moderate or high and may or may not interface with conservation lands or easements, a moderate consideration was assigned for agency coordination. Alternatives for which the above considerations were moderate or high and interface with conservation lands or easements, a high consideration was assigned for agency coordination. It is understood that, during the project stakeholder engagement, some managing agencies were unsure of the implications that this trail may have on their respective conservation lands or easements and were therefore given special consideration for agency coordination.

The overall environmental consideration per alternative per county was a culmination of the considerations described above. Values of 1, 2, and 3 were assigned for low, moderate, and high considerations, respectively. An alternative with a total value of 5 or 6 was considered low. An alternative with a total value of 7 or 8 was considered moderate. An alternative with a total value of 9 or 10 was considered high. See Figure 1 for an overall view of the Alternatives discussed below.

The methodology for this Environmental Scan was used to support development of the Environmental Considerations factor in the Collier to Polk Regional Trail Preliminary Work Plan (Table 1 in Chapter 7 in the Master Plan).

Figure 1. Collier to Polk Regional Trail – Preliminary Routing Alternatives Overview

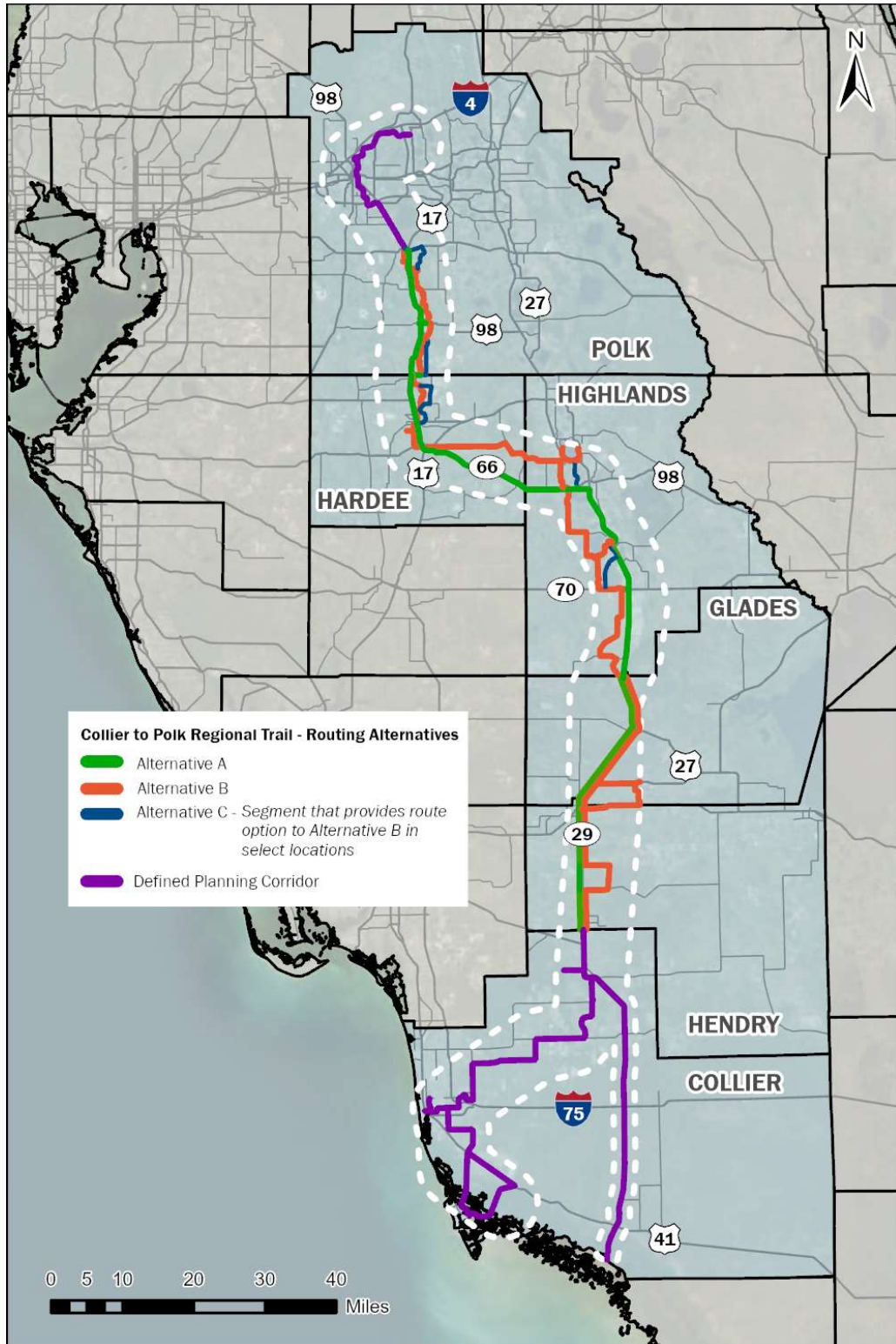


Table 1 – Collier to Polk Regional Trail Environmental Considerations Summary

Preliminary Routing Alternative	County	Environmental Consideration
Defined Planning Corridor	Collier County	N/A*
State Road 29	Collier County	High
Alternative A	Hendry County	Low
Alternative B	Hendry County	Moderate
Alternative A	Glades County	Low
Alternative B	Glades County	Moderate
Alternative A	Highlands County	Moderate
Alternative B	Highlands County	High
Alternative C	Highlands County	High
Alternative A	Hardee County	Low
Alternative B	Hardee County	High
Alternative C	Hardee County	High
Alternative A	Polk County	Low
Alternative B	Polk County	High
Alternative C	Polk County	High
Defined Planning Corridor	Polk County	Moderate
*See Appendix J – Paradise Coast Trail Pathway Report and Feasibility Study and Appendix K – Marco Island Loop Trail Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design		

Collier County

The Collier County segment of trail is primarily defined by ongoing and current studies. No additional alternatives were evaluated within Collier County. This segment of the trail encompasses approximately 137 miles primarily along existing roadway such as State Road (SR) 29 or United States (US) Highway (Hwy) 41. The discussion below will focus on the section of trail along SR 29 as it has not been previously studied in detail. For detailed analysis on the segment of trail within Collier County, which connects US Hwy 41 to the City of Naples and the City of Naples to Immokalee, see Appendix J. For detailed analysis on the segment of trail within Collier County, which includes the Marco Island loop along North Collier Boulevard, North Barfield Drive, and San Marco Road, see Appendix K.

State Road 29 Segment

Special considerations were evaluated for this segment due to its proximity to Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

There are approximately 1.9 wetland acres per mile within the SR 29 segment of trail. A **high** consideration for wetlands was assigned for this segment of trail due to the amount of wetland acres per mile in conjunction with the proximity to Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge. This segment is also within the USFWS CAs for the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*), crested caracara (*Caracara plancus audubonii*), Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*), Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*), Florida grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*), Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*), Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picooides borealis*), and West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*). Additionally, this segment crosses through Florida bonneted bat USFWS proposed critical habitat. Therefore, a **high** consideration was assigned to the SR 29 segment for protected species.

The majority of the adjacent land use along SR 29 within Collier County is agricultural lands and native habitats. When approaching Everglades City and Immokalee, development increases and adjacent lands include commercial, industrial, and low, medium, and high-density residential. The density of contaminated sites along SR 29 are low throughout the majority of the corridor. Although there is a moderately high volume of documented contaminated sites within the municipalities, a **low** consideration was assigned for the SR 29 segment for contamination as a whole.

Due to the high consideration for protected species and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, National Park Service, or Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for the SR 29 segment.

Hendry County

Two (2) alternatives were evaluated for Hendry County. Alternative A follows SR 29 throughout the County and totals approximately 18 miles. Alternative B follows SR 29 for approximately five (5) miles before departing SR 29 at Keri Road south of Spirit-of-the-Wild Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Alternative B then heads north at the separation between Spirit-of-the-Wild WMA and the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest before heading west along Sears Road to reconnect with SR 29. Alternative B continues along SR 29 for approximately eight (8) miles where it departs once again at SR 80 and heads east along the Hendry/Glades County line toward Dalton Lane. Alternative B totals approximately 33 miles.

Alternative A

No special considerations were evaluated for Alternative A within Hendry County as it is within SR 29 ROW and does not interface with conservation lands or easements.

There is approximately 0.5 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative A corridor. A **moderate** consideration for wetlands was assigned for Alternative A. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida panther, Florida scrub-jay, and West Indian manatee (Caloosahatchee Canal crossing). Due to the general lack of preferable habitat within SR 29, a **low** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use along Alternative A is agricultural lands or native habitats with exception to lands within the City of LaBelle. The density of contaminated sites along the majority of Alternative A are low. However, when considering the moderately high volume of documented contaminated sites within the City of LaBelle, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to Alternative A's low consideration for protected species, location within SR 29 ROW, and lack of conservation lands or easement interface, a **low** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **low** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative A within Hendry County.

Alternative B

Special considerations were evaluated for this segment due to its proximity to Spirit-of-the-Wild WMA and Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest.

There is approximately 0.4 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative B corridor. Although the wetland acres per mile is low, this alternative interfaces Spirit-of-the-Wild WMA and Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest. Therefore, a **moderate** consideration for wetlands was assigned for Alternative B. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida panther, and Florida scrub-jay. Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements which typically provide higher quality habitat, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use along Alternative B is agricultural lands or native habitats with exception to lands within the City of LaBelle. The density of contaminated sites along the majority of Alternative B are low. However, when considering the moderately high volume of documented contaminated sites within the City of LaBelle, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the moderate consideration for protected species and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), or SFWMD, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **moderate** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative B within Hendry County.

Glades County

Two (2) alternatives were evaluated for Glades County. Alternative A follows SR 29 for approximately 13 miles from the southern County boundary until the intersection of SR 29 and US Hwy 27. Alternative A then follows US Hwy 27 for approximately eight (8) miles to the northern County boundary. Alternative A totals approximately 20 miles. Alternative B continues from the Alternative B in Hendry County at Dalton Lane where it heads north towards Ortona Lock Road while crossing the Caloosahatchee Canal. Alternative B then heads west on SR 78 before connecting back with SR 29. Alternative B follows the same route as Alternative A until departing US Hwy 27 at Detjen's Dairy Road near the northern County boundary. Alternative B totals approximately 28 miles.

Alternative A

No special considerations were evaluated for Alternative A within Glades County as it is within SR 29 and US Hwy 27 ROW and does not interface with conservation lands or easements.

There is approximately 0.2 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative A corridor. A **low** consideration was assigned for wetlands due to the low wetland acres per mile and route within ROWs. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the crested caracara, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida panther, sand skink (*Neoseps reynoldsi*), Florida scrub-jay, Lake Wales Ridge plants, and red-cockaded woodpecker. Although there is generally a lack of preferable habitat for protected species within ROWs, there is a high volume of USFWS CAs. A **moderate** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use along Alternative A is agricultural lands or native habitats. The density of contaminated sites throughout the Alternative A corridor are low. A **low** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the low or moderate consideration for wetlands and protected species, location within ROW, and lack of conservation lands or easement interface, a **low** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **low** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative A within Glades County.

Alternative B

No special considerations were evaluated for Alternative B within Glades County as it is primarily within SR 78, SR 29, and US Hwy 27 ROW and does not interface with conservation lands or easements.

There is approximately 0.3 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative B corridor. Although the wetland acres per mile is considered low, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for the wetland due to the crossing of the Caloosahatchee Canal. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the crested caracara, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida panther, sand skink, Florida scrub-jay, Lake Wales Ridge plants, red-cockaded woodpecker, and West Indian manatee (Caloosahatchee Canal crossing). Although there is generally a lack of preferable

habitat for protected species within ROWs, there is a high volume of USFWS CAs. Therefore, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use along Alternative B is primarily agricultural lands or native habitats. Therefore, it would be anticipated that there is a lack of documented contamination sites along this segment. Alternative B will likely have a **low** involvement with contamination.

Due to the crossing of the Caloosahatchee Canal, high volume of USFWS CAs, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and USFWS, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **moderate** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative B within Glades County.

Highlands County

Three (3) alternatives were evaluated for Highlands County. Alternative A continues from Glades County Alternative A at the county boundary and follows US Hwy 27 for approximately 17 miles until departing just south of the Town of Lake Placid. Alternative A then rejoins US Hwy 27 at Heartland Boulevard for another approximately nine (9) miles. Finally, Alternative A heads west along Skipper Road and SR 66 until entering Hardee County. Alternative A totals approximately 39 miles. Alternative B continues from Alternative B in Glades County at the County boundary along Detjens Dairy Road before connecting with County Road (CR) 731. Alternative B then heads north along Old SR 8 for approximately 11 miles where it then heads west along SR 70. At Placid Lakes Boulevard, Alternative B heads north and connects east to Alternative A, offering another route west of Lake June-in-Winter. The route west then connects with Henscratch Road and heads north to SR 66. Alternative B continues north towards Lake Jackson and the City of Sebring before heading west along Hammock Road. Alternative B totals approximately 60 miles. Alternative C provides route options to Alternative B in select locations, such as at Placid View Drive following Lake Placid towards the Town of Lake Placid. Additionally, at SR 66, Alternative C follows Sparta Road north towards US Hwy 27. Alternative C totals approximately 62 miles.

Alternative A

Special considerations were evaluated for Alternative A within Highlands County due to the segment length and proximity to Fisheating Creek/Smoak Groves, Highlands Hammock State Park, and location on the Lake Wales Ridge.

There is approximately 0.3 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative A corridor. Therefore, a **low** consideration was assigned for Alternative A. This segment is within the USFWS CAs for the blue-tailed mole skink (*Eumeces egregius lividus*), crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida panther (southern extent of County), sand skink, Florida scrub-jay, Lake Wales Ridge plants, red-cockaded woodpecker (southern extent of County). Although there is generally a lack of preferable habitat for protected species within

ROWs, there is a high volume of USFWS Cas, and this alternative is near preferable habitats. Therefore, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use varies along Alternative A; however, it is primarily agricultural lands and native habitats. When approaching the Town of Lake Placid, development increases and adjacent lands include commercial, industrial, or medium and high-density residential. There is a moderately high volume of documented contaminated sites along US Hwy 27 and within the Town of Lake Placid. Therefore, a **high** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, moderate consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, or FDEP, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **moderate** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative A within Highlands County.

Alternative B

Special considerations were evaluated for Alternative B within Highlands County due to the number of conservation lands or easements either adjacent or in proximity to the alternative. Conservation lands or easements interfacing this alternative include Platt Branch Wildlife and Environmental Area, Blue Head Ranch Conservation Easement, Hendrie Ranch Agricultural and Conservation Easement, Archbold Biological Station, Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area, Lake June-in-Winter Scrub Preserve State Park, and Highlands Hammock State Park.

There is approximately 0.1 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative B corridor. A **low** consideration was assigned for wetlands. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the blue-tailed mole skink, crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, sand skink, Florida scrub-jay, Lake Wales Ridge plants, and red-cockaded woodpecker (southern extent of County). Due to the high volume of USFWS CAs and high volume of conservation lands or easements, a **high** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The majority of the adjacent land use of Alternative B is agricultural lands, native habitats, or low-density rural residential lands. When heading north of SR 66, development increases and adjacent lands change to primarily low or medium-residential. When entering the City of Sebring, the majority of adjacent land use is commercial, industrial, or medium and high-density residential. Due to the level of development throughout the corridor, the density of contaminated sites is moderately high. A **moderate** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, high consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, or FDEP, a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative B within Highlands County.

Alternative C

As previously mentioned, Alternative C provides route options to Alternative B in select locations such as at Placid View Drive following Lake Placid towards the Town of Lake Placid. The special considerations, wetland consideration, protected species consideration, contamination consideration, and agency coordination consideration discussed in Alternative B are applicable to Alternative C.

There is approximately 0.2 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative C corridor. For Alternative C, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for wetlands, a **high** consideration was assigned for protected species, and a **moderate** consideration was assigned for contamination. Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, high consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, or FDEP, a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative C within Highlands County.

Hardee County

Three (3) alternatives were evaluated for Hardee County. Alternative A continues west along SR 66 from Alternative A in Highlands County for approximately 16 miles into the Town of Zolfo Springs. Alternative A then heads north along US Hwy 17 for approximately 11 miles to the northern county boundary. Alternative A totals approximately 27 miles. Alternative B continues from Alternative B in Highlands County along Hammock Road before connecting to Parnell Road. Alternative B then heads west along Steve Roberts Special for approximately 13 miles where it then heads north along Florida Avenue. Alternative B then passes through the City of Wauchula before heading north on Heard Bridge Road for approximately 2 miles. At the Heard Bridge Road crossing of the Peace River, Alternative B departs the roadway and enters the Peace River until the crossing of Lake Branch Road. Alternative B follows Lake Branch Road through the City of Bowling Green. Alternative B totals approximately 30 miles. Alternative C provides route options to Alternative B in select locations, such as leaving the City of Wauchula and east of the Peace River along CR 664A. Alternative C totals approximately 33 miles.

Alternative A

No special considerations were evaluated for Alternative A within Hardee County, as it is within SR 66 and US Hwy 17 ROW and does not interface with conservation lands or easements.

There is approximately 0.3 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative A corridor. A **low** consideration was assigned for wetlands. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the crested caracara, Everglade snail kite (northern extent of County), Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, sand skink (eastern extent of County), Florida scrub-jay, and Lake Wales Ridge plants (eastern extent of County). Due to the general lack of preferable habitat within roadway ROWs and low volume of USFWS CA overlap, a **low** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use varies along Alternative A; however, it is primarily agricultural lands, native habitats, and low-density residential. When approaching the Town of Zolfo Springs, City of Wauchula, and City of Bowling Green, development increases and adjacent lands include commercial, industrial, or medium-density residential. Outside of the municipalities, the density of documented contaminated sites is moderate. However, when considering the high volume of contaminated sites within the three (3) municipalities, a **high** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the low consideration for protected species, location within SR 66 and US Hwy 17 ROW, and lack of conservation lands or easement interface, a **low** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **low** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative A within Hardee County.

Alternative B

Special considerations were evaluated for Alternative B within Hardee County due to the alignment within the Peace River and proximity to South Fort Meade Hardee County Conservation Easement and Paynes Creek Historic State Park.

There is approximately 1.0 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative B corridor. Due to the location of Alternative B along the Peace River and high wetland acres per mile, a **high** consideration was assigned for wetlands. This segment is within the USFWS CAs for the crested caracara, Everglade snail kite (northern extent of County), Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, sand skink (eastern extent of County), Florida scrub-jay, and Lake Wales Ridge plants (eastern extent of County). Due to the location of Alternative B along the Peace River and interface with conservation lands or easements, high quality habitat is available within the corridor. A **high** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The majority of the adjacent land use of Alternative B along Steve Roberts Special is agricultural lands or low-density rural residential lands. Along the Peace River, Alternative B is primarily adjacent to river bottomlands and floodplain wetlands. When approaching the Town of Zolfo Springs, City of Wauchula, and City of Bowling Green, development increases and adjacent lands include commercial, industrial, or medium-density residential. Due to the location within the Peace River, Alternative B avoids the high density of documented contaminated sites. Therefore, a **low** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, location along the Peace River, high consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, FDEP, SWFWMD, and USACE, a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative B within Hardee County.

Alternative C

As previously mentioned, Alternative C provides route options to Alternative B in select locations, such as leaving the City of Wauchula and east of the Peace River along CR 664A. Although the location within the Peace River differs between

Alternative B and Alternative C, the special considerations, wetland consideration, protected species consideration, contamination consideration, and agency coordination consideration discussed in Alternative B are applicable to Alternative C.

There is approximately 0.7 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative C corridor. For Alternative C, a **high** consideration was assigned for wetlands, a **high** consideration was assigned for protected species, and a **low** consideration was assigned for contamination. Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, location along the Peace River, high consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, FDEP, SWFWMD, and USACE, a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative C within Hardee County.

Polk County

Within Polk County, three (3) alternatives were evaluated which would connect from Hardee County north to the City of Bartow. North of Bartow, the Polk County segment of trail is defined by ongoing and current studies. No additional alternatives were evaluated within Polk County north of Bartow. The following discussion will focus on the segment of trail south of Bartow. Alternative A continues from Alternative A in Hardee County along US Hwy 17 throughout the County. Alternative A totals approximately 20 miles. Alternative B departs County Line Road at the southern county boundary and follows the Peace River Mount Pisgah Road. At Mount Pisgah Road, Alternative B continues north along the eastern boundary of forested floodplain wetland associated with the Peace River until it connects back at US Hwy 98. At US Hwy 98 Alternative B crosses the Peace River and then departs again north along the western boundary of forested floodplain wetland associated with the Peace River. Alternative B then enters the City of Bartow along Kissengen Road. Alternative B totals approximately 28 miles. Alternative C provides route options to Alternative B in select locations, such as at the southern county boundary where it avoids the Peace River until the confluence with Bowlegs Creek. Alternative C also provides another option which would continue along the Peace River north until SR 60. Alternative C would then head west along SR 60 into the City of Bartow. Alternative C totals approximately 27 miles.

Alternative A

No special considerations were evaluated for Alternative A within Polk County as it is within US Hwy 17 ROW and does not interface with conservation lands or easements.

There is approximately 0.1 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative A corridor. The lack of wetlands is primarily due to the reclamation of mining lands. A **low** consideration was assigned for wetlands. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the blue-tailed mole skink, crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, sand skink, and Florida scrub-jay. Due to the general lack of preferable habitat within roadway ROWs and low volume of USFWS CA overlap, a **low** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The adjacent land use varies along Alternative A; however, it is primarily reclaimed mine lands outside of municipalities. When approaching the City of Fort Meade and City of Bartow, development increases and adjacent lands include commercial, industrial, or low- to high-density residential. Due to the surrounding land use as active and reclaimed mining lands and moderate volume of contaminated sites within the two (2) municipalities, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the low consideration for wetlands and protected species, location within ROW, and lack of conservation lands or easement interface, a **low** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **low** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative A within Polk County.

Alternative B

Special considerations were evaluated for Alternative B within Polk County due to the alignment within the Peace River and the interface with conservation lands or easements such as South Peace River, Bowlegs Creek, Peace River Hammock, Homeland, Peace River Park, and Clear Springs.

There is approximately 1.2 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative B corridor. Due to the location of Alternative B along the Peace River and high wetland acres per mile, a **high** consideration was assigned for wetlands. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the blue-tailed mole skink, crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, sand skink, and Florida scrub-jay. Due to the location of Alternative B along the Peace River and interface with conservation lands or easements, high quality habitat is available within the corridor. A **high** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The majority of the adjacent land use of Alternative B consists of the Peace River floodplain bottomlands and associated wetlands along with reclaimed mining lands. When approaching the City of Bartow, development increases and adjacent lands include commercial, industrial, or low- to high-density residential. Outside of the City of Bartow, the density of documented contamination sites is low. Therefore, a **low** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, location along the Peace River, high consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, FDEP, SWFWMD, and USACE, a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative B within Polk County.

Alternative C

As previously mentioned, Alternative C provides route options to Alternative B in select locations such as at the southern County boundary where it avoids the Peace River until the confluence with Bowlegs Creek. The special considerations discussed in Alternative B are applicable to Alternative C, with exception to the interface with South Peace River conservation lands or easement.

There is approximately 0.5 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative C corridor. Although the wetland acres per mile are moderately low, a **high** consideration was assigned for wetlands due to the location along the Peace River. A **high** consideration was assigned for protected species and a **low** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Due to the proximity to conservation lands or easements, location along the Peace River, high consideration for protected species, and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as USFWS, FWC, FDEP, SWFWMD, and USACE, a **high** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **high** overall environmental consideration was assigned for Alternative C within Polk County.

Defined Planning Corridor

As previously mentioned, no additional alternatives were evaluated north of Bartow within Polk County. This segment of trail is defined by ongoing and current studies. Special considerations were evaluated for this segment due to the interface with Tenoroc Public Use Area.

There is approximately 0.2 wetland acres per mile within the Alternative C corridor. A **low** consideration was assigned for wetlands. This segment is within the USFWS CA for the blue-tailed mole skink, crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, sand skink, and Florida scrub-jay. Due to the high volume of development and limited preferable habitat for protected species, a **low** consideration was assigned for protected species.

The majority of the adjacent land use in this segment is commercial, industrial, or low- to high-density residential. Due to the relatively high density of documented contaminated sites within the City of Lakeland and the surrounding area, a **high** consideration was assigned for contamination.

Considering the interface with Tenoroc Public Use Area and coordination requirements with regulatory agencies such as FWC, a **moderate** consideration was assigned for agency coordination. A **moderate** overall environmental consideration was assigned for the defined planning corridor within Polk County.

Table 2 – Collier to Polk Regional Trail Environmental Considerations

Environmental Considerations						
Preliminary Routing Alternative	County	Wetlands	Protected Species	Contamination	Agency Coordination	Overall
Defined Planning Corridor	Collier County	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A*
State Road 29	Collier County	High	High	Low	High	High
Alternative A	Hendry County	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low	Low
Alternative B	Hendry County	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Alternative A	Glades County	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
Alternative B	Glades County	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Alternative A	Highlands County	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Alternative B	Highlands County	Low	High	Moderate	High	High
Alternative C	Highlands County	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	High
Alternative A	Hardee County	Low	Low	High	Low	Low
Alternative B	Hardee County	High	High	Low	High	High
Alternative C	Hardee County	High	High	Low	High	High
Alternative A	Polk County	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	Low
Alternative B	Polk County	High	High	Low	High	High
Alternative C	Polk County	High	High	Low	High	High
Defined Planning Corridor	Polk County	Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate

**See Appendix J – Paradise Coast Trail Pathway Report and Feasibility Study and Appendix K – Marco Island Loop Trail Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design*