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**A Brief History of
Agriculture Development
in Collier County**

March 22, 2018

The Agricultural Industry in Collier County, Florida

- Cattle, Citrus, & Vegetables generated about \$246.9 million of gross sales in 2015.
- The total direct & indirect economic impact was about \$435.5 million in 2014.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COUNTY LAND AREA - ACRES



COUNTY	TOTAL AREA	WATER AREA	LAND AREA	AG LAND AREA	AG LAND PERCENT
CHARLOTTE	549,120	113,920	435,200	217,222	49.91%
COLLIER	1,475,200	196,480	1,278,720	188,202	14.72%
GLADES	631,680	115,840	515,840	442,750	85.83%
HENDRY	761,600	23,680	737,920	541,229	73.35%
LEE	775,680	273,280	502,400	87,125	17.34%
TOTALS	4,193,280	723,200	3,470,080	1,476,528	42.55%

The Major Agricultural Commodities in Collier County, Florida

- Beef Cattle – 11,600 head of cattle
- Pasture – 73,350 acres.
- Citrus – 29,310 acres
- Vegetables – 13,714 acres (with double cropping there is about 25,000 acres of vegetables produced in Collier County)

Major Commodities utilize about 116,374 acres of land (does not include wetlands within agricultural operations, nursery, timber, sod & other agricultural land uses).

HOW COLLIER COUNTY CAME TO BE

- Monroe County was created July 3, 1823 from St. Johns County.
- Lee County was created out of Monroe County May 13, 1887 and included present day Hendry and Collier Counties.
- Collier County (May 8, 1923) and Hendry County (May 11, 1923) were created out of Lee County.

MAP OF LEE COUNTY and Adjoining Territory in FLORIDA

Railroads ——— Steam Lines ———
 Hard Surface Roads ———
 Roads Graded ——— Unimproved Roads ———
 Canals ———

Scale of Miles

THE MATTHEWS-NORTHROP WORKS, BUFFALO, N.Y.

COLLIER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

Cattle is the First Major Agricultural Industry in Southwest Florida



CATTLEMEN NOTICE SW FLORIDA AREA

- Cattlemen were in the area before 1840. In 1840 about 30,000 cattle were shipped to Cuba from Punta Rassa.
- During the Civil War, the area supplied about 50,000 head of cattle to the Confederate Army.

Pre – 1900's & Early 1900's Florida was an Open Range State

- There was no law requiring cattle to be fenced.
- Cattle owners jointly grazed the open range which consisted of native pine & palmetto & swamp areas.
- Brands & Ear Marks would identify the ownership of the cattle at roundup time.

LEE COUNTY BRAND REGISTRATION

NOV. 9, 1911 – MAY 27, 1912

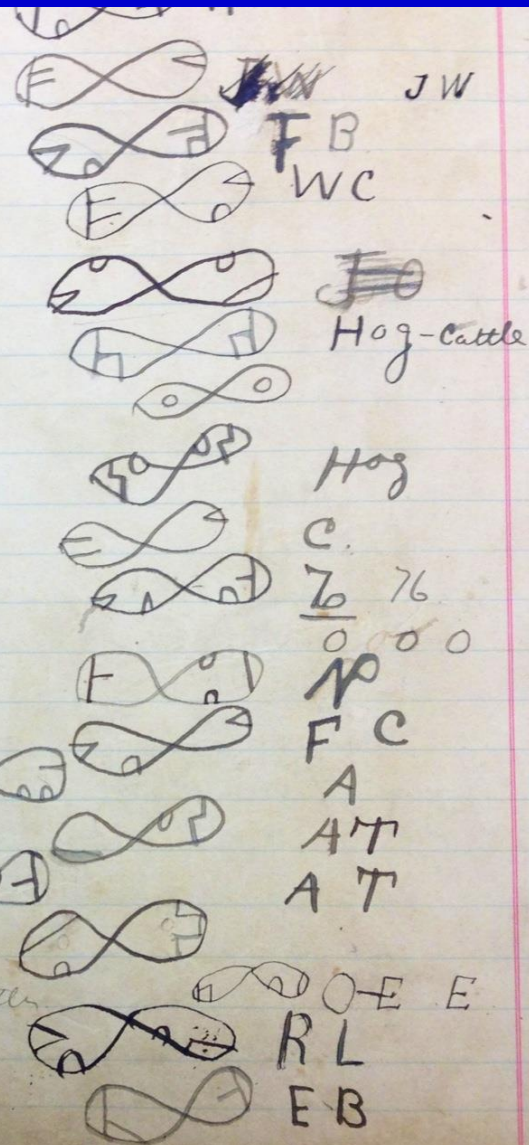
Nov 9-1911 J. W. Christian
 Nov 9-1911 Frank Brown
 Dec 14-1911 Walter Christian

Dec. 29-1911 J. I. Anders Brand JO
 .. 30-1911 Clarence Dodson
 Jan 3-1912 George Baker

Jan 9-1912 Lurey Chaney
 Jan 20-1912 H. C. Curry
 Jan 23-1912 Marlin Hilliard
 Marlin Hilliard
 Feb 20-1912 J. W. Corbitt

Apr 19-1912 Frank Christian
 .. 25-1912 A E Thomas
 .. 25-1912 A B Townsend
 .. 25-1912 A B Townsend
 .. 30-1912 Jim Carson

May 16-1912 O. H. Edwards
 May 16-1912 R. L. Murphay
 May 27-1912 Edmund Brown



Early 1900's Texas Fever Tick Problem

- The Texas Fever Tick was introduced to Florida before 1900 and was a severe pest by 1906.
- In 1923 the State & Federal Government implemented a *mandatory* cattle dipping program.
- The cattle had to be dipped every 14 days.
- The Texas Fever Tick was finally eradicated in 1946.

JEROME DIPPING VAT



JEROME DIPPING VAT



Screwworms

A Problem of the 1930's, '40's & '50's

- Screwworm infected cattle were brought to Georgia from the drought stricken SW USA in 1933 and spread southward.
- The flies laid eggs on the umbilical cord of a new born calf or an open wound and the worms from the hatched eggs would eat the live flesh of the calf or cow.
- If the animal wasn't treated with some pesticide it would often die.



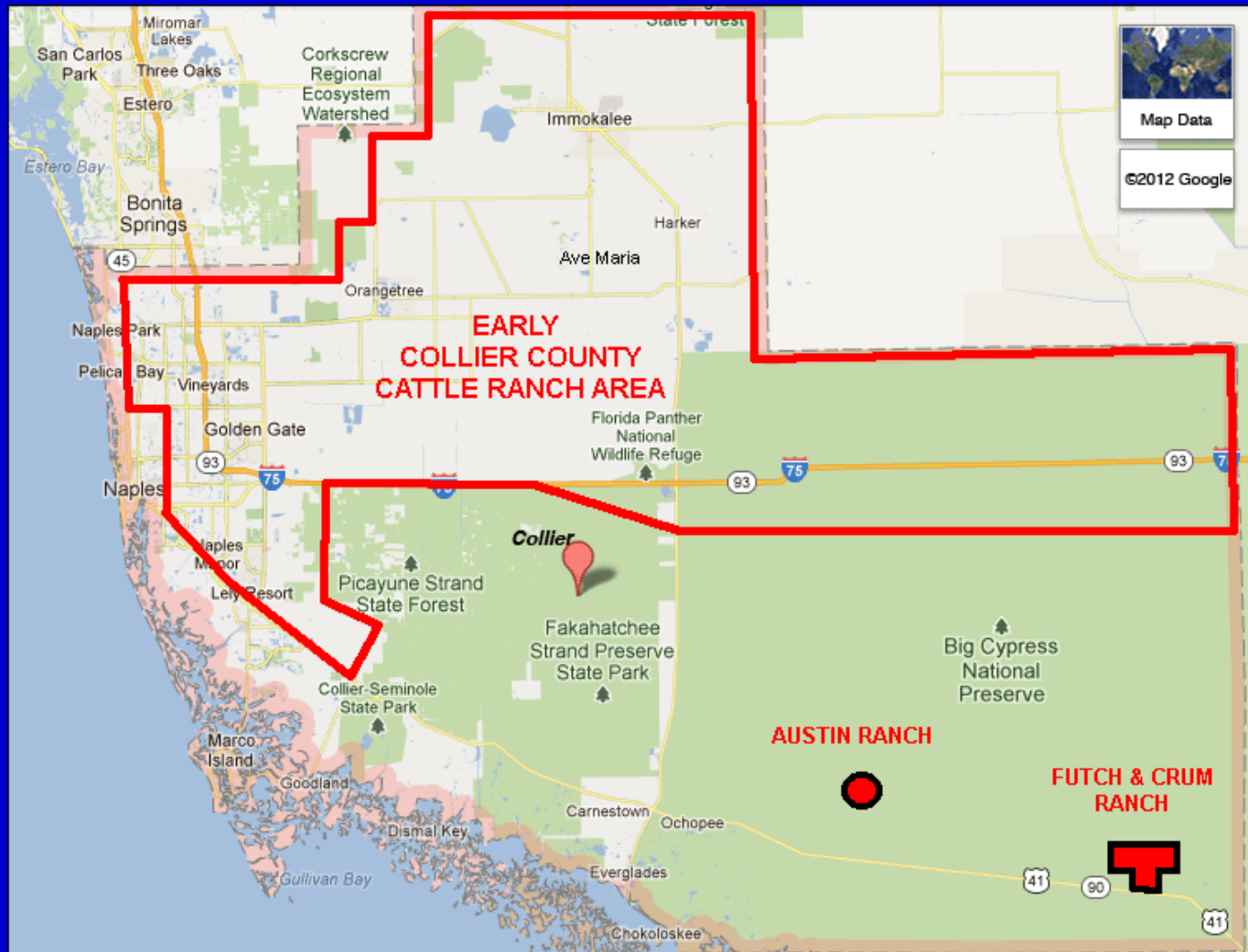
**Brahman calf with screwworms in shoulder.
Most infections were in the naval of a new calf.**

Screwworms

A Problem of the 1930's, '40's & '50's

- Research showed the female screwworm mated once, laid her eggs and then died.
- In 1951-52, the USDA conducted a test release of sterile male flies on Sanibel Island and again in May, 1957, southeast of Orlando. The tests were successful.
- In the fall of 1957 a release of 200 to 1,000 sterile flies per section began.
- The screwworm was declared eradicated in November, 1959.

Collier County Cattle Ranches Area Map 1923 - 1996



Cattle Industry

Major Events 1948 - 1990

- Cattle prices reach \$0.40/pound in late 1940's and Cattlemen buy land and develop improve pastures following being farmed for vegetables.
- In 1949 Florida passes "No Fence Law."
- Major freeze & rain in 1951 and winter of 1957-58 kills hundreds of cattle.
- In 1952 Cattle prices crash to \$0.10/pound.
- In 1973 feeder calves reach record high prices - \$0.80/pound.
- 1975 - prices crash to below \$0.15 per pound.

Late 1970's Until Today Cattle Industry Declines

- Several freezes between 1977 & 1989 cause expansion of citrus industry.
- Vegetable Industry also expands.
- Almost all of the citrus and vegetable acreage increase came from improved cattle pastures.
- Today there are only about 11,600 head of cattle in Collier County compared with over 40,000 head in 1975.

The Timber Industry

1924 - 1956



The Collier County Timber Industry 1928 - 1956

- The timber industry was an important but short lived industry lasting only about 28 years.
- The original native pine and cypress timber were harvested by several large companies, however, once it was harvested, the industry faded away.
- However, one timber company created the community of Copeland in Collier County.

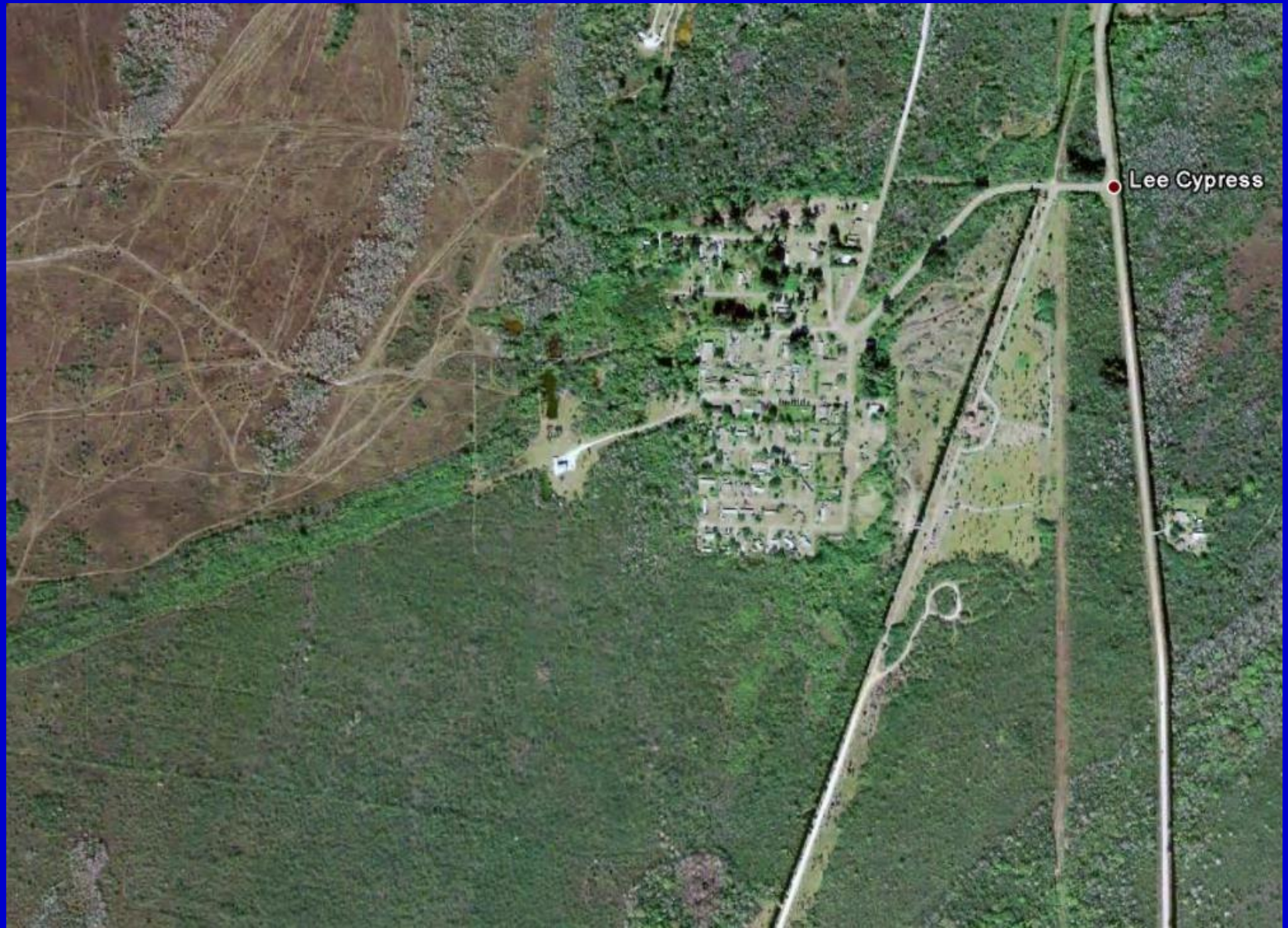
Copeland Area - 1940



Town of Copeland - 1953



Town of Copeland Today



Railroad Trams - 1953



Railroad Trams & I-75 Today



The Timber Industry Today

- The big timber cutting operations were gone by the late 1950's.
- It takes many years for cypress & pine timber to reach saw log size so there is very little timber harvesting today.
- Some areas of cull cypress & pine timber is still being harvested for the wood pulp & mulch industry.

The Vegetable Industry



Early Vegetable Production

- William S. Allen, came to present day Everglades City in 1873 and farmed along the east side of Allen River (now Barron River).
- The father of George W. Storter, Jr. came to the Everglades City site in 1881 and began farming with Allen.
- Sugarcane & pineapples were also produced in Everglades City and Marco Island.

Commercial Vegetable Production

- Prior to 1928, vegetables had to be grown near the coast or Caloosahatchee River.
- 1928 – Tamiami Trail is Completed / Atlantic Coastline Railroad & State Road 29 Reach Everglades City
- In 1929, J. B. Janes & E. C. Gaunt moved to the present day site of Ochopee and began farming tomatoes in the area.

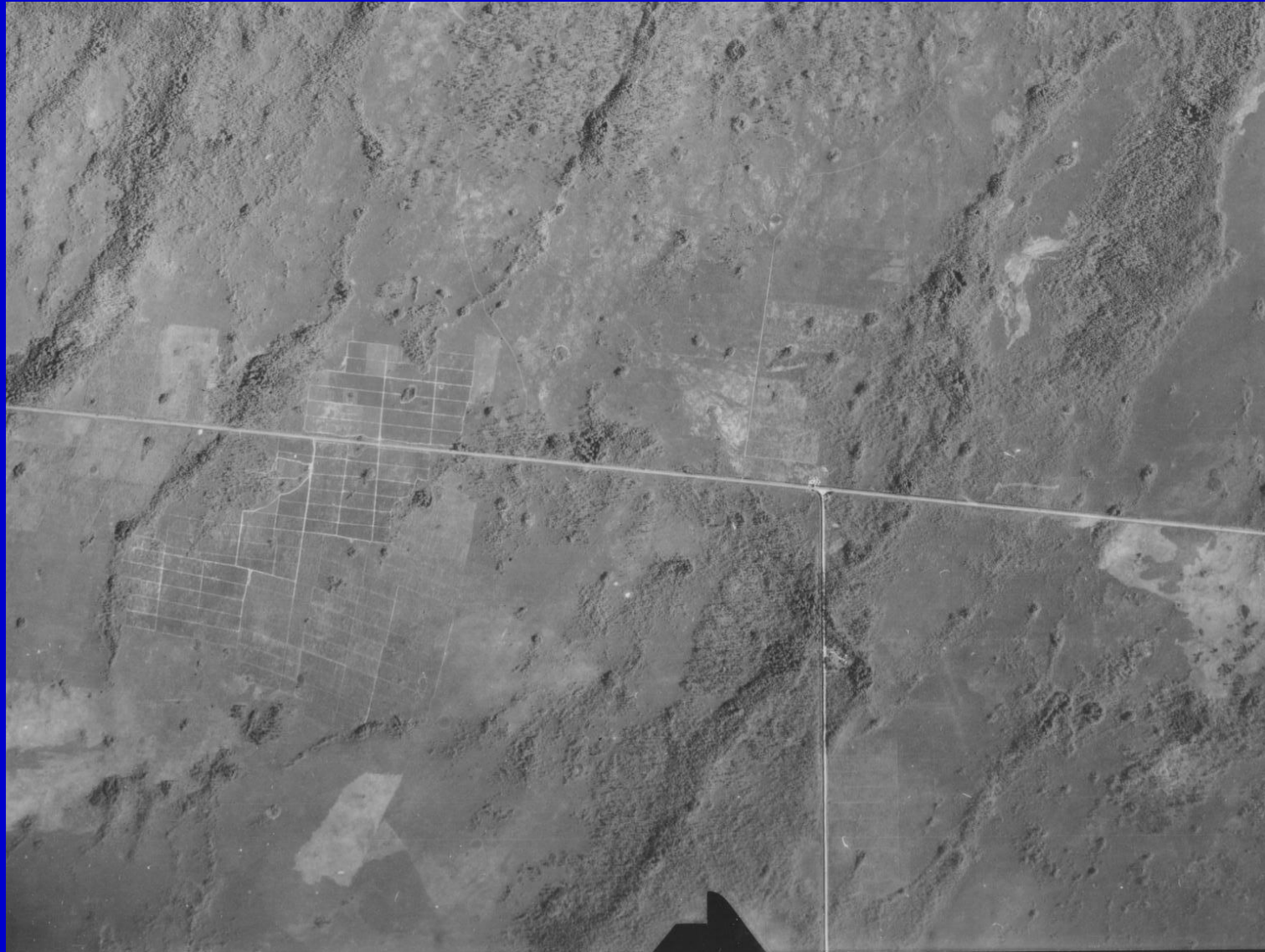
Commercial Vegetable Production in the Ochopee Area

- The vegetables were packed in packing houses in Ochopee and near Copeland and then shipped to northern markets by railroad.
- Production was along Tamiami Trail to Monroe Station & State Road 29 to about Alligator Alley.

Ochopee - 1940



Monroe Station - 1940



Copeland Area - 1940



Deep Lake Area - 1940



Miles City & I-75 Area - 1940



Vegetable Production in the Ochopee Area

- Farmers utilized native Ochopee Marl prairies with little clearing and used mules in the early years.
- Soils have a naturally high pH.
- Warm winter temperatures – only three frosts between 1930 and 1950.
- Vegetables, mostly tomatoes, were only produced in the spring.
- No irrigation or water control.

Commercial Vegetable Production in the Ochopee Area Continues into the 1950's

- Production very nomadic due to weeds and disease.
- Between 1928 and 1955 over 35,000 acres in the Ochopee area had been farmed.
- Little evidence of this farming can be seen today.

Before World War II – Farmers Look at Pine and Palmetto Flatwoods for Vegetable Production

- Problem: Soil has naturally very low pH & vegetables won't grow.
- However, research shows that applying lime raises the pH.
- Some use of Flatwoods soils during World War II.
- Massive use of Flatwoods soils after World War II.

After World War II – Flatwoods Area Production Expands

- Large expansion of vegetables on Flatwoods of Collier County and old farm fields in Ochopee area abandoned.
- In 1949 - Collier County creates County Agricultural Extension Department.
- In 1955 the Collier Development Corp. & Atlantic Land & Improvement Company donate 320 acres for research center at Immokalee.

Early 1960s – Usable Native Flatwoods Soils Become Scarce

- Growers still had to move because of weeds & diseases.
- Large acreage of Flatwoods soils left but most were very rocky, not accessible or poor shaped & land clearing cost became expensive.
- Soil fumigation and plastic mulch culture started and by the late 1960's, most growers use plastic mulch.

Clearing Data & Current Acreage

- 1940-1979 - 175,000 acres of land is cleared by Vegetable Industry.
- Most of the land was cleared before 1970.
- Vegetable acreage stable during last 10 years – about 25,000 acres.
- Due to double cropping, actual acres used is about 13,000 to 15,000 acres.

The Citrus Industry



The Early Days of the Citrus Industry

- Prior to the severe freezes of December 1894 and February 1895 the center of the citrus industry was Marion County.
- However, citrus groves were planted along the Caloosahatchee River and Orange River at Ft Myers prior to the 1894 & 1895 freezes and these survived the freezes.

Citrus Grove Development in Collier

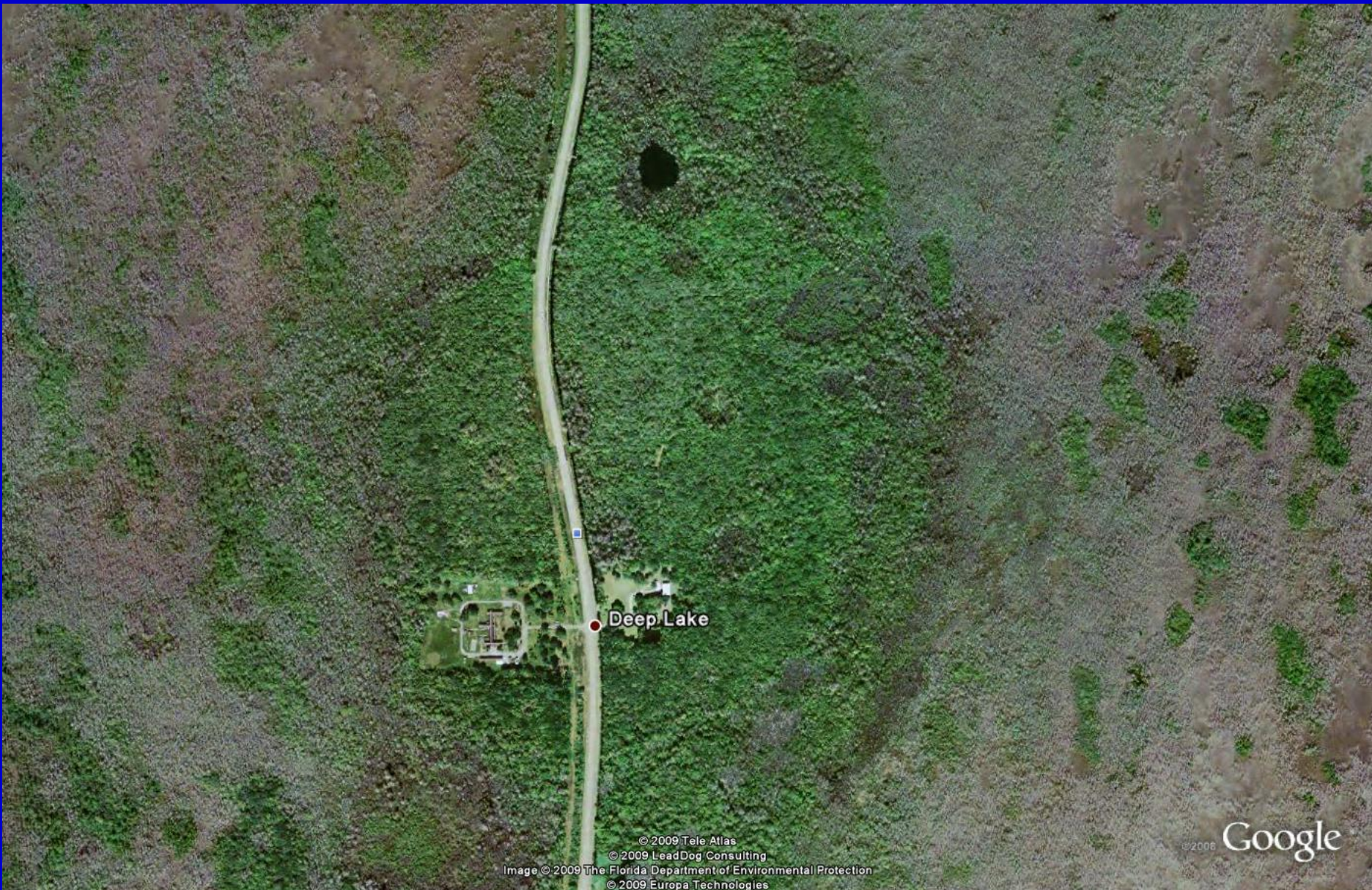
The Deep Lake Grove

- Shortly after 1900, Walter Langford & John M. Roach bought Deep Lake Hammock & planted 200 acres of Marsh Seedless Grapefruit.
- Fruit was hauled by ox cart 14 miles overland to Allen River (today it is Barron River at Everglades City) and shipped by barge to Fort Myers for packing and shipment to market.

Deep Lake Citrus Grove - 1940



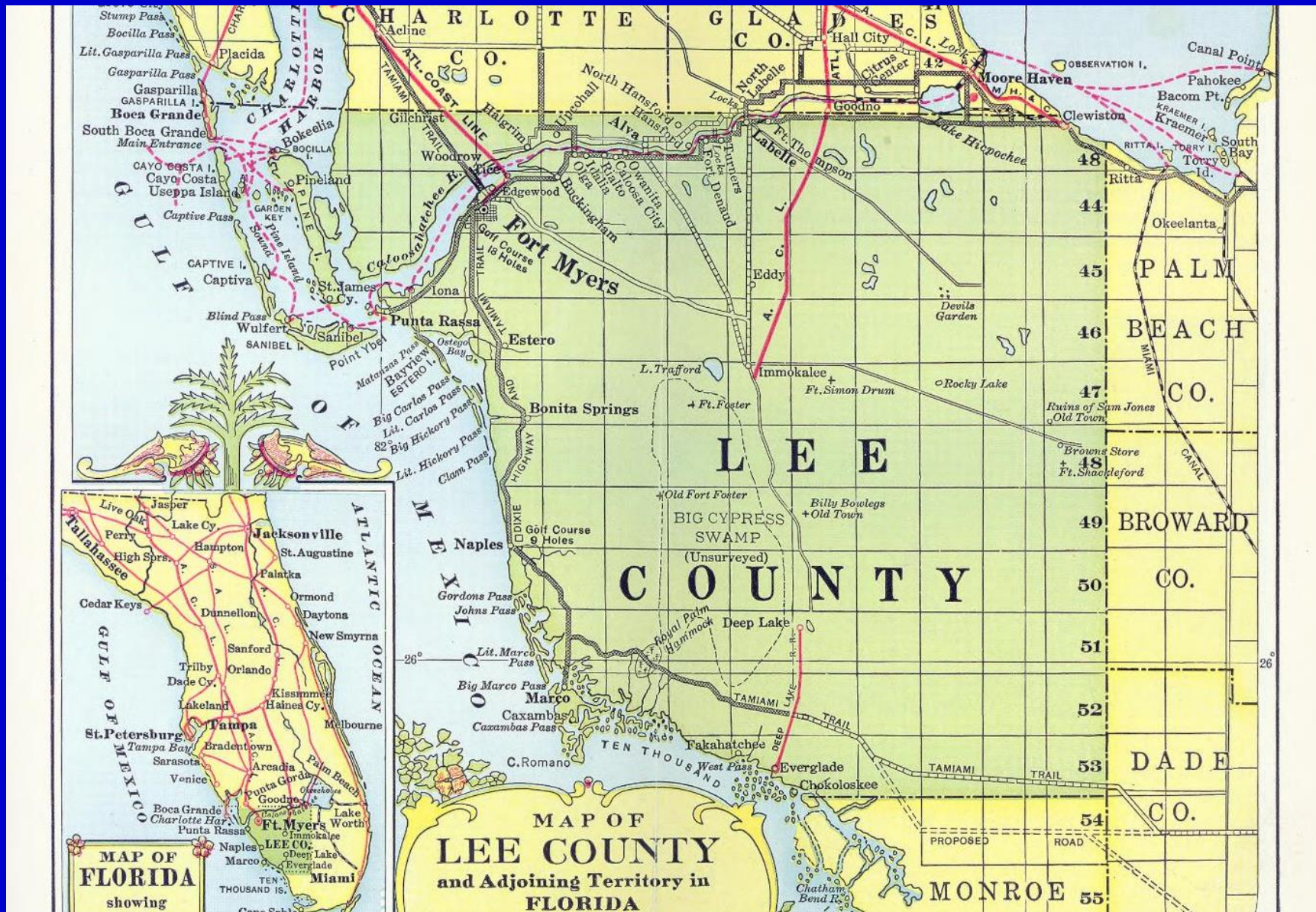
Deep Lake Today



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SW. FLORIDA MAP 1922



Citrus Development in Collier County 1910 - 1920

- Charles W. Garner planted a citrus grove in Immokalee sometime before 1914
- Part of that grove still exists as part of the Roberts Ranch Historic Site in Immokalee.

Roberts Grove - 1940



Citrus Development in Collier County 1930 - 1960

- Up to this time all of the citrus groves were planted on elevated Hammock lands or Pine ridges.
- UF Research in the late 1950's shows citrus can be grown on Flatwoods soils.
- Few small groves planted on Flatwoods soils near Immokalee in early 1960's.

Citrus Development in Collier County

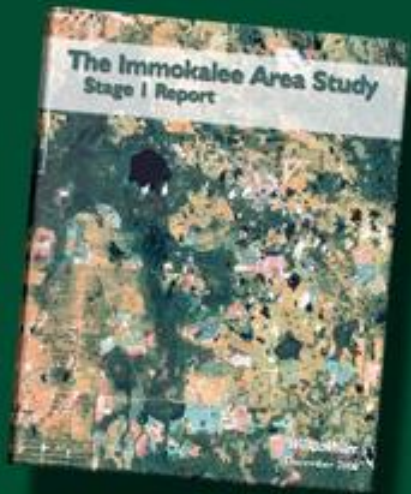
1960 - 2000

- The citrus expansion began with the freeze of 1962.
- The Collier Company and Turner Corporation each plant about 1,000 acres near Immokalee in late 1960's.
- There was a major freeze in 1977 followed by major freezes in 1981, 1983, 1985 and 1989. This prompted a large expansion of the citrus acreage in SW Florida.

Citrus Development in Collier & Hendry Counties – 1960 to 2014

Acres of Land Devoted to Citrus

Year	Collier	Hendry
1960	191	983
1980	6,706	30,086
2000	35,302	99,437
2010	30,336	66,814
2017	29,310	64,834



A Great Challenge

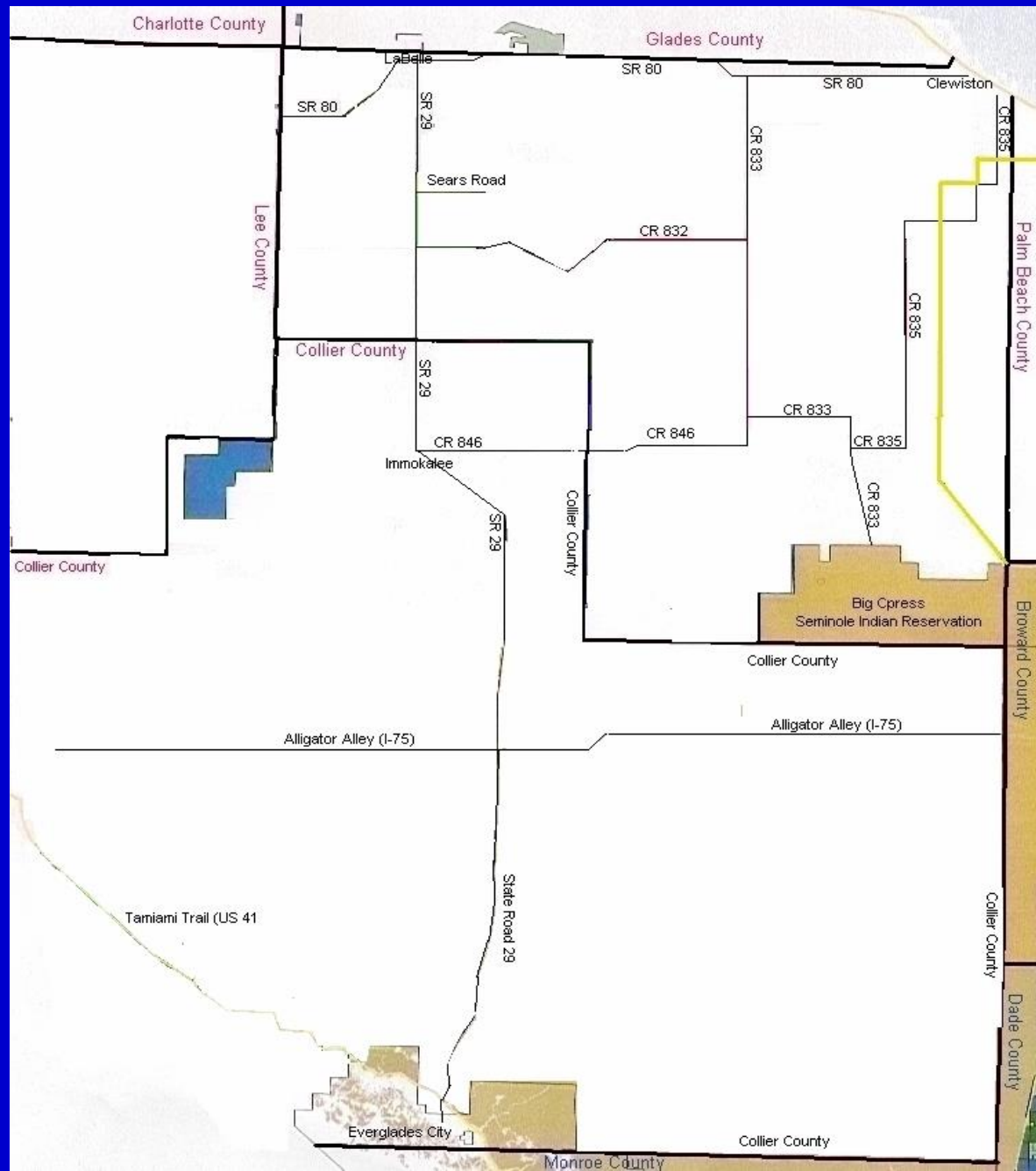
Government Purchase of Land



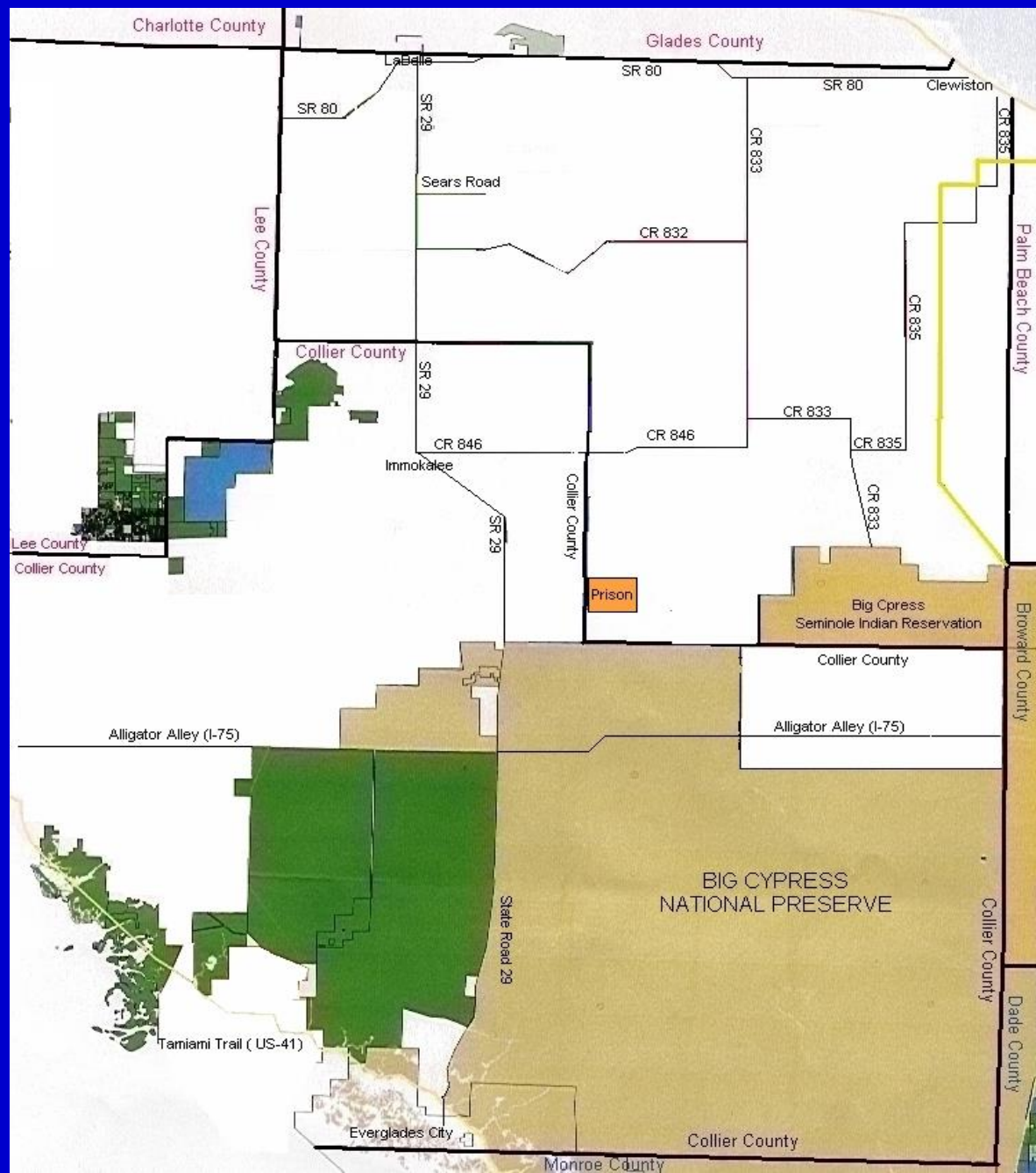
Big Cypress Preserve & Panther Habitat Preservation in 1970's, 80's & Early 1990's

- Federal & State government purchases over 910,500 acres in Collier County for Big Cypress Preserve and Panther Habitat in 1970's & 80's.
 - This amounts to about 71% of the county .
- These land purchases were almost all large swamp and wetland areas with little agricultural activity other than cattle grazing.

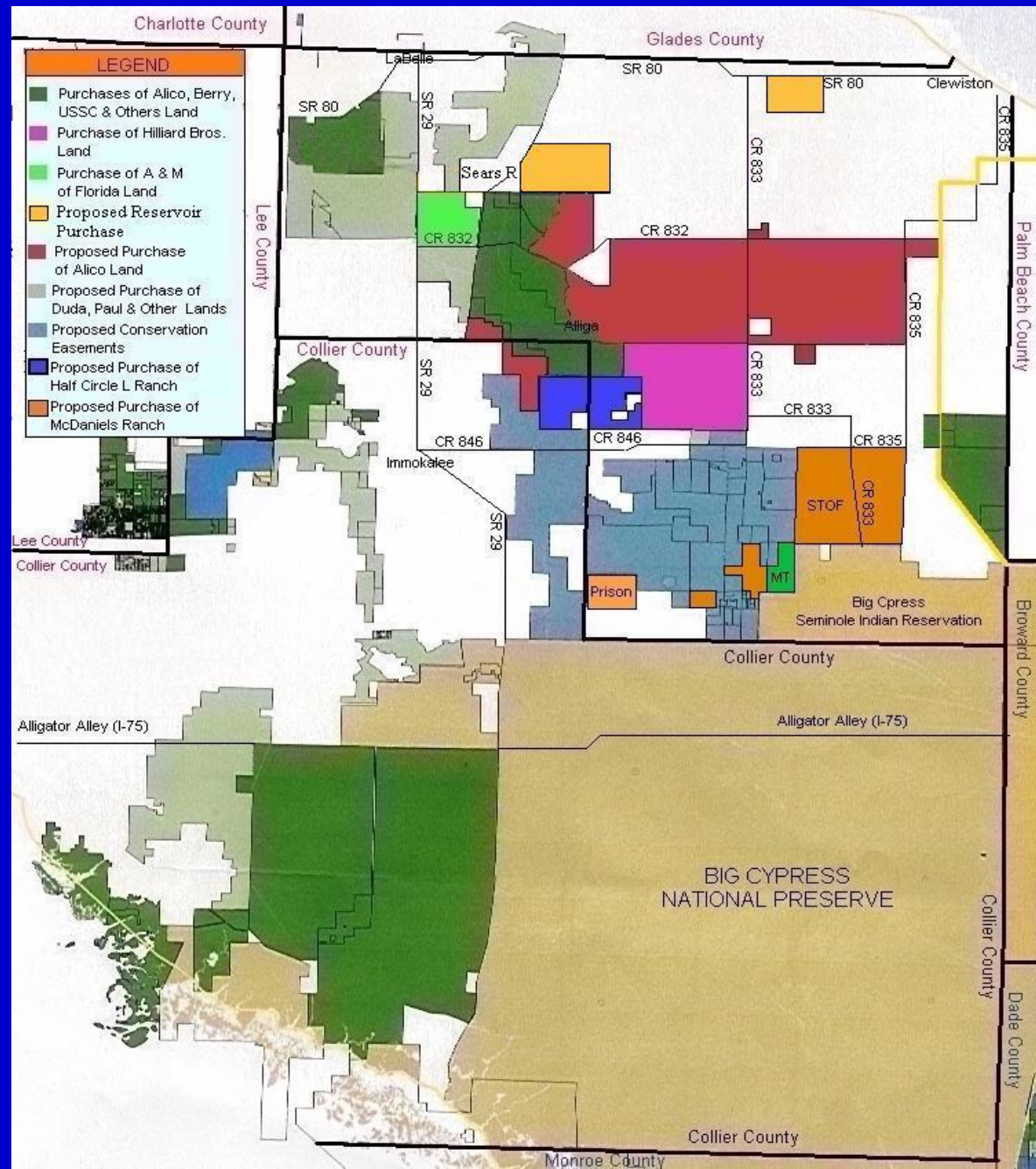
1970 MAP



1994 MAP



OCTOBER 2003 MAP



Summary

- The Agricultural Industry of SW Florida was the industry that actually made the area habitable.
- This area is the only area left in the United States that can produce the crops that we do in the winter.
- However government regulations are often imposed on farmers with little scientific basis.

Summary Cont.

- Major environmental issues threaten its future existence. Those issues are:
 - Water Supply
 - Water Quality
 - Wildlife Habitat Preservation.
- The Free Trade Agreements such as NAFTA threaten farmers ability to stay in business.
- Food Safety Regulations has become a serious issue.

Summary Cont.

- These issues are so onerous that we have exported part of our food production to other countries.
- *Several years ago, this country became a net importer of food. We are no longer self sufficient with food production.*
- Since less than 1% of all foods imported are inspected, quality and food safety are no longer under our control.

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!!!

