

# Challenger Marsh Sanctuary Draft Public Access Plan

## Site Summary

The sanctuary is a 57-acre site located west of I-95 in Titusville, Brevard County, Florida ([seen in Figure 1](#)). Challenger Marsh Sanctuary is adjacent to the St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge to the east and south and is located in the vicinity of a number of other conservation properties that offer similar recreational opportunities. The sanctuary can be accessed from Challenger Memorial Parkway on the east side of the sanctuary. The site is bordered by private property to the north and west. The entire site is floodplain marsh with a small ruderal area to the north. This is a mitigation property and is designated as a "Category 3 site" with no improvements for public access planned.

## Passive Recreation Definition

To the extent they do not interfere with biological management goals, Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) sanctuaries provide a range of passive recreation opportunities for the public. As a general guideline for EEL Program management decisions, passive recreation is defined as, "a recreational type of use, level and combination of uses that do not individually, or collectively, degrade the resource values, biological diversity, and aesthetic or environmental qualities of a site."

Before developing a site public access plan, staff conducts a Public Access Site Assessment. From this assessment, the types and extent of activities can be determined with the goal to balance human use with the protection of natural resources. Items considered during the assessment include environmental, cultural, recreational and educational resources, stakeholder interests, potential conflicts, universal access, connections to other recreational resources, and potential management and/or maintenance conflicts and constraints.

Activities that allow for the quiet enjoyment of nature are conducive to EEL Program goals. Common activities on EEL sanctuaries are hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and equestrian use. Activities and uses that are generally not allowed on EEL sanctuaries without permit include, but are not limited to: motorized vehicles, smoking, overnight use, commercial use, hunting/shooting sports, removal of plants or animals, relocating plants or animals, and pets.

## **Public Access Site Assessment**

During the Public Access Site Assessment, floodplain marsh habitat and threatened avian species were identified as resources on site. Similar or complimentary recreational resources are the nearby Salt Lake Wildlife Management Area, Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, Canaveral Marshes Conservation Area, Fox Lake Sanctuary, and Wuesthoff Park. Access at Challenger Marsh Sanctuary (C.M.S.) is limited to a single gate off Challenger Memorial Parkway without a deceleration lane, and installing a parking lot at C.M.S. is not feasible since the site was acquired through mitigation and consists almost entirely of wetlands. Therefore, no public access is proposed for the site. However, the site can be utilized for limited environmental education opportunities.

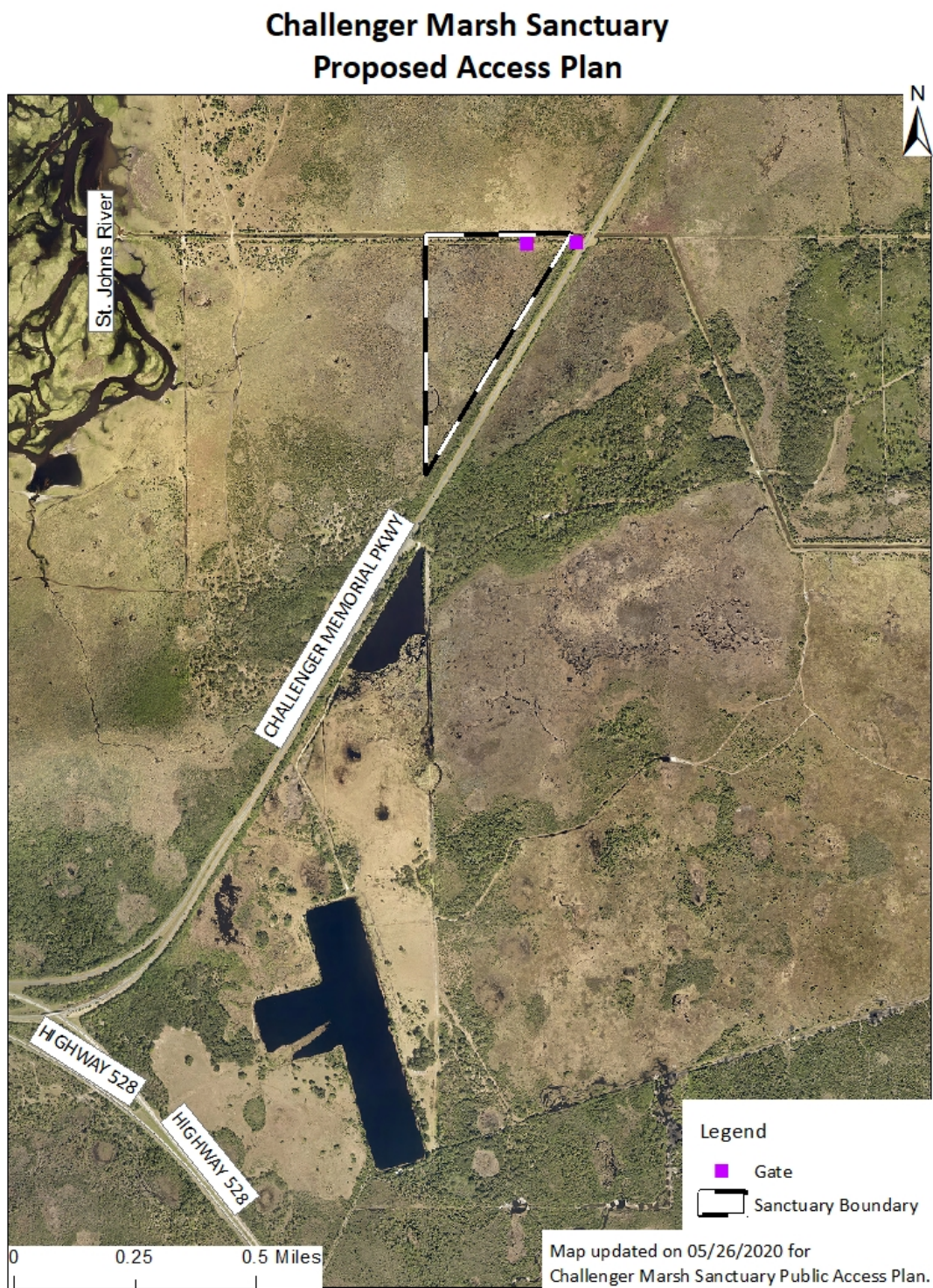
## **Recreational Uses and Amenities**

A gate off Challenger Memorial Parkway will serve as maintenance access to the site. There are no restrooms on site. A single lane dirt road and perimeter firelines provide limited access through the site during the dry periods. The small size of the sanctuary, proximity to roads, and wet conditions make it unsuitable for public use.

## **Environmental Education Opportunities**

Access to wetlands and threatened avian species offer limited opportunities for educational hikes.

Figure 1



[Link to Site Summary](#)

[Link to Figure 1 Descriptive Text](#)

## Figure 1 Descriptive Text

The satellite image map is an aerial view of the Challenger Marsh Sanctuary. This triangular-shaped sanctuary is located about .5 miles east of the St. Johns River and 1 mile north of the intersection of Challenger Memorial Parkway and Highway 528. Challenger Memorial Parkway extends along the entire eastern border. There are 2 gates located on the northern border of this property. The eastern-most gate enters a dirt road heading west from Challenger Memorial Parkway along the northern boundary of the Challenger Marsh Sanctuary. Heading west down the dirt road for less than .25 miles, there is a second gate which enters the Challenger Marsh Sanctuary.

[Link to Figure 1](#)