



# An Introduction to St. Petersburg's North Shore Seagrass Mitigation Bank

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*The viewpoints expressed herein are solely the presenter's opinions and are not those of the City of St. Petersburg.*

*Photo Credit: The Nature Conservancy*

# Presentation Outline

- Seagrass Overview
- Trends in Seagrass Coverage in Tampa Bay
- St. Petersburg's North Shore Seagrass Mitigation Bank (SGMB)
  - Where is it?
  - How was the site selected?
- Launching the SGMB
  - Referendum
  - Baseline Establishment and Restoration Design Phase
  - Permitting
- Proposed Service Area
- Anticipated Credits and Costs



# Seagrass Overview

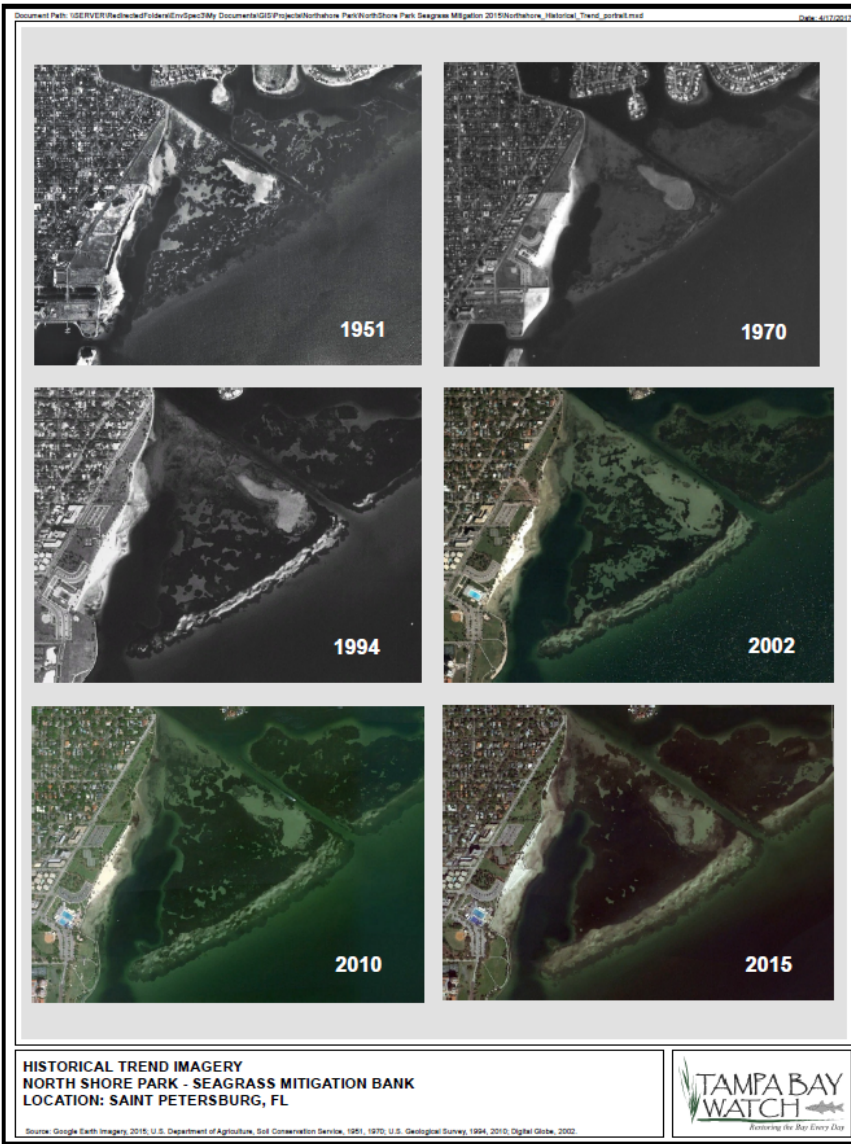
Seagrasses are a vital marine resource, functioning in:

- Nursery and habitat for fish and benthic organisms
- Structural support for algae
- Food web
- Sediment stabilization
- Nutrient cycling
- Water quality integration



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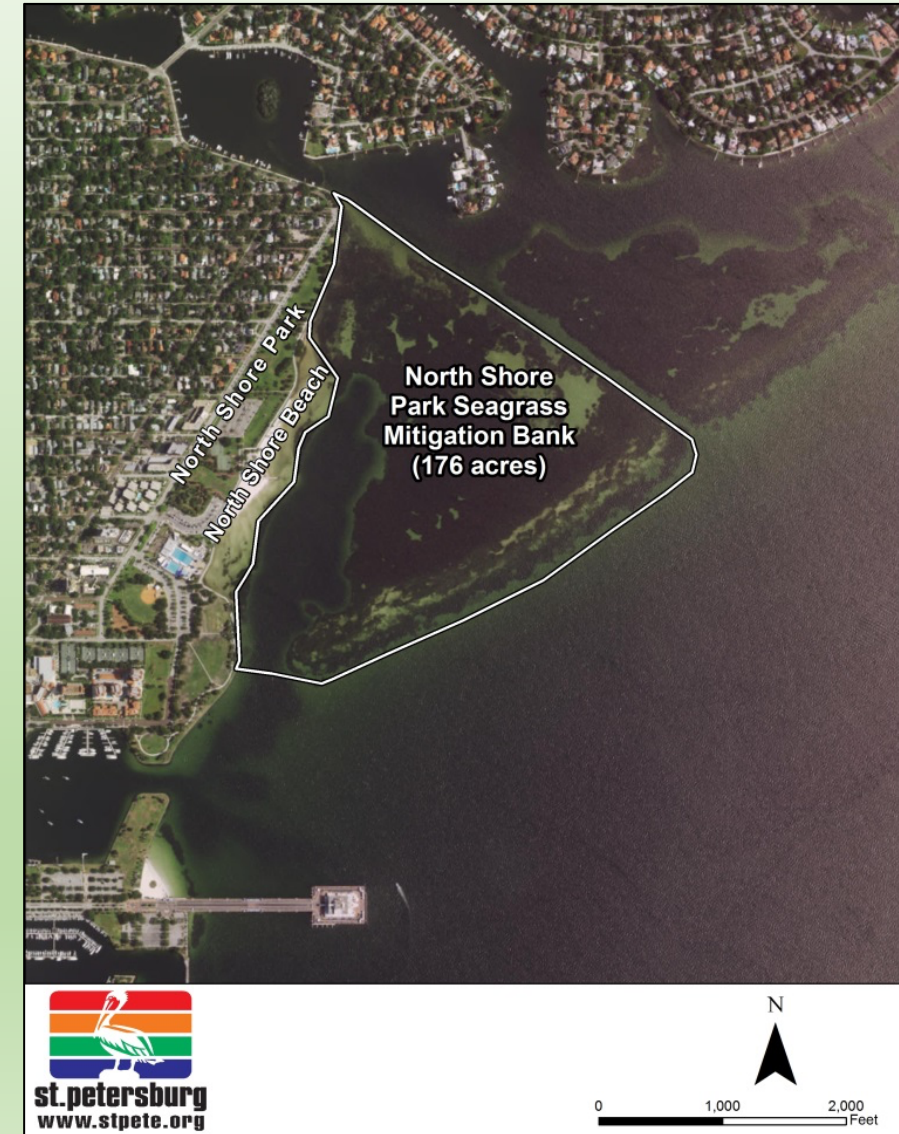
# Trends in Seagrass Coverage in Tampa Bay



- 1950: ~40,000 acres
- 1982: ~22,000 acres
- 1995: TBEP and stakeholders seek to restore Tampa Bay seagrass to 95% of 1950 level.
  - ~38,000 acres
- 2016: 41,655 acres



# North Shore SGMB Location



# City's Ownership of Submerged Lands

- City was granted fee simple ownership of submerged lands in Tampa Bay by Florida in 1918
- Relatively rare instance of State giving up title to otherwise sovereign submerged lands
- Large grant of land needed to facilitate the SGMB

106  
Chap. 7781  
1918

## LAWS OF FLORIDA.

### CHAPTER 7781—(No. 56).

AN ACT to Grant the Water Front, Riparian Rights and Submerged Lands in Tampa Bay, in Front of that Property of the City of St. Petersburg lying between Coffee Pot Bayou and the South Line of 14th Avenue, South, Extended East, to which the State may have any Title or Right of Possession to the City of St. Petersburg, and the Individual Owners of Land Abutting Tampa Bay, between said Points.

#### *Be it Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:*

Section 1. That the State of Florida, hereby grants to the City of St. Petersburg and the several individual property owners, whose land lies on the east boundary of the incorporate limits of the city of St. Petersburg, adjacent to and abutting on Tampa Bay, in fee simple, absolutely, all lands owned or held by the State of Florida, in trust or otherwise, and lying or being within the corporate limits of said city of St. Petersburg, whether said lands are covered or partly covered by the tide, or otherwise, and including all lands that have been reclaimed or filled in by said City or said property owners, prior to the enactment of this Act.

Sec. 2. That this Act shall take effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor, or upon its becoming a law without his approval.

Approved Dec. 5, 1918.



# Launching the SGMB: Referendum

City Charter § 1.02(a):

*Purpose.* The purpose of this section is to protect City-owned park and waterfront property. Except as provided herein, **no waterfront or park property owned by the City may be sold, donated or leased without specific authorization by a majority vote in a City-wide referendum.**

# Referendum Question

Shall the City Council be authorized to approve, after properly noticed public hearing, the placement of permanent use and development restrictions over a portion of the City owned submerged lands property located adjacent to North Shore Park for the purpose of protecting and enhancing seagrass beds to further goals of water quality improvement and habitat conservation?

YES

NO



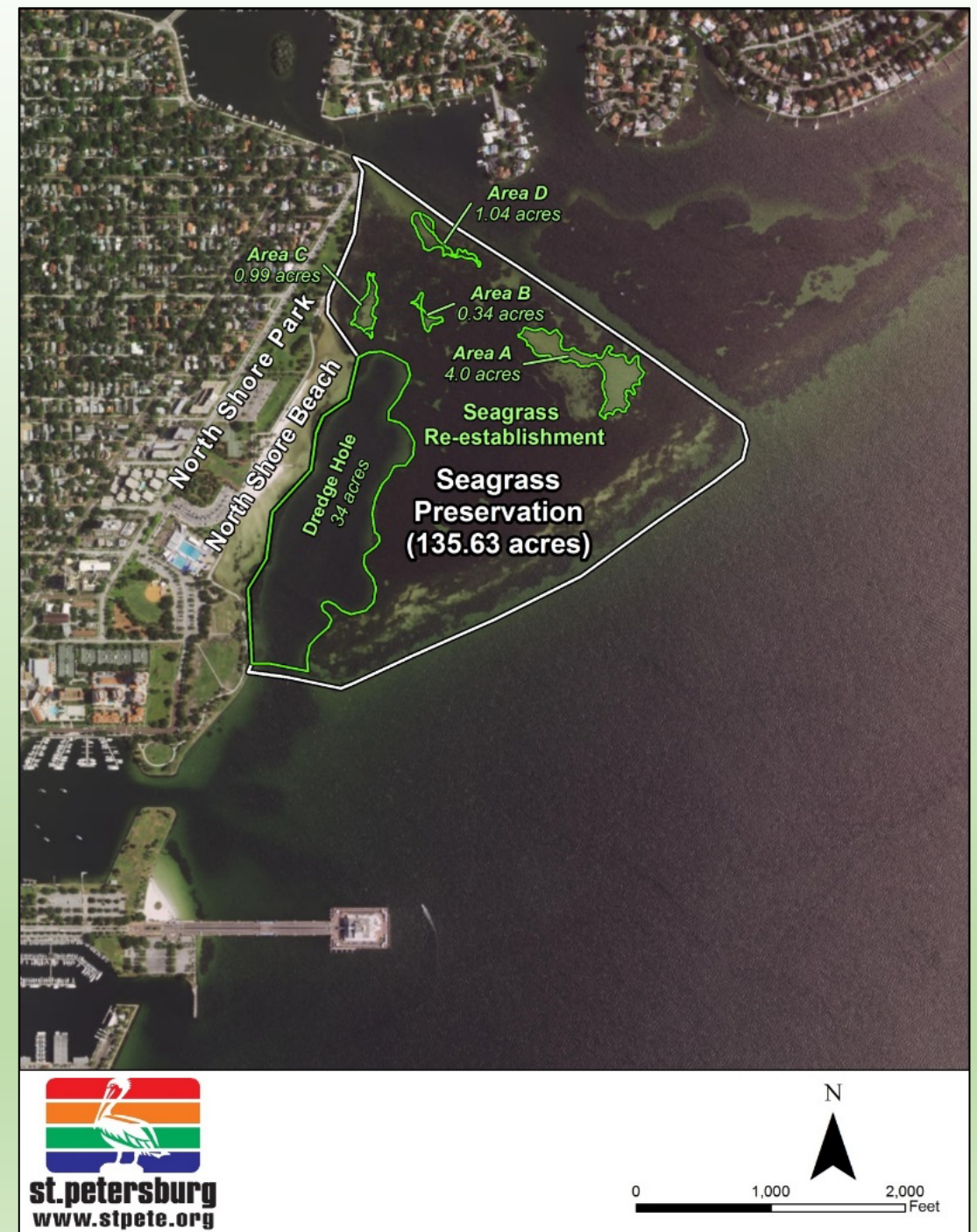
# Times recommends: Yes on St. Petersburg referendum questions

84.6% YES!

**Referendum Question 1** empowers the City Council to impose restrictions on submerged city land east of North Shore Park without holding a cumbersome voter referendum. As water quality in Tampa Bay has improved over the years, sea grass has proliferated in this area, enhancing marine life and water quality. Because these grass beds are part of the waterfront park system, use restrictions could require a special referendum. The change would allow the council to pass protective ordinances after a public hearing but without holding a referendum. On Referendum Question 1, the *Tampa Bay Times* recommends voting **yes**.

# Baseline Establishment and Restoration Design Plan

- Sediment cores
- Bathymetry
- Seagrass transects
  
- Dredge Hole: ~32-34 acres
  - Beneficial use program
- Enhancement Area A: ~4 acres

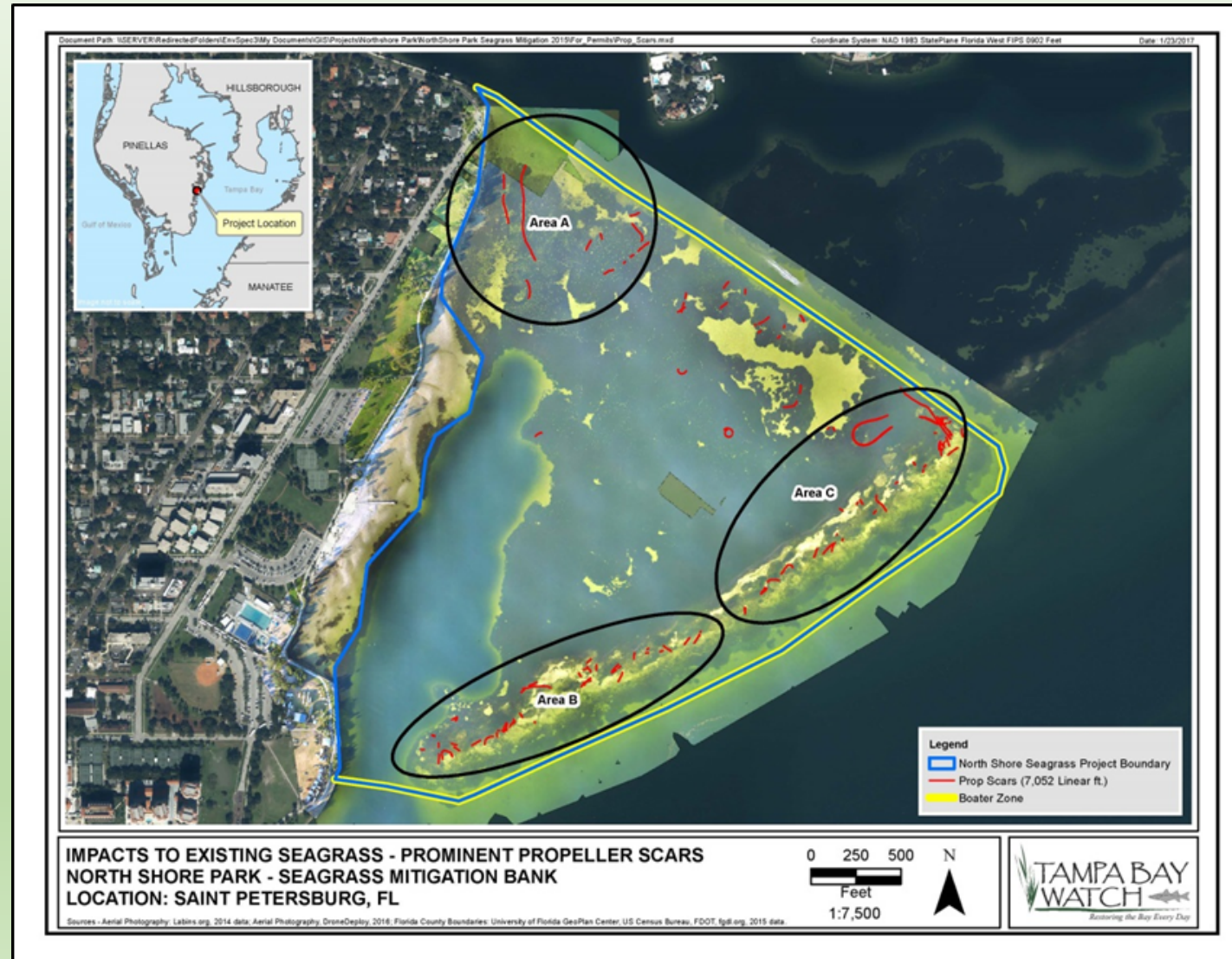




# Permitting Phase

- Prospectus has been submitted
- Currently in permitting with USACE and Southwest Florida Water Management District
- Legal issues associated with RAI:
  - Obtaining a title commitment and title insurance
  - Conservation Easement
  - Establishing a Motor Exclusion Zone for the SGMB
    - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission - Boating and Waterways
    - City ordinance required
    - Non-motorized boating will be allowed
- Potential for early release of credits

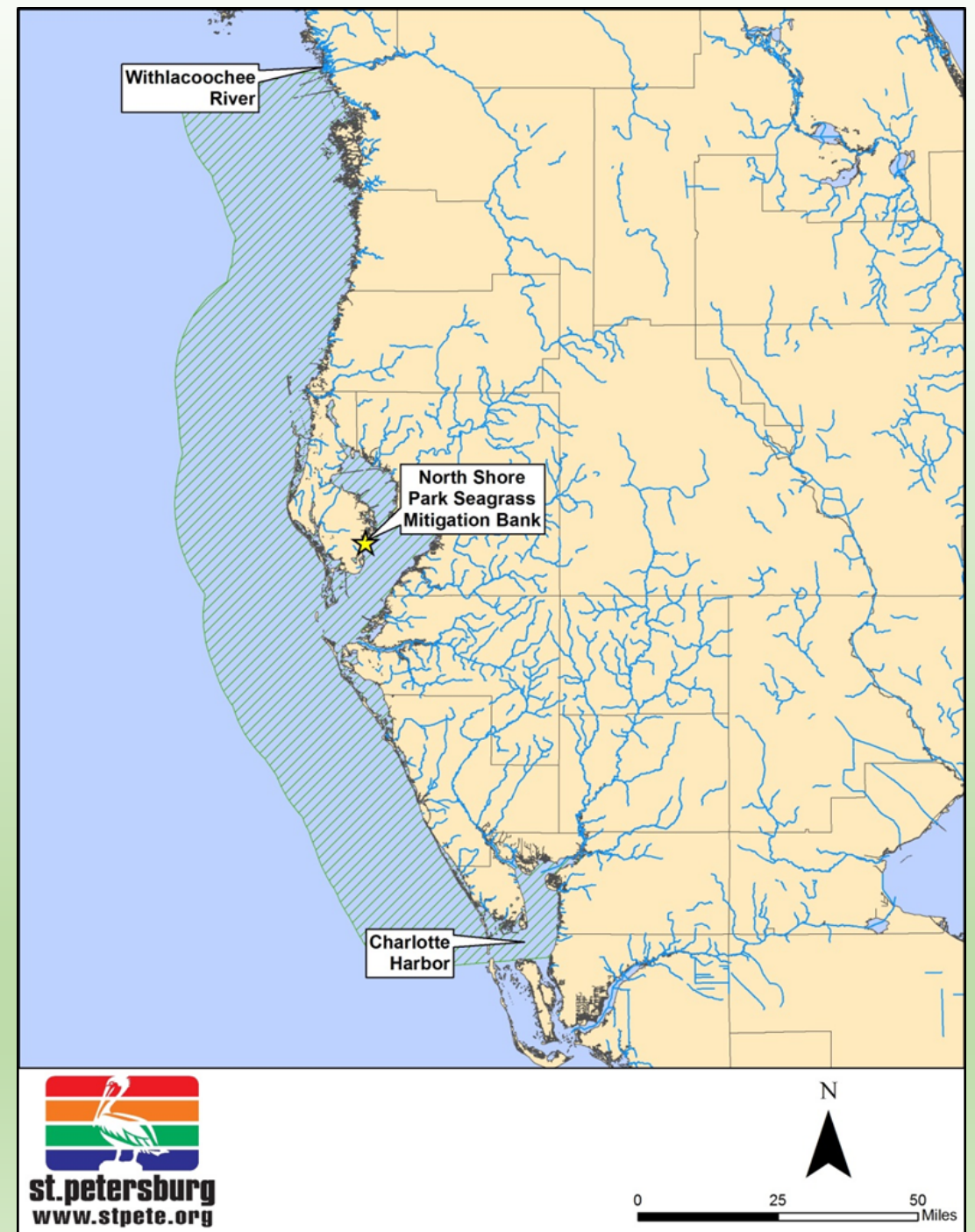
# Propeller Scars





# Proposed Service Area

- The extent of the potential Service Area of the SGMB and that which will be requested by the team is co-extensive with the coastal boundaries of the Southwest Florida Water Management District.



# Anticipated Credits and Costs

- 40-50 credits generated
- Estimated value \$500,000 to \$700,000 per credit
- Total revenue estimate (range): \$20,000,000 to \$35,000,000
- \$4.4M to \$16.85M in costs
  - Planning and Permitting: \$387,500
  - Dredge hole filling and other enhancements: \$2M-\$5M
  - Seagrass installation and monitoring: \$2M-\$5M
  - Maintenance and Pier Environmental Education Center trusts: \$6.5M
    - Maintenance cost estimated at \$50K-\$60K annually

# Thank you!

- Tampa Bay Watch and all of the City of St. Petersburg's partners
- Stetson University College of Law
- Environmental Law Institute

