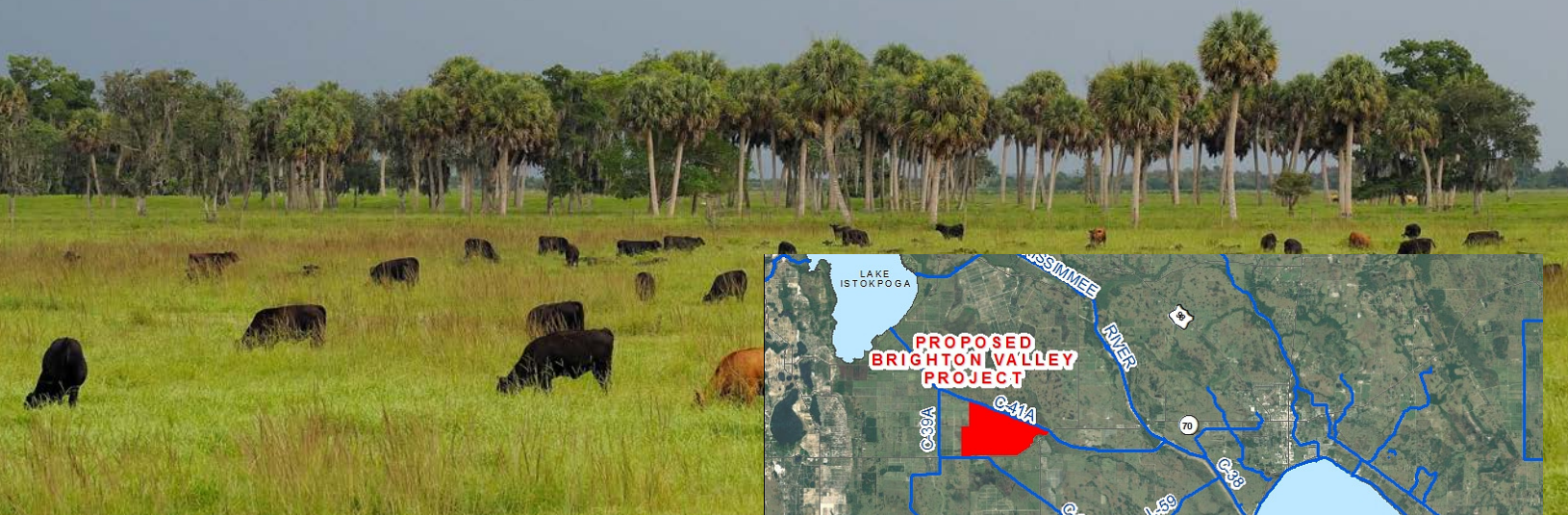


Brighton Valley



Cattle graze at Brighton Valley by Linda McCarthy

THE CHALLENGE

Elevated nutrient levels are a serious problem plaguing Lake Okeechobee that affect natural and human communities downstream, including coastal areas, when water is released from the lake. A Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) for Lake Okeechobee has been adopted in accordance with the federal Clean Water Act, with a target of reducing the average inflow of phosphorus to the lake from 448 to 105 metric tons per year. The BMAP is the product of years of inter-agency work as well as public input, and multiple innovative solutions are needed to meet this hurdle.

THE SETTING

The Indian Prairie/Lake Istokpoga sub watershed was identified as the largest contributor of phosphorus to Lake



Okeechobee with 20% of the phosphorus load coming from this basin. Brighton Valley is by far the largest and most significant, quick and economical project to initiate and operate to help achieve the given nutrient reduction target.

THE PROJECT

Brighton Valley is a large-scale (8,200 acres) stormwater storage and treatment project designed for its unique and desirable location that can both capture significant nutrients and help manage Lake Okeechobee levels and regulatory releases. Accordingly, Brighton Valley is a BMAP priority project. Construction of the project is scheduled to begin in Fall 2018.

THE BENEFITS

The initial phase of **Brighton Valley** has the potential to annually treat 95,000 acre-feet of stormwater before it enters the Lake, reducing the phosphorus load to Lake Okeechobee by as much as 3.2 tons per year and lessening high water releases to the estuaries. Like the Nicodemus Slough project, Brighton Valley will retain rainfall and conserve excess surface water for beneficial uses that would have been otherwise lost to the tide. The project is similar or lower in cost to other existing projects on private lands before any value is attributed to the nutrient removal benefit of the project, making it far more economical than more intensive capital projects on publicly owned land.



Brighton Valley Project by Linda McCarthy



Deer by Linda McCarthy

ABOUT LYKES

Lykes Bros. is the largest private property owner in the Lake Okeechobee watershed and one of the largest in Florida, managing more than 300,000 acres for agriculture and conservation. Because of the size and location of the Lykes Ranch, it is not possible to meet the phosphorus reduction goals for Lake Okeechobee without locating significant projects on Lykes Property. Lykes is already a proud partner with SFWMD on two water storage projects, West Waterhole Project and Nicodemus Slough. The hallmark of the Lykes-SFWMD joint projects is relatively low cost, early implementation, opportunity, and flexibility of operational management. Lykes is an efficient and important cooperative partner in reaching both water quality and upstream water storage goals for Lake Okeechobee.