

# Weeki Wachee Spring Protection Zone Public Meeting March 28, 2023



Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission



# Section 327.45, Florida Statute

## Establish Springs Protection Zones

- Purpose of protecting and preventing harm to the springs
- First, second and third magnitude springs and spring groups and their associated spring runs
- May restrict speed and operation
- May prohibit anchoring, mooring, beaching or grounding



# Definitions

- Anchoring - Holding a vessel in place with a device attached to the vessel
- Mooring - Act of making fast a boat with lines or anchors
- Beaching – To run or drive ashore
- Grounding – Occurs when a vessel has hit bottom and can no longer move forward (when the draft on the vessel has exceeded the water depth)



# 68D-24.0035 Protection Zones for Springs



- Requires substantial competent evidence of harm and that harm is caused by vessels.
- Any person may provide evidence to the Commission for use in evaluation
- May include carrying capacity studies, vessel traffic studies, water quality studies or any facts or data that are of a type reasonably relied upon by scientists, environmental professionals, or engineers.





# Request for Weeki Wachee SPZ

- Received from Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
- Request a prohibition on anchoring, mooring, beaching, and grounding.
- From upstream boundary at state park corridor towards Rogers Park boat ramp canal



# Request for Weeki Wachee SPZ

- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requested the zone be extended into the state park all the way to the spring boil.





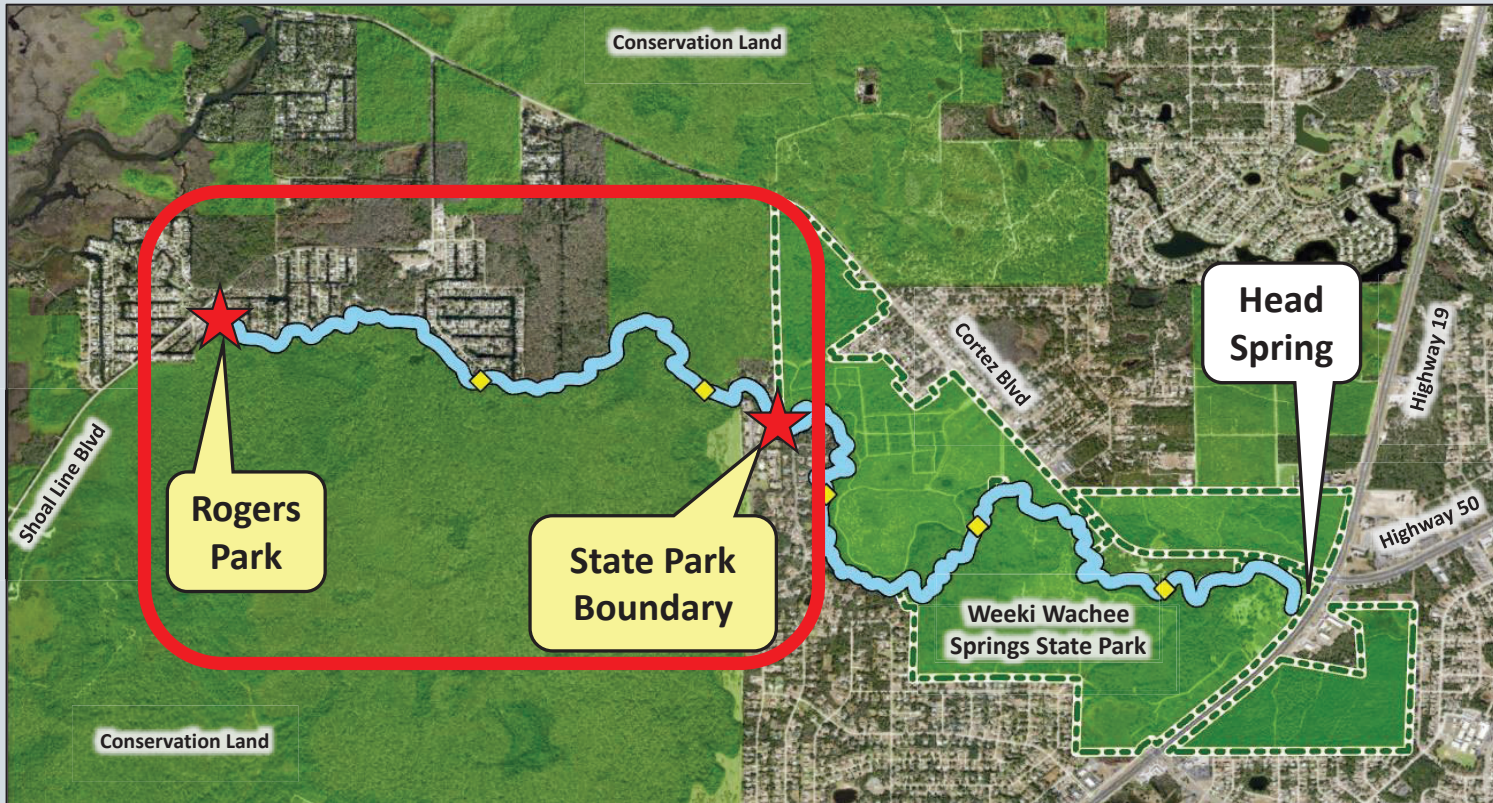
# Request for Weeki Wachee SPZ

## Weeki Wachee Springs State Park

- Boaters are requested to stay in vessel
- Park rule 62D - 2.014(8)(c) F.A.C.
- No person shall moor, anchor or tie up to any buoy, marker, bank or any wharf, dock, tree, building or other object or structure on the bank, any watercraft of any kind in waters within or contiguous to park areas within one hundred feet of the shoreline, in areas designated by the Division as closed for such purposes. This restriction does not apply to vessels of a law enforcement agency of a local, state, or federal government.



# Weeki Wachee River – Rogers Park to Head Spring



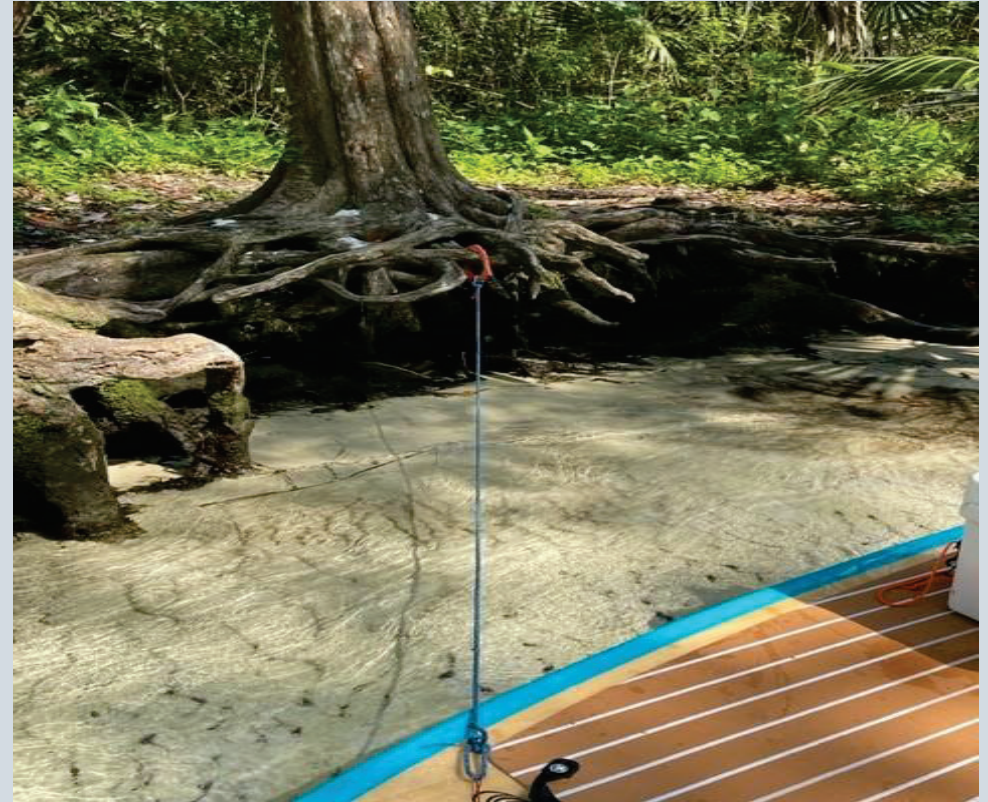
Map box is 4.5 miles wide.





# Evidence of Harm

Review of multiple studies and management plans along with site visits from FWC staff revealed evidence of harm being caused by vessels anchoring, mooring, beaching, and grounding in specific areas.



# Evidence of Harm





# Evidence of Harm





# Evidence of Harm





# Evidence of Harm



# Weeki Wachee River - Protection Philosophy

Springs protection zones shall be no larger than necessary to protect or prevent specified harm to springs, spring runs, and spring groups. 68D-24.0035(4) F.A.C.

## Harmful Activities

- Anchoring, mooring, beaching, or grounding of vessels

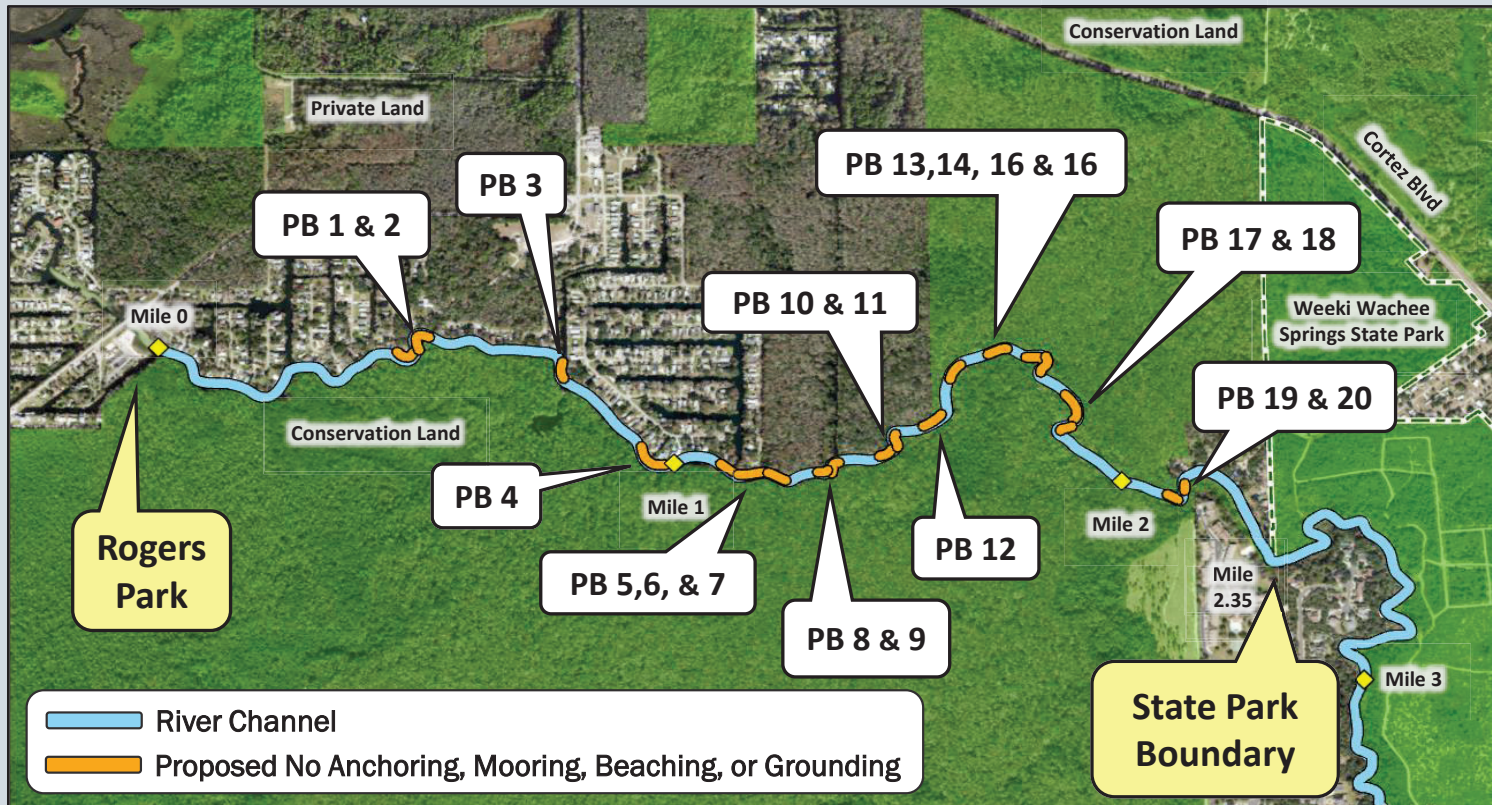
## Impacted Locations

- Select point bars, comprising approximately 0.62 miles of the 2.35 miles between Rogers Park and the State Park.





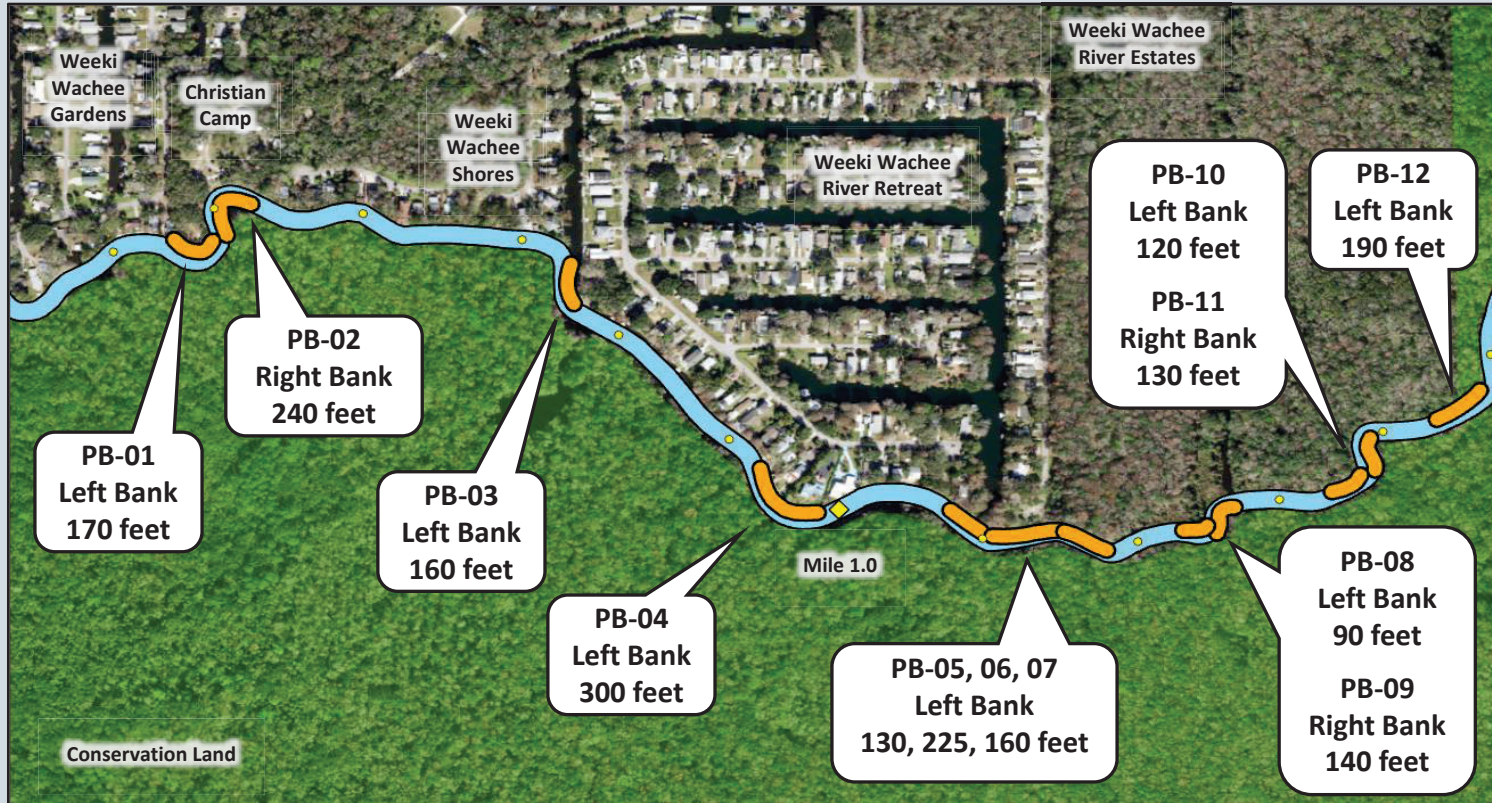
# Weeki Wachee River – Point Bars Under Proposed Protection



Map box is 2 miles wide.



# Weeki Wachee River – Point Bars # 1 through #12

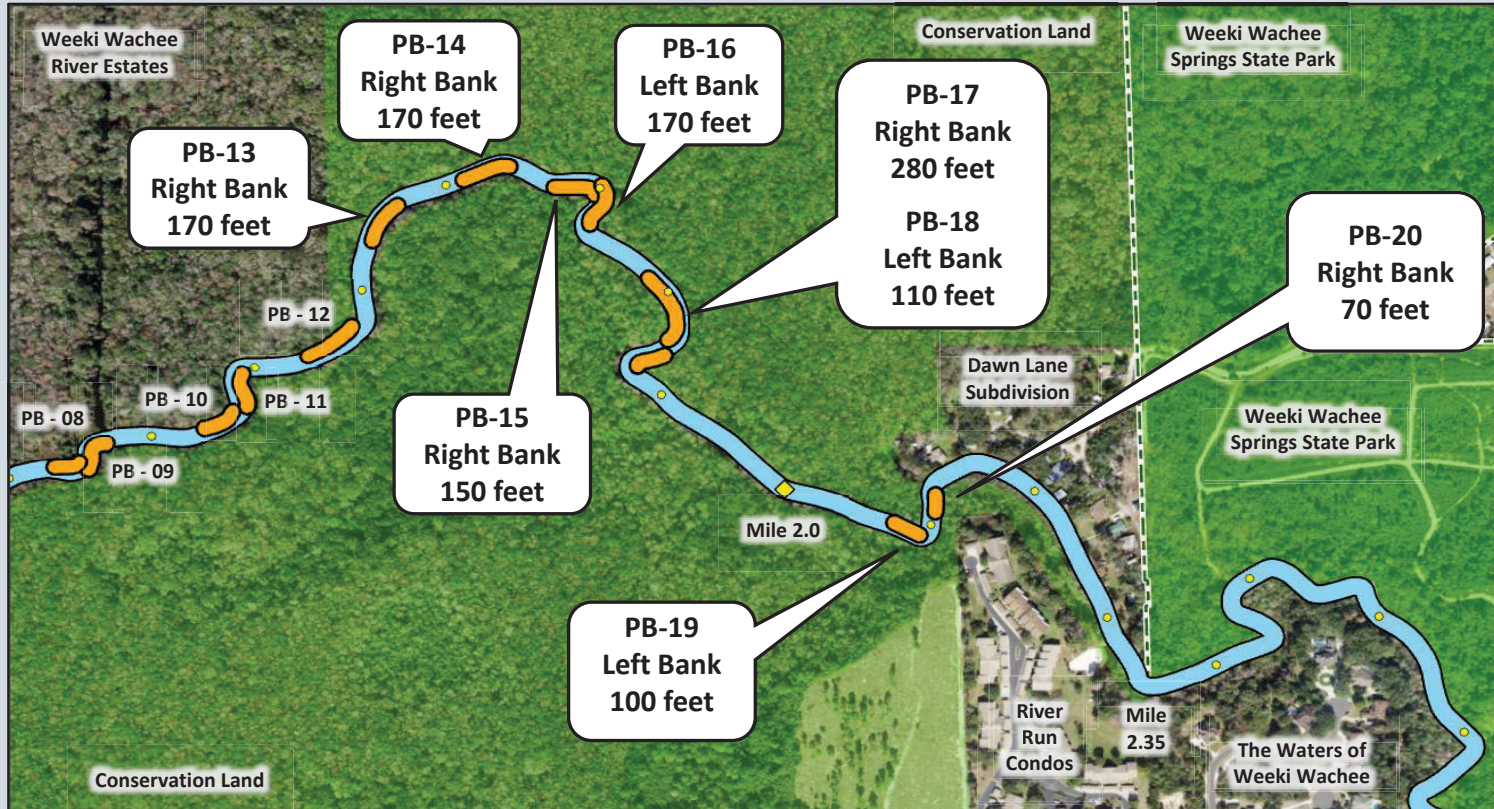


Map box is 1 mile wide.





# Weeki Wachee River – Point Bars # 13 through #20



Map box is 1 mile wide.



# Public Comment Period

Comments can be made by completing a comment card and dropping in comment box before you leave.

Comments can also be made by sending an e-mail to:

[BoatingPublicComments@myfwc.com](mailto:BoatingPublicComments@myfwc.com)

