

ELYSA Ballfield Expansion Floodplain Compensation /Wetland Mitigation and Existing Site Overflow Parking – Status as of August 13, 2007

The East Lake Youth Sports Association (ELYSA) ballfield expansion was moved from the 38-acre site in the Brooker Creek Preserve (BCP) to the Pinellas County School Board property on the southeast corner of East Lake Road and Keystone Road (Figure 1).

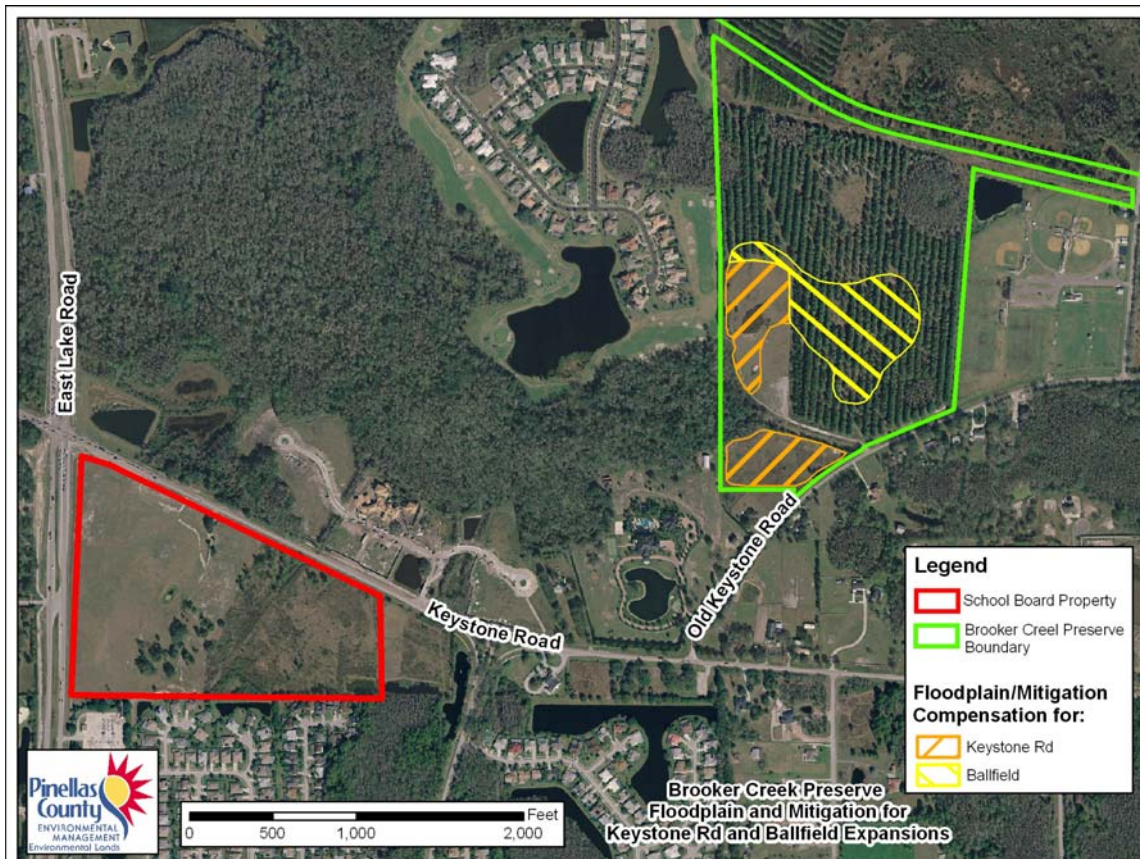


Figure 1.

The School Board is agreeing to allow four permanent all purpose fields to be built within their parcel as this will not interfere with the future site of the middle school. There will be floodplain and low value wetland impacts within this parcel. As such SWFWMD will require floodplain compensation and wetland mitigation as a condition of the permit.

In the past, several mitigation projects were completed within the Brooker Creek Preserve boundary. These mitigation projects were done in areas in need of restoration. Therefore, the County benefited two-fold by meeting their mitigation requirements and areas within the Preserve were restored with no cost to the Preserve.

Similar to the above completed projects, part of the Keystone Road expansion project floodplain compensation will be constructed on BCP (Figure 2). This area of the Preserve is currently a bahia grass field. The area's elevation will be reduced to required elevations and planted as a forested wetland. This will extend the large existing wetland system to the east. The ballfield expansion will also require floodplain and wetland mitigation so it was decided to expand the current Keystone Road floodplain/mitigation site.

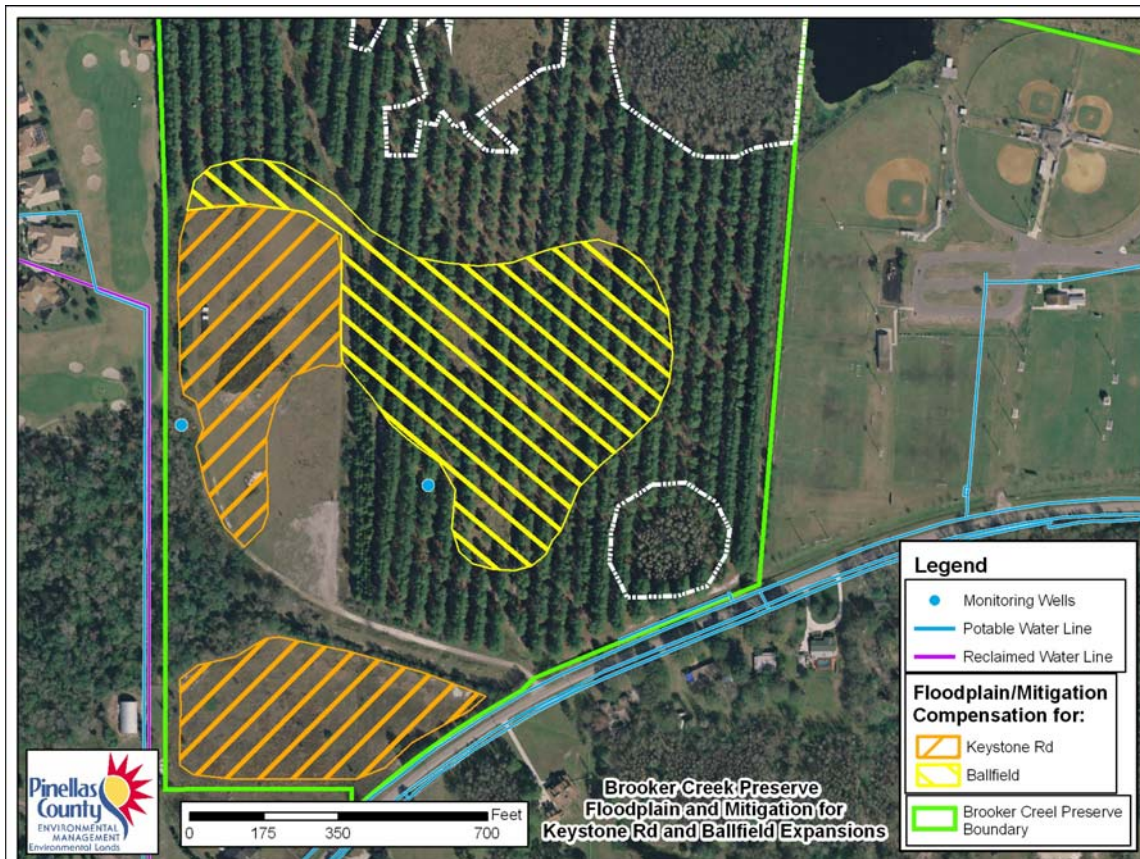


Figure 2.

The proposed layout keeps the project far enough away from the existing isolated wetlands so as not to impact their hydrology and leaves sufficient buffer between the new horse trail route and the existing ballfields. The layout also accounts for soil surveys and stays within the areas of Basinger soils which tend to occur at lower elevations than the surrounding flatwoods Myakka soils (Figure 3). This project will also be planted as a forested wetland. The eastern boundaries of this project will be built with a 6:1 slope to provide a more natural look and safe slopes to the public.

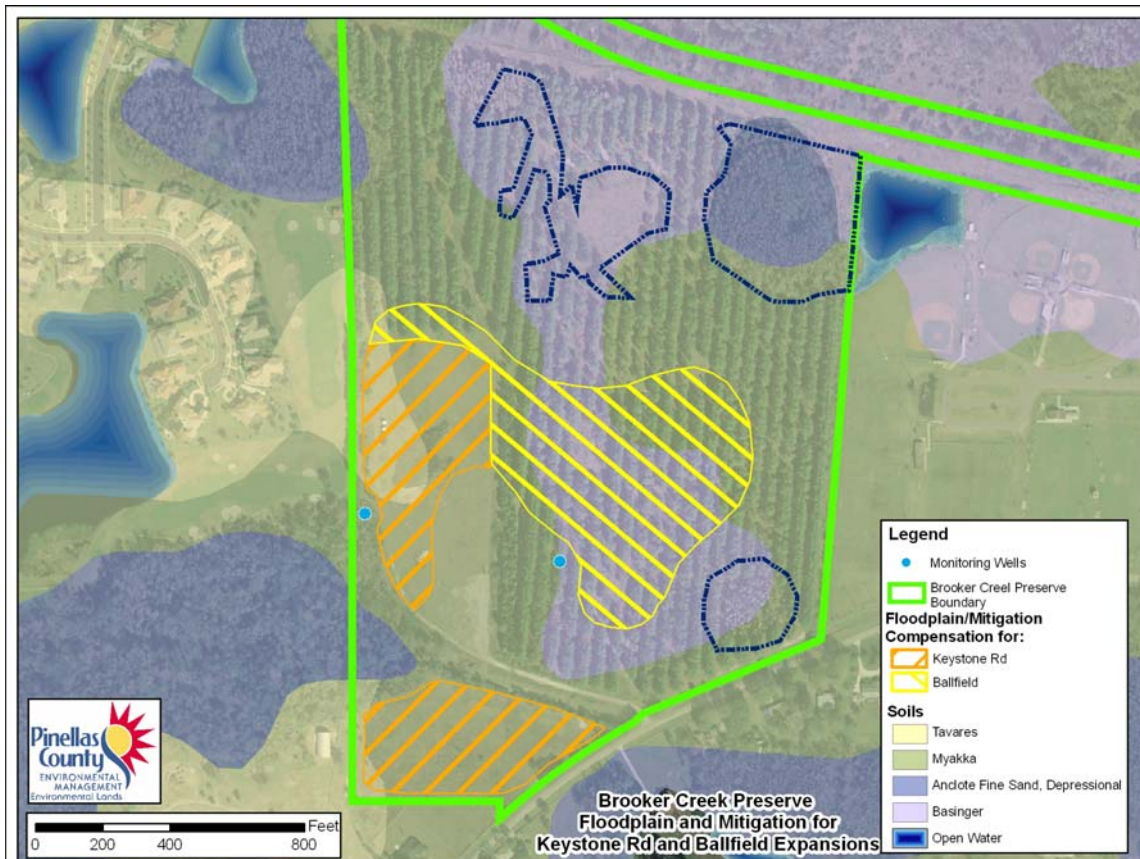


Figure 3.

This area is also the entrance to the Preserve's Scenic Horse Trail. The existing horse trailer parking will remain. A 1-acre overflow parking area north of the horse trailer parking will remain for special events at the Preserve's Education Center. The horse trail will need to be rerouted in this area after construction is complete. The trail will most likely hug the newly created wetland and will double as the maintenance access for the floodplain/mitigation site itself. Since the planted pines will need to be harvested out of the wetland creation area the Preserve staff will go ahead and have the remaining pines in the area shown in Figure 4 thinned to about 4 times a normal pine flatwoods tree density as the next step toward ecologically restoring this area. Addressing the understory will be the next step in restoring this remaining area. Fire reintroduction, broadcast seeding, and supplemental plantings will be utilized to restore the understory.

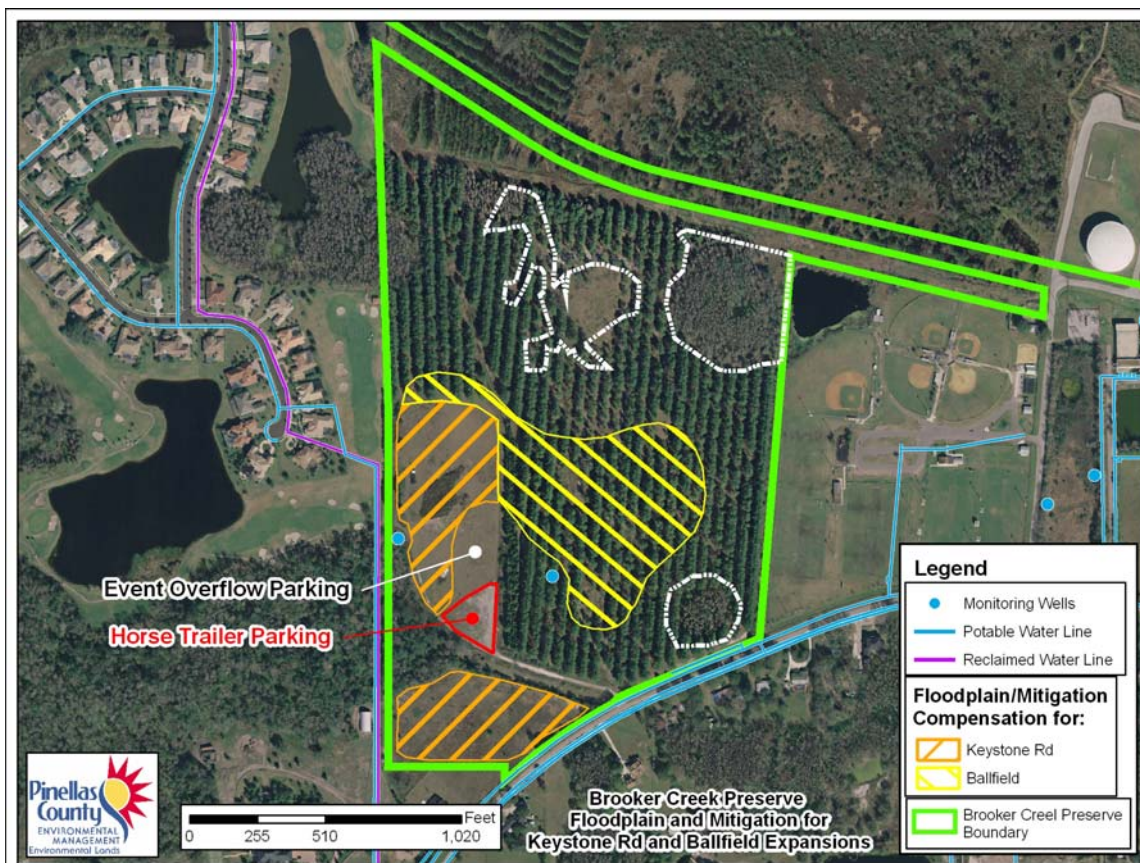


Figure 4.

There is still a need for overflow parking at the existing ELYSA site. Pinellas County Utilities owns a parcel that is directly east of the ballfields (Figure 5). This tract does not fall within the Brooker Creek Preserve. The southern 2 acres of this parcel is being evaluated for potential use as overflow parking for ELYSA as well as the Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center. The County will need to submit a formal plan to SWFWMD as the area seems to impound water even though soils surveys show Myakka soils. The County environmental permitting group is currently investigating this option.

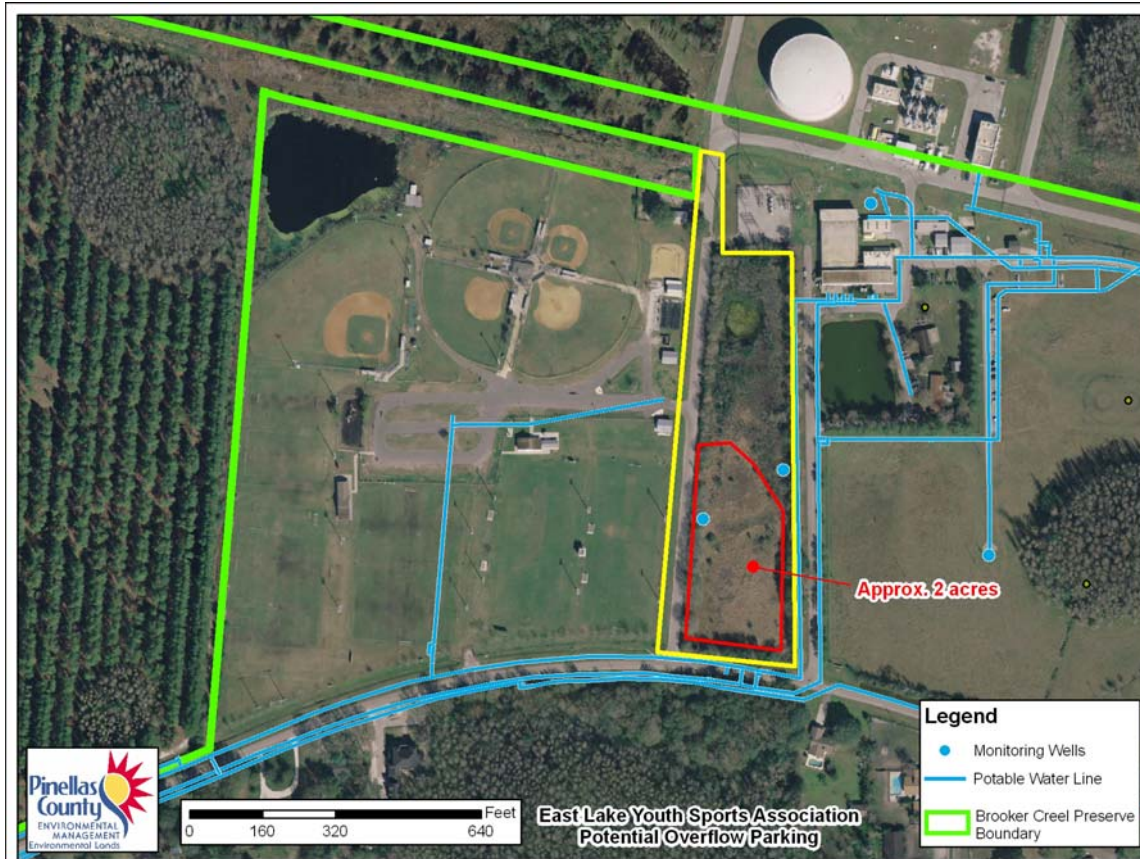


Figure 5.