Map 1C.
Pre-development Peace River/Matlacha conditions.
Estero Bay, formerly a sleepy backwater locale, was stirring under the pressures of coastal residential development. By 1965, most finger canals on Estero Island (Ft. Myers Beach) were dredged. Land clearing for the canal subdivision at Hurricane Bay was complete, along with dredging of finger canals and an access channel. The Spring Creek subdivision canals were in place. Canal excavation was under way on the Imperial River’s south shore, on the mainland side of Little Hickory Bay, and on the barrier island at Bonita Beach. By the mid-1970s, canals lined both banks of the Imperial River, and residents had moved into a waterfront subdivision on the upper Estero River.

Barrier island canal development farther north, on Sanibel and Captiva Islands, began in the early 1960s, with dredging at Halloway Bayou and at South Seas Plantation (now South Seas Resort). However, the completion of the 3-mile-long causeway in May 1963, connecting Sanibel to the mainland at Punta Rassa, awakened the islands to a building boom. By 1973, most canals on the south tip of Sanibel had been dredged.
Map 1D.
Contemporary Peace River/Matlacha Pass conditions.
While the large-scale developments mentioned earlier, at Port Charlotte and Cape Coral, had their beginnings in the late 1950s and extended throughout the 1960s, similar projects were taking shape such as at Punta Gorda Isles and Alligator Creek in northeast Charlotte Harbor. Developments along the Caloosahatchee included Deep Lagoon (Hendry Creek), Hidden Harbour (Whiskey Creek, formerly Wyoming Creek), McGregor Isles (south shore), and Waterway Estates, Hancock Creek (Yellow Fever Creek), Marsh Point, and Yacht Club Colony (north shore). The Placida and Cape Haze area development began relatively late in this period, around 1969, and continued throughout the 1970s, with construction of canals along Coral Creek and Rotunda West. These canals, however, were never connected to the bay system because of growing public concern with potential environmental impacts.

Map 1E.
Pre-development Caloosahatchee conditions.
Map 1F.
Contemporary Caloosahatchee conditions.