

Bridges of the Isles Design Build

Services Provided: Environmental Permitting

Client: City of Ft Lauderdale / FDOT District 4

Location: Broward County, FL

DESCRIPTION OF WORK:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 4, in association with the City of Ft. Lauderdale is replacing four low level bridges that link the Bridges of the Isles to Las Olas Boulevard and a bridge that connects Sunrise Key to the mainland. All five bridges were structurally deficient and functionally obsolete with substandard typical sections. As a result of public input, local government coordination, and a detailed comparative analysis of viable alternatives, the alternative was selected to replace the bridges along their existing horizontal and vertical alignments and all bridges are currently being replaced to meet current safety and design standards. CECOS was part of the MCM/Gannett Fleming Design Build Team and responsible for environmental permitting. As part of the permitting effort, CECOS conducted a marine benthic survey to determine if significant benthic resources were present. The benthic survey revealed Johnson's seagrass

(*Halophila johnsonii*), a federally listed species, was present at two of the bridges. It was determined that impact to a small amount of seagrass was unavoidable.

CECOS prepared the permit applications and supporting documents for the project, including the preparation of avoidance and minimization measures for the identified seagrass impacts, an evaluation of the seagrass habitat using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method, the development of a mitigation plan due to impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), and preparation of an Endangered Species Biological Assessment. We completed Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act consultation with NMFS for the evaluation of impacts to Johnson's seagrass, sea turtles, and small tooth sawfish and we completed EFH consultation. The mitigation plan included a water quality improvement component to each bridge (existing bridges provide no treatment) to provide improved water transparency and tidal flushing.

