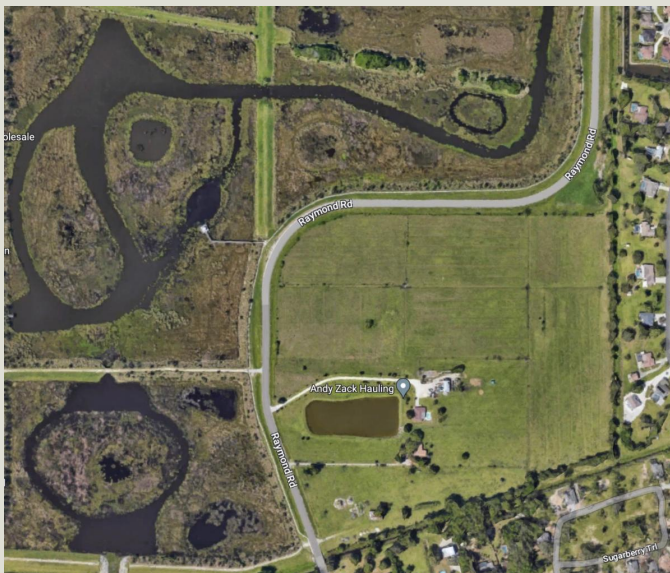




Information on Smith Farms Hearing

Smith Farms Hearing continued to October 1 at 9 a.m.



DR Horton filed a FLUEDRA (Florida Land Use and Environmental Dispute Resolution Act) motion stating the county commission had failed to provide adequate reasons for its 5-0 denial of the Smith Family Farm rezone on February 12, 2025 and further, that this denial unfairly burdened the landowner's property rights.

The proceeding took place Thursday, September 11, at the county administration building. The Sarasota Audubon as well as approximately 20 citizens were given an opportunity to speak after the attorneys representing each party made some opening remarks.

It was once again made clear that any development at this location risks the safety and well-being of visitors of this beloved park and surrounding residents as well as jeopardizing the wildlife that the community and tourists from around the world come to enjoy.

The parties then broke out into mediation which was not resolved by the end of the allotted hearing time. The hearing was extended until October 1 to continue to try and resolve the dispute through amendments to Horton's plan.

The October 1 hearing will begin at 9 a.m. at the Sarasota County Administration Building, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236

The magistrate said that, as it will be a continuation, it was not clear whether

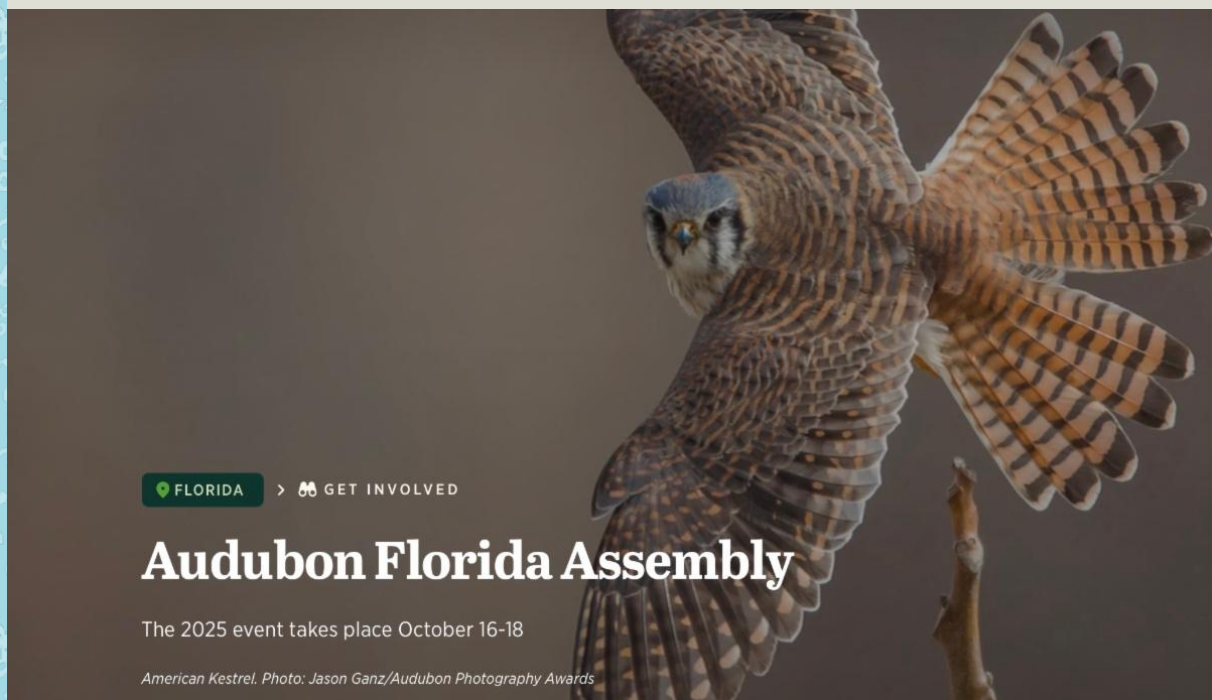
more public input will be taken.

It is our belief that any development of this property beyond its current zoning would be irreparably disruptive to birds and wildlife of Celery Fields. Increased traffic, lights, noise and pets post-development would increase risk for all those visiting Celery Fields as well as its resident wildlife.

During the hearing, the Special Magistrate asked if acquisition of the property has been considered by the County. Although it is not clear if this option was discussed during the mediation on that day, Sarasota Audubon wholeheartedly supports acquisition of this land for public purposes such as a park or stormwater facility, or a conservation easement that restricts use of the land in a manner that adequately protects and preserves the Celery Fields.

Please reach out if you have further questions.

Sara Reisinger
Sarasota Audubon President



This annual three-day event will take place in Central Florida, Howey-in-the-Hills, on October 16-18.

This year's theme is *Power of Birds, Power of Us: Science and Joy as Catalysts for Conservation.*

Early Bird price for Assembly ends tomorrow, September 5.
Guaranteed room block price ends September 15.

- **[Register for Assembly here](#)**. No promo code needed for early bird price. Don't forget to scroll down and register for a field trip in the "add-on" section. (CLI mentors do not need to register for a field trip!)

- [Access our hotel room block here.](#) Also noting—if you need a room extending up to three nights, before or after Assembly, you can call the hotel directly and they will honor our price throughout your whole trip.

[Assembly Registration](#)

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