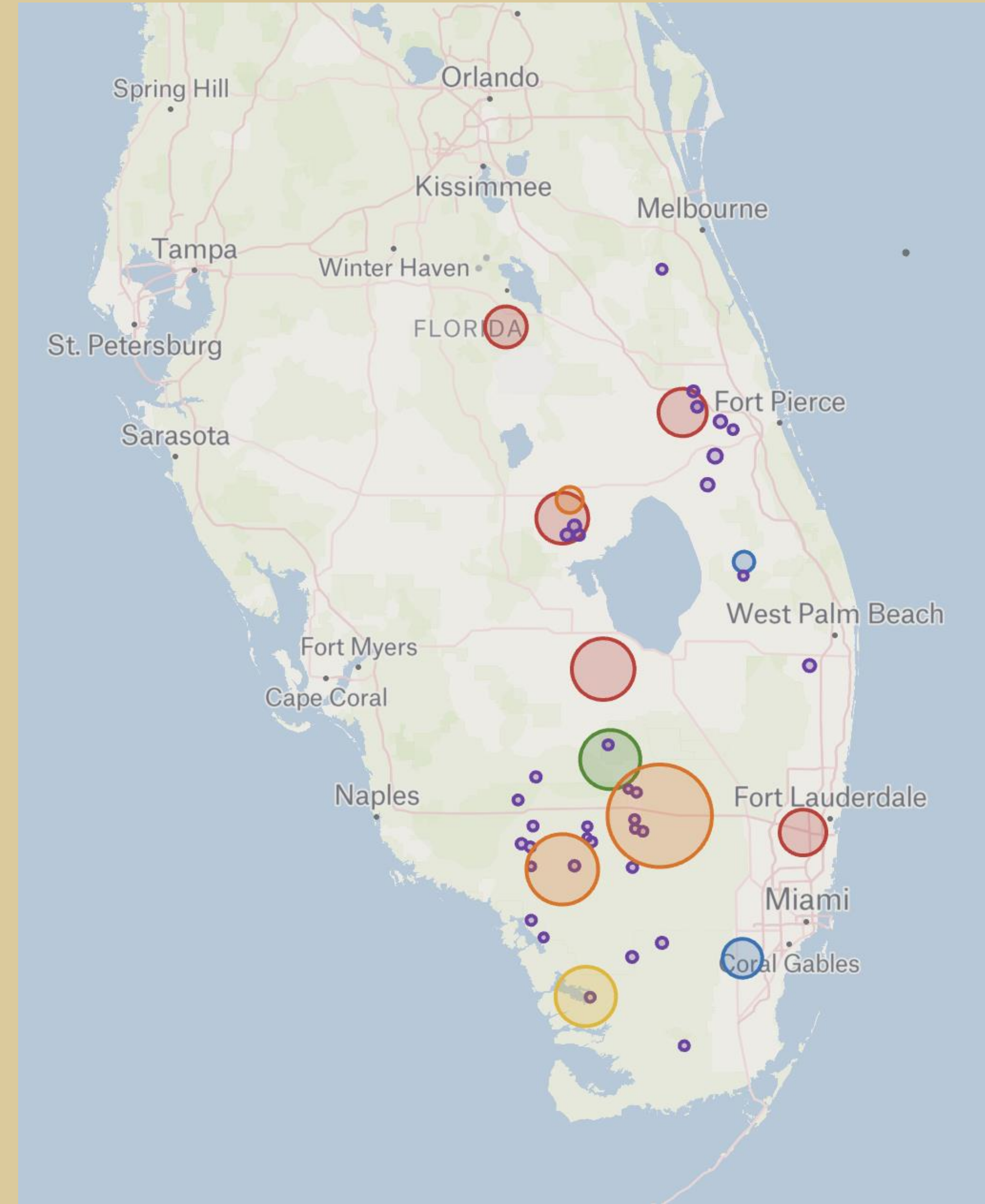


# Reclamation and Transportation: Altered Water Flow's Role in the Geographical Convergence of Seminole Camps in the Florida Everglades

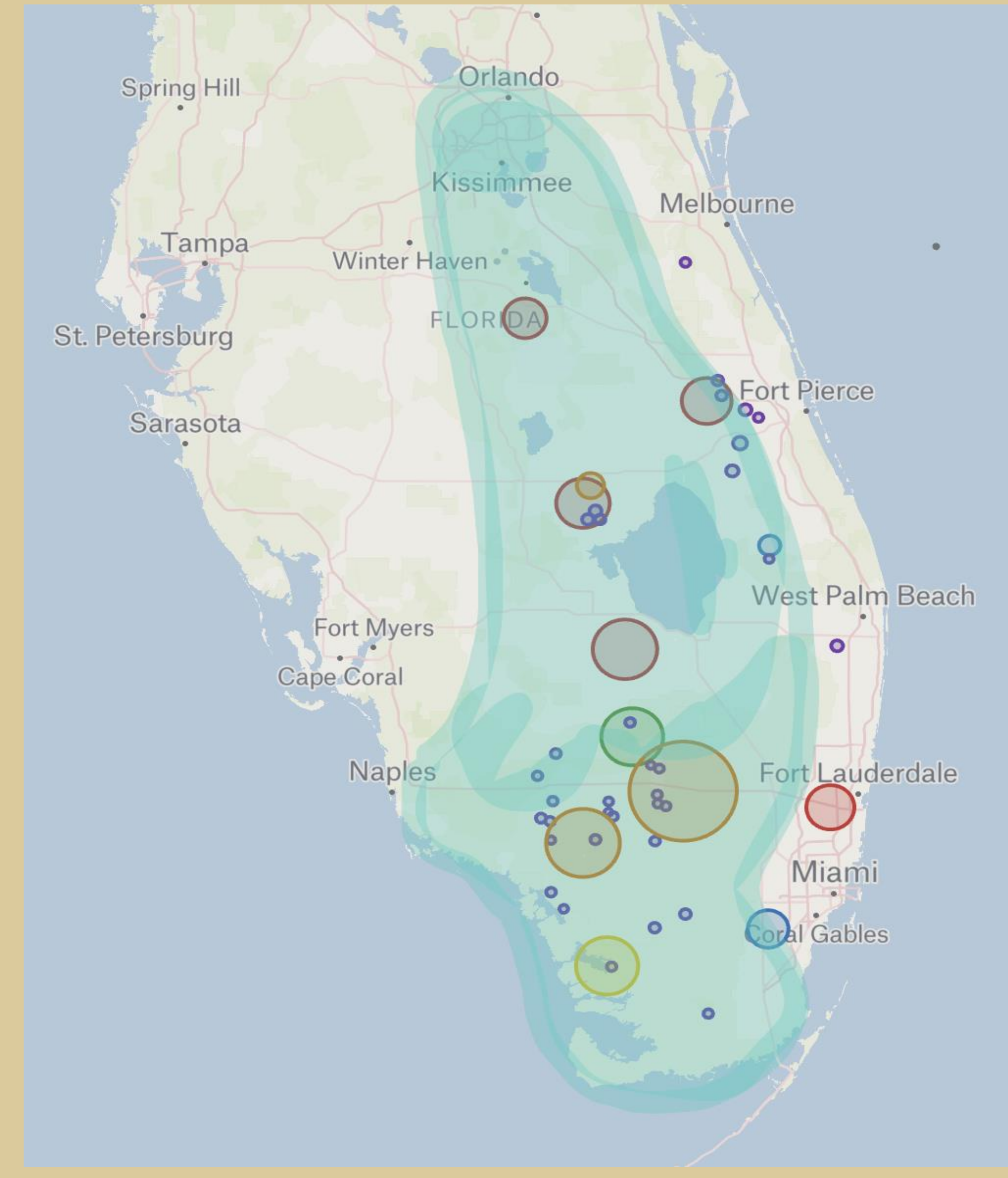
Shaelyn Taylor and Dr. Andrew Frank

## Introduction

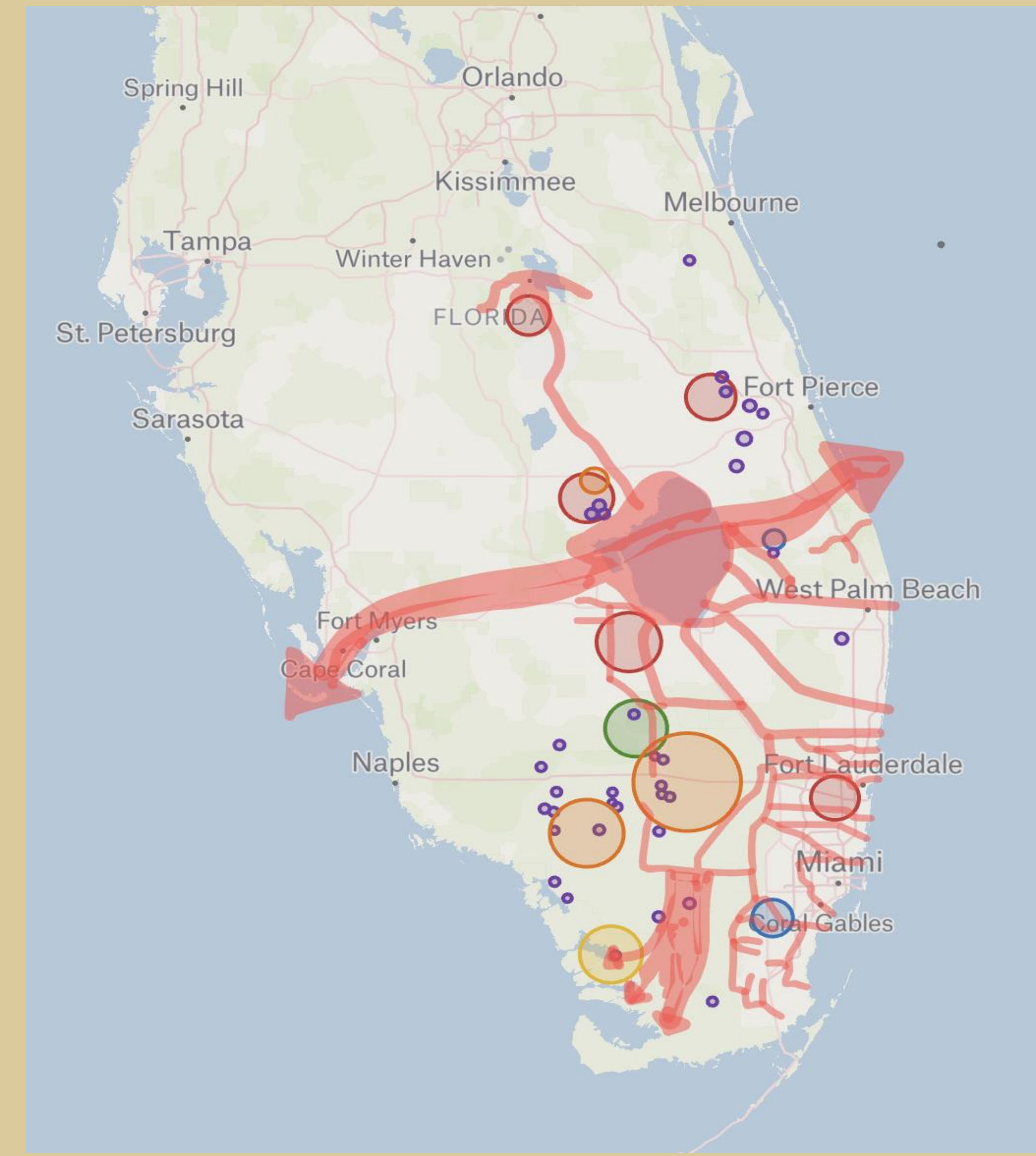
- For generations, Seminole families made their homes in camps in the wetlands of south Florida
- Seminoles relied upon the "Water Highway", an extensive collection of canoe routes, for travel, hunting, and connection between encampments and trading posts
- In the latter half of the 19th century, Florida's raw potential for development was recognized by the government, farmers, and land developers alike
- In the name of "reclamation", interested parties invested in drainage systems to render Florida's wetlands fit for cultivation and construction
- While everglades drainage was seen by developers as increasing the land's utility, this "reclamation" irreversibly altered Seminole use of the peninsula, in particular their use of dugout canoes for transportation
- This research project aimed to map out the geographical interaction of Seminole camps and the altered water flow resulting from everglades drainage projects between the years of 1880-1950
- The maps created would visualize the forced contraction of Seminole land use brought upon by changing hydrogeography
- This depicted localization of Seminole camps could help future researchers in expanding upon the incomplete records of Seminole history



Layer 1. Approximate locations of Seminole camps. Each documented camp is linked to its respective historical map by color.



Layer 2. Historic watershed of the Florida everglades according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Layer 3. Current watershed of the Florida everglades according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## Method

- Qualitative analysis of historical maps depicting Florida between the years 1880-1950
- Further analysis of data visualization post map projection
- The timespan of 1880-1950 is representative of the prime development stages concerning the draining and reclamation of Florida's wetlands
- Historical maps were acquired through the University of Florida's Digital Collections using specified search language
- The University of Florida's Digital Collections database was chosen for its temporal reach and its extensive access to the primary document of interest
- Maps were analyzed for Seminole camps and documented territories over the 70-year span
- Collected maps were overlaid on the GIS software program Felt to illustrate the geographical scope of Seminole territory
- The maps portraying historic and current water flow chosen for this comparison were generated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## Results

- 200 search results under the key words "South Florida"
- 28 maps qualified for the time-period (1880-1950) and 16 contained relevant identifications of Seminole encampments
- Of the 16 maps, six were chosen to be overlaid onto the final comparative map, the other ten used for corroboration of approximate locations for the settlements
- Each of the six maps were imported and fitted to match the outline of the Floridian base map provided by the GIS software at 50% opacity for accurate alignment
- The overlaying allowed for approximations of Seminole territories that mirrored the historic documentation
- Three interactive layers created: Seminole camps linked to their respective maps and year of documentation categorized by color, historic water shed pre-drainage and development, and current water shed resulting from drainage and development
- A majority of documented camps fell within the historic reach of Florida's wetlands
- A minority of documented camps geographically interacted with the altered water flow

## Conclusions

- This project successfully visualizes the geographical interaction between Seminole camps and the transformation of the everglades' water flow
- The wetlands historically encapsulated Seminole territories
- This redirection of flow prevented travel by longstanding canoe routes
- Loss of flooding meant loss of camp interconnectedness, trading post business, and traditional hunting methods
- The reclamation of the wetlands led to a forced re-location of Seminole camps
- The maps created can inform future researchers on the extent of publicly acknowledged Seminole documentation and its influence on individual drainage projects
- With the expansive documentation of Seminole territory in the primary years of everglades development, the developers of the time have little deniability in their role in displacing the Seminoles from their homes
- Further research should focus on developer perspectives of the Seminoles and any conscious part they played in gaining access to Seminole territory via reclamation projects

## Interactive Map of Documented Seminole Camps and Historic/Current Water Flow



## Resources

