

[https://www.yoursun.com/arcadia/news/work-underway-for-new-desoto-boat-ramp-project/article\\_07c67dc6-68d8-11ec-8605-8b468460f5b9.html](https://www.yoursun.com/arcadia/news/work-underway-for-new-desoto-boat-ramp-project/article_07c67dc6-68d8-11ec-8605-8b468460f5b9.html)

## Work underway for new DeSoto boat ramp project

By DANIEL SUTPHIN Staff Writer

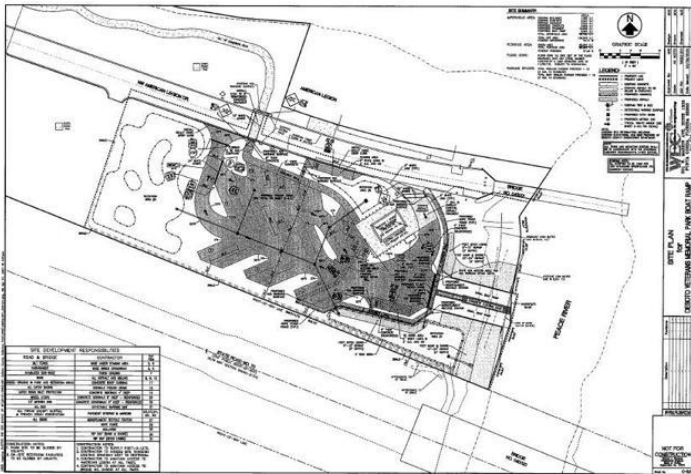
Jan 2, 2022



Work has begun on a DeSoto County project to build a new two-lane boat ramp, floating dock, parking area and more at DeSoto Veterans Memorial Park in Arcadia.  
SUN PHOTO BY DANIEL SUTPHIN

ARCADIA — Work has begun to build a new two-lane boat ramp, floating dock and more at DeSoto Veterans Memorial Park in Arcadia.

For generations, boaters have launched vessels into a corner of Peace River at the old, battered boat ramp on the west end of the park, 2195 N.W. American Legion Drive.



A site plan for the new two-lane boat ramp, parking area and more on the east end of DeSoto Veterans Memorial Park in Arcadia.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DESOTO COUNTY

Despite the old ramp's popularity, it just isn't the best option, according to DeSoto County Public Information Officer Sara Walker.

“The old ramp has had many complaints over the years about the flow of the current,” Walker said. “It has been described to have a backflow (or) rush and is not conducive to a good ramp.”

County studies and engineering efforts have shown the better current is at the east end of the park between the State Road 70 bridge and the historic Peace River Bridge, or old S.R. 70 which serves as a pedestrian bridge now.

DeSoto's Road and Bridge Department broke ground on the project the last week of October.

Thomas Marine Construction will begin construction of the boat ramp and the floating dock portion today.

Walker said Thomas Marine's contract gives them 240 days to complete their portion.

The project also calls for construction of retaining walls, a large parking lot, three storm-water ponds, and sidewalk area.

“All will be handicap accessible, and all will be relocated to the east end of the park, down by the current bathroom and restroom building,” Walker said.

---

Plans for the new boat ramp date back to the mid-2000s.

“This plan began actually as part of the Parks Master Plan established after Hurricane Charley back in 2004, 2005,” Walker said. “Grant funding had been applied for back in 2008, 2009, but funding was not received.”

In February 2020, DeSoto County commissioners gave county staff the go-ahead to complete a grant application as part of the Florida Boating Improvement Program, FBIP, with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

This time, the grant stuck.

The cost of the overall project is around \$1.6 million with \$1.1 million in grant funding from the FWC through the FBIP grant program.

Walker said another \$500,000 is match funding by the DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners and around \$340,000 cash match from the DeSoto’s Parks Department.

“The other \$160,000 is in-kind services through the County’s Road and Bridge Department,” she added. “The Road and Bridge Department is doing some demolition, layouts for the parking lot and digging two of the three storm-water retention ponds.”

For the project, DeSoto County hired Weiler Engineering for the boat ramp designs, as well as engineering and permitting back in 2019, 2020.

Permitting for the new ramps was obtained through both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Walker said they’ve been receiving positive feedback so far from area boaters.

“Some of the local boaters from the community have had positive reactions to seeing a new boat ramp and its new location,” she said.

---

Email: [daniel.sutphin@yoursun.com](mailto:daniel.sutphin@yoursun.com)

