

Driving Directions Texas Water Safari

Updated May 2023



These directions were started to help provide out of town family who were coming in to TC driving directions. They have been a work in progress since 2010. While I try to make sure these directions are accurate and up to date...I make no guarantees. Things have been known to change due to flooding or construction so use at your own risk. Any updates or changes (especially regarding checkpoints or access) provided by the Texas Water Safari or Texas Water Safari Board will override what is in these directions.

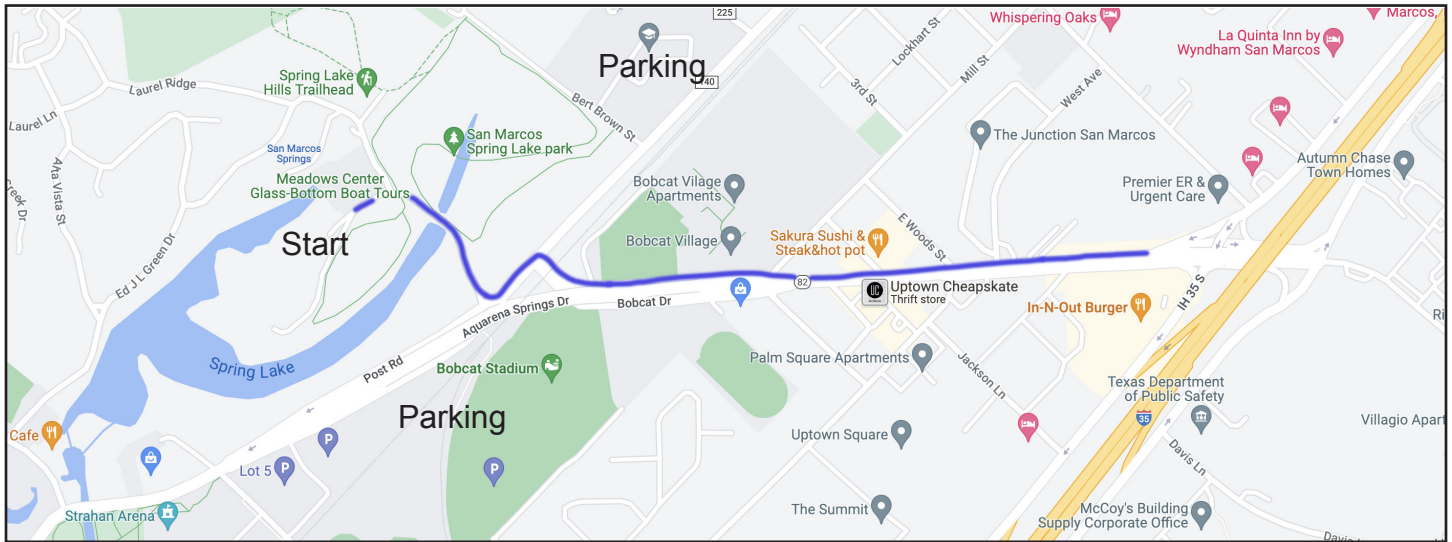
Please send any suggestions to Kate Tart at kathryn.tart@gmail.com.
Have fun and drive safe.

(1) Aquarena Springs ** (Mile 0 - 9:00 am Saturday) RACE START

Coming South on IH-35:

- Exit IH-35 (Exit 206) at Aquarena Springs Drive (Tx 82). Stay on frontage until you reach Aquarena Springs Drive. Take a right on Aquarena Springs Drive.
- This road will lead you directly to Aquarena Center. Stay to the right and do not get on the over-pass. Take a left on 140 and then a right on Post Rd/Laurel St. Directly across from Bobcat Stadium. Go through golf course.

PARKING: Parking is available in parking lots once you pass through the golf course although it will fill up. Alternate parking is available across Hwy 80 in the Campus parking lots. Shuttles have run in previous years from nearby parking lots over to Aquarena Springs.



Entrance through Golf course



Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

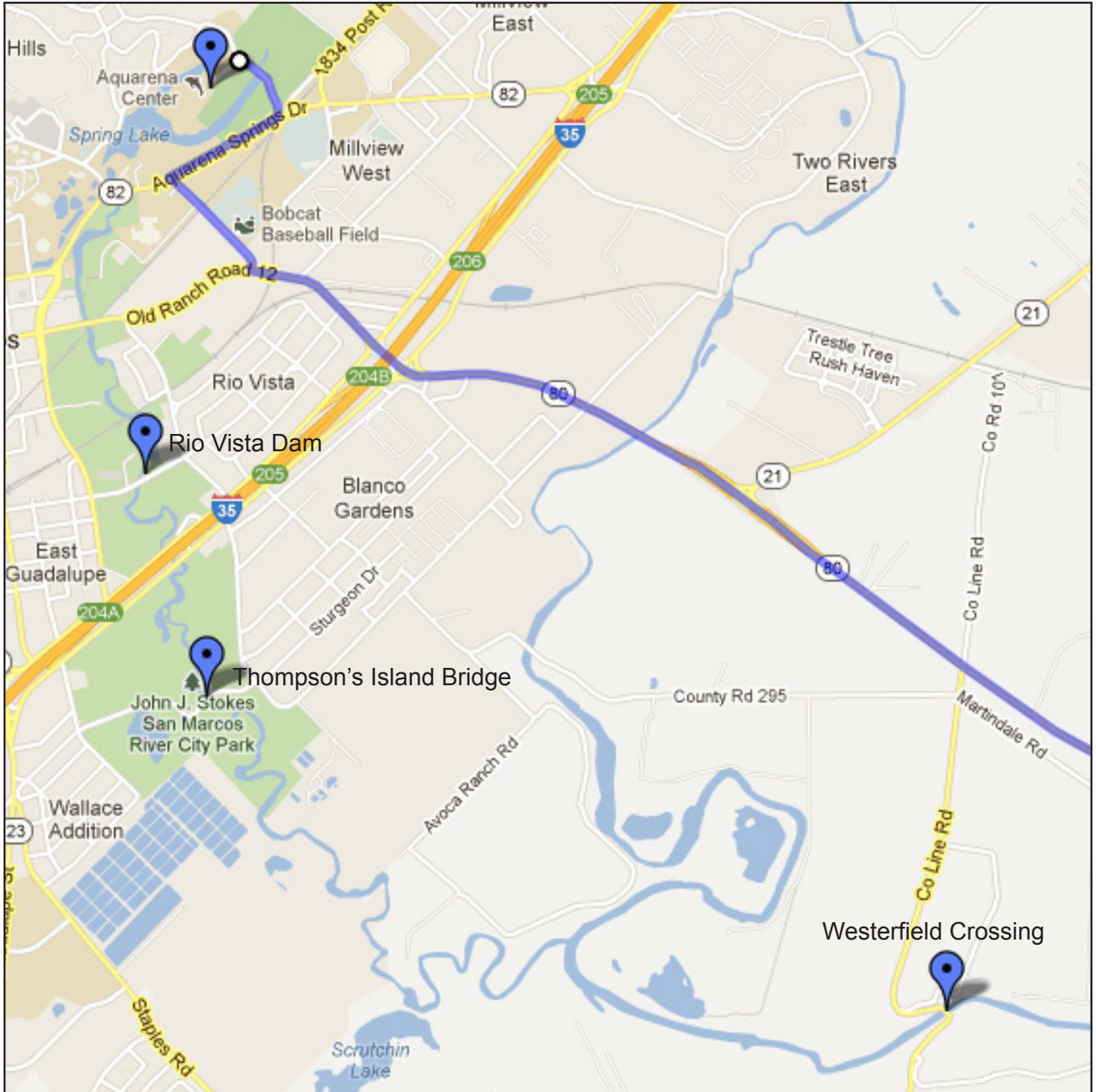
Alternate viewing spots for the beginning of the race:

Note: You cannot watch the start at Aquarina Springs and make it to these spots by car to view the boats.

Rio Vista Dam (Mile .75 from start)

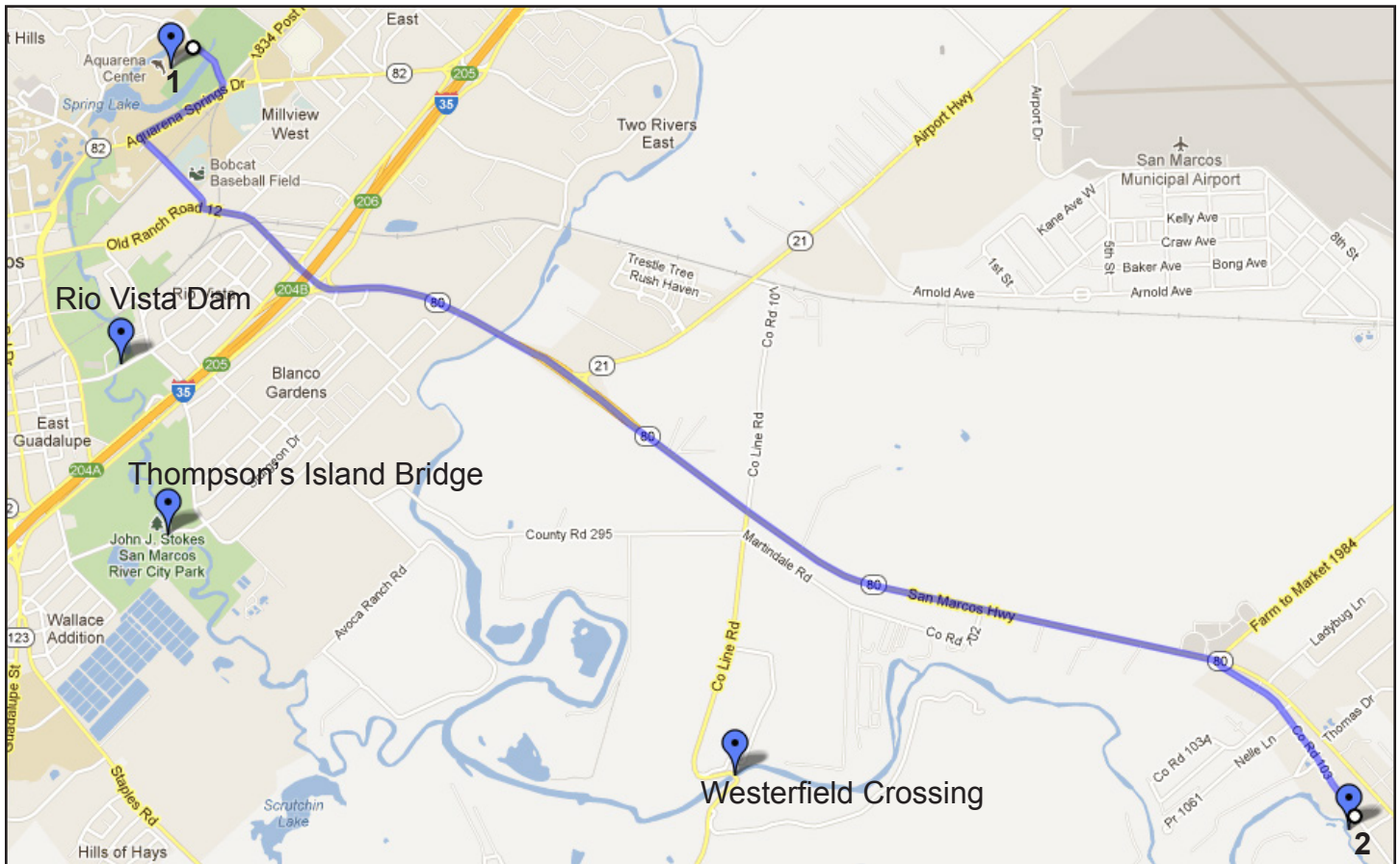
Thompson's Island Bridge (Mile 2.5 from start)

Westerfield Crossing (Mile 6 from start)



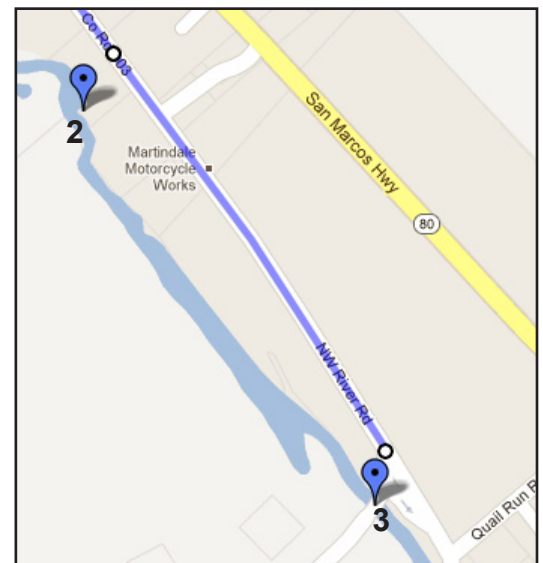
(2) Cottonseed Rapid (Mile 9)

- Go back to Aquarina Springs Drive and turn right.
 - Proceed (.3 miles) to Charles Austin Drive (stop light) and turn left.
 - Proceed (.3 miles) to E. Hopkins St. and turn left. East Hopkins Drive turns into HWY 80.
 - Once you go under 1-35, continue on HWY 80 for 3.5 miles to stop light at CR 103/NW River Road and turn right.
 - Proceed (.1 mil) past two water towers. Park between the 2nd water tower (old and rusted) and the old Cotton Gin on the side of the road. (Private property accessible only on raceday, be considerate.)
- Note: This will be one of the major stops to watch a lot of boats.



(3) Sculls Crossing (Mile 10)

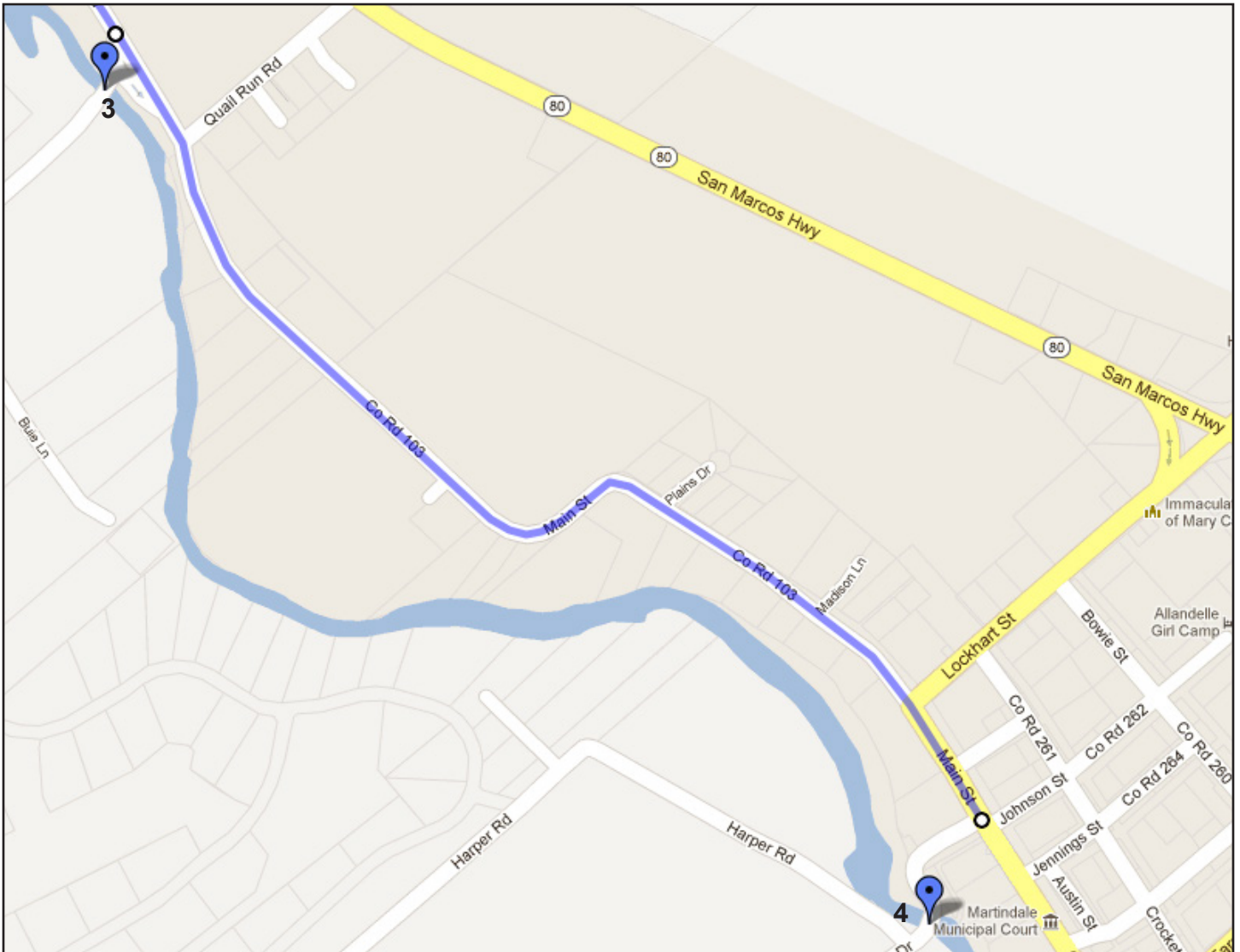
- Continue on CR 103 approximately .3 miles to dirt road Sculls Crossing.



(4) Martindale Low water bridge/ Martindale Dam (Mile 11)

(15 min driving from Cottonseed to Martindale)

- Continue on CR 103/NW River Road. On your right you will see a blue metal building and a silver Martindale water tower. Turn right on Diveney Drive (no street sign). It's a one lane dirt road (one lane bridge) right next to the building and water tower. House #205 is across the street. Cross bridge and park (very limited parking) or park on River Road and walk down.



Martindale Dam / Bridge

Diveney Drive - Park here and walk down or drive down.

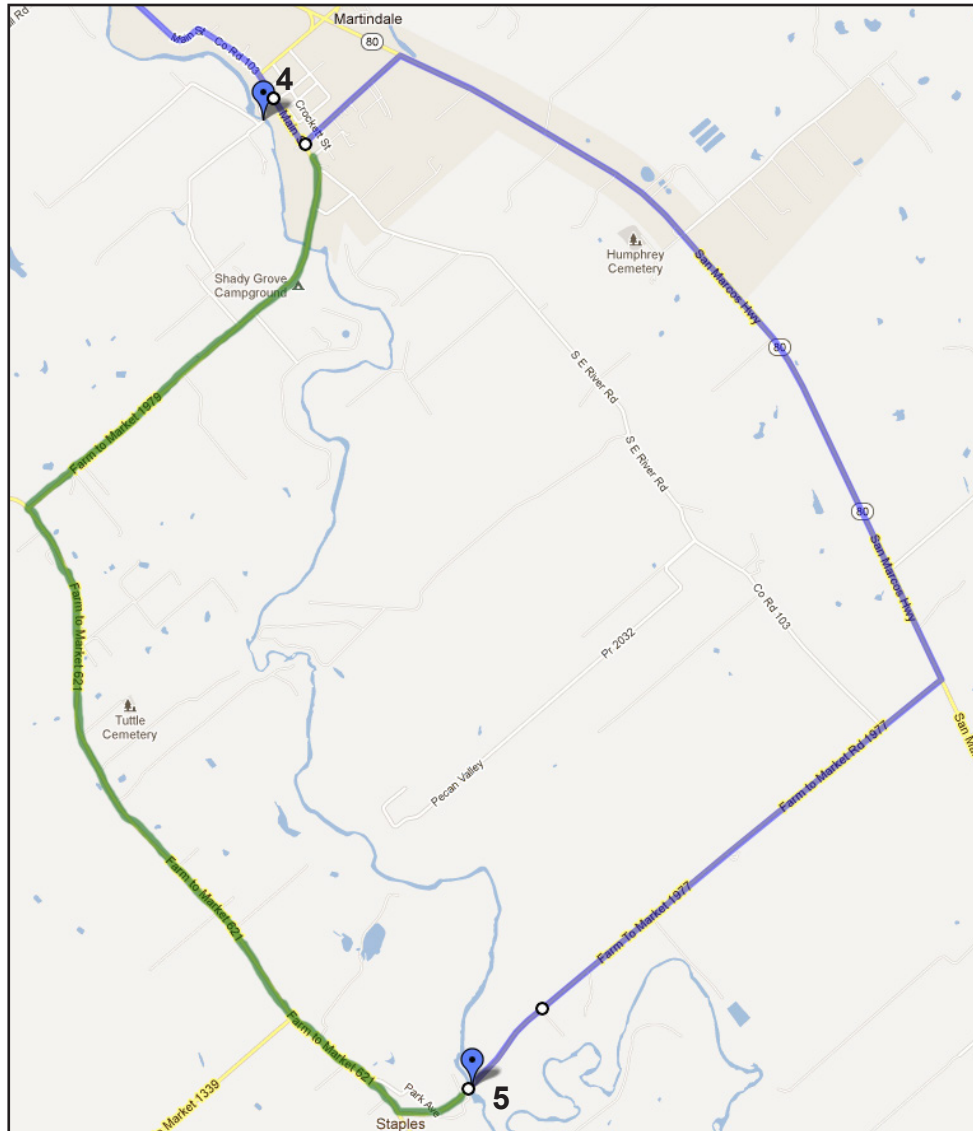


Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

(5) Staples Bridge/Dam: (CHECKPOINT-1) (Mile 17) (Portage) (DEADLINE: 3:00 PM SATURDAY)

Go back to Main Street, take a right. Proceed to FM 1979 and turn left. Return to Hwy 80 and turn right. Go (3.4 mi.) on Hwy 80 to FM 1977, turn Right. 2.3 mi. to bridge.

Teams will portage both river left and river right. Best spectator viewing is on river right. The owners are very hospitable to TWS so please be considerate.



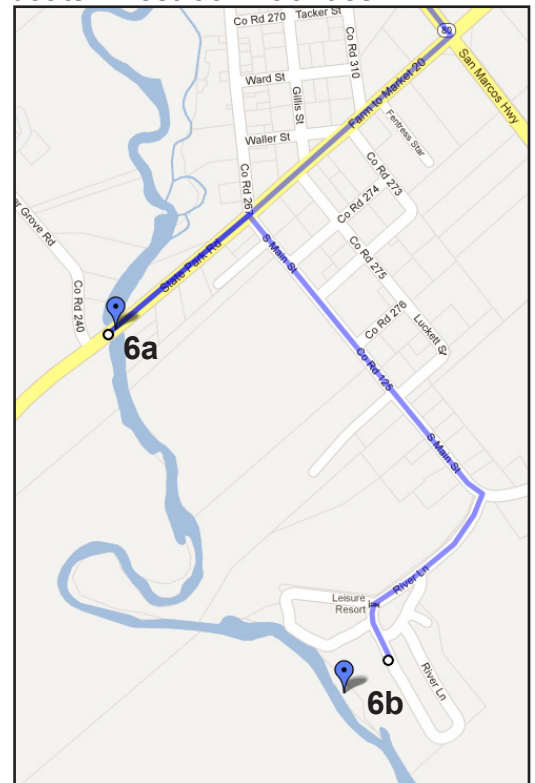
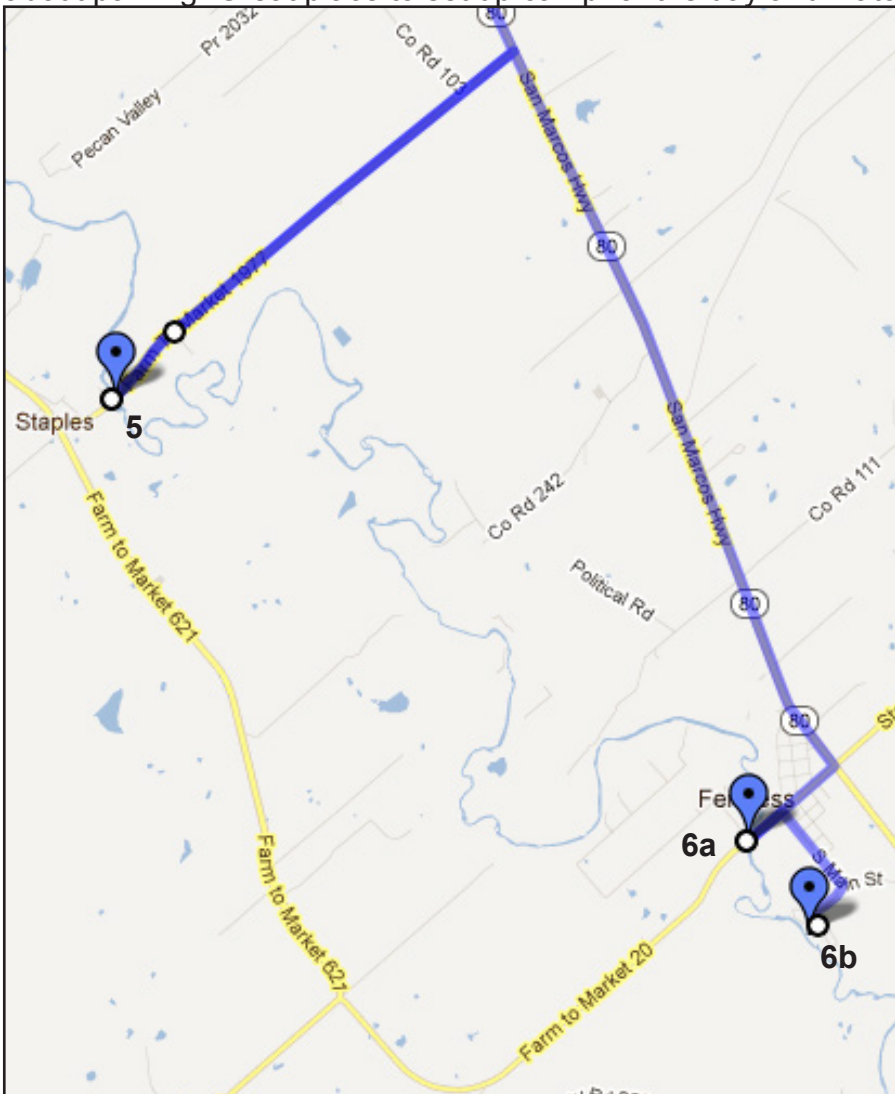
(6a) Fentress Bridge (Mile 26)

- Back to Hwy 80, Turn right
- Go 3.6 mi to FM 20 and turn right. (There is a flashing yellow light and a Valero gas station at turn.)
- Turn right on Hwy 20 to bridge. Park on either side.

(6b) Fentress Leisure Camp (Great viewing area for all ages) (Mile 27)

- Follow directions to Fentress Bridge but before you get to the bridge turn left on CR125/South Main (Church on corner).
- Go (.4 mi.) to Leisure Camp on Right (entrance fee required).

Pay at the gate. Continue to drive down as close to the river as you can get. Follow posted rules about parking. Great place to set up camp for the day and watch boats. Restroom facilities.



Sign to Fentress
Leisure Camp

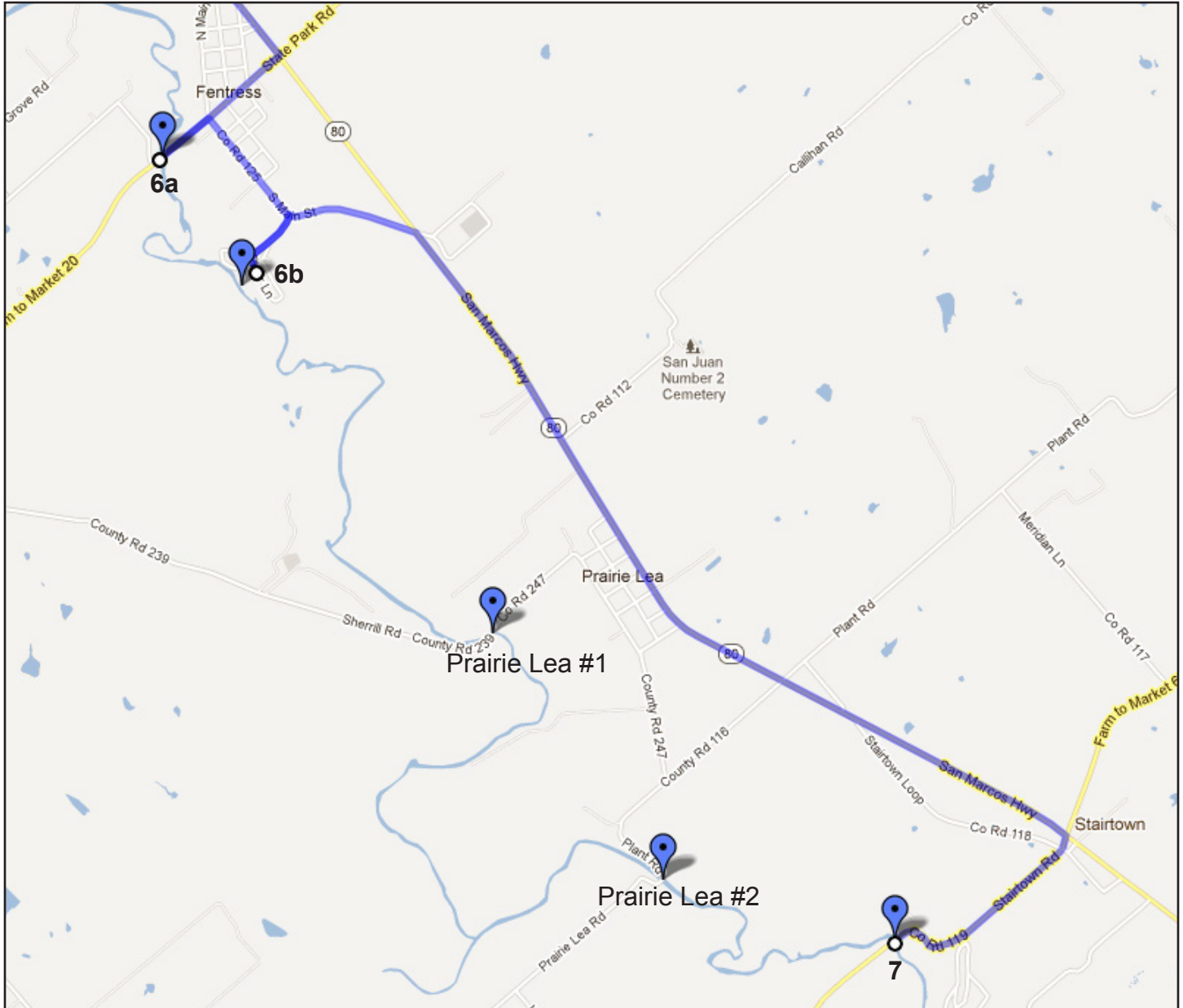
Spectators at
Leisure Camp



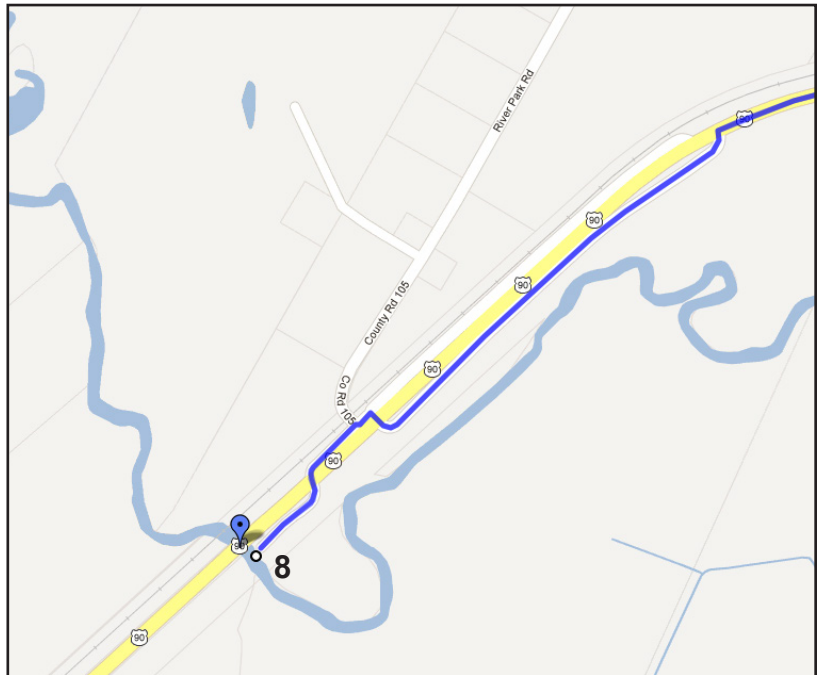
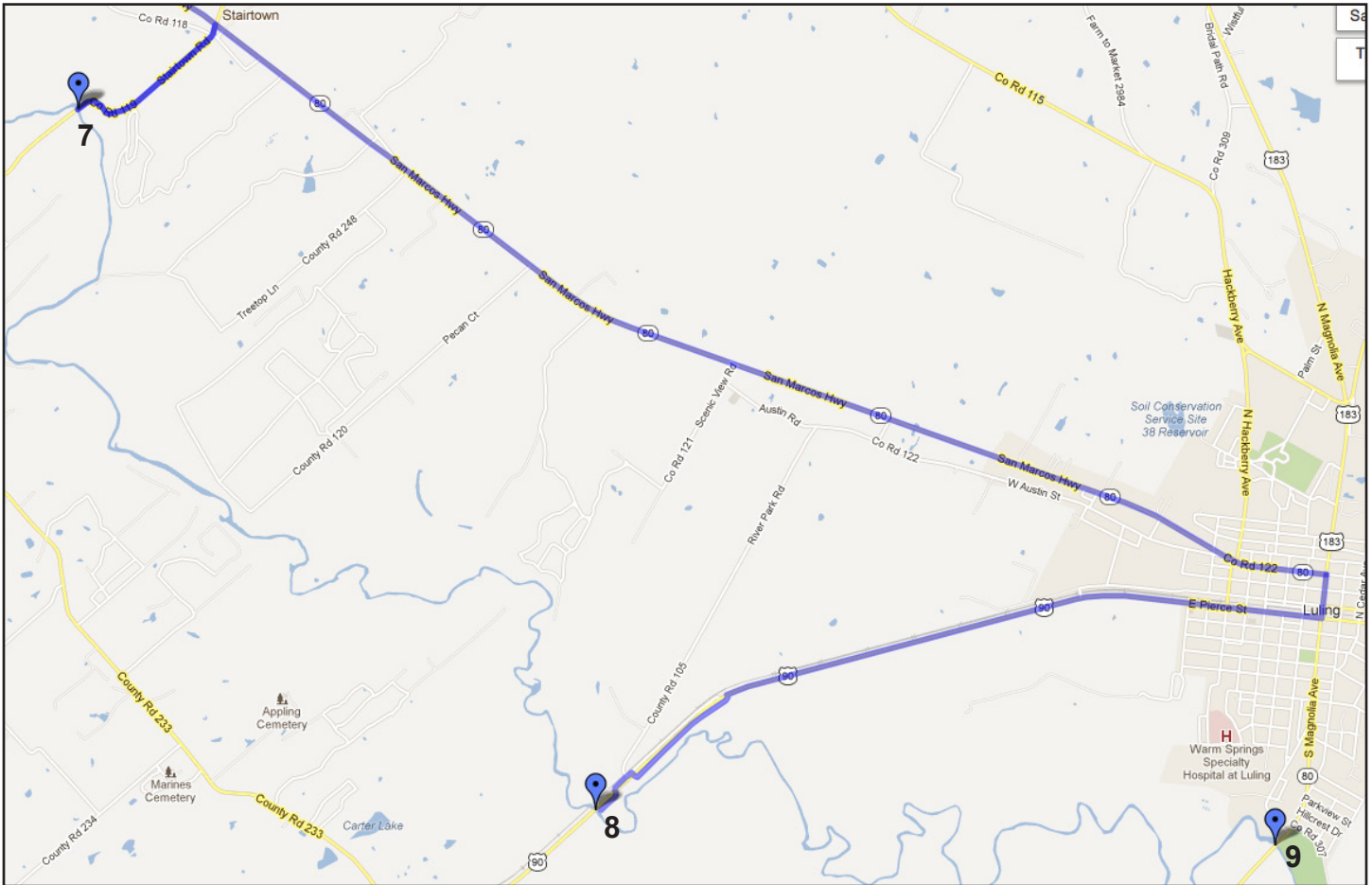
(7) Stairtown Bridge (Mile 33)

- Back to Hwy 80. Turn right (1.8 mi.) to CR119/ Stairtown Road (NOT Stairtown Loop).
- Turn right (.8 mi.) to bridge.
- Follow dirt road on left to get down to the river.

Note: There are two bridges, Prairie Lea #1 and Prairie Lea #2 where you can view the river between Fentress and Luling.



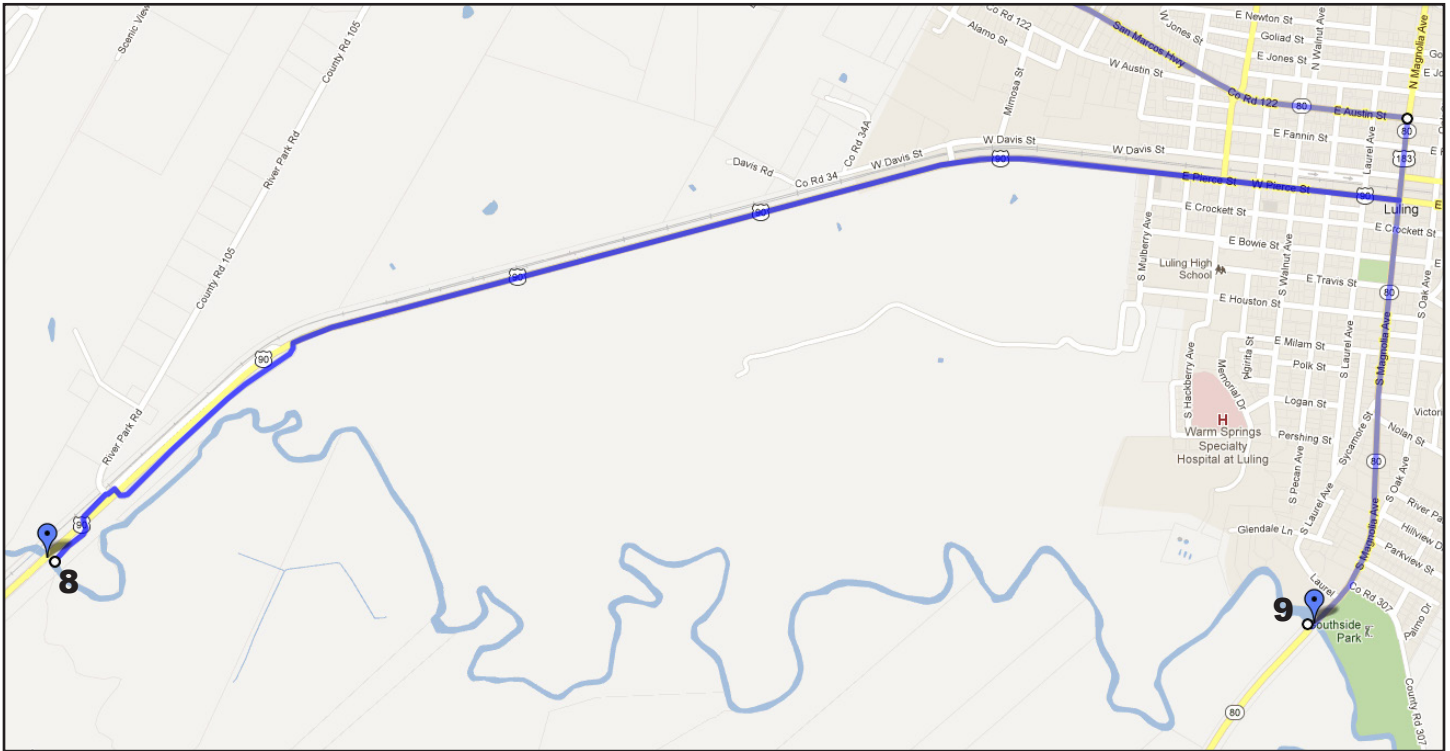
- Back to Hwy 80 Turn Right. Travel into Luling. Turn right at stop light onto HWY 183. Turn right at stop light onto HW 90 West. Drive 2.6 miles on on HWY 90 to picnic area. Look for sign saying 1 mile to picnic area. Turn left before the bridge (Paddling Trail) - easy to miss. It's the first left after leaving town. Go under bridge, stay left, go under bridge again, continue down to river.



Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

(9) Luling Dam/Zedler Mill (Mile 46)

• Go back to Hwy 90 and turn Right, travel 2.6 mi. to Hwy 80. Turn right onto HWY 80. Zedler Mill is on the right (Laurel Street). Parking is available on both sides of the bridge. Portage will be on right side of river but best spectator viewing is from Zedler Mill or under the Hwy 80 bridge.

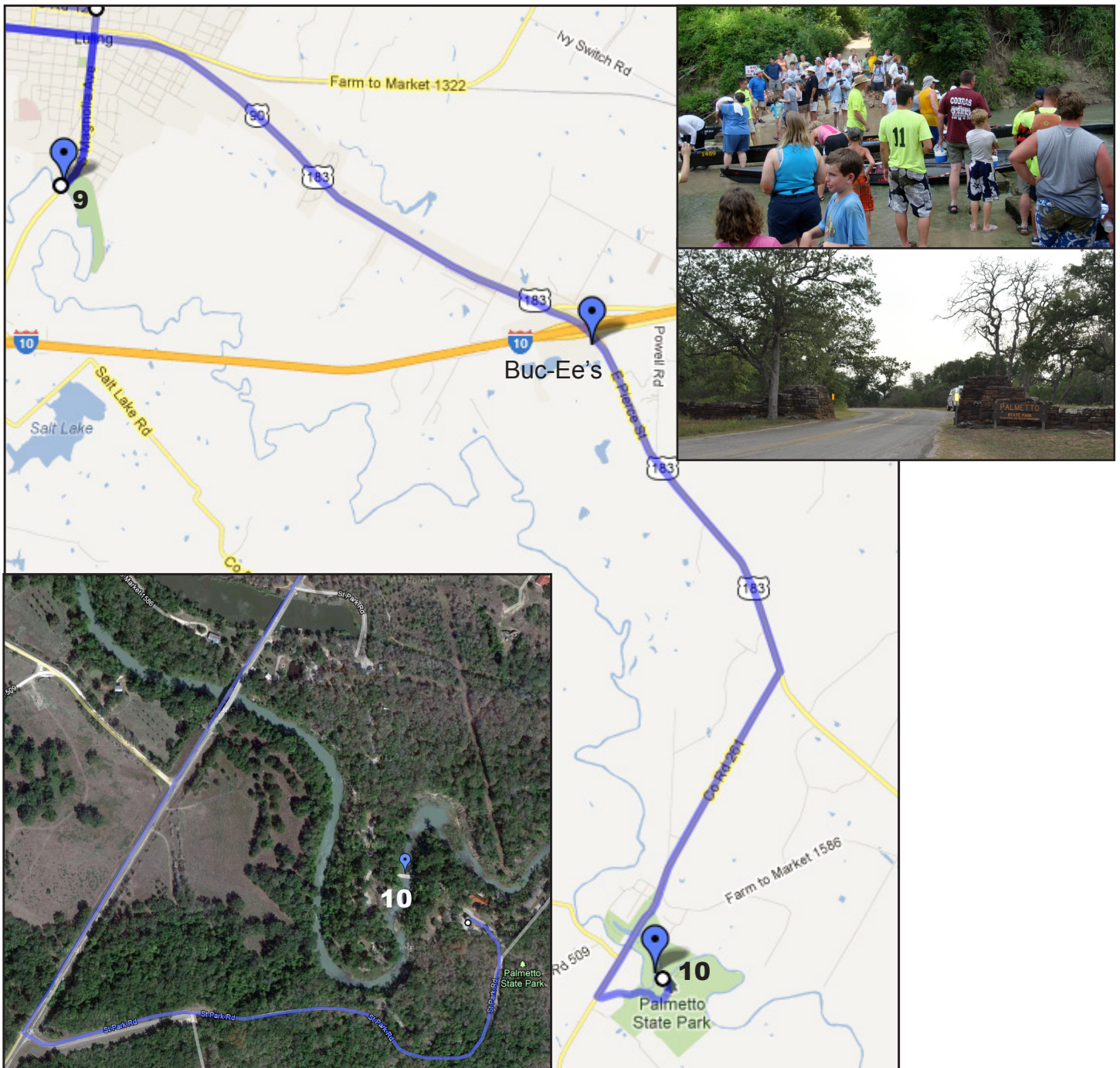


Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

(10) Palmetto State Park ** (CHECKPOINT-3) (Mile 60) (DEADLINE: 8:00 AM SUNDAY)

- From Luling intersection of Hwy 80 and Hwy 90/183,
- Turn right onto Hwy 90/183.
- Go (6.2mi) to Park Road 11, turn right (Stone wall/entrance to State Park - see pic below).
Look for "Palmetto State Park 1 mile ahead" signs along Hwy 90/183.
- Proceed (1.9 mil) to Ottine (4-way stop w/FM 1586).
- Continue straight (Park Headquarters will be on Right) (.8 mi) cross 3 bridges, to second PR 11 sign.
- Turn left take PR 11 for (.5 mi) to pay station/parking (If you don't have a pass purchased at the start of the race you must stop and pay entrance fee).

Note: Follow signs or park personnel - bridge/portage (seen in satellite image below) may be access from both sides of the river. If parking is full on one side you may be directed to the other parking area. Restroom/shower facilities here.



Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

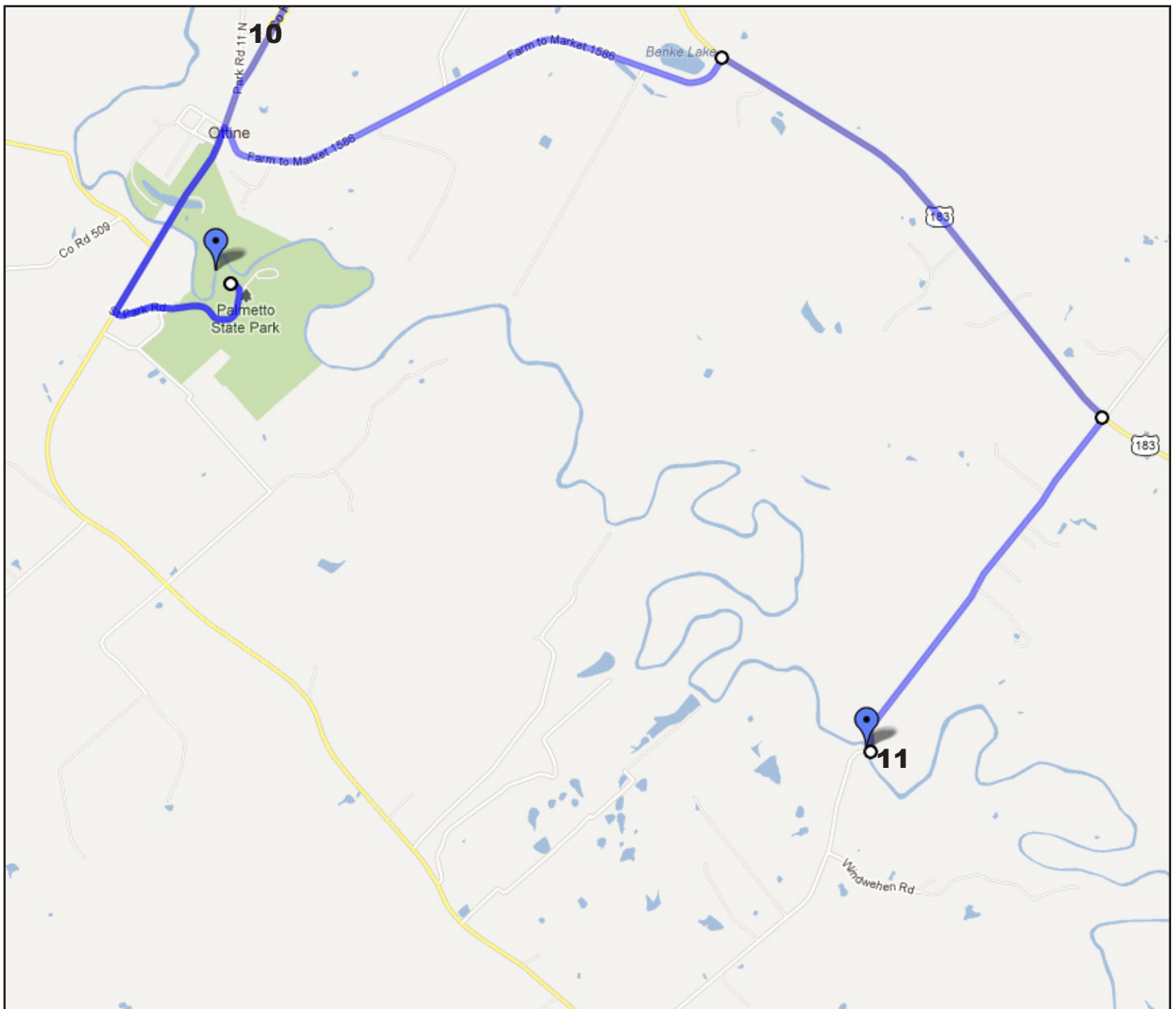
(11) Slayden Cemetery Road (Mile 68)

• NOTE: Bridge is closed to driving. You can walk across but will be unable to drive across. You can access from bridge from both sides, just know you will have to go out the way you came in.

- Back to main park road. Turn Right
- Return to 4-way stop FM 1586, turn right (Old Warm Springs Hospital and Water Tower on Corner).
- Go (2.1 mi) back to Hwy 90/183 on FM 1586, turn right.
- Go (2 mi) to (metal chicken houses on left side of Hwy183) CR 232/Slayden Cemetery Road. (This is a gravel Road), turn right (1.5 mi) to bridge. Park on either side of bridge.

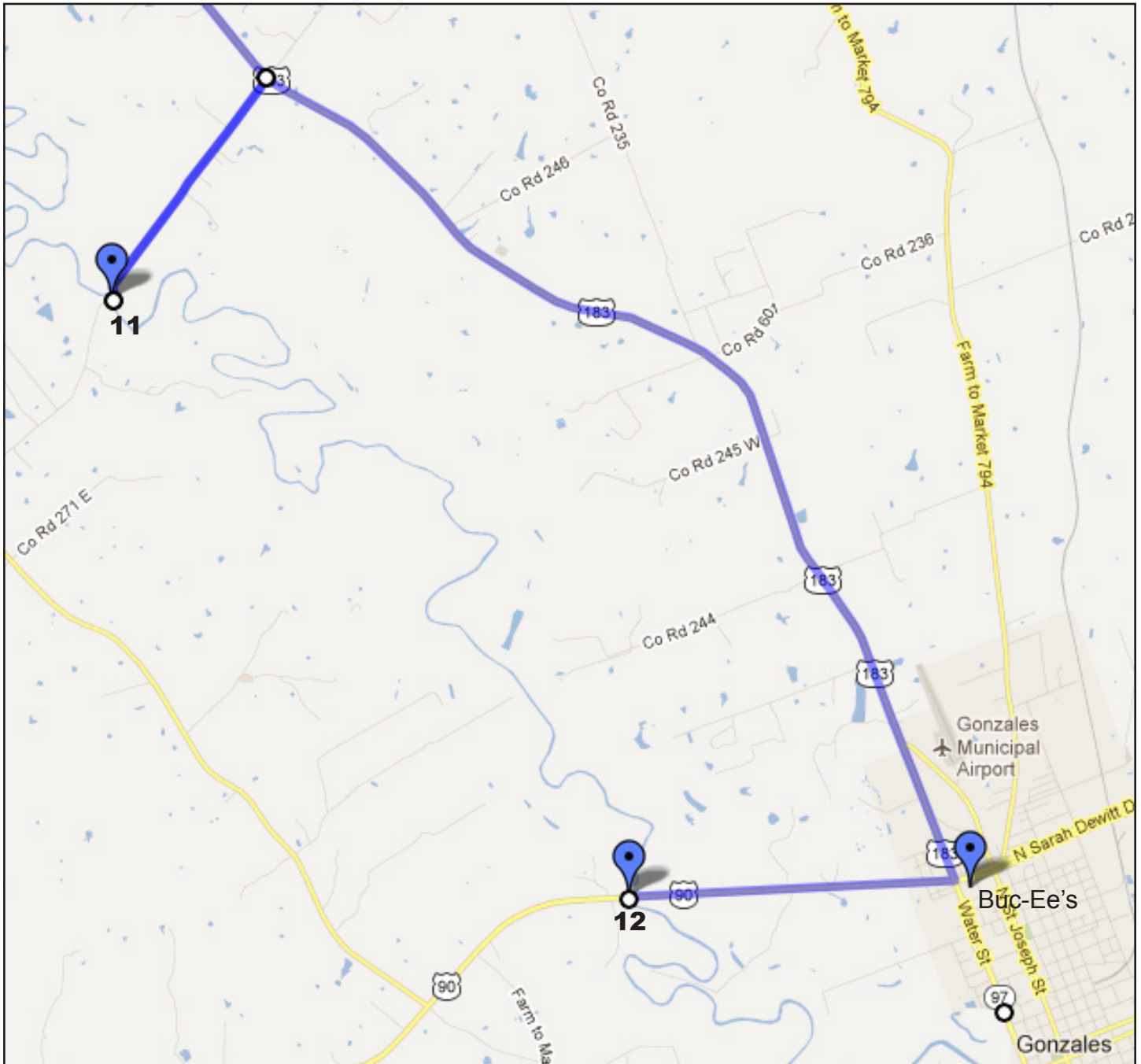
Note: Primarily spectator viewing - difficult river access.

Alternate route: Leave Palmetto State park traveling south on 2091 and then left on CR 232.



(12) Gonzales Hwy 90 Bridge (Mile 77)

- Back to Hwy 183. Turn right
- Go (6.3 mi) to traffic light intersection of Hwy 183 and Hwy 90A. (Holiday Inn Express and Sleep Inn will be on your left before the turn. Buc-ee's is on the southeast corner at the stoplight)
- Turn right on Hwy 90A.
- Bridge is (1.9 mi). Cross Bridge and turn left (Private Property be Respectful).



(13) Gonzales Dam (CHECKPOINT-4) (Mile 84) (CHECKPOINT LOCATION CHANGE 2023)

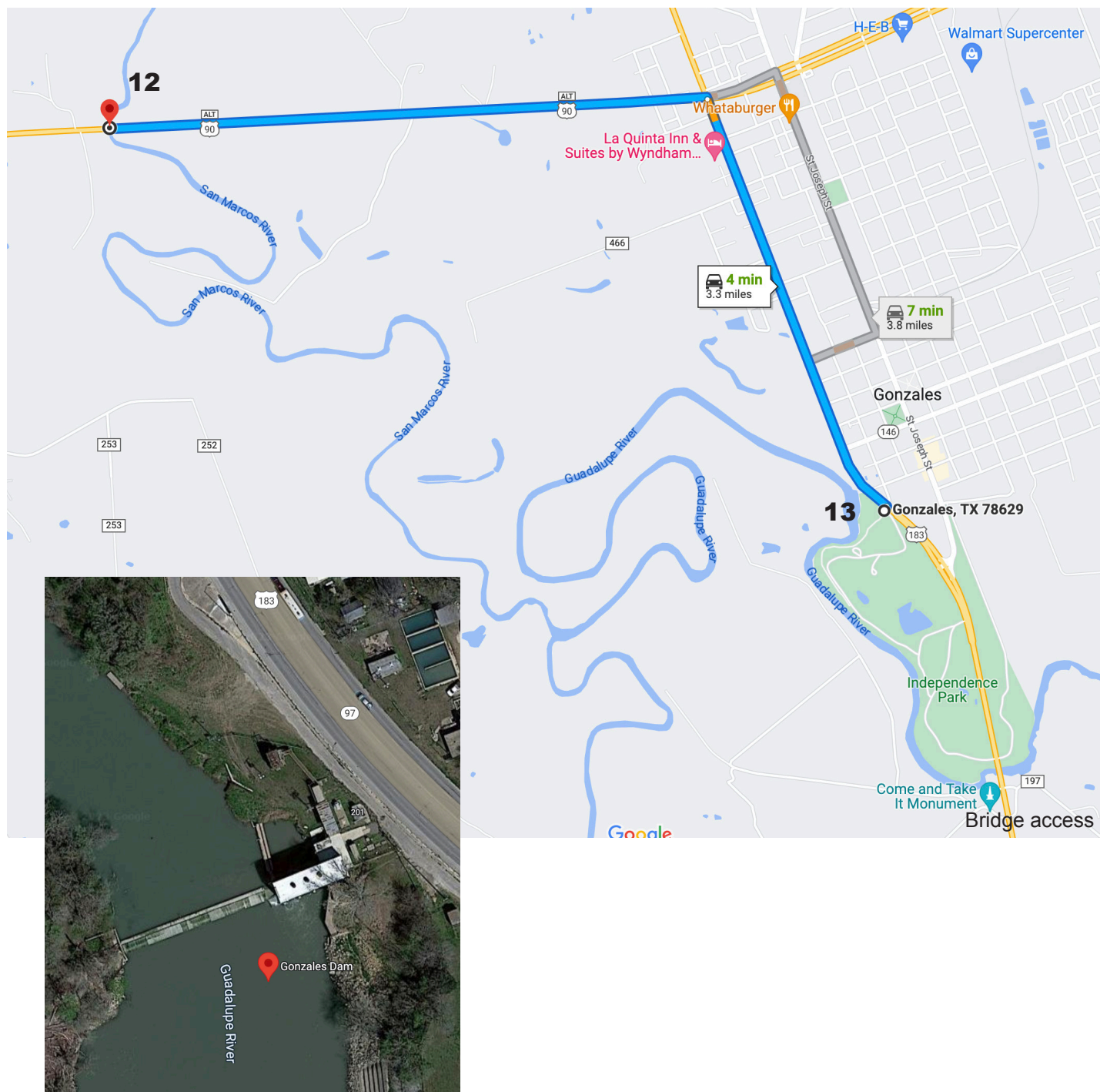
Mandatory Left portage (DEADLINE: 4:00 PM SUNDAY)

- Back to light at the intersection of Hwy 90A and Hwy 183.
- Turn right on Hwy 183.
- Continue about 1.3 miles. Dam will be on your right. Parking is located at the first right after the dam.

Hwy 183 Bridge (1.3 miles after the dam/checkpoint)

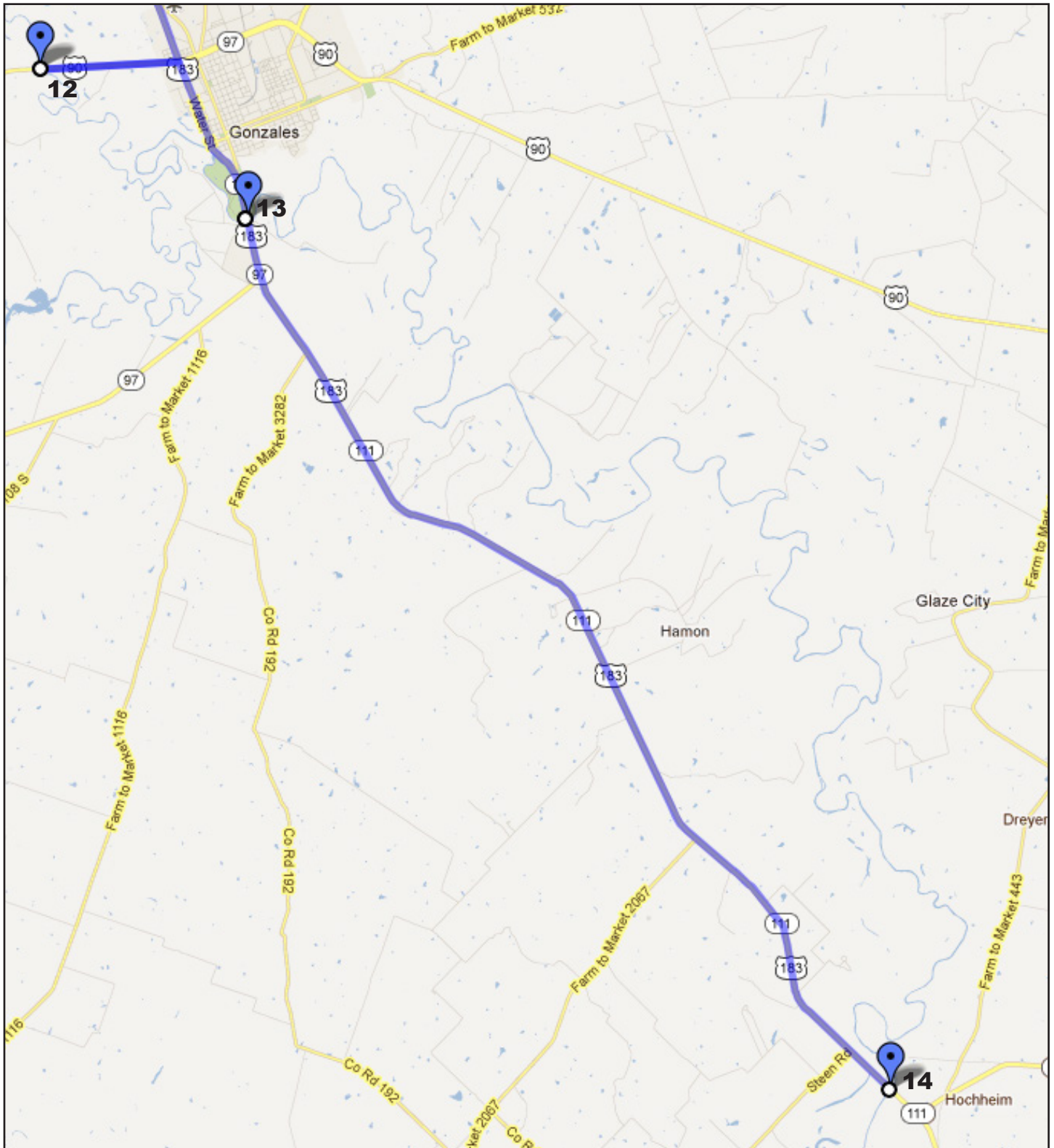
Continue over the Guadalupe River Bridge.

Take first right after bridge on CR 197 to checkpoint under bridge.



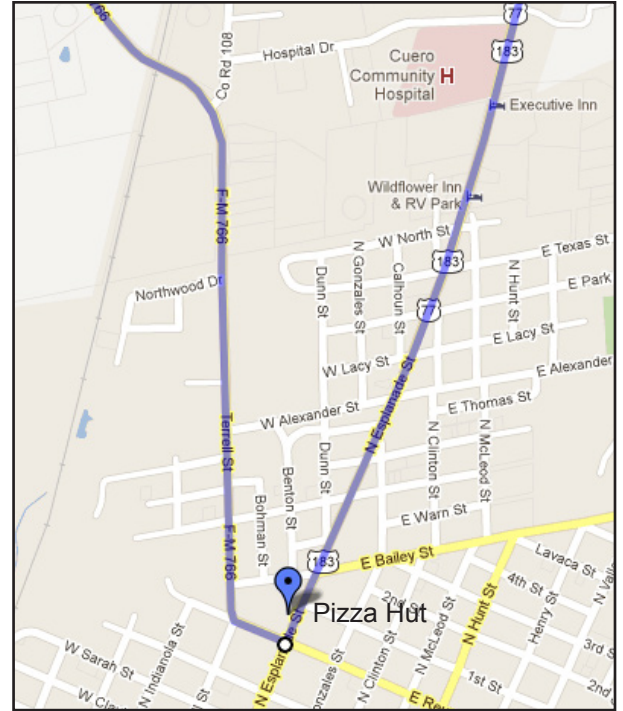
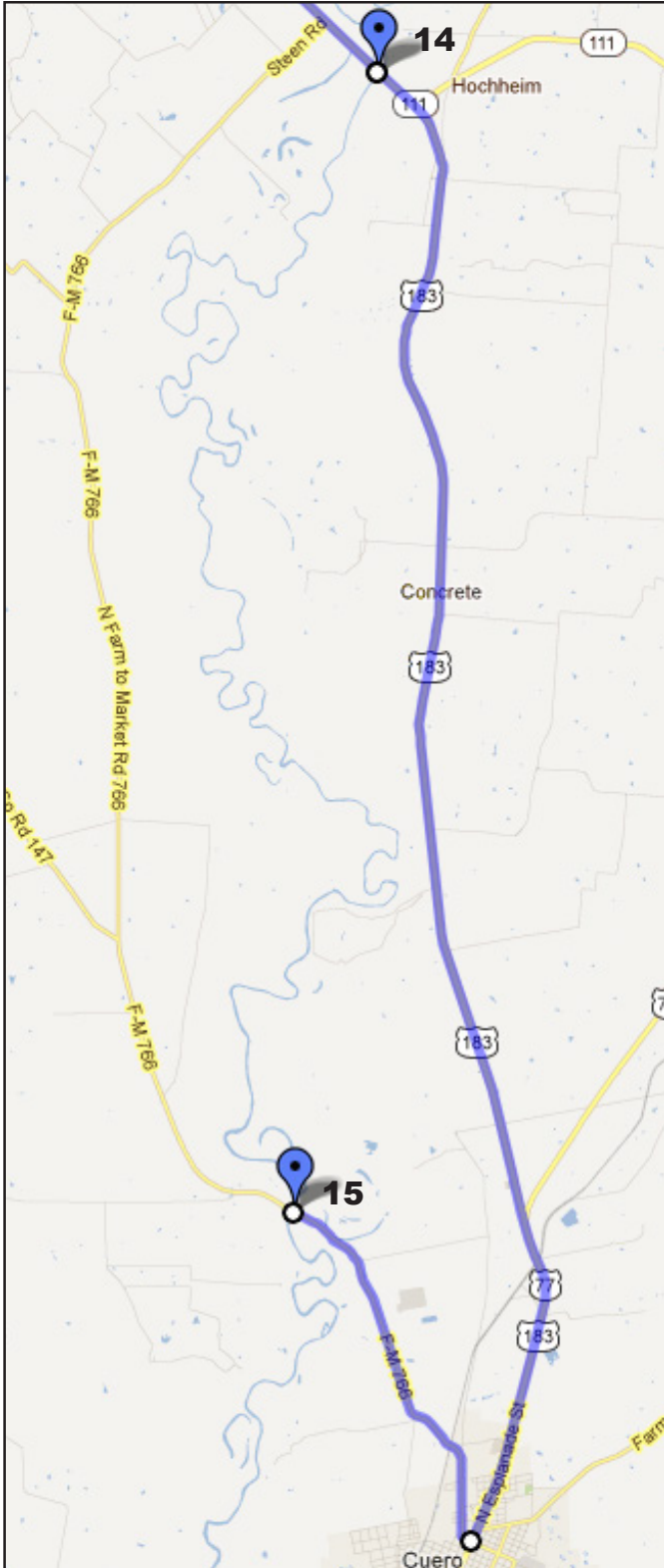
(14) Hochheim Bridge (CHECKPOINT-5) (Mile 123) (DEADLINE: 7:00 AM MONDAY)

- From Gonzales 183 Checkpoint turn right on Hwy 183
- Go (14.8 mi) to the bridge, turn off on your left just before the Guadalupe
- River Bridge (small drive next to bridge). Proceed beside bridge to boatramp.



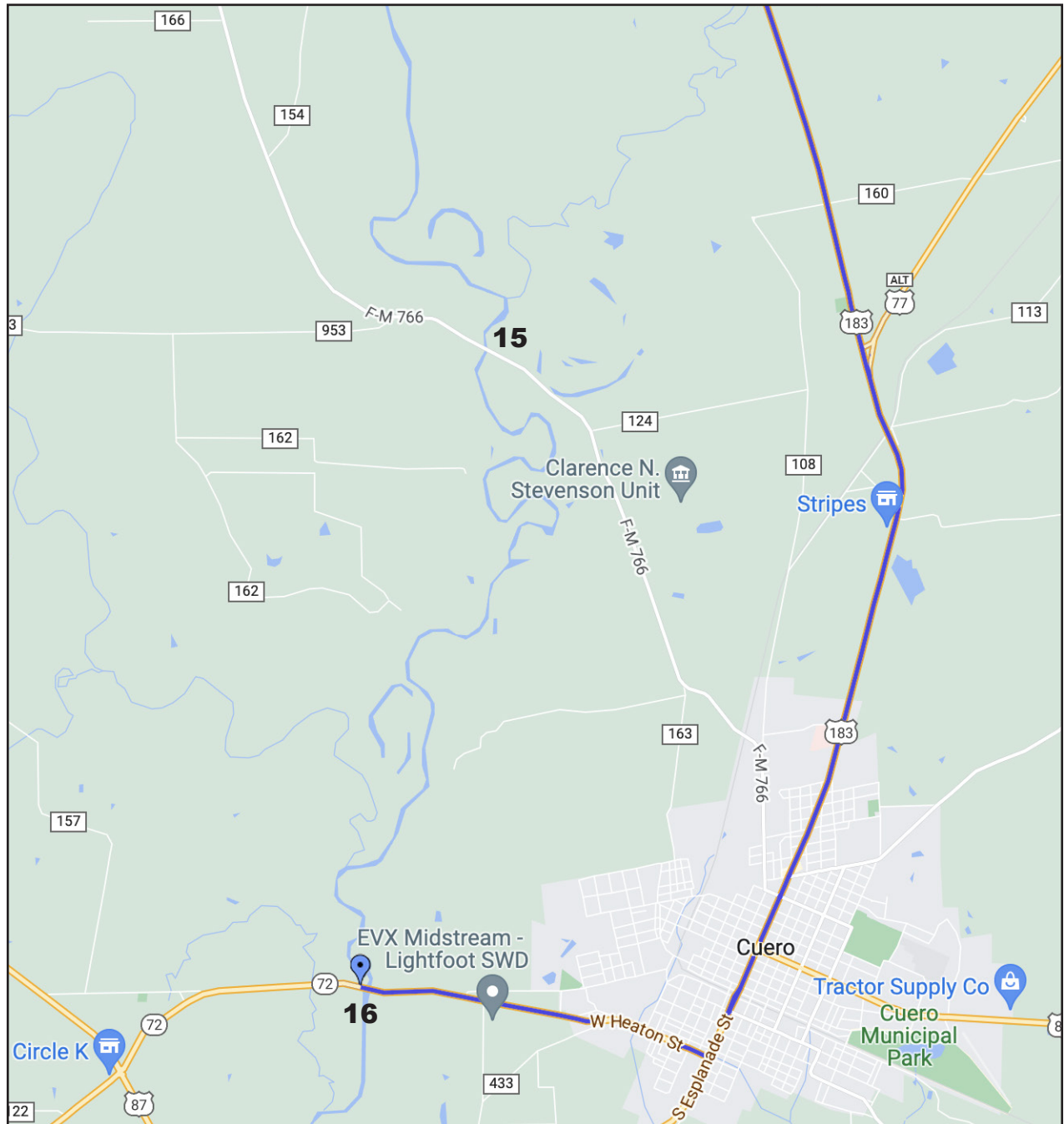
(15) Cheapside (Mile 148) (CHECKPOINT 6) (CUTOFF 2:00 PM MONDAY)

- From Hochheim bridge turn left on Hwy 183
- Go (15.5 mi) into Cuero to W. Reuss Blvd. There is a stoplight and signage to Cheapside (Pizza Hut is just before turn). Turn Right on W. Reuss Blvd and veer to Right on CR 766.
- Go total of (4.4 mi.) to gravel road past bridge, turn right under bridge.



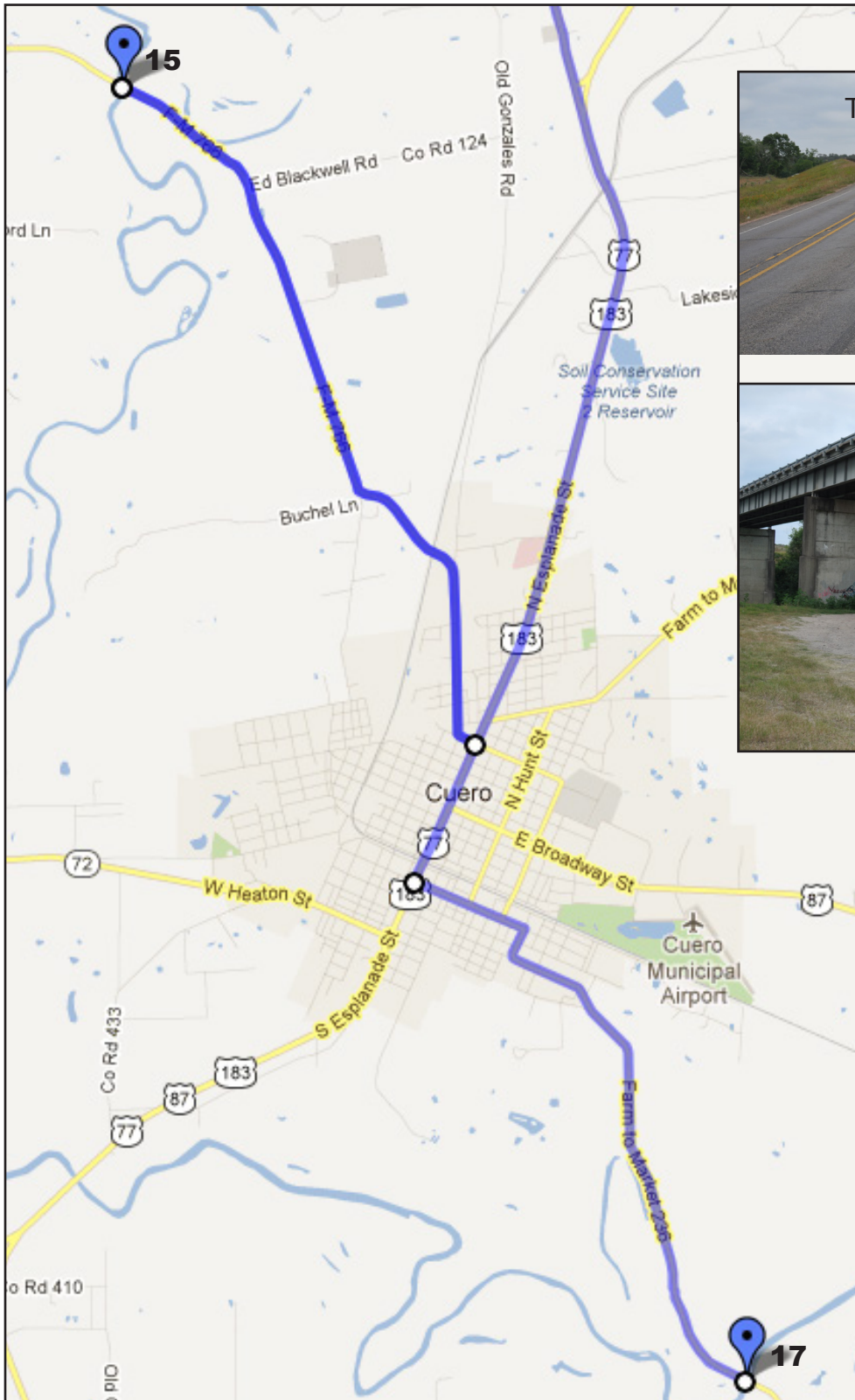
(16) Cuero FM 72 / Heaton St (Mile 154)

- From Hochheim bridge go south on Hwy 183
- Go into Cuero to W Heaton St. Turn west on W Heaton/FM 72
- Go past the bridge and turn right to road to ramp.



(17) Cuero Hwy 236 (CHECKPOINT-7) (Mile 160) (DEADLINE: 7:00 PM MONDAY)

- From Cheapside or FM 72 - travel back into Cuero.
- Go through town to light at (Morgan St./Arneckville), turn east on E. Morgan Ave.
- Follow E. Morgan Ave. for (.5 mi) to FM 236/Arneckville Road.
- Turn right and go (2.5 mi.) to bridge. Exit right on gravel road before bridge.

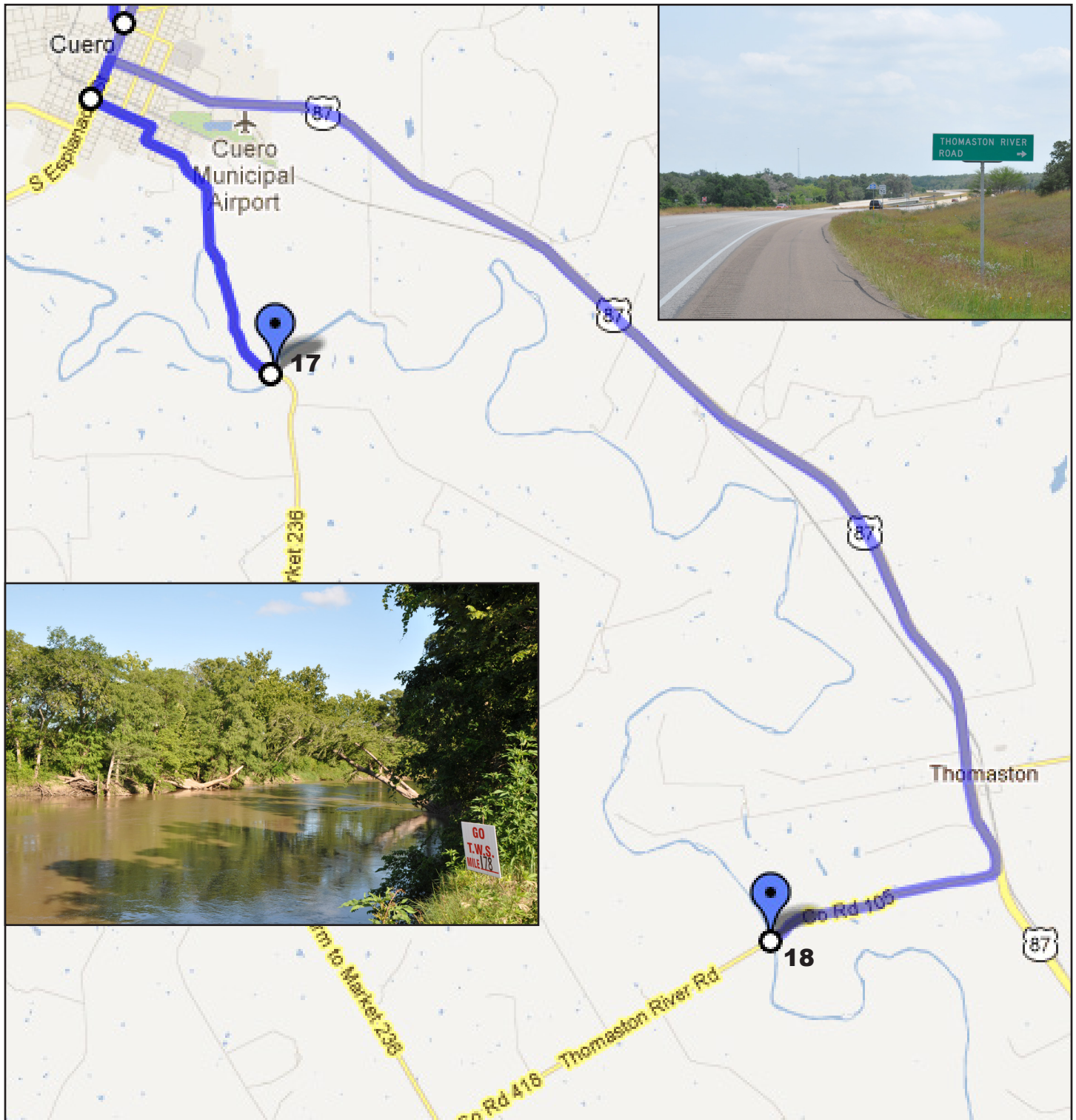


(18) Thomaston Bridge (Mile 178)

- Go back to Hwy 183, turn right
- Proceed (.3 mi.) to Hwy 87, turn right on Hwy 87.
- Go (11.8 mi) to Thomaston River Road, turn right (2.3 mi.) to bridge. Cross bridge and park on either side.

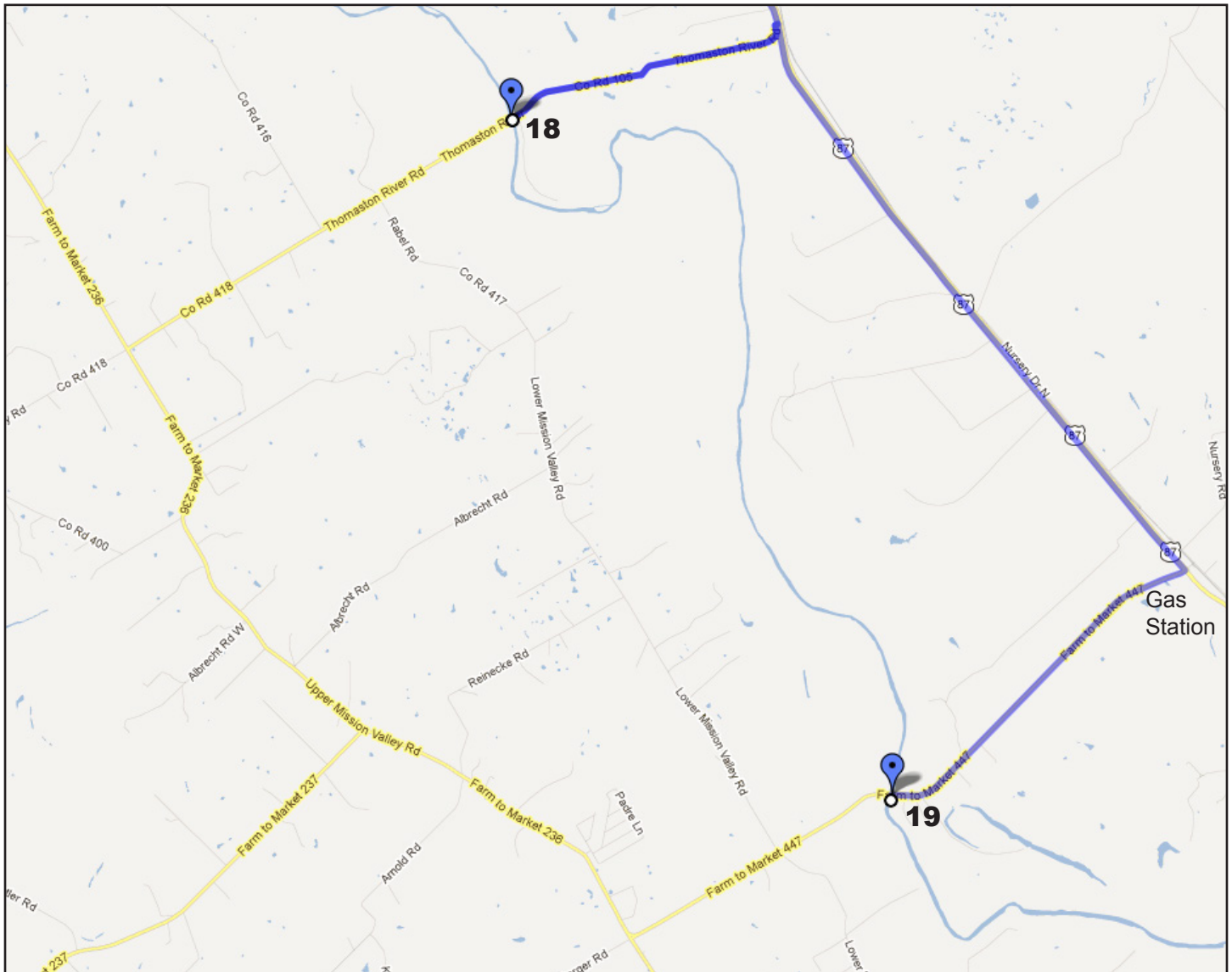
Note: Steep river access. A rope may be necessary to access the river.

Alternate route via FM236 to CR 418 - use caution at night, narrow roads and limited street sign's.



(19) Nursery Hwy 447 Bridge (Mile 187)

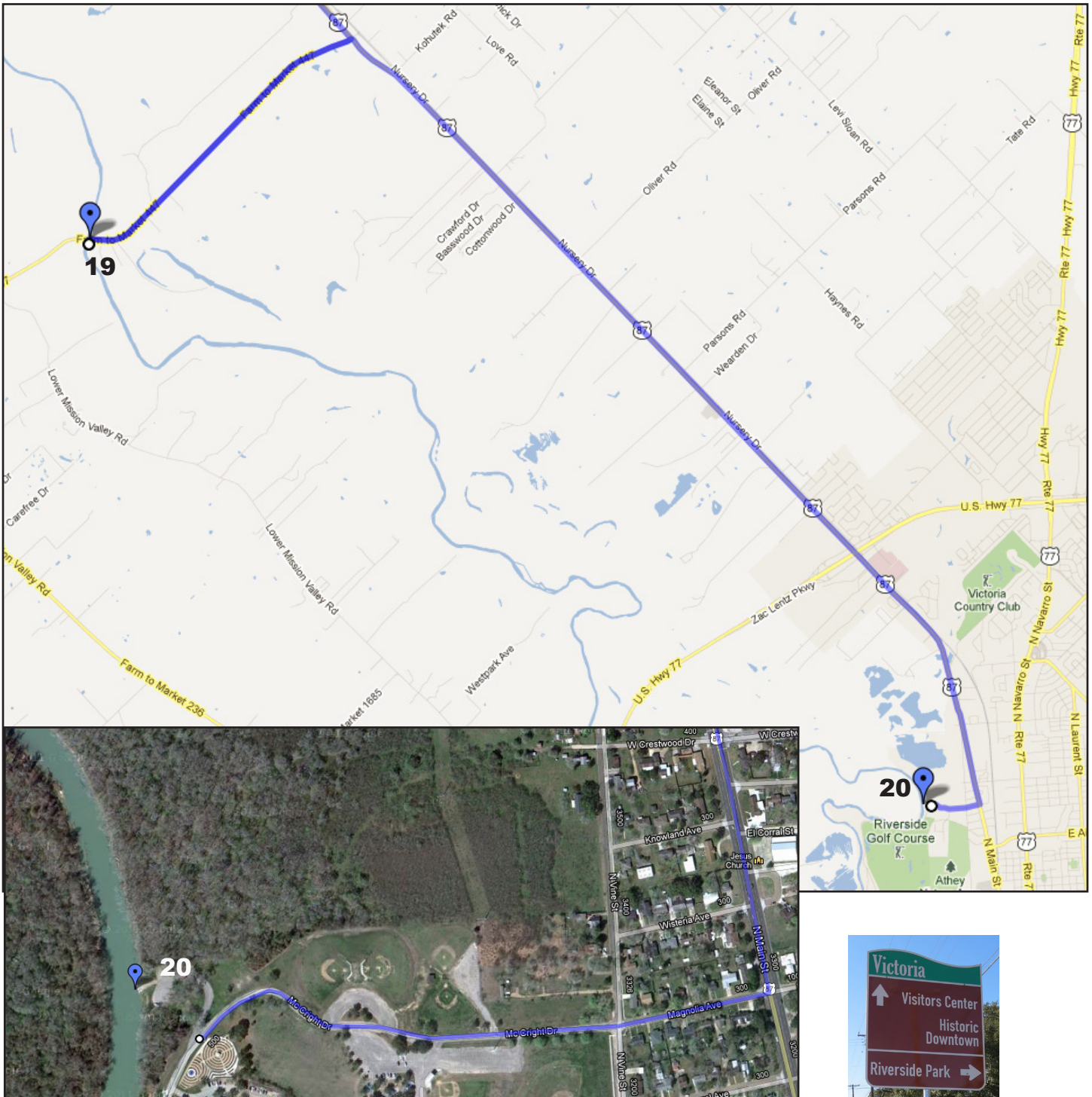
- Go back to Hwy 87, turn right.
- Go (5.3 mi.) to Hwy 447/Nursery (Shell Station) Mission Valley Rd, turn right
- Proceed (2.9 mi.) to bridge, just past radio tower.
- Cross bridge and turn off on gravel road on right immediately after bridge.



(20) Victoria City Park (CHECKPOINT-7) (Mile 200) (DEADLINE: 9:00 AM TUESDAY)

- From Nursery FM 447, go back to Hwy 87, turn right.
- Go (8.9 mi) to Magnolia Street (Easy to miss, 3rd right after Crestwood stop light, no stoplight at Magnolia). (2014 UPDATE: new signs have been put up in Victoria so this might be easier to find.)
- Turn right on Magnolia and go straight (.4 mi) into Victoria City Park past Little League Complex.
- Go past the playground complex and parking lot on the left (restroom facilities).
- When you reach the Victoria Memorial Rose Garden on your left, turn right (down the hill) into parking area at boat ramp and checkpoint.

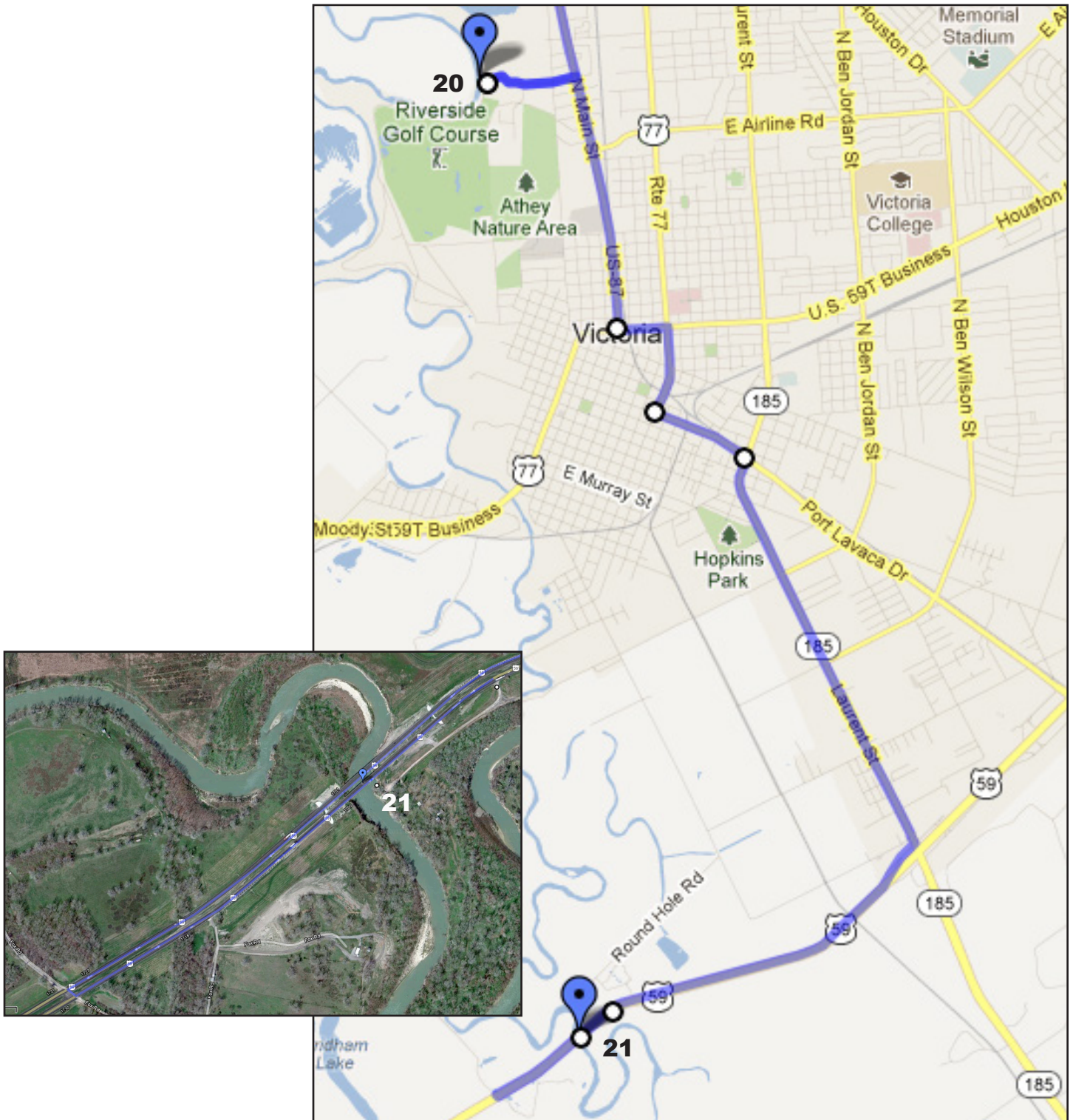
Note: Hwy 77 through town is the main drag for food, supplies, HEB, etc.



Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

(21) Victoria Hwy 59 Bypass (Mile 209)

- Go back to Hwy 87 (N. Main St.), turn right.
- Go (1.3 mi) to light at Rio Grande, turn left. (Stay on 87)
- Proceed (.7 mi.) To North Lauren/Hwy 185, turn right.
- Go (2.9 mi) to Hwy 59 South (toward Refugio), turn right.
- Go (1.9 mi) to Guadalupe River Bridge, cross bridge and go (.7 mi.) to Fox Road.
- Crossover and U-turn back on Hwy. 59 North.
- Cross the river again and exit to the right under bridge.



Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

(22) Swinging Bridge (CHECKPOINT-9) (Mile 228) (DEADLINE: 8:00 PM TUESDAY)

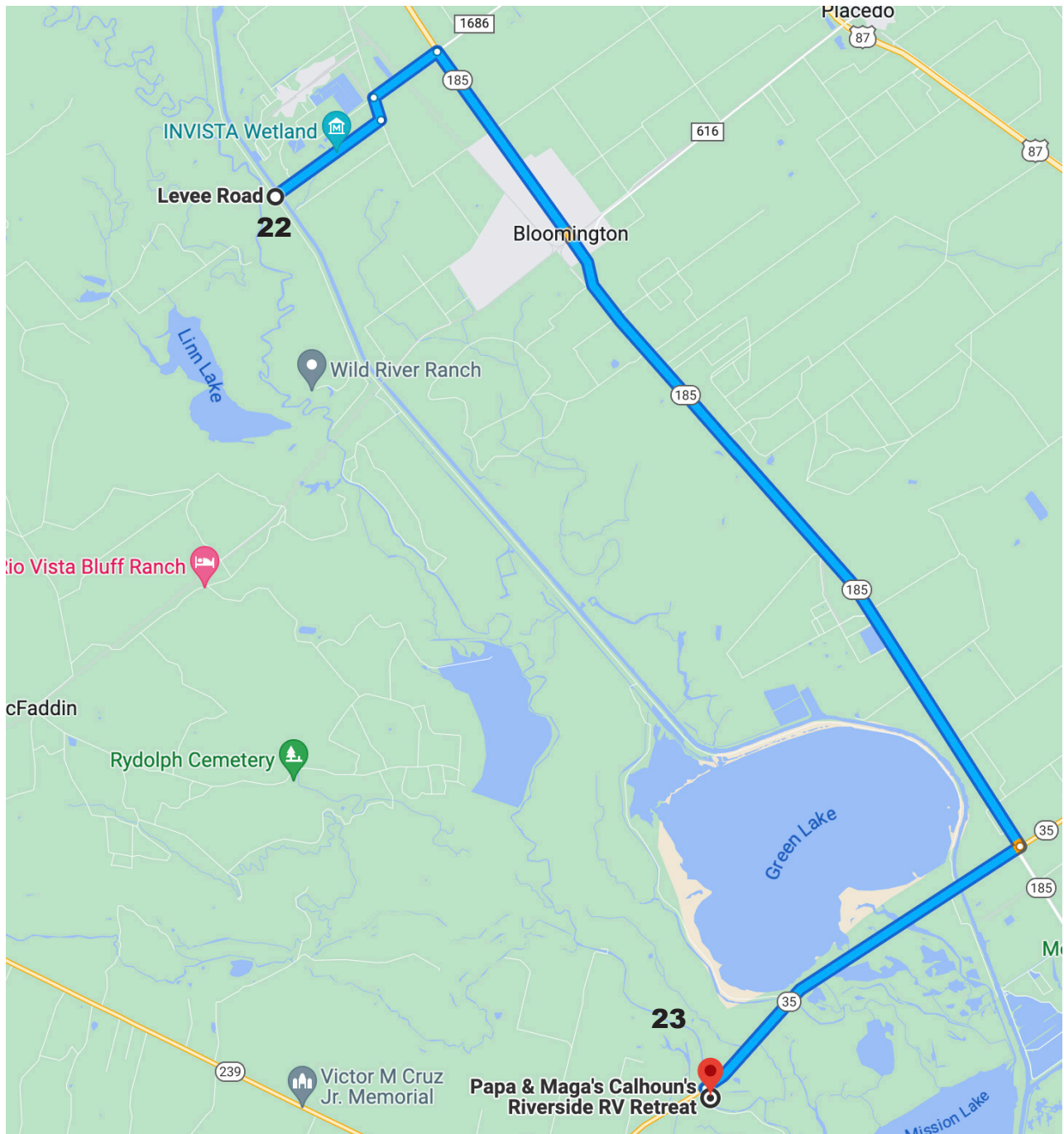
- Back to Hwy 59 take right.
- Go (1.5 mi) to Hwy 185 (Victoria/Bloomington Exit), take right.
- Go (6.5 mi) to Canal Road/FM 1686 (McJunkin Bldg on corner), be sure name is Canal Road. (there are two exists for FM 1686).
- Follow Canal Road. "Caution" at (.5 mi) there is a R/R Track (No Flashing Lights for Train) and go (1 mi) to stop sign, turn left onto Old Bloomington Road.
- Take your first right onto Dupont Road. Follow Dupont road 1.8 miles (over the levy bridge).
- Go through the gate on your left and immediately turn right follow dirt/grass road to checkpoint (do not follow the paved road going straight).

NOTE: Swinging Bridge is owned by Invista who controls access to the river. It is open for the race only and is not accessible for training runs. Everything beyond the gate is private property.



(23) CHECKPOINT LOCATION CHANGE 2023 Papa and Maga's Calhoun Riverside RV Resort
(CHECKPOINT-10) (Mile 251) (DEADLINE: 7:00 AM WEDNESDAY)

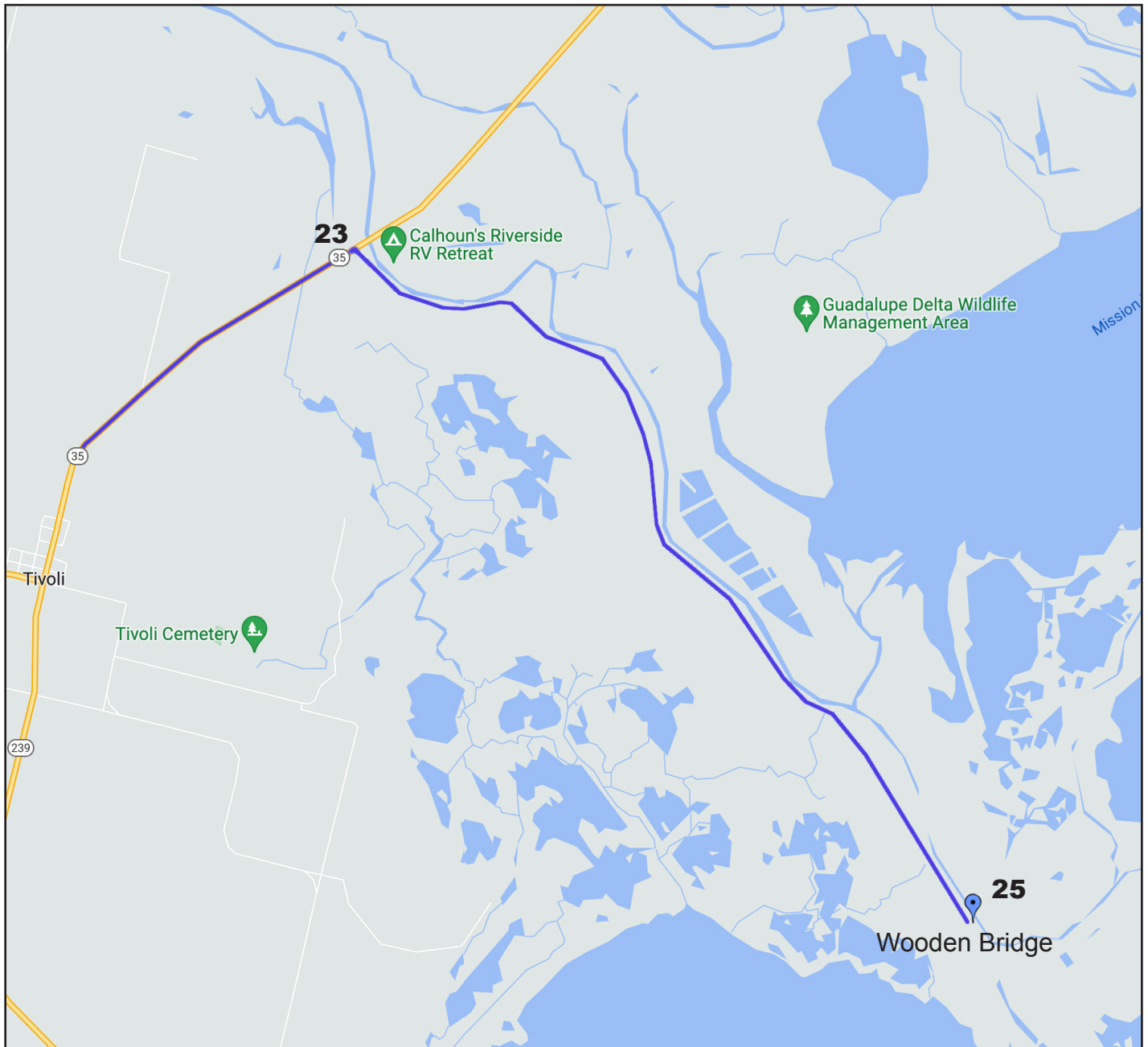
- From Dupont go back to Hwy 185, turn right.
- Go (13.5 mi) to intersection with Hwy 35, turn right.
- Take Hwy 35 towards Tivoli.
- Take a left on the last road right before the bridge.
-



(25) Wooden Bridge (Mile 256)

- From Hwy 35 turn south onto River Road (on river right).
- Follow road for aprox 5 miles to small pavillion on river.

Note: This is private property - please be respectful, clean up after yourself and follow any instructions regarding parking.

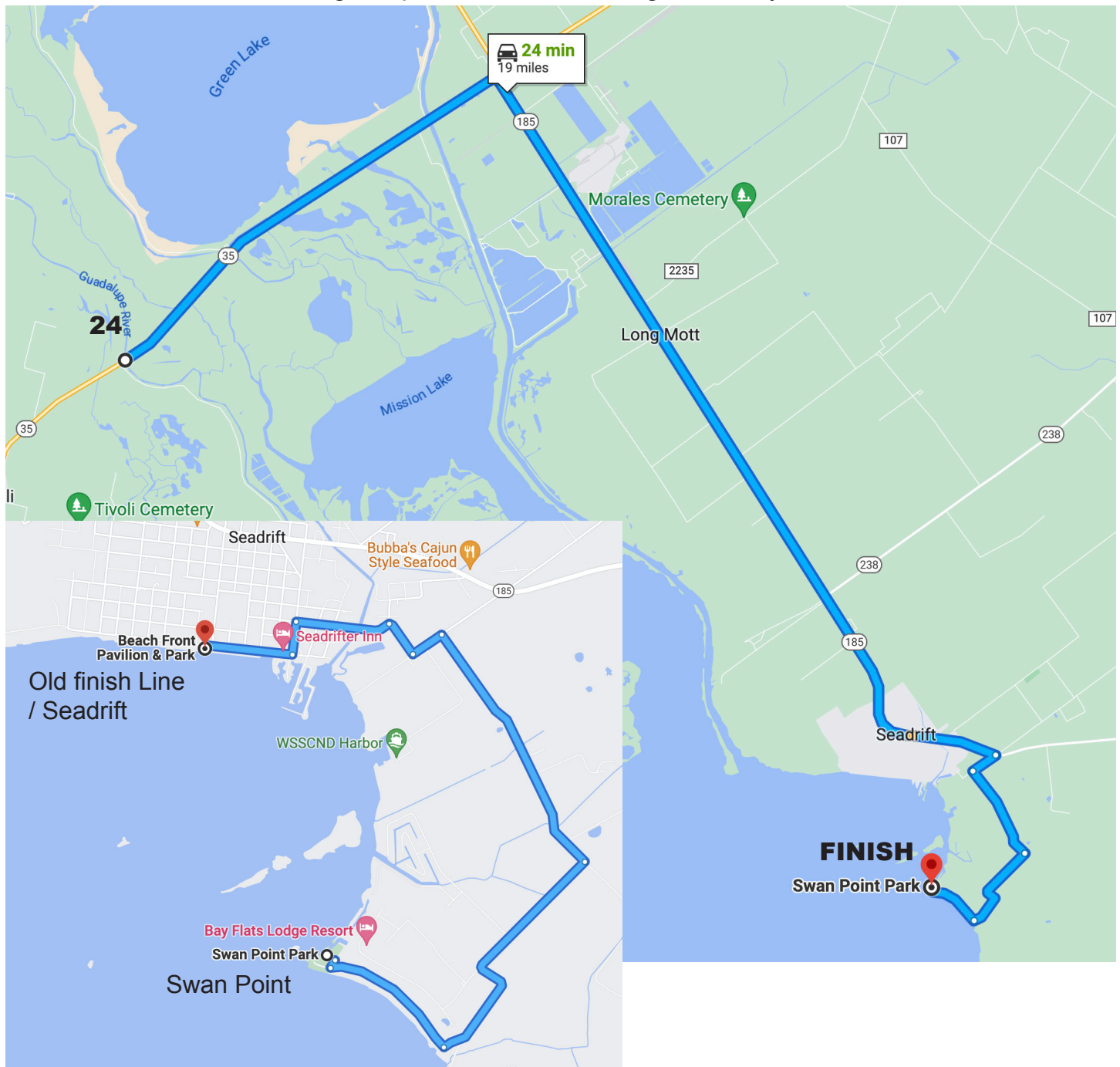


(26) Seadrift / Swan Point (RACE FINISH) (Mile 260)

From 185 in Seadrift, turn right on Dierlam Rd. Left on Old Settlement Rd and then right on Swan Point Road. Follow to the end

Notes for TC's, Family and Spectators:

- Once paddlers have passed the buoy they are finished. You can hug them and anyone can help carry their boat in for them - they have paddled/carried that boat far enough.
- The water at the finish line has oyster shells, be careful and wear shoes.
- If paddlers are strapped into the skirt and flip, please jump in the water and help. They are tired and it is hard for them to get out.
- The social media team does their best to have someone at the finish for all the teams. Please try not to set up chairs, coolers, etc. on the road between the ramp and the finish line sign to allow room for the teams finishing and pictures at the finish sign. Thank you!



Courtesy of Kate Tart Photography - 2023

