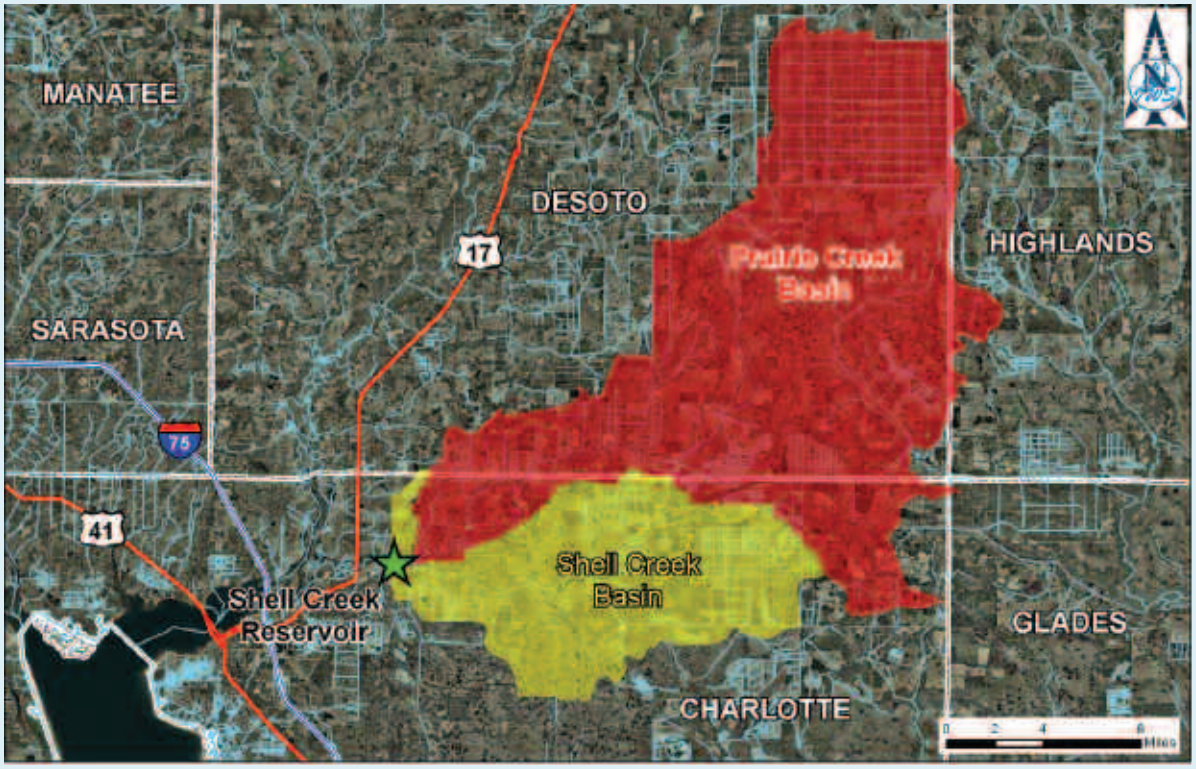
Peace River Manasota

Regional Water Supply Authority

Shell Creek System Feasibility Study



Mission Statement

To provide the region with a sufficient, high-quality, safe drinking water supply that is reliable, sustainable and protective of our natural resources now and into the future.

Background

The Shell Creek System is identified by the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (Authority) as a potential new source of up to 20 million gallons per day in water supply for the region.

Storing excess water at strategic locations within the Shell Creek Watershed during high flows, and redirecting water that has been diverted through ditches to the Caloosahatchee River watershed, could provide both environmental and alternative water supply benefits.

The Shell Creek System is comprised of the Shell Creek and Prairie Creek watersheds, covering about 367 square miles and ultimately discharging into Charlotte Harbor. Decades ago, ditching, draining and diversion of water within these watersheds altered the natural timing, rate and volume of water flow in this system. Some of the high flows from this system now enter the Caloosahatchee River watershed, and have contributed to adverse environmental impacts in that system. In addition, mineralized groundwater from irrigation in the watershed affects the quality of water in this system, particularly during extended dry periods. Shell Creek was impounded in 1964 by the construction of the Hendrickson Dam, which created an 835-acre in-stream reservoir used for municipal potable water supply by the City of Punta Gorda. Shell Creek and Prairie Creek converge at, and sustain, the City's reservoir.

Improvements could moderate flash flows during the wet season and provide for increased dry season flows and improved water quality. To this end, the Authority, in conjunction with the City of Punta Gorda and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), will explore opportunities for restoration and enhancement of natural water storage areas upstream. Restoration efforts would improve environmental and water quality conditions throughout the Shell Creek System and supplement the drinking water supply for the City of Punta Gorda and the region.

In March 2007 the Authority Board approved beginning feasibility studies on three potential sources, including the Shell Creek System, for future regional supply. This study scheduled for completion in summer 2008 would be conducted in conjunction with the SWFWMD. The feasibility studies and future development of selected alternative water supplies by the Authority will also be co-funded by the SWFWMD.

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