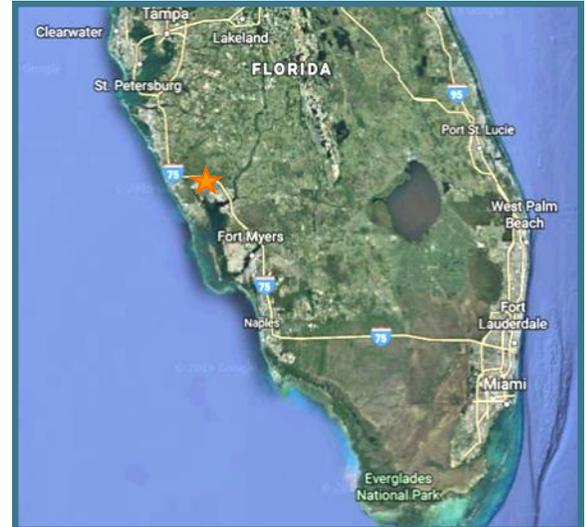


Warm Mineral Springs Habitat Restoration

FISH, WILDLIFE, & HABITAT RESTORATION



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Summary

The mineral rich waters from Warm Mineral Springs travel to Warm Mineral Springs Creek and Salt Creek; the water that fills these creeks stays a relatively consistent temperature of 84 degrees Fahrenheit and serves as a critical sanctuary for Florida manatees. Unfortunately, due to historical land alterations, this area is now suffering from bank erosion, excessive sedimentation, and the rapid spreading of invasive plant species.

During Florida's winter months, manatees travel to warm-water habitats to avoid the shock of cold waters which can result in emaciation, skin lesions, infection, and potentially death. It is necessary that warm-water sites like these are restored and protected from the dangers of man-made alterations and that manatees are left undisturbed when they enter the creek at this time of year. For this reason, the state has designated some creek sections as seasonal 'No Entry Zones' for recreation.

CHNEP worked closely with partners to fund and oversee the engineering, design, and permitting process of a project to restore this historic habitat. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recently received funding from the state of Florida to move forward with the next project phase which is projected to start in early 2022. This next phase will utilize the permitted designs to complete restoration work such as sediment removal, creek bank stabilization, native plantings and invasive species treatment.

Location: Sarasota County, FL

Partners: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sarasota County, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, The City of North Port, The Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida and the Nature Conservancy

Implemented: 2019

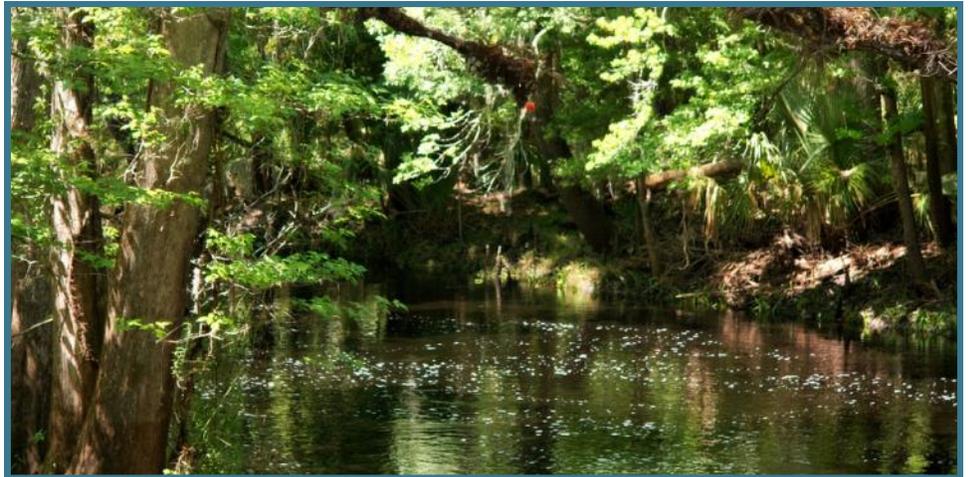
Status: Completed

CHNEP Cost: \$64,990

Funding Source: Federal funds and Mosaic funds contributed to CHNEP

2019 CHNEP Plan Activity: 

Fish, Wildlife, & Habitat Restoration
1.2: Research and promote best management practices for tidal creeks, rivers, canals, and stormwater conveyances that support habitats and native aquatic life.



Anticipated Results and Benefits From Implemented Design Plan

Improved Aquatic Habitat:

The removal of creek-bottom sediment in this area will increase the current volume of warm water habitat and the deeper channels will make it more accessible to the manatee population. It will also result in better access for various fish species (Redear Sunfish, Pickerel, Spotted Sea Trout, Redfish, and Blue Catfish) as well as wading shore bird species (Great Blue Heron, Wood Stork, Great Egret, and White Ibis).

Decreased Bank Erosion:

The shoreline stabilization of this project will decrease erosion and reduce the need for future maintenance work.

Research:

During Florida's winter months some creek sections are labeled as seasonal no entry zones and are off limits to recreation as human interaction may disturb manatees, alter their behavioral patterns, or cause abandonment to this creek altogether. However, these sections are valuable in other ways. Scientists visit these areas to perform photo identification studies on the Florida manatee. The research from these studies can be beneficial in estimating manatee survival rates, population dynamics, behavioral patterns, and reproductive parameters.

Improved Water Quality:

The restoration of these upstream areas will help reduce sediment pollution and improve water clarity in Warm Mineral Springs Creek, Salt Creek, and eventually downstream in the Myakka River and Charlotte Harbor.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



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