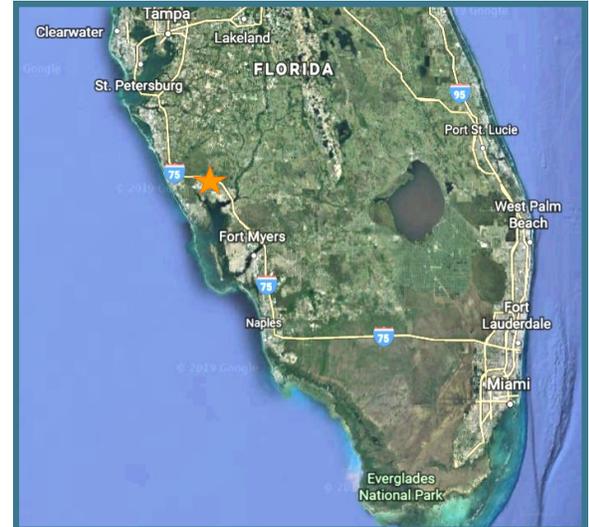


# Warm Mineral Springs Creek and Salt Creek

## FISH, WILDLIFE, & HABITAT RESTORATION



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



### Summary

The nutrient rich waters from Warm Mineral Springs travel into Warm Mineral Springs Creek and Salt Creek. The water that fills these creeks stays at a relatively consistent temperature of 84 degrees Fahrenheit and serves as a critical sanctuary for Florida manatees during winter months. Unfortunately, due to historical and current land alterations, this area is now suffering from bank erosion, excessive sedimentation, and the rapid spread of invasive 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. This is why 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 the area a seasonal No Entry Zone for recreation. This area is currently undergoing a restoration project to provide a more natural and easily accessible habitat for this species, along with the many others that utilize it.

With phases one and two of this restoration project soon to be complete, CHNEP will fund phase three involving the engineering, design, and permitting of the project.

**Location:** Sarasota County, FL

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

**Implemented:** 2019

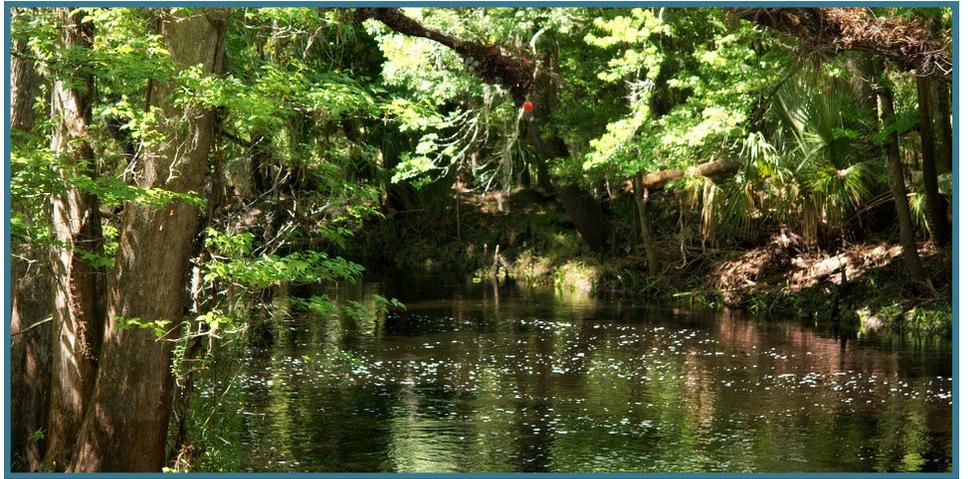
**Status:** Ongoing

**Cost:** \$65,000

**Funding Source:** Mosaic funds contributed to CHNEP

**2019 CHNEP Plan Activity:** 

Fish, Wildlife, & Habitat Restoration 3.1: Assist in assessing and promoting the economic, social, and environmental benefits of land protection and habitat restoration.



## Anticipated Results and Benefits

### **Improved Aquatic Habitat:**

The removal of creek-bottom sediments in this area will increase the current volume of warm water habitat making 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 this project will decrease erosion and reduce the need for future maintenance work in this water system.

### **Research:**

Although these creeks are not open for recreation when manatees are seasonally present, this area is of value in other ways. Warm water sites like Warm Mineral Springs allow scientists 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.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



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