

Myakka River Management Coordinating Council

DEP District 4 Administration 1843 South Tamiami Trail Osprey, FL 34229

North Port City Commission

29 January 2021

Commissioners:

As you may know, the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) was created by the Florida Legislature in 1985 (F.S. 258.501), as a unique citizen/agency amalgam, which has worked for more than three decades to provide management guidance regarding the Myakka River in general and the State-designated Wild and Scenic River (existing within Sarasota County) in particular. The Council was charged by the Legislature to provide non-binding advisory opinions. This letter is just such an opinion.

At our most recent meeting (January 29, 2021) members discussed the fact that two well-known and important springs in North Port Florida seem to be ignored in legislation designed to understand and protect Florida's springs. Following the discussion, a motion was made by Becky Ayeche to send a letter to the North Port City Commissioners requesting that the City Commission pass a resolution identifying Warm Mineral Springs as a high priority for spring protection, for presentation to their local legislative delegation. Barbara Lockhart provided a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Expounding on the motion, I note that 7.6% of Amendment 1 dollars are dedicated to Florida springs. Since passage the passage of Amendment 1 in 2014, Sarasota County has sent over \$113 million to Tallahassee as one third of collected documentary stamp fees. Had those dollars been allocated solely within Sarasota County, it would have resulted in over \$8.5 million being available for springs in Sarasota County. The two most noteworthy springs, Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring occur in North Port, far further south than Florida's higher profile and greater magnitude springs. Despite relatively low flow rates, North Port's springs are candidates for being the state's most unique ecological, hydrological, archaeological and paleontological geologic features. In addition, many believe the Warm Mineral Springs facility possesses significant historic, architectural, artistic, and therapeutic features. And the Warm Mineral Springs creek is probably the most significant natural warm water winter refugia for manatees on Florida's Gulf Coast. Despite their significance, both springs face challenges, challenges that would benefit from additional research and/or improvements.

As I interpret it, it is the Council's hope that a resolution from the City Commission might finally result in legislative support for these two irreplaceable resources. Please don't hesitate to contact me or Myakka River Biologist Chris Oliver if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Jon Miller, 2021 Chair MRMCC 941-320-3846

Cc: James "Chris" Oliver, FDEP/FPS District 4, 1843 S. Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229 941-882-7206