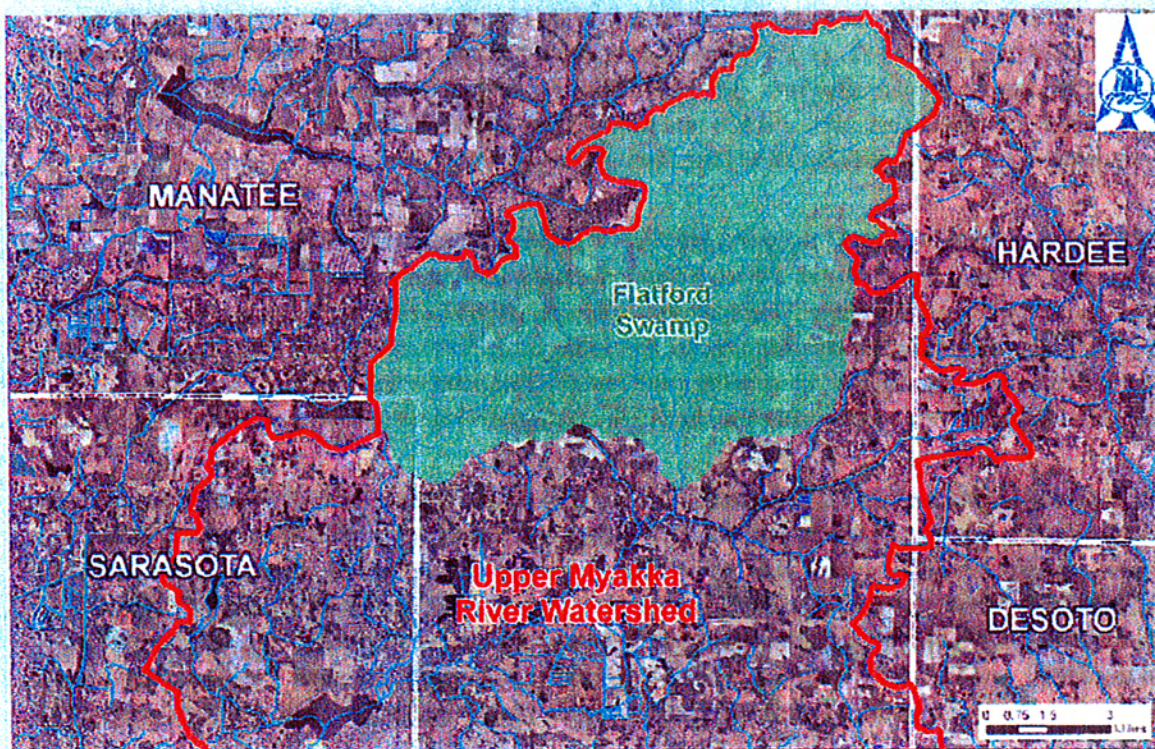


Peace River Manasota
Regional Water Supply Authority

Flatford Swamp/Upper Myakka River Watershed 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 Flatford Swamp and Upper Myakka River Watershed, located in southeast Manatee County, is identified by the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (Authority) as a potential new source of 10 million to 15 million gallons of water per day.

Opportunities to improve environmental conditions, while developing much-needed public water supplies, are being studied by the Authority and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).

The Myakka River watershed covers about 600 square miles from its mouth at Charlotte Harbor to its origins in northeast Manatee County. The river is designated an Outstanding Florida Water and the segment through Sarasota County is designated a Wild and Scenic River. Flatford Swamp is located in the Upper Myakka River Watershed. In addition to its value as a wildlife habitat, Flatford Swamp acts as a natural watershed storage area weakening flood flows and improving water quality.

Decades ago, dry season flow in the upper Myakka was typically small and regularly ceased. The environment in Flatford Swamp also developed around similar conditions of low seasonal water levels, with some areas of the swamp drying out in the spring. However, in the last several decades, dry season flows have increased. The upper Myakka no longer ceases to flow, and excess water tends to remain in Flatford Swamp for much longer periods than would occur naturally. The excess water conditions are associated with human activities in the area and have been linked to large scale tree die-off in the Flatford Swamp.

Environmental restoration efforts at Flatford Swamp require removal of excess water. SWFWMD has identified a variety of environmental restoration options. The agency is also looking at supply alternatives that will reduce groundwater pumping in the area to minimize saline water intrusion and work in conjunction with the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) Recovery Plan. These environmental restoration efforts present opportunities for the Authority to partner with SWFWMD and the local agricultural community to improve environmental conditions, aid in control of saline water intrusion in the SWUCA, and at the same time provide much needed drinking water supplies for our growing region through the harvest and storage of excess water.

In March 2007 the Authority Board approved beginning feasibility studies on three potential sources, including Flatford Swamp and Upper Myakka River Watershed, for future regional supply. This study, scheduled for completion in the summer of 2008 and to be conducted in conjunction with the SWFWMD, will identify opportunities and further evaluate water supply development in conjunction with environmental stewardship efforts in the Flatford Swamp and vicinity. 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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