



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applicant:
Richard Anderson, Executive Director
Peace River Water Supply Authority

Published: April 3, 2025
Expires: May 3, 2025

**Jacksonville District
Permit Application No. SAJ-2005-01274 (SP-BMC)**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344). The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments from the public regarding the work described below:

If you are interested in receiving additional project drawings associated with this public notice, please send an e-mail request to the project manager by electronic mail at barbara.m.cory@usace.army.mil.

APPLICANT: Richard Anderson, Executive Director
Peace River Water Supply Authority
9415 Town Center Parkway
Lakewood Ranch, Florida 34202

AGENT: Benjamin Brice
HDR, Inc.
4830 W Kennedy Blvd, Suite 400
Tampa, Florida 33609

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The project would affect unnamed aquatic resources associated with the Peace River. The project review area is located at the existing Peace River Water Supply Facility (PRF) on the RV Griffin Reserve (Reserve) at 9225 SW County Road 769, in Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, and 17, Township 39 South, Range 23 East; at Latitude 27.093448 and Longitude -82.038628; in Arcadia, DeSoto County, Florida.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The existing PRF water supply system is located in southwestern DeSoto County on the 5,913- acre Reserve, acquired by Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) with the primary intent of expanding the regional public water supply system. The PRF currently has two (2) existing off-stream surface water storage reservoirs with a combined 6.5 billion-gallons (BG) of surface storage, two (2) aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wellfields, and a 51-million-gallon (MG) water treatment plant with potable water delivered to the public through 80-miles of regional transmission mains.

The PRF Reservoir No. 1 (PR1) was constructed in the 1970s, encompasses approximately 85 acres (1,900-acre feet), and has a storage capacity of 500 MG. PRF Reservoir No. 2 (PR2) was constructed in 2009, encompasses approximately 640 acres (18,000 acre-feet), and has a storage capacity of 6 BG. In addition to providing storage for the public water supply, the southwestern portion of the Reserve currently hosts a 2,485-acre preserve area open to the public for passive recreation (hiking, equestrian use, and biking), and a model airplane flying field. Approximately 2,305 acres in the southwestern area of the Reserve is also currently leased for cattle grazing.

Land uses in the project vicinity are predominantly rural with adjacent properties consisting of conservation lands, wildlife management areas, preserves, mitigation banks, agricultural lands, and low-density residential. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Cooperative Land Cover (CLC) classification system, landscape on the Reserve is comprised of a mosaic of communities including mesic hammock, mesic and hydric flatwoods, scrub, shrub and brushland, mixed scrub-shrub wetlands, wet and dry prairie, mixed hardwood-coniferous, improved and unimproved pasture, marshes, forested wetlands, and artificial impoundments. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), soil types found on the Reserve generally consist of deep, poorly drained, fine sands (Felda, Basinger, and Holopaw series) and mucky fine sand (Delray and Floridana series).

Most wetlands and slough systems on site have been disturbed through an extensive network of shallow man-made ditches constructed across the site to enhance drainage for past uses including pine plantation and cattle production. The shallow man-made ditches connect most wetlands onsite and promote drainage towards the Peace and Myakka Rivers. In general, past ditching, agriculture, and silviculture practices have altered the hydroperiod, size, and condition of wetlands and upland habitats on site.

The project area is located approximately 1 mile west of the Peace River which is mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) as R1UBV ((R) Riverine, (1) Tidal, (UB) Unconsolidated Bottom, (V) Permanently Flooded-Tidal) and is connected to the Gulf of America via Charlotte Harbor. Surface waters onsite occur in channels or ditches mapped on the NWI as R5UBF or R5UBFx ((R) Riverine, (5) Unknown Perennial, (UB) Unconsolidated Bottom, (F) Semi-permanently Flooded, (x) Excavated). Wetland systems onsite consist of various (emergent, forested, and scrub-shrub) freshwater palustrine systems with ranging hydroperiods (seasonally to semi-permanently flooded).

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: Expand an existing public water supply

Overall: Expand an existing public water supply through construction of a regional-capacity reservoir and associated infrastructure.

PROPOSED WORK: The Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (Authority) seeks authorization to discharge 15,233 cubic yards of clean fill material into

281.19 acres of aquatic resources in order to expand the public water supply storage at the existing PRF. Proposed work includes construction of a new 9-billion-gallon (BG) off-stream raw water storage reservoir, associated pump station and conveyance (intake/discharge) pipelines, access roadways (north and east), and on-site mitigation areas. The PRF's Reservoir No. 3 (PR3) is proposed to be constructed adjacent (southwest) to the existing PR2 reservoir and would be supplied by an existing 120 million gallon per day (MGD) river intake pump station. The project is intended to provide an additional water source for the region. Construction is expected to take approximately 2 to 3 years for completion.

The proposed work would occur within three (3) separate areas of the Reserve totaling approximately 2,382 acres. The PR3 project area includes the proposed reservoir footprint (1,105 acres) and surrounding construction limits encompassing approximately 1,251 acres. PR3 construction will directly impact 281.19 acres of wetlands (89.89 acres within Peace Watershed and 191.3 acres within Myakka Watershed), 18 acres of surface waters (12.48 acres within Peace Watershed and 5.52 acres within Myakka Watershed), and 952 acres of uplands. As mitigation for wetland impacts incurred through construction of the reservoir project, the Authority proposes onsite permittee-responsible mitigation (PRM) projects within two (2) areas (North Pasture and Southwest Pasture) of the Reserve which encompass a total of approximately 1,131-acres.

The proposed reservoir is categorized as a high hazard dam consistent with the hazard potential classification system developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As proposed, PR3 will consist of an above ground earthen embankment dam with a maximum height of 45-feet above the excavated interior elevation and a 5-mile-long, 15-foot-wide crest. After clearing, grubbing, and stripping topsoil, the embankment will be constructed of clean fill material, underlain with a 12-inch-thick sand filter layer, and an 18-inch-thick gravel drainage layer with a varying width perimeter drainage canal and outer berm surrounding the embankment.

The reservoir has been designed and will be constructed in a manner to minimize impacts to the surrounding environment. The reservoir will store water far above natural grade and the water table and will not draw down the water table at surrounding wetlands. Inclusion of a soil cement bentonite cutoff wall will serve as a barrier to effectively isolate the reservoir interior and prevent impacts to surrounding wetlands. To provide a minimum of 9 BG of raw water storage with consideration for seasonal variations (river-water withdrawal limitations), PR3 pool levels will be maintained at elevation 61.8 feet (NGVD 29) (actual storage 9.3 BG) in the wet season and adjusted to elevation 63.8 feet (NGVD 29) during the dry season.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment: Wetland impact avoidance was prioritized during a project feasibility study and assessment of reservoir siting alternatives. A multi-criteria decision analysis was used to evaluate how different alternatives might meet Authority goals while seeking to avoid and minimize wetland impacts to the degree feasible. Screening of potential

project footprints was conducted to evaluate the most suitable site for avoiding impacts. To further avoid and minimize wetland impacts, project components were modified through engineering and design revisions including redesign of the stormwater treatment system where treatment ponds were eliminated in favor of a perimeter canal treatment system. The Authority will follow standard Best Management Practices to ensure avoided wetland and surface waters are not impacted during construction.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION: The applicant offered the following compensatory mitigation plan to offset unavoidable functional loss to the aquatic environment:

Project impacts will occur within two (2) watershed basins, the Myakka and Peace Watersheds. The Project is located within the service area of one (1) federally authorized mitigation bank within the Myakka basin and three (3) federally authorized mitigation banks within the Peace basin; however, the total available mitigation credits from these banks are insufficient to offset the total anticipated unavoidable impacts. As such, the Authority is proposing to construct onsite PRM to offset unavoidable wetland impacts. The proposed PRM is located within two (2) different sections of the Reserve (1,131 acres total) and would provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts within both the Myakka and Peace Watershed basins with ecological functions (loss or gain) for wetlands calculated via the Unified Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM).

The Authority's capacity for achieving goals and objectives of PRM has been demonstrated through prior success. The Authority previously used onsite PRM to offset functional losses of wetlands impacted through construction of PR2 which was authorized by the Corps in 2007. The Authority's 2007 PRM sites for PR2 encompassed 1,055 acres and were considered successful and fully released from monitoring and reporting by the Corps in 2015.

The proposed PRM is designed to alleviate effects of excessive drainage caused by agricultural ditching on the project site. The Authority proposes PRM within two (2) areas on site for a combined total of approximately 409 acres of wetland enhancement, 150 acres of wetland creation, and 144 acres of wetland restoration as well as enhancement of native upland communities (133 acres) expected to provide life support functions (refugia) for wetland dependent wildlife. Primary enhancement activities include hydrologic improvements via backfilling/eliminating ditches that drain onsite wetlands and nuisance/exotic species abatement. Primary restoration or creation activities include filling agricultural ditches, shallow excavation (6 to 18 inches) and grading, re-location of topsoil from impacted wetlands, and vegetative enhancement or re-vegetation through planting appropriate native species. SWFWMD owns the property upon which the PRM projects will be constructed and has indicated that they anticipate permit requirements to provide for perpetual protection of the proposed mitigation areas.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The Corps is aware of recorded historic resources within or adjacent to the permit area and is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The permit area/area of potential effects has been subject to several cultural resources

assessment surveys including DHR Survey #281 in 1988, #12999 in 2006, and #29372 in 2022, in anticipation of various proposed uses of the project area over the years. Three (3) recorded sites (8DE30, DE387, and DE482) have been identified in the permit area. Researchers recommended the three sites as ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in the 2006 survey report and the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with these assessments that same year. No other resources were identified in the permit area. Based upon this information, the Corps has determined the proposed project would have no effect on historic properties.

This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government Agencies with respect to historic resources. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, federally recognized tribes and other interested parties.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The Corps has conducted an initial review of the application, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Section 7 Mapper, and the NMFS Critical Habitat Mapper to determine if any threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, as well as any proposed or final designated critical habitat may occur in vicinity of the proposed project. Based on this initial review, the Corps has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the Florida scrub jay (*Chelonia mydas*), Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*), and wood stork (*Mycteria Americana*). The project may affect species listed below (Table 1). No other Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species or critical habitat will be affected by the proposed action.

Table 1: ESA-listed species and/or critical habitat potentially present in the action area.

Species Common Name and/or Critical Habitat Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status
Crested caracara	(<i>Polyborus plancus audubonii</i>)	Threatened
Eastern indigo snake	(<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>)	Threatened
Florida Bonneted Bat	(<i>Eumops floridanus</i>)	Endangered
Tricolored bat	(<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>)	Proposed Endangered

Pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA, any required consultation with the Service(s) will be conducted in accordance with 50 CFR part 402. The Corps will request initiation of consultation with USFWS pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996, the Corps reviewed the project area, examined information provided by the applicant, and consulted available species information. The project will impact only freshwater (palustrine) wetlands. The Corps initial determination is that the proposed action will not result in any substantial adverse impacts to EFH. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NAVIGATION: The proposed structure or activity is not located in the vicinity of a federal navigation channel.

SECTION 408: The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Water Quality Certification is required from the State of Florida certifying authority. The project is being reviewed for an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) by the SWFWMD under Application No. 878986.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY: Coastal Zone Consistency Concurrence is required. In Florida, the State approval constitutes compliance with the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.

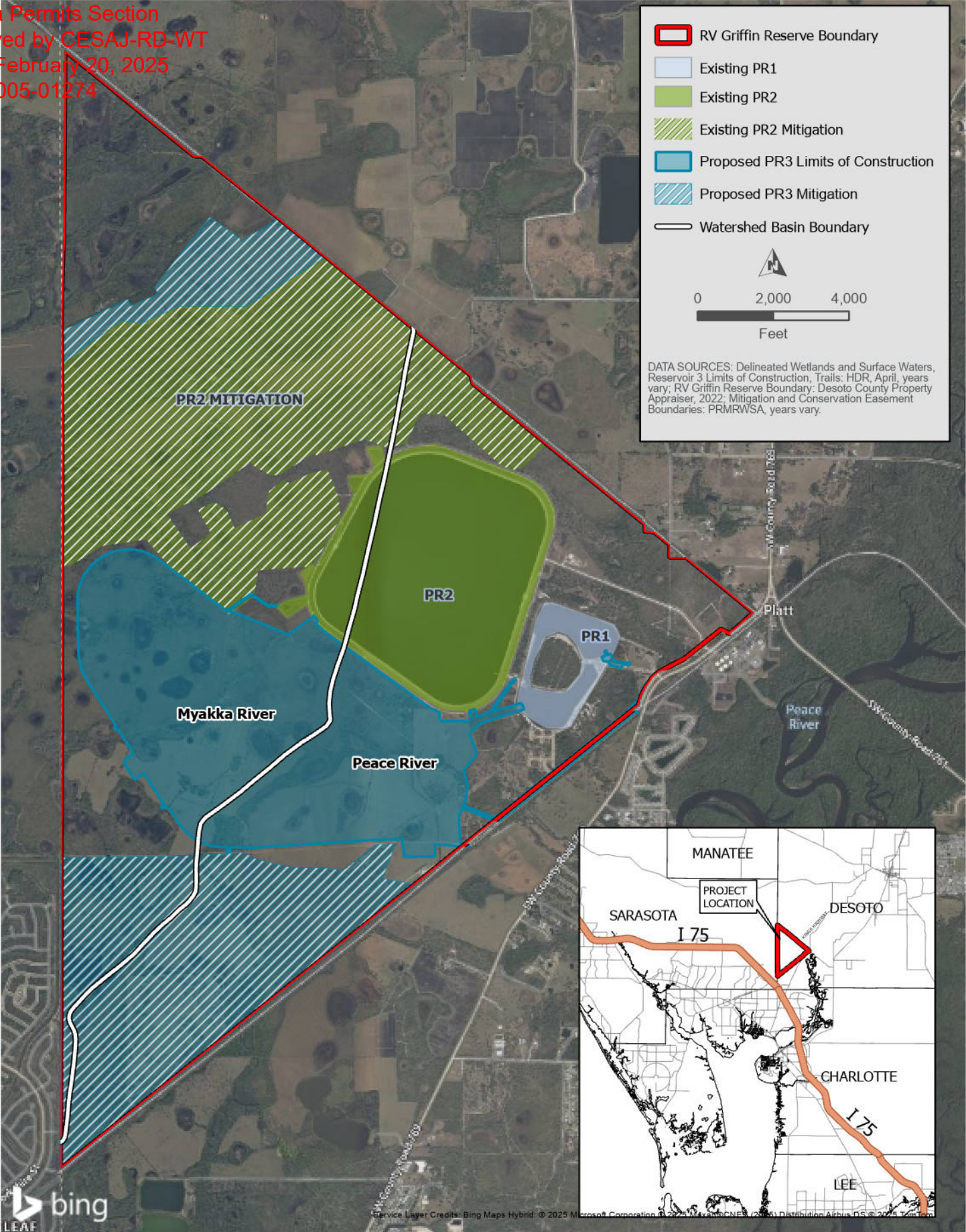
NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The geographic extent of aquatic resources within the proposed project area that either are, or are presumed to be, within the Corps jurisdiction has not been verified by Corps personnel.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act or the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972.

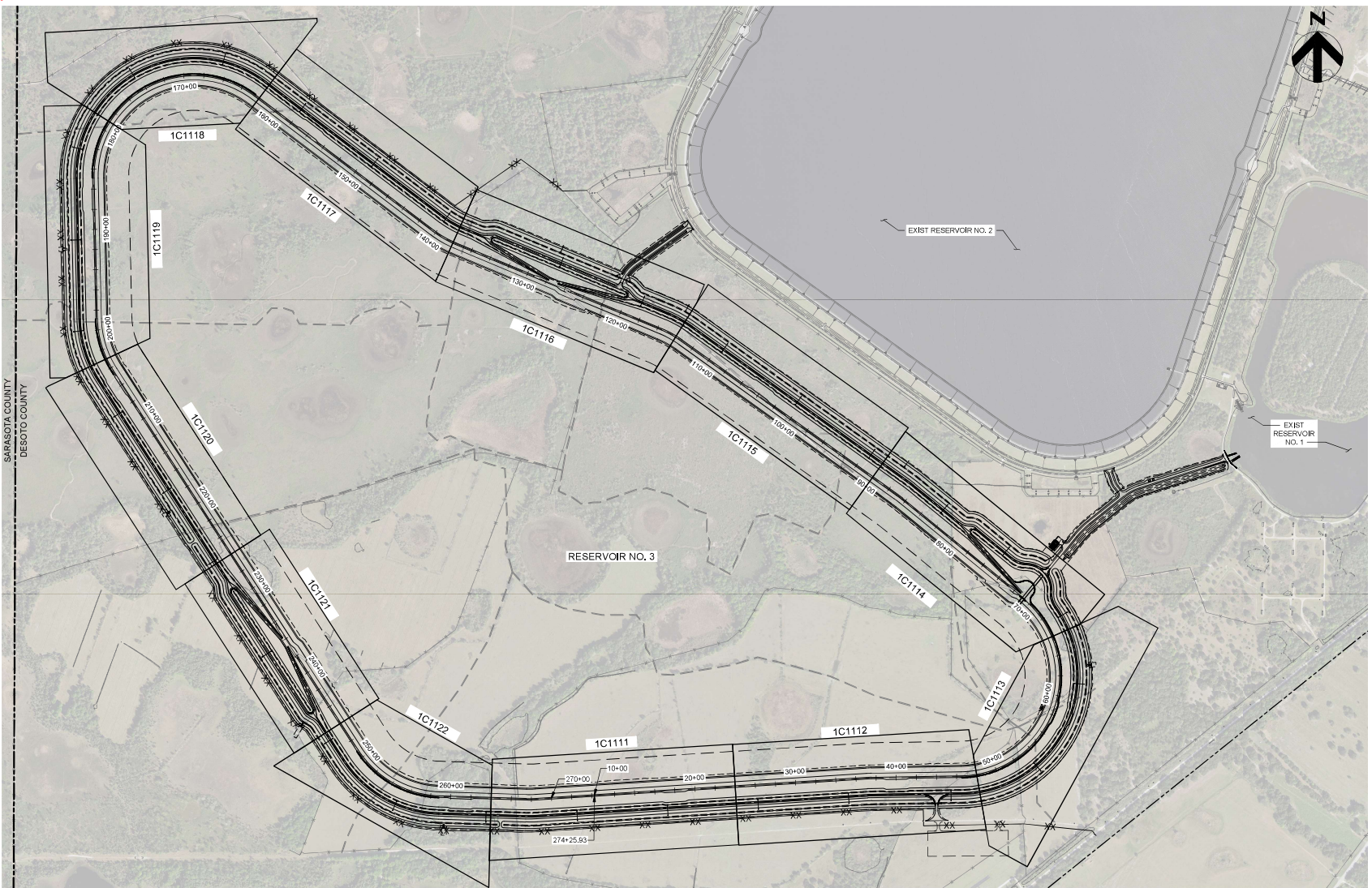
COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

The Jacksonville District will receive written comments on the proposed work, as outlined above, until May 3, 2025. Comments should be submitted electronically via the Regulatory Request System (RRS) at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs> or to Barbara Cory at barbara.m.cory@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Attention: Barbara Cory, Tampa Permits Section at 10117 Princess Palm Ave., Suite 120, Tampa FL 33610. Please refer to the permit application number in your comments.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing will be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.



US Army Corps of Engineers
Tampa Permit Section
Received by CESA-JRD-WT
Date: January 31, 2025
SA-J-2025-01274



RESERVOIR NO. 3 EMBANKMENT SHEET ORIENTATION PLAN

1" = 500'

GENERAL NOTES:

GRAPHIC SCALE(S):



Hazen

HDR

HDR Engineering, Inc.
4330 W. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 400
Tampa, FL 33609-2549
813.282.2300

ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION
A	09/2024	90% ISSUED FOR REVIEW

PROJECT MANAGER	KATIE E. DUTY, P.E.
DESIGNED BY	A. JUD
DRAWN BY	D. DIXON
CHECKED BY	R. LEBLANC, P.E.
PROJECT NUMBER	10383774

PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION
OR
RECORDING



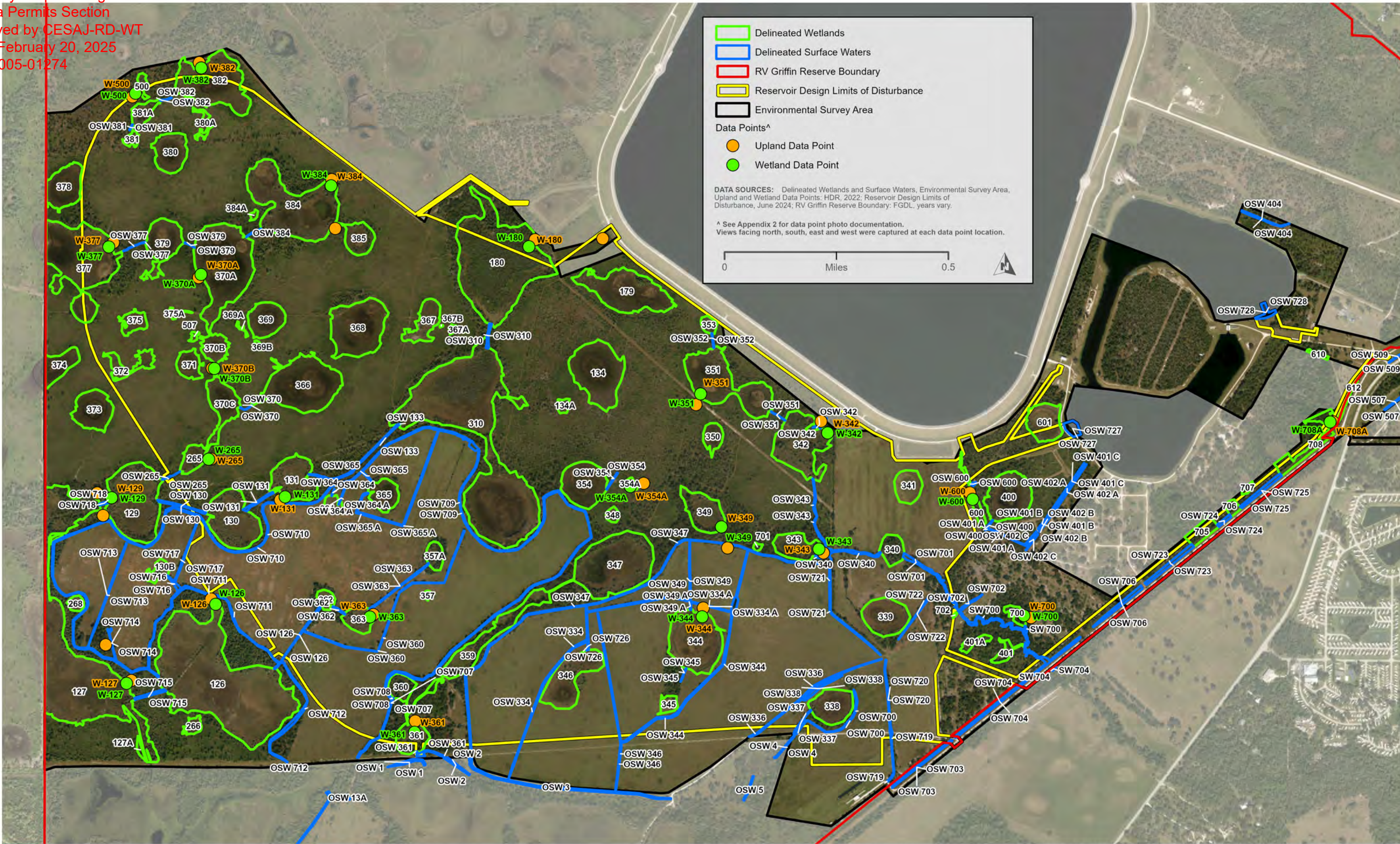
WORK ORDER NO. 02
PEACE RIVER REGIONAL
(PR³) PROJECT
DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

VOLUME I - RESERVOIR NO. 3

RESERVOIR NO. 3 EMBANKMENT
SHEET ORIENTATION PLAN

FILENAME	1C1101.dwg
SCALE	1" = 500'

SHEET
1C1101



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL RESERVOIR (PR3) PROJECT
AQUATIC RESOURCES

