

**MYAKKA RIVER MANAGEMENT
COORDINATING COUNCIL**

MYAKKA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER PROGRAM
1843 S. TAMiami TRAIL, OSPREY FL 34229

May 30, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for federal partnership Wild and Scenic River designation for the Myakka River and H.R. 642 – Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman:

The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council whole-heartedly supports Federal Partnership Wild and Scenic designation for the Myakka River in Sarasota County.

The Council provides management guidance regarding the Myakka River. The Florida State Wild and Scenic designation created the Council in 1985, with a charge from the Legislature to identify opportunities to better protect the river resources and provide non-binding advisory opinions.

Council members consider Partnership Wild and Scenic designation a genuine opportunity to fully maximize our community's potential to create the support and awareness necessary for sustaining and enhancing the river long-term. The Council's work over the past four decades as a public-private group of stakeholders directed to facilitate management of the river has enhanced its wild and scenic values, albeit with limited resources.

The partnership will empower the Council to increase educational efforts, community involvement and consensus building, in support of the river's values. Federal recognition will drive increased awareness and support, taking local management to the next level, providing necessary support and expertise to take on multi-faceted projects, such as shoreline restoration projects with multiple owners. In addition, access to highly specialized technical assistance, best practices and educational tools from the National Park Service Night Skies Division, could enhance night sky quality in the Myakka River corridor, to the benefit of our community and the river.

To advance the designation, we are asking for the Chairman of the Federal Lands Subcommittee Tom Tiffany to hold a hearing to assess the merits of marking up this legislation in the full committee. A hearing would allow both community leaders and river experts to offer testimony on the work that has made the Myakka River both *eligible* and *suitable* for designation as a partnership Wild and Scenic River as well as discuss the meaningful community-driven work that will become possible with Federal designation.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact me if you would like to discuss further.

On behalf of the Council,



Jono Miller, 2025 Chair
Myakka River Management Coordinating Council

ADDENDUM: MYAKKA RIVER MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL 2025 MEMBERS

Counties:

Manatee County, Sarasota County, Charlotte County

Cities:

North Port, Sarasota, Venice

State and Regional Agencies & Organizations:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service, Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership

Environmental Organizations: Friends of Myakka River, Big Waters Land Trust, ManaSota-88, Sierra Club, Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida, Sarasota County League of Women's Voters, Sarasota Audubon Society, Venice Area Audubon Society, Friends of Warm Mineral Springs, Greater Charlotte Harbor Sierra Club, North Port Friends of Wildlife, Environmental Conservancy of North Port,

Agricultural Interests & Homeowners:

O Bar O Ranch, Victor Dobrin, Deborah Musallam,

CC:

The Honorable Tom Tiffany, Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Lands
The Honorable Joe Neguse, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Federal Lands