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February XX, 2016

Ms. Julie Espy

Program Administrator

Water Quality Assessment and Restoration

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

2600 Blair Stone Rd. MS3560

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Shell Creek and Prairie Creek Watersheds Reasonable Assurance Plan; Fifth Bi-Annual Performance Monitoring Summary.

Dear: Ms. Espy;

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), along with the Shell, Prairie, and Joshua Creek Stakeholders Group (SPJCSG), hereby submits to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the Fifth Bi-Annual Performance Monitoring Summary as required under the Shell Creek and Prairie Creek Watersheds Management/Reasonable Assurance (RA) Plan. The specific goal of the SPJCSG was to improve water quality within the Shell and Prairie Creek watersheds, with specific emphasis on Total Maximum Daily Load impaired sub-basins, to consistently meet Class I surface-water quality criteria (F.A.C. 62-302.530) for chloride, specific conductance, and total dissolved solids (TDS). The time frame to achieve reductions in the identified water quality parameters was ten years, or by 2014. Therefore, this document represents the final performance monitoring submittal required under the RA Plan.

The enclosed report documents water quality improvements which are the results of regulatory and resource management actions that have been specified in the Shell Creek and Prairie Creek Watersheds RA Plan (2004) for the September 2012 to September 2014 time period. However, results from each bi-annual performance monitoring submittal throughout the entire RA Plan time frame (August 2004 to September 2014) are also included.

Considerable success has been achieved over the past ten years in reducing concentrations, as well as the number of occurrences, of the identified impaired parameters exceeding Class I surface-water quality criteria within the surface waters of these watersheds. These water quality improvements are of particular significance considering this region of southwest Florida was impacted more than 50 percent of the time over the course of the RA Plan by drought conditions. In addition, the commitment of the SPJCSG, which also included numerous agricultural entities, was instrumental in collaboratively addressing

the water quality impairments. Considerable funding totaling over \$47,000,000 (which does not include cost-share funding from private landowners) secured through state, local and Federal commitments supported the success of the resource management actions and allowed extensive water quality data collection/performance monitoring efforts to occur throughout the timeline of the RA Plan.

Based on results provided in the Fifth Bi-Annual Performance Monitoring Summary, and further supported by the FDEP's Group 3 / Cycle 3 Verified Assessment Period Report Card, the District and the SPJCSG request that the FDEP consider delisting TDS and specific conductance for both Prairie Creek water segments within WBID 1962.

Continued analysis of historical surface and groundwater quality conditions in the Shell Creek watershed, along with implementation of Best Management Practices, suggest that the surface waters within WBIDs 2040 and 2041 naturally exceed FDEP Class I drinking water standards. Although management actions will continue to be implemented in the Shell Creek watershed to address both water quality and quantity issues (Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy, SWFWMD, 2015), additional water quality improvements are anticipated to be minimal.

Sincerely,

Eric C. DeHaven, P.G
Assistant Division Director
Resource Management Division
Southwest Florida Water Management District

CC: TBD

Enclosure(s)
Shell Creek and Creek Watersheds Management Plan; Fifth Performance Monitoring Summary (September 2012 to September 2014).