This 370+ acre site was the largest area of unprotected native habitat remaining along the unchannelized portion of Shell Creek. The character of the preserve is unusual for south Florida. From the waterline the creek banks rise almost vertically for several feet, up to 10 feet in some places, indicating that this creek is very old geologically in comparison to most south Florida waterways. The entire site is made up of a wide variety of upland habitat types, an unusual feature for waterfront lands and a function of the highly incised creek. Cypress and bottomland hardwoods line the creek shores giving way to xeric hammock, and further landward are intermittent small areas of mesic hammock and scrub. Farther upland are large areas of mostly high quality longleaf pine dominated mesic flatwoods. Several small streams and one major creek enter Shell Creek within the preserve from both the north and the south. The site contains three depressional wetland marshes.

Shell Creek, along with Prairie Creek, are drinking water sources for the City of Punta Gorda and parts of unincorporated Charlotte County. The creeks provide 8,000,000 gallons of potable water per day to thousands of residents. Shell Creek preserve contains extensive acreage of high quality, rare native habitats, and over five miles of frontage on Shell Creek. The site provides an important native habitat link in a regional wildlife corridor from the Webb/Babcock preservation area to the Myakka Island (to the north).

Protecting this site sustains and improves wildlife habitat and provides the opportunity for connectivity and wildlife corridors in the future. Protection also provides for preservation of the water quality in Shell Creek, and the potable water supply for the City of Punta Gorda and parts of unincorporated Charlotte County. Shell Creek Preserve also provides passive recreational opportunities and access to Shell Creek for fishing and non-motorized vessels.

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