

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**FROM:** Sharon M. Trost, P.G., AICP, Director, Regulation Division

**DATE:** May 15, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Approve an Interagency Agreement between the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) authorizing the SFWMD to review the proposed Best Management Practices Water Quality Improvement Exemption for Highland Farms located in Highlands County.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve an Interagency Agreement between the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) authorizing the SFWMD to issue an Environmental Resource Permit for the best management practices water quality improvement exemption of the ranch under the Wetland Reserve Program and in support of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program on Highland Farms located in Highlands County.

### **BACKGROUND**

The subject property is presently improved pasture and native rangeland located in Highlands County along the headwaters of Fisheating Creek. The property is located within the jurisdiction of both SWFWMD and SFWMD. The property drains via sheetflow and ditches to Fisheating Creek, which is located in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed within the South Florida Water Management District.

Subsection 373.046 (6), authorizes a water management district to designate through an interagency agreement, regulatory responsibility to another water management district over a project which crosses the jurisdictional boundaries of both districts. For efficiency and effectiveness, the applicant and both districts desire to designate SFWMD as the water management district with all regulatory responsibilities under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., for the Highlands Farms Project. Both Districts propose to enter into an Interagency Agreement, directing the SFWMD to process and regulate Best Management Practices Water Quality Improvement projects under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., for those activities associated with Highland Farms in Highlands County.

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