

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Tommy Strowd, Director, Operations, Maintenance and Construction Division

DATE: August 2, 2011

SUBJECT: **4600002497-4600002500 - Ground Application Services that will provide exotic plant control throughout the District's properties, including flood control infrastructure and natural areas.**

Background:

These contracts are to replace the existing ground application services contracts (4600000981, 4600000982 and 4600000984). This project targets exotic plant infestations, which threaten both the operation and maintenance of the C & SF project and the stability of the natural ecosystems of South Florida. The objectives of this award are to: 1) supplement the District's effort to maintain flood control project facilities in accordance with established standards and 2) eliminate melaleuca and other invasive exotic plant species from natural areas within District boundaries. Plant species with the highest potential for impacting these lands are best controlled through an integrated management approach using chemical, biological, and physical methods. However, the primary method of control is the application of herbicides using ground or aerial application equipment. These contractors apply different herbicides to various types of aquatic, wetland and upland vegetation using ground application equipment and associated support vehicles, in accordance with District project management directions. O&M provides this service District-wide, mostly through contractors. The District intends to issue 3-year work order contracts with 2 one year renewal options to four contractors following negotiations. The District has used these services over the past 20 years to control melaleuca, aquatic and other exotic plants District-wide. These services have also supported projects funded by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the USACE.

How this helps meet the District's 10-year Strategic Plan:

Vegetation management is required to maintain efficient operation of the C&SF project, environmental integrity of District-managed conservation lands and waters, and maximum performance capability of the STAs and additional CERP projects. District project sites include the canals, levees and rights-of-way; and natural areas include, but are not limited to, the Everglades Water Conservation Areas and surrounding buffer lands, Lake Okeechobee, the Kissimmee River and Chain of lakes and other Conservation properties.

Funding Source:

Funding historically has come from many dedicated funding sources. FY12 funds are derived as follows: \$4M allocated between the Okeechobee Basin Fund, Big Cypress Basin Fund, \$2.7M against the STA Operations and Maintenance Fund and \$463,000 against the Capital Projects Big Cypress Basin Fund. Non ad-valorem funds are as follows: \$500,000 against Aquatic Plant Control, \$800K against the Melaleuca Management Fund, \$1,511,147 against the Wetlands Mitigation Fund and \$25,853 against the Lake Okeechobee Trust Fund. The not-to-exceed spending authority is \$10M annually for the 3 year contract with 2 one-year renewal options, of which \$10M is subject to Governing Board approval of the FY12 budget, with the remainder subject to Governing Board approval of the FY13-FY16 budgets.

FWC provides matching funds to the District melaleuca program under a cooperative agreement, 4600001831. The District is, also, reimbursed for aquatic plant treatments in sovereign waters of the State, under agreement 46000001832.

This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:

These contracts are managed by the Vegetation Management Section and provide vegetation management services District-wide, and for all District sections requesting these services.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

This Request for Proposal (RFP) followed standard procurement procedures and the highest ranking, responsive and responsible bidders were selected. It should be noted that if negotiations are unsuccessful with the top 4 bidders, the District may elect to negotiate with the next highest ranking proposal. The contractors are Applied Aquatic Management, LJR, Inc., Lake & Wetland Management, Inc., EarthBalance Corporation and Florida Best Inc. of Haines City.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

On-going programs to mitigate the threat from invasive species require ground application services in order to be effective. Vegetation management has been identified as a critical element for several programs at the District. Ground application services are integral to successful vegetation management throughout the District. As the program is increasingly outsourced, this service helps to fill the gaps. To help maintain consistency through this outsourcing initiative, we are requesting that these work order contracts be for a 3-year term with 2 one year renewal options. Without these contracts, vegetation management activities at the District cannot proceed.

TS/ed