

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: George L. Horne, Deputy Executive Director, Operations and Maintenance

DATE: October 02, 2006

SUBJECT: 4600000435 - Aerial Application Services for Vegetation Management

Background:

This contract is to replace the existing aerial application services contract, C-15517 which is expiring. This project targets exotic plant infestations, which threaten both the operation and maintenance of the flood control project and stability of the natural ecosystems of South Florida. The objectives of this service are to 1) supplement the District's efforts to maintain the flood control project facilities and Storm Water Treatment Areas (STAs) in accordance with established standards and 2) eliminate melaleuca and other exotic plant species from natural areas within District boundaries. The District's project facilities and STAs include various canals, levees, reservoir, wetlands and rights-of-way. Natural areas include, but are not limited to the Water Conservation Areas and surrounding buffer lands, the Lake Okeechobee marsh, Kissimmee River and chain of lakes and Save Our Rivers (SOR) properties. Plant species with the highest potential for impacting these lands are controlled through an integrated management approach. However, the primary method of control is the application of herbicides using ground or aerial application equipment. The contractor applies different herbicides to various types of aquatic, wetland and upland vegetation using helicopters and associated support vehicles, in accordance with District project management directions. This is a very cost-effective method for treating large infestations in remote locations which otherwise require a significant expenditure of time and equipment. The contractor also provides aerial transportation for aerial surveys and conduct aerial ignition for control burning. O&M is a District-wide provider for this service, which has also supported projects funded by the FLDEP 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. The District project facilities include the canals, levees and right-of-way and natural areas include but are not limited to the Everglades Water Conservation Areas and surrounding buffer lands, the Lake Okeechobee marsh, the Kissimmee river and chain of lakes and Conservation properties

Funding Source:

The highest ranking proposal is Helicopter Applicator, Inc. for a contract total of \$15,000,000 over a 5 year period. Funding historically has come from many dedicated fund sources, including State and Federal funds (Water Management Land Trust Fund, Invasive Plant Management Fund, Wetland Mitigation, and Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Fund). Some ad valorem funding will be used over the 5 year period. Total funding is \$15M for the 5 year contract, of which, \$3M is budgeted and the remainder or \$12M, is subject to Governing Board approval of the FY08-FY11 budgets. Dedicated funds total \$2,700,000 and ad valorem funding totals \$300,000 for this fiscal year.

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

This item impacts the Operations and Maintenance resource areas, District wide. This contract is managed by the Vegetation Management Division and provides vegetation management services District-wide, and for all other District requesting Divisions.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

This request for Proposal (RFP) followed standard procurement procedures and the highest ranking, responsive and responsible bidder was selected. It should be noted that if negotiations are unsuccessful with Helicopter Applicator, Inc., the District will proceed in ranked order until a contract has been successfully negotiated.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

The District has always outsourced this service as the District does not have the in-house capacity to provide this service. On-going programs to mitigate the threat from invasive species require aerial application services in order to be effective. Vegetation management has been identified as a critical element for several programs at the District. Without this contract, this work cannot proceed.

GLH/dt