

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director, Everglades Restoration Resource Area

DATE: August 9, 2007

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir Project Implementation Report

Background:

The SFWMD and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), with input from several other federal, state, and local agency staff, have completed the Project Implementation Report (PIR) for the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir (CRWBSR) Project. Implementation of the Recommended Plan described in this report will provide a structural component that is essential to the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem and the Caloosahatchee Estuary. The project will provide the following benefits: improve the timing of freshwater deliveries to the Caloosahatchee Estuary, improve the salinity range within the Estuary and restore habitat function and quality in the Estuary, resulting in improved plant and animal species abundance and diversity.

The CRWBSR Project will provide 170,000 acre feet of storage along the Caloosahatchee River. Excess freshwater flows will be captured during wet season and then subsequently released to the Caloosahatchee Estuary during the dry season. This project is in Band 1 of the CERP Master Implementation Sequencing Plan, along with other projects scheduled to be completed and operational by 2010. The CRWBSR Project is one of the CERP projects to be implemented under the State's Acceler8 Program.

This action by the Governing Board expresses the Board's non-binding support for the Project Implementation Report. This District will collaborate with the Corps as the District completes the design and engineering for the CRWBSR Project under the Acceler8 Program. Once the Corps has full authorization and appropriations for implementation of the project, and if Congress authorizes the Corps to credit the District for early construction activities, the District would have an opportunity to enter into a Project Cooperation Agreement with the Corps to receive credit for any construction completed prior to execution of the Agreement. This Project Cooperation Agreement would be presented to the Governing Board for approval prior to execution.

How this helps meet the District's 10-Year Strategic Plan: The CRWBSR Project supports the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

Funding Source:

No new funding is associated with this action.

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

The CRWBSR Project is located in western Hendry County. The reservoir is located on 10,500 acres just west of the City of LaBelle, south of the Caloosahatchee River and SR 80. This project will help to restore habitat function and quality in the Caloosahatchee Estuary. The planning of this project is being managed by the Everglades Planning Department.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

Since this is a non-binding letter of support, this action should raise no significant concerns. However, the Governing Board should expect some stakeholder input on the project assurances modeling and operating plan, benefits analysis, water quality treatment and recreational opportunities.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

The District has committed to implementation of CERP, which includes the CRWBSR Project. Additionally, the District intends to accelerate the schedule for construction of this project under the Acceler8 Program with the desire to receive cost-share credit from the Corps for construction expenses toward the State's 50/50 cost-share under the CERP. Approval of this Project Implementation Report is a critical step in the federal process that would allow the District to receive credit for its Acceler8 construction expenditures.

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Attachments – Resolution, Map, Letter of Support