

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Governing Board Members

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

**DATE:** August 2, 2011

**SUBJECT:** 4600002452 - Aerial Application Services for Vegetation Management

### **Background:**

This contract will replace the existing aerial application services contract, 4600000435 which will expire in September, 2011. 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) support the District's effort of maintaining 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. This contract requires application of different herbicides to various types of aquatic, wetland and upland vegetation using aerial application equipment and associated support vehicles, in accordance with District project management directions. Following negotiations, the District intends to issue a 3-year work order contract with 2 one year renewal options to Helicopter Applicators Inc. 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 and the USACE.

In addition to herbicide application this contract includes aerial services for additional activities. Prescribed fire services are utilized by the District to maintain ecosystem health. Aerial vegetation drops allow for conversion of plant species within the Stormwater Treatment Areas. Survey flights for mapping of plant infestations are also included.

### **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 including, 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 ad valorem and dedicated fund sources. FY12 funds are derived as follows: \$1.3M allocated between the Okeechobee Basin Fund, Big Cypress Basin Fund and Save Our Rivers Fund; \$1M against the Aquatic Plant Fund, \$300K against the Melaleuca Management Fund, \$300K against Wetlands Mitigation Fund and \$400K against STA Operations and Maintenance Fund and \$100K against the Lake Okeechobee Trust Fund. The not-to-exceed spending authority is \$3.4M annually for the 3 year contract with 2 one-year renewal options, of which \$3.4M is subject to Governing Board approval of the FY12 budget, with the remainder subject to Governing Board approval of the FY13-FY16 budgets.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission provide 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:**

This contract is managed by the Vegetation Management Section and provides vegetation management services District-wide, and to all District Sections requesting such services.

**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.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?**

On-going programs to mitigate the threat from invasive species require aerial application services in order to be effective & cost efficient. Vegetation management has been identified as a critical element for several programs at the District. Aerial application services are integral to successful vegetation management. To help maintain consistency through this outsourcing initiative, we are requesting that this work order contract be for a 3 year term with 2 one-year renewal options. Without this contract, vegetation management activities at the District cannot proceed.

TS/ed