

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Deena Reppen, Deputy Executive Director, Regulatory and Public Affairs

DATE: May 21, 2010

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 issue an Environmental Resource Permit for the proposed environmental restoration of the Rafter T Ranch 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 proposed implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in accordance with the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program on the Rafter T Ranch located in Highlands County.

BACKGROUND

The subject property is located in Highlands County along the western bank of Arbuckle Creek and is presently improved pasture. The property is located within the jurisdiction of both SWFWMD and SFWMD. SFWMD has previously issued an Environmental Resource Permit for the implementation of a Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Project (FRESP), which was constructed on the portion of the ranch within SFWMD (28-00543-P). The property drains via sheetflow, open ditches, and pumps to Arbuckle Creek, which is located in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed within the SFWMD.

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 Rafter T Ranch Project. Both Districts propose to enter into an Interagency Agreement, directing the SFWMD to process and regulate environmental resource permits under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., for those activities associated with the environmental restoration of the Rafter T Ranch in Highlands County.

Staff Contacts: **Benita Whalen, P.E., Deputy Department Director**
Environmental Resource Regulation Department (561) 682- 2957