

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 Santa Rosa 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 environmental restoration of the ranch under the Wetland Reserve Program and in support of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program on the Santa Rosa 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 has been historically diked off from the remainder of the floodplain and discharges into Arbuckle Creek through a pump, which was authorized in 1979 by SFWMD under Permit Number 28-00135-S. The property is located within the jurisdiction of both SWFWMD and SFWMD and drains via sheetflow, 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 Santa Rosa 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 Santa Rosa Ranch in Highlands County.

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