

**REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**PROJECT:** C-23/C-24, C-44 & Cypress Creek

**PURPOSE:** Land Clearing and Bio Fuel Crop Production Lease

**CONTRACT:** 46000022451 Approximately 5,744.33 Acres–Martin and St. Lucie Counties

**REQUEST:** Authorize a two year Lease with USCJO, Inc. to clear and lease the land for bio-fuel crop production

**BACKGROUND:**

The District acquired parcels for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project C-23/C-24, C-44 and Cypress Creek components containing ~5,744.33 acres of various citrus groves located in Martin and St. Lucie Counties. Storm events and disease had significant impacts on the groves. The District solicited a Request for Bids to clear the remaining trees from the parcels, remove any existing irrigation lines and lease the tracts to assist in their stewardship and maintenance. The areas that make up the total acreage to be cleared and leased are comprised of three separate sites: two sites in Martin County and one site in St. Lucie County made up of a number of smaller parcels. The Request for Bids stated that the land parcels could be utilized for any lawful purpose including, but not limited to, crops for bio fuel production or cattle grazing which cause no adverse environmental impacts to water resources. The sole successful bidder intends to clear the sites and plant crops for bio fuel production.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The proposed lease would provide for the land to be cleared and any existing irrigation lines to be removed at no cost to the District and allow USCJO to plant bio fuel crops for a period of two years. USCJO, Inc. would be responsible for paying any taxes assessed on the property to the appropriate county.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District authorize a lease with USCJO, Inc. to clear the land, remove the irrigation lines and lease the parcels for bio fuel production for two years.

Governing Board Members  
June 9, 2011  
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