

## LAND ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**PROJECT:** CERP Northern Palm Beach County Project  
Pal Mar and J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area  
Hydropattern Restoration

**COUNTY:** Martin

**SIZE:** 1357.14 acres, more or less

**SELLERS:** South Florida Water Management District (“District”) and Martin County

**BUYER:** United States of America, by and through the Commodity Credit Corporation (“United States”)

**INTEREST:** Conservation Easement Deed over Pal Mar East Property (Tract 23-116-050) and Access Easement (Tract 23-116-051)

**PRICE:** \$5,029,042 (\$3706 per acre)

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The purpose of this project is to partner with the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), under their Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), in the acquisition and protection of lands in the PalMar East Project. Under this action, the District and Martin County would provide USDA-NRCS with a WRP conservation easement over 1357.14 acres, more or less, in Martin County, as identified on attached Exhibit “A” of the PalMar East property in exchange for a payment of \$5,029,042. This WRP Conservation Easement Deed is intended to restore, protect, manage, maintain, and enhance the functional values of wetlands and conserve the natural values, including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality improvement, flood water retention, groundwater recharge, open space, aesthetic values, and environmental education over project lands.

**CONSIDERATIONS:** In July, 2004, the Governing Board approved an Option Agreement for Sale and purchase of approximately 3096 acres of property situated in an ideal location to provide hydrologic connections between the Corbett Wildlife Management Area, Pal Mar and the northwest fork of the Loxahatchee River. In May, 2006, the Governing Board approved entering into a revenue agreement with Martin County for approximately \$8,827,507 of County funds. The District has acquired all of the property in the original option agreement in partnership with Martin County together with an additional ten (10) acre parcel that has adjusted the project boundary and confirmed access to the project. Upon approval by the Martin County Board of Commissioners, Martin County and the District will convey this conservation easement to the United States over an approximate 1,357.14 acre portion of the original option property, as shown on Exhibit “A” attached hereto. Additionally, an access easement will be granted to the United States over adjacent property owned

by the District and Martin County as shown on the attached map. Staff will recommend at a future board meeting that the Board approve entering into a cost-share agreement with the USDA/NRCS for restoration of this conservation easement parcel, under which the USDA/NRCS will provide 75% of the restoration costs on a reimbursement basis.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The acquisition price of the original transaction was approximately \$43,344,000 payable over three years. By partnering with Martin County in the ownership and management of this property, the District has received \$8,827,500. By conveying this conservation easement to the United States, the District will recoup another \$5,029,042 of the original purchase price from the Wetlands Reserve Program, plus 75% of the costs of restoring the wetland functions on the parcel. This amount is based on the maximum amount that was allowable per acre at the time of the original transaction for conservation easements in South Florida under the Wetlands Reserve Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District authorize declaring as surplus and granting a perpetual conservation easement deed to the United States of America, by and through the Commodity Credit Corporation encumbering 1357.14 acres, more or less, in Martin County, Florida, of the CERP Northern Palm Beach County Project, Pal Mar and J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area Hydropattern Restoration for the amount of \$5,029,042.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Hall, Sr. Real Estate Specialist  
Land Acquisition & Land Management  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth P. Clements, Director  
Land Acquisition and  
Land Management Department  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E.  
Deputy Executive Director  
Everglades Restoration Resource Area  
Date \_\_\_\_\_