

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**FROM:** Chip Merriam, Deputy Executive Director, Water Resources

**DATE:** March 5, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee Project

**Background:** The Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative (LRPI) is the outgrowth of the watershed management effort that was spearheaded by the Department of Environmental Protection in 1996. The initiative outlines several key projects that are critical in preserving the long-term health of the Loxahatchee River. The LRPI ranked the Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee Project number four for its potential positive impact on water quality, and its ability to proceed rapidly. The construction of this project will provide for redistribution, storage and timed delivery of basin stormwater. Recommended improvements within the Cypress Creek Basin will provide stormwater treatment, wetland rehydration, and flood relief throughout the basin. The primary objective of this project is to restore the historical water flow out of the Pal-Mar basin into Cypress Creek and the Loxahatchee River Northwest Fork (NWF). Redistribution of flow from west of Ranch Colony Canal back into Cypress Creek will be accomplished through use of existing rights of way, land or flowway acquisition, use of adjacent lands and design engineering for restoration of flow to the Creek and the Wild and Scenic North Fork of the Loxahatchee River. Increased freshwater flow and pushing the saltwater interface back to the east toward the Atlantic Ocean will result in the restoration of preferred habitat of several rare, threatened, and endangered species.

**How this helps meet the District's 10-Year Strategic Plan:** This water project supports the District's 10-Year Strategic Plan to restore watersheds and estuaries through local initiatives.

**Funding Source:** This is a one year cost share agreement with Martin County for the Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee Project, in the amount of \$1,025,000, of which the District's total contribution is \$500,000, for which dedicated funds (state appropriations) are budgeted.

**This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:** The project is in the Loxahatchee River Watershed (Martin County). The water management improvements are located in the Cypress Creek/Pal-MAR public lands. Resource areas impacted are the Coastal Ecosystems Division and Land Management Department.

**What concerns could this Board item raise?** This project is supported by the Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative, and is one of several key projects that are important in preserving the long-term health of the Loxahatchee River.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?** This project will increase groundwater and surface water contribution to the NWF. Its success will result in improved water quality of discharges to the NWF, enhanced freshwater flows to the NWF, and enhanced flood protection for the basin.

CM/tc  
Attachment – Resolution, Map