

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**FROM:** Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director,  
Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects 

**DATE:** June 28, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Project Partnership Agreement for the Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Project - Contract Number 4600002148

**Background:** Staff requests Governing Board approval to enter into a Project Partnership Agreement with the U.S. Department of the Army for construction, operation, maintenance, repair, replacement and rehabilitation of the Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Project, a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). This Agreement, coupled with the CERP Master Agreement (Contract No. 40001759), specifies the terms and conditions for implementation responsibilities and cost-share for the project. The estimated construction cost is \$1,750,000 and the estimated annual cost of operations and maintenance for the Project is \$660,000.

Under this Project Partnership Agreement, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) will construct a 2700-square-foot "Mass Rearing Annex" as an addition to the existing Invasive Plant Research Laboratory in Davie, Florida. The Mass Rearing Annex will be used to raise insects that have been approved by state and federal agencies for use as biological control agents for managing the spread of invasive exotic plants species (e.g., Melaleuca, Brazilian Pepper, Old World Climbing Fern, etc.) in the South Florida ecosystem. Before being introduced to the Mass Rearing Annex, insects will have successfully completed an exhaustive quarantine testing program completed by the United States Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service to demonstrate that the insects will not attack any other plant species except the target exotic plant for which they are being released to help control.

Subject to Governing Board approval of a resolution on the current Governing Board agenda, SFWMD will also enter into a Cooperative Agreement (Contract No. 4600002151) with the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida (BOARD), The University of Florida Board of Trustees and the United States Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) to obtain these agencies' certification and dedication of the 0.19 acres of land needed for the Project. This land is currently owned by the BOARD, leased to the University of Florida and subleased to the USDA-ARS. After receiving certification from the BOARD, University and Florida and USDA-ARS, the SFWMD will certify the land to the Corps for the Project.

After the Corps completes construction of the Mass Rearing Annex, SFWMD will be responsible for operations, maintenance, repair, replacement and rehabilitation of the

building for the life of the project, which will be 24 years. SFWMD is also responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the project operations, which will include mass rearing and field release of biological control insects, as well as field monitoring. The SFWMD will contract with USDA-ARS to perform these operations and maintenance activities under a separate Cooperative Agreement to be negotiated and presented to the Governing Board for approval at a later date. The Corps will provide a 50 percent cost-share for these activities on an annual basis.

**How this helps meet the District's 10-Year Strategic Plan:** The Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Project is a component of CERP, which is a major component of the Strategic Plan.

**Funding Source:** The Corps will complete construction in FY11 using Stimulus funding provide under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. No SFWMD funding is needed for FY10 or FY11. At this time, no cash contributions are anticipated for construction of the Project, because the SFWMD can transfer credits among all CERP Projects with executed Project Partnership Agreements to balance the 50-50 cost-share programmatically. The operations and maintenance will start in FY12, will be funded with SFWMD ad valorem, and will be subject to Governing Board approval of future fiscal year budgets.

**This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:** This project will provide restoration benefits to the entire South Florida ecosystem. Staff from the Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects will manage the contract, with significant support and input from the Operations and Maintenance Department.

**What concerns could this Board item raise?** The benefits from this project will accrue over time as a result of the rearing and release of insects to control invasive exotic plants. Achieving these benefits is contingent on Congress appropriating the Corps' 50 percent share (approximately \$330,000 per year) of the operations and maintenance costs each year. SFWMD and the Corps will jointly develop a 5-year Operations and Maintenance Work Plan and Budget for CERP and will update it annually. However, the actual annual operations and maintenance budget for the Project will be determined by the Corps' appropriation from Congress for that year. For example, if the Corps only receives a \$100,000 appropriation for a given year, then the level of insect rearing and release would have to be reduced for that year, with a resultant reduction in restoration benefits.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?** The Governing Board should approve this Agreement so that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can initiate construction of the Mass Rearing Annex and achieve the resultant restoration benefits.

Attachment – Resolution  
KGA - pw