

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: George L. Horne, Deputy Executive Director, Operations & Maintenance

DATE: February 11, 2010

SUBJECT: 4600000435–A03 - Aerial Application Spending Authority Increase

Background:

This amendment increases the spending authority on the existing aerial application services contract, 4600000435, by 5 million dollars. This project targets exotic plant infestations, which threaten both the operation and maintenance of the flood control project and the stability of the natural ecosystems of South Florida. The objectives of this service are to 1) supplement the District's efforts to maintain the flood control project facilities and Storm Water Treatment Areas (STAs) in accordance with established standards, 2) eliminate exotic plant species from natural areas within District boundaries and 3) manage interim lands, including citrus groves. The District's assets include canals, levees, reservoirs, STAs, wetlands and rights-of-way. Natural areas include, but are not limited to the Water Conservation Areas and surrounding buffer lands, the Lake Okeechobee marsh and Land Stewardship properties. Plant species with the highest potential for impacting these lands are controlled through an integrated management approach. However, the primary method of control is the application of herbicides using ground or aerial application equipment. This contractor applies herbicides to various types of aquatic, wetland and upland vegetation using helicopters, in accordance with District project management protocols. This is the most cost-effective method for treating large infestations in remote locations which otherwise require a significant expenditure of time and equipment. The contractor also provides aerial transportation for aerial surveys and conducts aerial ignition for prescribed burning. O&M is a District-wide provider for this service, which also supports projects funded by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers. This Amendment does not seek to modify the existing statement of work or extend the contract period.

This amendment to the spending authority is required due to unforeseen projects that the District undertook after awarding this contract. One of these projects was the accelerated treatment of melaleuca and lygodium in the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. In 2008 we began aerial treatment of Luziola, a species first discovered in North America in 2007, in Lake Okeechobee. Again in 2008 our assistance was requested by ACOE to begin treatment of floating plants on Lake Okeechobee, in order to maintain a healthy system. In cooperation with FFWCC, we successfully completed the largest hydrilla treatment ever undertaken on the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes which required utilization of up to five helicopters, at one time. Most recently this contract has been utilized to begin treatment of diseased citrus groves on District lands. This vendor has been responsive to these unanticipated projects and completed all requests to the satisfaction of the project manager. This vendor was the only satisfactory applicant when this contract was awarded.

How this helps meet the District's 10-year Strategic Plan:

Vegetation management is required to maintain efficient operation of the C&SF project, environmental integrity of District managed conservation lands and waters, and to maximize performance capability of the STAs.

Funding Source:

Funding historically has come from many dedicated fund sources, including State and Federal funds (Water Management Land Trust Fund, Invasive Plant Management Fund, Wetland Mitigation, and Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Fund). Some ad valorem funding and FFWCC funding will be used over the remaining period of this contract. The amendment allowing a 5 million dollar increase, of which one million dollars are budgeted and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of the FY11 budget. This will allow for continued services against this contract which expires on 11/01/2011.

This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:

This item impacts the Operations and Maintenance Resource Area. This contract is managed by the Vegetation Management Division and provides vegetation management services District-wide, including all other District requesting Divisions.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

Without this amendment to increase spending authority in this contract the District will be unable to utilize the allotted funding on District lands or continue to economically manage land.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

The District has always outsourced this service as the District does not have the in-house capacity to provide this service. On-going programs to mitigate the threat from invasive species require aerial application services in order to be effective. Vegetation management has been identified as a critical element for several programs at the District. Without this amendment, this work cannot proceed.

GLH/fl