

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**THROUGH:** Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director  
Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program

**FROM:** Ruth Clements, Department Director  
Land Acquisition and Land Management

**DATE:** May 10, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Cooperative Agreement with Polk County for the Management and Ownership of a Boat Ramp and Public Use Area to be Constructed by the District on Lake Kissimmee

### **Recommendation:**

Approve a resolution of the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District authorizing entering into a Cooperative Agreement with Polk County for the management and ownership of a boat ramp and public use area on Lake Kissimmee, at no additional cost to the District; providing an effective date. (Contract Number 4600000643)

### **Background:**

The District, under the Kissimmee River Restoration Program, acquired approximately 3250 acres along the southwest shore of Lake Kissimmee, an area formerly known as the Speight or Shady Oaks property. The District retained approximately 620 acres in fee and flowage easement necessary for the Kissimmee River Head Water project and an additional 136 acres was retained to provide public access to Lake Kissimmee. The remaining property, including the original marina site, was exchanged for lands necessary for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project. In response to public input for a public recreational and boating site, the Board at the time of approval of the land exchange, directed staff to initiate a plan to replace the lost public boating access to the Lake.

In compliance with this direction, staff initiated a contract for design of the boat ramp and public access facilities. The design is expected to be complete by the end of FY 07. The design will encompass an airboat launch area, a powerboat ramp, canoe/kayak launch area, parking lot, restrooms, picnic area, and access roads for a future campground area to be further developed by the County. A contract to construct will be initiated in early FY 08. The District's funding of the design and construction of the facilities is planned not to exceed \$1,000,000 which will be funded through the State Florida Forever program.

**Background (Continued):**

Upon completion of the public access facilities, the District would transfer ownership of the 136 acre Park property to Polk County for long-term management of the facilities. The transfer of ownership is subject to a reservation by the District of a conservation easement over the entire project site and a flowage easement over the portion of the site identified as being between the 52.5 and 54 foot contour line.

**How this helps meet the District's Mission:**

The execution of this agreement will provide a partner to manage and operate the boat ramp and public access area. The development of the boat ramp area meets the District's 10-Year Strategic Plan to provide recreational access improvements.

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

The subject project area and improvements for this site are located on the southwestern shore of Lake Kissimmee in Polk County. The Land Stewardship Division is administering the agreement, and the improvements will be constructed under the lead of the Engineering Department.

**What concerns could this Board item raise?**

Without the approval of this agreement the District would take on the management and operation of the facilities necessary to access this region of the lake.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?**

Expanding our allowable recreational activities is consistent with the District's Public Recreational Access and Use Policy. Execution of this agreement provides for a local partnering agency to operate and maintain the boat ramp and recreation area.

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