

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**FROM:** Deena Reppen, Deputy Executive Director, Government & Public Affairs

**DATE:** November 10, 2008

**SUBJECT:** North Shore Lake Okeechobee Navigation Channel Improvements (Contract #4600001552)

**Background:** Glades County is located on the western shore of Lake Okeechobee and bordered by the Caloosahatchee River to the south. It has a large influx of part time residents who enjoy the fishing and nature activities associated with its location. Storms and droughts over the past several years have affected the population with a decline in workforce beginning in 2002 and only showing a slight increase in 2006. The tourism industry supports RV parks and small resorts associated with Lake Okeechobee. The small fishing resorts are challenged with no access to the lake at most of their locations during periods of low water.

This project will assist Glades County enhance recreational opportunities on Lake Okeechobee by providing funding for maintenance dredging of the Pearce Canal and Dyess Ditch, as well as a dredging and recreational enhancement project in the Moore Haven Canal through a 5-year Local Government Agreement. The first installment of \$1 million will be used to complete the dredging of 3 miles of Pearce Canal producing approximately 27,500 cubic yards of spoil material, complete the design and engineering for Dyess Ditch, and initiate the design and construction for Moore Haven Canal. Glades County will be responsible for choosing a contractor, providing construction management and engineering certification of completion of work on the Pearce Canal and Dyess Ditch projects. On the Moore Haven Canal, Glades County will provide the same services, in addition to choosing an engineering firm to design the project and obtain necessary permitting. Continued maintenance of these navigation channels may be performed by the Florida Inland Navigation District.

**How does this item help meet the District's 10 year strategic plan:** Providing this community development assistance will result in navigational and recreational improvements, and outreach opportunities which are elements of the Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan and the Northern Everglades Initiative.

**Funding Source:** The District will provide \$5 million of ad valorem funding at \$1 million per year over a five-year period, pending Governing Board approval of future funding availability. The state has appropriated \$250,000 in FY 09 funding directly to Glades County for this project.

**This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:** This is a project that will impact Glades County, the City of Moore Haven, the communities of Buckhead Ridge and Lakeport, Lake Okeechobee and the Northern Everglades programs. Resource areas impacted are Government and Public Affairs, Watershed Management and Everglades Restoration.

**What concerns could this Board item raise?** This assistance could be seen as setting a precedent that is not within the District's area of responsibility. Although 2008 legislation has made it possible that one of the Florida Inland Navigation Districts can take on continued responsibility for the maintenance of these navigation channels, this is not guaranteed.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?** The District is committed to providing access to water resources for the recreational needs of Florida's citizens. Providing support for local government initiatives to preserve and develop economic enterprises in those communities within the South Central Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern also is within the District's role as a member of the state Rural Economic Development Initiative. This project will help Glades County to achieve its goal of preserving current home values by ensuring future lake access during low water times to its residents, as well as developing opportunities for future recreation-based economic development.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at extension 6232.

DR/mb  
Attachment: Resolution