

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Cassandra Armstrong, Ph.D., Water Resources Division

DATE: August 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Kissimmee River Restoration: Request to Extend Riverwoods Field Laboratory Contract

Agenda Item Background:

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project is a 50/50 cost share between the federal government (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and the District. The District is charged with assessing physical, chemical, biological, and functional responses within the restored river/floodplain to evaluate project success. The District currently has a contract with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) to manage the Riverwoods Field Laboratory as a base for field operations for District scientists due to the remote location of the project and distance from District headquarters. This contract also provides two scientific staff to support evaluation of ecosystem response and supports outreach and education of the project. The proposed three-year extension to the contract for \$1,125,648 is to continue FAU providing two scientific staff, project outreach and education, and site maintenance/security for the 15-acre Riverwoods site located in Cornwell, Florida; for a revised total six-year contract amount not to exceed \$2,142,816. Costs for this contract, both expended and proposed, are creditable and included in the District's total project cost estimate for Kissimmee River Restoration.

Additional Item Background:

The District has held four previous multi-year contracts with FAU to manage the Riverwoods Field Laboratory. Section 287.057, Florida Statutes, and District Policy provide exempting this agreement from competitive solicitation based on Section 155-6 #17 that state "services from universities and colleges, including community colleges, for research, studies, or training, unless more than one institution can provide comparable products or services." Contracting these services through FAU rather than from a private sector firm provides the District with substantial savings over the six-year contract life.

Core Mission and Strategic Priorities:

This action supports the mission element, "to safeguard and restore South Florida's water resources and ecosystems." This continued support will allow evaluation and documentation of ecological conditions in the Kissimmee River and floodplain as the system responds to project construction completed in 2020, as well as full hydrologic restoration slated to begin in 2027.

Funding Source:

The contract amendment with FAU for the Riverwoods Field Laboratory will be funded through Ad Valorem funds.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

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ATTACHMENTS:

[Resolution No. 2025-0805](#)