

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Rich Virgil, Field Operations Division

DATE: May 9, 2024

SUBJECT: Ground Application Services Contracts

Agenda Item Background:

Invasive and nuisance plants threaten the operation and maintenance of the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) project and the health and stability of the natural ecosystems of South Florida. Plant species with the highest potential for impacting District infrastructure and District-managed natural areas are best controlled through an integrated management approach using chemical, biological, and physical methods. The primary method of control is the application of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved herbicides. The District utilizes contractors (consistent with the District's herbicide reduction strategy) to apply herbicides to various types of aquatic, wetland and upland vegetation using ground application equipment and associated support vehicles as well as planting beneficial native vegetation, under the direction of District project managers. The District intends to issue three-year work order contracts with two one-year renewal options to ten contractors following negotiations. The existing ground service agreements will expire September 30, 2024. All responsive and responsible applicants that met District criteria have been selected for these services, which the following contractors may provide ground application services, as needed: Applied Aquatic Management, Inc., Aquatic Vegetation Control, Inc., Environmental Quality, Inc., Ground Level, Inc., Walker Environmental, LLC DBA Walker Exotic Tree Eradication, Native Creations, Inc., Earthbalance Corporation, Florida Best Inc. of Haines City, Woods and Wetlands, Inc., Deangelo Contracting Services LLC DBA Aquagenix.

Additional Item Background:

Core Mission and Strategic Priorities:

Vegetation management is required to maintain efficient operation of the C&SF project, ensure maximum performance capability of the STAs and additional CERP projects, improve environmental integrity of District-managed conservation lands and waters, and facilitate recreational use of lands open to the public. District project sites include the canals, levees, rights-of-way, and interim project lands. Natural areas include but are not limited to the Everglades Water Conservation Areas, Picayune Strand State Forest, the Kissimmee River floodplain, and the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes.

Funding Source:

Funding to come from Ad Valorem and dedicated funding sources to include State Appropriations, Federal, State and Local Grant funds, Lease Revenue, and Wetland and Lake Belt Mitigation funds. The total spending authority request is \$160 Million for the five-year contract, which the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget includes Ad Valorem and dedicated funds (State Appropriations) and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) provides matching funds to the District melaleuca program under Cooperative Agreement No. 4600004406. U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service provides funding for Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (Water Conservation Area 1) under Cooperative Agreement Award F23AC00479. The District is also reimbursed by the FWC for aquatic plant treatments in sovereign waters of the State, under Agreement No. 4600004562.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

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ATTACHMENTS:

[Resolution No. 2024-0505](#)