

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Ray Palmer, Real Estate

DATE: March 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Lake Cattle Trust, Cattle Grazing Lease, Okeechobee County

Agenda Item Background:

Staff is seeking Governing Board authorization to issue a cattle grazing lease for lands located in Okeechobee County for an initial term of ten years or upon a notice of commencement of project construction, whichever occurs first. Due to the short timeframe between lease execution and the start of construction, and because the previous owner has successfully operated and maintained the property as a cattle grazing operation since the District's acquisition, staff recommends that this lease not be subject to a competitive bid process.

No rent will be required under this lease since the lessee, as the previous owner of these lands, granted the District a perpetual access easement across adjacent private property to access the site. The lease has a provision for termination by the District of 90 days after issuing a Notice to Proceed for a construction contract on this property.

The District acquired the properties in February 2026 as part of the Lower Kissimmee Basin Stormwater Treatment Area Project for the purpose of capturing clean water from priority areas of the Lake Okeechobee watershed prior to it flowing into Lake Okeechobee. The property is being leased for cattle grazing as part of the District's land management program and as a condition of the acquisition.

Additional Item Background:

All leased lands are inspected on a semi-annual basis at a minimum.

Funding Source:

There are no District costs associated with this item other than the cost of administering the lease.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Ray Palmer, rpalmer@sfwmd.gov; 561-682-2246

ATTACHMENTS:

[Resolution No. 2026-0303](#)

[Exhibit A Map](#)