

WRRDA 7001 Submissions Package
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Proposal Name: Lake Okeechobee Everglades Ecosystem Protection

Submission Date: 09/15/2016

Proposal ID Number: 6ab9d149-0d59-4fd9-adfe-44bc566d6171

Purpose of Proposal: The modification to the existing authorization would be as follows:

Section 5158 (3) (G) (127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) is amended by striking “SOUTH SEMINOLE AND NORTH ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and adding “SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and by striking “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida” and adding “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.”

Section 5158 (3)(G)(127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) would now read –

SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA. – \$30,000,000 for wastewater infrastructure for the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida, and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.”

The modification would allow the Okeechobee Utility Authority to move forward with the Corps of Engineers to participate in the Environmental Infrastructure program, and pursue a project that would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

1. Administrative Details

Proposal Name: Lake Okeechobee Everglades Ecosystem Protection

by Agency: Okeechobee Utility Authority

Locations: FL

Date Submitted: 09/15/2016

Confirmation Number: 6ab9d149-0d59-4fd9-adfe-44bc566d6171

Supporting Documents

File Name	Date Uploaded
Okeechobee Utility Authority Letter.pdf	09/15/2016
Bill Nelson - Okeechobee Utility Authority - WRRDA Ltre of support.pdf	09/15/2016
ECO Letter of Support.pdf	09/15/2016
Okeechobee County Letter of Support.pdf	09/15/2016
Okeechobee Utility Authority 2016-proposal.pdf	09/15/2016
Okeechobee Utility Project Map.pdf	09/15/2016
Rooney 09 28 15 Okeechobee Utility Support Letter.pdf	09/15/2016
SFWMD Letter of Support.pdf	09/15/2016

2. Provide the name of the primary sponsor and all non-Federal interests that have contributed or are expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.

Sponsor	Letter of Support
Okeechobee Utility Authority(Primary)	The project will collect and treat wastewater that will prevent nutrients from septic tanks systems to enter waters of the State of Florida (Taylor Creek and Lake Okeechobee (headwaters to the Everglades). This project will directly support the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects, which have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation. In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem a priority.

3. State if this proposal is for a feasibility study, a modification to an authorized USACE feasibility study or a modification to an authorized USACE project. If it is a proposal for a modification, provide the authorized water resources development feasibility study or project name.

[x] Modification to an Authorized USACE Project : South Seminole and North Orange County Florida

4. Clearly articulate the specific project purpose(s) of the proposed study or modification. Demonstrate that the proposal is related to USACE mission and authorities and specifically address why additional or new authorization is needed.

The modification to the existing authorization would be as follows:

Section 5158 (3) (G) (127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) is amended by striking “SOUTH SEMINOLE AND NORTH ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and adding “SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and by striking “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida” and adding “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.”

Section 5158 (3)(G)(127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) would now read –

SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA. – \$30,000,000 for wastewater infrastructure for the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida, and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.”

The modification would allow the Okeechobee Utility Authority to move forward with the Corps of Engineers to participate in the Environmental Infrastructure program, and pursue a project that would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

5. To the extent practicable, provide an estimate of the total cost, and the Federal and non-Federal share of those costs, of the proposed study and, separately, an estimate of the cost of construction or modification.

	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
Study	\$275,000	\$175,000	\$450,000
Construction	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000

Explanation (if necessary)

6. To the extent practicable, describe the anticipated monetary and nonmonetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee, the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions. This summer, those flows discharged the noxious blue-green algae into Martin County's coastline, having a detrimental effect on the tourism economy.

Since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and the noxious blue-green algae. With the removal of these excessively elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

7. Does local support exist? If 'Yes', describe the local support for the proposal.

Yes

Local Support Description

This project is supported by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, South Florida Water Management District, Okeechobee County, City of Okeechobee and Economic Council of Okeechobee. It also has the support of Senator Bill Nelson and Congressman Tom Rooney.

8. Does the primary sponsor named in (2.) above have the financial ability to provide for the required cost share?

Yes

Primary Sponsor Letter of Support

(As uploaded)

Okeechobee Utility Authority Letter.pdf



OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY

100 SW 5th Avenue
Okeechobee, Florida 34974-4221

(863) 763-9460
FAX: (863) 467-4335

September 8, 2016

Ms. Lisa Kiefel, Planning Community of Practice
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW.
Attn: CECW-CE
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Re: Section 7001 Water Resources Reform and Development Act 2014

Dear Ms. Kiefel:

This letter is submitted in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers annual request for proposals in accordance with Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). On behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, I am submitting a modification to an existing authorization for consideration.

I respectfully request that the Corps modify an existing authorization for an environmental infrastructure project in Florida, (Section 5158(3)(G)(127) of title V of the Water Resources Act of 2007) that has never been utilized to allow the Okeechobee Utility Authority to support a viable public utility infrastructure project that will protect Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystems and provide for the health and safety of residents and visitors in the Lake Okeechobee region. The Okeechobee Utility Authority would act as the local sponsor for the project.

This project will directly support the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects, which have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

Since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and noxious blue-green algae. With the removal of these excessively elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem a priority.

The project has the direct support of Okeechobee County and the City of Okeechobee, Florida Department of Environmental Protection as well as the South Florida Water Management District are all aware of the project.

The total cost for this project is approximately \$20,000,000. The Okeechobee Utility Authority has the financial ability to provide up to 50% for this project.

Please find several letters attached providing support for the conceptual idea of the project.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. We look forward to discussing it with you further. If you have any questions for us, please contact our Washington consultant, Jim Davenport at 703-841-0626, or the Okeechobee Utility Authority Executive Director, John Hayford at 863-763-9460.

Sincerely,



John F. Hayford, P.E.
Executive Director
Okeechobee Utility Authority

Other Non-Federal Sponsors Letter(s) of Support

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**Bill Nelson - Okeechobee Utility Authority - WRRDA Ltr of
support.pdf**



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

September 24, 2015

Jo Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works
Department of the Army
Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia 20314-1000

RE: Okeechobee Utility Authority - Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014

Dear Secretary Darcy:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the Okeechobee Utility Authority's efforts to obtain a federal grant. The goal of their proposed project, Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project, is to protect both environmental and aquatic ecosystems in their region. I respectfully request your consideration of this organization's application for federal funding.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project seeks to protect the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee, and the Everglades ecosystem. If funded, they will positively impact the environmental and aquatic ecosystems by removing approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, which flows into Lake Okeechobee, the headwaters for the Everglades.

Again, I encourage your consideration of this worthy cause. If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,

BN/jm

CC: Ms. Michelle McGovern, Regional Director, U. S. Senator Bill Nelson

Other Non-Federal Sponsors Letter(s) of Support

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ECO Letter of Support.pdf

Attachment E – Letter of Support Hon. Senator B. Nelson, Florida



Economic Council of Okeechobee
Post Office Box 718
Okeechobee, Florida 34973
(863) 467-0200
www.ecok.org

December 19, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman
Okeechobee Utility Authority
100 SW 5th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974

RE: Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project

Dear Mr. Clay:

The Economic Council of Okeechobee supports the efforts of the Okeechobee Utility Authority to complete the Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project contingent upon the availability of grant funding to cover the total costs of the project.

Our economically-disadvantaged community has already contributed significant funds to this project and our designation as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern necessitates Federal funding to complete the construction of the project.

We recognize the significant impact that removing 1,600 septic tanks and drain fields would have on the environmentally-sensitive ecosystem in the Taylor Creek Watershed near Lake Okeechobee. Tourism and seasonal visitors account for a large portion of Okeechobee's economy, an industry that depends heavily on the health of Lake Okeechobee and its surrounding water bodies.

Completing this project would allow Okeechobee Utility Authority to grow their customer base benefitting the utility through improved operational efficiency. A more-efficient utility would in-turn benefit Okeechobee's economy making the community more attractive to new industry and business.

In addition, the Okeechobee Utility Authority will be able to meet their commitments to developers located in the project area.

For these reasons, and should funding become available, we support the Okeechobee Utility Authority's Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jon Geitner
Chairman

Economic Council of Okeechobee

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Attachment F – Letter of Support Economic Council Okeechobee

Other Non-Federal Sponsors Letter(s) of Support

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Okeechobee County Letter of Support.pdf

Board of County Commissioners
Okeechobee County



304 NW 2nd Street-Room123
Okeechobee, FL 34972
(863)763-6441 x1

November 24, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman
Okeechobee Utility Authority
100 SW 5th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974

RE: Water Resource & Development Act Grant

Dear Chairman Clay:

The Okeechobee Board of County Commissioners is pleased to submit this letter of support, on behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, regarding the Water Resources Reform & Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014) for removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks in the Treasure Island area of the Taylor Creek Watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryant H. Culpepper".

Bryant H. Culpepper
1st Vice Chairman – District 2

Vacant
District 1

Bryant H. Culpepper
District 2

Frank Irby
District 3

Terry Burroughs
District 4

Margaret Garrard Helton
District 5

Attachment I – the Board of Okeechobee County Commissioners

Additional Proposal Information

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Okeechobee Utility Authority 2016_proposal.pdf

1. Administrative Details

Proposal Name: Lake Okeechobee Everglades Ecosystem Protection

by Agency: Okeechobee Utility Authority

Locations: FL

POC Name: John Hayford

POC Phone: (863) 763-9460, Ext. 218

POC Email: jhayford@ouafl.com

Date Submitted: 09/15/2016

Confirmation Number: 6ab9d149-0d59-4fd9-adfe-44bc566d6171

Supporting Documents

File Name	Date Uploaded
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2. Provide the name of the primary sponsor and all non-Federal interests that have contributed or are expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.

Sponsor	Letter of Support
Okeechobee Utility Authority (Primary)	The project will collect and treat wastewater that will prevent nutrients from septic tanks systems to enter waters of the State of Florida (Taylor Creek) and Lake Okeechobee (headwaters to the Everglades). This project will directly support the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects, which have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation. In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem a priority.

3. State if this proposal is for a feasibility study, a modification to an authorized USACE feasibility study or a modification to an authorized USACE project. If it is a proposal for a modification, provide the authorized water resources development feasibility study or project name.

[x] Modification to an Authorized USACE Project : South Seminole and North Orange County Florida

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5. To the extent practicable, provide an estimate of the total cost, and the Federal and non-Federal share of those costs, of the proposed study and, separately, an estimate of the cost of construction or modification.

	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
Study	\$275,000	\$175,000	\$450,000
Construction	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000

Explanation (if necessary)

6. To the extent practicable, describe the anticipated monetary and nonmonetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee, the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions. This summer, those flows discharged the noxious blue-green algae into Martin County's coastline, having a detrimental effect on the tourism economy.

Since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and the noxious blue-green algae. With the removal of these excessively elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

7. Does local support exist? If 'Yes', describe the local support for the proposal.

Yes

Local Support Description

This project is supported by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, South Florida Water Management District, Okeechobee County, City of Okeechobee and Economic Council of Okeechobee. It also has the support of Senator Bill Nelson and Congressman Tom Rooney.

8. Does the primary sponsor named in (2.) above have the financial ability to provide for the required cost share?

Yes

Map Document

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Okeechobee Utility Project Map.pdf



Attachment A – Treasure Island Service Area

Other Non-Federal Sponsors Letter(s) of Support

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Rooney 09 28 15 Okeechobee Utility Support Letter.pdf

THOMAS J. ROONEY

17TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

DEPUTY WHIP

2160 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

(202) 225-5792

<http://rooney.house.gov>

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0917

September 28, 2015

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Secretary Darcy:

I am writing to offer my support to the Okeechobee Utility Authority's proposed feasibility study, in accordance with Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), that will protect the Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystems.

This project will directly support the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects that have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants that impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities both directly and indirectly deposit into the tributaries of Taylor Creek, near the area where the creek meets Lake Okeechobee. These flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

The project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District. The project is also in the interest of Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem system a priority.

The total cost for this project is approximately \$19 million, and the Okeechobee Utility Authority has the financial ability to provide up to 50% for this project.

Again, I am writing to convey my strong support for this proposed feasibility study. If you have any questions, please contact Clay Hollis in my office at clay.hollis@mail.house.gov, or (202) 225-5792.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress

Other Non-Federal Sponsors Letter(s) of Support

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

SFWMD Letter of Support.pdf



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

December 15, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman
Okeechobee Utility Authority
100 SW 5th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974

Subject: Treasure Island Vacuum Sewer System and East Side Force Main Project

Dear Mr. Clay:

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) understands that the Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) is seeking a grant under the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) 2014 for the Treasure Island Vacuum Sewer System and East Side Force Main Project. The SFWMD is submitting this letter to indicate that the proposed septic to sewer project is included in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan and it supports the goals of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

The Watershed Protection Plans associated with the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (373.4595 Florida Statutes) identified failing septic tanks as a contributor to degraded water quality and includes septic to sewer conversion projects as measures to improve water quality. The Okeechobee Utility Authority Treasure Island Vacuum Sewer System and East Side Force Main Project, to remove the dependency of septic systems in this area, was included as a specific management measure in the 2014 update to the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan to help improve the quality of water entering Lake Okeechobee. The Treasure Island development is located in the Taylor Creek Nubbin Slough Sub-watershed which drains to Lake Okeechobee and is a priority area for water quality improvements due to elevated levels of nutrients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lennart J. Lindahl".

Lennart J. Lindahl, P.E.
Assistant Executive Director

LJL/lb

c: Lesley Bertolotti, SFWMD
Mark Elsner, SFWMD
Beth Lewis, SFWMD
Jeff Sumner, SFWMD
Tom Teets, SFWMD