

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

FROM: Leroy Marshall, Chief, Office of Agriculture and Environmental Projects

THRU: Amy Brown, Deputy Executive Director, Water Resources

DATE: June 9, 2022

RE: Renewal of Conservation Technician Services Contract Number 16/17-250 with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Executive Director to renew Contract Number 16/17-250 with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for conservation technician services for an amount not to exceed \$211,410.

BACKGROUND

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) through the Suwannee River Partnership (SRP) have recognized the need to provide technical support services to agricultural producers to implement best management practices (BMPs). These services have been critical to the SRP mission to help conserve water and improve water quality in the District.

The FDACS, FDEP, and District funding for this initiative is accomplished with FDACS entering into separate agreements with the Gilchrist County Soil and Water Conservation District, Suwannee County Soil and Water Conservation District, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science North Florida Research and Education Center (NFREC) – Live Oak for positions which provide service to thirteen counties.

These conservation districts employ seven conservation technicians that work under the direction of FDACS to assist producers with BMPs in fertilization, irrigation, and waste management. The technicians provide significant assistance to District staff regarding water use permitting, agricultural land use (FSAID model), and cost-share outreach.

In addition, the NFREC employs an SRP Outreach Coordinator, which is co-funded by FDEP and FDACS. The SRP Outreach Coordinator spearheads SRP Steering Committee's efforts, SRP events, and other public outreach and educational activities throughout the District.

The contract period aligns with the state of Florida Fiscal Year (FY) of July 1st through June 30th.

Funding for this contract can be found in the current FY 2021-2022 budget. Funding for the remaining portion of the contract is proposed in the FY 2022-2023 Preliminary Budget and is contingent upon final approval of the FY 2023-2024 budget.

LM/tm