

**SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**  
**GOVERNING BOARD DIRECTIVE**

Directive Number: **GBD22-0003**  
Date Approved: **November 8, 2022**  
Subject: **Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources (RIVER) Cooperative Funding Program**  
Approval:



  
Virginia Johns, Chair

  
Charles Keith, Secretary/Treasurer

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**1.0 Reference to Prior Directive**

This directive supersedes GBD12-0004.

**2.0 Purpose and Intent**

The purpose of this Directive is to establish a policy and procedure for the Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources (RIVER) Cooperative Funding Program. The intent of this Directive is to offer District funding assistance to public entities and other interested entities, through a conceptual portal submissions webpage and ranking process, to implement projects that protect and improve the District's core mission areas of water supply, water quality, natural systems, and flood protection.

**3.0 Statement of Policy**

In accordance with Chapter 373, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Governing Board (Board) may participate and cooperate with a county government, town, city, municipality, water supply and/or wastewater utility or other interested entity (local entities) in water management projects of mutual benefit, provided such projects are consistent with the District's statutory authority and will ensure proper development, utilization, and conservation of the water resources and ecology within the jurisdictional boundaries of the District.

**4.0 Policy Guidelines**

1. The Board will give priority consideration to those projects designed to protect or improve multiple District core mission areas and are located in high priority areas.
2. The Board will consider the local entities' efforts in developing and implementing monitoring and best management practices.
3. Funding may be provided to assist with the cost of conservation, ecosystem

restoration, alternative water supply, water resource development, and construction of associated capital projects.

4. Funding assistance will be contingent upon past and current project performance and commitment by the local entity to ensure the project goals will be implemented.
5. The Board will consider funding based on the local entities' ability to demonstrate that the project protects or improves the District's core missions areas and such funding is necessary to make the project economically feasible.
6. The local entity must demonstrate that matching funds have been appropriated, are contained within a Capital Improvement Plan, or otherwise committed to the project.
7. Any state or federal appropriations or grant monies received by a local entity for a specific project shall be first applied toward the total cost of the local entities' proposed project. The District may fund up to 50 percent of the remaining project costs.
8. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 288.06561, F.S., the Board may reduce or waive requirements for matching funds when requested by rural counties or municipalities, as defined by Subsection 288.0656, F.S.
9. All projects submitted for funding consideration must be signed by a single Senior Administrator acting as a coordinator for the local entity. If a local entity submits multiple projects, an overall ranking of the projects is required.
10. The local entity must be in compliance with all District Water Use Permits, Water Well Permits, and/or Environmental Resource Permits as well as any previous or current District contracts.
11. Final approval for funding of the project proposals are the exclusive responsibility of the Governing Board and the Executive Director in accordance with the District's procurement procedures relating to signature authority as found in section 24 of the Procedures Manual.
12. The Executive Director's signature authority and maximum funding allowed under said authority are established by the Governing Board and can be found in the Procedures Manual. The signature authority applies to each individual or contract entity over the course of the contractual agreement. Requests to enter into or amend a contract that meet or exceed the signature authority for an individual or entity during the fiscal year or in aggregate, must be brought to the Governing Board for approval.

## **5.0 Procedure**

1. In coordination with the District's annual planning and budgeting process, the District will allocate an amount of cooperative funding for projects submitted through the conceptual portal.
2. Deadline for Submittal – Project applications may be submitted to the conceptual portal all year long. Project applications received will be reviewed and can be modified by the local entity until the application is determined to be complete by the District review team (Team). Complete project applications will be moved to the Projects Queue.
3. Information Requirements - Each project proposal shall include a completed application form, taking into consideration the information known at the time, the type of project and the criteria noted on the application form. At a minimum, the application should include:
  - project name;
  - applicant's project manager;
  - address; phone number; project manager's email address;
  - project type;
  - strategic initiatives;

- counties and watershed/basin to benefit from the project;
  - project objectives and goals;
  - project description;
  - location map;
  - conceptual plans;
  - project costs/benefits;
  - best management practices or technologies to be implemented;
  - a monitoring plan;
  - available funding sources; and
  - assurance matching funds are in an approved capital improvement plan or within a current or proposed budget. Multiple project proposals must be ranked in order of priority.
4. Evaluation Criteria - District staff will consider:
- the quality of the application as measured by thoroughness and clarity;
  - the location of the project;
  - the applicant's performance in the RIVER Cooperative Funding Program;
  - the effectiveness of the project to protect, conserve, restore, or augment the area's water resource and ecology;
  - the use of best management practices;
  - the cost effectiveness of the project;
  - the regional nature of the project;
  - the potential of the project to start and proceed in a timely manner;
  - if the application is for a multi-year or phased project, the project benefits to be realized if future phases are not funded;
  - the results of a pre-application meeting with state regulatory agencies;
  - counties and municipalities meeting the rural community definition established by Section 288.0656, F.S., may request a reduction or waiver of financial match, pursuant to the provisions of Section 288.06561, F.S., As a part of such requests, the county or municipality must demonstrate how they meet the requirements of Section 288.0656, F.S.
  - if the local entities' matching funds are included in an approved capital improvement plan or budgeted at the time of application, the appropriate documentation from the plan or budget indicating the local entities' matching funds are available must be included as part of the application. Otherwise, the Senior Administrator shall attest the local entities' matching funds will be included in the local entities' proposed budget no later than for the year the project is submitted; and
  - projects are limited to a 10% cap on contingency requests.
5. Project Queue – Projects will remain in the Project Queue until either they are withdrawn by the applicant, submitted and approved for funding by an external funding source, or funded by the District.
6. Yearly Project Funding – Projects in the Project Queue may be funded throughout the year by either submittal to and approval by external funding sources or by District funding. For funding by external funding sources, the District may provide funding for the match requirements of the external funding source. For match funding or for project funded by the district, Final approval for funding of the project proposals are the exclusive responsibility of the Governing Board and the Executive Director in accordance with the District's procurement procedures relating to signature authority as found in section 24 of the Procedures Manual. The Executive Director's signature authority and maximum funding allowed under said authority are established by the Governing Board and can be found in the Procedures Manual. The signature authority applies to each individual or contract entity over the course of the contractual agreement. Requests to enter into

or amend a contract that meet or exceed the signature authority for an individual or entity during the fiscal year or in aggregate, must be brought to the Governing Board for approval.

7. RIVER Project Prioritization/Recommendations - On or immediately after May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, the review Team shall meet to prioritize all project proposals in the Project Queue. Based on prioritization and available funding, projects recommended by the Team shall be presented to the Board for funding approval no later than September of that year. In addition, all projects that have been funded by the District, projects submitted to external funding sources as applications and projects remaining in the Projects Queue, will be presented to the Governing Board.
8. Once a project has been approved and included in the adopted budget, a contractual agreement will be prepared for execution by the involved parties. The contract, at a minimum, shall set forth:
  - the specific commitments and obligations of each party;
  - financial and other considerations to be exchanged;
  - indemnification and damages to be paid upon injury, default or termination;
  - the term of completion of the project; and
  - performance measures.