

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Governing Board

FROM: Darlene Velez, Chief, Office of Water Resources

THRU: Tom Mirti, Deputy Executive Director, Water and Land Resources

DATE: July 31, 2020

RE: Agreement with United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services for Monitoring Assistance

**RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a five-year cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services to provide monitoring assistance for the Lower Suwannee River Watershed – Nutrient Reduction Restoration Project and to execute all documents necessary to implement including task work assignments and contract documents for a cost not to exceed \$294,000.00.

**BACKGROUND**

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) requested discharge and water quality monitoring assistance from the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) for the Lower Suwannee River Watershed - Nutrient Reduction Restoration Project (Project).

The Project is a monitoring and adaptive management plan with the primary goal to improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient (phosphorus and nitrogen) loads to the Lower Suwannee River Watershed through the development and implementation of conservation plans on agricultural lands. These plans aim to address nutrient and sediment runoff through the implementation of conservation practices. In addition, a key component of the Project will be to evaluate the effectiveness of best management practices at improving the water quality of surface and ground water at selected sites in the Lower Suwannee River Watershed.

This agreement will provide the District with funds to monitor up to 9 surface or groundwater stations in the lower Suwannee River area near Manatee and Fanning Springs for a minimum of 3 years and up to 5 years as applicable. The Project is still in the development and planning phase and specific stations are yet to be determined. These funds will offset costs for water quality and discharge monitoring already being conducted in the project area, as well as adding new monitoring stations as identified to meet the needs of both the NRCS Project and the District's own project monitoring program.

The funding for this agreement has been included in the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (FY 2021) Tentative Budget codes 60-2-586-1-1200-41-00, 60-1-516-0-1200-41-00, and 60-6-930-2-1200-41-00 and is contingent upon approval of the FY 2021 final budget.

DV/pf