

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Lands Committee

FROM: Stephen Schroeder, Chief, Office of Administration

THRU: Steve Minnis, Deputy Executive Director, Business and Community Services

DATE: October 20, 2020

RE: Agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for the Acquisition for the Quail Heights Parcel, Columbia County

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend the Governing Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for reimbursement for a portion of a 40.83 acre +/- parcel of real property known as Quail Heights located in Columbia County for an amount not to exceed \$651,105.

**BACKGROUND**

On February 11, 2020, the Lands Committee recommended to the Governing Board to include the Quail Heights Project in the District's submittal to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). On April 14, 2020, the Governing Board concurred with the Lands Committee recommendation. Although the project did not receive Springs Grant funding for the current year, District staff is still interested in pursuing this project and submitting it for Springs Funding consideration in future years.

The proposed project involves a partnership between the District, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and Columbia County. The total project cost is estimated at \$8,209,300, with a match of \$5,048,195 from FDOT that includes \$968,195 for land acquisition and \$4,080,000 for construction, \$651,105 from the District for land acquisition, and a future Springs Restoration Grant request of \$2,510,000.

On September 10, 2020, the FDOT acquired fee interest in 40.83 acres +/- of real property located in Columbia County within Quail Heights. The FDOT portion of the project will serve as direct treatment for roadway improvements on SR 247 and I-75. The construction of the joint use stormwater pond will treat and attenuate runoff from Cannon Creek. It will treat existing untreated runoff and provide a net benefit to Cannon Creek, a tributary of the Santa Fe River. Over 800 pounds of nitrogen are estimated to be removed each year by the project.

Runoff will be piped from the Cannon Creek crossing just north of the Bascom Norris Intersection with SR 247, which is proposed to reduce existing flooding. Additionally, nitrogen levels upstream and downstream of the pond site will be monitored to evaluate nitrogen removal effectiveness and the reduction in frequency and/or duration of overtopping of SR 247 at the Bascom Norris intersection.