



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 3341

1. **Project Title**
2. **Senate Sponsor**
3. **Date of Request**

**4. Project/Program Description**

This project will build on previous efforts to reestablish tape grass in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary (CRE). Since 2017, the Angler Action Foundation successfully restored 22 acres of tape grass in proximity to the localized losses, which demonstrates that nursery-grown cultivars can be successfully re-introduced here. Phase 6 of this project will restore an additional 71.75 acres of tape grass throughout the CRE as part of a larger project to restore a total of 352 additional acres. Herbivory exclusion cages will protect plants from grazers until roots become established, and temporary navigational aids will alert boaters of the project. Monitoring and reporting for a period of three years will document project success. As tape grass becomes established in the area, the restored site will provide the beneficial ecosystem services of healthy SAV meadows and will help accomplish the South Florida Water Management District's long-term goal of restoring tape grass in the CRE.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**
- State Agency contacted?**

**6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	3,500,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>

**7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)**

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	3,500,000	100%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2023-24	0	2,000,000	HSE Form# 2299	No

9. **Is future funding likely to be requested?**
- a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**
- b. **Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**
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10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

## Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning    
  Design    
  Construction    
  N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Administrative duties, outreach, community education, contracting	332,500
Other Salary and Benefits	NA	0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	NA	0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	NA	0
<b>Operational Costs: Other</b>		
Salary and Benefits	NA	0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	NA	0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Environmental monitoring, permitting, engineering, reporting, cultivating and planting nursery grown tape grass, protecting tape grass, maintenance of tape grass, educational marker installation.	3,167,500
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>3,500,000</b>

14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?



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71.75 acres of the CRE will be restored using nursery-grown native tape grass (*Vallisneria americana*). The benefits of native submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), such as tape grass, have been extensively researched for their importance in supporting recreational and commercially important fisheries production. SAV provides habitat, improves water quality and clarity, reduces toxic algae blooms, stabilizes sediments, absorbs nutrients, and builds coastal resiliency. Planting units will be protected from grazers using herbivory exclusion devices until roots become established. Navigational aids will alert boaters of the project. Monitoring and reporting will document project success for a period of three years.

**b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?**

The funds will be spent on project management; cultivation/installation of nursery-grown tape grass plants; protection of plants with herbivory exclusion cages and navigational aids for boaters; maintenance of the herbivory exclusion cages and plants; reporting and scientific review; and a public outreach campaign. Several cultivars of nursery-grown tape grass will be utilized to ensure that wild populations are not depleted and that contamination of algae or invasive vegetation is not introduced into the watershed. Herbivory exclusion devices will protect planting units until roots and rhizomes become established. Navigational aids will alert vessels of the restoration project. Regular maintenance will ensure that sites are properly maintained. Monitoring will document project success and quantify aquatic communities/habitat, biomass and nutrient uptake. Reporting will occur at time zero and annually for three years.

**c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?**

The project will provide direct services to citizens in Lee County by improving CRE water quality and clarity; reducing harmful algal blooms; creating habitat for important recreational fish species; improving natural infrastructure resiliency; enhancing ecotourism and other recreational opportunities; and building resiliency against climate change. This project incorporates proven methodologies to restore 71.75 acres of tape grass as well as the quantification of certain ecosystem services that have not yet been documented or well-studied.

**d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?**

Both the local and state economy will benefit from this project. The local economy includes Lee County's population of over 822,000 Floridians and FL's population of over 22 million (based on the 2022 U.S. census). This project will have direct positive impacts to the seafood industry, ecotourism industry, recreational boating industry, real estate industry, and the tourism industry since each of these industries are dependent on healthy habitats and clean water. The indirect benefits of this project will reach individuals that depend on clean water in Florida.

**e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?**

Expected benefits of this project include: stimulating the local and state-wide economy through increased recreational opportunities, which supports the industries that depend on them; improving real estate values in the area; reducing harmful algal blooms and their associated health consequences; and improving habitat for fish and wildlife. The benefits of this project will be reviewed by independent scientist that will monitor changes in water quality, fisheries production, and plant expansion. Annual monitoring reports will be generated for three years documenting the success of the goals of this project.

**f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?**

If deliverables are not achieved, then funds should be withheld for nonperformance.

**15. Requester Contact Information**

a. First Name  Last Name

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number  Ext.

**16. Recipient Contact Information**

a. Organization



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**b. Municipality and County**

**c. Organization Type**

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College
- Other (please specify)

**d. First Name**  **Last Name**

**e. E-mail Address**

**f. Phone Number**

**17. Lobbyist Contact Information**

**a. Name**

**b. Firm Name**

**c. E-mail Address**

**d. Phone Number**

### Please complete the questions below for Water Projects only.

**18. Have you applied for alternative state funding?**

- Waste Water Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify)
- N/A

**19. What is the population economic status?**

- Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Rural Area of Economic Concern
- Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)



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N/A

**20. What is the status of construction?**

Construction has not begun, but design is completed

**21. What percentage of the construction has been completed?**

0%

**22. What is the estimated completion date of construction?**

12/31/2025