



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1355

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

4. Project/Program Description

One Rake At A Time aims to restore the Rainbow River which is in significant decline before it is too late. We are beginning a pilot project to clean and replant the river focusing on the lower river that is the most critically impaired. This project will utilize the same methodology that has been extremely successful in Kings Bay, Crystal River. One Rake At A Time has spent over 10 years hand raking and cleaning Florida's rivers but now it is clear hand raking will never be enough. By giving the river a good vacuuming to remove the decades of muck and invasive hydrilla and then replanting the river with native plants, the river will be able to heal and restore itself once and for all and reduce herbicide applications. This additional funding will allow us to clean additional acres and add living shorelines in areas that are of critical need on the river.

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

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	2,000,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	2,000,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	2,000,000	100%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	2,000,000	100%

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?** Yes
- If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2024-25	0	2,000,000	1732A	No

9. **Is future-year funding likely to be requested?** Yes
- 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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We are also seeking Springs Restoration Funds from DEP, grant funds from private foundations/SWFMD/and Federal programs, as well as Deepwater Horizon funds. We hope through a public/private partnership we can restore the river in the next 5 years.

Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

10. 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?

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

11. 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.

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

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Project management/grant management, accounting services, annual GAAP audit, etc.	40,000
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Remove muck, replant native plants, and restore 3-4 acres (anticipated); install living shorelines on eroding islands in the lower river as needed.	1,810,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Educational outreach such as creating videos, giving tours, hosting community cleanups, printing of educational information/signs/brochures, Environmental Assessment Study, permits/studies for living shoreline installations, educate homeowners about protecting the aquatic preserve and the benefits of installing living shorelines on their properties. Hand-raking removal and disposal of invasive species for maintenance.	150,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		2,000,000



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13. Program Performance

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

Funds will be provided to restore the impaired lower Rainbow River. Designated as an aquatic preserve in 1986 and an Outstanding Florida Water (OFW) in 1987, it was then deemed in 1989 to be a SWIM priority water body. The river has been declining for decades. The lower river is especially impaired from nearby phosphate mining. It is a world famous tourist attraction and critical habitat that will be restored. Educational opportunities for school children, visitors, and residents are planned. This project will remove muck, algae, invasive plants and detrital material and replant native vegetation restoring the river to its natural/healthy state and reduce herbicide applications.

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

This project will remove millions of pounds of muck and legacy nutrients from decades of herbicide applications as well as invasive hydrilla from the river bottom through selective diver held vacuums. Once removed, native plants will be installed and eventually these native plants will out compete the invasive plants to restore the river. As part of the agreement with DEP monitoring will continue for 3 years.

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

Rainbow Springs State Park is a hugely popular attraction drawing visitors from around the world. And while the headspring is still full of native eelgrass, algae has begun moving in signaling even this area of the river is in trouble. Cleaning the river will ensure all the businesses that rely on tourism such as boat and tube rentals, restaurants, lodging, will continue to thrive.

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

Anyone that lives on or enjoys the river will see increased water quality, a healthier river, and a decrease in toxic/harmful algae and invasive species. Businesses in the local community will benefit by increased tourism. Over 400,000 visitors are estimated to use the river annually.

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

Increased tourism can be measured in numbers of state park visitors, the increased revenue from tourism in the local area, number of hotel rooms rented, number of boat rentals, etc. Increased beneficial/native plants are measured as part of the required annual survey that is conducted for 3 years post restoration. Reduction in nutrients such as phosphate and nitrogen can be measured by the thousands of pounds of organic muck and hydrilla that is removed from the river and by an independent third party biological assessment.

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 in the contract?

Funds are disbursed as a cost reimbursement program so that the grant administrator ensures all deliverables are met and work is completed before funds are released.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster? No

a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?

- Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)
- Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):

15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?



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- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:

b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:

16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):

Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.

17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?

- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program



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- Resilient Florida Grant Program
- Wastewater Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants) prings Restoration Grant applied for last cycle
- N/A

18. 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)
- N/A

19. What is the status of construction?

No Construction, only environmental restoration. Hand raking is underway and permits are in process.

20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

N/A

21. What is the estimated completion date of construction? 12/31/2028

22. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name Last Name

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number Ext.

23. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)



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- 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 Ext.

24. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number

The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.