



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1564

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. Project/Program Description

The Santa Fe River and its springs have been impacted over decades by a litany of anthropogenic stressors. The most significant impairments include declining groundwater inflows, increasing nitrates, loss of native submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and excessive recreation.

Although protective designations and lawful regulations have been put in place to prevent further harm to the river and springs, nitrogen concentrations (which have risen by 2,600% in the last 100 years average a pollutant load of 1,900 tons/year) still exceed protective levels in the majority of springs along the Santa Fe River, killing off once flourishing populations of aquatic plants and animals.

This project aims to improve the health of the Santa Fe River and its many springs by restoring its native SAV. This will help to cycle out excessive nutrients improving water quality and habitat for the system's wildlife and the more than one million residents and tourists who visit these springs annually.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**

State Agency contacted?

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	1,200,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	1,200,000

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)	1,200,000	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	1,200,000	100%

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

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. **Is future-year funding likely to be requested?**

a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**



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b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

Stakeholders will be submitting a variety of state and federal grants as well as a Federal Community Project Funding Request for a Federal appropriation.

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	Oversight of project, grant, contracted grant manager, billing, communications with stakeholders, review of maintenance and monitoring reports, public outreach, media relations, and marketing communications	72,000
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Grant management, invoicing, and validation of work performed	48,000
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Project design, surveying, permitting, plant grow out, plant installation, plant protection, and project maintenance and monitoring	1,080,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		1,200,000

13. Program Performance



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

The Santa Fe River and its springs have been impacted over decades by a litany of anthropogenic stressors. The most significant impairments include declining groundwater inflows, increasing nitrates, loss of native submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and excessive recreation.

Although protective designations and lawful regulations have been put in place to prevent further harm to the river and springs, nitrogen concentrations (which have risen by 2,600% in the last 100 years average a pollutant load of 1,900 tons/year) still exceed protective levels in the majority of springs along the Santa Fe River, killing off once flourishing populations of aquatic plants and animals.

This project aims to improve the health of the Santa Fe River and its many springs by restoring its native SAV. This will help to cycle out excessive nutrients improving water quality and habitat for the system's wildlife and the more than one million residents and tourists who visit these springs annually.

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

This project aims to improve the health of the Santa Fe River and its many springs by restoring its native submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). This restoration method has proven successful in other Florida spring systems. Activities and services include planting, protecting, maintaining, and monitoring cultivars of nursery grown native grasses, mainly tapegrass (*Vallisneria americana*) and strap-leaf grass (*Sagittaria kurziana*) into the watersheds.

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

- This project is a good use of taxpayer dollars because it will:
1. Enhance the springs for the more than one million residents and visitors who visit them annually to kayak, swim, sunbathe, picnic, fish, and recreate
 2. Improve water quality by cycling out excess nutrients that can cause harmful algal blooms
 3. Stabilize the sediment preventing sediment resuspension and flooding
 4. Enhance ecotourism for the multiple communities and counties along the river
 5. Provide enhanced habitat for fish and other wildlife to thrive
 6. Enhance fishing opportunities
 7. Offset the effects of climate change through carbon storage in plant roots

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

This project will enhance the springs for the more than one million residents and visitors who visit them annually. The Santa Fe River, a second order tributary to the Suwannee River, is approximately 75 miles long and has a surface watershed of roughly 1,380 square-miles and a 2,423 square mile historic spring shed. The Santa Fe River basin is located entirely within the state of Florida and extends through seven counties in North Florida including Columbia County, Suwannee County, Bradford County, Alachua County, Lafayette County, Hamilton County, and Madison County.

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

It is expected that the project will help to increase the presence of native submerged aquatic vegetation in the spring systems of the river, helping to create canopy form dense meadows of SAV that will help to stabilize the sediment, clean and oxygenate the water column by cycling out excess nutrients, provide food, habitat and protection for fish and other wildlife, and reduce the occurrence of harmful algal blooms. Similar projects, funded by the Florida Legislature have been scientifically validated to successfully reset spring systems.

Scientific maintenance and monitoring reports will document the project's progress and success for a period of three years.

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?

Non-payment of invoices.

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



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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?

- 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

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

17. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name **Last Name**

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number **Ext.**

18. 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 Ext.

19. 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.