



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1860

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

4. Project/Program Description

The purpose of this project is to remove 60-acres of muck and flocculant material from the Newton Park area of Lake Apopka (Florida's fourth largest lake) near downtown Winter Garden to improve water quality, navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, ecotourism, and surrounding property values for thousands of local residents and businesses.

Much of the bottom of Lake Apopka is covered by a consolidated muck layer of decayed plant matter and an unconsolidated flocculant layer made up mostly of dead algae. These muck and flocculant layers damage boat engines, are malodorous and aesthetically displeasing, contribute to nutrient overloading and algal blooms, and inhibit recovery efforts for essential submerged aquatic vegetation in the lake which is vital to improving water quality and wildlife habitats, and controlling invasive vegetation.

The SJRWMD and the City funded a WSP engineering study to design and permit this project. The study is nearly complete.

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	21%
Matching Funds		
Federal	4,000,000	73%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	300,000	6%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	5,500,000	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.

This project is a multi-phase project totaling approximately \$20 M. Project has been awarded \$4.3 M in match to date. Additional funding is being requested via other state and federal grants and federal appropriations (Community Project Funding requests).

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, engineer providing third party validation of work performed, communications with stakeholders, and public outreach.	72,000
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Grant management, invoicing, validation of work by a licensed engineer	48,000
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Dredging contractor to mobilize, dredge, transport and dispose of muck and flocculant material. Amount of acreage is dependent upon available funding.	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 purpose of this project is to remove muck and flocculant material from the Newton Park area of Lake Apopka (Florida's fourth largest lake) near downtown Winter Garden to improve water quality, navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, ecotourism, and surrounding property values for thousands of local residents and businesses.

Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) is critical to the health and sustainability of an aquatic ecosystem. It stabilizes the sediment, cleans and oxygenates the water column, cycles nutrients to prevent harmful algal blooms, and provides habitat for fish and wildlife. Currently, turbidity in this large, shallow lake is inhibiting the growth of native SAV, which is a vital restorative component for the lake's recovery. This dredging project will help to create favorable sediment conditions for the growth and expansion of SAV in the lake which will aid in transforming this water body from algae-dominated to plant-dominated.

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

Activities will include dredging, transporting, and disposing of muck and flocculant material from the Newton Park area of Lake Apopka, as well as project management, grant management, and third-party validation of work performed.

It is important to note that in fiscal year 2023-2024 Lake Apopka has received \$4,000,000 from the Florida Legislature for hydrilla remediation in Lake Apopka. Additionally, for the fiscal year 2024-2025, there is a request for \$2,000,000 for the Lake Apopka Native Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Aquaculture Planting Program. This program focuses on planting native submerged aquatic vegetation to improve the lake's ecosystem. These two requests complement this project funding request and support the overall restoration of the Lake and the goals of the SJRWMD.

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

This project will benefit the residents, businesses and visitors of Winter Garden and other communities surrounding Lake Apopka by removing legacy nutrients and muck from the lake that will improve water quality. This project will:

1. Improve recreational activities at this public park area
2. Create shoreline depths that can be navigated by boaters
3. Eliminate the presence of malodorous and aesthetically displeasing black plumes of muck
4. Prevent damage to boat motor cooling systems from muck that becomes entrained in outboard engines
5. Improve recreational fishing from an area that historically hosted dozens of fish camps
6. Improve ecotourism by drawing thousands of residents and visitors to the park and the downtown area of Winter Garden where they will dine, shop, and lodge.
7. Enhance the property values of thousands of homeowners who live on or near the lake

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

This project is in a densely populated area of downtown historic Winter Garden, home to over 47,000 residents hundreds of businesses, and thousands of weekly visitors.

Newton Park is a charming green space. This tranquil park area offers a peaceful retreat with lush landscaping, walking paths, and picnic areas. The park is known for its beautiful views of Lake Apopka and amenities like a boardwalk, boat ramp, grills, picnic tables, playground, shaded gazebo, and restrooms. The local community frequents this park to recreate and to attend community celebrations such as the Fourth of July when all sit along the shores of the lake to watch fireworks.

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

Expected outcomes include:

1. Nutrient reduction
2. Water quality improvement
3. Improved navigation
4. Improved conditions for restoration of submerged aquatic vegetation
5. Improved habitat for fish and other wildlife
6. Sediment stabilization
7. Enhanced ecotourism, property values, and recreational opportunities including fishing

Project engineer, contractor, and SJRWMD will validate lbs. of muck removed, amount of nutrients removed, and other measures that demonstrate water quality improvement



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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 project invoices.

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?

- 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):

Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.

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



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- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Resilient Florida Grant Program
- Wastewater Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants)
- 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?

Not started. Engineering plan is nearing completion.

20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

0%

21. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

11/01/2025

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



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- 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.

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.