



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3213

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 90 acres of tape grass in proximity to the localized losses, which demonstrates that nursery-grown cultivars can be successfully re-introduced here. Phase 7 of this project will restore an additional 74 acres of tape grass throughout the CRE as part of a larger project to restore a total of 426 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 2025-2026

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	3,500,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	3,500,000

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)	3,500,000	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	3,500,000	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		
2024-25	0	3,500,000	1712A	No

9. **Is future-year 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.**

NA



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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	Administrative duties, outreach, community education, contracting	350,000
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		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.	3,150,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		3,500,000

13. Program Performance

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



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74 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 74 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 in the contract?

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

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):



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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?

- 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)



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- 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 Ready

20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

0

21. What is the estimated completion date of construction? 4/1/2027

22. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name Brett **Last Name** Fitzgerald

b. Organization Angler Action Foundation, Inc.

c. E-mail Address brett@angleractionfoundation.org

d. Phone Number (561)707-8923 **Ext.**

23. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization Angler Action Foundation, Inc.

b. Municipality and County Saint Lucie

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 Brett **Last Name** Fitzgerald

e. E-mail Address brett@angleractionfoundation.org

f. Phone Number (561)707-8923 **Ext.**

24. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name Andrew T. Ketchel

b. Firm Name Capital City Consulting LLC



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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.