

CONSENT AGENDA

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Board of County Commissioners

THROUGH: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

THROUGH: Michael Zito
Assistant County Administrator

FROM: Beth Powell
Conservation Lands Manager

SUBJECT: Hurricane Matthew HMGP Grant Funding #4283-60 - Countywide
Wildfire Management Application Status & Environmental Science
Associates Scope of Services dated January 17, 2018

DATE: January 17, 2018

DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS

On February 8, 2017, the Florida Division of Emergency Management announced the availability of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds resulting from the Presidential Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Matthew (FEMA 4283-DR-FL). The purpose of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is to assist communities in implementing hazard mitigation measures following a major federal disaster declaration. The HMGP program is a federally funded program that is allocated and distributed by the State. There are three funding tiers: Tier One is the initial allocation of submitted and eligible projects which are funded in order of priority as endorsed by the LMS Working Group; Tiers Two and Three allocate remaining funds to applicants whose projects are not funded through the Tier One phase (as funding is available).

HMGP is a cost-reimbursement grant program and will fund up to 75% for eligible projects. The 25% match may be a combination of cash and in-kind/in-house sources. Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or eliminate long term risk to people and property from natural hazards. Indian River County is an eligible applicant as it has a FEMA-approved local mitigation plan and has a formally adopted Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) (Resolution No. 2010-059 adopted on July 13, 2010, and revised Resolution No. 2015-078 adopted July 7, 2015). Indian River County's original estimated funding allocation under Tier I for Hurricane Matthew was \$437,838.87.

On January 6, 2017, Indian River County's LMS Working Group members met, and created a prioritized project list for the HMGP eligible projects. That list was narrowed down to a total of 18 projects that were considered not only eligible, but practical. This list was revised again in April 2017 after review by Florida Division of Emergency Management, and narrowed further to a list of 12 county-wide projects which included Conservation Area Prescribed Burn (ranked #6) for the

purpose of reducing wildfire threats by creating defensible space through vegetation management. This project was originally ranked by the State as a Tier II project.

On January 11, 2018, staff received phone and email communication from the HMGP Project Manager indicating that Project #6 had been moved from Tier II to Tier I and that the project may be eligible for additional funding beyond what was originally requested through the LMS Worksheet. In order to move forward with the project, HMGP staff indicated that the County could request additional funding to hire a consultant to produce the Fire Management Plan which is an integral component of the approval process for the grant award. The Environmental Science Associates (ESA) Scope of Services dated January 17, 2018 is directed at completing the required data collection, document preparation, contractor specifications and other administrative tasks required to create the Countywide Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

THE PROJECT:

Project Priority #6 – The Countywide Wildfire Protection Management Plan and subsequent mitigation activities would provide vegetation management, firebreak installation and prescribed burns (if conditions allow) on conservation lands throughout the county that have a high likelihood or history of wildfire. At this time, 10 conservation areas have been identified as being vulnerable to wildfire. These conservation areas contain over 1,200 acres of vulnerable habitat, and 4 have historically had wildfires (some more than once within the last 17 years). Grant funding would be utilized to develop a countywide management plan, create firebreaks, reduce vegetation and conduct prescribed burns.

Each year County staff works with the Florida Forestry Services Mitigation Team to provide wildfire protection to vulnerable conservation areas and private lands, however, this team is only available to the entire district for two weeks out of the year. Forestry and County staff identify the most vulnerable areas, but due to limited time, this leaves many areas untreated until conditions worsen. This project would provide funding to create a management plan that would direct the creation of defensible space, reduction of wildfire threat and minimize the chance of catastrophic wildfires in a prioritized manner. The management plan also serves to outline procedures, contractor specifications and long-term management objectives and schedules.

All of the conservation areas identified lie within highly urban areas with homes and businesses vulnerable to damage caused by wildfire. In addition, these homes and businesses may not have adequate defensible space creating increased cost and more difficult conditions for emergency responders. Funds provided would utilize private contractors and the Florida Forestry Services (FFS) (if available) to install firebreaks, reduce vegetation and create defensible space on each property identified. Additional funding may be utilized to provide protection to highly vulnerable county-owned parcels (i.e. Sandridge Golf Course, Water Treatment Facilities and other public properties).

FUNDING

Funding for the ESA Scope of Services dated January 17, 2018 in the amount of \$38,150 would utilize the Upland Mitigation Fund (Account No. 12721037-033490) to develop the Countywide

Fire Management Plan. If awarded, the grant agreement will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for final funding approval and grant execution. The HMGP match is a 25/75 match of in-kind/in-house and cash services. With the \$38,150 ESA Scope of Services dated January 17, 2018 and approximately \$11,850 in County staff in-house services, the grant funding would potentially fund up to \$150,000 in project costs for a total project cost of \$200,000. A revised cost estimate and grant proposal will be provided to the Board for approval upon grant award. While HMGP funding at this point is not guaranteed, we have received positive feedback from the HMGP staff that the funding allocation is available and this project is ranked high due to its cost/benefit analysis conducted by their staff.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends appointing Conservation Lands Manager, Beth Powell as the County's Point of Contact and Authorized Applicant Agent to continue working with the HMGP staff and to complete the Pre-Award Cost Request Form, and to approve the attached Scope of Services for Environmental Science Associates, Inc. (under Continuing Contract RFQ #2017053; Project No. IRC-1720 – approved October 10, 2017) in the amount of \$38,150.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Indian River County Local Mitigation Strategy Project Prioritization list for HMGP Applications related to Hurricane Matthew (FEMA-4283-DR) updated April 5, 2017.

Attachment B – State of Florida – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Pre-Award Cost Request Form

Attachment C – LMS Approval Letter dated May 12, 2017 and signed by John King, Director – LMS Chairman – Conservation Area Prescribed Burn

Attachment D – Environmental Science Associates - Scope of Services – dated January 17, 2018

APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR: JANUARY 23, 2018