

**Report to Congress for Future Water Resources Development (WRRDA 7001) Submission  
Package**

Proposal Name: Lake Okeechobee Everglades Ecosystem Protection

Submission Date: 08/26/2019

Proposal ID Number: f6b2524a-492b-4389-935d-785c7f9256d2

Purpose of Proposal: The modification to the existing authorization would be as follows: Section 5158 (3) (G) (127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) is amended by striking “SOUTH SEMINOLE AND NORTH ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and adding “SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and by striking “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida” and adding “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.” Section 5158 (3)(G)(127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) would now read - SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA. - \$30,000,000 for wastewater infrastructure for the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida, and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.” The modification would allow the Okeechobee Utility Authority to move forward with the Corps of Engineers to participate in the Environmental Infrastructure program, and pursue a project that would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

*1. Administrative Details*

**Proposal Name: Lake Okeechobee Everglades Ecosystem Protection**

**by Agency: Okeechobee Utility Authority**

**Locations: FL**

**POC Name:**

**POC Phone:**

**POC Email:**

**Date Submitted: 08/26/2019**

**Confirmation Number: f6b2524a-492b-4389-935d-785c7f9256d2**

*Supporting Documents*

<b>File Name</b>	<b>Date Uploaded</b>
OUA 2019 Sec 7011 Ltr 8.26.19.pdf	08/26/2019

2. Provide the name of the primary sponsor and all non-Federal interests that have contributed or are expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.

Sponsor	Letter of Support
Okeechobee Utility Authority (Primary)	The project will collect and treat wastewater that will prevent nutrients from septic tanks systems to enter waters of the State of Florida (Taylor Creek) and Lake Okeechobee (headwaters to the Everglades). This project will directly support the Everglades Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects, which have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation. In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem a priority.

3. State if this proposal is for new feasibility study authority, a modification to an existing feasibility study authority, a modification to an existing USACE project authority, or a modification to an existing USACE Environmental Infrastructure Program authority. If it is a proposal for a modification to an existing study, project or program authority, provide the authorized water resources development feasibility study or project name.

Modification to a USACE Environmental Infrastructure Program Authority

**Environmental Infrastructure Program Authority Name:**

South Seminole and North Orange County Florida

**Description of assistance provided to date:**

No Data

**Total Federal cost of assistance provided to date:**

\$0.00

***4. Clearly articulate the specific project purpose(s) of the proposed study or modification. Demonstrate that the proposal is related to USACE mission and authorities and specifically address why additional or new authorization is needed.***

The modification to the existing authorization would be as follows: Section 5158 (3) (G) (127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) is amended by striking “SOUTH SEMINOLE AND NORTH ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and adding “SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA” and by striking “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida” and adding “the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.” Section 5158 (3)(G)(127) of title V of the Water Resources Development Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-114) would now read - SOUTH SEMINOLE, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY AND OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA. - \$30,000,000 for wastewater infrastructure for the South Seminole and North Orange County Wastewater Transmission Authority, Florida, and Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida.” The modification would allow the Okeechobee Utility Authority to move forward with the Corps of Engineers to participate in the Environmental Infrastructure program, and pursue a project that would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

5. To the extent practicable, provide an estimate of the total cost, and the Federal and non-Federal share of those costs, of the proposed study and, separately, an estimate of the cost of construction or modification.

	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
<b>Study</b>	\$275,000	\$175,000	\$450,000
<b>Construction</b>	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000

Explanation (if necessary)

***6. To the extent practicable, describe the anticipated monetary and nonmonetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.***

The proposed Lake Okeechobee Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee, the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions. Last summer, those flows discharged the noxious blue-green algae into Martin County's coastline, having a detrimental effect on the tourism economy. Since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and the noxious blue-green algae. With the removal of these excessively elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

*7. Does local support exist? If 'Yes', describe the local support for the proposal.*

Yes

### **Local Support Description**

This project is supported by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, South Florida Water Management District, Okeechobee County, City of Okeechobee and Economic Council of Okeechobee.

*8. Does the primary sponsor named in (2.) above have the financial ability to provide for the required cost share?*

Yes

# Primary Sponsor Letter of Support

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**OUA 2019 Sec 7011 Ltr 8.26.19.pdf**

THORN RUN PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Ms. Lisa Kiefel  
Planning and Policy Division, Headquarters  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street NW.  
Washington, DC 20314

Re: Section 7001 Water Resources Reform and Development Act 2014

Dear Ms. Kiefel:

This letter is submitted in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers annual request for proposals in accordance with Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). On behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, I am submitting a proposed modification to an environmental infrastructure project.

I respectfully request that the Corps modify an existing authorization for an environmental infrastructure project in Florida, (Section 5158(3)(G)(127) of title V of the Water Resources Act of 2007) that has never been utilized to allow the Okeechobee Utility Authority to support a viable public utility infrastructure project that will protect Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystems and provide for the health and safety of residents and visitors in the Lake Okeechobee region. The Okeechobee Utility Authority would act as the local sponsor for the project.

This project will directly support the aquatic ecosystem restoration of the Indian River Lagoon, Caloosahatchee River/Estuarine System and the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects, which have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields that indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

Since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and noxious blue-green algae. With the removal of these elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem a priority.

The project has the direct support of Okeechobee County and the City of Okeechobee, Florida Department of Environmental Protection as well as the South Florida Water Management District are all aware of the project.

The total cost for this project is approximately \$20,000,000. The Okeechobee Utility Authority has the financial ability to provide up to 50% for this project.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. We look forward to discussing it with you further. If you have any questions for us, please contact me at 202-849-8528.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Davenport". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jim Davenport