

# STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



# 2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## INTRODUCTION

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This document represents the Board's state legislative program for the 2016 Session. While these priorities are intended to guide the County's advocacy efforts in Tallahassee, the list is not exhaustive and issues may arise or evolve that will require Board attention.

The most critical issues are not ranked in order of priority. Commissioners, staff and contract lobbyists will pursue all of the legislative policies approved by the Board and place appropriate priority on the issues given the opportunities that arise during the legislative process. As usual, items of emphasis will include maintaining the County's home rule authority and opposing cost shifts or unfunded mandates.

The state legislative session will begin on January 12, 2016 and is scheduled to conclude on March 11th.

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SUPPORT AND TRACKING ISSUES

BACKUP MATERIALS

### **LEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**



**JOHN MANNING – DISTRICT 1**



**CECIL L PENDERGRASS – DISTRICT 2**



**LARRY KIKER -- DISTRICT 3**



**BRIAN HAMMAN -- DISTRICT 4  
CHAIR**



**FRANK MANN -- DISTRICT 5  
VICE-CHAIR**

## 2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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### PRIORITIES

- A. **Caloosahatchee River and Estuary Protection – SUPPORT** funding for the C-43 Water Quality Treatment Testing Facility on property purchased jointly by Lee County and the South Florida Water Management District (BOMA property); construction of the first cell of the C-43 Reservoir; and the Lake Hicpochee Shallow Storage and Hydrologic Enhancement Project.
- B. **Transportation Projects Funding Requests –** Two critical infrastructure projects:
- a) Advance completion of Estero Boulevard reconstruction, which serves as the central artery for the Town of Fort Myers Beach, from 2025 to 2020 through provision of \$15.5 million in road construction matching funds. Total project costs are estimated at \$86.4 million. Accelerating the project delivers tourism, economic development and public safety benefits to the region and state. (\$15.5 million request with a \$70.9 million local match)
  - b) Widen Alico Road from a 2-lane rural arterial to 4-lanes (expandable to 6) in order to accelerate burgeoning development, including Florida Gulf Coast University's Emerging Technology Institute at the I-HUB. This roadway improvement will spur three large-scale developments that are expected to create 3,000 full-time jobs. (\$5.75 million request with an equal Lee County match)
- C. **Water Quality Funding Requests –** \$3,300,000 (Lee County match of \$3,300,000)  
Most of these projects will help meet pollutant load reductions required for the Tidal Caloosahatchee TMDL, as well as provide flood control, habitat enhancement, additional water quality improvement and water recharge benefits. (Deep Lagoon - \$1.5 million; Hendry Creek West - \$1.2 million; Sunniland/FGCU - \$300,000; and Lakes Park - \$300,000 with equal Lee County matches)
- D. **Bob Janes Triage Center – SUPPORT** fully funding the Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Local Matching Grant Program in order to satisfy outstanding obligations to all current recipients. The Bob Janes Triage Center will enter the third year of a three year grant cycle in March of 2016. The services provided by the Center have a proven track record of enhancing public safety and reducing criminal justice expenditures.
- E. **Regional Planning Councils – SUPPORT** legislation to allow counties to opt out from mandatory membership in an RPC by majority vote of the county's governing body.
- F. **Transportation Infrastructure Funding – SUPPORT** creating a formal mechanism for allocating state funding in a way that emphasizes needs attributable to high economic and population growth while also rewarding jurisdictions that provide matching funds.

## 2015 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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The Lee County Board of County Commissioners advocates for the preservation of local home rule and opposes any legislation, policies or regulations that would impose unfunded responsibilities upon the County.

### SUPPORT ISSUES

Amendment 1 Implementation – **SUPPORT** an allocation policy that involves local government participation in project prioritization and community impact assessments. **PROVIDE** matching funds for local conservation projects.

Medicaid County Cost Cap – **SUPPORT** establishing a cap on growth in the individual county Medicaid costs under s. 409.915, F.S. to address the anticipated cost shifts that result from the transition to a Medicaid enrollee based cost-sharing system. **OPPOSE** efforts to shift more state Medicaid costs to counties.

DJJ Cost Share – **SUPPORT** the state funding secure detention as upheld by Florida's courts and allow counties to pay actual costs on a monthly reimbursement basis.

Communications Services Tax – **SUPPORT** revising current law in a manner that is: 1) *revenue neutral*; 2) simplifies administration and collection of the current tax; 3) provides for a broad and equitable tax base; 4) provides for enhanced stability and reliability as an important revenue source for local government; and 5) provides the opportunity for market-based growth.

Taxis and Limousines – **SUPPORT** maintaining the integrity of home rule power, which allows counties to regulate taxis and limousines for the purpose of public safety and consumer protection.

Florida Retirement System (FRS) – **SUPPORT** a requirement that all legislation potentially increasing FRS contribution rates be analyzed and evaluated to determine the direct fiscal impact of proposed changes to all local and state government in order to be eligible for consideration.

Fertilizer – **SUPPORT** the County's authority to regulate the use and application of fertilizer to protect water quality.

Septic Tanks – **SUPPORT** the County's authority to regulate use and inspection.

Water Well Construction – **SUPPORT** the County's authority to promulgate and enforce construction standards. The County's unique hydrology and geology requires local knowledge of its aquifers and compatible grout materials for the local conditions in order to prevent inter-aquifer intrusion.

## **SUPPORT ISSUES (Continued)**

Behavioral Health System – **SUPPORT** increased funding for core mental health and substance abuse services as well as ancillary support and diversion programs.

Smoking Regulation – **SUPPORT** legislation that repeals the state statutory preemption of smoking regulation by allowing local governments to enact local regulations that exceed state standards. In lieu of a total repeal of the preemption, **SUPPORT** legislation granting to local governments additional authority to restrict smoking on certain outdoor property.

Homelessness – **SUPPORT** developing a dedicated state funding source for homeless programs and streamlining current state statutes relating to homelessness and associated programs (including the funding allocation and appropriation processes). **SUPPORT** creation of a public records exemption for individual identifying information entered into the Homeless Management Information System.

Article V Court Funding – **SUPPORT** eliminating the mandates contained in Section 29.008(4)(a), F.S., that require counties to fund certain court expenditures by 1.5 percent over the prior county fiscal year.

Shift of Prison Inmates to Jails – **OPPOSE** any efforts to shift inmates with less than a year on their sentence at the time of sentencing to jails instead of prisons.

Oil & Gas Laws – **SUPPORT** comprehensive review of oil and gas extraction technologies and related regulations resulting in meaningful oil legislation reform.

EMS Billing – **Oppose** efforts to prevent local governments from recovering the true cost of providing emergency medical services to patients. Preserve the ability to “balance bill” for same.

County Health Departments – **SUPPORT** increasing state general revenue funding for CHDs and maintaining a coordinated system of CHDs that is centrally housed with the Department of Health.

Utility Relocation – **OPPOSE** legislation requiring counties to pay for relocation of private utilities within county owned rights-of-way to accommodate public projects.

Beach Renourishment – **SUPPORT** revising statutory criteria for ranking cost-share beach projects in order to better account for economic benefits and the leveraging of federal funds.

Lovers Key State Park – **SUPPORT** state funding for a new visitors center/museum at one of Florida's most visited parks.

# C-43 Reservoir Project – Critical to Southwest Florida’s Economy

**F**or nearly a century, the Caloosahatchee Estuary has been degraded by extremes in flow resulting from an inadequate water control system in the upstream basin. Low flows during critical dry periods adversely affect the estuary, resulting in harmful algal blooms and impacting critical fish and invertebrate spawning patterns. Conversely, high flows depress salinity levels to a point where important estuarine species are killed or flee the area. Both extremes impact the delicate ecosystem balance and economy of Southwest Florida.

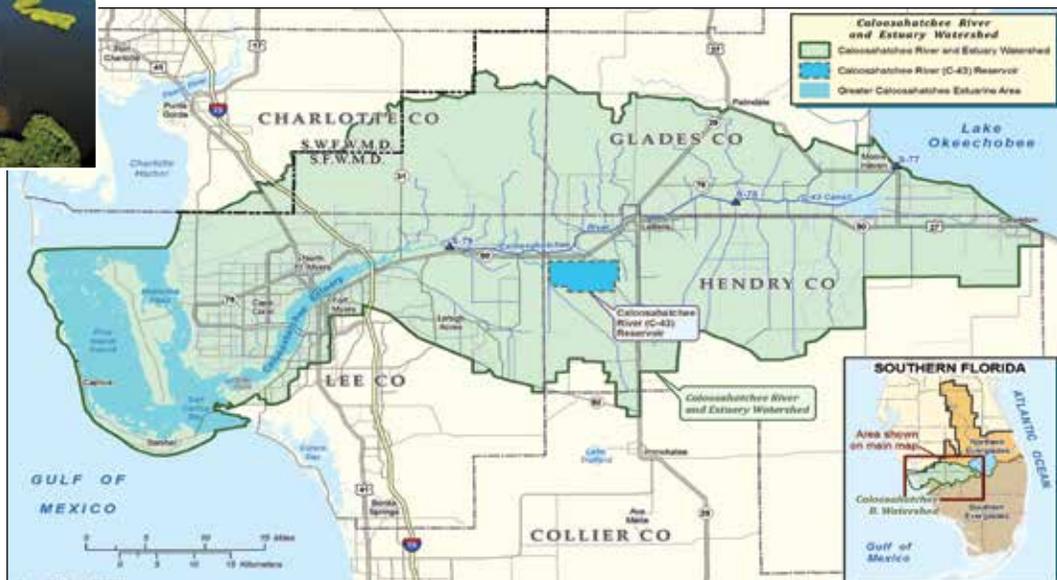
**What can be done?** The C-43 Reservoir project, a long time component of the greater CERP, was finally authorized in WRDA 2014 and will better manage both wet season and dry season flows to the estuary once completed. However, appropriating the funds to build the project will take years, and sensitive components of the estuary’s ecosystem will continue to be impacted.

The primary design criteria included creating sufficient capacity to attenuate excessive storm flows during the wet season while providing adequate storage to augment dry season flows to the estuary to protect ecological resources including sensitive oyster and SAV beds. As currently planned, the C-43 Reservoir will store

up to 170,000 ac-ft of basin storm water and overflow from Lake Okeechobee. The C-43 Reservoir is expected to supply enough water to meet the existing Minimum Flow and Level (300 cfs monthly average at S-79) for the Caloosahatchee River 80% of the time.

The project, with an estimated cost of more than \$500 million, was designed with two large cells, a single 1,500 cfs pump station, and a number of gated overflow and discharge structures. Under CERP, the State of Florida and South Florida Water Management District are each responsible for 50% of the total project costs. Historically, the State has generally satisfied their cost share through land acquisition. In this case, however, most of the land was purchased using federal dollars. As a result, the State will be responsible for paying for at least 50% of construction costs.

**Given the importance of the Caloosahatchee Estuary and River to the region’s commercial, recreational, and ecological resources, it is in the State of Florida’s best interest to move forward with construction on the first cell of the C-43 Reservoir. The cost of the first cell is \$300 million over 3 years.**



# C-43 Water Quality Treatment Testing Facility Project Phase I: Vital to Southwest Florida's Economy

Unlike the Everglades where phosphorus is the constituent of concern, the Caloosahatchee Estuary is impacted more severely by nitrogen which can result in toxic algal blooms. As a result, the **C-43 Water Quality Treatment Facility**, also known as **BOMA**, is focused on finding treatment technologies and processes that have a greater success at nitrogen removal than traditional Stormwater Treatment Areas.

(particularly nitrogen) within the Caloosahatchee watershed.

Mesocosms, commonly referred to as test cells, are the first phase of a larger project, known as the **C-43 Water Quality Treatment and Testing Facility Project**, which will demonstrate and implement cost effective wetland-based strategies for reducing loadings of total nitrogen and other constituents, including total phosphorus and total suspended solids.

Contingent upon future funding, the test and field-scale cell phases of the project are to be constructed, operated, and sampled in subsequent phases. Each phase of implementation will build upon the information and "lessons learned" of the previous phase with the goal of having the field-scale cells incorporated into a full-sized facility operating on site. It is anticipated that the knowledge gained from the demonstrations will be used to construct a full treatment facility at the site.

The Caloosahatchee Estuary has been degraded by extremes in flow and water quality for nearly a century. Of the critical large scale projects necessary to begin improving downstream ecosystems, the **C-43 Water Quality Treatment Testing Facility** is among the most important. The required land for this project was acquired by Lee County and the South Florida Water Management District more than 7 years ago at a cost of \$37 million for the purpose of providing water quality enhancement



Given the importance of the Caloosahatchee Estuary and River to the region's commercial, recreational, and ecological resources, it is in the State of Florida's best interest to move forward with construction of the full scale project. **The estimated project cost is \$5 million over eighteen months.**



# Lake Hicpochee Enhancement Project

As part of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program, the SFWMD is designing a project to improve water quality and enhance the distribution of C-19 discharges into Lake Hicpochee and the C-43 canal. The design components include a large, shallow storage compartment, similar to an FEB (Flow Equalization Basin) or a shallow reservoir, and a spreader canal along the northern margin of Lake Hicpochee. The southern portion of this project will create shallow storage in partnership with two local 298 districts. When completed, discharges from the C-19 will be collected in the shallow reservoir and discharged more gradually to Lake Hicpochee and the Caloosahatchee River. The District expects to realize measurable water quality and hydropattern benefits from the project.

This site is located in Glades County along the northern shore of Lake Hicpochee and just west of Lake Okeechobee. Lake Hicpochee was once a natural lake and part of the Caloosahatchee River headwaters before being bisected by the C-43 canal dredging in the late 1800s. Now over-drained, Lake Hicpochee can no longer support its once vibrant ecology nor buffer stormwater flows to the downstream estuary.

**Phase I:** Project design is expected to finish up in early 2015 and construction should begin later in the year. The total footprint for the project is 5,940 acres, which consists of the 640 acre shallow Reservoir and 1,500 acres of restored lake and wetland area. As of today, the project cost is estimated at \$18.4 million. The land required is already under state ownership.

**Phase II:** With the acquisition of the 640 acre reservoir property, the District also acquired an option on an additional approximately 2,480 acres of contiguous land for future expansion. The option land will provide approximately 9,000 acre feet of additional storage. The option for the property expires January 2017. Land acquisition for Phase II will cost \$17 million and construction is estimated at \$40 million.

**Phase III:** The final phase of Lake Hicpochee restoration includes redirecting flow across the southern 6,000 acres of the historic lake bed.

**Given the importance of the Caloosahatchee Estuary and River to the region's commercial, recreational, and ecological resources, it is in the State of Florida's best interest to move forward with construction on Phase I at a cost of \$18.4 million and to purchase the land required for Phase II at a cost of \$17 million.**





## Vital Southwest Florida Economic Facts:

- More than 75% of Florida's population lives within an estuary watershed and 78% of Florida's GDP is generated within estuary regions.
- Southwest Florida is experiencing the fastest growth in population, employment, and GDP among all U.S. estuary regions. Protecting or enhancing the region's estuaries is essential to support the regional economy.
- Lee County tourism, which depends on a healthy natural ecosystem, employs 1 in 5 workers. This includes the restaurant and hotel industries as well as ecosystem-based industries such as fishing and boating.
- Sources: Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, South Florida Water Management District, and NOAA.

| Resource      | Hectares | Value per hectare | Total                                   |
|---------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Seagrasses    | 18,297   | \$7697            | \$140,832,009                           |
| Mangroves     | 1213     | \$4010            | \$4,864,130                             |
| Estuarine/Bay | 9210     | \$9247            | \$85,164,502                            |
|               |          |                   | <b>\$230,860,641</b><br><i>per year</i> |



## Completed to Date:

- All necessary project lands have been acquired.
- The design is complete and can be subdivided into distinct components.
- The water reservation rule for the CERP Caloosahatchee (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir has been adopted.



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FY 16/17 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE FUNDING  
**LEE COUNTY ESTERO BLVD SEGMENTS 3 through 6**  
TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROJECTS - \$15.5 million



**Lee County supports \$15.5 million in State funds to match a \$70.9 million local investment in Estero Boulevard, the two-lane tourism industry artery on Fort Myers Beach.**

### **Benefits of the state match:**

- **Complete the project in 2020 instead of 2025;**
- **Minimize the drop in state sales tax** and other tourism industry revenue;
- **Minimize threat to small businesses** and employment;
- **Lessen the uncertainty of rising construction costs** over the next 10 years;
- **Reduce the danger to daily ambulance, police and fire emergencies** through 10 years of road construction;
- **Reduce the period of exposure to evacuating the island** during road construction for a hurricane or other disaster.

### **Project Highlights:**

- Add a middle turn lane, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and trolley pull-offs; improve surface water drainage;
- Upgrade aging wastewater and potable water lines and add a natural gas line;
- The \$70.9 million local match includes:
  - \$15.5 million, Lee County match for road construction of Segments 3 to 6;
  - \$18.8 million, Lee County has spent or budgeted for Segments 1 to 2, and design work;
  - \$27 million, Town of Fort Myers Beach replacement of aging potable water lines;
  - \$9.6 million, Lee County investment in wastewater line improvements.

FY 16/17 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE FUNDING  
**LEE COUNTY ESTERO BLVD SEGMENTS 3 to 6**  
TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROJECTS - \$15.5 million

Lee County plans to rebuild Estero Boulevard – the two-lane tourism industry artery on Fort Myers Beach on the Gulf of Mexico. Due to funding constraints, the work is planned in six, 1-mile segments over at least 10 years. Nearly \$71 million in local funding is earmarked to add a middle turn lane, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and trolley pull-offs, to improve surface water drainage, and to upgrade aging wastewater and potable water lines and add a natural gas line. Work on Segments 1 and 2 is under way. **With \$15.5 million in State matching funds to advance Segments 3 to 6 as a single project, Lee County will speed up completion by five years or more and mitigate economic and safety impacts of prolonged construction.**

#### **ECONOMIC/TOURISM IMPACTS**

- Estero Boulevard is a massive driver of Southwest Florida tourism and is the primary access to Fort Myers Beach, Lover’s Key and Mound Key state parks, 610 hospitality industry businesses – all remitting sales tax, and 6,100 hotel rooms and rental units for visitors. The State match eliminates seven years of construction that would mar the fun and beauty of these attractions. It will minimize the resulting drop in state and local revenue generated by tourism.
- These businesses – especially the smaller ones – will more likely survive a five-year impact than a 10+ year impact on tourism, sales and traffic.
- The State’s \$15.5 million match will relieve funding constraints that currently require the project to be done in six, 1-mile increments. It will lessen the uncertainty of rising construction costs over the next 10 years.

#### **SAFETY IMPACTS**

- Lee County has safety plans in place to deal with traffic complications for ambulance, police and fire emergencies. However, stretching this project over 10 or more years will prolong the traffic-related dangers of construction.
- The State match will also reduce the chance of road construction complicating evacuation of the island for a hurricane or other disaster.

#### **FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

- Total cost of the project is \$86.4 million with \$15.5 million being requested from the State.
- The \$70.9 million local match includes:
  - \$15.5 million from Lee County for road construction of Segments 3 to 6;
  - \$18.8 million from Lee County for Segments 1 to 2, and design work;
  - \$27 million from Fort Myers Beach to replace aging potable water lines;
  - \$9.6 million from Lee County for wastewater line improvements.

**FY 16/17 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE FUNDING**  
**Alico Road Widening**  
**TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROJECTS - \$5.75 million**

**AS A 50% MATCH TO ADVANCE THE CONSTRUCTION AND CEI PHASES OF THE ALICO ROAD 4-LANING FROM BEN HILL GRIFFIN PARKWAY TO EAST OF AIRPORT HAUL ROAD**

Statewide Interest

The Alico Road widening project addresses a statewide and regional interest as it will ensure adequate roadway capacity for a section of the County's Research & Enterprise Diamond, an area targeted by Lee County for economic diversification and job creation, and anchored by a State University (Florida Gulf Coast University) and the Southwest Florida International Airport (which receives a significant amount of State and Federal funding.) The Research & Enterprise Diamond has several planned developments, most notably the FGCU Innovation Hub property which the State has already provided funding to help develop. The road widening through this eastern end of the Research & Enterprise Diamond will promote and facilitate private investment and critical research efforts, and aid in the creation of 3,000 permanent jobs in the immediate area. As Lee County emerges from the devastating effects of the recent recession, job creation and expansion combined with diversification of its economy (with less reliance on housing construction and tourism) is critical. In 2014, the State Legislature provided a grant of \$761,250 to help fund the installation of a sanitary sewer force main along Alico Road to help ensure adequate and sustainable infrastructure for the anticipated developments, including the FGCU I-HUB.

Funding Request

**Lee County is seeking State funding assistance in the amount of \$5,750,000, or 50% of the total cost to advance the construction and CEI phases of the Alico Road 4-laning project.**

While Lee County does not have the projected local transportation revenues to advance the full cost of the construction and CEI phases to FY 2016/2017 on its own, it would have enough funds, through a combination of local option gas taxes and road impact fees, to fund a 50% match to the State funds. The State funds would allow the phases to be advanced by 2 years, to provide sufficient roadway capacity to support planned and permitted commercial and industrial development in the County's Research & Enterprise Diamond area, and the FGCU Innovation Hub (I-HUB) property in particular. Lee County currently maintains Alico Road and would continue to maintain it after the widening, and as such anticipates managing all phases of the project including building it to County standards.

Project Description

Lee County is currently developing a roadway improvement project to widen a portion of Alico Road, which is currently a 2-lane rural arterial, to 4 lanes ultimately expandable to 6, from Ben Hill Griffin Parkway to east of Airport Haul Road. Alico Road is the main east-west spine for a targeted area of commercial and industrial development in Lee County known as the Research & Enterprise Diamond, and west of Ben Hill Griffin Parkway it is already 6

lanes wide. The Research & Enterprise Diamond area is anchored to the south by Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and to the north by the Southwest Florida International Airport. The Research & Enterprise Diamond is envisioned as an innovation center with links to the university and the airport that includes several private-sector industrial, commercial and research-oriented developments in various stages of conception and approval, within land use classifications of Industrial, Interchange Commercial, Tradeport and University Community. Lee County has targeted this area to diversify its economy and create jobs, and is focused on ensuring the area has adequate infrastructure for that purpose. The Research & Enterprise Diamond area is anticipated to create over 25,000 jobs with an economic impact of over \$1 billion over a 10-year period. The planned developments within the area will create 4.9 million square feet of industrial uses, 1.5 million square feet of office, 1.2 million square feet of retail space, and 560 new hotel rooms. The Alico Road 4-laning from Ben Hill Griffin Parkway to east of Airport Haul Road will help facilitate at least three large-scale developments expected to create 3,000 permanent, high-quality technical jobs within the Research & Enterprise Diamond boundaries. One of the key developments is the FGCU Innovation Hub located at the east end of the road widening project, with proposed development of that site to reach 1.2 million square feet of research facilities geared towards renewable energy, wetlands research, bio-terrorism, and bio- technology.

### Project Status

The County completed a corridor alignment study with Board approval of a preferred alignment in June, 2013, and is currently designing the widening project from Ben Hill Griffin Parkway to east of Airport Haul Road. The project is being designed for an initial 4-laning, ultimately expandable to 6 lanes in the future, and includes a realignment of the south end of Airport Haul Road to coincide with a planned north-south road to be built in the future. The County has been working with the adjacent property owners to provide the needed right-of-way through donations or in exchange for road impact fee credits, and already has a commitment for a donation of 75 feet from the property owner on the south side. The project should be shovel-ready in fiscal year 2015/2016, and the construction phase and related construction engineering inspection (CEI) phase were previously programmed in that year, but in November 2013 the Lee County Board of County Commissioners was forced to defer the construction/CEI phases two years to fiscal year 2017/2018 due to competing priorities and limited transportation revenues. The cost of the construction phase is currently estimated at \$9,500,000 and the CEI phase at \$1,100,000, for a total combined cost of \$10,600,000. At the time of the deferral, the Lee County Board of County Commissioners indicated its desire to restore the construction/CEI phases to fiscal year 2015/2016 if funding allowed, by including the following statement as part of its action: *“These phases could be advanced in the future at Board discretion should conditions warrant to support economic development initiatives, and if funding is available through government sources or private development sources.”*

## 2016 Lee County Water Resources Projects Funding Request

**Project Name:** Deep Lagoon Preserve Hydrologic Restoration

**Description:** Project will provide ecosystem restoration through hydrologic and water quality improvements within the disturbed portions of the Deep Lagoon Preserve. Project is expected to provide multiple benefits including flood control, habitat enhancement, water quality improvements and water recharge. This project will assist in meeting pollutant load reductions required for the Tidal Caloosahatchee TMDL.

**Project Status:** Land acquired (432 acres) through Lee County's Conservation 2020 program. Land Management Plan completed. Project alternatives analysis underway. Engineering and permitting to begin within the next year.

**Estimated Cost:** \$3,000,000

**Requested Amount:** \$1,500,000

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**Project Name:** Hendry Creek West Branch

**Description:** Project provides passive water quality treatment through use of a filter marsh and/or other best management practices along the west branch of Hendry Creek. This project will assist in meeting pollutant load reductions required for the Everglades West Coast-Hendry Creek TMDL.

**Project Status:** Lee County recently acquired parcel (9.3 acres) within the flood plain of Hendry Creek, just south of the outflow from Lakes Regional Park. Planning and permitting to begin within the next year.

**Estimated Cost:** \$2,500,000

**Requested Amount:** \$1,200,000

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**Project Name:** Sunniland/Nine Mile Run Drainage Improvements

**Description:** Project involves the restoration of historical flows to Buckingham Trails Preserve. Consists of the rehydration of the preserve through the removal of manmade alterations to correct the natural sheetflow and hydrology. Project is expected to provide multiple benefits including flood control, habitat enhancement and water recharge.

**Project Status:** In the process of selection of an consultant to design and permit the project.

**Estimated Cost:** \$ 600,000

**Requested Amount:** \$ 300,000

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## 2016 Lee County Water Resources Projects Funding Request

**Project Name:** Lakes Park

**Description:** The proposed project provides passive water quality treatment through use of a filter marsh to reduce nutrients and improve oxygen content along Hendry Creek. One of the main objectives of this project is to reduce total nitrogen discharge into Hendry Creek. **This project helps achieve the goals of the Everglades West Coast Basin Management Action Plan.**

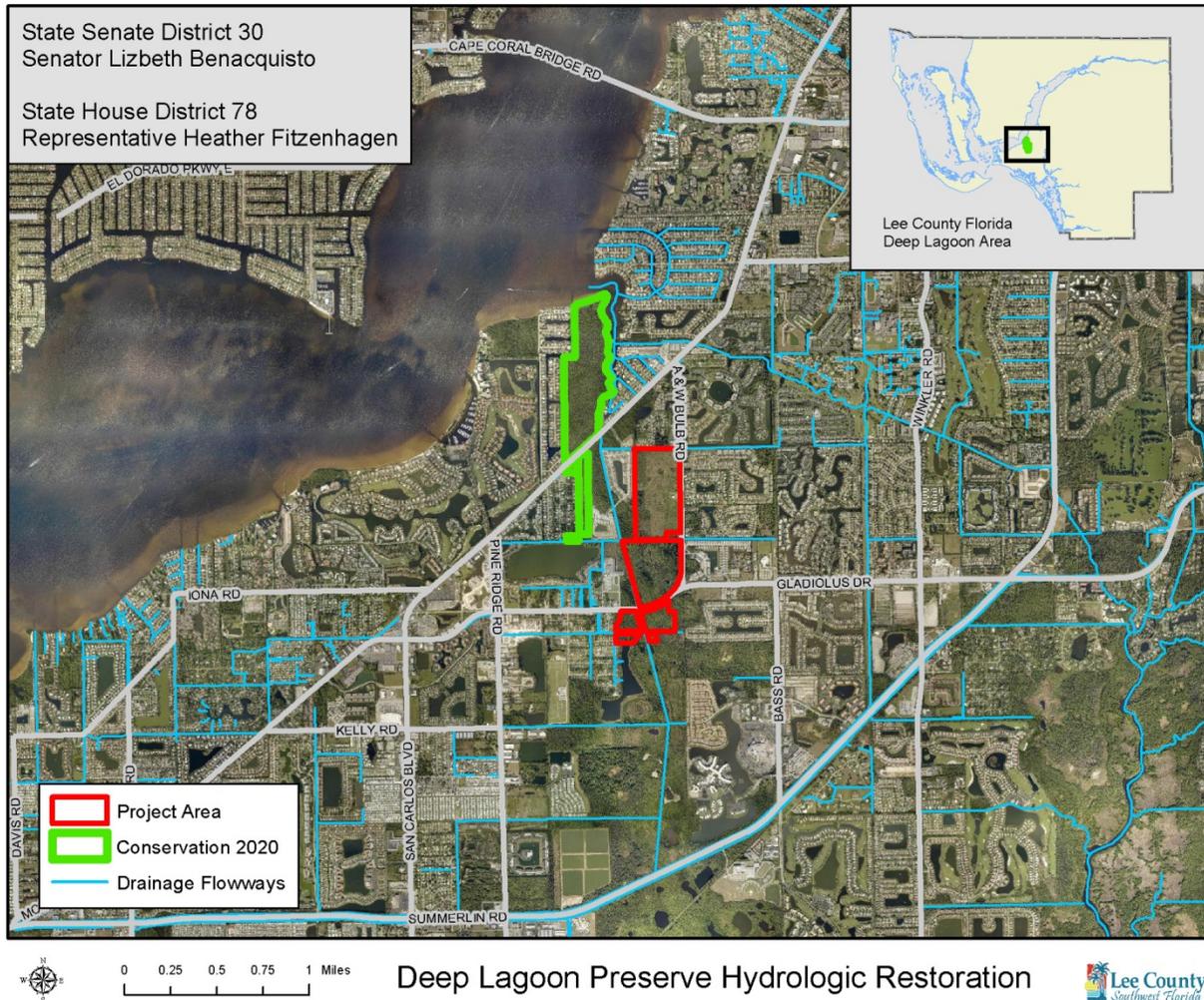
**Project Status:** The project will include the removal of exotic vegetation on the islands, and creation of littoral shelves with native wetland plants which will absorb nutrients from the water column. The proposed work will include design, permitting and construction of these littoral shelves.

**Estimated Cost:** \$400,000

**Requested Amount:** \$200,000

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# Deep Lagoon Preserve Hydrologic Restoration



## Background

The Deep Lagoon Preserve is a 272 acre parcel purchased through the Conservation 20/20 program in 1999. The Preserve is located in Fort Myers in central Lee County, along the Caloosahatchee River. The Preserve is a chain of disturbed salt water wetlands and connector ditches that collects stormwater runoff from the adjacent urban area and then flows into the Caloosahatchee River. **This surface water system is a tributary to the Caloosahatchee River, which has a TMDL for total nitrogen and is currently subject to a State of Florida Basin Management Action Plan.**

### **The Project**

The Deep Lagoon Preserve Hydrologic Restoration Project will provide ecosystem restoration through hydrologic and water quality improvements within the disturbed portions of the Deep Lagoon Preserve. The first phase of the project includes a feasibility study to identify sources of pollution and recommendations of potential improvements that can be implemented to remove targeted pollutants. The project will include design, permitting and construction of water quality improvement facilities within the preserve.

### **Benefits**

The Deep Lagoon Hydrologic Restoration Project is expected to provide multiple benefits including flood control, habitat enhancement, water quality improvements and groundwater recharge. **This project helps achieve the goals of the Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan and the Caloosahatchee Estuary Basin Management Action Plan.**

### **Water Quality Improvement Projects FY 2015-16 Funding Request**

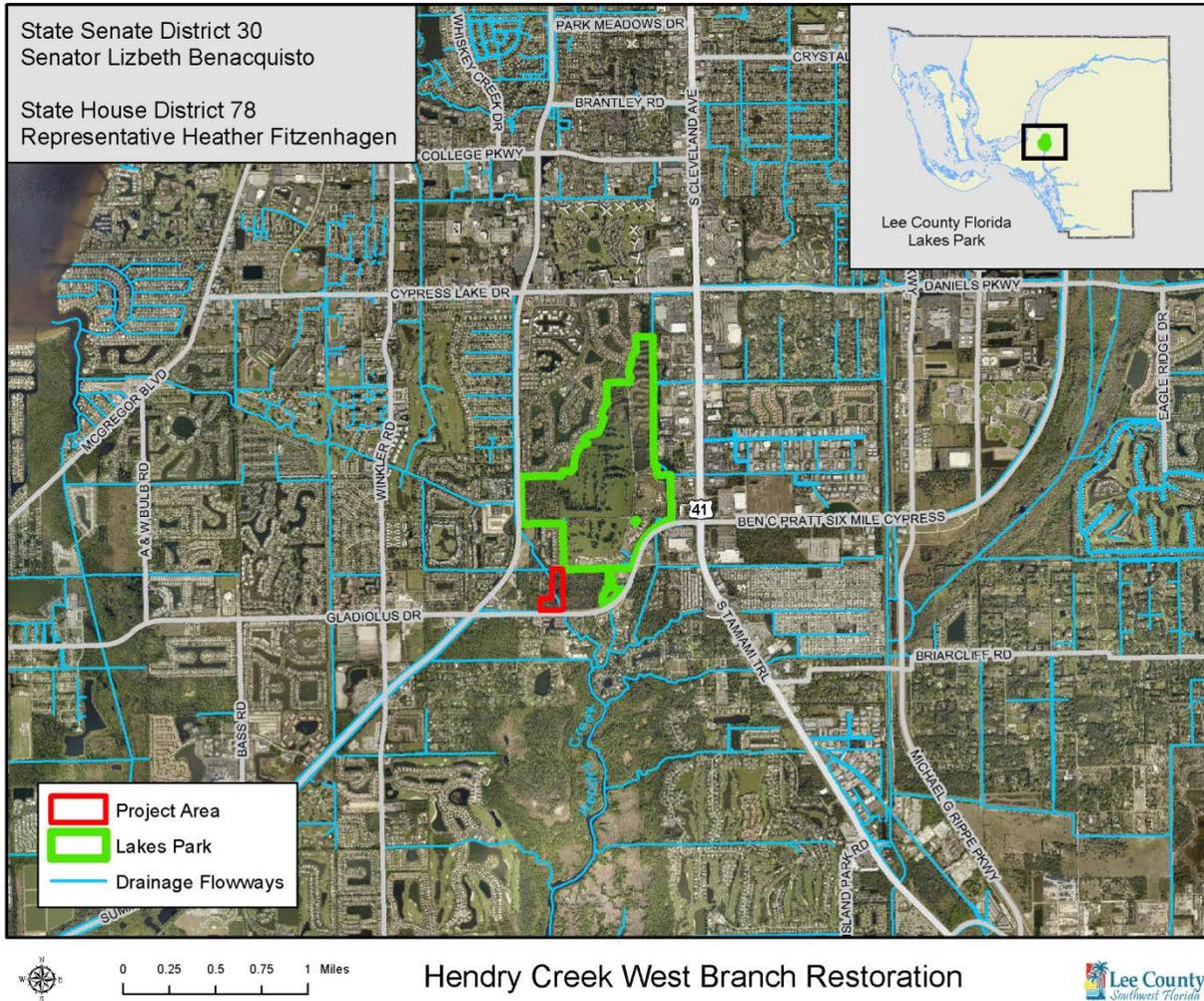
- Requested dollar amount: ***\$1,500,000***
- Local matching funds pledged, along with a written copy of the vote or other commitment by a local elected official: ***\$1,500,000***
- Total project cost/phase amount: ***\$3,000,000***

## **Vital Southwest Florida Facts**

- More than 75% of Florida's population lives within an estuary watershed and 78% of Florida's GDP is generated within estuary regions.
- Southwest Florida is experiencing the fastest growth in population, employment, and GDP among all U.S. estuary regions. Protecting or enhancing the region's estuaries is essential to support the regional economy.
- Lee County tourism, which depends on a healthy natural ecosystem, employs 1 in 5 workers. This includes the restaurant and hotel industries as well as ecosystem-based industries such as fishing and boating.
- Sources: Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, South Florida Water Management District, and NOAA.

*For more information, please contact:*  
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# Hendry Creek West Branch Restoration



## Background

The proposed project is located at 7800 Gladiolus Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33908, just south of the Lakes Regional Park and is bisected by the Hendry Creek West Branch. Lee County acquired the project parcels (9.3 acres) in 2012. The watershed of the West Branch includes the urbanized areas west of Summerlin Road and Lakes Park. A large portion of the project site is located within the creek floodway. Planning and permitting will begin within the next year. **Hendry Creek West Branch is a tributary to the Hendry Creek, which has a TMDL for total nitrogen and is currently subject to a State of Florida Basin Management Action Plan.**

### **The Project**

- Design a facility within Hendry Creek watershed intended to provide water quality benefits, wild life habitat and recreational opportunities for the community.
- Obtain necessary permits to construct best management practices on the project site to begin construction of water quality improvement amenities.

### **Benefits**

The proposed project provides passive water quality treatment through use of a filter marsh and/or other best management practices along the west branch of Hendry Creek. One of the main objectives of this project is to reduce total nitrogen discharge into Hendry Creek. **This project helps achieve the goals of the Everglades West Coast Basin Management Action Plan.**

### **Water Quality Improvement Projects FY 2015-16 Funding Request**

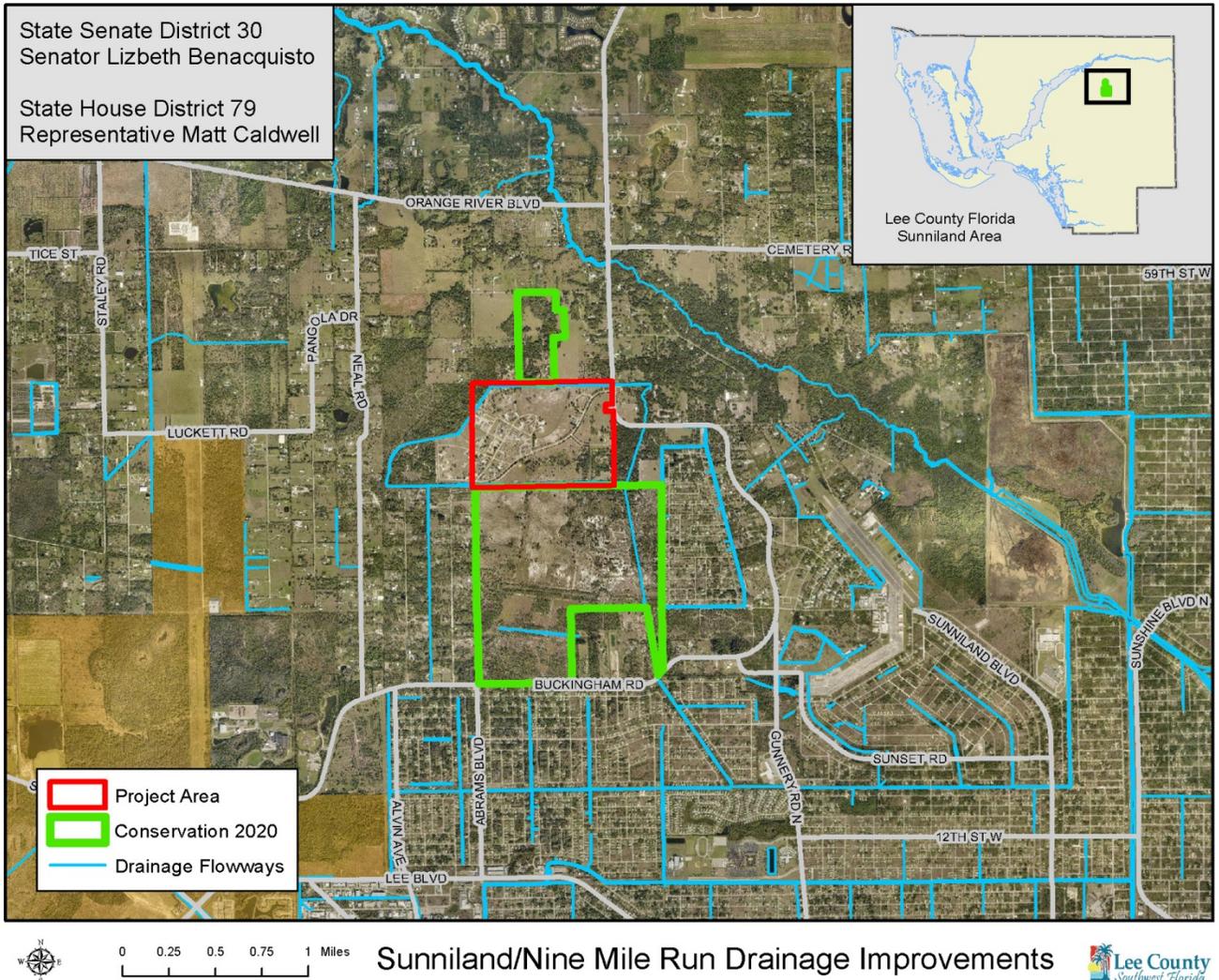
- Requested dollar amount: ***\$1,200,000***
- Local matching funds pledged, along with a written copy of the vote or other commitment by a local elected official: ***\$1,300,000***
- Total project cost/phase amount: ***\$2,500,000***

## **Vital Southwest Florida Facts**

- More than 75% of Florida's population lives within an estuary watershed and 78% of Florida's GDP is generated within estuary regions.
- Southwest Florida is experiencing the fastest growth in population, employment, and GDP among all U.S. estuary regions. Protecting or enhancing the region's estuaries is essential to support the regional economy.
- Lee County tourism, which depends on a healthy natural ecosystem, employs 1 in 5 workers. This includes the restaurant and hotel industries as well as ecosystem-based industries such as fishing and boating.
- Sources: Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, South Florida Water Management District, and NOAA.

*For more information, please contact:*  
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# Sunniland/Nine Mile Run Drainage Improvements



## Background

The Sunniland property was formerly a state facility that is now under the ownership and management of the Florida Gulf Coast University. The 2000 acre drainage area for the Nine Mile Run watershed is generally bounded on the north by Orange River and the top bank of Sunniland Canal, on the east and south by Buckingham Road, and on the west by a portion of Pangola Lane. The area is predominately undeveloped or low density rural residential. The canals for the Sunniland/Nine Mile Run were excavated as relatively deep, uniform channels which is drastically different from the shallow depressional flowway system of its prior undisturbed condition. The canals have become overgrown with vegetation and the water control structures in disrepair. **Nine Mile Run is a tributary to the Caloosahatchee River, which has a TMDL for total nitrogen and is currently subject to a State of Florida Basin Management Action Plan.**

### The Project

- Replacement of failing water control structures;
- Removal of invasive vegetation;
- Reconnection of flow ways from drainage ditch system to Hickory Swamp and Buckingham Trails Preserve.

### Benefit

The repairs will enhance storage in the drainage ditch system, increasing residence time of the water which flows from agricultural areas adjacent to the property. Increased residence time will allow for attenuation, groundwater recharge, and nutrient uptake by plants and mitigate flooding issues on adjacent properties. Lee County will also reconnect the flow ways through the Buckingham Trails Preserve. **This project helps achieve the goals of the Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan and the Caloosahatchee Estuary Basin Management Action Plan and the Conservation 2020 Land Stewardship Management Plan.**

### Water Quality Improvement Projects FY 2015-16 Funding Request

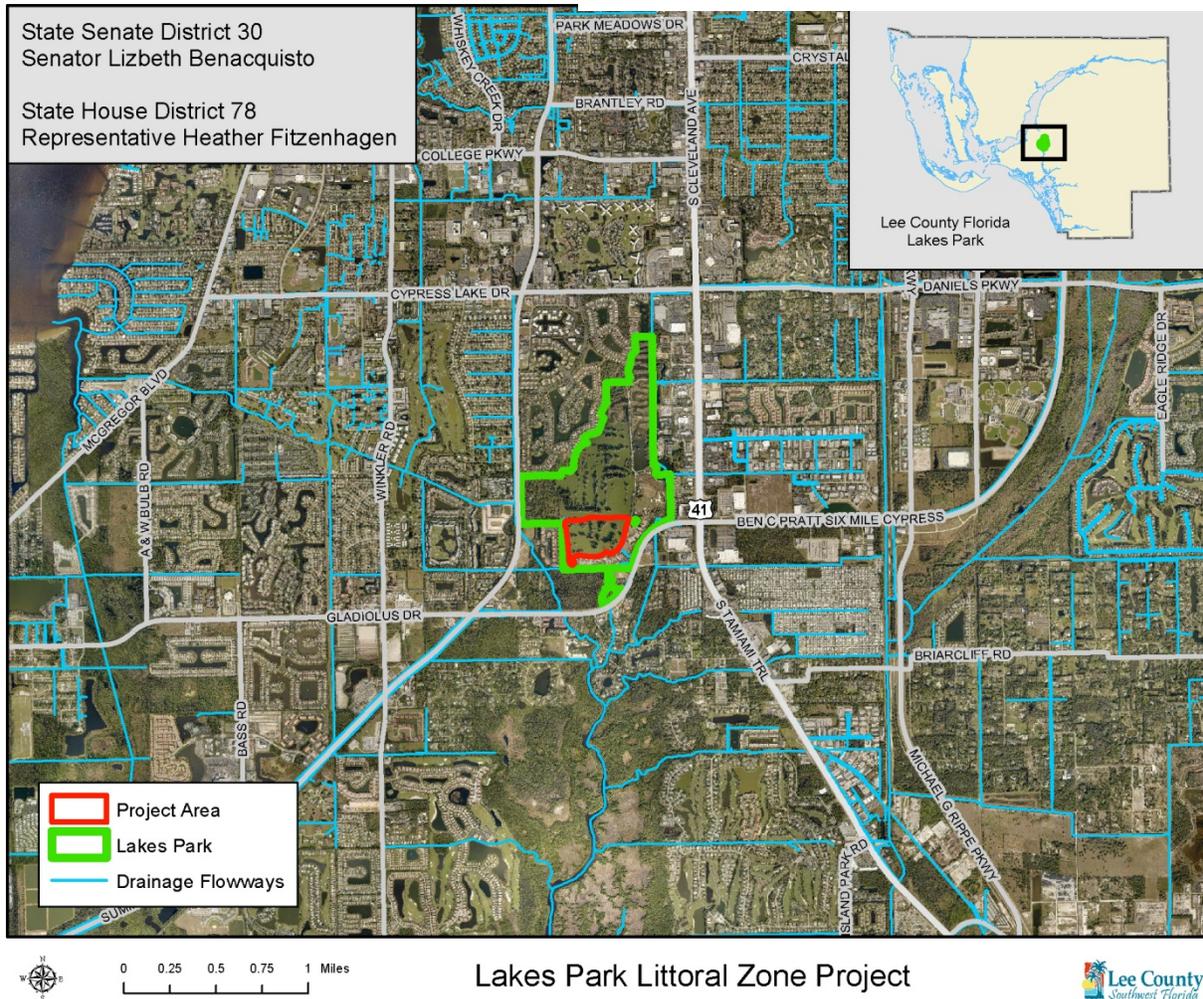
- Requested dollar amount: **\$300,000**
- Local matching funds pledged, along with a written copy of the vote or other commitment by a local elected official: **\$300,000**
- Total project cost/phase amount: **\$600,000**

## Vital Southwest Florida Facts

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# Lakes Park Littoral Zone Project



## Background

Lakes Park is an existing 279 acre recreational area, with 158 acres of lakes, located north of Gladiolus Drive, east of Summerlin Road, in Lee County, Florida. Stormwater from surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas flows into the lakes. Prior to the 1950's, the project area was undeveloped wetlands and uplands, and the headwaters of Hendry Creek originated further north of the current park. Lakes Regional Park began as a man-made area where limestone was quarried during the 1960's. The Lakes Regional Park property was purchased by Lee County in 1978.

Lakes Park is located in the headwaters of Hendry Creek, which flows for a few miles before entering the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve. **Hendry Creek has a TMDL for total nitrogen and is currently subject to a State of Florida Basin Management Action Plan.**

## The Project

This project will augment ongoing restoration efforts at Lakes Park. Construction of east and west filter marshes, removal of invasive vegetation, and planting of native vegetation has already been completed on portions of the property. The purpose of this project is to reshape and restore islands located south of the existing boardwalk. These islands were created during mining activities conducted in the 1950's and 1960's. The project will include the removal of exotic vegetation on the islands, and creation of littoral shelves with native wetland plants which will absorb nutrients from the water column. The proposed work will include design, permitting and construction of these littoral shelves.

## Benefits

The proposed project provides passive water quality treatment through use of a filter marsh to reduce nutrients and improve oxygen content along Hendry Creek. One of the main objectives of this project is to reduce total nitrogen discharge into Hendry Creek. **This project helps achieve the goals of the Everglades West Coast Basin Management Action Plan.**

## Water Quality Improvement Projects FY 2015-16 Funding Request

- Requested dollar amount: **\$200,000**
- Local matching funds pledged, along with a written copy of the vote or other commitment by a local elected official: **\$200,000**
- Total project cost/phase amount: **\$400,000**

## Vital Southwest Florida Facts

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