



## **Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative Legislative Funding Request**

### **Background**

Since 1998, the Florida Legislature has appropriated more than \$23 million towards Lake Worth Lagoon restoration. These funds have been leveraged with local funds to support over \$88 million in restoration and water quality improvements in the lagoon. Palm Beach County (PBC) will solicit project proposals to provide collaborative support for a stronger Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative (LWLI) Legislative Funding Request, and to assist local municipalities and special taxing districts in improving the lagoon through projects such as habitat restoration, storm water retrofits and septic-to-sewer conversions.

A Selection Committee (“Committee”), comprised of representatives of the following agencies: Palm Beach County, South Florida Water Management District, Palm Beach County League of Cities, Florida Inland Navigation District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will be convened for one day to hear presentations and to rank projects for inclusion in Palm Beach County’s annual legislative agenda for the LWLI funding request.

Funds are appropriated to the LWLI by the Florida Legislature and will be distributed to projects in order of ranking. Individual projects may also be approved for funding through the LWLI Legislative Funding Request. Each recipient will be responsible for entering into a contractual agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to receive reimbursement based funding.

### **Eligibility**

Inclusion in the LWLI Legislative Funding Request is limited to political subdivisions of the State of Florida. This includes municipalities, drainage districts/stormwater utilities, special taxing districts, PBC Agencies and the PBC School Board. Additionally, projects submitted for funding must be within the Lake Worth Lagoon and/or within its watershed.

### **Project Selection Criteria**

To the greatest extent possible, all projects must be consistent with the Water Projects Grant Program as defined in FS 403.885. The Legislature’s preference is towards turn-dirt projects. No more than 10% of the funding for any year should be spent on research, education, and

monitoring. Land acquisition is allowed if the land will be utilized to further a water quality or habitat improvement project.

Projects should be completed within a one-year period. Larger projects, which require multi-year implementation, may be broken down to phased projects, but each phase should yield tangible and stand alone results. In no circumstance should contract duration exceed 24 months unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

***Bang for the Buck***

Does the proposed project represent tangible and measurable expectations of water quality or habitat improvements to the Lake Worth Lagoon and its watershed?

***Ready to Go***

Has the proposed project initiated land acquisitions and local approvals, if necessary, to move forward with the construction phase? (ranking preference will be given towards construction ready projects) If regulatory permits are required, have those permits been received? (Lower consideration will be given for projects that have not yet received necessary permits)

***Local Commitment***

Does the proposed project have a commitment from the local sponsor of at least 50/50 cost share (match may be other non-state funding commitments)? Does the sponsor have a record of timely completion?

***Consistency with Lake Worth Lagoon Management Plan***

Does the proposed project demonstrate consistency with the goals, action plans, and/or program areas specified in the management plan? [2021 Lake Worth Lagoon Management Plan](#) can be accessed at [www.LWLI.org](http://www.LWLI.org)

**General Information**

The LWLI Legislative Funding Request will be open from May 1, 2023 – July 31, 2023. Applications must be submitted by July 31, 2023. The application form is located on the LWLI website, [www.LWLI.org](http://www.LWLI.org). Applicants will be expected to provide the Committee a ten (10) minute presentation outlining the merits of the proposed project on August 17, 2023. After presentations, Committee members may ask questions of the applicant. The Committee will rank the selected projects by a formal vote. A final project list and ranking will be announced at the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative Steering Committee meeting on October 18, 2023. Subsequently, the ranked project list will be recommended to the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners for inclusion into its annual legislative agenda. Each LWLI member entity is also encouraged to adopt and support the LWLI legislative funding request. Projects will be funded in order of ranking until all available funds are encumbered. If a ranked project does not receive funding, it can be re-submitted the following year for ranking. Funding becomes available July 1, 2024, and requires each organization to enter into a contractual agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis for project completion. Work conducted prior to July 1, 2024, may not be eligible for reimbursement.