

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: February 1, 2010

Date Submitted: January 25, 2010

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Timothy P. Barden, Assistant County Administrator
Eva Thorpe, OMB Analyst

Subject: Request Board Authorization to Submit Grant Application to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry (FDACS- DOF) and Approve Required Resolution

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests Board authorization to submit a grant application to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry (FDACS-DOF) in the amount of \$24,000 (Attachment #1) and approve required Resolution (Attachment #2).

Background:

The Florida Division of Forestry is utilizing 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding from the United States Forest Service to conduct a competitive grant process inviting eligible participants to apply for funding to restore public right-of-ways, parks, public schools and other natural areas, as well as, provide opportunities for tree remediation work which include corrective tree pruning, hazard tree removal and rehabilitation of soil conditions for significant trees.

Cities, counties, educational institutions, native american tribal entities, and non-profit groups throughout the state are eligible to apply for these funds. **Priority for funding will be given to communities that have the highest unemployment rates in the state of Florida, to blighted neighborhoods or underserved rural population centers.** This effort is intended to enable increased employment opportunity for commercial arborists, landscape contractors, nurseryman, consulting arborists, and landscape architects/designers as a result of this initiative.

Applications are due to the FDACS – DOF by 2:00p.m. on February 12, 2010. The proposals will be evaluated on March 15, 2010. On March 31, 2010 awards will be posted on Florida Bid System at <http://myflorida.com>, and shortly thereafter, contracts will be provided to the successful applicants.

Grants requests cannot exceed \$24,000 maximum and the minimum is \$2,000. This is a cost reimbursement project, which entails that the County front the funds to pay for the costs and be reimbursed by the FDACS – DOF when the project is complete. No match is required to be provided by the County.

There are two grant categories under which funds can be applied for as follows:

1) Category I - Reforestation

This activity is to increase local tree canopy cover, enhance the environmental and health benefits that trees provide to the local community, and to stimulate local economic activity in sectors related to the growing, transportation, and installation of trees. Funds may only be used for purchase and planting of trees or palms and related expenses listed below. Purchase and planting of shrubs and ground covers is not eligible. Up to 10% of the grant award may be used for the purchase and/or installation of irrigation equipment or an irrigation system, or for supplemental watering during the 60-day grow-in period.

65% of the funding available will be awarded for project under this Category I. This category carries some specific limitations on amounts that can be spent on purchases and allowance for ISA certified arborist.

2) Category II - Tree Remediation and Site Amelioration

These activities are to improve the health of existing community trees, eliminate safety hazards associated with trees, and stimulate local economic activity in sectors related to tree care. The following practices are eligible for funding under this category two.

- 1) Corrective pruning
- 2) Tree removal
- 3) Site amelioration

35% of the funds will be awarded under this Category II. All 3 practices carry specific allowances and limitations for use of the funds, as well as for use of professionals and industry standards to be complied with.

The criteria for evaluation and scoring are based on prioritized and weighted attributes. The maximum possible point score is 150, including bonus points. A minimum score of 75, including bonus points is required for an application to be accepted. Funds will be allocated to the acceptable applications with the highest numerical scores in each of three population regions of the state. Each region will receive approximately \$465,000, unless they do not have a sufficient number of accepted applications. In which case, funds will be awarded to acceptable applications in other regions.

Wakulla County is part of Population Zone 1 Counties that is comprised of 43 total counties, including Wakulla County. Population Zone 2 Counties is comprised of 17 counties and Population Zone 3 Counties is comprised of 7 counties only.

Agenda Request: Request Board Authorization to Submit Grant Application to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry (FDACS- DOF) and Approve Required Resolution

February 1, 2010

Page 3

The following sites have been identified as possible areas for tree planting activities under this grant opportunity and are provided for the Board's consideration.

County Parks

- 1) Woolley Park & Rock Landing Parking Lot
- 2) Medart Recreational Park, including the parking lot
- 3) Shell Point Park, cedar trees
- 4) Hickory Park, edible fruit & climbing trees for kids
- 5) Azalea Park, replacement and understory trees
- 6) Community Property (though property not yet acquired)

Right-Of- Way Areas

- 1) Arran Road, north side of Courthouse & BoCC Chambers
- 2) Shadeville Road, north side along future Community Center
- 3) Wakulla Arran Road, near Health Department & Senior Center
- 4) Spring Creek Highway, front of RMS and Shadeville Elementary School

Analysis

The County will be competing with 42 other Florida counties in Population Zone 1. However, if this application is successful, it presents a good opportunity for Wakulla County to perform beautification activities, exercise good environmental stewardship by protecting valuable trees and will enable employment opportunities for local businesses, arborists, landscape architects and others to work with the County to carry out this very worthwhile project.

It should be noted that the Resolution has been reviewed and approved by the County Attorney.

Options:

1. Authorize staff to submit grant application to FDACS – DOF and approve Resolution.
2. Do not authorize staff to submit grant application to FDACS – DOF and do not approve Resolution.
3. Board Direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachment(s):

1. Application for FDACS – DOF Funding
2. Resolution

[BHP/TB/EST]