



SANTA ROSA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Santa Rosa Administrative Offices
6495 Caroline Street, Suite M
Milton, Florida 32570-4592



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JAYNE BELL, OMB Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Tony Gomillion, County Administrator

DATE: February 8, 2016

SUBJECT: Agreement with Florida Department of Agriculture

DISCUSSION

Mr. David Cambron from the Florida Department of Agriculture will discuss the available funding program.

BACKGROUND

Mr. Trent Mathews has been in discussions with the Department of Agriculture and Santa Rosa County for the last several months related to the agreement for the funding of an additional technician to oversee the development of "Best Management Practices" for area farms. This funding will fully fund the position and related equipment. The agreement is a reimbursement grant other than providing upfront funding in the amount of \$36,987.50 for start-up cost.

COMPLETION

The County attorney has reviewed the contract documents and would finalize those documents for the Chairman's signature.

The Florida Watershed Restoration Act authorizes the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to develop water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address agricultural nonpoint sources to meet Total Maximum Loads (TMDLS) and otherwise protect water quality within the state.

FDACS has developed BMPs for all agricultural land uses that serve as agriculture's method of compliance.

The voluntary adoption of these practices provide farmers a "presumption of compliance" with state water quality standards. Currently there are only two farms in Santa Rosa County that have enrolled in this program with seven more on a waitlist to enroll their farming operations.

FDACS currently does not have the staff to accommodate the request for assistance in the West Florida Region but has great interest in providing this service and enrolling new farmers. It is for this reason they have approached the Blackwater Soil and Water Conservation District with grant funding, asking them to hire a BMP Conservation Technician to work with farmers in Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties.

FDACS has secured funding to provide Santa Rosa County reimbursement of salary, insurance, retirement, vehicle, field tools and all employee related cost for this position. Additionally, they are offering a 5% (of total employment cost) administrative fee to the county for providing this position.

Blackwater SWCD is asking Santa Rosa County to consider granting a position to be employed under terms of a special grant funded position that would work for the SWCD to accomplish the goals of enrolling agriculture producers in the BMP program and allow us to leverage state funds to address local resource concerns and improve the overall water quality of Santa Rosa County. This person would be an employee of Santa Rosa County, work multiple counties within our local region and be fully funded by the State of Florida.

Please let me know if I can provide more information concerning this request.

Trent Mathews

District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS

Santa Rosa County

Summary of the proposed Santa Rosa County Conservation Technician contract

Contract Period: Signing Date of Contract—30 June, 2017.

Funding Agency: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

Scope of Work: Conservation Technician will assist Agricultural Producers with understanding Best Management Practices (BMP) for agriculture through Site Visits, Demonstrations, Workshops, Field Days, and Educational/ Technical Assistance Activities. The Conservation Technician will enroll these agricultural producers in FDACS BMP program and help them know how to implement BMPs.

County Obligations- Employ Full time Technician, Provide supervision for Technician in consultation with FDACS Project Manager, Option to purchase vehicle with FDACS contract funding for the Technician to drive for FDACS related business, Maintain Field/Office equipment purchased by contract funds, and prepare and submit Quarterly Invoices with appropriate back-up documentation for reimbursement from FDACS for the Technician's salary, benefits, and any expenses such as fuel

A contract advance of \$ 36,987.50\$ will be provided for start-up costs associated with Technician. The total contract amount is \$147,950.00 for Agricultural Nonpoint Source BMP Implementation.

Any required or approved travel by the Technician will be reimbursed by FDACS.

Contract extensions are single period only, and not to exceed 6 months. It is mutually understood that funding for future contracts are dependent on Legislative funding. We anticipate that this will be a long-term relationship with FDACS funding this position for future years. The county agrees to maintain public records as required by "Sunshine law" provisions in Florida Statutes.

The FDACS Project Manager for the Technician Position is Dave Cambron..

The FDACS Contract Manager for this position is Hugh Thomas.

The County Contract Manager is Commissioner Lane Lynchard. At the discretion of the County Commission, Blackwater SWCD can and will serve in this role and handle associated administrative duties.

The Santa Rosa County BMP Technician will work in conjunction with the guidance of the Blackwater Soil and Water Conservation District.

The deliverables required by this contract are that the Technician maintain and submit monthly and quarterly an Activity Log, maintain certain minimum performance standards, attend staff training annually, conduct Implementation Assurance visits, assist in BMP Implementation, mail in BMP paperwork, assist in Cost Share Programs, Communicate with FDACS Project Manager, and Assist in NRCS Practices implementation.

The above is a synopsis of the contract details. To further elaborate, it is the intent of all partners to provide for the placement of a technician to focus efforts providing a service to area farmers that has previously been lacking. Best Management Practices are agricultural practices that are promoted by FDACS and Blackwater SWCD and are voluntarily adopted by local farmers that provide them a "presumption of compliance" to future environmental regulations and offers funding opportunities unavailable to operations that have not adopted these levels of conservation and enrolled in the BMP Program.

The expectation of the Blackwater SWCD is that this position will ensure that every farmer in our area has been presented this information and given the opportunity to adopt BMPs and enroll in the state monitoring program. This will serve the county by increasing conservation on private lands, providing opportunities for cost share funding and other financial assistance to local landowners and promoting non-regulatory compliance that leads to proven future water quality improvements.

It is also the intent to create a full time salaried position, provide HR benefits, office space, work vehicle, equipment, tools and supplies without Santa Rosa County incurring any associated cost.

Finally, along with the reimbursement of all expenses associated with the position, there will be a 5% administrative fee paid to Santa Rosa County. This is an opportunity for us to add and improve services without any additional expense to Santa Rosa County.

Thank you for providing producers with this valuable resource in the area.

Sincerely,

David Cambron

FDACS OAWP

NW District Representative

and

Trent Mathews

District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS