



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-2305A, Version: 1

Subject:

Third Amendment to the Agreement with The Forestry Company for Ecosystem Management pertaining to the Al-Bar and Cross Bar Ranches.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Third Amendment to the Agreement with The Forestry Company for Ecosystem Management pertaining to the Al-Bar and Cross Bar Ranches.

- This contract provides for ecosystem management at the County owned property in Pasco County known as Al-Bar and Cross Bar Ranches. A map of the property location is attached to the agenda item.
- The Third Amendment increases the contract in the amount of \$940,000.00 for contract services through the remaining of the contract term expiration on March 19, 2023.
- The Third Amendment replenishes funds which have been utilized by additional operation and maintenance activities and revenue generating pursuits. Additional operation and maintenance expenditures include road improvements, staff gauge replacements, and on-site housing repairs. Revenue generating pursuits include additional fertilization of planted pines and wildlife habitat restoration.
- There are sufficient funds budgeted in the Utilities Operating Budget to cover the contract increase.
- The Board of County Commissioners approved the 5-year contract on March 20, 2018 in the amount of \$3,479,518.00.
 - a.) The County Administrator approved the First Amendment on October 11, 2019 in the amount of \$260,000.00 for potential revenue; and
 - b.) The Second Amendment on May 4, 2021 adding a \$300.00 monthly credit on land management services related to allowing the Forestry Company to place a mobile home near the northern property boundary.

Contract No. 167-0365-P(LN); increase in the amount of \$940,000.00 for a revised total contract value of \$4,419,518.00 effective through March 19, 2023; Authorize the Chairman to sign and the Clerk of the Circuit Court to attest.

Strategic Plan:

Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship

3.2 Preserve and manage environmental lands, beaches, parks, and historical assets.

3.3 Protect and improve the quality of our water, air, and other natural resources

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.1 Maximize partner relationships and public outreach

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

The Third Amendment to this contract is necessary to provide for expenditures through the remainder of the contract term. The original contract amount has been depleted by unforeseen but essential work pertaining to infrastructure and wildlife habitat, and as such, sufficient funds are not available for the remainder of the contract term. An estimated \$940,000.00 will be required for the remaining duration to replenish funds which have been utilized for the purpose of additional operation and maintenance activities and revenue generating pursuits that were not included or anticipated at the time of the original contract execution.

The additional operation and maintenance expenditures include road improvements, staff gauge replacements (wetlands water level monitors), and on-site housing repairs (air conditioning unit replacement). Revenue generating pursuits include additional fertilization of planted pines and wildlife habitat restoration.

The requested \$940,000.00 to replenish the contract through the end of the contract duration is in alignment with prior year expenditures and anticipated expenditures through contract duration for basic contract services (security, fire suppression, wild hog and weed control, fence and gate maintenance, and mowing); miscellaneous special projects (fertilization of pine trees, habitat restoration, Scrub-Jay habitat rehabilitation; replanting (pine trees, raking, burning, seedling purchase); 20% contingency; and finally, vendor charges and administrative fees.

The Utilities Department is currently in the very early stages of asset management using Cityworks and GIS for the assets on the Cross Bar property. Going forward, Utilities staff will have a better understanding of the condition of the assets that will be considered in future contracts.

Lastly, the revenue generating pursuits have the potential to develop over time. For example, the expense for fertilization of pine trees and habitat restoration are long-term investments and can take many years for the County to see substantial revenue. Pine trees can take approximately 20-years to grow to the appropriate size for harvesting under ideal conditions (assuming an unforeseen freeze, fire, or insect issue doesn't cause delay or damage). The wildlife habitat restoration effort allows for Gopher Tortoises to be relocated to this site that are displaced from development areas, and County staff has applied for grants to offset the costs associated with Scrub-Jay population protection.

Background Information:

The Board approved this 5-year contract on March 20, 2018 in the amount of \$3,479,518.00 for professional forestry, wildlife habitat maintenance, and land management services for the County owned Al-Bar and Cross Bar Ranches. The County Administrator approved the First Amendment on October 11, 2019 for potential revenue in the amount of \$260,000.00 for the sale of palmetto berries and use of additional pasture acreage. The County Administrator approved the Second Amendment on May 4, 2021 to allow the Forestry Company to place a mobile home near the northern property boundary of the Cross Bar Ranch resulting in a \$300.00 monthly credit on monthly land management services.

The land management and maintenance of both ranches is required to be performed in a manner which will promote the growth and maintenance of the property including the preservation of the pine forest, protection and preservation of the wildlife habitat, protection and preservation of endangered wildlife, and secure the investment of pine forest production.

Ancillary services provided include, but are not limited to, supervision of the site, on-site security, wild fire prevention, fence maintenance, road maintenance, control burning, hog control, operation of the on-site augmentation wells and ditch blocks, forest management planning, timber and pine straw harvesting sales, market analysis, development of a geographic information system database and associated maps, forest insect and disease monitoring, coordination of the reforestation of harvest areas, coordination with Tampa Bay Water, and other miscellaneous site management tasks.

Fiscal Impact:

Current approved total contract expenditure not to exceed: \$3,479,518.00

Third Amendment increase not to exceed: \$ 940,000.00

Revised total contract expenditure not to exceed: \$4,419,518.00

Funding is derived from the Utilities Department Operating Budget

Staff Member Responsible:

Megan Ross, Director, Utilities

Merry Celeste, Division Director, Purchasing & Risk, Administrative Services

Joe Lauro, Director, Administrative Services

Partners:

Southwest Florida Water Management District

Tampa Bay Water

Pasco County

Attachments:

Third Amendment