



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 23-0980A, Version: 1

Subject:

Annual agreement with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services by Environmental Lands Unit Deputies.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the annual agreement with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) for law enforcement services by the Environmental Lands Unit from October 1, 2023 through October 1, 2024.

- Contract provides for two assigned Environmental Land Unit (ELU) deputies to patrol County preserves and parks at a cost of \$364,480 per year including personnel, vehicle, operating and training expenses.
- ELU deputies are critical to deter poaching of wildlife and cultural artifacts from county environmental lands and assist park rangers upon reports of suspicious activities.
- This partnership with the PCSO has existed since Fiscal Year 2001.
- Costs for the services are appropriated within the PCSO budget with General Fund dollars (\$273,841.33) and Utilities contributing (\$90,998.67) for their portion of the Brooker Creek Reserve.

Strategic Plan:

Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship

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

Summary:

The proposed contract provides law enforcement services at environmentally sensitive lands, preserves and waterways, including but not limited to Brooker Creek and Weedon Island Preserves, and the waters in and around Fort De Soto Park and Shell Key Island, which encompass over 15,940 acres. The contract period is October 1, 2023 through October 1, 2024 unless extended, terminated or modified by both parties.

Background Information:

Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2001, the first year of the Environmental Lands Unit contract with the County, PCSO deputies have provided excellent security at the preserves, have shown sincere interest and have helped build community support. They have greatly diminished the trespassing, illegal dumping and poaching activity on County park and preserve properties and work very effectively with Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) staff.

Fiscal Impact:

This contract is an annual expenditure of \$364,840, an increase of \$32,498, or 9.8%, from FY23 (\$332,342.00) and includes Utilities funding of \$90,998.67 to secure their department's portion of the

Brooker Creek Preserve. This expenditure is not part of the Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) budget but is included in the yearly appropriations to the Pinellas County Sheriff Office (PCSO) as part of the budget process. This contract is consistent with the FY24 Proposed Budget for PCR, PCSO and Utilities. No negative budgetary impacts anticipated.

Staff Member Responsible:

Paul Cozzie, Director, Parks and Conservation Resources

Partners:

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office

Pinellas County Utilities

Attachments:

FY23 Contract for Law Enforcement Services Environmental Lands Unit (PDF)

FY23 Contract for Law Enforcement Services Environmental Lands Unit (Word)

FY23 Environmental Lands Unit Law Enforcement Services Cost Worksheet