



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3195

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

This project aims to protect Miccosukee cultural tree islands in the Everglades. Water levels in the Everglades are anthropogenically managed to the detriment of wildlife and vegetation. In high water years even high elevation tree islands are inundated for 2-6 months a year. All wildlife, from deer, to the Florida panther, to the cotton mouse, are affected. No animal can survive hanging in a tree for this length of time. We propose to initially elevate ten tree island heads.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds

State Agency contacted?

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	250,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	250,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	250,000	71%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	100,000	29%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	350,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding?

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future-year funding likely to be requested?

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects



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10. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

☐ Planning ☐ Design ☐ Construction ☐ N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

11. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

12. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Travel expenses into the interior of the Everglades via airboat, swamp buggy, and full track vehicles. It is expensive to travel into the Everglades and transport soil into the interior of the Everglades. Additionally, planks, soil, and native vegetation for planting on raised areas.	250,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		250,000

13. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

This project aims to protect Miccosukee cultural tree islands in the Everglades. Water levels in the Everglades are anthropogenically managed to the detriment of wildlife and vegetation. In high water years even high elevation tree islands are inundated for 2-6 months a year. All wildlife, from deer, to the Florida panther, to the cotton mouse, are affected. No animal can survive hanging in a tree for this length of time. We propose to initially elevate ten tree island heads with soil to offset continuing engineered flood impacts in the Everglades.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?



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Transport into the interior Everglades via airboat, swamp buggy, and full track vehicles (already in the Tribe's fleet), bringing planks, soil, and native vegetation to build elevated planting boxes on tree island heads to restore the hardwood tree species to the hammocks. Restoration of the hardwood trees restores the leaf-fall, which will build up the tree islands further over time, and provide refuge for mammals and egg-laying species that have otherwise been pushed out of this ecosystem.

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

The funds will be used restore flora and fauna that are culturally important to the Miccosukee and Seminole Tribes, and Florida Gladesmen. Building elevated platforms on tree islands, planted with native trees, will lead to gradual restoration of the tree islands through recolonization & leaf deposition, enhancing the greater Everglades ecosystem and benefiting native species and visitors. Improved recreational and natural opportunities will be provided in the Miccosukee Water Conservation Area 3-A, which the Tribe manages as a state special improvement district under the Florida Indian Land Claims Settlement Act of 1982, and which is open to the public.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

Lands proposed for restoration are public TITF lands visited by countless Floridians and tourists annually. The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida has non-exclusive use and occupancy rights to the same through a long-term lease included in the Florida Indian Land Claims Settlement Act of 1982. Restoration of these tree islands improves habitat integrity and recreational access. While statistics are limited, the Central and Southern Everglades receives more than a million visitors annually, and is frequented by thousands of locals for hunting and fishing.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

Degrading of tree islands is having substantial negative impacts on Tribal culture, including the loss of species relied upon in traditional religious practices, and on common species relied on by hunters and fishermen, like white-tailed deer, which have been pushed out of this region because of the water overtopping many tree islands. Specific measure: number of flora and fauna on tree islands on annual basis, seeking gradual increase. Monitored via vegetation surveys and remote camera traps.

This process seeks to produce documentation regarding best practices for tree island restoration. Specific measure: Successful acceptance for publication of research results.

Reptilian egg laying species have collapsed in the Central Everglades. Specific Measure: number of reptilian animals that utilize the raised areas of the tree island on an annual basis, seeking a gradual increase in occupancy

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for in the contract?

Forfeiture of funds.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?

a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?

- ☐ Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)
- ☐ Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- ☒ Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):

Repeated floods, every time a hurricane hits SFL. Inclusive of Milton, Helene.

15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?

☐ Yes, Applied



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- ☐ Yes, Received
- ☒ No
- ☐ No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:

b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:

16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?

- ☐ Yes, Applied
- ☐ Yes, Received
- ☒ No
- ☐ No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):

17. Requester Contact Information

- a. First Name Last Name
- b. Organization
- c. E-mail Address
- d. Phone Number Ext.

18. Recipient Contact Information

- a. Organization
- b. Municipality and County
- c. Organization Type
- ☐ For Profit Entity
- ☐ Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- ☐ Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- ☐ Local Entity
- ☐ University or College



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☒ Other (please specify) Tribal government, operating state Special Improvement District where project is proposed

d. First Name Last Name
e. E-mail Address
f. Phone Number Ext.

19. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name
b. Firm Name
c. E-mail Address
d. Phone Number

The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.