



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

March 3, 2021

Colonel Andrew Kelly
District Commander – Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Subject: Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project Technical Assistance

Dear Colonel Kelly:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP) and the request for technical assistance to evaluate benefits of the Final Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement (PIR/EIS) without the shallow storage component known as the Wetland Attenuation Feature (WAF). As the non-Federal sponsor for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and with an understanding of the concerns raised during the State and Agency Review, the District team stands ready to provide technical assistance for this evaluation.

The LOWRP plays a role in achieving the storage benefits originally envisioned by the CERP, and it is important that we work towards project goals of the LOWRP as part of this process. The District will work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to review the scope, schedule and budget as part of the evaluation of a LOWRP plan which removes the WAF and allows for consideration of beneficial and cost-effective modifications to the plan.

With \$100 million in appropriations from the Florida Legislature, the District is already advancing the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Well component of the August 2020 LOWRP PIR/EIS. We encourage the USACE to make the appropriate technical modification necessary for the LOWRP and submit the plan for Congressional authorization by 2022. Once Congressionally authorized, the District looks forward to executing a Project Partnership Agreement.

We are ready to begin this evaluation immediately and our team is ready to assist you in developing a plan to advance this CERP project.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Drew Bartlett", is written over a white background.

Drew Bartlett
Executive Director

DB/mj