

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

# Levy County CPTA Grant Application



Restoring Historic Flows to the Lower  
Withlacochee River



**LEVY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
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June 6, 2023

Benjamin M. Melnick, Deputy Secretary  
Division of Community Development  
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity  
107 East Madison Street, MSC 160  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-4120

Dear Mr. Melnick

The Levy County Board of County Commissioners is proud to submit the following request to the Department of Economic Opportunity, Capital Planning Technical Assistance Grant for the 2023-2024 solicitation cycle. We and our regional partners, elected officials, and others feel strongly the project outlined will assist the County in providing the planning tools needed to restore the historic flows to the lower Withlacoochee River, with positive impacts on the water quality of this Outstanding Florida Waterway. We have taken the time to review nearby successful projects with our needs and meet Chapter 163.3618, Florida Statutes.

Inglis and Yankeetown are located along the Lower Withlacoochee River on the border of Citrus and Levy Counties, in an economically-challenged area. This section of the river is designated as an Outstanding Florida Waterway by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). In partnership with the Towns of Inglis and Yankeetown, FDEP, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has worked with Wetland Solutions, Inc., to conduct an extensive, multi-year water quality monitoring study and to develop a recovery plan. One of the key elements of this recovery plan is to restore the original flows to the river.

Much of the historic river flow is now being discharged to the Gulf of Mexico through the Cross Florida Barge Canal, instead of following its original path down the Lower Withlacoochee. As a result of this diversion, historic peak flows which are needed to scour the river bottom, no longer occur (regardless of the amount of rainfall received.)

An additional benefit is likely in the context of sea level rise. As increasing sea levels continue to impact the vegetative and biological life along the river, additional flow (as would have existed historically) would help maintain the saline interface further downstream. The impact of increased salinity is already visible in the areas within a few miles of the Gulf, where native hardwood trees including ancient cypress and oaks have been dying at alarming numbers, likely because of increased salinity brought about by reduced flows and increasing sea levels. These trees have root structures that support islands and hammocks that act as buffers during extreme weather events and serve to shelter the inland lowlands. As we lose these trees, we will also lose acres of the land they are holding place, and gain vulnerability in coastal flooding events.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers and SWFWMD have also performed studies on the Withlacoochee River Watershed for more than twenty years. The extent of those studies includes approximately 2,100 square miles of the watershed area along the 157-mile-long Withlacoochee River. In 2003, SWFWMD funded a feasibility study considering alternatives for the restoration of flow to the Lower Withlacoochee River. To date, none of the alternatives have been initiated, while the water quality of the river continues to be degraded. Levy County wants to take action.

Levy County's Consultant will perform a review of the existing studies on the Inglis Dams, Locks, and Spillways that control the flow from Lake Rousseau to the Cross-Florida Barge Canal and the Lower Withlacoochee River. Stakeholder input meetings will be held to facilitate discussions about the alternatives to restore the flow. Lastly, a Community Action Plan will be developed to restore the flow of the Lower Withlacoochee River.



Levy County's total amount of funding requested is \$75,000. Through this grant opportunity, we can get the planning tools needed to restore historic flows to the lower Withlacoochee River, with positive impacts on the water quality of this Outstanding Florida Waterway. Additionally, benefitting the local economy, as well as protection against some of the impacts of sea-level rise and local flooding. We are prepared to meet DEO's requirements, deadlines, and expectations outlined in our Scope of Work.

The contact person for this project is:

Alicia Tretheway, Procurement Coordinator  
P.O. Box 310  
Bronson, FL 32621  
(352) 486-5218 Ext. 2  
[Tretheway-ali@levycounty.org](mailto:Tretheway-ali@levycounty.org)

The County is proud to align with the Governor's views that reinforce planning and development strategies that promote economic diversity, while also protecting environmentally sensitive areas. We feel confident that our proposed project will help the County meet our state leadership's request of communities and support state-wide efforts as we all prepare for the future of Florida. To that end, we appreciated any consideration or support for this project in Levy County. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our offices and we will work with you in any way we can to support this effort.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wilbur Dean,  
County Coordinator



## Table of Contents

<b>CPTA PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK</b> .....	4
<b>DELIVERABLE 1:</b> .....	4
<b>DELIVERABLE 2:</b> .....	4
<b>DELIVERABLE 3:</b> .....	4
<b>BUDGET</b> .....	5
<i>Budget Outline with Expenditures by Category:</i> .....	5
<b>RESOLUTION 2023-23</b> .....	6



# CPTA PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

## DELIVERABLE 1:

Data Collection and Analysis.

### **Deliverable Items Include:**

1. Engineering Consultant to review existing studies of information on the Inglis Dam, Locks and Spillway that Control the flow from Lake Rousseau to the Cross-Florida Barge Canal and the Lower Withlacoochee River.
2. Review alternatives to increase the flow to the Lower Withlacoochee.
3. Perform Site Visits of the Existing Facilities.

**Deliverable Due Date:** November 17, 2023

**Project Documentation:** PDF's or similar documents of a summary memo of existing studies, data, and alternatives, provide pictures of site visits.

**Cost:** Not to exceed \$30,000

## DELIVERABLE 2:

Public Workshops

### **Deliverable Items Include:**

1. Conduct a minimum of 1 (one) public workshops to discuss potential alternatives to increase flow to the Lower Withlacoochee River and receive input from stakeholders.
2. Written summary of comments received during public workshop.

**Deliverable Due Date:** December 13, 2023

**Project Documentation:** PDF's or similar documents of public notice(s), agenda (if any), presentation materials, and a written summary of public workshop in which stakeholder input is requested.

**Cost:** Not to exceed \$5,000

## DELIVERABLE 3:

Community Action Plan

### **Deliverable Items Include:**

1. Prepare a Community Action Plan with alternatives to increase the flow to the Lower Withlacoochee River that will identify actionable steps to move forward, a conceptual budget estimate, and an estimated timeline for each alternative presented.

**Deliverable Due Date:** March 29, 2024

**Project Documentation:** PDF's or similar documents of the Community Action Plan to restore the flow to the Lower Withlacoochee River.

**Cost:** Not to exceed \$40,000



## BUDGET

### *Budget Outline with Expenditures by Category:*

ITEM	AMOUNT
Data Collection and Analysis (Contracted)	\$30,000
Public Workshops (Contracted)	\$5,000
Community Action Plan (Contracted)	\$40,000
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>



**RESOLUTION 2023-23**  
**(On Following Pages)**







