

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: FY2020 USGS Joint Funding Agreement

Work Session/Regular Session

DATE OF MEETING: October 22, 2019

BUDGET IMPACT: \$22,500

FUNDING SOURCE:

- (X) Annual - \$22,500
- () Capital
- (X) USGS - \$1,800
- () SPLOST
- () TSPLOST

COUNTY ACTION REQUESTED ON: Authorize Chairman to execute Joint Funding Agreement to allow continued operation of both the Little River and Skipper Bridge Stream Gauges.

HISTORY, FACTS AND ISSUES:

There are currently a total of four (4) operational stream gauges on rivers in Lowndes County. One gauge is located on the Withlacoochee River on the bridge on Skipper Bridge Road. This location has served as an official forecast point and been jointly funded by the US Geological Survey (USGS) and the City of Valdosta for at least the last twenty (20) years. Following the 2009 flooding event, Lowndes County requested a gauge be installed on the Little River at the Hwy 122 bridge and this location has been funded by Lowndes County since that time. At the same time, the City of Valdosta began funding a second gauge located on the N Valdosta Rd Bridge over the Withlacoochee River. The USGS has also totally funded the fourth gauge which is located on the Withlacoochee River on the US Hwy 84 Bridge at the Brooks/Lowndes County line. This location is just past where the Little River and Withlacoochee Rivers combine into one and has recently been designated a forecast point as well. These stream gauges are valuable tools to alert local officials to potential flooding and allow for adequate time to prepare and plan for any potential impacts. It also allows the National Weather Service (NWS) hydrologist to provide both emergency management officials as well as the general public with warning information well in advance of a potential flooding event thereby allowing both local responders and citizens to adequately prepare to save life and property.

As of FY2020 the City of Valdosta is no longer able to fund their portion of the Skipper Bridge Rd gauge as it lies outside the city limits. Without the data from this gauge the other gauge currently funded on the Little River would provide little benefit as it relates to providing forecast further downstream, especially at Hwy 84. Gauges on both rivers are needed to provide any type of accurate forecast. This gauge also is important in providing warning to those downstream of the Skipper Bridge Rd gauge that flooded during the 2009 event.

The attached agreement represents funding on the part of Lowndes County for both gauges, with each costing \$15,100 to operate for the period from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.