

Martin County Projects Update



Rivers Coalition Meeting April 17, 2014 at 11 a.m., City of Stuart Commission Chambers

(Update provided by Deborah Drum, Ecosystem Restoration & Management Division)

- On the state level, the 2014 Florida Legislative Session continues and it is anticipated that the House and Senate will conference on the budget next week. The last day of regular session is May 2. Martin County has been active in advocating for our previously stated priorities to healthy waterways and ecosystems, which are essential to our economy and quality of life. Specifically, Martin County is advocating for \$40 million for the C-44 project, and we thank our delegation and Governor Scott for their support as the funding for the project has been included in the Senate, House and Governor's budgets. We are also advocating for the \$220 million for recommendations from the Senate Select Committee, funding for the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon Issues Team, funding for hybrid wetland treatment projects and supporting House Memorial 607 advocating Congress to fully fund Everglades restoration projects and authorize Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA). As previously reported, Martin County has actively opposed HB703/SB1464 relating to Environmental Regulation. The bill was temporarily postponed in the Senate Community Affairs Committee on April 8. This bill now appears to have stalled. With the postponement in the Senate, the fact that it was not on the House State Affairs calendar last week, and given public comments by the bill sponsors, the bill may have reached the point of no return. The County will be watchful of any potential amendments with provisions the county opposes until the session concludes. We are grateful to Governor Scott, Senator Negron, Senator Grimsley, Representative Harrell and Representative Magar for their tremendous support of Martin County legislative priorities this session.
- On the federal level, we thank our federal delegation for their advocacy in securing \$38 million for the C-44 project in President Obama's FY 15 budget. This budget request was the majority of the \$65.5 M the President recommended for South Florida ecosystem restoration. We are now requesting support from Appropriators in passage of the budget. Also on the federal level we are supporting passage of the Water Resources Development Act and its funding for Everglades restoration and the inclusion of the Central Everglades Planning Project. Thank you Congressman Murphy for your tremendous advocacy on Martin County's priorities.
- The Rio / St. Lucie Exfiltration and Baffle Box project is under construction, and will be substantially complete on April 22, 2014 with final completion scheduled for May 22, 2014.
- Martin County's Ecosystem Restoration and Management Division has proposed additional water quality improvement projects that will benefit the St. Lucie Estuary in our Capital Improvement Plan for FY15, which is being considered as part of the County's budget process.