

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Joint Funding Agreement with USGS for Stream Gauge
Maintenance

DATE OF MEETING: October 15, 2024

Work
Session/Regular
Session

BUDGET IMPACT: \$27,850.00

FUNDING SOURCE:

- Annual: \$27,850.00
- Capital
- N/A
- SPLOST
- TSPLOST

COUNTY ACTION REQUESTED ON: Approval of Joint Funding Agreement with USGS

HISTORY, FACTS AND ISSUES: In 2009, Lowndes County entered into an agreement with the US Geological Survey (USGS) to install and maintain a stream gauge to monitor water levels on the Little River. This gauge is installed on the Hwy 122 bridge, just west of Hahira. While the USGS provided all the equipment and the installation costs, Lowndes County has entered into an agreement since that time to provide funding for the ongoing maintenance costs associated with keeping the equipment in operation. From 2009 until 2019, Lowndes County funded this single gauge site.

In 2019, the City of Valdosta notified the USGS that they would no longer be able to fund the main gauge site located on the Withlacoochee River at Skipper Bridge. At that time, Lowndes County agreed to assist with additional funding to allow this gauge to remain in operation. This additional gauge is funded in partnership with USGS and the Suwanee River Watershed Management District, both providing funding for this project location.

Lowndes County is responsible for \$27,850.00 in total maintenance costs with the currently proposed agreement. This is broken down into \$17,000.00 for the Little River site and \$10,850.00 for the Withlacoochee River site. This represents an increase of \$3,025.00 over the previous year. The reason for the increase is that in previous years, the USGS has not charged for maintenance of the rain gauges attached to each stream gauge. They now include the precipitation gauge cost as a separate line item at each location. These rain gauges are essential to the stream gauge network because knowing how much rain fell at a specific location helps determine a more accurate river level forecast.

- OPTIONS: 1. Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the Joint Funding Agreement with the USGS for continued maintenance of Stream Gauges at the Little River and Withlacoochee River in Lowndes County.
2. Board's Pleasure

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve