

Focus shifts to Island Way stormwater project

River Preservation Initiative sets priorities for 2006 legislative funding

By **Michelle Sheldone**
Staff Writer

An exotic pest and plant removal effort at Jonathan Dickinson State Park will wait a year, and an Island Way stormwater treatment project will instead move forward, according to Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative Chairman David Brown.

"We try to implement 'turn-dirt' projects as quickly as possible that will have an immediate benefit to the river," Brown said.

Martin County, in seeking to minimize flooding and improve the stormwater runoff quality from its Little Club community into the Loxahatchee River, plans to utilize the park's \$400,000 in fiscal year 2005 state legislative matching funds to first treat the water. A stormwater treatment project is proposed for the foot of the Island Way bridge, Brown said.

The state park's \$800,000 effort had been delayed and, when park officials heard that Martin County wanted to move forward with the Little Club project, they volunteered their matching funds, he said.

The Preservation Initiative each year creates a package of projects for legislative funding.

The state park exotics removal project received the River Preservation Initiative's top ranking for 2006 state legislative funding, followed by projects designed to improve runoff from agricultural areas into the Northwest Fork's Cypress and Kitching Creek freshwater tributaries.

Board members last month heard from environmental agencies about why river restoration and preservation-related projects should receive \$3.5 million-plus in

matching funds from the 2006 legislative budget and on Monday ranked them in order of priority as follows:

1. Jonathan Dickinson State Park-sponsored Wild and Scenic River Corridor Exotic Pest/Plant Control Phase I: \$400,000

2. Palm Beach County-sponsored Cypress Creek Restoration Phase II: \$125,000

3. Martin County Board of County Commissioners-sponsored Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee Project: \$500,000

4. Martin County Board of County Commissioners-sponsored Kitching Creek Phase IV: \$500,000

5. Palm Beach County-sponsored Delaware Scrub Natural Area Restoration: \$75,000

6. Palm Beach County-sponsored Limestone Creek Restoration Phase II: \$330,000

7. Town of Jupiter-sponsored Urban Stormwater Management System Rehabilitation Phase II: \$200,000

8. Loxahatchee River District/South Florida Water Management District-sponsored Loxahatchee River Monitoring: \$100,000

9. South Indian River Water Control District-sponsored Muck Removal in District Canal and Removal of Exotics in Outfall Right-of-Ways: \$45,000

10. Town of Jupiter-sponsored Jones Creek Parcel Acquisition and Hydrological Restoration: \$812,500

11. Town of Jupiter-sponsored Surficial Aquifer Recharge System Improvements: \$400,000

12. Loxahatchee River District-sponsored Loxahatchee River Environmental Center: \$80,000

13. Loxahatchee River District-sponsored Loxahatchee Septic Tank Maintenance Program: \$40,000

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