

ORDER OF DELEGATION AND OPERATING AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
AND METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
REGARDING THE REGULATION OF MANGROVES

THIS Agreement is made and entered into this 21 day of Nw., 1995, by and between the Department of Environmental Protection (the Department) and Metropolitan Dade County for and on behalf of the Department of Environmental Resources Management (County or DERM). By execution of this agreement, the Department delegates its authority to regulate the trimming and alteration of mangroves.

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, mangroves play an important ecological role as habitat for various species of marine and esturine vertebrates, invertebrates, and other wildlife, including mammals, birds, and reptiles; and

WHEREAS, mangroves contribute to the economies of many coastal counties in the state through a combination of functions; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of section 403.9323(1) of the Florida Statutes to protect and preserve mangrove resources valuable to Florida's environment and economy from unregulated removal, defoliation, and destruction; and

WHEREAS, the Department has been directed by the Legislature to delegate its authority to administer and enforce the regulation of trimming and alteration of mangroves pursuant to ss. 403.9321 - 403.9333 of the Florida Statutes (Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act) to any local government that makes written request for delegation, if the local government can demonstrate that it has sufficient resources and procedures for the adequate administration and enforcement of a delegated mangrove regulatory program.

I. ORDER OF DELEGATION

A. DERM is delegated the authority to issue permits for the trimming of mangroves, provided such mangrove trimming is proposed in connection with an activity that does not require a wetland resource or environmental resource permit under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., in lieu of a Department permit pursuant to the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act. In accordance with section 403.9327(3) of this act, DERM may impose stricter substantive standards than the Department for such mangrove trimming permits; however, such regulations may not preclude the issuance of a permit for the trimming of mangroves in extended mangrove fringe areas.

B. DERM is delegated the authority to issue permits for the alteration of mangroves (to remove, destroy, or defoliate mangroves), provided such mangrove alteration is proposed in connection with an

activity that does not require a wetland resource or environmental resource permit under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., in lieu of a Department permit pursuant to the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act. In accordance with Section 403.9328(3) of this act, DERM may impose stricter substantive standards than the Department for such mangrove alteration permits, but may not preclude the issuance of permits.

C. The Department hereby retains the authority to administer and enforce the provisions of ss. 403.9321 - 403.9333, F.S., when mangrove alteration or trimming is proposed in connection with an activity that requires a wetland resource or environmental resource permit to be issued by the Department or the South Florida Water Management District under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., if and until DERM is delegated the authority to issue such Part IV permits pursuant to section 373.441, F.S. Nothing herein shall preclude DERM from administering and enforcing any lawfully adopted regulations, pursuant to Chapter 24 of the Code of Metropolitan Dade County, in a manner consistent with the provisions of ss. 403.9321 - 403.9333, F.S.

D. DERM is delegated the authority to enforce the provisions of the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act, as provided in section 403.9332 of the Florida Statutes, for activities requiring a permit from DERM. DERM is also authorized to enforce any lawful regulation adopted by DERM to the fullest extent possible, in accordance with the provisions of this act. Nothing herein shall limit or restrict DERM's authority to enforce any lawful regulation adopted by Metropolitan Dade County to the fullest extent possible. Nevertheless, nothing herein shall limit or restrict the Department's authority to enforce the provisions of the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act for activities that require a wetland resource or environmental resource permit under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S.

## II. OPERATING AGREEMENT

### A. PURPOSE OF OPERATING AGREEMENT

1. The purpose of this Agreement between the Department and DERM is to implement the legislative direction in the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act to delegate the Department's authority to regulate the trimming and alteration of mangroves to counties and municipalities.

2. DERM shall require compliance with the statutory requirements set forth in ss. 403.9321 - 403.9333, Florida Statutes, in decisions pertaining to the regulation of mangrove trimming and alteration.

3. DERM shall not restrict or qualify the availability of the exemptions to trim mangroves in riparian mangrove fringe areas as provided by s. 403.9326, Florida Statutes, except as provided in Section 403.9329(2)(b), F.S. In accordance with Sections 403.9327 and 403.9328 of the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act, DERM may

impose stricter substantive standards or more demanding procedural requirements for mangrove trimming or alteration outside of riparian mangrove fringe areas.

4. In order to ensure consistent implementation of the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act throughout the state, DERM agrees to construe the phrase "public lands that have been set aside for conservation or preservation" as provided in the definition of riparian mangrove fringe in s. 403.9325(6), F.S., to include the following lands:

- a. Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL),
- b. State and National Parks,
- c. State and National Reserves and Preserves,
- d. State and National Wilderness Areas,
- e. National Wildlife Refuges (lands within refuge boundaries that are owned by the federal government),
- f. Lands acquired under the Save Our Rivers program (SOR),
- g. Lands acquired under the Save Our Coast program (SOC),
- h. Lands acquired under the Environmentally Endangered Lands Bond Program,
- i. Public lands designated as conservation, preservation, or mangrove protection areas under a local government comprehensive plan,
- j. Lands purchased by a local government, Water Management District, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission or any other state agency for conservation or preservation purposes,
- k. Public lands encumbered by a conservation easement that does not provide for the trimming of mangroves, and
- l. Public lands designated as Critical Wildlife Areas by Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.

5. In order to further ensure consistent implementation of the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act throughout the state, DERM agrees that "mangroves on lands that have been set aside for mitigation" as provided in the definition of riparian mangrove fringe in section 403.9325(6), F.S., shall mean mangrove areas on public or private land that have been created, enhanced, restored, or preserved as mitigation pursuant to a Wetland Resource Permit, Management and Storage of Surface Waters Permit, Environmental Resource Permit, a permit issued pursuant to Chapter 24 of the Code of Metropolitan Dade County, Florida, as amended from time to time, or resolution of an enforcement action, where the permitting or enforcement agency has not determined that the success criteria have been met, or where a consent agreement has been entered into between the permitting or enforcement agency and the property owner or a restrictive covenant or conservation easement has been granted by the property owner that does not provide for trimming. These mangroves may not be trimmed under exemptions applicable to riparian mangrove fringes.

## **B. MODIFICATION OF AGREEMENT**

This Agreement may be modified in writing at any time as necessary by mutual consent of the Department and DERM. Modifications may be made in whole, by part, or by section; and upon approval shall supersede previous versions of this Agreement. Approvals of modifications to the language of this Agreement shall be approved and signed by the Secretary for the Department and the Metropolitan Dade County Manager.

## **C. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Department may biannually review the performance of DERM's delegated mangrove regulatory program to determine if the program is being properly administered and enforced. To allow the Department to effectively review the delegated mangrove regulatory program, DERM shall submit a semiannual report to the Department that includes at a minimum:

1. number of trimming and alteration permit applications received during the reporting period;
2. number of trimming and alteration permits issued during the reporting period;
3. number of trimming and alteration permit denials issued during the reporting period;
4. number of exemption notifications issued during the reporting period;
5. number of violations reported and investigated during the reporting period; and
6. number and result of enforcement actions taken during the reporting period.

If additional information is needed for the Department to effectively review DERM's performance of administering and enforcing the delegated mangrove regulatory program, DERM shall, upon request from the Department's contact person, provide additional information concerning permitting, compliance and enforcement for mangrove trimming and alteration activities.

## **D. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

1. DERM shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate compliance inspections are conducted on all permits issued pursuant to this Agreement.
2. DERM shall be responsible for enforcement of this Agreement and any ordinance, rule, or order adopted pursuant hereto. The Department may provide assistance in compliance and enforcement cases, intervene or take the lead role in any enforcement actions

within DERM's jurisdiction, when deemed necessary by the Department. The Department shall give notice to DERM of its intent to pursue such an enforcement action.

3. Where appropriate, the Department and DERM shall coordinate their enforcement activities in order to maximize the staff resources available to each.

4. Nothing in this Agreement shall limit the enforcement authority of either party.

**E. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. DERM shall notify the Department prior to promulgating new or modified mangrove regulations.

2. The Department shall notify DERM of any request to obtain delegation by a municipality within DERM's area of jurisdiction.

3. DERM shall notify the Department prior to further delegating the mangrove regulatory program to any municipality.

4. All notices and reports required or permitted to be given under the terms and provisions of this Agreement by a party to the other party shall be in writing and sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
Division of Environmental Resource Permitting  
Bureau of Aquatic Plant Management  
Environmental Program Administrator, Permitting  
2051 East Dirac Drive  
Tallahassee, Florida 32310

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
Chief, Coastal Resources Section  
33 S.W. 2nd Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33130

or to such other address as may hereafter be provided by the parties in writing. Notices by registered or certified mail shall be deemed received on the delivery date indicated by the U.S. Postal Service on the return receipt.

**F. EFFECTIVE DATE OF AGREEMENT**

1. This agreement shall become effective on the latest day and year executed by either the Department or the County as noted below.

**G. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT**

1. Either party may terminate this Agreement upon written notice of not less than ninety (90) days.

2. In the event of termination of this Agreement, DERM agrees to perform compliance inspections on those permits that were issued by DERM under this Agreement, and to report any violations to the Department. DERM retains joint authority with the Department to enforce the provisions of the Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act for any mangrove trimming or alteration activities which were permitted while DERM was operating under the provisions of this Agreement.

**H. SEVERABILITY**

If any part of this Agreement is judicially, administratively or otherwise determined to be invalid or unenforceable, the other provisions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect, provided that both parties agree that the material purposes of this Agreement can be determined and effectuated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representative(s) on the latest day and year noted below.

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY

By: Virginia B. Wetherell  
VIRGINIA B. WETHERELL  
Secretary  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

By: Armando Vidal  
ARMANDO VIDAL P.E.  
County Manager  
111 N.W. 1st St., Suite 2900  
Miami, FL 33128

This 27 day of September, 1995.

This 21 day of Nov., 1995.

WITNESS: Stacey D. Cowley

WITNESS: Eugene D. [Signature]

Approved as to Form and Legality

Approved as to Form and Legality

By: Stacey D. Cowley  
DEP Attorney

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Attorney

