



Natural Resources Programs

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**PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION**

February 21, 2017

The Honorable Howard Wiggs, Mayor  
City of Lakeland  
228 S. Massachusetts Avenue  
Lakeland, Florida 33801

RECEIVED

FEB 24 2017

W.U. WASTEWATER

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF LAKELAND'S SE7EN WETLANDS PARK**

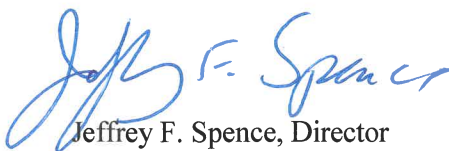
Dear Mayor Wiggs,

I understand the City of Lakeland wishes to enhance their existing wastewater wetland treatment system by adding the necessary infrastructure to allow for public access to the property, creating a public park. As the Parks and Natural Resources Director for Polk County, I fully support this endeavor.

The park will provide connectivity to Polk County's Lakeland Highlands Scrub and Loyce E. Harpe Park for over 2,700 acres of contiguous public space for recreation and an increase of 22 miles in the regional trail network. Polk County is partnering with Lakeland to provide access and services to the park. The Lakeland Se7en Wetlands Master Plan includes educational components similar to Polk County's Circle Bar B Reserve, which is a popular destination for school groups and other organizations. The City of Lakeland's Se7en Wetlands will complement the outdoor and environmental education programs available in the County.

As Polk County is also a contributing member of the Regional Reclaimed Water Partnership Initiative with the Tampa Electric Company and the Southwest Water Management District, having public access to Se7en Wetland's will allow us to tell this story of regional water reuse, public/private partnerships on a regional scale, and the reduction of pollutants to waters of the state. I look forward to additional partnership opportunities as this effort moves forward.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey F. Spence, Director