



**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM  
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)  
June 6, 2018**

**Attendance List**

**SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Tammy Foster  
Oli Johnson  
Randy Parkinson  
Paul Schmalzer  
Laurilee Thompson  
Kim Zarillo

**EEL PROGRAM STAFF**

Jenny Ashbury  
Laura Clark  
Mike Knight  
Chris O'Hara

**GUESTS**

None

*Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity  
Through Responsible Stewardship of Brevard County's Natural Resources  
June 6, 2018  
Approved July 31, 2018*



## ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)

June 6, 2018

### Meeting Minutes

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Randy Parkinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

#### **MINUTES**

The April 4, 2018 and May 4, 2018 minutes were presented.

##### April 4, 2018

The April 4, 2018 meeting minutes were presented for approval.

#### **MOTION ONE**

**Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the April 4, 2018 minutes, as submitted.**

**Kim Zarillo seconded the motion.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

##### May 4, 2018

The May 4, 2018 meeting minutes were presented for approval.

#### **MOTION TWO**

**Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the May 4, 2018 minutes, as submitted.**

**Tammy Foster seconded the motion.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

The Administrative Review was discussed.

#### **BOCC Items**

None.

### **FIND Exchange**

Mike explained that staff attended the second of two public meetings related to the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) project planned in the Valkaria scrub area and he confirmed that he had provided a brief presentation regarding the proposed land exchange between FIND and the EEL Program as part of the meeting. One citizen had a question regarding future access to part of the land included in the exchange. Mike explained his understanding that future public access to the area will not be impacted.

### **Habitat Golf Course and Valkaria Airport Land Management Possibilities**

During the last meeting, Dave Breininger asked about the possibility of reducing tree density at the Habitat Golf Course, which is currently managed by the Parks & Recreation Department (P&R). Additional information will be provided on this in the future.

Mike also noted he had a conversation with representatives of the Valkaria Airport and he had been told that they would not be supportive of a cooperative agreement regarding land management efforts to improve Florida Scrub-Jay (Scrub-Jay) habitat on the airport property. Kim asked if there were federal requirements about land management efforts there. Mike noted he did not know. Paul noted his understanding that there are requirements for land management efforts on Federal property through the Endangered Species Office. Mike noted he has a good relationship with the Airport Director and he hopes that in time, additional communications with them can occur.

### **Additional Discussion – 100 acre scrub site near Valkaria Airport**

Mike mentioned the need for a new access point into the 100 acres of scrub property in the mega-parcel area east of the airport that was received as a mitigation donation and he confirmed that the Airport is open to staff accessing the site through the north gate. The EEL Program will have responsibility for keeping the access road clear. Chris O'Hara, South Region Land Management Superintendent, is in the process of determining how much effort it will take to keep the road clear.

### **Additional Discussion – Possibility of tree removal on FIND Site**

Mike reminded the group that Dave had also asked if FIND might be agreeable to removing some of the trees in the basin area before the construction begins. Mike noted he did not ask FIND directly, but he believes that they will not be willing to do so. He also stated the EEL Program will not be allowed to spend money on the area, because it is being developed. Mike noted he understands Dave's perspective that tree reduction in this area would be beneficial for the Scrub-Jay population over the next few years, until construction begins, but unless anyone else has any ideas, he does not see any possibility of a tree reduction in that area occurring.

### **Additional Discussion – Florida Scrub-Jay Video**

A draft of the Scrub-Jay video, which is being prepared by Shay Saldana, the new P&R Marketing person, was presented for review. Mike asked for comments. The following was noted:

- Laurilee suggested including pictures of Scrub-Jays on the ground, especially larger pictures which might be included at the beginning of the film.
- Paul suggested removing the pictures of the grackles.
- Kim suggested including a few pictures of scrub habitat in good management shape.
- Jonny Baker, North Region Land Management Specialist, suggested checking the language regarding number of acres acquired to be sure it doesn't list a specific number that could change with time, in order to keep the film from becoming out dated if additional lands area acquired.

Mike thanked the group for their input.

### **SMC REPORTS**

None.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

None.

### **LAND ACQUISITION STATUS UPDATE**

None.

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **Scrub Habitat Assessment / Stepping Stone Prioritization Matrix**

Mike noted he is continuing work on determining the criteria and categories for review of possible stepping stone properties which may be considered as additions to the EEL Program through escheating, donation, or by acquisition; either through a new referendum, or through the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) scrub mitigation fund as discussed by Todd Mecklenborg during the March 7, 2018 SMC meeting.

It was noted that the USFWS scrub mitigation fund is administered by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and that the EEL Program received \$3 million from that fund towards the purchase of part of the Scottsmoor Flatwoods Sanctuary. Additional funding has come to the EEL Program in the past for land management efforts on scrub habitat. It was also noted that scrub mitigation funding from new construction in Brevard County is currently being allocated to the Lake Wales Ridge area as USFWS feels that area has a higher chance of maintaining Scrub-Jay populations long-term than Brevard County does. An additional reason this review is being undertaken is to try to get some the Brevard County scrub mitigation funding coming back into Brevard County.

The current matrix data categories are listed as follows:

- Location Description
- Acres
- Kilometers to Next Potential Territories
- Fire Management
- Current Owner / Custodian
- Acquisition Challenge Level
- Aquifer Recharge Soils
- Comments

The following was also noted:

- A significant portion of a large area in the North Region is made up of 1¼ acre parcels, but many of them are under one ownership.
- Kim noted it would be helpful to indicate which parcels are next to land currently occupied by Scrub-Jays.
- An 85 acre parcel which has been discussed in the past is primarily under one owner. Mike indicated he plans to add the 85 acre area to the list.
- Tammy noted that an overgrown property with an outside owner could impede travel between areas and she suggested including information about ease or difficulty of movement between sites.
- Randy suggested assigning scores to information within each of the categories, and totaling each property's score as a method of comparison.
- Jonny suggested consideration of including information on population viability along with distance to next occupied territory to ensure land is being purchased in an area where populations are more likely to survive.
- Kim noted some of the larger areas might be appropriate for future Scrub-Jay translocations.

Mike emphasized that USFWS currently needs two primary sets of information from the EEL Program:

- Where do we need work done on existing sites?
  - Staff is in the process of identifying every site that needs tree reduction.
- Identify possible stepping stone locations for future acquisition.

Randy noted that several months ago, when the group was discussing long term-management needs and whether the Program has accomplished its goals, it was noted that determination of what the Program wanted to accomplish during the planning for the 2004 referendum, but hasn't

been able to complete, still needs to be identified. He noted that review of potential stepping stones was part of that process, as well.

### **South Mega-Parcel Acquisition/Exchange Area Fall Back Boundary**

Mike provided a few examples of areas where SMC input on the conceptual future acquisition/exchange boundaries of the South Mega-Parcel area would be helpful.

Tammy noted that there has been very high density of sand pine regeneration in certain areas which prescribed fire on the landscape would help alleviate. She also noted additional benefits of prescribed fire, beyond habitat improvement, include reduction in fuel load and a lower need for Department of Forestry plow lines in the event of a wildfire.

Additional discussion on this item will be scheduled when Dave Breininger is able to attend. Staff will prepare an updated map showing all parcels that have been acquired. Printed maps of the area will be distributed for the next meeting.

### **Land Management Report**

#### **Management Plans**

Kim noted her thanks for the information in the Sanctuary Management Plan section of the report. She also noted that approximately 9 management plans are due during 2018 and that some of the fields in the report are still blank.

Mike reminded everyone that the EEL Site Management Plan Approval Process (most recent version dated 6/12/2018) includes several milestones which are highlighted in green. Staff should indicate when they expect to reach the next milestone for each sanctuary as part of each month's report.

Mike noted that if the SMC has other thoughts which might be helpful for the review to let him know.

It was noted that while all management plans are required to have Stakeholder public meetings, only management plans sent to the State require an Advisory Group public meeting.

Clarification was requested: Do all Management Plans for properties in State title need to be sent to ARC for approval, or only those plans for sanctuaries above a specific size?

A variety of opinions were expressed. Staff will research and provide additional information.

#### **Land Management**

South: Micco Scrub Sanctuary

Paul requested follow up information from the May minutes related to the need for an expedited removal of trees on the northern border of the sanctuary. Chris stated an initial bid to remove the trees has been received from the contractor they normally use and staff will be moving forward with getting the specs to get the work done. It is noted that the work is expected to be completed in a couple of months. Oli asked for clarification of how many trees are involved. Chris estimated that the job will involve approximately a thousand trees and noted his plan to have the trees cut and removed. Paul emphasized his understanding of Dave's perception that the tree line on the northern border of the sanctuary needs to be removed quickly so the trees will not constitute a barrier between the existing occupied habitat that will be destroyed soon during construction of the new I-95 interchange and the scrub habitat in the sanctuary.

Chris also noted that the previously planned timber project at the sanctuary is being revised to a salvage/timbering project due to the wildfire. It is expected that the new contract will be received next week. Determination of contract approval authority level is dependent on the value of the trees. Staff plans to implement prescribed fire, on the areas within the footprint of the restoration area that were not burned in the wildfire, prior to the timbering.

There are two Scrub-Jay families in the northern half of Micco Sanctuary within the scrub area on the eastern side.

#### **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION – SMC OPENING**

Mike noted that one applicant (Elizabeth Becker) applied for the current opening on the SMC during the advertised timeframe. One additional application was received two days past the deadline. Paul mentioned that Ms. Becker had also applied to the SMC during a previous call for applicants. He noted that Ms. Becker was determined to be qualified at that time, although she was not selected for that opening. The SMC Qualifications Review Committee meeting will be held on June 12<sup>th</sup> and the PC's meeting for review and confirmation of applicant qualifications will be held on June 29<sup>th</sup>. BOCC review and approval of the appointment will be final step in the appointment process.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be scheduled for July 31, 2018.

#### **ADJOURNED**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 P.M.

## **SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS**

1. Motion to approve the May 4, 2018 minutes, as submitted.
2. Motion to approve the April 4, 2018 minutes, as submitted.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Chris O'Hara to determine level of effort required to keep road to new Valkaria Airport access point usable.
2. Research incorporation of suggestions to draft Scrub-Jay video.
  - a. Include pictures of Scrub-Jays on the ground, especially larger pictures at the beginning of the film.
  - b. Removal pictures of grackles.
  - c. Include a few pictures of scrub habitat in good management shape.
  - d. Confirm that acres acquired by EEL Program is not listed as a specific number in order to keep the film from becoming outdated if additional lands are acquired.
3. Incorporate suggestions for Scrub Habitat Assessment / Stepping Stone Prioritization Matrix:
  - a. Indicate which parcels are next to land currently occupied by Scrub-Jays.
  - b. Add 85 acre parcel to list.
  - c. Indicate information showing ease or difficulty of travel between locations.
  - d. Include information on population viability with identification of occupied territories.
  - e. Identify areas which might be appropriate for future Scrub-Jay translocations.
  - f. Incorporate a scoring process to assist with prioritization.
4. Information to provide to USFWS:
  - a. Where do we need work on existing sites?
  - b. Identify every site that needs tree reduction.
  - c. Identify possible stepping stone locations.
5. Continue with determination of what the Program hoped to accomplish, but has not been able to complete, as part of planning for future funding requirements.
6. Schedule discussion on south mega-parcel acquisition/exchange fall back boundary for meeting when Dave Breininger can be in attendance.
  - a. Update mega-parcel map using GIS.
  - b. Provide printed maps.
7. Complete filling in blanks of management plan column of Land Management Report including next step dates.
8. Research and provide clarifications on which office at the State level is responsible for approving management plans based on sanctuary sizes.
9. Continue to move forward with restoration plans at Micco Scrub Sanctuary:

- a. Expedited removal of line of trees on north border.
  - b. Remainder of restoration project.
10. Continue to move forward with SMC member appointment:
- a. SMC Qualifications Review Committee meeting to be held June 12<sup>th</sup>
  - b. PC review and confirmation of qualifications of applicant to be held June 29<sup>th</sup>
  - c. Submit to BOCC for final approval.