



**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
September 5, 2018**

Attendance

SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Elizabeth Becker
Dave Breininger
Tammy Foster
Oli Johnson
Randy Parkinson
Paul Schmalzer
Kim Zarillo

EEL PROGRAM STAFF

Laura Clark
David DeMeyer
Damien Keene
Mike Knight
Steve McGuffey
Ray Mojica
Chris O'Hara
Evan Owens
Jenny Warner

GUESTS

John and Pam LaSalle, Citizens

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MINUTES

July 31, 2018 Minutes

The July 31, 2018 SMC minutes were presented for approval.

Paul Schmalzer noted that on page 5, last paragraph, line four “disbursal” should be changed to “dispersal”.

MOTION ONE

Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the July 31, 2018 minutes, as amended.

Oli Johnson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The Administrative Review was discussed.

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

- Elizabeth Becker was appointed to the SMC on August 14, 2018.
- First Budget Hearing – September 11, 2018
- Final Budget Hearing – September 25, 2018

Parks and Recreation Department Reorganization

The Parks Department has created a second Assistant Director Position and discussions are taking place regarding possible ways to reorganize the Department. Discussions are currently conceptual and have included consolidating environmental education operations with the EEL Program.

COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

Laurilee Thompson expressed her appreciation for the EEL Program's participation in the upcoming Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival and noted the layout of this year's festival program has been revised and will provide additional information on the EEL Program.

Paul Schmalzer noted he will be leading a field trip to Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary in Titusville on October 27, 2018 for the Native Plant Society and other interested members of the public.

Paul also explained that he and Tammy Foster have two articles related to scrub vegetation and management which have just been published in Restoration Ecology and Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society.

Randy noted he recently had an article on beach nourishment published in Estuarine, Coastal, and Shelf Science.

STAFF REPORTS

None.

LAND ACQUISITION STATUS UPDATE

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

Scrub Parcel Prioritization Matrix

Mike Knight, EEL Program Manager, explained that the current funding cycle for the EEL Program ends in 2024 and a couple of years ago, EEL Program Citizen Advisory Committees began discussions regarding the need for continued funding for the EEL Program and whether or not a land acquisition component should be included if the SMC and PC move a request for a new referendum forward to the Board of County Commissioners. A portion of those discussions include a review of possible scrub habitat "stepping stones" between existing conservation areas. When Todd Mecklenborg, with US Fish and Wildlife Service, attended an SMC meeting to discuss Florida Scrub-Jay recovery, he noted that his organization might be able to provide funding for additional land acquisition through the Florida Scrub-Jay mitigation fund. As a result, staff has been compiling a matrix of potential areas which will be presented to the SMC for review and ranking.

Mike noted that they have all the areas identified and while filling in several sections of the matrix a couple of questions had come up:

- How are we defining next potential territory?
 - Clarification: Only use areas already acquired.

- Should they exclude areas previously identified for acquisition?
 - Clarification: Make a note the area has already been identified by SMC.
 - Randy noted his feeling that having stepping stone areas which had been previously identified for acquisition would provide additional confirmation of their importance.

Dave noted his feeling that a small group could probably review the matrix in an afternoon. Mike agreed.

It was noted for the record and Kim Zarillo and Dave Breininger were now participating in the meeting.

Tree Density Reduction Zones

Mike explained that it is possible that US Fish and Wildlife Service may be able to provide funding for scrub land management and that staff has prepared maps for areas which could benefit from this activity. Maps for Dicerandra Scrub, Fox Lake, Indian Mound Station, Scottsmoor Flatwoods, Jordan Scrub, Malabar Scrub East, Malabar Scrub West, and Micco Scrub Sanctuaries were provided.

The group reviewed the maps, along with a chart prepared by Dave, which showed several Brevard County areas and their potential for increasing Scrub-Jay populations. He noted that the Malabar and Valkaria areas on the chart were combined and confirmed that the Cruickshank Sanctuary information is included with Viera. He also noted multiple areas are significantly below potential carrying capacity.

Discussion ensued. The following was noted:

- Tammy Foster mentioned that in her opinion, the places where you could probably get the most benefits per dollar were in the South Region. Dave agreed. Dave noted that this doesn't mean to give up on north Brevard, but due to the dire situation for Scrub-Jay populations, it makes sense to spend money where you have the best potential for success first.
- Dave asked if estimated costs were available. Mike noted that information has not yet been compiled.
- It was noted that in some cases staff had included tree reduction parameters of 1,000 feet from scrub or occupied territories and Dave's parameters were 1,000 feet from potential territories. Staff will update the maps to Dave's parameters.
- Dave noted the importance of public education regarding scrub habitat and offered to assist.
- Paul noted that having existing Scrub-Jay populations significantly below carrying capacity is not a good situation and his feeling that it is incumbent on the EEL Program to do as

much as it can, as quickly as it can on the land the Program is responsible for. Mike agreed.

- Dave noted that a large tree reduction was recently completed at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and the contractor had done an excellent job. He emphasized that pile burning creates the most long lasting openings in scrub and these openings are crucial to multiple species. Paul noted this information is also included in the publication he mentioned earlier in the meeting.
- Kim asked if information on when the project might be completed was available. Dave said he felt it might take a couple of years. Mike noted his feeling that the project could move forward more quickly.
- Sanctuary specific comments included:
 - Jordan
 - Expand to the west 1000' from potential territories to reach Marie Street.
 - Micco
 - Expand west to power lines and south to Buffer Preserve north border.
 - It was noted that a lesser amount of tree reduction is planned for the northwest corner to hopefully save some of the area for future Red Cockaded Woodpeckers.
 - Malabar/Valkaria
 - It is anticipated some citizen concerns may be received regarding a significant tree reduction at Malabar West.
 - There are multiple mega-parcel areas with a large number of consolidated ownership under the EEL Program.
 - It may be possible that tree reduction in the FIND area could be funded by the Scrub-Jay mitigation fund. This area will be added to the list along with an area near the missile tracking site.

Malabar Scrub Sanctuary Site Visit Report

Paul provided an overview of his site visit report from the SMC's September 1, 2018 visit. He noted that habitat conditions have improved. There are still some areas of dense pines that should be thinned and it is important to continue burning with sufficient frequency to maintain appropriate shrub height structure. Thinning the young pines and maintaining open conditions are needed to retain the diverse understory. This site is occupied by Florida Scrub-Jays. .

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Bikes on Trails

Ray Mojica, South Beach Land Management Superintendent, gave a presentation on bike issues at the Maritime Hammock Sanctuary. Staff has attempted multiple actions to curtail this activity which is not allowed in the South Beaches due to concerns over safety of hikers and negative impacts on trails.

Ray explained that the conservation area to the south of this sanctuary plans to allow bikes at some point in the future and he noted possible benefit of allowing bikes, just on the dike areas, in an attempt to provide some bike access here. Randy and Laurilee noted their support for consideration of this topic. Paul and Kim mentioned it is important to consider negative impacts as well.

Staff will continue attempts in curtailing inappropriate use.

Land Management Report

Discussion on this topic was limited due to time constraints.

Paul noted his impression that the Central Region and South Region have extended "next step due dates" and requested additional explanation when presenting information in the future.

Clarification was provided that the Central Region had not extended a due date, but had accomplished one task and moved to the next step.

Ray suggested adding a completion date for the step that had just been achieved, and a new step number and target date. It was also determined that when a target date does need to be extended, the original target date should not be removed, but should be crossed through, and the new date should be added.

Public Comment

Pam LaSalle, citizen, expressed her concerns regarding feral cats, in general, and their impact on conservation lands. She requested information on how the EEL Program deals with these animals.

Members of the SMC explained that they understand the issues caused by feral cats. Mike noted his impression that they are not a significant issue on EEL Program sanctuaries, but staff will research this topic and provide additional information at a future meeting.

NEXT MEETING

To be determined.

ADJOURNED

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS

1. Motion to approve the July 31, 2018 minutes, as amended.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Continue work on Stepping Stones Matrix.
2. Schedule small group review, when matrix is complete.
3. Focus on existing EEL scrub habitat management short term.
4. Continue work on Tree Reduction Zones. Extend 1,000 foot buffer from potential territories Include FIND area and area near missile tracking site.
5. Micco Sanctuary: FWC is revising memo regarding timber/salvage project. Removal of tree line - second bid is expected the end of this week.
6. Maritime Hammock: Continue working to eliminate bikes on trails. Future consideration may be given to allowing bikes on dike roads when conservation lands to the south begin allowing that access.
7. Land Management Report/ Management Plan status: If a target date needs to be extended, clarify extension within report by striking through the original date and adding the new date.
8. Feral Cats: Research whether feral cats are an issue for EEL Program sanctuaries and take follow up action, if necessary. Notify LaSalle's when this item is added to SMC agenda.