# Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Selection and Management Committee Meeting

## February 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes

## Attendance

### SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT (SMC) MEMBERS

Elizabeth Becker, Tamy Dabu, Mac McLouth, Doug Sphar, Lisa Toland, and Kim Zarillo attended in-person. David Breininger, Tammy Foster, Oli Johnson, and Paul Schmalzer joined the meeting via Zoom.

### ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM STAFF

Mike Knight, Damien Keene, Amy Rivera, David DeMeyer, Jenny Warner, Brad Manley, Steve McGuffey

### GUESTS

Suzanne Kennedy, Stephanie Koontz, Eric Menges, Scott Ward, Monty Montgomery (Procedures Committee) and Rick Follett (Procedures and Recreation and Educational Advisory Committee)

Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity

Through Responsible Stewardship of Brevard County’s Natural Resources

## Meeting Minutes

### CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Tamy Dabu called the meeting to order at 1:07.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

## MINUTES

The SMC 1/11/2011 minutes we presented for approval.

### MOTION 1

**Mac McLouth moved to accept the 1/11/2021 minutes as presented.**

**Lisa Toland seconded the motion.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Mike mentioned the updated Management Plan was recently emailed and copies printed for this meeting. He mentioned the North Region Stakeholder Meeting was held on January 27, 2021, and the South Beaches Stakeholder Meeting will take place on February 23rd.

Mike provided an update on the SMC application process. He explained there were 8 applications; however, one candidate withdrew their application. The Qualifying Committee meets February 12th to complete the initial ranking for the seven applicants. The Procedures Committee meets on February 22nd to confirm the list of qualified applicants. Shortly after that, the list of qualified applicants will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners (Board). The date of the final ranking is to be determined.

He noted the 30-Year Anniversary Report has been distributed. Mike stated the report is being finalized and stated Committee Members can provide input by email for one additional week or can provide input at this time.

Mac McLouth stated he is impressed with the report. He would like to add Keep Brevard Beautiful (KBB) and the Port Authority because of the port’s location and KBB’s removal of pepper trees and efforts to clean the causeway.

Tamy Dabu noted this is not within the scope of this report.

Mike mentioned the State Lease Amendment and provided historical information. Lease Amendment 4263 was approved by the Board unanimously without question during the meeting on Tuesday of this week. All of the lands that the Program receives reimbursements for that are in State title are under this lease. There are a handful of properties that are eligible for reimbursement; however, they have not gone through the process yet. The Program is hopeful they will go through the process eventually.

### COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

Doug Sphar mentioned there has not been a Recreation and Advisory Committee (REAC) meeting recently. Mike added a meeting is expected to be scheduled after the public access meetings.

### LAND ACQUISITION REPORT

FIND Exchange Update

Mike mentioned the FIND Exchange was scheduled to close on Monday, February 8th; however, minor title issues arose that require additional documentation. The anticipated closing date is next week.

### AGENDA ITEM 1

Species Translocation Request – *Dicerandra thinicola*

Suzanne Kennedy, President of Floravista, Inc., presented the Translocation Proposal for the Indian Mound Station Sanctuary North 1 (IMSS-N1). Research for this project was conducted at Titusville Wellfield III which is adjacent to Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary to the northwest of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. The IMSS-N1 recipient site will receive cuttings from Aurantia Road Greenways donor site. Suzanne and her team are requesting permission from the Selection and Management Committee (SMC) to proceed with this translocation project. This presentation is available upon request.

Tammy Foster inquired about the expected burn return interval for IMSS-N1. Suzanne stated the timeline is 2022-2023; however, it is best to have two years of flowering before burning to ensure a viable seed bank. Eric added the as long as the areas aren’t burned convectively in just a couple years, based on modeling of the species *Dicerandra thinicola* can deal with a burn interval from 4 to 20 years.

Paul stated this was a nice presentation and a good project for conservation.

Steve stated one consideration is to keep the plantings 30 - 50 feet from the fire line to prevent damage from equipment. Suzanne stated if there are sufficient seeds existing management can continue and added it would be best to not have tire tracks through the gaps. Her plan is to be flexible and support burning and management efforts. Doug Sphar asked if the donor sites will be sequestered from the trails so the plants won’t be disturbed. Mike stated it is his understanding the plantings will occur away from the trail. Suzanne confirmed the plantings will be accessible by service roads away from public view.

Lisa Toland asked about why some gaps are successful and some are not. Suzanne responded that there are different numbers of gaps depending on where the species are located. Some of the gaps closed because of the lack of management. Lisa confirmed the Program should not burn for two to three years. Suzanne clarified the earliest burn is 2023 but another year is acceptable as well. Stephanie stated there was a similar project on federal lands and was burned three years later. She added based on weather conditions and there is an opportunity to burn, it is fine to burn. Suzanne concurs and stated sometimes there is an early burn advantage to retain gaps.

### MOTION 2

**Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the Species Translocation Request.**

**Doug Sphar seconded the motion.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### AGENDA ITEM 2

REAC Appointment

Mike stated John J. Kabboord III was recommended by the Tourism Development Council (TDC) as their representative on REAC and shared his background. Doug Sphar added it is important to have members who are interested in the types of recreation supported by the Program.

### MOTION 3

**Doug Sphar moved to appoint the Tourism and Development Council (TDC) appointee John J. Kabbord III to REAC.**

**Mac McLouth seconded the motion.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### AGENDA ITEM 3

North Region Management Update

Mike introduced Damien Keene, the North Area Land Management Superintendent. Damien provided an update on the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary, Fox Lake Sanctuary, and Challenger Marsh Sanctuary including grants, exotic plant treatment, timbering, prescribed burns, scrub-jays, gopher tortoises, bromeliads, *Dicerandra thinicola*, trail updates, youth campsite upgrades, and new equipment. This presentation is available upon request.

Mike announced Evan Hall was selected as the Fire Coordinator and he will start soon.

Kim asked if Unit 8 in Fox Lake is where the County relocated tortoises. Damien does not think it is, but he will review his notes. Mike mentioned a significant wetland mitigation at this location but does not recall a tortoise relocation at Fox Lake. He asked Kim if she is referring to North Buck Lake. Damien stated there is a mitigation site at North Buck Lake. Kim asked if North Buck Lake is in Brevard County. Mike confirmed it is and is the Titusville-Cocoa Airport (TICO) Airport was a recipient Site.

Kim asked about the Program’s relationship with the City of Titusville regarding burning at Dicerandra. Damien stated that is something he wanted to approach once the new Fire Coordinator starts and determine the best way to proceed. Mike added this discussion is regarding Wellfield next to Dicerandra which is managed by the City of Titusville and is typically overgrown. The Program coordinated with the City and the Florida Forest Service two years ago to burn this area. Mike stated this is something the Program will advocate for in the future; however, the City added the beautiful, paved trail through the Wellfield. Unfortunately, this trail runs through an area that should be drastically reduced but perhaps other areas could be reduced. Mike added the City is concerned about damage to infrastructure from equipment.

Kim noted some of the neighbors may have a negative reaction to removing tree cover and asked if the Program is going to move forward with the management that needs to be done. Mike stated we are going to talk about that extensively next and stated the Program is going to focus on education and move forward with management.

Lisa Toland asked Mike where the Program can find monies to use for management. She mentioned the Gopher Tortoise Survey at Dicerandra and stated if one tortoise is added per acre that is from $55,000 to $80,000 in potential revenue and asked is this is something the Program would want to consider. Mike stated the Translocation Policy includes a section on gopher tortoise and is possible with this policy. The Program has a recipient site at North Buck Lake and that opportunity is available as long as the person who wants to move the tortoise funds the Carrying Capacity Analysis so the Program does not have to absorb those expenses. Lisa asked if the Program has looked at this in reverse where the Program completes the Carrying Capacity Analysis and offers the opportunity. Mike stated this is a question for the Committee and how they want to approach the Translocation Policy and stated the reason the Program did the TICO Airport was because the site was overgrown and there were virtually no tortoises on the site. Mike agreed the opportunities are there it is just a matter of how the Committee wants to approach it and the policy would need to be revised. Lisa would like to see this as an agenda item in the future because two tortoises per acre would result in $160,000 in potential maintenance fund for Fox Lake. Paul Schmalzer stated we should be cautious about going beyond the existing gopher relocation protocols and what we do benefits both the site and the overall population of tortoises. Lisa agreed and stated the Program can start with a conservative approach, remain under capacity, and monitor it since we have to find management fund. Paul restated we have to review FWC’s guidelines with caution and evaluate if their recommendations are actually what a site can support. Lisa agreed and suggested asking this question and perhaps a presentation on this subject. David Breininger wanted to concur with Paul because the guidelines were expanded for perhaps political reasons. He further stated their upper boundary is very high is there is not enough scientific data to support this in our type of landscape. He added there was pressure to dump a lot of tortoises on EEL land which would interfere with management because of the curtains and such that were needed. Oli added there were eight to ten tortoises in Turkey Creek and there was discussion of moving tortoises to South Carolina. Oli supports keeping tortoises local.

Tamy Dabu asked if Florida Forest Service (FFS) is the only entity that can do the timbering. Damien replied no; however, went there first because they come in and do it for us since the specs have been completed and there is a cost savings. Mike added the reasoning is the Program has a formal agreement with the FFS that was ratified by the Board where we do not have to go out for bid. Tamy is aware of instances where an entity completes the work and keeps all of the profits. Doug Sphar added if FFS can’t get an eighteen-wheeler into a site a private guy cannot either. Mike stated working with FFS is the easiest way for the Program to share in the revenue from the sale of timber. Doug asked if the Program has a plan to deal with public backlash from dropping trees on site like at Fox Lake. Mike stated we will discuss this next. He added dropping trees at Fox Lake is good for the site; however, the challenge becomes getting the roller chopper around the site.

### AGENDA ITEM 4

Malabar Scrub Tree Reduction

Mike introduced, Steve McGuffey, the South Region Land Management Superintendent and outlined the Program’s approach to the Tree Reduction Strategy and ensure the Committee is supportive of the proposal. Mike shared the Malabar Scrub trail history, mitigation projects, management, Population Viability Analysis recommendations, and expected user group concern. Steve explained the work that is needed to improve and restore the scrub habitat such as pine and oak tree density reduction. Mac McLouth asked what the end result of this project. Mike responded this is to restore optimal scrub-jay habitat and reduce the number of perches for raptors that threaten scrub-jays. This presentation is available upon request.

### MOTION 4

**Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the staff recommendation to reduce the pine tree density and habitat restoration at Malabar Scrub to improve the scrub-jay habitat.**

**Doug Sphar seconded the motion.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

None

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

### NEXT MEETING

March 11, 2021 from 1-4.

### MOTION 5

**Mac McLouth moved to schedule the meeting March 11, 2021 from 1-4pm.**

**Elizabeth seconded**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### ADJOURNED

Tamy asked if there is a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:43.

### MOTION 6

**Kim Zarillo moved to adjourn the meeting.**

**Elizabeth Becker seconded.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**