



**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM  
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
February 8, 2018**

**Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program Recreation and Education Advisory  
Committee Meeting**

**Attendance**

**RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Alex Buchness
- Bob Champaigne
- Rick Follet
- Murray Han
- Karen MacArthur
- Doug Sphar
- Suzanne Valencia

**SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBER**

- Paul Schmalzer, Selection and Management Committee

**EEL PROGRAM STAFF**

- Mike Knight
- Brad Manley

**GUESTS**

- Lisette Kolar, Town of Grant/Valkaria Council Member
- Janet Meta, Town of Grant/Valkaria

## ***Meeting Minutes***

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Doug Sphar, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **MINUTES**

#### **August 10, 2018**

The August 10, 2017 minutes were presented for approval.

#### **MOTION ONE**

Bob Champaign moved to approve the August 10, 2017 minutes as presented.

Suzanne Valencia seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

#### **Presentation**

Brad Manley, Public Access Coordinator, provided information on recent events. A copy of the presentation is available upon request by calling the EEL Program Office (321) 255-4466.

#### **Additional Discussion**

- EEL Program Staff provided assistance at Shelters during Hurricane Irma. Overall damage minimal: mostly trees down and flooding. Continuing high water is still an issue. Fox Lake Sanctuary Scout Camp Shelter rebuilt.
- Cruickshank Sanctuary Footbridge damaged by vandalism. Additional vegetation removal at front of parking lot in attempt to reduce inappropriate activity occurring on site. It appears a local contractor has also been dumping yard waste at the sanctuary.
- The 21st Annual Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival included 12 field trips on EEL Sites. 99 participants included in 10 trips led by EEL staff.
- Sams House Pioneer Day, February 10, 2018 included Florida living history demonstrations, live music, exhibitors, guided hikes, crafts, fair & farmers market, prehistoric canoe presentation, kid's activities, food, free parking.
- Fox Lake Sanctuary entrance trail rerouted due to wet conditions. Trail location now complete, Kayak ramp is still under water.

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- The Hog Point Cove Sanctuary Caretaker's building received significant damage during previous hurricane. Waiting on repair/rebuild determination from FEMA. Security issues, campfire/hangout activities being monitored as site includes Florida Institute of Technology research activities.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **EEL Program Funding Status Update Presentation**

Mike Knight, EEL Program Manager, provided an EEL Program Financial Overview. A copy of the presentation is available upon request by calling the EEL Program Office (321) 255-4466.

### **Additional Discussion - Funding**

- Operational budget peaked around 2009 at approximately \$3.5 million annually.
- Operational budget is currently a little over \$2 million annually.
- The following funding sources have been used to make up the difference between what it takes to run the Program and what has been collected.
  - EEL Operational Reserves
  - Retired Bond Funds
- The \$3 million of retired bonds funds could have been used to buy land, construct the 4<sup>th</sup> Center in Malabar, or purchase other capital expense items like vehicles.
- Prior to the ending of the collections from the 1990 referendum in 2011, collections occurred for both the 1990 and the 2004 referendums for a period of several years. The first year that occurred, (2006) millage rates were lowered significantly from the maximum voter approved levels of both referendums.
- In 2008, the State passed legislation which designates maximum level of funding increase that can occur in a single year based on number of votes of approval from the BOCC. This legislation has also had an effect on EEL Program funding since 2009.
- A perception was expressed that the reason why the millage was reduced beginning in 2006 when collections were being received from both referendums was because the BOCC did not want to "overcollect" on EEL Program millage.
- A counter to this perspective was expressed indicating that it was not possible to "overcollect" on the Program's millage unless collection rates were set to a level which was higher than the voter-approved maximum.
- Paul Schmalzer stated that when the millage was first reduced, the change from collecting 100% of the voter approved maximum, to less than the maximum, was not disclosed to the citizens.
- Mike stated that when the millage rates started being lowered, they could have theoretically raised the millage to the level needed to cover operations with three votes of the commission, until the 2008 legislation was passed.

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- The last slide in the presentation represents:
  - Purple - Maximum Voter-approved Millage of 0.2085 from 2004 Referendum
  - Red - EEL Program Operations Budget
  - Black – EEL Program Tax Revenue
  - Teal - Timeframe covering the use of EEL Program Operations Reserves to supplement operations.
  - Yellow – Timeframe covering the use of EEL Program Retired Bond Reserves to supplement operations.
  - Teal Stars – anticipated level of funding achievable with 4 votes (super-majority) from BOCC
  - Green Line – 4 vote revenue increase received during three subsequent years is expected to obtain a funding level which will cover operational needs. Two of the 3 annual budget cycle votes at the 4 vote level have occurred.
- The 2004 referendum was put on the ballot for Brevard County seven years before the ending of the 1990 referendum.
- It is now seven years before the ending of the second referendum which was passed in 2004.
- It is hoped that an EEL Program Public Workshop with the BOCC can be arranged.
- Murray noted his feeling that as long as tax rates were not increasing much, there would probably not be a great deal of concern regarding the Program's budget.
- Mike noted that even though the Operational Millage was increased, the total millage has gone down.
- Mike noted that in 1997, the SMC and PC presented a suggestion to the BOCC on long-term funding which the Board members at the time chose not to follow.
- Bob asked if the debt would go away in 2024. Clarification was provided that the bond debt is required to be collected in a manner that provides for all repayments to be completed by the end of the referendum.
- Paul noted
  - The 1990 referendum (up to \$55 million) was never fully bonded
  - The 2004 referendum (up to \$60 million) was only bonded for \$45 million
    - \$4 million of that was defeased (not spent - paid back early).
- Mike noted that the Brevard Nature Alliance may be able to assist with facilitating a new EEL Program referendum.
- Suzanne noted that the monies coming to the EEL Program are not significant in the overall budget.
- Mike noted that a white paper regarding the Program's History and Funding Status has also been prepared.

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## **PUBLIC COMMENT – Grant / Valkaria Trails**

Representatives of and citizens from the Town of Grant/Valkaria noted they are pursuing a non-paved extension of the Al Tuttle Trail running from Grant Road to Cypress Creek. Mike noted that wetlands will be a big challenge in this area. Mike noted his willingness to meet with the Town to discuss options.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next REAC meeting will be planned for May 10, 2018.

## **ADJOURNED**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

## **SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS**

1. Motion to approve the August 10, 2017 minutes, as presented. **APPROVED.**