

***ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
ATTENDANCE LIST***

January 28, 2002

SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

David Breininger
Mark Bush
Ron Hight
Randy Parkinson
Paul Schmalzer
Kim Zarillo

EEL PROGRAM MEMBERS

Anne Birch
Laura Clark
Ray Mojica
Zachary Prusak
Tami Robinson
Lisa Smith
Kit Van Wagner

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Keith Fountain
Angela Klug

GUESTS

Amy Mosher, Rockledge Resident
Donna Oddy, Brevard County Natural Resource Management
Suzanne Kennedy, Brevard County Natural Resources Management
Mark Ehle, Brevard County Natural Resources Management

*January 28, 2002
Approved April 15, 2002*

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM
SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

January 28, 2002

CALL TO ORDER:

Randy Parkinson called the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M.

MINUTES:

The minutes for March 23, May 31, September 20, October 16, and November 29, 2001 meetings were approved as written with the notation that the Aquarina Property information included in the October 16 minutes referred to 218 feet of land, not 218 acres. The official copy of those minutes has been changed as noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Amy Mosher, Rockledge resident spoke in support of the possible EEL purchase of lands near Plantation Point (Pyjnaker-McCauley property) and urged land management activities be done at the Cruickshank Sanctuary. Lisa explained that the Cruickshank property has not been able to be fenced due to boundary discrepancies. Surveyors are on site this week and those issues are being resolved. Zach Prusak indicated that the area is a priority for prescribed fires planned for later this year. Dave Breininger stated that the Cruickshank site was not presently suitable as Scrub Jay habitat and it might be best to timber and burn the site to provide for suitable jay habitat.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

The Administrative Review for January 28, 2002 was distributed and reviewed as part of the agenda. A copy is included with these minutes.

MANAGEMENT UPDATE:

The EEL Program Land Management Status Report for November 19, 2002 – January 28, 2002 was distributed and reviewed at the meeting. A copy is included with these minutes.

Lisa Smith will write a final report regarding Waterfowl Hunting that will be presented at the next meeting.

A site management plan has been drafted for the Cruickshank Sanctuary. Anne invited the SMC to participate in the Cruickshank site visit to review the proposed management activities.

Dave Breininger expressed concern regarding possible poaching in the Valkaria area. He stated that the last time he was in the area he counted 13 trucks with 36 people driving through the scrub area.

Lisa Smith provided information regarding the killing of an alligator within the Pine Island Conservation Area (PICA). The incident has been reported to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) and they have indicated they will make routine stops in the area and initiate

an investigation. Further information will be provided as it is received.

Anne Birch reported that site security is one of the EEL Program's most expensive management activities due to the cost of fencing required to protect the areas. She provided information on our Sanctuary Monitor Program that includes citizen volunteers who assist with the monitoring of specific sites. It was noted that the topic of site security would be included in a future meeting agenda.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM UPDATE:

The EEL Volunteer Program Update for December was distributed and reviewed. A copy is included with these minutes. It was noted that an AmeriCorps team began work on January 15th and will be with us until February 22nd.

EDUCATION SPECIALIST UPDATE:

The Environmental Education Program Status Report for November 20, 2001– January 28, 2002 was distributed. A copy is included with these minutes.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY:

TNC Acquisition Summary report dated January 28, 2002 was distributed and reviewed. A copy of the report is included with these minutes. Several parcels of land in the Viera area are being appraised at this time. Determining if the SMC would be interested in a cooperative management effort for the conservation easements in this area will be a topic for discussion at a future meeting.

SMC MEMBERS REPORT:

This topic will be added to future agendas as a forum for SMC members to provide information regarding their research or projects that may be pertinent to the Program.

Ron Hight reported that at the request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office in Jacksonville, he is working with Don Lusk, Assistant County Manager to receive clarification on the County's policy for the release of feral cats on public lands.

Ron also reported that the Army Corps of Engineers has initiated a North Indian River Lagoon study in connection with Everglades restoration and that an opportunity exists for a Brevard County representative to be involved. The study will primarily involve wetlands and will include land acquisition and exotic plant control. EEL staff will research and provide additional information in the near future.

OLD BUSINESS:

Construction Progress Update – Malabar Sanctuary Road

Zach informed the group that at a meeting held January 25, 2002 a decision based on financial and timing considerations was made to improve the existing ditch structures along the entrance road to the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary. This will help to alleviate the entrance road flooding. The plan also involves the placing of culverts under existing trails to allow for continued trail access and to place culverts in areas of existing scrub, instead of taking the scrub, when possible. A site visit will

be held within 30 days of Frazier Engineering's completion of the project outline. It was confirmed that the Parks and Recreation Department have the lead in this project. Anne Birch stated it was hoped that this could be a two-phase project. The first step is the cleaning of the ditches, to be completed by the engineering firm and the second step is the restoration of wetlands. This may be able to be completed as a mitigation project. Confirmation was provided that the Town of Malabar is actively involved in this process.

Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center Update

Construction on the Center began after Thanksgiving. The berms for stormwater retention have been created and the installation of utilities has begun. The entrance road has been widened to accommodate two lanes of traffic and will be paved in the near future. The main building pad has been completed from materials available on site and the floor has been poured. There exists an excellent working relationships with Rebel Development, the site contractor and T & G Constructors who are presently working on site at the sanctuary. Construction is presently a week ahead of schedule and it is hoped that the Center will be open early this summer. Confirmation of the exhibit design company is expected in the near future.

A site visit for the SMC was scheduled for Tuesday, February 12, 2002.

Barrier Island Ecosystem Center (BIEC)

Seven firms have submitted Architectural & Engineering (A&E) proposals. Information from the short-listed firms will be copied and provided to the organizations that are partnering with EEL on the Center. On February 19th the short-listed A&E firms will provide presentations to EEL and the other partners. Negotiations with the selected firm should begin shortly after the meeting on February 19th.

Pine Island Conservation Area (PICA) Restoration Plan Update

Lisa Smith reported that in October of 2000, she worked with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) on an expansive plan for restoration of the PICA area. Although methodology for the plan has been successfully implemented in the Indian River Lagoon Basin, original cost estimates for implementation at PICA were approximately \$1.2 million. Since that time, she has worked to provide a plan that would be more economically feasible. Information has been distributed to the SMC for their review and input at a future meeting.

Lisa also stated that she has been approached by citizens wishing to install a single track mountain bike path between Sam's Creek and the southern burrow area at PICA. This disturbed area is primarily composed of spoil and pepper trees, but is also in the vicinity of a bird rookery. The SMC asked for specific information relating to the request for use and resulting impact before a decision could be made. Staff will provide additional information at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of acquisition priorities; funding opportunities

During the November meeting, Dave Breininger submitted a request the EEL Program consider acquisition in additional areas in the county, such as the Maytown Flatwoods area. Anne Birch reviewed information provided by Volusia County as well as a map provided by Ron Hight regarding acquisition plans by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Additional information

from the County's Natural Resources Department was distributed for review. There is very little conservation acquisition activity in the northwest portion of Brevard County. It was determined that east-west connective areas would be more feasible than a north-south connection.

Suzanne Kennedy, from the County's Natural Resources Department provided information regarding the sensitive environmental areas plan. They are working on a map showing planning priority areas that could be provided to the Board of County Commissioners so that efforts between departments would complement each other. Suzanne also discussed a draft Non-Native Noxious Plant Ordinance before the Board that would regulate public and private lands. A copy of the draft was requested by the members of the SMC. EEL staff will provide the draft ordinance once it is complete. It was noted that grant funds would be required to provide compliance to the ordinance on EEL properties due to the cost to treat invasive exotics.

Donna Oddy, from the County's Natural Resources Department provided information on a possible mitigation bank opportunity as provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC). Mike Allen of the FWCC will attend the next meeting to provide additional information at the request of the SMC.

Dave Breininger suggested the possibility of a special workshop dedicated to comparing what was needed to preserve animal populations vs. lands designated for acquisition in an effort to determine if sufficient amount of large areas were being set aside to prevent the extinction of endangered species and ensure biological diversity. The workshop could also help determine if this concept falls within the priorities of the EEL Program, or if it should be addressed by other organizations. These items will be addressed in a future meeting.

Florida DEP, Office of Greenways & Trails Grant

Ray Mojica reported that the Board of County Commissioners had authorized the EEL Program to apply to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Office of Greenways and Trails Recreational Trails Program for a grant in the amount of \$100,000.00. It is anticipated that funds will be used for the construction of boardwalks and a pedestrian bridge to provide public access to the EEL managed lands adjacent to the Barrier Island Ecosystem Center.

NEXT MEETING:

The next EELSMC meeting was scheduled for February 25, 2002.

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

No motions.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Pine Island Conservation Area
 - Lisa Smith will write a final report regarding Waterfowl Hunting at PICA. The report will be presented at the next meeting.
 - SMC members will review the conservation plan provided by Lisa Smith regarding resotration at PICA and provide comments at the next meeting.
 - EEL staff will gather information regarding citizen's request for a bike path at PICA.

2. Site Security
 - Update on alligator killing at PICA will be provided at a future meeting.
 - Poaching in Valkaria area to be discussed at a future meeting.

3. Opportunity for cooperative management efforts for the conservation easement in Viera to be included in a future meeting.

4. EEL staff will provide contact information to Ron Hight regarding a possible Brevard County contact person for the Army Corps of Engineers study being initiated in reference to the North Indian River Lagoon.

5. Town of Malabar
 - Road improvement status
 - Acquisition

6. EEL staff will provide copy of Non-Native Noxious Plant Ordinance draft being prepared by the County's Natural Resources Department.