

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM  
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
May 10, 2007  
Attendance List**

**RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Bob Champaigne  
Jim Durocher  
Murray Hann  
Karen Hill  
Eve Owens  
Mark Nathan  
Beverly Pinyerd  
Paul Saia

**SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Barbara Meyer, Brevard County, Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Program Coordinator  
Paul Schmalzer, Selection and Management Committee

**EEL PROGRAM STAFF**

Xavier DeSeguin des Hons  
Brad Manley  
Judy Gregoire  
Mike Knight

**GUESTS**

Susan Gosselin, Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office  
Suzanne Valencia, citizen

*“Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity  
Through Responsible Stewardship of Brevard County’s Natural Resources”*

*May 10, 2007  
Approved August 9, 2007*

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM  
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**May 10, 2007  
Meeting Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Murray Hann called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:**

Mike Knight, EEL Program Manager, provided information on recent issues involved with the request for a paved linear trail as part of the Management Plan for the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary. He clarified that the REAC Committee had moved to support the public access portion of the plan as presented by staff, which included a paved linear trail placed on an existing dirt fire break which runs along the east side of the sanctuary, near Marie Street. Mike explained that the EEL Program's Selection and Management Committee (SMC) passed a motion approving the Management Plan, but with the caveat that the paved, linear trail be located on the existing, four lane concrete road that runs through the middle of the sanctuary. He also explained that staff made a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to locate the trail on the east side of the sanctuary, instead of on the existing concrete road. During the Board meeting, Commissioners Scarborough and Nelson expressed their desire to have the item tabled for further consideration. There was a final vote by the Board of 4 to 1 to approve the Management plan as presented by staff, with Commissioner Nelson voting no.

Eve Owens stated that her motion to approve the public access portion of the plan had been made with the understanding that the SMC would be supportive of the plan. Mike clarified that it was his opinion that even if the issue came back before the EEL Program's REAC and SMC committees, for additional review, it would have ended up in the Board room anyway. He expressed his opinion regarding the need to revise the EEL Program's Sanctuary Management Manual (SMM) to provide greater clarification on the approval process for Management Plans.

Clarification was provided that the joint meeting between the REAC and SMC which had been planned for both committees was cancelled because initial input from the SMC indicated the concept of the paved trail would be considered favorably.

Mike explained that the primary reason for Staff's recommendation to locate the trail on the east boundary fire line was because there was a long history of inconsistent communications regarding the trail that contributed to the current alignment of the trail.

Paul Schmalzer clarified that the EEL Program's Land Acquisition Manual (LAM) clearly stated that the Board can either approve or disapprove an acquisition that is recommended by the SMC, but they can not buy something that has not been recommended by the SMC

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and followed the established land acquisition process which includes SMC final approval of the contract terms and authority to submit to the Board. Paul said that this process came from the 1990 EEL Program referendum. He explained there was a very similar referendum in 1989 without a science based advisory committee to make decisions which did not pass.

Mike stated that was a good point and that we needed to make sure that the same type of language was in place from a Management Plan standpoint.

Barbara Meyer stated that she had been involved in the process from the beginning and that she wanted to clarify that there were times direction was received by County Administration and it was important not to think that previous Program Managers were acting on their own.

Murray Hann stated his opinion that he felt that it was appropriate for the Board to make this type of decision and that in future years, people would look back and wonder why the issue was so controversial.

Paul Schmalzer stated that neither Duane nor Anne had brought the issue of a request for a paved linear trail to the SMC in the past and that he did not know if they had been directed to do so, or not, and, that he had a great deal of respect for them both, but, not taking that information to the SMC had been an error in judgment, as neither of them had the expertise to make that decision on their own without consulting the SMC.

Paul Saia said that he had a copy of the Resolution that formed the REAC Committee at the meeting and, not to minimize the REAC group, that REAC was an advisory committee to the SMC, which was staffed by professionals. He said that it was a good idea to have a sounding board for citizen's input.

Mike stated that one of the reasons the REAC Committee had been brought to life was to facilitate the exchange of information. He said that now the Program was working with a clean slate and that what happened in this case would not be representative of issues in the future. He said that in the future when trails are considered for the south part of the County, and those things start to come up, the Program can go through the process the way it was meant to be done.

Paul Saia asked if there was concern that management of new acquisitions would be an issue due to the possible budget cutbacks.

Mike explained that it was anticipated that some of the management activities would be shifted to staff, but that it was expected that what was needed could still be accomplished.

## **MINUTES:**

The March 24, 2007 minutes were presented for approval.

Murray asked for comments to the March 2007 minutes.

### **MOTION ONE:**

**Eve Owens moved to approve the March 24, 2007 minutes as presented.**

**Bob Champaigne seconded the motion.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

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## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

### Status update on past REAC motions – Brad Manley

Brad Manley reviewed each of the previous motions from the REAC Committee relative to public access plans and provided an update for the status of each.

- November 2005: Jordan Scrub Sanctuary  
*Update: The management plan for the Jordan Scrub Sanctuary has been approved by the Brevard County Commissioners. Staff worked with a volunteer Americorps team to complete and sign the trail system. One section north of the larger pond was re-routed around a wetland. At the southern end of the property, the blue trail was re-routed, utilizing an old fence line, and old, existing trails. This separates the trail from the fireline which will run along the southern fence line. This provides a better quality trail that will not be subject to management activities associated with the fire line. This is the section of trail that could possibly be used as an unpaved connection to the South Brevard Linear Trail if it follows Marie St. south of Malabar Road.*
- January 2006: Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary  
*Update: Management plan has been approved by SMC and BOCC.*
- January 2006: Micco Scrub Sanctuary  
*Update: Simplified trail system has been redesigned and mapped by staff.*
- August 2006: South Beaches
  - Maritime Hammock Sanctuary Trail  
*Update: Staff worked with an Americorps team to essentially complete the trail extension and construct two foot bridges. The trail will be opened when native plantings in the restoration area have had time to become established.*
  - Barrier Island Sanctuary Trail  
*Update: Staff worked with an Americorps team to complete the trail on the east side of A1A and connect the ADA boardwalk to Bonsteel Park.*
- March 2007 Malabar Scrub Sanctuary  
*Update:*
  - *March 2007 - REAC endorsed the plan based on input from the SMC.*
  - *April 2007 - SMC passed a motion recommending the trail be sited along the existing concrete boulevard in order to minimize disturbance to the Sanctuary.*
  - *May 2007 – After taking input from staff, committee recommendations, and Citizens, BOCC approved the Management Plan including the paved linear trail as recommended by staff.*
  - *The partnering entities involved in the project have begun the planning process.*

## REAC REPORTS

Eve thanked the EEL Program staff for their assistance with the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Palm Bay Boundary Canal Trail in April.

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## AGENDA ITEMS

### North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary Proposed Public Access Plan

Judy Gregoire, Land Manager for the EEL Program's North Region, provided information on the Public Access Plan for the North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary. This 165± acre sanctuary was purchased in 2001. It is adjacent to the 9,000± acre Buck Lake Conservation Area (BLCA) which was purchased by the EEL Program in partnership with the St. Johns River Water Management District. As part of the planning process for the North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary, stakeholders were identified and invited to a recreation assessment public meeting which was held on April 3, 2007. Comments from the public have been received and documented. The recreational plan (as presented at the public meeting) includes:

- Parking area at the end of Cinnamon Teal Drive
  - Walk through gate for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders (no horse trailer parking)
  - Equestrian trailer parking available at BLCA off SR 46 in Mims.
  - Walk through gate on the southern boundary provides access to BLCA.
- 2.3 miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails
  - Trails double as fire breaks
  - Effects of multiple uses on trails will be monitored
- Core Conservation Area (marked with boundary signs)
- Boundary fire lines will be identified as non-hiking areas
- Education interpretive signs
  - At parking area
  - Along trails
  - Kiosk at BLCA walk through to identify the legal activities on each side of the fence.

Judy also provided updated information on properties which are adjacent to the North Buck Lake Sanctuary that are under consideration for acquisition.

Comments received at the Public Meeting included:

Paul Schmalzer confirmed the presence of a rare plant *Lechea divaricata* at the North Buck Lake Sanctuary.

- Concerns from neighbors that heavy equipment needed to construct the trailhead parking area would damage the concrete roadway, which is already cracked and damaged.

*Clarification was provided that road impact assessments would be done prior to any work being done.*

- Concerns from neighbors that the trailhead would attract inappropriate use in the form of late-night parties, etc.

*Clarification was provided that inappropriate use tends to decline as areas are fenced and use will be monitored.*

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- The primary concern expressed by the neighbors in attendance was that traffic to the trailhead would pass by their homes.

*Staff has researched options for placing the trailhead at either Hog Valley Road or on Cinnamon Teal Drive including:*

- Hog Valley Road Trailhead

*Pros*

- *Sufficient space for parking exists with careful planning to allow firebreak access.*
- *The substrate is more solid than Cinnamon Teal Drive – possibly easier to construct parking.*
- *The route to the trailhead is more direct by two less turns.*
- *Traffic would flow past approximately three homes.*

*Cons*

- *The trailhead would be across the street from at least two homes and would be in view of their front windows/yards. (View is currently woods, EEL Program fence and gate)*
- *Not close to the center of the trail system – is at the western end.*
- *Extension of the paved road required.*
- *Possibly creating a more welcoming area for inappropriate use.*

- Cinnamon Teal Road Trailhead

*Pros*

- *Larger, more disturbed location for parking.*
- *Good firebreak access could be readily configured.*
- *There is buffer of several vacant lots between the trailhead and homes – neighbor's view would not change.*
- *Assuming pending acquisitions of adjacent lots are accomplished (high probability) there may be options to site the trailhead without extending the paved road.*
- *Close to the hub of the trail system, allowing access to loops of various lengths.*

*Cons*

- *The driving route to the trailhead is less direct by two turns. Traffic would flow past approximately seven homes.*
- *More potential for damage to roadway by construction traffic.*

Judy explained that other upcoming goals for the North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary Include:

- Guided Hikes
- Volunteer Workdays
- Surveys for plants and animals
- Prescribed fire

Eve asked if there was data related to current use of the sanctuary.

Judy explained that they do not have formal documentation of use, but there appears to be a few visitors a week. Fence repairs due to inappropriate activity on the site are still

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required several times monthly. It is anticipated that as the sanctuary gets a designated trail head and receives more visitors, the inappropriate use will be reduced.

Clarification was provided that restroom or other fixed buildings are not anticipated for this sanctuary and that this site would be a good alternative for citizens who wanted to visit a nature sanctuary in the area that was not impacted by the seasonal hunting at Buck Lake Conservation Area.

## **MOTION TWO**

**Bob Champaign moved to support the North Buck Lake Sanctuary Conceptual Public Access Plan as presented by staff.**

**Paul Saia seconded the motion.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## **Helen and Allan Cruickshank Sanctuary Proposed Public Access Plan**

Brad explained that Scott Taylor, Land Manager for the EEL Program's Central Region was not able to attend the meeting, but that the group would be revisiting a request for bike use as part of the proposed recreation plan for the Cruickshank Sanctuary. He stated that when the REAC Committee had previously reviewed the proposed public access plan, there was a motion for staff to reconsider bike trails, which did not pass because it received a split vote of 4 to 4. Subsequently, staff reevaluated the request anyway because the point of the REAC Committee is to receive public input. He explained that some of the things that were evaluated were environmental impact to endangered plant and animal species, and what type of volume might be expected. The original determination to not include biking as an approved activity at the Cruickshank Sanctuary was largely based on the fact that the trails are frequently wet and consist mainly of sugar sand, which does not usually provide for a pleasurable biking experience. Also some of the trails are placed along fire breaks and when the fire breaks are maintained, they are returned to mineral soil making biking difficult.

The Cruickshank Sanctuary is a 140± acre sanctuary located on the north side of Barnes Blvd. in Rockledge. It is a Category 2 site which provides for minimal improvement with simple trail heads. Brad showed the group pictures of a Florida Scrub-jay and a young Gopher Tortoise which were taken at the Sanctuary. He reported that although Scrub-jays had disappeared from this location in the past, it is estimated that 6 families have returned to the area as a result of restoration efforts.

Bob Champaign stated that he had voted against allowing bike trails at Cruickshank at the previous meeting, but that he might be agreeable to allowing biking if it was not advertised as a suggested activity.

Murray stated that he had received e-mails from a couple of citizens who lived in the area in support of bike use on the sanctuary.

Beverly Pinyerd stated that she lived near the Cruickshank Sanctuary and that it was the only EEL Program sanctuary in the Central Brevard mainland area. She said that civilization has run native animals out of almost every other place in the area as a result of high density and overdevelopment. She expressed her concern related to possible impacts to the sanctuary as a result of the possible widening of Barnes Blvd. to four lanes. She said

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that she had visited the Cruickshank recently and had been pleased to see that Scrub-jays have returned to the area. She expressed her opinion that Cruickshank was a good place to go birding, but that the general area was becoming too populated and that she was absolutely against biking at that location.

Mark Nathan stated that he had visited Cruickshank since the last meeting and that after further consideration he would not be supportive of bike trails, a hardened parking area or restrooms as it was a small site with existing populations of endangered animals and plants. He expressed the importance of the EEL Program's vision of a place for wildlife, and native plants and animals, and his feeling was that our footprint there should be small because it was first and foremost a wildlife area.

Jim Durocher stated that he had voted against allowing bikes at Cruickshank last time and that he had also visited the property since the last meeting to gain additional information. He stated that he agreed with Beverly and Mark that the sanctuary was too small to allow bikes and that someone might walk the trail one time and enjoy it, but a biker would have to go around the small trail several times to get any exercise. Jim also said that the area was an island of protected land in the middle of thousands of people and expressed his concern that large bike groups might use the sanctuary, which could result in a negative impact. He said that it was his opinion that no biking should be allowed there.

Paul Saia said that the Cruickshank Sanctuary was one of the only areas in District IV that had been purchased by the EEL Program and expressed his support for additional acquisition in this area.

Paul Schmalzer stated that the Program had been trying to purchase additional property in this area for a long time, but that it was difficult to compete with the speculative development market. He reminded the group that the EEL Program is a willing-seller program.

Brad provided overview information on the anticipated County Storm Water Project and Request for a Maintenance Easement at the Cruickshank Sanctuary.

Paul Saia said that he did not think that bikes were appropriate for the Cruickshank Sanctuary at this time, but that the City of Rockledge had expressed a desire for a possible cooperative effort in recreational planning in the future and he suggested that information on this possibility be included in any motion that was made.

Clarification was provided that if circumstances change, it would be possible to consider an amendment to the Management Plan in the future.

Beverly expressed her pleasure with the trails and signage that have recently been completed as part of an Eagle Scott project. Brad informed the group that all the interpretive signs put up by the Scouts had recently been destroyed by vandals but that staff had plans to replace the signage.

### **MOTION THREE**

**Mark Nathan moved to support the Cruickshank recreation plan as originally presented by staff, for hiking only, with educational information on site and parking limited to a soft surface.**

**Beverly Pinyerd seconded the motion.**

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## Discussion

General discussion ensued.

Murray clarified that there was a motion on the table that had been seconded, and asked for a vote.

**The motion passed, with 5 positive votes, Murray Hann and Eve Owens voting no, and Karen Hill abstaining.**

Murray stated that he had voted no because he is aware of citizens who use this location as a biking destination.

Eve stated that she had voted no because she felt that the Program had not heard from all the stakeholders.

Paul Saia stated that his vote was not anti-bike, but that he felt that at the present time, there were many pending issues that could impact the sanctuary and that if things settled down, perhaps the issue could be reevaluated.

## **Thousand Islands Sanctuary Proposed Public Access Plan**

Brad provided overview information on the Thousand Islands property in Cocoa Beach. The EEL Program is involved with two general areas. The Crawford property has been acquired. A second ownership is under contract.

These properties are being purchased through a cooperative effort between the EEL Program, the City of Cocoa Beach, the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Conservation Fund, and a Florida Communities Trust (FCT) Grant. In order to submit the paperwork for the FCT grant, a preliminary Management Plan must be in place. This plan has a recreational component. Brad explained that the REAC Committee was being requested to review the preliminary recreational component of the Management Plan, so that the FCT grant could be submitted, with the understanding that a more detailed plan would be reviewed in the future, along with a possible field trip to the site. Jim Durocher offered assistance with the field trip.

Brad reviewed the tentative recreation plan:

- Clear/treat exotics: re-vegetate with native species.
- Ramp Road Park in Cocoa Beach will be the center of launch activity.
- Fourth Street Park in Cocoa Beach will have opportunities for trails and connectivity to Ramp Road with, with a possible overlook.
- Activities on/around the Thousand Islands may include:
  - Kayak and canoe trails
  - Landings
  - Overlooks
  - Hiking trails

## **MOTION FOUR**

**Eve Owens moved to support the concept for the recreational component of the Thousand Islands Management Plan with the understanding that it will come back to the Committee for detailed review at a later date.**

**Mark Nathan seconded the motion.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

None.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **NEXT MEETING:**

The group discussed a date for the next meeting. Brad explained that an August 9, 2007 date would put the committee on schedule for a quarterly meeting. It was determined that the next meeting should be held at the Viera Government Center.

### **MOTION FIVE**

**Paul Saia moved to schedule the next REAC Committee meeting for August 9, 2007.**

**Eve Owens seconded the motion.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## **ADJOURNED:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

## **SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:**

- **Motion to approve the March 24, 2007 minutes as presented.**
- **Motion to support the North Buck Lake Scrub Sanctuary Public Access Plan as presented by staff.**
- **Motion to support the Cruickshank Sanctuary recreation plan as originally presented by staff, with hiking only, education information on site, and parking limited to a soft surface.**
- **Motion to support the concept for the recreational component of the Thousand Island Management Plan, with the understanding that it will come back to the Committee for a detailed review at a later date.**
- **Motion to hold the next meeting on August 9, 2007.**