

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 9, 2006
Attendance List**

RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bob Champaigne
Murray Hann
Karen Hill
Mark Nathan
Eve Owens
Beverly Pinyerd
Paul Saia
Steven Webster

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

EEL PROGRAM STAFF

Laura Clark
Brad Manley
Chris O'Hara

GUESTS

Susan Gosselin, Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office
Roland Verduyn, Brevard County EEL Program

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 9, 2006
Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER:

Murray Hann called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

MINUTES:

The January 12, 2006 minutes were presented for approval.
Murray asked for comments to the January minutes.

MOTION ONE:

**Eve Owens moved to approve the January 12, 2006 minutes as presented.
Karen Hill seconded the motion.**

The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

EEL Site Field Trip

It has been determined that the REAC Committee will visit EEL Program sites in the North and Central area on February 18, 2006. The trip will be publicized as a public meeting. Participants are encouraged to bring hats and wear comfortable shoes. Water and snacks will be provided.

The group will meet at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary in Titusville at 9:00 AM where they will tour the Management and Education Center and hike a short trail. The group is also scheduled to visit the Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary and the Sams House at the Pine Island Conservation Area.

NEW BUSINESS:

Malabar Scrub Sanctuary

Chris O'Hara, South Region Land Manager provided overview information on the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is made up of two parcels, referred to as Malabar East and Malabar West. The eastern parcel acquired in 1993 - 1994 is considered to be a Category 1 site which includes the development of a Management and Education Center, and the greatest level of public access with an emphasis on ADA accessibility. The western parcel which was acquired in 2004 is a proposed Category 2 site which is designated for intermediate use. The two parcels total 570 acres.

Primary habitats include Scrub, Scrubby Flatwoods, Pine Flatwoods, and Sand Pine Scrub. There is a small Hammock at the northern part of Malabar East. Notable species include

indigo snake, gopher tortoise, Florida scrub jay, scrub lizard, sand hill crane, along with several rare and endangered plant species including Large-flowered false rosemary (*Conradina grandiflora*).

A public meeting was held on January 31, 2006. This gave the public an opportunity to receive information on the draft public access plan and provide input. The draft plan included the elimination of several trails, including one which runs through an area with 19 active gopher tortoise burrows. A core conservation area has been designated in the southern portion of Malabar West. Public comments have been reviewed and considered by staff. Some of these comments have been incorporated into the most recent draft of the public access plan, which Chris presented to the REAC. One significant change has been the designation of some trails as hiker/biker only when all trails were previously considered multi-use. The minutes for this meeting will be posted to the EEL Program Web page.

Eve provided information on the trail plans for the City of Palm Bay.

Malabar East Summary

- Provides almost 6 miles of multi-use trails
- 3/4 mile ADA accessible trail that bisects the property
- Closing small sections of trail, two of which are in the northwest corner of the site, and one is a redundant parallel trail on the western side of the site.
- Parking and boardwalks already in place
- One additional footbridge to be located on the southernmost trail on the site.
- Future Management and Education Facilities.

Malabar West Summary

- One additional multi-use trail
- Trail improvements including adding mulch to unstable areas and rerouting the trail through seasonally wet areas. May include some natural structures if it coincides with trail difficulty.
- 1.1 miles of trail for hikers/bikers only
- Possible ½ mile of additional hiker/biker only trail

Murray provided a PowerPoint presentation and asked the REAC Committee to consider his suggestions including:

- Leaving the “Jeep Trail South” inside a “Green Corridor” to allow for shade and natural mulching of the trail area.
- Creating a small amount of new trails, proposed on a non-interference basis with the restoration areas – placed primarily inside oak hammock areas, near the creeks.
- Increased public access to restoration area.
- This is one area, where public access should take equal footing with the Primary Mission of preservation and restoration.
- Provide additional single track, bicycle/hiker/runner trails.

Paul Schmalzer explained that dividing a large core conservation area into smaller sections is not feasible because of increased edge effects and management difficulties that would

result. He explained that historically, fire was common throughout this region and that the area had become a forest due to fire suppression. It is estimated that 70 – 80% of the scrub habitat in Brevard County has been developed and much of what is left is not in good condition as a result of fire suppression. Scrub Jays, gopher tortoises, indigo snakes and other critically endangered animals that live in scrub habitats require large, open areas. Tree removal and prescribed fire is required to restore the area to its' former state as a scrub landscape in the hopes that the endangered plants and animals that used to live there will return.

Andrea Gimon spoke of the need for additional bike trails in Brevard County and her willingness to assist with improvements and maintenance to the trails.

Bob Champaigne stated that the prime directive of the EEL Program is conservation of the natural resources.

Steven Webster spoke of his support for Murray's suggestions.

Karen Hill stated that public awareness of the natural resource was improved by access.

Brad Manley explained that although it was acknowledged that there is a lack of good mountain bike trails in Brevard County, that problem could not be solved on this one conservation site.

Eve Owens moved to support the proposed public access plan for the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary as presented by staff and to leave the trail known as the "Jeep Trail" in Malabar West open to public access until restoration begins.

Bob Champaigne seconded the motion

The motion passed.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held March 9, 2006

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

- Motion to approve the January 12, 2006 minutes.
- Motion to support the proposed public access plan for the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary as presented by staff and to leave the trail known as the "Jeep Trail" in the Malabar West section open to public access until restoration begins.