

***ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
ATTENDANCE LIST
February 19, 2002***

SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

EEL PROGRAM MEMBERS

Anne Birch
Laura Clark
Zachary Prusak
Lisa Smith
Kit Van Wagner

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Angela Klug

GUESTS

Donna Oddy, Natural Resources Management
Amy Mosher, City of Rockledge
Nona Swan, Town of Malabar
Mike Allen, FWCC
Pat Benington, Town of Malabar

*February 19, 2002
Approved April 15, 2002*

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

February 19, 2002

CALL TO ORDER:

Ross Hinkle called the meeting to order at 1:07 P.M.

MINUTES:

No minutes were presented for review. The January 28, 2002 minutes are pending approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Allen, from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) provided information on the FWCC Mitigation Park program. The program is seeking input from conservation groups regarding locations for new mitigation parks, primarily for the conservation of uplands. Mike provided an overview of program criteria and funding guidelines for consideration by the Selection and Management Committee (SMC). It was noted that the average size of their mitigation parks is 500 – 1,500 acres. Uplands on the site should support gopher tortoise density of at least 0.8 individuals per acre. Preference will also be shown to sites that contain other upland listed species such as scrub jay, fox squirrel, or red-cockaded woodpecker. The SMC will discuss possible sites that could be recommended as a future agenda item.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

None.

MANAGEMENT UPDATE:

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

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM UPDATE:

The information for January and February volunteer activities was distributed and reviewed. A copy is included with these minutes. It was noted that staff has been extremely impressed with the level of effort shown by the current AmeriCorps team.

EDUCATION SPECIALIST UPDATE:

Kit Van Wagner provided a flowchart of proposed revisions to the EEL Web Site for review by the SMC. SMC members were asked to provide suggestions to Kit via e-mail or phone.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pine Island Conservation Area (PICA)

Lisa Smith reported that a tour by the St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD)

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Management Review Team will be held on February 21, 2002. The purpose of this tour is to determine the extent to which the management plan is being implemented. Results of the report will be provided at a future meeting.

Lisa Smith provided information regarding the Waterfowl Hunt administration and harvest for the last 3 seasons at PICA. The hunt program is in a period of evaluation at this time.

Donna Oddy from the County's Natural Resources Department provided clarification that the ordinance regarding removal of exotics from public and private land is still under review for legislative intent. It was noted that the EEL Program would require grant funding to comply with the ordinance if it was approved and that these funding concerns had been expressed to Natural Resources.

Ross Hinkle stated there was an Army Corps of Engineers Program regarding long-term restorations of lagoon fringing wetlands. Kim Zarillo mentioned a North Indian River Lagoon meeting being held the afternoon of February 20, and wondered if that program might provide funding or partnership opportunities. Ron Hight will be attending this meeting.

SMC REPORTS:

Paul Schmalzer commented on an article that had recently appeared in local newspapers that there is a potential move in the Legislature to divert Florida Forever Funds to water reuse. Anne will contact Sue Mullins at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for further information.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY:

TNC Acquisition Summary report dated February 19, 2002 was distributed and reviewed. A copy of the report is included with these minutes. Angela Klug reported that a large majority of the Farm and Grove lots had recently closed or would close in the very near future. Anne expressed her appreciation to The Nature Conservancy for their efforts in this endeavor.

Acquisitions within the Town of Malabar

Anne Birch provided an update on the events following the January 7, 2002 Town Council Meeting that was attended by David Breininger, Ross Hinkle, Randy Parkinson and Paul Schmalzer. She relayed that concerns were expressed regarding the amount of lands that have been proposed for acquisition, and the lack of communication between the County and the Town. The Town has indicated a desire to express those concerns to the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Higgs and Anne Birch have met with Bill Hall to determine how EEL can improve communication and to confirm how the Town wants that communication to occur. Commissioner Higgs has also met with each of the Town Council members separately in an effort to understand their concerns. During those meetings, Anne and Commissioner Higgs indicated that EEL would be interested in knowing what road right of ways the town would like on acquired properties, and other special concerns or issues which might be addressed by EEL.

At the request of a Town Council member, there was a Public Meeting held on February 13, 2002 where Commissioner Higgs, Anne Birch, and Zach Prusak presented information on the EEL Program and answered questions from the public. Approximately 100 residents and several of the Town Council members attended the meeting. Staff acknowledged EEL could have done a better job communicating with the Town and stated that steps have been taken to develop

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internal procedures on how staff will communicate with all municipalities regarding future land management activities and pre/post acquisition activities. A status report of EEL Program acquisition activities within municipalities has been provided to every City Manager of all the municipalities in Brevard County, each Commissioner, the County Manager and Assistant County Managers. The report was distributed to the SMC for their review.

It is hoped that a workshop with the Town of Malabar can be held to address citizen concerns. Anne requested that the SMC consider making a recommendation to hold off on additional acquisition activity within the Town until a workshop of this type could be held. Ross Hinkle stated the SMC would be able to provide factual information as to how the EEL Program selects lands for possible acquisition. Anne indicated this would be a helpful first step. Members of the SMC indicated that they supported communication with municipalities but felt that their recommendations should be based on providing scientific input regarding conservation issues as opposed to making a recommendation to continue with or to stop the acquisition process.

Kim Zarillo requested clarification regarding the Town's road easements and land owner's responsibilities regarding roads and road easements. EEL staff will research and provide information.

Kim also stated that the Town of Malabar's Comprehensive Plan calls for intergovernmental communication by the Town and that communication is not just the county's responsibility. It was also noted that the Town of Malabar has pursued acquisition of land for conservation purposes on its own.

Ross Hinkle stated the EEL Program is a willing seller, conservation based program where selections for purchase are based on the conservation value of the land. He also expressed his feeling that if the SMC were to recommend to the Commission to put land acquisition on hold, it would have to be based on scientific reasons. The SMC voiced their agreement. Ross indicated the SMC understood the importance of community support and offered to participate in a workshop or other communications with municipalities as needed.

Anne stated that she felt the workshop would be beneficial as a means of communication for the Program and the community. Dave suggested that a field trip with the Council to potential sites might also be beneficial.

It was noted that the SMC would be willing to send a letter to the BOCC confirming their support of a workshop and willingness to meet with members of the Malabar community.

Pine Island Conservation Area

Lisa Smith indicated she is waiting on information from other sources to complete the final Waterfowl Hunting Season Report and distributed a summary for the last three year's activities. It was noted that the hunt had caused a disturbance to other species and was a disincentive to non-hunting citizens during the hunt season. It was noted that the hunt activities agreement was on an open-ended, trial basis which could be discontinued at any time. Ron Hight recommended keeping the program active for the 5 years originally determined to be an evaluation period. Concern was expressed that requests for hunting activities might be received at additional EEL Program sites. Clarification was provided that this type of activity is on a trial basis only at PICA due to historical use of the land, and that hunting activity was not compatible with the passive recreational use identified for other EEL sanctuaries. It was suggested that the EEL Program contact the SJRWMD to determine if they could be a partner in absorbing the hunt

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program expense. A final report will be prepared and distributed to the SMC for their review and consideration. Further discussion will be scheduled for the meeting following receipt of the report.

Confirmation was provided that the SMC has reviewed and approved plans for the restoration project at PICA and work may proceed.

Construction Progress Update – Malabar Sanctuary Road

Frazier Engineering is scheduling a visit to the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary in the near future to discuss the entrance road drainage problem. Further information will be provided at the next meeting. Zach Prusak confirmed the Town of Malabar will be notified of the opportunity to participate in this meeting.

Construction Progress Update – Enchanted Forest Sanctuary

Positive progress has continued on the Management and Education Center at the Enchanted Forest. Ross Hinkle noted that visitors from the Indianapolis Children's Museum will be in this area the first of March and plan to visit the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Ross will contact the group to see if they would like to meet with the exhibit design company while they are here. Anne will contact the company if a positive response is received.

Construction Progress Update – Barrier Island Ecosystem Center (BIEC)

Anne Birch reported that five Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms have been selected to interview on February 22, 2002 and invited the SMC to attend the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

New Property – Tony Barge T28, R37, S15 Parcel 508 (3.28 ac.) Melbourne

Angela Klug provided information on property in the Melbourne area that has been offered for sale to the EEL Program. The SMC indicated that although an eagle's nest is in the vicinity, the parcel does not meet EEL criteria for acquisition due to its very small size and isolation from other conservation lands.

Motion One:

Kim Zarillo made a motion for a first majority vote regarding acquisition of the 3.28 acre parcel of land offered for sale to the EEL Program by Tony Barge. Ross Hinkle clarified that a vote in the affirmative would mean EEL moves ahead with the purchase and a nay vote would mean a decline of the property.

Paul Schmalzer seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously declined.

This action confirms that the SMC does not wish to pursue acquisition of the parcel. Angela Klug will notify the owner.

NEXT MEETING:

The next EEL SMC meeting was scheduled for March 18, 2002. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss EEL priorities and role in preserving biological diversity along with land management issues. The April meeting was set for April 15, 2002.

EEL staff will work on developing an overview map showing locations of acquired and proposed properties. Discussion regarding how the EEL Program should evaluate its success so far and where the program should go in the future will be future agenda items.

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

1. Kim Zarillo made a motion for first majority vote regarding acquisition of the 3.28 acre parcel of land offered by Tony Barge. Paul Schmalzer seconded. The motion was unanimously declined.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. SMC will provide a recommendation of sites that might be considered for inclusion in the FWCC Mitigation Bank Program. This topic will be an agenda item at a future meeting.
2. SMC members will review the EEL web site flowchart and make recommendations to Kit.
3. EEL staff will provide information on the SJRWMD Management Review tour held at PICA on February 21, 2002 at a future meeting.
4. EEL staff will research a potential move in the Legislature to divert Florida Forever Funds to alternate uses.
5. Lisa Smith will prepare a final report on the Waterfowl Hunt at PICA and provide to the SMC for their consideration. Further discussion by the SMC will be scheduled for the meeting following receipt of the report.
6. EEL staff will provide information received from Frazier Engineering's site visit to the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary entrance road project at the next meeting.
7. Ross Hinkle will check with the group from the Indianapolis Children's Museum to determine if they would like to meet with a representative from the exhibit design company involved in the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary construction project. Anne will try to coordinate a meeting if a positive response is received.
8. Angela Klug will notify property owner Tony Barge regarding the SMC's decision on the property he offered for sale to the EEL Program.
9. EEL staff will provide an overview map indicating acquired, and proposed properties.

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