

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
PROCEDURES COMMITTEE (PC)
March 16, 2004
Attendance List**

SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dave Breininger
Mark Bush
Ross Hinkle
Randy Parkinson
Paul Schmalzer

PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

Priscilla Griffith
Diane Stees
Rocky Randels
Bob Brown
Julia "Tibby" Parker
Sharon Savastio
Leesa Souto

EEL PROGRAM STAFF

Laura Clark
Mike Knight

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Keith Fountain
Lori Thoms
John Winfree

GUESTS

Duane Lundgren, Brevard County, District IV
Mike Myjak, Preserve Brevard
Maureen Parent, Preserve Brevard
Amy Tidd, Preserve Brevard
Jim Waymer, Florida Today Newspaper

*March 16, 2004
Approved June 17, 2004*

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM
SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
PROCEDURES COMMITTEE**

**March 16, 2004
Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER:

Rocky Randels called the meeting to order at 2:10 PM and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rocky asked if anyone wished to make public comment. No one desired to provide public comment at that time.

Rocky commented on the March 15th Florida Today article about the EEL Program and thanked Jim Waymer for his efforts in presenting the information to the public.

MINUTES:

No minutes are pending approval.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Review of EEL Annual Goals

Mike Knight provided an overview of the goals the EEL Program has identified for the remainder of the fiscal year. Topics include but are not limited to: land acquisition and funding sources, prescribed fires, training of new employees on invasive plant management, PICA restoration project, sanctuary security, safety training, tool tracking and equipment maintenance, as well as Education and Management Center projects and public relations. The Program will be reviewing each of the sanctuary sites with public access to complete a detailed assessment determining what type of passive recreation would best serve the site while preserving the natural resources.

New Procedures Committee Members

Rocky introduced Bob Brown, Julia "Tibby" Parker and Leesa Souto as new members to the Procedures Committee. The group welcomed the new members and expressed appreciation for their contribution.

Referendum – Amy Tidd

Rocky introduced Amy Tidd, who will be heading "Preserve Brevard" a Political Action Committee (PAC) to bring a land acquisition referendum before the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). If approved by the Board, the referendum will be submitted to voters for their consideration.

Amy reported that in December of 2003, the Selection and Management Committee (SMC) voted to approve a motion that would seek funding to complete the EEL Program's land acquisition phase and to ensure land management funding in perpetuity.

Amy said that members of the PAC have met with each of the five Commissioners.

Randy Parkinson said that it was important to be sure that the proper language was included in the ballot to ensure that funds were provided for the management of EEL lands in perpetuity.

Paul Schmalzer mentioned the complexities of municipal bonding issues.

Keith Fountain, from The Nature Conservancy, (TNC) stated that the Conservancy would be able to assist with items such as polling, and that they would be able to assist with local efforts in drafting the bond language, if needed.

Randy stated that in his opinion, consideration should be given to calling the referendum project the "last generation" because this should be the last time the EEL Program should need to request additional funding, and because now is the last chance for the preservation of land.

Amy advised the members of the PC that in the event changes needed to be made to the Land Acquisition Manual, this would be the appropriate time to address them.

Clarification was requested regarding the ending of the Beach & Riverfront Tax as well as timeframe for collection of funds.

Ross Hinkle stated he would like to provide some historical information on the EEL Program. He said that when the EEL Program started and began the acquisition process, the SMC, a scientific panel, targeted areas for acquisition. Charged with the objective of preserving biological diversity, the SMC looked at all of the natural range and put together packages that would target those areas critical for preserving natural Brevard. The Program has been very successful with the acquisition program and obtaining matching dollars. As the land management part of the Program was developed, everyone learned:

- 1) Balancing public access with management is an issue with costs associated.
- 2) Management costs are legitimate long-term expenses.

The SMC has reviewed acquisitions to determine if sufficient lands have been set aside to ensure a sustainable biodiversity. It was determined that additional land was needed to round out acquisition and that acquisition funding was very limited. A suggestion was made to try to obtain additional resources to round out acquisition and to put in place resources that would allow long-term management of what has been acquired.

Mark Bush suggested publicizing of one or two areas that the EEL Program had targeted for future acquisition, in the same manner that the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary was used during the first referendum.

Sharon Savastio stated some folks see the guidelines for the protection of scrub-jays as a negative and expressed concern that this might spill over to a lack of support other conservation efforts.

Randy suggested that the PAC try to define possible issues before opponents do, and address the issues in materials that will be distributed as part of the campaign.

Several questions were raised regarding the level of involvement that the SMC or PC could take in the referendum.

Ross stated that one of the successes of the EEL Program has been that the SMC, a scientific advisory panel, is a-political, and that they very carefully guard that objectivity.

Paul clarified that one of the tasks of the PC, as outlined in the Land Acquisition Manual, is to bring funding recommendations to the BOCC.

Randy stated that the PC needed to determine if they supported the goals and recommendations expressed by the SMC and, if they did, that the PC would be very important in networking and getting the word out to the voters.

Mike Myjak asked if the phrase "groundwater recharge" would be appropriate to include in explaining the need for additional land acquisition. Ross said that hydrologic recharge is an important part of the ecosystem process.

Mike Knight stated he could obtain clarification regarding appropriate levels of involvement for Advisory Committees when dealing with support of a referendum.

MOTION ONE

Diane Stees made a motion that the Procedures Committee should show their support for the December 17, 2003 motion by the SMC to support a referendum, linked to the sunseting of the Beach and Riverfront Tax, that would seek to produce the funds to complete the EEL Program's land acquisition agenda during the period of the referendum, and to ensure funding for the long term management of EEL lands.

Priscilla Griffith seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Rocky asked if there were other topics for discussion.

Amy asked if it was required that land acquisition always be done through matching funds.

Ross stated that the use of matching funds was not required, but that matching funds were used to extend the value of the County dollar.

Mike Myjak asked for clarification regarding limits on prices paid for property and asked if it would be possible for an outside entity to provide the difference between what the EEL Program could legally pay and the owner's requested price. Rocky said that he did not believe that had ever occurred. Keith stated he did not recall the County ever paying more than 100% of the appraised value for property acquired by the Program.

Ross stated that there was a potential for another organization to buy land and donate it to the Program as land had been accepted as donations. The present process is that the SMC makes recommendations and the County attempts to purchase the land with TNC as acquisition agent.

Leesa requested clarification regarding the timeframe for the referendum. Amy confirmed that Commissioner Higgs has agreed to place the item on the BOCC Agenda and that the PAC hopes to meet with TNC in the next few weeks. Additional information will be provided as it is received.

Priscilla asked if the PAC would be meeting with groups who might be willing to assist with providing information to the public regarding the referendum.

Amy confirmed that the PAC plans to meet with many groups and that they will be including developers in an effort to present the information in an objective manner.

Leesa asked if the Commissioners had expressed any concerns regarding accountability or procedures that have been conducted so far and also if there was knowledge of any other County agency that would be moving forward with a funding request.

Additional information will be provided as it is received.

NEXT MEETING:

A date and time for the next meeting will be provided when determined.

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

- Motion to support a referendum, linked to the sunseting of the Beach and Riverfront Tax, that would seek to produce the funds to complete the EEL Program's land acquisition agenda during the period of the referendum, and to ensure funding for the long term management of EEL lands.