

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 8, 2007
Attendance List**

RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bob Champaigne
Jim Durocher
Murray Hann
Karen Hill
Mark Nathan
Eve Owens
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

Laura Clark
Brad Manley
Scott Taylor

GUESTS

Shirril Adams
David Gallagher
Don Griffin

*February 8, 2007
Approved August 9, 2007*

**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM
RECREATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 8, 2007
Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER:

Murray Hann called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

Murray asked if anyone would mind a change in the order of the minutes so that Scott Taylor could do his presentation early in the meeting. No concerns were received.

AGENDA ITEMS

Helen and Allan Cruickshank Sanctuary Proposed Public Access Plan

Scott Taylor, Central Region Land Manager gave a presentation on the Cruickshank Sanctuary proposed public access plan including:

- The 140 acre Cruickshank Sanctuary is located in a rapidly urbanizing landscape and it is important to remember that it is an ecological island.
- The EEL Program has attempted to purchase addition land in the area, but has not been successful.
- The original plans to provide an Education and Management Center at the Cruickshank Sanctuary were changed at the direction of the Board of County Commissioners in an effort to make the best use of available funds and existing properties.
- There is an access point with a small parking area on Barnes Blvd.
- Hiking trails and fire breaks currently exist on the property. Fire breaks on this site can be used as hiking trails.
- The Sanctuary has a lot of sugar sand and is quite flooded during the rainy season.
- There are several wetland areas in the Cruickshank Sanctuary.
- The property is divided into four burn units and has received aggressive management to restore the original scrub habitat where possible. Two units have been burned with no complaints from citizens. Staff continues to educate the public on the importance of prescribed fire.
- There are trail markers on this site.
- Current passive recreational opportunities on this site include hiking and bird watching, but not biking.

- Brevard County Storm Water Utilities Department is requesting permission to use this Sanctuary as part of a storm water project.
- An Eagle Scout trail project was recently completed on site.
- Fencing has reduced much of the previous inappropriate use of this site.
- Six families of Florida Scrub Jays, which have been absent from the area for several years, have moved into this site as a result of the land management efforts.
- This sanctuary contains the largest population of a rare plant, commonly called the Sand Mat, in Brevard County.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC COMMENT:

Brad Manley explained that he had recently visited the Cruickshank Sanctuary to get current information on trail conditions and sanctuary habitat. Brad provided his opinion that the sand in the trails was very soft, and would not provide a positive bike riding experience. He stated that he felt that if the EEL Program indicated that biking was available at a particular sanctuary, then an opportunity for a positive experience should be available.

Murray Hann said that several people had expressed concerns to him regarding the plans to not offer mountain biking at this location and suggested that the trails be available for use when appropriate, and closed when wet.

Paul Schmalzer said that this was a small site and mountain biking would have greater impacts than hiking.

Jim Durocher said that he was an off road biker and gave his opinion that bikers and hikers don't always mix well. He expressed his concern that some folks might go off the trails in the small sanctuary.

Scott stated that in his experience bikers were usually good stewards of the land, but that biking needed to be allowed only where it was appropriate.

Beverly Pinyerd stated her feeling that the Cruickshank Sanctuary was the only EEL Program site on the Central Brevard mainland, and that there were lots of places in the County where people could ride bikes. She said that she felt it was important that this site be preserved as much as possible.

Paul Schmalzer stated that conservation was the primary goal of the EEL Program.

Mark Nathan stressed the importance of protecting the natural resource.

Don Griffin, from the City of Rockledge said that he was the original presenter of this property to the EEL Program for consideration of acquisition. He said he was pleased with the original plans for a Management and Education Center on site and very disappointed with the change in plans. He suggested a cooperative effort between the City and the EEL Program on future projects.

Barbara Meyer said that the Commission had approved a linear trail in Brevard County.

Murray Hann said that if it wasn't a fun trail, only a few people would want to use it, and he didn't think allowing mountain biking would cause a negative impact to the habitat.

Jim Durocher stated that he felt the primary Mission of the program was not being considered.

Motion One

Eve Owens moved that the REAC Committee request staff to reconsider biking at the Cruickshank Sanctuary, based on environmental impacts, previous commissioner's request, a request from the City of Rockledge, and requests from citizens.

Paul Saia seconded the motion.

Four members voted to approve the motion and four members voted to decline the motion.

The motion failed.

Eve mentioned that she had one more motion for the Committee to consider.

Motion Two

Eve Owens moved to support that the REAC Committee should encourage the EEL Program Staff to work with the City of Rockledge and Brevard County regarding possible opportunities for a cooperative effort relative to plans for the Sky View Drive In property before the Cruickshank Sanctuary Management Plan was finalized.

Mark Nathan seconded the motion.

The motion carried by a vote of 6 to 2, with Beverly Pinyerd and Bob Champaigne voting no.

Clarification was provided by REAC committee members that maps of conservation lands in Brevard County would be beneficial during their decision making.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comment was received from a citizen who said that tax payer monies had been used to purchase EEL Program property. She spoke of her support for balancing passive recreation with conservation goals and stated she was representing a group of approximately 30 kayakers who would like to request that the EEL Program's citizen advisory committees reconsider allowing access to the Mellon (Hog Point Cove) property in the South Beach region as she felt that it was the only access option for the members of her group when traveling across the Indian River to A1A.

Brad stated that there were additional access opportunities at other EEL Program sites nearby and that staff was willing to meet with her to discuss the issue further and to clarify the alternatives. He asked that this be done prior to any formal request to one of the citizen advisory committees.

Paul Schmalzer confirmed that the SMC would direct staff to gather this type of information before an issue of this type could be presented for consideration by the SMC.

Members of the REAC Committee expressed their interest in hearing the woman's concerns after she was able to meet with Brad.

Murray asked Brad if he could be available immediately after the meeting to meet with the 3 citizens who attended the meeting relative to this topic. Brad confirmed he would be available and explained that he would like to get everyone's e-mail address, if possible, to assist in notifications for future meetings when this might be discussed.

The citizens thanked the members of the REAC Committee for their time and volunteer efforts.

MINUTES:

The October 12, 2006 and January 27, 2007 minutes were presented for approval.

Murray asked for comments to the October minutes.

MOTION THREE:

Eve Owens moved to approve the October 12, 2006 minutes as presented

Karen Hill seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Murray asked for comments to the January minutes.

MOTION FOUR:

Karen Hill moved to approve the January 12, 2007 minutes as presented.

Bob Champaigne seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

It was determined that the next meeting would be held on May 10, 2007

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

- Motion to request staff reconsider biking at the Cruickshank Sanctuary, based on environmental impacts, previous commissioner's request, a request from the City of Rockledge and requests from citizens. The motion failed.
- Motion to support that the REAC Committee should encourage the EEL Program staff to work with the City of Rockledge and Brevard County regarding possible opportunities for a cooperative effort relative to plans for the Sky View Drive in property before the Cruickshank Sanctuary Management Plan was finalized.
- Motion to approve the October 12, 2006 minutes as presented.
- Motion to approve the January 12, 2007 minutes as presented.