



**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
PROCEDURES COMMITTEE (PC)
February 27, 2008
Attendance List**

SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dave Breininger
Ron Hight
Ross Hinkle
Paul Schmalzer
Kim Zarillo

PROCEDURES COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Priscilla Griffith
Ralph McCoig
Wayne Mozo
Rocky Randels
Diane Stees
Kim Zarillo

EEL PROGRAM STAFF

Sandy Carnival
Laura Clark
Xavier DeSeguin des Hons
Mike Knight
Brad Manley
Ray Mojica
Chris O'Hara
Scott Taylor

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Keith Fountain
Anne Mayer
Rebecca Perry

GUESTS

Dan Gallagher, Citizen

*Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity
Through Responsible Stewardship of Brevard County's Natural Resources*

*SMC / PC Meeting
February 27, 2008
Approved May 28 2009*



**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
PROCEDURES COMMITTEE (PC)
February 27, 2008
Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER:

Rocky Randels, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

MINUTES:

February 8, 2007 Procedures Committee Meeting

The February 8, 2007 PC minutes were presented for approval. Rocky asked for comments to the February minutes.

MOTION ONE:

Ralph McCoig moved to approve the February 8, 2007 PC minutes as presented.

Kim Zarillo seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously

April 25, 2007 Selection and Management Committee/Procedures Committee Meeting

The April 25, 2007 SMC/PC minutes were presented for approval. Rocky asked for comments to the April SMC/PC minutes.

Paul stated that that he had provided a written comment that a copy of the Annual Report, which was listed as a draft copy had been distributed at the April meeting, and he asked if the final report had been distributed.

Mike explained that staff had received some comments on the draft Report, which included a suggestion for reformatting, and that it had been determined that the changes would be incorporated into the next year's report, and that the draft document had been kept as it was presented at the April 2007 meeting.

MOTION TWO:

Kim Zarillo moved to approve the April 25, 2007 minutes as presented

Paul Schmalzer seconded the motion.

Additional Discussion

Clarification was provided that Paul's information was considered to be discussion for the current meeting, and not revisions to the April draft minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

EEL PROGRAM REPORTS

Procedures Committee Overview – Rocky Randels, Chair

Mike explained that the purpose of the annual joint meeting is to have an opportunity for the Selection and Management Committee (SMC) and the Procedures Committee (PC) to come together and for Program staff to provide an overview summary of what has happened over the past year. He stated he would be going through the annual report to touch on a few highlights, TNC would provide a brief update on acquisitions, and staff would do brief presentations on what has been happening in the Program over the last year. He added that Committee members should feel free to comment or ask questions at any time.

Mike also explained that the PC reviews the procedures associated with how the EEL Program acquires land, and that the joint meeting is one of the requirements in the Land Acquisition Manual.

Selection and Management Committee Overview – Dr. Ross Hinkle, Chair

Ross explained that the SMC was a voluntary advisory committee, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners (Board). The SMC's role is to identify and review properties that are considered for acquisition, to recommend acquisition to the Board when the properties meet the scientific criteria established by the Land Acquisition Manual, and to assist in the development of management guidelines after properties are acquired.

Additional Discussion

Rocky mentioned the Florida Today Editor's article "*Preservation, not politics – Seize the moment and save Brevard's threatened lands before rapid growth returns*", which was distributed at the meeting and he reminded everyone that the Program is guided by scientific principles.

Ross stated that it was very encouraging to see the kind of support that the article provided.

Acquisition Report – The Nature Conservancy

Keith Fountain, from The Nature Conservancy gave a presentation on acquisition efforts during February 1, 2007 – February 27, 2008:

- Summary Info
 - Twenty-three tracts either appraised or actively negotiated
 - Contracts signed for 16 tracts containing 5,110 acres
 - Negotiations deferred on seven tracts
 - Five contracts not exercised by BOCC
 - Scottsmoor Partners LLC
 - Ag Ventures
 - Boyd
 - DiChristopher
 - Hossain
 - Eleven transactions closed for a total of 3,276 acres protected
 - Closings
 - Buck Lake additions 4 tracts for 4 acres
 - Sykes Creek/Johnson 99 acres
 - TICO/Vero Pittsburg 41 acres
 - NRIL/Nevins Fruit 42 acres
 - NIRL/Gaizo 19 acres
 - Rockledge/Schopke-Barge 11 acres

- Grissom/Veronica Estates 182 acres
- Fox Lake/Hunters Brooke 3,052 acres (*largest single acquisition in Program's History*)
- Megaparcel Projects
 - 81 acres either acquired or under contract
 - Contracts for the purchase of 13 acres
 - 41 transactions closed for a total of 68 acres acquired
- South Megaparcel % acquired
 - Ten Mile Ridge 23%
 - South Babcock 14%
 - Micco Expansion 59%
 - Val/Micco 30%
 - Valkaria 55%
- Grissom Pkwy Megaparcel 48% of site acquired

Additional Discussion:

- The megaparcel area has historically been funded by the State. It is made up of many small lots approximately an acre in size, requiring individual contacts.
- Florida Forever funding has dropped off for the megaparcel areas due to budgetary restrictions.
- A suggestion was received to consider acquisition of properties included in tax deed sales.
- Clarification was provided that the EEL Program also sometimes receives mitigation donations in the megaparcel area.
- Challenge: Now in buyer's real estate market, but current funding is limited.
- Brevard Coastal Scrub Ecosystem is not in States top 21 ranked projects.
- North Indian River Lagoon is within State's top 21 ranked projects.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the Florida Forever Program.

EEL Program Annual Report

Mike Knight, Program Manager

Mike provided an overview of the Draft 2006-2007 Annual Report and explained that comments would be compiled and distributed before distribution of the final copy.

- EEL Program Sanctuary – sanctuary *“a place of refuge and protection”*
- EEL Program History – funded by two voter approved referendums in 1990 and 2004
- Acquisition – total acres acquired in FY 06/07 include 182.31
 - Crawford Homes, Thousand Island – 62 acres
 - Vero Pittsburg, Enchanted forest – 41.5 acres
 - Munich, North Indian River Lagoon - 8.5 acres
 - Nevins Fruit, NIRL – 43 acres
 - Jeffreys, N Buck Lake – 0.73 acres
 - Espinoza, N Buck Lake – 1 acre
 - Taylor, N Buck Lake - 0.58 acres
 - White, N Buck Lake – 2 acres
 - 15 parcels accepted as donations, totaling approximately 23 acres

- Management Activities
 - Quantifying data collection to measure success
 - 8 Management Plans completed
 - 2 Interim Management Plans completed
 - Prescribed Fire Accomplishments
- Public Access
 - 30 miles of marked trails provide visitors access to nearly 4,000 acres of conservation lands
 - 5 canoe and kayak launches provide paddlers access to the Indian River Lagoon from EEL Program sites.
 - Public Access plans developed for 5 sanctuaries
 - Trail system improvements and new trail sections created at 6 sanctuaries
 - Phase 1 restoration of Sam's House Education Center completed
 - 500 ft ADA boardwalk completed to connect Barrier Island Center to Bonsteel Park
- Environmental Education
 - Community Outreach
 - School Events
 - Teacher Training
 - Material Development
- Financial Overview

Additional Discussion

Members of the group provided suggestion for clarification of the report.

It was noted that the Program will probably always receive request for recreation activities that may not be compatible with the EEL Programs guidelines for passive recreation and that as the County becomes more developed, these requests are anticipated to increase.

Staff Presentations

Mike stated that the EEL Program divides Brevard County into four regions for management purposes. He explained that each Land Manager would be providing information on their areas and that additional presentations would be provided by the Education Coordinator and the Volunteer/Public Access Coordinator.

Ray Mojica, South Beach Region Land Manager

- ❖ General Information
 - Staff Overview
 - Status of Management Plans
 - Interpretive Trail Signs
 - Importance of Prescribed Fire
- ❖ Hog Point Cove
 - Caretaker facility
 - Research
 - Storm water Pond Restoration Project
- ❖ Maritime Hammock
 - Existing trail system
 - Planned trail expansion
 - Pond Overlook
 - Boardwalk & Bridge

- Trailhead on A1A – property runs to the Indian River Lagoon
- ❖ Barrier Island Sanctuary
 - Within the Archie Carr Refuge
 - Future site of Management and Education Center
 - ADA Boardwalk
 - Small wildfire
 - Kiosk at trailhead
 - Small bridge, boardwalk, benches

Chris O'Hara, South Region Land Manager

- ❖ Major Projects
 - Malabar Scrub Sanctuary West Improvements
 - Improved Entrance
 - Bridge Over Creek
 - Volunteer Day
- ❖ Crane Creek Recreation Assessment
 - Located within urban area
 - Onsite Recreation Assessment
 - Public Stakeholders Meeting
 - Supported by REAC
- ❖ Micco Scrub Sanctuary Firebreak
 - Perimeter Firebreak
 - 20,000 Linear Feet
 - Burn Piles
 - Habitat Restoration
- ❖ Prescribed Fires
 - Micco Scrub Sanctuary
 - Jordan Scrub Sanctuary
 - Volunteer effort Trash Bash post burn
 - Wal-mart Parcel Firebreak

Scott Taylor, Central Region Land Manager

- ❖ Exotic Plant Removal
 - Primarily funded by grants
- ❖ Upland Management
 - Pine Island Conservation Area – 120 acres flatwoods chopped and burned
 - Cruickshank Sanctuary – two 40 acre parcels chopped and burned
 - Listed Species
 - Gopher tortoise survey at Cruickshank
 - New Florida Scrub-Jays at Cruickshank due to restoration efforts
- ❖ Management Plan Update
- ❖ Central Region Highlights
 - Johnson Property acquisition
 - Reynolds portion of Thousand Islands under negotiation
 - Sams House
 - Site plan complete
 - Architectural drawings complete
 - Phase II of renovations ready to go out to bid

- Outbuildings – restroom/dining and maintenance
- Archaeological Dig continuing
 - 1181 volunteer hours on this dig, plus 1000 plus hours by lead archaeologist Tom Penders
- Planning for educational exhibits

Xavier de Sequin des Hons, North Region Land Manager

- ❖ Prescribed Fire activity
- ❖ Exotic Plant Control
- ❖ Enchanted Forest Sanctuary
 - Release of parasitic fly research project re: Bromiliad Evil Weevil
 - Hog Trapping
- ❖ Surveys
 - Gopher Tortoise Burrows
 - Florida Scrub-Jays
 - Plant
 - Wild Bird
 - Vegetation Transects
- ❖ Maintenance and Clean-up
- ❖ North Buck Lake Sanctuary Fence
 - Clean ups at Indian Mound Sanctuary and South Lake Conservation Area
 - Acquisition of Hunters Brooke property
- ❖ Management Plan Status update
- ❖ Events at Enchanted Forest Sanctuary
 - Forest Festival
 - Earth Day
 - Forest Fun Days
 - Music in the Forest
 - Nature Crafts
 - Guide Training and guided hikes
 - Volunteer Appreciation
 - Ancient Oaks 100 mile run
 - Space Coast Birding Festival
 - Photography Workshop
 - Butterfly Garden Volunteers

Katrina Morrell, Education Coordinator Additional Discussion

Ray Mojica provided information from Katrina Morrell, EEL Program Education Coordinator.

- ❖ Major Accomplishments
- ❖ Displays to be installed December 2008
- ❖ Interpretive Trail Signs for South Beaches
 - Healthy Scrub Habitat needs Prescribed Fire
- ❖ Other Accomplishments
 - Brevard Research Rules!
 - Pine Island Stakeholder Meeting
 - Manned EEL Program Booth at 8 community events
 - School Programs
 - Participated in activities within each of the 4 regions

NEW BUSINESS

Land Acquisition Process Review

Mike explained that during the recent Land Acquisition Workshop the BOCC requested that the SMC consider streamlining the current acquisition process to determine if that might resolve some of the issues that have been brought up by the Clerk of the Court.

A recap of the three processes that are outlined in the Land Acquisition Manual (LAM) was distributed for review. Mike stated that the SMC would be considering this topic at their next meeting, and if the SMC felt that revision of the LAM would be beneficial, additional PC meetings would be scheduled in the future. Mike stated that in his opinion, it is important that the Board consider the period of time that begins when the appraisals are started, because that is the date of value for the property. Time spent during the negotiation process, and scheduling of BOCC consideration of contracts that have been approved by the SMC, also impacts the land acquisition timeframe.

A brief review of Process A, B, and C was provided.

Ross Hinkle, SMC Chairman stated that when the EEL Program started, the SMC received hundreds of willing seller applications, and that areas with a high conservation value were reviewed and Project footprints were established to assist with review of willing seller applications and EEL Program applications to the State for partnership funding. He stated that the Procedure Committee wrote the first LAM, and after it had been used for a few years, it was refined by the SMC and PC in 1997 and those are the processes now being used.

Clarification was provided that Ross and Paul, along with Randy who was not at the meeting, were part of the original SMC, and that Priscilla, Diane, and Kim were members of the original Procedures Committee.

Ross stated that the PC and SMC committees had worked long, and hard, to establish a system that would work, and that in his opinion the system worked well. He expressed his feeling that they should not try to solve a problem in another area by addressing an issue that did not exist in terms of the land acquisition process. He expressed his frustration that recent land acquisition contracts which had been negotiated by The Nature Conservancy and approved by the SMC were not always submitted promptly to the Board for final approval, and that sometimes the contracts expired before they could be closed.

Paul clarified that the SMC had approved contracts for Hunters Brooke, Ag Ventures /Honeybrook Development Corp., Scottsmoor Partners LLC, and Hossain properties on September 28, 2007 and that Hunters Brooke made it to the Board in November, and Ag Ventures and Scottsmoor Partners, LLC were allowed to lapse in January, so there was a long time between when the SMC did it's final approval process and the time the Board did, or didn't, make a final decision.

Rocky stated that he had received some concerns from people who were unhappy that the EEL Program had not purchased property near their areas, but he had explained to them that the Program was founded in science, and that land that was suitable for conservation just wasn't available in every community.

Dave Breininger, SMC member, stated that he felt there was a perception that there is a lot of land that could be valuable for biodiversity left in Brevard County, but that in his opinion, that was a misconception. He explained that there are only a few large tracks of land that could be important

for conservation left and that we are down to the last of the best options and do not have a long shopping list.

Public Comment

Dan Gallagher, citizen stated that it was his understanding that the acquisition process was good, but that it seemed like the Clerk of the Courts always got his information late.

Mike explained that confidentiality rules associated with negotiations prevented disclosure of appraisal information, even to members of the SMC, until negotiations were complete and contracts were signed. He stated that the EEL Program makes every effort to provide the Clerk's Office with information as quickly as possible.

Ross stated that in his opinion the Program had done a great job of identifying and acquiring land for the protection of biodiversity since it began, and that there was still work to do, but a good start had been made.

NEXT MEETING:

To be determined.

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

- Motion to approve the February 8, 2007 PC minutes as presented.
- Motion to approve the April 25, 2007 SMC/PC as presented.