



**ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM
SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
January 29, 2009
Attendance List**

SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dave Breininger
Ron Hight
Ross Hinkle
Randy Parkinson
Paul Schmalzer
Kim Zarillo

EEL PROGRAM STAFF

Jenny Ashbury
Sandy Carnival
Laura Clark
Mike Knight
Nichole Perna

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Anne Mayer
Keith Fountain, via conference call

GUESTS

David Cox
Jim Durocher, REAC commit member, Friends of Thousand Islands
Susan Gosselin, Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office
Vince Lamb, Friends of Ulumay
Jack Lembeck, Friends of Ulumay
Joe Paladin
Juilian Sparks
Bonilyn Wilbanks-Free, Administrator – Town of Malabar



ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS (EEL) PROGRAM SELECTION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)

January 29, 2009
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

Ross Hinkle called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Durocher, REAC Committee, Friends of the Thousand Islands member, and kayak franchise owner, stated that he has been paddling in the Thousand Islands area in Cocoa Beach for about 25 years, and requested that the following items be considered:

- Consideration of installing signage for all water access points to alert boaters of the speed zones and to protect sea grasses.
- Consideration of advertising guidelines at land access points of Ramp Road Parks, Country Club and Bicentennial.
- Consideration of including a guideline which states that no airboats can be used at this sanctuary.
- Consideration of including a guideline which states that power boats must stay in channels unless trolling or polling, due to the damage they cause to the sea grasses, which he feels have seen a lot of reduction in the last five years.
- Designate some of the islands as rookeries with possible signs to advise people that the rookery islands should not have landings.
- Designate some of the beaches as set aside for horseshoe crabs, which have also seen a significant reduction in numbers during the last few years.
- Consideration of addition of osprey platforms.
- Consideration of setting aside specific areas for the protection of Diamond back terrapin, along with support for continuation of studies for this species.
- Consideration of working with kayak franchise owners in a cooperative effort to benefit the Thousand Islands Sanctuary.
- Consideration of including one of the Thousand Islands as an approved camping location for participants in the 1,500 mile Florida Circumnavigation Blueway trail which is being established, with the caveat that the location would be maintained by volunteers, and only used by groups participating in the Circumnavigation.

Ross thanked Jim for his comments.

MINUTES:

The December 18, 2008 minutes were presented for approval. Clarification was provided that the November minutes are outstanding and will be presented at a future meeting.

Paul Schmalzer noted that page 3 at the top of the page, regarding the Space Needle Property, should indicate that the owner had provided information on "soil" reports, not "spoil".

Ross asked for additional comments or questions on the December minutes. No additional comments were received.

MOTION ONE:

Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the December 18, 2009 minutes as amended.

Dave Breininger seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

The Administrative Review was reviewed.

Mike Knight, EEL Program Manager, advised the SMC that the Board of County Commissioners would be reviewing the Thousand Islands Management Plan, which now includes the Exotic Species Removal plan, on February 3, 2009.

Mike stated that Keith would also be doing an update on the potential Florida Inland Navigational District (FIND) property exchange, but that everyone still appeared to be interested. He stated that there are three ownerships involved in the potential property exchange and there has been an outstanding issue, referred to as a "hiatus", for some time over the clarification of ownership of part of one of the properties. The Brevard County Survey Department and County Attorney is currently reviewing this documentation. Once the reviews by the Brevard County Survey Department and County Attorney are complete, staff will present the exchange concept to the County Commission for input

Ross asked for additional comment or questions on the Administrative Review.

Paul stated that it was his understanding that the City of Cocoa Beach had requested amendments to the Thousand Islands Sanctuary Management plan that was approved by the SMC on December 18, 2008.

Mike stated that during the meeting with the Cocoa Beach City Commission the City made a recommendation that he felt would not required another review by the SMC, and that he had made an administrative decision to include the changes.

Paul stated that it was his impression, from listening to the meeting on the City's web site, that the change related to the time table for the restoration phases, and that the City had requested that Phase II not proceed unless Phase I planting criteria were met.

Mike stated that the criteria is 50%.

Paul expressed concern that this would open the door to allowing the continuation of Australian Pines on the Sanctuary, which he stated, was not the intent of the Plan approved by the SMC.

Mike said that it was his decision at the time that the City made the request, to go ahead and accept the request as something we could deal with. He said because he felt strongly, as did the Cocoa Beach Land Management Committee who were present at the meeting that night, that if the EEL Program couldn't meet a 50% growth success rate for the plants, which would be planted with water being on the island, there would be bigger issues to deal with politically, and too much controversy if we moved forward without the City's support. Mike explained that in the spirit of trying to work things out, that was the decision that was made at the time.

Ray Mojica asked if the plantings will be done in-house or be contracted out.

Mike stated that remained to be determined, but that at this time, the only contracted funds available are for the removal of the biomass, not the replanting.

Dave Breininger asked if there were plans for the islands to be completely vegetated, as he had concerns about habitats for horse shoe crabs and terrapin nesting, and asked if there was going to be any flexibility in terms of management for biodiversity as the management plan progressed. He expressed concern that some people might only be satisfied with full vegetation.

Mike stated that the Management Plan did not call for full vegetation.

Jim Durocher stated his impression that the City had received some citizen concerns that the amount of replanting that was proposed in the Management Plan would not be sufficient.

Dave stated that there was evidence that for best management of biodiversity, alternatives to full vegetation should be considered.

Mike agreed that some concerns had been received regarding the amount of replanting that was proposed, but the Plan that was approved by the City was not for full vegetation.

Dave stated that he felt that local education would be beneficial.

Ross stated that the issues he saw with the Management Plan that was approved were, whether a possible Phase II delay was a significant issue, or not, or, if it could set a precedence. He stated his interpretation would be that if you started Phase I and did replanting, and were not successful, you might have to go back to the drawing board to see how you were going to re-vegetate, but if you do get 50% plus, it would not be an issue and asked if his understanding seemed correct.

Mike stated that restructuring of the process would not be required, just doing additional planting to make up the difference.

Kim said that, because there is a high concentration of Australian pines off Ramp Road, she had concerns about the existing tropical plant species in the island facing the former Crawford property, as the pines were already encroaching on the tropics.

Mike said that the way the plan is set now, once you start Phase I, Phase II can not begin for 3 years from the date you started Phase I.

Kim agreed that was her understanding, and expressed concern that waiting 3 years was too long and that the island right next to Ramp Road could become an Australian pine island by then due to the encroachment on the tropics which included some very nice specimens at this time. She stated that didn't seem to go along with the way the SMC is supposed to recommend management on EEL Program properties, but that she felt it would be better to move forward and try to adjust the management of those properties sooner than 3 years.

Mike said that it was his perspective that there were some people in the City who did not think the replanting would work and in his opinion it was our responsibility to prove that it could.

Ross asked if the plan that the SMC approved was being submitted to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mike clarified that it was, with the modification that Paul had mentioned, and that what it involves is a removal of a statement that says if 50% success for replanting was not achieved, the EEL Program would delay one year, but not any longer.

Paul stated he felt it was clear from his listening to the meeting on the web, that there was still an attachment to the Australian pines among some of the people in the City of Cocoa Beach, and

that there seemed to be a variety of delaying tactics employed to delay the management of these areas for invasive exotic species according to the criteria of the EEL Program. He stated that this was a very expensive acquisition, funded primarily by the EEL Program, and he was concerned that we were having the City of Cocoa Beach dictate management of it to an extent unwarranted by their contribution to the acquisition.

Ross stated that he recommended we continue with the Plan approval process and then addressing the issues as management activities are begun. He stated he thought they had the right to revisit it, and asked if he was correct.

Kim stated that she believed it was.

Ross stated the other option would be for the SMC to ask for the Plan to come back for additional discussion and debate, and not approve it, or to go through another series of meetings, and he did not think that would get the Program any closer to the goal of restoring the islands.

Kim stated she agreed.

Paul stated that the other issue was that the EEL Program has received an invasive plant management grant from the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management (BIPM) and that if the Management Plan was not moved forward, there could be a possibility that the Program could lose the funding. He stated that he felt the change in the plan should have been noted, as it was not described in the Administrative Review, or in the Board Agenda Report.

Mike agreed that had been an oversight on his part.

Kim said she felt that the SMC should make their recommendation, and this was a case where the decision was up to the Board of County Commissioners. She stated she did not feel it would be productive to bring it back again.

Ross clarified that the Management Plan that the SMC approved was slightly amended by Mike and now it would be going to the Board and that the Committee understood that.

Ross added the note that the amendment to the plan potentially causes some longer term issues in terms of management of the site, and that the SMC was available for consultation.

Mike added Paul's point that the SMC should be notified of any changes of this type.

Ross asked if there were any additional discussion or questions. No questions were received.

Ross asked if there would be any concerns with a change in the order of the agenda items having the Miami Corporation item be addressed next so that Glen Storch and Clay Henderson could present their information next. No concerns were received.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Miami Corporation Presentation

Mike introduced Glen Storch from the Miami Corporation and Clay Henderson of Holland and Knight and explained that they would be providing information on Miami Corporation plans.

Glen explained that he represents the Deering and McCormick families who have owned a significant amount of property under the Miami Corporation in northern Brevard and southern Volusia County for the past 20 years. The majority of the property is now used for silviculture, but

as the cost of gas and other items associated with this industry increase, it has become necessary to look for other options that would best maintain the land's value while considering growth issues. While researching options it became apparent that part of the land the families hold in both counties is habitat considered critical for conservation in both Brevard and Volusia counties and that the area is considered to be part of a potential conservation corridor between the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River that has been the focus of conservation agencies on a regional basis.

The Miami Corporation is considering a Rural Lands Stewardship and are working on a regional approach with different agencies to move forward a plan that they feel would result in viable conservation corridors while maintaining overall land value long term.

Ross stated that from his perspective, the area held by the Miami Corp. was critical to creating an environmental corridor that has been part of the EEL Program's goals since the Program began and which was critical in meeting the Program's biodiversity goals.

The SMC thanked Glen and Clay for their information.
Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

SMC REPORTS

Randy Parkinson stated that on February 9, 2009 he would be involved in the first of a first of several Forums on climate change at Brevard Community College. The meeting is free and additional information is available on www.spacecoastclimatechange.com.

Dave Breininger asked if the Translocation Request that had been e-mailed to the SMC just prior to the meeting could be discussed at the end of the meeting, if time permitted.

Paul stated that he would be leading a Florida Native Plant Society Field Trip to Coconut Point on February 21, 2009.

STAFF REPORTS:

Prescribed Fire – Dean Vanderbleek

Dean Vanderbleek, EEL Program Fire Manager, explained that during the last 6 months, at first the weather was extremely dry, and then the area became very wet from Tropical Storm Fay. He provided updates on Prescribed Fire activities:

- North Region - South Lake Conservation Area
 - 2 burns in the areas where the translocated Florida Scrub-Jays were moved to
- Central Region - Cruickshank
 - Site was under water for most of the summer
 - 2 burn days for a total of 18 acres
- South Region - Grant Flatwoods
 - 3 burn days, 135 acres + 2 smaller burns in areas missed by Mother's Day wildfires
- Attendance at Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference
 - Attended by approx. 500 people from all over the Eastern United States
 - Presentation to the group on Brevard County Mother's Day wildfires and how prescribed burning at EEL Program Sanctuaries prevented the spread of wildfires to other areas.
 - Total cost to County \$34 for gas
 - Gained prevention information on I-4 super fog incident in Polk County

- Learned of possible experimental Prescribed Fire modeling opportunity for EEL Program
- Learned of possible funding for mechanical reduction on potential Gopher Tortoise sites, as well as on occupied territory. Information provided to Land Managers.
- Fire meeting yesterday at EEL Program for local Prescribed Fire community
- Malabar
 - 15 acre prescribed fire across from Malabar Fire Department.

North Region – Xavier DeSeguin des Hons

Xavier DeSeguin des Hons, North Region Land Manager, gave a presentation on recent events in the North Region:

- Property exchange with Parks & Rec. W.W. James Park & Vero Pittsburg Partners property
- Enchanted Forest Sanctuary
 - Feral Hog trapping
 - Frequent citizen reports of seeing hogs near the trails
 - Xeric and Hydric Room renovations completed by Staff
 - Joe Swingle training guides
 - Repair work on Butterfly Garden Pond complete
 - 3 new staff (replacement positions)
 - Small engine plane crash
 - No injuries to occupants or anyone on the ground
 - Some damage to habitat, but not a great deal
- Nevins Property – Interim Management Plan being drafted
 - Invasive exotics plant removal grant received
 - Currently doing evaluation for public access assessment
- Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary
 - Small Prescribed Fire completed
- Indian Mound Sanctuary
 - Plan drafted, will come to SMC soon
- Fox Lake Sanctuary
 - Hog trapping
 - Bird Survey
- North Buck Lake Sanctuary
 - Burn Units 1 and 2 mechanical reduction has been started
 - Plants collected for survey – Paul Schmalzer to assist with identification
 - Bird surveys complete
 - Management Plan a few small changes, will come back to SMC
- Ag Ventures / Scottsmoor Partners, LLC property
 - Getting to know the new area
 - There has been a significant decrease in the vandalism to the EEL Program fences in this area
 - Site security and mapping
 - Fireline and Gate installation
 - Working on Interim Management Plan
- South Lake Conservation Area

- Burn unit 4 burned
- Unit 1 and 3 timbering
- Unit 5 timbering and mechanical reduction
- Translocation of Florida Scrub-Jays
- Trail Day

Additional Discussion

Dave Breininger explained that a feral hog can give birth to 16 offspring at a time.

Dave stated that Xavier deserves a lot of credit for getting the South Lake Conservation Area site ready to receive the translocated Scrub-Jays.

Ross asked about I-95 Welcome Center Expansion plans near the North Buck Land Sanctuary and requested clarification of whether or not there would be plans to request property for an expanded footprint for the Welcome Center and Rest Stop. Staff will research and provide information in the near future.

Kim asked for status on potato vine and *Ardisia* at the Enchanted Forest. Xavier stated the vine dies in the winter, but they will work it again in the spring and the *Ardisia* is treated all year long.

Ross asked about the status of the experiment on the release of the fly to control the Bromeliad weevil.

Xavier stated Dr. Cooper feels that the reason the experiment has not had more positive results has been due to the fly's sensitivity to cold weather, but the process is continuing.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY:

Keith Fountain, who participated in the meeting via conference call, reviewed the major activity points in The Nature Conservancy's January Report to the SMC.

Honey Hole Ranch - In reappraisal. Landowners continue to be interested in conservation easement, or fee simple sale.

North Indian River Lagoon (NIRL) – TNC is checking again for updated willing sellers. No appraisals going on at this time, waiting on outcome of Coastal Jewell negotiations.

Fox Lake – Negotiations with Wasileski underway. Owner not responding.

RJ Lands – will commence negotiations

Balkany – closing complete

Coastal Jewell – negotiations ongoing

AGENDA ITEMS con't.

Atlantic Coast Paladin Property

Public Comment

None

Mike provided overview information on this 19+ acre property which is located within the Town of Malabar north of the Jordan Scrub Sanctuary, east of I-95, and adjacent to the Coastal Jewell property which is currently in negotiation. He stated his understanding is that anything that would be decided would be contingent on the Coastal Jewell property being acquired.

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Paul agreed that without Coastal Jewell the property would be quite isolated.

Ross stated that he agreed that any acquisition should be contingent on Coastal Jewell and suggested a site visit.

It was determined that a site visit to the property would be appropriate. A site visit will be scheduled.

Additional Discussion

Dave Breininger asked about the status of a mitigation donation in the area that Brian Toland worked which includes 3 families of Scrub-Jays. Dave stated that the property has received significant management for Scrub-Jays.

Staff will research and provide additional information on this item.

Public Comment and Additional Discussion

Joseph Paladin, the owner of the Atlantic Coast Paladin property explained that he was here to represent the family and answer any questions that might arise.

Ross explained that if the EEL Program was not able to acquire the Coastal Jewell property, it would leave Mr. Paladin's property kind of like an island which would reduce the property's conservation value and management capability. Ross explained that the SMC would like to visit the site, to evaluate it so they would have information needed to make future decisions.

Mr. Paladin voiced his authorization for a visit to his property.

David Cox, stated the property was scrub, and wetland, and a small band of it went east of US1. There are approximately 1200 feet of lagoon front property with this site.

The SMC thanked the Paladins for coming to the meeting.

Management Review of South Beach Region

Ross stated that the SMC was hoping to identify issues which transcend the Program and asked for clarification from Ray for any items the SMC might need to note.

Ray Mojica, Land Manager for the South Beach region provided information on land management activity in the South Beach Region:

- Overview
 - There are eight sanctuaries in this region totaling approximately 400 acres
 - 6 management plans complete through BOCC approval
 - Barrier Island Management and Education Center draft Management Plan recently distributed to SMC for review
 - Graduate Student is working on Hog Point Cove Management Plan
- Ocean Ridge Sanctuary
 - Northern most portion of Archie Carr Refuge
 - Acquired by State, transferred to EEL Program for Management in 2002
 - Two Rare Plants
 - Trails
 - Some invasive exotic plant species including Rosary Pea
 - 53 active gopher tortoise burrows at last count
 - Dodder Vine, not invasive exotic, but possible concern

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- Coconut Point Sanctuary
 - Located south of County Coconut Point Park
 - Equipment induced wildfire previously burned everything north of road
 - Prescribed fire for the rest in April 2007
 - Management required for invasive exotic species Brazilian pepper, Rosemary Pea
 - Now some moon and love vine issues in areas historically treated for Brazilian pepper
 - Salt bush almost monoculture
 - Possible Concern - Almost exchanging invasive exotic monoculture for native monoculture

Additional discussion
Paul stated that the vine previously described as the dodder vine is actually love vine Cassytha filiformis and it is not necessarily a problem and just needs to be monitored at this point.
Kim suggested monitoring the salt bush
- Hog Point Cove Sanctuary
 - Some brontosaurus work
 - 1 Gopher Tortoise burrow
 - Some *Lantana depressa var. floridana*
 - No trails at this time
 - Considering prescribed fire, but would require substantial fire breaks for very small parcel.
 - General issue Red Bays dying become fuel
 - Caretaker House
 - Clam farm structure
 - It is anticipated that one third of the Red Bay trees at this site will be lost due to the Ambrosia Beetle.
 - Graduate student working on draft Management Plan and inspecting traps
 - Zach Prusak will help identify insects

Additional Discussion
Ross assume it will burn, determine and consider possible consequences
- Hog Point Sanctuary
 - A few Gopher Tortoise burrows
 - Some *Lantana depressa var. floridana*
 - Considering Prescribed Fire – concerns on removing any of small habitat for fire break.
 - Thick hammock adjacent to neighbors
 - Lots of native recovery on east side after removal of invasive exotic
- Washburn Cove Sanctuary
 - One of the most pristine hammocks
 - Some invasive exotics on edges
 - Great shape
 - Very thick along the roads, no plans for fencing at this time
- Maritime Hammock Sanctuary
 - Red bays 5% canopy lost due to invasive exotic beetle

- Trail extension
- Vandalism – full sized pickups broke in and damaged wetlands
- Major invasive exotic problem is torpedo grass near the stormwater project
- Caretaker facility complete and being used as maintenance facility
- Additional signage placed regarding alligators

Additional Discussion

It was suggested that a transect system similar to what was being used in the South Beaches Region be used for the Thousand Islands for replantings after the removal of Australian Pines.

- Barrier Island Management and Education Center

- Brontosaurus work completed for about one third of site
- There were 2 phases for the removal of Brazilian pepper
 - Two species of rare plants were located after pepper was removed
- New trail
- New Center
- Firebreak needed adjacent to Boardwalk
- Exotics: Torpedo Grass and Brazilian pepper
- Native planting and Butterfly Garden
- Beach clean ups
- Culvert traps in an impoundment which is open year round
- Management issue: dune restoration
 - Dune restoration going well, but staff is receiving some notification that if they don't accept current sand offer, the EEL Program may not be able to apply for future restoration
 - Staff is working with FEMA to get clarification

- Hardwood Hammock Sanctuary

- Good relationship with most sanctuary neighbors
- Same vine issues as other sanctuaries
- Exotics: Air Potatoes
- No plans to fence at this time.

Additional Discussion

Paul mentioned that on the very small sites where staff was contemplating prescribed fire, he would suggest holding off for the time being on installing fire lines when it would severely impact the amount of habitat.

Paul and Kim suggested the monitoring of vines, both exotic or native to see what happens, before spending a lot of time trying to remove them when they may not yet be a problem.

Ross agreed that the size of the site was an important consideration for management issues.

Kim asked if the management plans could be put on the internet to make reviews easier when they needed to be update.

Staff will research this possibility.

Ross suggested comparison of sites that were burned with those that did not burn for educational purposes.

Discussion: Management Permitting Requirements

This item was postponed until a future meeting.

Review of Florida Scrub-Jay Translocation Request

A second application for Scrub-Jay Translocation has been received from the Brevard Zoo and was distributed to the SMC shortly before the meeting. Ross asked Dave to provide a brief recap of the request.

Dave stated he doubted any Jays would actually be moved before next winter due to the lengthy permitting process, but he felt the first translocation effort has been undeniably successful so far, and that it would be nice to get one more group going to provide the additional experience that could be gained from a second translocation. If the Jays are moved, it will be in consultation with Fish and Wildlife recovery people, Game and Fish recovery people, scientists, the land managers, and consultations with SMC members. The Brevard Zoo is spearheading this relocation effort.

Paul stated he felt this application was better written than the first and he had sent a few minor corrections to the zoo a few days ago. He said the success so far at South Lake Conservation Area (SLCA) is certainly encouraging and warrants following up. Paul asked if there would be sufficient habitat available for additional Jays after the recent land management that has been done at SLCA.

Dave stated that there should be 5 possible sites and he felt that SCLA was the most likely candidate.

Ross said it was important to find out how the two families would respond.

Dave emphasized there were a lot of vulnerable populations at risk.

Ron asked if there could be concerns with introducing additional birds related to how territorial the species could be.

Dave said that there was no ideal site and this was an experimental approach. He mentioned that groups of Jays frequently work together to warn each other of the presence of Cooper's Hawks and he was hopeful for a positive response.

MOTION TWO

Paul Schmalzer moved to approve the EEL Program Species Translocation Application dated January 26, 2009 from the Brevard Zoo regarding Florida Scrub-Jays.

Kim Zarillo seconded the motion.

Additional Discussion

Xavier asked when it was expected that the new Jays might arrive at SCLA.

Dave said that it probably would be near the end of November.

Xavier stated he felt he could work with that time table.

Dave stated he didn't know if arrangements could be made but was pleased that the SMC would not be the hold up in the approval process and that a great deal was learned with the first translocation effort.

The motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on February 24, 2009.

ADJOURNED:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM.

SUMMARY OF MEETING MOTIONS:

- Motion to approve the December 18, 2009 minutes as amended.
- Motion to approve the January 26, 2009 Brevard Zoo Application for Species Translocation related to Florida Scrub-Jays.