



2021 Florida Forever Five-Year Plan

Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC)
Summaries of Hearings/Meetings
January-December 2020





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Council Meeting, Friday, February 14, 2020

After hearing announcements (Interim Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation Mr. Shawn Hamilton announcing Deputy Secretary Ms. Barbara Goodman's retirement, recognizing Mr. Jim Karels retirement with 12 years of service to the council and 35-year career with the Florida Forest Service[FFS], incoming FFS Director Mr. Erin Albury and Assistant Director Mr. Johnny Sabo) and approving the meeting summaries for December 12 and 13, 2019, the ARC approved the following:

- the fiscal year 2020-2021 Division of State Lands [DSL] Annual Florida Forever workplan for presentation to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund;
- a 1.07-acre reduction from the boundary of the Florida Keys Ecosystem Florida Forever Project (Monroe);
- a 0.94-acre reduction from the boundary of the Bombing Ridge Range Florida Forever Project (Polk);
- a 22.29-acre public transportation easement to the Florida Department of Transportation within Withlacoochee State Forest (FFS, Hernando/Sumter)(Linear Facilities Policy [LFP]);
- a 10-year management plan for Plank Road State Forest (FFS, Leon/Jefferson); and
- a 10-year management plan for Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park (Florida Park Service [FPS], Gilchrist).

ARC reviewed one minor management plan amendment; Goethe State Forest for an Operation Outdoor Freedom Hunt Camp (FFS, Levy). The ARC also considered the land management review reports from July to December 2019. The ARC also welcomed Ms. Deborah Burr, Office of Environmental Services Program Administrator and reviewed improvements to the ARC webpage.

Public Hearing, Wednesday, May 20, 2020

After hearing announcements, public comments were received for the Amtel Farms, Buck Island Ranch, Hendrie Ranch and Withlacoochee River Corridor Cycle 1 proposals. Ms. Glady Delgadillo (Conservancy of Southwest Florida) spoke in support of Amtel Farms, Dr. Hillary Swain (Archbold Biological Station) spoke in favor of Buck Island Ranch and Mr. Kent Wimmer (Defenders of Wildlife) spoke in favor of all four proposals.



Council Meeting, Friday, June 12, 2020

After hearing announcements (welcoming new member Mr. Erin Albury, Director of the Florida Forest Service and acknowledging Paula Allen's retirement from 34 years of service to the state including 15 years with the Florida Forever program), revisions to agenda items 2, 12, 15 and 16 and approving the meeting summaries for February and May, the ARC approved the following:

- a 10-year management plan update for Hillsborough River State Park (FPS, Hillsborough);
- a 10-year management plan update for Lake Talquin State Park (FPS, Leon);
- a 10-year management plan update for Picayune State Forest (FFS, Collier);
- a management plan for Fort Pickens State Park Aquatic Preserve (Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection [ORCP], Escambia/Santa Rosa);
- a 10-year management plan update for Silver Springs Conservation Area (Marion County, Marion);
- a management plan for Silver Springs Sandhill (Marion County, Marion);
- a 2.53-acre reduction from the boundary of the Bombing Ridge Range Florida Forever Project (Polk);
- a 995.0-acre addition to the boundary of the Bombing Ridge Range Florida Forever Project (Polk);
- a 170-acre addition to the boundary of the Natural Bridge Creek Florida Forever Project (Walton);
- a 149-acre addition to the boundary of the Florida Springs Coastal Greenway Florida Forever Project (Citrus);
- a 2.45-acre public road right-of-way easement to Walton County within Eden Gardens State Park (FPS, Walton, LFP);
- a 3.62-acre private easement to Duke Energy within Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (FPS, Alachua, LFP);
- a 0.77-acre public right-of-way easement to FDOT within the East Coast Buffer (DSL, Miami-Dade, LFP);
- a 0.68-acre private single-family access easement to Mr. and Mrs. Harrell within Withlacoochee State Forest (FFS, Sumter, LFP);
- a 3.019-acre private access easement to Mr. Thomas Gaskins within Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area (FWC, Glades, LFP); and
- a 1.35-acre right-of-way easement to the City of Miramar within conservation lands managed by the South Florida Water Management District [SFWMD] (Miami-Dade, LFP).

The ARC received public testimony and voted unanimously to approve the Project Evaluation Reports for Amtel Farms (Glades/Hendry), Buck Island Ranch (Highlands), Hendrie Ranch (Highlands) and Withlacoochee River Corridor (Citrus) Cycle 1 Florida Forever Projects. The ARC unanimously approved the Withlacoochee River Corridor proposal as a stand-alone project. ARC approved the addition of Amtel Farms to the Caloosahatchee Ecoscape Project boundary, Hendrie Ranch to the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Project boundary and Buck Island Ranch to the Fisheating Creek Ecosystem Project boundary by unanimous vote.

The ARC received public testimony on Abington Ranch (Okeechobee), Bluefield to Cow Creek (St. Lucie/Okeechobee), Crayfish Habitat Restoration (Bay), Welannee Watershed Forest (Okaloosa) and Withlacoochee River Addition (Citrus/Hernando) Cycle 2 proposals and voted unanimously by seven members to further evaluate the proposals.



ARC reviewed one minor management plan amendment, Tenoroc public use area; two management plans for areas less than 160 acres, Erna Nixon Park and Suwannee River Greenway at Bradford; and four incompatible use requests for private easements within Blackwater River State Forest and underground utility easement across West Orange Trail.

Council Meeting, Friday, August 21, 2020

After hearing announcements and approving the meeting summary from June 12, 2020, the ARC approved the following:

- a 30.147-acre private electric transmission line easement across Torreya State Park, Joe Budd Wildlife Management Area, Lake Talquin State Forest, Tallahassee-St. Marks Historic Railroad State Trail, Wakulla State Forest and Plank Road State Forest (FPS/WMD/FFS, Gadsden/Leon/Jefferson, LFP);
- a 10-year management plan update for Bell Ridge Longleaf Wildlife and Environmental Area (FWC, Gilchrist);
- an amendment to the management plan for Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area (FWC, Franklin/Gulf);
- an amendment to the management plan for Box-R Wildlife Management Area (FWC, Franklin/Gulf);
- an amendment to the management plan for Charles H. Bronson State Forest (FFS, Orange/Seminole);
- a 10-year management plan update for Hugh Taylor Birch State Park (FFS, Broward);
- a 10-year management plan update for John D. MacArthur State Park (FFS, Palm Beach);
- a 347-acre addition to the boundary of the Apalachicola River Florida Forever Project (Gulf);
- a 249.5-acre addition to the boundary of the Strategic Managed Area Lands List Florida Forever Project for the FWC (Hernando/Palm Beach); and
- a 41-acre addition to the boundary of the Strategic Managed Area Lands List Florida Forever Project for the FFS (Lake).

ARC reviewed four minor management plan amendments, Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park for equipment storage facility, St. Andrews State Park for multipurpose pavilion, Twin Rivers State Park for vehicle access and parking, and Myakka State Forest for water quality and drainage improvements; one management plan for properties less than 160 acres for Pine Island Ridge; and one private easement across the East Central Regional Rail Trail.

Public Hearing, Tuesday, September 1, 2020

After hearing announcements, public comment was received on the Abington Ranch, Bluefield to Cow Creek, Crayfish Habitat Restoration, Welannee Watershed Forest and Withlacoochee River Addition Cycle 2 proposals. Mr. Kent Wimmer (Defenders of Wildlife) spoke in favor of the Abington Ranch, Bluefield to Cow Creek and Withlacoochee River Addition proposals.

Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 2, 2020

After hearing announcements, public comment was received on the Abington Ranch, Bluefield to Cow Creek, Crayfish Habitat Restoration, Welannee Watershed Forest and Withlacoochee River Addition Cycle 2 proposals. Mr. Kent



Wimmer (Defenders of Wildlife) spoke in favor of the Crayfish Habitat Restoration and Welannee Watershed Forest proposals.

Council Meeting, Friday, October 9, 2020

After hearing announcements and approving the meeting summary from August 21, 2020, and regional hearing summaries from September 1 and 2, 2020, the ARC approved the following:

- removal of Tippen Bay Ranch, Caber Coastal Connector, Estero Bay and Upper St. Marks River Corridor projects from the 2021 Florida Forever Priority List;
- a 37.6-acre addition to the boundary of the Florida's First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project (Hernando);
- a 79.63-acre addition to the boundary of the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Florida Forever Project (Polk);
- a 221-acre addition to the boundary of the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Florida Forever Project (Highlands);
- a 354-acre addition to the boundary of the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Florida Forever Project (Highlands);
- surplus of a 0.98-acre parcel managed by the City of Doral to the City of Doral (Miami-Dade);
- surplus of a 0.29-acre parcel in the Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area in exchange for 1.01 acres of private property (FWC, Monroe);
- a 10-year management plan update for Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area (FWC, Osceola); and
- a 10-year management plan update for Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (FWC, Sumter).

The ARC received public testimony and voted unanimously to approve the Project Evaluation Reports for Abington Ranch (Okeechobee), Bluefield to Cow Creek (St. Lucie/Okeechobee), Crayfish Habitat Restoration (Bay), Welannee Watershed Forest (Okaloosa) and Withlacoochee River Addition (Citrus/Hernando) Cycle 2 Florida Forever Projects. The ARC unanimously approved the Bluefield to Cow Creek, Crayfish Habitat Restoration and Welannee Watershed Forest proposals as stand-alone projects. ARC approved the addition of Abington Ranch to the Kissimmee-St. Johns River Connector boundary and the Withlacoochee River Addition to the Withlacoochee River Corridor boundary by a unanimous vote.

ARC reviewed one minor management plan amendment for a property less than 160 acres to develop a new trailhead at the Mosquito Lagoon Marine Enhancement Center and one incompatible use request for a public utility easement at the Withlacoochee State Trail. ARC also reviewed the DSL Annual Conservation Easement Monitoring update, the Annual Land Management Review Report, the Annual and Biennial Land Management Uniform Accounting Council Reports and received a presentation on the DSL acquisition program.

Public Hearing, Thursday, December 10, 2020

After hearing announcements, ARC heard presentations on the Florida Forever 2021 Cycle 1 proposals for Big Pine Preserve by Ms. Susan Carr (North Florida Land Trust [NFLT]) and Wilson Ranch Property by Mr. Andrew Ketchel (Capital City Consulting).

ARC also heard presentations on boundary amendments for St. Johns River Blueway by Ms. Cherise Stewart (NFLT), Annutteliga Hammock by Ms. Laramie Ferry (FWC), Pinhook Swamp by Ms. Susan Carr (NFLT), Middle Chipola River by Mr. Jamie Streetman (representing the owner), Wekiva-Ocala Greenway by Mr. Carmen Rosamonda (City of DeBary),



Hardee Flatwoods by Mr. David Lott (representing the owner) and Wekiva-Ocala Greenway by Mr. Charles Power (owner).

ARC received public comments on the Florida Forever 2021 Cycle 1 Proposals and Florida Forever Project Boundary Amendments and other Florida Forever Projects.

Council Meeting, Friday, December 11, 2020

After hearing announcements and approving the meeting summary for October 9, 2020, ARC approved the following:

- 2021 ARC meeting calendar;
- 2021 Florida Forever priority list;
- A 2,213-acre reduction to the boundary of the Caloosahatchee Ecoscape Florida Forever Project (Glades/Hendry);
- by seven yes-votes to further evaluate Big Pine Preserve (Marion) and Wilson Ranch (Polk) 2021 Cycle 1 Florida Forever proposals;
- a 112-acre addition to the boundary of the St. Johns River Blueway Florida Forever Project (Clay);
- a 48.3-acre addition to the boundary of the Annutteliga Hammock Florida Forever Project (Hernando);
- a 147.5-acre addition to the boundary of the Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever Project (Hamilton);
- a 49.41-acre addition to the boundary of the Middle Chipola River Florida Forever Project (Jackson);
- a 9-acre addition to the boundary of the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway Florida Forever Project (Seminole);
- a 170-acre addition to the boundary of the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway Florida Forever Project (Volusia);
- a 160-acre addition to the boundary of the Hardee Flatwoods Florida Forever Project (Hardee);
- a 10-year management plan update for the L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area (FWC, Leon);
- a 10-year management plan update for the Belmore State Forest (FFS, Clay);
- a 10-year management plan update for the Bahia Honda State Park (FPS, Monroe);
- surplus of an 8-acre parcel in the Blackwater River State Forest in exchange for 16 acres of private property (FFS, Okaloosa); and
- a 0.68-acre private single-family access easement within the Blackwater River State Forest (FFS, Santa Rosa, LFP).

ARC reviewed one management plan amendment for John M. Bethea State Forest for a new recreation area and equestrian trailhead improvements, two management plans updates for properties less than 160 acres: Arch Creek Park and Sunny Isles Beach and two public utility easement requests for Coupon Bight/Key Deer and Tallahassee-St. Marks Historic Railroad State Trail were approved via the negative response process.