ITEM 4:

Quarterly status report on Land Management Reviews completed by the Division of State Lands from July to December 2019.

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Office of Environmental Services has coordinated onsite reviews of 16 managed conservation lands. The following sixteen land management reviews have been completed in the first and second quarter (July – December) and their reports are provided for the Council's information. The October 2020 annual report of land management reviews will be compiled from these and the remaining reports, presented to the Council for acceptance, and then submitted to the Board of Trustees.

The results of each review are compiled and returned to the managing agencies for their responses to recommendations and checklist findings. The sixteen summaries provided below briefly summarize finalized reports. These reports are backup to this agenda item.

Land Management Review of Joe Budd Wildlife Management Area (Gadsden County):

On July 16, 2019, the review team found Joe Budd Wildlife Management Area (11,039 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff for managing Joe Budd WMA in a manner to preserve and conserve while providing a suite of recreational and educational opportunities. The team also commended the FWC staff for implementing an aggressive feral hog control program which includes trapping. The team recommended and encouraged regular surveying of listed plant populations. Consider enlisting local Florida Native Plant Survey members and university personnel to assist in surveys.

Land Management Review of Lake Talquin State Forest (Leon and Gadsden Counties):

On July 17, 2019, the review team found Lake Talquin State Forest (17,491 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the Florida Forest Service (FFS) for the improvements and educational programs being provided at Bear Creek. The team also commended FFS for the excellent prescribed burning program, consistently achieving annual objectives.

Land Management Review of St. Marks River State Park (Leon County):

On July 19, 2019, the review team found St. Marks River State Park (2,590 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the Florida Park Service (FPS) for the reintroduction and continued use of prescribed fire across the park. The team recommended that the FPS consider restoration of ecotones at wet/mesic flatwoods, shrub bogs, and seepage slopes by incorporating pond pine, *Pinus serotina*, component into the restoration. This could be volunteer/AmeriCorps led, with little to no cost to the Florida Park Service.

Land Management Review of Escribano Point Wildlife Management Area (Santa Rosa County):

On August 6, 2019, the review team found Escribano Point Wildlife Management Area (4,057 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended FWC for working with partners to implement management actions including habitat restoration, monitoring and head-starting for the reticulated flatwoods salamander. The team also commended FWC for habitat restoration and management of natural communities using prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, and invasive plant control.

Land Management Review of Box-R Wildlife Management Area (Franklin County):

On August 8, 2019, the review team found Box-R Wildlife Management Area (11,216 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FWC for natural community restoration efforts. Mechanical fuel reduction along with prescribed fire have improved wildlife habitat and species diversity. At the same time, thinning of planted slash pines and underplanting with longleaf are beginning the gradual process of restoring the historical overstory. The team also commended the Box-R staff and manager for restoring the property that was just acquired 15 years ago, especially the large wet flatwoods area on the south side of the property. The team recommended that the FWC stay on top of shrub layer management for hydric pine flatwoods restoration. More than 2-year fire return interval may be insufficient.

Land Management Review of Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area (Osceola County):

On August 28, 2019, the review team found Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area (61,845 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FWC for excellent monitoring of Florida Grasshopper Sparrows and interagency cooperation in their restoration. The team also commended the FWC for excellent management of their prescribed fire program regarding the quality, frequency, and quantity of fire used to maintain natural communities. The team recommended that the FWC coordinate with SFWMD for management of the Kissimmee River Public Use Area or get an access easement so the land can be managed.

Land Management Review of Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area (Osceola County):

On August 30, 2019, the review team found Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area (16,295 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FWC staff for the work done on red cockaded woodpeckers and the results achieved. The team also commended the FWC for the discovery of a novel population of the striped newt at the WMA, and the management following the discovery (removal of cattle grazing in the area).

Land Management Review of Belmore State Forest (Clay County):

On September 17, 2019, the review team found Belmore State Forest (8,737 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FFS

for working with DHR prior to repair/replace of the bridge under construction now. The team also commended the FFS for continuing efforts to upgrade roads, bridges and culverts to protect water quality in the stream crossings. The team recommended that the FFS increase the number of acres burned and continue to move towards more growing season burns as restoration continues.

Land Management Review of Four Creeks State Forest (Nassau County):

On September 18, 2019, the review team found Four Creeks State Forest (10,221 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FFS for continuing improvement in prescribed fire program. The team also commended the FFS for significant efforts to control Chines tallow with the help of SJRWMD and other contributors. The team recommended that the FFS increase effort to document flora and fauna on this forest particularly listed species.

Land Management Review of John M. Bethea State Forest (Baker County):

On September 20, 2019, the review team found John M. Bethea State Forest (10,221 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FFS for continuing efforts to improve the forest's resilience to wildfire by converting to longleaf, widening firebreaks, and increased prescribed fire. The team recommended that the FFS add additional community types per the 2016 FNAI survey, which was conducted after the current 10-year management plan was written.

Land Management Review of Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area (Marion, Putnam, Levy and Citrus Counties):

On October 9, 2019, the review team found Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area (79,289 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FPS for an exemplary prescribed fire program and results in sandhill community, particularly considering a significantly challenging urban-wildland interface, including residential subdivisions and public roadways and highways, including I-75. The team also commended the FPS for excellent efforts managing vegetation and predators and posting spoil islands in Citrus County for the protection of shorebirds, American oystercatchers. The team recommended that the FPS continue and seek to further enhance funding for prescribed fire contracting and fuel wood removal. This recommendation is based upon the significant improvement demonstrated since the previous land management review in 2014 in fire dependent communities and percent of acres now in rotation. Additional contract funding and staff are required if the current and past inadequate staffing levels are not improved. Increased staffing is a critical need on the Greenway. The team also recommended that the FPS updates and improvement of manatee protection system at Buckman locks until partial restoration, as per the management plan, is implemented.

Land Management Review of Rainbow Springs State Park (Marion County):

On October 11, 2019, the review team found Rainbow Springs State Park (1,472 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FPS

staff on providing a wide array of recreational opportunities while managing visitor impacts. The team recommended that the FPS resume southeastern kestrel monitoring and nest box maintenance in coordination with FWC.

Land Management Review of Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County):

On October 23, 2019, the review team found Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (9,554.00 acres (5,533.00 BOT; 4,021 SWFWMD)) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FWC for groundcover restoration efforts in the pasture area. Staff is using adaptive management to fine tune a challenging process. The team also commended the FWC for providing both a comprehensive historical perspective of land ownership and a detailed account of how the land managers have accomplished previous objectives in the management plan. The team recommended that the FWC include more details about desired future conditions, and provide more detail about OBVM process in the management plan.

Land Management Review of Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area (Hernando County):

On October 25, 2019, the review team found Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area (27,262 acres) are being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FWC for their efforts to consider the resident Florida black bear subpopulation during management activities by protecting potential denning habitat and maintaining forage and cover for bears on the CWMA. The team recommended that the FWC improve plant inventory and list in the management plan.

Land Management Review of Little Big Econ State Forest (Seminole County):

On November 6, 2019, the review team found Little Big Econ State Forest (8,491 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the FFS manager for supporting diverse recreation through increased infrastructure and productive partnerships with those user groups. The team recommended that the FFS consider applying for FWC uplands invasive plant management funding for the larger infestations on the property.

Land Management Review of Spring Hammock Preserve (Seminole County):

On November 7, 2019, the review team found the Spring Hammock Preserve (1,505 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the actual management practices are following the management plan. The team commended the County for a very good proactive and reactive management of invasive species. The team recommended that the County provide additional staff members to assist with management of land.

DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

None required

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

None required