

ITEM 2:

Consider the August 21, 2020 meeting and September 1 and 2, 2020 regional public hearing summaries.

None

DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the meeting and regional public hearing summaries.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE

APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____

DEFER

WITHDRAW

NOT APPROVE

OTHER: _____

Acquisition and Restoration Council

August 21, 2020 Meeting Summary

Council Meeting: August 21, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Webinar meeting

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr. Tim Parsons, DHR
Mr. Erin Albury, FFS
Ms. Lynetta Griner, Citizen Member
Dr. Thomas Eason, FWC
Dr. Bill Palmer, Citizen Member
Ms. Elva Peppers, Citizen Member
Mr. Shawn Hamilton, ARC Chair, DEP

ARC Staff Director: Ms. Shauna Allen, DEP

Item 1: Call to Order at 10:00 a.m.

DEP Interim Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation Shawn Hamilton called the meeting to order. He asked ARC Staff Director, Shauna Allen to conduct the roll call. All 7 ARC members were present, and the quorum was established.

Ms. Allen provided housekeeping announcements including webinar instructions and information for public comments. She also announced minor corrections to Item 2 and an addendum to Item 4 correcting the acreage for Wakulla State Forest, revised survey maps and an overall reduction in the total easement acreage.

Item 2: Consider the June 12, 2020 meeting summary.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the meeting summary with minor corrections.

Discussion: None.

ARC Action: Chair Hamilton made the motion to approve the June meeting summary as corrected with Dr. Eason seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

ARC STAFF REPORTS

Item 3: Items approved by the Division of State Lands via the online negative response process since the June 2020 ARC meeting.

DSL Staff Remarks: Ms. Allen stated that several items were submitted and approved via the negative response process including 4 management plan amendments, one management plan for properties less than 160 acres and one private easement.

Discussion: None.

ARC Action: No action required.

LAND ADMINISTRATION

Item 4: Consider whether an approximately 30.147-acre private electric transmission line easement that traverses parts of 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, is consistent with the Board of Trustees' Linear Facilities Policy.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the easement

Discussion: Ms. Angel Granger, DSL/BPLA presented the Gulf Power request for an easement to install a 161 kV electric transmission line known as the North Florida Resiliency Connection from the substation in Sneads/Jackson County to Lake City/Columbia County. The proposed easement also includes non-conservation lands managed by the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Services. Ms. Granger listed the managed areas within the transmission line easement from Torreya State Park in Gadsden County to Plank Road State Forest in Jefferson and Leon Counties and the acreage associated with each managed area. She discussed the avoidance objectives for the proposed easement including colocation with other linear facilities, safety costs, alternative routes, environmental considerations and public outreach (April 2019-May 2020). Ms. Granger also discussed minimization of impacts due to co-location with existing facilities, crossing on perimeters of managed areas, and avoiding historic resources. The proposed easement fee will be based on the appraised value and replacement lands to be identified at 1.5 times the appraised value.

Dr. Eason expressed appreciation to the staff an applicant in the routing and for the thorough presentation. He stated that the project would benefit Floridians and asked that every effort be made to secure replacement lands.

ARC Action: Ms. Griner made the motion to approve the proposed easement with Ms. Peppers seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Due to a connection issue with the presenter, Items 5 and 6 were presented to the council after Item 10.

Item 7: Consider a 10-year update to the Bell Ridge Longleaf Wildlife and Environmental Area (Lease No. 4595).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the management plan.

Discussion: Ms. Dylan Haase with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission mentioned that Nathan Lambert the area manager was available to answer questions following her presentation. The Bell Ridge Longleaf WEA in northeast Gilchrist County is 720 acres. It is adjacent to the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Florida Forever project and was acquired by the Nature Conservancy in 1991. The BOT purchased the area in 2008. 100% of the in-tact sandhill site is managed for gopher tortoise habitat and associated upland species. The area is also a Florida Natural Areas Inventory reference site for sandhill habitat. It has recreational use and is a popular wildlife viewing area with 11.5 miles of trails and recreational facilities.

ARC Action: Ms. Peppers made the motion to approve the management plan with Ms. Griner seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 8: Consider an amendment to the Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area Management Plan (Lease No. 3584).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the management plan.

Discussion: Ms. Dylan Haase with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission presented this proposed amendment to add approximately 13,967 acres to the Apalachicola River WEA (ARWEA). The property is part of a 20,000-acre donation from The Nature Conservancy to the state known as the Lake Wimico donation. The remainder of the donation was be added to Box-R WMA. The new land brings the total area of the ARWEA to 77,423 acres. The ARWEA was established in 1974 to protect and buffer the Apalachicola Rive and Bay System. The amendment identifies management actions including coordination with FNAI and DHR for surveys, conduct prescribed burning, road maintenance and install gates and fences. The FWC will initiate the 10-year update to the management plan in the spring of 2021. Ms. Haase mentioned that the area manager Kathy Ricketts was available to respond to questions.

ARC Action: Mr. Albury made the motion to approve the management plan amendment with Dr. Palmer seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 9: Consider an amendment to the Box-R Wildlife Management Area Management Plan (Lease No. 4454).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the management plan.

Discussion: Ms. Dylan Haase with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission presented this proposed amendment to add approximately 6,194 acres to the Box-R Wildlife Management Area (BRWMA). The property is part of a 20,000-acre donation from The Nature Conservancy to the state known as the Lake Wimico donation. The remainder of the donation was be added to ARWEA. The new land brings the total area of the BRWMA to 18,427 acres. The BRWMA was established in 2003 to conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands protecting native species habitat and important water resources including Lake Wimico,

Apalachicola and Jackson Rivers and Apalachicola Bay. The amendment identifies management actions including coordination with FNAI and DHR for surveys, conduct prescribed burning, road maintenance and install gates and fences. The FWC will initiate the 10-year update to the management plan in the spring of 2022. Ms. Haase mentioned that the area manager Jerry Pitts was available to respond to questions.

ARC Action: Ms. Peppers made the motion to approve the management plan amendment with Dr. Palmer seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 10: Consider an amendment to the Charles H. Bronson State Forest Management Plan (Lease No. 3958).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the management plan.

Discussion: Mr. Shawn Gallagher with the Florida Forest Service presented the management plan amendment for Charles H. Bronson State Forest (CHBSF). The CHBSF is a shared ownership area with 90% BOT and 10% WMD. The management plan contemplates cattle management and the proposed amendment will allow the construction of two stock water ponds and a well to supply the cattle pens. Due to a switch in the cattle lessee the water source used by the previous lessee is not available. The proposed ponds and well replace the water source required for the cattle lease in existing improved pasture areas consistent with the grazing plan and Cow/Calf BMPs via the lease requirements. Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the 10-year update for the management plan due in December 2020 is on schedule.

Ms. Peppers asked if the lessee will construct the improvements. Mr. Jeff Lefils, the lessee, responded affirmatively that he would construct the two ponds and hire a well contractor to construct the shallow well for the cattle pens.

ARC Action: Dr. Eason made the motion to approve the management plan amendment with Ms. Griner seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 5: Consider an update to the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park Management Plan (Lease No. 3624).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the management plan.

Discussion: Ms. Yasmine Armaghani with the Division of Recreation and Parks, Office of Park Planning provided the presentation on the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park Management Plan (HTBSP) update. She mentioned that Park Manager Kyle Easley and Biologist Jeffery Bock were available to answer questions following the presentation. HTBSP was established in 1941 in Brevard County. This 175-acre park includes the unique feature, Lost Lake, a man-made lake and features recreation and interpretation. The park has 5 natural communities, 5 imperiled plants and 16 imperiled animals. There are also 24 recorded sites associated with the 1940-1960's Mediterranean Revival Style. Ms. Armaghani spoke about the management objectives to restore 7 acres of ruderal lake, treat 60 acres of exotics and control 2 exotic animals. There are

plans to improve the pedestrian path, flood adaptations and general landscaping along with an extension to the paddle craft dock, new seating area and trail maintenance.

ARC Action: Chair Hamilton made the motion to approve the management plan with Dr. Eason seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 6: Consider an update to the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park Management Plan (Lease No. 3205).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the management plan.

Discussion: Ms. Yasmine Armaghani with the Division of Recreation and Parks, Office of Park Planning provided the presentation on the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park Management Plan (JDMBSP) update. She mentioned that Park Manager David Dearth and Biologist Randy Cowan were available to answer questions following the presentation. JDMBSP was acquired in 1981 in north Palm Beach County and contains 436 acres. The park features undisturbed mangrove shoreline providing wading bird habitat, paddling, snorkeling and a nature education center. Containing 5 natural communities, 6 imperiled plants and 18 imperiled animals, the park protects 5 archaeological sites. Improvements planned include stabilizing dune crossovers, restroom renovations, Munyon Island facility improvements, formalizing the south paddling launch and new volunteer camping sites.

Mr. Martin Novoa, acting president of Beaches Institute, requested Council defer the management plan update. He stated that they are working with the legislature to address naturist use of beaches in Florida. The availability of clothing optional areas has declined, and he is advocating for family friendly naturist use of state parks. He mentioned that John D. MacArthur was a naturist and that the public comments were not adequately considered or addressed in the plan.

Mr. Gerald Ward of Rivera Beach, Palm Beach County expressed appreciation and stated that ARC is one of the most important activities. He spoke in opposition to the staff recommendation and offered two options to move forward: defer and send the park back to public meetings in Palm Beach County to respond to the comments or to refer to the Governor and Cabinet with heightened public interest/concern. He mentioned delays in this management plan update and asked for new investigations for cultural resources.

Ms. Shirley Mason, Executive Director for Beaches Foundation Institute established in 1979, advocated for clothing optional consideration at MacArthur beach because the namesake was a skinny dipper. She also mentioned that Mr. Ward was the original designer for the park and is interested in seeing the wishes considered for a designated section.

Dr. Eason asked for a DEP staff response. Ms. Armaghani stated that the park was unable to accommodate this interest. Dr. Eason asked if there was significant engagement with all stakeholder groups. He stated his concern that we are doing our best to meet the needs of multiple constituencies. Mr. Daniel Alsentzer, Division of Recreation and Parks, Office of Park

Planning stated that the interest group concerns are taken into consideration. They are mindful of the need to keep the beach accessible to all members of visitor groups and not zoning for special interest purposes.

ARC Action: Chair Hamilton made the motion to approve the management plan with Ms. Peppers seconding. ARC approved the item by majority vote (6-1).

FLORIDA FOREVER

Item 11: Vote on whether to amend the Apalachicola River Florida Forever Project Boundary to add five parcels totaling approximately 347 acres in Gulf County with a tax assessed market value of \$583,762.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

Discussion: Ms. Deb Burr, DSL Office of Environmental Services, presented the boundary amendment to add 347 acres to the Apalachicola River project boundary in Gulf County. The proposed addition is adjacent to the Apalachicola WEA and borders Lands Landing, Severn Springs Lake and the Chipola River. The proposed amendment would enhance connectivity to managed lands.

ARC Action: Dr. Eason made the motion to approve the boundary amendment with Dr. Palmer seconding. ARC voted unanimously by seven members to approve the amendment.

Item 12: Vote on whether to amend the Strategic Managed Area Lands List Florida Forever Project Boundary for the FWC to add three parcels totaling approximately 249.5 acres in Palm Beach and Hernando counties with a tax assessed market value of \$698,325.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

Discussion: Ms. Deborah Burr, DSL Office of Environmental Services, provided an overview of the Strategic Managed Area Lands List project approved in 2018 to help acquire private inholdings. Each of the managing agencies are allowed 10 parcels on the list. She described the proposed amendment from the FWC to add three parcels in Palm Beach and Hernando counties, the Compton/Smith 22.2-acre inholding to the JW Corbett WMA and Beteejay Spring/Storch 227-acre property adjacent to the Chassahowitzka WMA. The Compton/Smith inholding includes a portion of Big Mound City archaeological site. The Beteejay Spring feeds Crawford creek and is subject to a retained life estate by the owner.

Ms. Griner asked if the owner was residing on the property with the life estate and their age. Ms. Burr confirmed that the owner is residing on the property. Dr. Eason stated that the owner was in his 80s.

ARC Action: Dr. Parsons made the motion to approve the boundary amendment with Ms. Griner seconding. ARC voted unanimously by seven members to approve the amendment.

Item 13: Vote on whether to amend the Strategic Managed Area Lands List Florida Forever Project Boundary for the FFS to add one parcel totaling approximately 41 acres in Lake County with a tax assessed market value of \$88,160.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

Discussion: Ms. Deborah Burr, DSL Office of Environmental Services, described the proposed amendment from the Florida Forest Service to add one 41-acre parcel adjacent to Seminole State Forest in Lake County. The proposed addition comprised of scrub habitat and mature pine includes 6 acres of ephemeral ponds and provided habitat for gopher frogs and the Florida scrub jay.

ARC Action: Dr. Palmer made the motion to approve the boundary amendment with Dr. Eason seconding. ARC voted unanimously by seven members to approve the amendment.

CLOSING COMMENTS

ARC Announcements: Chair Hamilton announced the next scheduled ARC meeting on October 9, 2020 at 9 am location to be determined. Dr. Eason thanked staff for putting on a great meeting and all the prep work. He stated that he appreciates the public participation and asked for the state park staff to reach back and work with everyone. He stated that he takes the public comment seriously. Chair Hamilton stated his commitment to engage stakeholders vested in these resources in their communities. He stated that diverse views, needs and desires are important and that we are committed to hearing them all.

Ms. Peppers moved to adjourn the meeting with Dr. Eason seconding. ARC approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Summary of the September 1, 2020 Acquisition and Restoration Council Regional Public Hearing

Date: September 1, 2020

Location: GoToWebinar

Time: 3:00 PM Eastern

In Attendance:

Shauna Allen, DEP, ARC Staff Director
Deborah Burr, DEP, Division of State Lands (DSL)
Adam Bass, Conserveflorida.org
Alan Davis, FDACS, Florida Forest Service
Merrill Emfinger, DEP, DSL
Larame Ferry, FWC
Simone James, DEP, DSL
Jen Lomberk, Matanzas Riverkeeper
James Parker, DEP, DSL
Dean Saunders, Saunders Real Estate
Keith Singleton, DEP, DSL
Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife
Tom Houston, FWC

Ms. Allen opened the hearing with an orientation to the webinar. Ms. Burr chaired the meeting on behalf of DEP. Ms. Burr noted that there were several managing agency personnel in attendance as well.

Ms. Burr outlined the ARC Florida Forever selection and ranking process and the five new proposals being considered for Cycle 2. She then asked Ms. Allen to call for public comment.

Mr. Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, expressed support for the excellent conservation properties presented in the hearing. He mentioned that he also emailed a letter and maps sharing how these projects will contribute to the Florida Ecological Greenway network. On behalf of the Defenders he asked that Abington Ranch, Bluefield to Cow Creek and Withlacoochee River Addition proposals be added to the 2020-2021 Florida Forever List citing their significant features and benefits to listed and native wildlife.

There was no further comment. Ms. Burr adjourned the meeting at 3:18 pm.

Summary of the September 2, 2020 Acquisition and Restoration Council Regional Public Hearing

Date: September 2, 2020
Location: GoToWebinar
Time: 3:00 PM Central/4:00 PM Eastern

In Attendance:

Shauna Allen, DEP, ARC Staff Director
Deborah Burr, DEP, Division of State Lands (DSL)
Adam Bass, Conserveflorida.org
Keith Bryant, Bay County
Josee Cyr, Bay County
Merrill Emfinger, DEP, DSL
Larame Ferry, FWC
Simone James, DEP, DSL
Keith Singleton, DEP, DSL
Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife

Ms. Allen opened the hearing with an orientation to the webinar. Ms. Burr chaired the meeting on behalf of DEP. Ms. Burr noted that there were several managing agency personnel in attendance as well.

Ms. Burr outlined the ARC Florida Forever selection and ranking process and the five new proposals being considered for Cycle 2. She then asked Ms. Allen to call for public comment.

Mr. Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, expressed support for the excellent conservation properties presented in the hearing. He mentioned that he also emailed a letter and maps sharing how these projects will contribute to closing gaps in the Florida Ecological Greenway network. On behalf of the Defenders he asked that Crayfish Habitat Restoration and the Welannee Watershed Forest proposals be added to the 2020-2021 Florida Forever List citing their significant features and benefits to listed and native wildlife.

There was no further comment. Ms. Burr adjourned the meeting at 4:12 pm