

PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: April 1, 2008 (X) Consent () Regular
() Ordinance () Public Hearing

Department
Submitted By: Environmental Resources Management
Submitted For: Environmental Resources Management

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: the revised Management Plan for the Rosemary Scrub Natural Area.

Summary: The Rosemary Scrub Natural Area Management Plan was originally approved by the Board on March 4, 1997. The Management Plan was revised in 2007 to include additional information regarding the history of the site and its biological resources, a chronology of significant events and activities occurring since the County's acquisition, improvements in management techniques, and other new information. The County continues to manage the natural area with the assistance of the City of Boynton Beach. District 4 (SF)

Background and Justification: The Palm Beach County Natural Areas Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) reviews the management plans prepared by County staff for each natural area managed by the County and recommends approval of the plan by the Board of County Commissioners. The goal is to review each approved plan every ten (10) years after the initial management plan is approved. Each management plan should be revised as necessary on the basis of new information, research data, improvements in management techniques, or other relevant factors. NAMAC has reviewed the revised Management Plan for the Rosemary Scrub Natural Area and received public comments on the Management Plan at several of its meetings during 2007. NAMAC recommended approval of the revised Management Plan at its November 16, 2007 meeting. Capital improvements for site development (fencing, signage, trails, management roads/firebreaks, initial exotic vegetation removal, and public use facilities) have been completed. Annual maintenance and operation costs, including biological monitoring, on-going exotic vegetation treatment, and repair and replacement of facilities, as needed, are estimated to be \$78,294. The County will be responsible for \$69,594 of these costs in 2008 dollars. Actual increases for the site (beyond 2008) may be higher or lower than this amount. The remaining \$8,700 will be provided in contributed services by the City of Boynton Beach, as a management partner with the County. Over the past five years capital and maintenance costs for County owned/managed natural areas have increased an average of 10% per year. The next scheduled review of the Management Plan will be in 2017.

Attachments: 1. Rosemary Scrub Management Plan

Agenda Item is more than 50 pages;
may be viewed in Administration.

Recommended by: Richard E. Walch 3/6/08
Department Director Date

Approved by: [Signature] 3/19/08
County Administrator Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs	<u>\$69,594</u>	<u>\$76,553</u>	<u>\$84,209</u>	<u>\$92,630</u>	<u>\$101,893</u>
External Revenues	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Income (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In-Kind Match (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
 NET FISCAL IMPACT	<u>\$69,594</u>	<u>\$76,553</u>	<u>\$84,209</u>	<u>\$92,630</u>	<u>\$101,893</u>
# ADDITIONAL FTE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
POSITIONS (Cumulative)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes X No _____
 Budget Account No.: Fund 1226 Department 380 Unit 3162 Object var

Program E300

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Funds for management costs will be provided by ERM's Natural Areas Fund (1226). Actual costs estimated for 2008 and beyond may be higher or lower than projected.

C. Department Fiscal Review: JP

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and /or Contract Administrator Comments:

The annual maintenance and operations cost of facilities are estimated to be \$78,294 for FY 2008; however \$8,700 of that will be provided in contributed services by the City of Boynton Beach.

Atwillhite 3-17-08
 OFMB 2/2/08 VO
03/07

W. J. Fredout 3/18/08
 Contract Administrator

B. Legal Sufficiency:

M. J. J.
 Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review: Property & Real Estate Management

 Department Director



MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR

ROSEMARY SCRUB

NATURAL AREA

FCT PROJECT NO. 93-008-P3A

Prepared by

**Palm Beach County
Department of Environmental Resources Management
2300 North Jog Road, 4th Floor
West Palm Beach, Florida 33411**

THE PALM BEACH COUNTY NATURAL AREAS SYSTEM MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

The Palm Beach County Natural Areas System is composed of those environmentally sensitive lands that are owned or leased by the County and managed as natural areas by the County's Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM). These natural areas were selected on the basis of their biological characteristics and were acquired to preserve the rare and diverse native ecosystems present on these sites and the endangered, threatened, and rare species of plants and animals that live there.

Purpose and Goals of the Natural Areas System

- *The purpose of the Natural Areas System is to protect historic native ecosystems and their biological diversity throughout Palm Beach County. Examples of each ecosystem shall be acquired and managed to preserve in perpetuity the full complement of plants and animals characteristic of that ecosystem. The management of each natural area shall be coordinated with that of the other natural areas in the system to support existing populations and to reflect in perpetuity the subtropical biological diversity characteristic of Palm Beach County in pre-development times.*
- *The wilderness values of each natural area shall be preserved.*
- *Where a natural area currently is physically or biologically connected to another publicly- or privately-owned natural area, attempts shall be made to maintain that connection through additional land acquisitions, regulatory preserve set-asides, conservation easements, interlocal agreements, and other appropriate actions.*

Management Considerations

- *The natural areas in the system shall be available to the public for passive, resource-based recreation, environmental education, and scientific research. Public use shall not take precedence over ecosystem protection. Proposed public uses shall take into account the specific environmental conditions of each natural area, and may be modified in response to changing environmental conditions.*

- *Facilities for passive public use shall be provided on each site. These facilities shall be designed to have a minimal impact on native ecosystems and shall be located in previously disturbed areas as much as possible.*
- *Facilities, structures, or roads other than management or access roads that would cause fragmentation of a natural area shall not be permitted within a natural area.*
- *The establishment of compatible land uses and activities on lands adjacent to a natural area shall be encouraged.*
- *To the extent possible, fire-maintained native ecosystems shall be burned at the appropriate interval and season, as determined by historical data, to maintain those ecosystems. Burns shall be conducted by trained personnel, using a prescribed burn plan that addresses safety and smoke concerns. The seasonality of prescribed burns may be adjusted for initial fuel reduction burns and site safety constraints.*
- *Where ecosystems within a natural area have been impacted by invasive, nonnative plant infestations, land-clearing activities, drainage, or flooding, attempts shall be made to restore those ecosystems to their previous condition or to a natural ecosystem best suited to the existing conditions on the natural area.*
- *The special requirements of listed species shall be considered in developing management strategies for each natural area, but management for an individual species shall not take precedence over management of an entire ecosystem or be allowed to have a detrimental impact on that ecosystem's complement of species.*

Management Plan Development and Revision

- *A specific management plan, based on biological, hydrological, and historical information and interpretation of this information, shall be written for each natural area that takes into account the environmental conditions found on that natural area.*
- *Each management plan shall address the strategies and techniques that will be used to manage and restore native ecosystems, to protect listed species, control the*

occurrence of invasive, nonnative plants and animals, to allow for appropriate public access, and to prevent unauthorized access and activities.

- *Each initial plan shall be reviewed by the Palm Beach County Natural Areas Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC), a citizens' advisory board, and the public shall be invited to comment on the plan at a public hearing held by NAMAC in the community in which the site is located.*
- *Following NAMAC review of the comments received, the plan shall be sent to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.*
- *Each approved plan shall be subsequently reviewed every ten years thereafter, by NAMAC.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 13.59-acre Rosemary Scrub Natural Area is located within the City of Boynton Beach in southeastern Palm Beach County, Florida. The site was acquired in 1995 by Palm Beach County (the County) and the City of Boynton Beach. Funds were provided from the Palm Beach County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Bond Issue Referendum of March 12, 1991. Matching funds for the acquisition were approved by the Florida Communities Trust through its Preservation 2000 Program.

The primary purpose of this acquisition was to preserve important remnants of scrub and scrubby flatwoods vegetation communities. The secondary purposes were to provide for passive recreation, environmental education, and scientific research. The acquisition of the Rosemary Scrub Natural Area has assisted Palm Beach County and the City of Boynton Beach in the implementation of several policies within their respective Comprehensive Plans.

Scrub is the predominant natural community found on the site, with smaller areas of scrubby flatwoods. Scrub is one of the rarest natural communities in the state of Florida. Scrubby flatwoods also are considered to be very rare in the state. In addition, the acquisition and management of the natural area will preserve important habitats for several rare and/or endemic plant and animal species. Thus far, eight plant and seven animal species recorded on the site have been listed by at least one government agency or nonprofit environmental organization.

Fire exclusion, off-road vehicle trespassing, exotic pest plant invasions, agricultural alteration, illegal dumping, and clearing for and construction of adjacent roads and buildings have all impacted the site. In addition, managers face special challenges unique to fragmented natural communities located within urban and suburban environments. In recognition of the significance of the natural vegetation communities on the site, public use is limited to passive, non-consumptive recreation, environmental education, and scientific study. An accessible nature trail, a footpath and an interpretive display provide opportunities for the public to observe the site's distinctive scrub and scrubby flatwoods communities and their associated species, and to appreciate their biological uniqueness. Scientific research opportunities at the site include monitoring of populations of rare and/or endemic species, and evaluation of restoration and management technologies.

An initial management plan for the site was developed in 1997. This plan achieved two major goals: 1) to provide specific information required by the Florida Communities Trust's

Preservation 2000 Program and 2) to provide additional information and management recommendations so that management activities could begin promptly. It is the goal of the County to have each management plan reviewed every ten years thereafter, by the Palm Beach County Natural Areas Management Advisory Committee and to revise the management plan as necessary on the basis of new information, improvements in management techniques, or other relevant factors. This is the first revision of the Rosemary Scrub Natural Area Management Plan. The next revision is tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2018.

A stewardship report has been provided to the Florida Communities Trust each year for the past ten years. Stewardship reports for the years 1996 through 2006 show that listed species populations have remained stable within a normal range of fluctuation and the invasive vegetation control program has been successful. Public use facilities have been installed and have worked well, with minimal complaints received from the public. There have been a few negative occurrences at the site, including: damage to one of the fences caused by an automobile accident, canopy damage from several hurricanes, and some lewd acts. This revised management plan addresses these issues and summarizes the actions taken to deal with them.