

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Capital Expenditures	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Operating Costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
External Revenues	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Income (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In-Kind Match (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
NET FISCAL IMPACT	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes _____ No X
 Budget Account No.: Fund _____ Department _____ Unit _____ Object _____
 Program _____

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

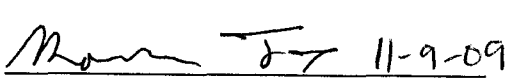
No fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

C. Department Fiscal Review: *sf*

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and /or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

 OFMB SP 11/5/09 11-5-09	 Contract Development and Control 11/6/09
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B. Legal Sufficiency:

 Assistant County Attorney
 11-9-09

C. Other Department Review:

 Department Director

Background and Policy Issues (concluded):


Staff continues to work under the direction of the Board as to the priorities for the Natural Areas Program. Those priorities were established at their February 26, 2008 Workshop. Staff recommends the County continue to follow those priorities. Not opening the bridge over the west leg of the C-18 Canal to equestrian uses would be consistent with that direction, given that other north-south and east-west trails, as well as local trail systems, have been established within the Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area for equestrian use.



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM
Palm Beach County
Environmental Resources Management

DATE: February 20, 2007

TO: Addie L. Greene, Chairperson
and Members of the Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Richard E. Walesky, Director 
Environmental Resources Management

SUBJECT: HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PALM BEACH COUNTY
LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM

The land acquisition program for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands and conservation lands has been completed. The last closing occurred February 8 for the purchase of the Whitesell property. The last meeting of the Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Committee (CLASC) was held on January 8. The resolution that authorized the formation of CLASC will automatically sunset after receipt by the Department of Environmental Resources Management of official notification from the County's Financial Management & Budget Department that no funds are available from bond issue proceeds. The Natural Areas Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) will continue to meet to review management plans prepared by staff, obtain public comment on these plans, and provide recommendations to the Board for approval of the plans.

A summary of the history and accomplishments of the land acquisition program is attached for your information and use. Please feel free to contact me at 233-2400 or rwalesky@co.palm-beach.fl.us if you have any questions regarding the summary or if we can be of further assistance.

REW:KMB

Attachment

cc: Robert Weisman

County Administrator

HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PALM BEACH COUNTY NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM – 1988-2006

Program History

- 1988 – Inventory of Native Ecosystems Phase III report approved by Board of County Commissioners; Board designated ecosystems in study as environmentally sensitive areas of countywide concern and directed that their locations be incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and that County departments use the information in the report in their reviews and programs; County and City of Delray Beach jointly acquired Leon M. Weekes Environmental Preserve
- 1989 – Final report of Inventory of Native Ecosystems study completed; Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (89-23) adopted to provide regulatory protection for high-quality sites until they could be acquired; Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Advisory Committee appointed to identify potential sites for acquisition
- 1991 – Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Selection Ordinance (91-13) adopted; Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Selection Committee appointed after voter approval of the March 12, 1991 Environmentally Sensitive Lands Bond Referendum, which provided \$100 million for acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands; The Nature Conservancy hired to negotiate with landowners and provide other acquisition-related services
- 1994 – Natural Areas Ordinance (94-13) adopted to provide regulatory protection for the properties acquired; Natural Areas Stewardship Endowment Fund Ordinance (94-31) adopted to provide mechanism to assist in funding perpetual management of natural areas; Natural Areas Management Advisory Committee appointed to review management plans and procedures, conduct hearings to obtain public input on management plans, and recommend adoption of management plans
- 1999 – Conservation Land Acquisition Committee appointed to develop procedures, priorities and criteria for the acquisition of conservation lands; County voters approved the \$150 million March 9, 1999 Land Acquisition for Conservation Purposes Bond Referendum, which included up to \$100 million for the acquisition of lands within the Agricultural Reserve to be used for continued active agriculture, water resources, and open space, and not less than \$50 million for the continued acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands and greenways; Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Committee appointed to recommended acquisition of conservation lands and agricultural lands; second contract with The Nature Conservancy approved; contract approved with The Conservation Fund to assist with negotiations
- 2003 – Conservation Lands Protection Ordinance (2003-052) adopted to establish policy and procedures for approval of conveyance of an interest in conservation lands when such conveyance would result in an exceptional benefit to the Natural Areas Program

- 2006 – Policy for the Acceptance of Conservation Lands adopted to provide criteria and procedures for consideration of acceptance of donations of conservation lands from homeowners' associations and developers for management by ERM

Program Accomplishments

- A total of 35,063 acres of conservation lands were protected through the program as of December 31, 2006. Of these, 2,121 acres of environmentally sensitive lands were sold to the State for incorporation into the Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area and 131 acres of lands in the Agricultural Reserve were sold to agricultural interests with conditions requiring the lands to be used for agriculture.
- The \$150 million in conservation land bonds initially dedicated for environmentally sensitive lands yielded property appraised at \$317,872,177, for which the County spent only \$177,836,600 due to owner discounts, mitigation revenue designated for land acquisition, partnerships with regional and local government agencies, and matching funds received through grants from state land acquisition programs – a savings to the County of \$140,035,577.
- Discounts from owners totaled \$54,878,410.
- Mitigation revenues received from federal and state regulatory programs totaled \$9,904,077.
- Matching funds received through partnerships with regional and local government agencies totaled \$9,626,047.
- State matching funds totaling \$65,627,043 were obtained through successful applications to the Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) Preservation 2000 Program (\$24,405,577) and the Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever Programs (\$41,221,466) of the Florida Communities Trust (FCT).
- Palm Beach County has partnered with 9 municipalities in submitting successful applications to FCT and is one of the top 6 counties in the number of successful grant applications to FCT.
- Of the 2,356 acres still owned by the County in the Agricultural Reserve, 1,782 acres are leased back to the original owners for agricultural uses. The annual revenues from these leases total approximately \$1.6 million. The remaining 574 acres are co-owned with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and will be used for water resource and recreational purposes.
- The County is granting conservation easements over each natural area or part of a natural area owned by the County to provide additional long-term protection for these lands – one easement to SFWMD and one to The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Conservation easements have already been granted to both entities over 4 natural areas and are in

process for 4 additional natural areas. A conservation easement was granted to SFWMD over part of another natural area, and conservation easements over the entire site will be granted to both entities in the near future.


- Thirty-four natural areas are under County management, and the County has management oversight on another natural area (Leon M. Weekes Environmental Preserve).
- Interlocal agreements were approved with 9 municipalities, 1 federal agency, 1 state agency and 1 improvement district for assistance in the management of 19 natural areas.
- Management plans were approved by the Board for 15 natural areas and by other entities for 2 natural areas (Jupiter Inlet and Sweetbay).
- Visitor use facilities have been constructed at 13 natural areas, providing improved access and parking for 3,345 acres of conservation lands for passive recreational activities. Facilities for 8 additional natural areas are in design that will provide improved access and parking for an additional 10,139 acres.
- A site steward program was developed and site stewards for 15 natural areas were trained to assist with site inspection, monitoring, and volunteer management activities.
- A volunteer program was developed and 20,634 hours of volunteer service were contributed by individuals, companies, school groups, church groups, environmental groups, service groups, and site stewards since January 2000 in the preparation of sites for public use, restoration projects, and ongoing management activities – a savings to the County of \$358,445.
- Grants and mitigation funds totaling \$18,082,001 have been received or are pending for exotic plant control, hydrologic restoration, and habitat restoration and enhancement on these lands.
- Seven restoration projects were completed on 7 natural areas and 13 restoration projects are in progress on 8 natural areas.
- An interagency master plan was developed for the approximately 154,000-acre Northeast Everglades Natural Area (NENA) in northern Palm Beach County and southern Martin County.
- The 72-mile Ocean-to-Lake Trail (OLT), a hiking trail that connects the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Okeechobee, is nearly complete. Three bridges have been designed for crossings of the Loxahatchee River and the C-18 Canal, and negotiations are in progress for making the final connection to Lake Okeechobee. The Ocean-to-Lake Greenway, which includes the OLT, has been designated as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System.



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