

**SEMINOLE COUNTY
PARKS & PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NATURAL LANDS SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING January 28, 2015**

ATTENDANCE:

Members:

Tom Boyko
Barbara Whittier
David Williamson
Ed Ghiglieri

Staff:

Jim Duby

Guests:

Pete Brewer
Comm. John Horan
Matthew Criswell
Jeff Ebbers

LOCATION:

Econ River Wilderness Area

TIME:

8:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m. at the Econ River Wilderness Area. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1990 and 2000 Referendum review – Jim Duby gave a brief history of the referendums held and voted on in 1990 and 2000 explaining they established funding of 20 million and 25 million respectively. Mr. Duby also explained the original language stated the funds were to purchase and preserve environmentally significant lands for preservation, env. education and the properties natural storm water functions. Discussion followed on how those funds could be spent on property purchase and initial improvements and the Natural Lands donation fund on ongoing management and replacement.

NEW BUSINESS:

Canoe/Kayak Launch at ERWA and or LHWA – The group welcomed members of the Trails and Blueways subcommittee to discuss the possibilities, appropriateness and or feasibility of someday establishing a canoe kaya launch at this site. Using a large aerial photograph Jim Duby started with a brief introduction to the property. Commissioner Horan spoke of the Foundation and its role in funding approved projects on all Leisure Services sites. He compared it to the Friends of the Libraries and how successful that has become. He stated a canoe/kayak launch along the Econ might be a good project for this funding source.

Jim Duby expressed concern regarding the establishment of a remote parking area away from the main entrance and caretaker residence. The area at the end of McCulloch Rd. has a long history of dumping, fence breaks and other vandalism. Mr. Duby also stated it would require the clearing of Sandhill habitat which is one of, if not the, most rare upland habitats in the County as well as the State and is inhabited by many gopher tortoises.

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The group traveled down to the end of the cul-de-sac on McCulloch Rd. to look at a potential site for access. It was observed that the large transmission line would be a more desirable option than clearing additional land on the wilderness area. There was discussion on whether other road crossings to the south i.e. Lake Pickett Rd. or Highway 50 had been looked at. The group seemed to agree that other options be exhausted prior to considering the wilderness area.

The group then traveled to the Lake Harney Wilderness Area. At this location the group quickly reviewed the aerial map and then traveled down to the St. Johns River. Jim Duby discussed the fact that a Consultant had been hired for the development of a master plan several years ago. The plan included three phases or levels of improvement. The Board of County Commissioners selected the lowest level and that is how the site was developed. He stated that the highest level did include establishing a canoe/kayak parking area further east on the site, closer to the river. This phase also included the addition of a caretaker residence.

The area near the river was looked over and a couple of options were discussed. Jim Duby pointed out the proximity to Deep Creek across the river which would be a great canoe/kayak destination. Mr. Duby also stated he had the same concerns regarding a remote parking area and the history of undesirable activities that have occurred on site. It was also pointed out that several significant archeological sites existed in this area and would need to be considered during any future improvements. It was discussed that a presence on site would be highly desired if such a facility was to be considered.

Meeting adjourned at app. 10:40 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on **February 25, 2015 at the Geneva Wilderness Area** at 8:00 a.m. address: 3485 County Rd 426 Geneva, FL 32732