

ITEM 4:

Status report on Land Management Reviews completed by the Office of Environmental Services from October 2020 to June 2021.

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

During Fiscal Year 2020-21, the Office of Environmental Services conducted onsite reviews of 19 managed conservation lands. A summary of the land management reviews that were completed in quarters 2, 3 and 4 by regional review teams (pursuant to S. 259.036, F.S), are included below.

The results of each review are compiled into reports and returned to the managing agencies for their responses to recommendations and checklist findings. These reports can be reviewed as backup to this item.

Land Management Review of Weedon Island Preserve (Pinellas County):

On November 17, 2020, the review team found Weedon Island Preserve (3,164 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the Pinellas County staff for the outstanding control of invasive species at the preserve, and for recruitment and use of volunteers in the absence of adequate staffing. The team recommended the Pinellas County recruit a full-time ranger for the preserve to conduct trail maintenance, education, exotic species removal, and site security.

Land Management Review of Hillsborough River State Park (Hillsborough County):

On November 18, 2020, the review team found Hillsborough River State Park (3,319 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) for excellent resource management, fire management and monitoring programs. Additionally, exotic pest plant control efforts have shown excellent results. Park staff are doing an excellent job with the funds provided. The team recommended the DRP increase funding for the management of the park due to the pending urban expansion in the vicinity.

Land Management Review of Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park (Pasco County):

On November 19, 2020, the review team found Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park (3,999 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended DRP for improvements to educational and interpretive signs made since the last land management review.

Land Management Review of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park (Walton County):

On January 26, 2021, the review team found Topsail Hill Preserve State Park (1,643 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the DRP for achieving 100% of inholdings acquisition at this park. The team also commended the Florida Park Service (FPS) for the amount of prescribed burning being done on the property

with the rapidly growing amount of development around the park. The team recommended that the DRP shift to growing season burns as much as possible at this park.

Land Management Review of Point Washington State Forest (Walton County):

On January 27, 2021, the review team found Point Washington State Forest (15,281 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the Florida Forest Service (FFS) site preparation tactics used in order to preserve and maintain native groundcover species, and for managing fire on this landscape while dealing with wildland urban interface and challenging environmental factors. The team recommended that the FFS explore mechanical and chemical treatments to aid in wetland restoration in addition to prescribed fire.

Land Management Review of Grayton Beach State Park (Walton County):

On January 29, 2021, the review team found Grayton Beach State Park (2,171 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the DRP for continued attention to seasonality of prescribed burns on the area. The team also commended the DRP for focused efforts to use multiple tools (fire, mechanical, and hand removal) to control undesirable hardwood mid-story species (primarily titi) and to enhance herbaceous groundcover and abundance of imperiled plants.

Land Management Review of Etoniah Creek State Forest (Putnam County):

On February 3, 2021, the review team found Etoniah Creek State Forest (8,691 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the FFS for the sand pine removal in the scrub natural community that moved the habitat toward better condition for rare and endemic species, and for using the gas line easement funds to improve public access.

Land Management Review of Welaka State Forest (Putnam County):

On February 4, 2021, the review team found Welaka State Forest (2,287 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the FFS staff for the addition of the steps in Mud Spring, for sediment and erosion control in that area and for safe public access to the spring. The team recommended more growing season fire in the communities in order to meet the goals of the management plan.

Land Management Review of Lover's Key State Park (Lee County):

On February 24, 2021, the review team found Lover's Key State Park (1,397 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the DRP for efforts in the removal and maintenance of solid waste throughout the park, including providing recycling bins in high use areas. The team also commended the DRP for efforts in treatment and removal of exotic invasive plants throughout the park.

Land Management Review of Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest (Collier and Hendry counties):

On February 26, 2021, the review team found Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest (32,349 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the FFS for the improved interpretive and informative signage on the boardwalk and elsewhere in the forest. The team also commended the FFS staff for their overall effort to control and maintain the exotic plant species in the forest.

Land Management Review of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park (Monroe County):

On March 15, 2021, the review team found John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park (63,839 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team recommended and requested that a Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) liaison be assigned to work with park staff to better coordinate park activities, and to increase staffing resources (if possible) to adequately support the high public visitation and conservation of the park's natural resources.

Land Management Review of Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park (Monroe County):

On March 17, 2021, the review team found Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park (10,817 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the DRP for maintaining excellent condition of all natural and cultural resources and restoring submerged resources with extremely limited staff and funding. The team also commended the park staff for the ongoing exotic plant and animal removals within the park. The team recommended that DRP coordinate with FWC to increase law enforcement presence to better protect both upland and submerged resources.

Land Management Review of Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock State Park (Monroe County):

On March 18, 2021, the review team found Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock State Park (2,805 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the state park staff for their restoration at Fort Bougainville and Carysfort Yacht Club, and continuation of the long-term restoration projects. The team recommended the management plan include priority research needs targeted for resource management.

Land Management Review of Bald Point State Park (Franklin County):

On April 21, 2021, the review team found Bald Point State Park (4,875 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the state park staff on their ability to apply fire on the landscape despite the challenges with inholdings and adjacent properties, and for thinking comprehensively about conservation and environmental issues and public uses at the park and managing to accomplish their goals with the resources available.

Land Management Review of Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park (Leon County):

On April 23, 2021, the review team found Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park (1,169 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended

the DRP for their knowledge and caring for the management of the park, and for the management of the gardens and maintaining the historical aspects of the park.

Land Management Review of Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area (Franklin and Gulf counties):

On May 12, 2021, the review team found Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area (63,257 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the manager for the comprehensive approach to habitat management and restoration for wildlife, imperiled plants and the natural communities environment.

Land Management Review of Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park (Franklin County):

On May 14, 2021, the review team found Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park (2,024 acres) is being managed for purposes compatible with conservation, preservation, or recreation, and that the management practices are in compliance with the management plan. The team commended the park staff on the innovative thinking in turning the challenges of Hurricane Michael into opportunities and adapting the interpretive programs when the old ways were not an option. The team also commended the park staff for the ability to manage for visitor impacts, such as closing off vehicular traffic to the east end for the protection of habitat of the ground nesting birds.

DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

None required

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

None required