Urban Wilderness Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Parks and Recreation Division Administration Offices
Cypress Conference Room
950 NW 38th Street
Oakland Park, FL 33309

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:07 PM

Roll Call: Roll was called; a quorum was present.

Board Members Present:

Corey Callaghan
Marcey Carabelli
Elizabeth Dutra
Ken Evans
Roberto Fernandez, III
Diana Guidry (via Zoom)
Brian Rosen

Staff:

Linda Briggs Thompson, Manager, Environmental Management Group
Michel Therrien, Environmental Project Coordinator, Environmental Management Group
Elena Suarez, Environmental Specialist, Environmental Management Group
Lisa Totten, Administrative Assistant, Broward County Parks and Recreation
Amanda Tolbert, Assistant County Attorney

Guests: None.

Public Input: None.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes from the May 21, 2025 Meeting: Marcey Carabelli made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2025, meeting and Roberto Fernandez, III seconded. The minutes are approved unanimously.

Public Hearing to be held on October 15, 2025 and Status of Sites to Add to Inventory

Linda Briggs Thompson reported that the team has been preparing for the Public Hearing, which is scheduled for October 15, 2025, at 6:30 PM at Plantation Heritage Park. Ms. Briggs Thompson explained the process of moving sites from "Sites to Add to the Inventory" to "Sites on the Inventory for Review" and the plan to present each proposed site with a brief overview, location, what it protects, observed species, acquisition background where available, and then to

conclude with a vote on a letter from the Chair Callaghan to the County Commission. The letter from Chair Corey Callaghan to the County Commission was discussed, and Ms. Briggs Thompson stated it will formally request moving the listed sites into the "Sites on the Inventory for Review" category. Amanda Tolbert stated she will prepare a Resolution for the UWAB to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners add the listed sites to the Urban Wilderness Inventory. The Resolution and the letter will then go to the County Commission, who will review and conduct its own public hearing, which is usually on the regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting. In order for the sites that are on the list "Sites on the Inventory for Review" to move to "Designated Urban Wilderness," an Ordinance that includes all advancing sites will need to go before the County Commission for two readings. She noted that accurate legal descriptions are anticipated to be one of the more challenging aspects of the process. Cities who are owners of the proposed sites will receive official notices at least 30 days prior to the Public Hearing. Staff have been meeting informally with the municipalities to explain the process. Ms. Briggs Thompson mentioned they would not advance listings over a city's objection, citing Coconut Creek's current reluctance and Lighthouse Point's request not to list DeGroff Park at this time. She confirmed the Public Hearing will cover all sites moving forward, will use a concise slide for each site, and that the UWAB will host the hearing, vote on the letter and recommendation of the Resolution in that same meeting, after which the package goes to the County Commission. Ms. Briggs Thompson added that outreach meetings are underway with the City of Dania Beach, the City of Fort Lauderdale, the City of Plantation, and the City of Oakland Park. She also mentioned that state-owned sites under county lease are being officially noticed. Members may inform their appointing Commissioners, at their discretion, with the final site list and maps to accompany the letter once finalized. Ms. Tolbert clarified the timeline and the steps involved in getting the resolution approved by the County Commission. Ms. Briggs Thompson emphasizes the importance of celebrating conservation lands and the process of getting sites designated.

Site Visit to William J. Kelley Rookery and Fern Forest

Ms. Briggs Thompson proposed conducting site visits to W.J. Kelly and Fern Forest, noting that Fern Forest would allow the group to look at the prairie, walk through the area, and see recent plantings and invasive removal work. Several possible dates were offered, and after discussion the group aligned on December 2, 2025 in the morning, with the plan to meet first at W.J. Kelly for a brief stop, estimated at about 10 minutes, and then caravan to Fern Forest. Staff said directions would be sent, and Ms. Briggs Thompson clarified that W.J. Kelly is just north of Commercial and Lyons.

<u>New Business</u>:

Board Membership

Ms. Briggs Thompson stated there are two vacancies on the Board—District 7 (Commissioner Alexander P. Davis) and District 8 (Commissioner Robert McKenzie)—and invited members to suggest candidates. Ken Evans mentioned Commissioner McKenzie could be a good contact given his district ties. Michel Therrien added the requirement that Board members must be

county residents; Ms. Briggs Thompson clarified that while appointees can live anywhere in the county, some Commissioners prefer appointees from within their own districts.

Section Update

Michel Therrien provided an overview of the Environmental Management Group's activities. He reported that the West Lake mitigation project is essentially complete and entering a five-year monitoring phase. Mr. Therrien displayed before-and-after results at West Lake Island two where Australian pines were removed to create future seagrass habitat. The Environmental Management Group's hosting and participation in the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area ("ECISMA") July 2025 meeting where restoration and prescribed fire work were highlighted. Mr. Therrien also detailed extensive invasive plant treatments across multiple sites (e.g., Crystal Lake Sand Pine Scrub, Highland Scrub, Fern Forest north and south prairies, Military Trail, Pine Island Ridge, Snake Warrior's Island, Tradewinds Park, Tree Tops, Woodmont, Tall Cypress, Miramar Pineland), including notable air potato and syngonium/pothos efforts. He described an early-detection rapid-response ("EDRR") capture of an Argentine black and white tegu at Snake Warrior's Island with collaboration of the Croc Docs. He also outlined ongoing monitoring and surveys (photo points, gopher tortoise, burrowing owl, rehydration pumps, prescribed-fire monitoring) and mechanical restoration at Deerfield Island. Mr. Therrien recapped recent native plantings at Fern Forest prairies, Hollywood North Beach dunes (via Florida Wildlife Foundation grant), and Deerfield Island, supported by the 4-H greenhouse partnership with Fairchild for propagation and seed banking; he highlighted rare-plant work such as Euphorbia seed introductions at Crystal Lake, additional yucca filamentosa at Military Trail after fire, and hand-pollination attempts for Curtis's milkweed. He reviewed prescribed burns at Fern Forest's north prairie and Military Trail's northwest parcel with improved native response and reduced invasives; and noted expanded public programming (yoga, bat walks, youth education). Ms. Briggs-Thompson highlighted the NACo award for the "Niños en la Naturaleza" program received by the Naturalists, and STEAM initiatives reaching BMSD schools with FAU support.

Corey Callaghan inquired about the status of the least tern platform, and Staff provided an update on its progress.

Additional New Business: None.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.