Urban Wilderness Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 19, 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 6:00 PM

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

Board Members Present:
Corey Callaghan
Marcey Carabelli
Ken Evans
Roberto Fernandez, III

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

Guests: None.

Public Input: None.

Old Business:
Approval of Minutes from the December 4, 2024 Meeting: Corey Callaghan made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2024, meeting and Marcey Carabelli seconded. The minutes are approved unanimously.

Logo Update
Michel Therrien presented updated logo designs and displayed several updated renderings. Cory Callaghan and Ken Evens like the first two logos presented. The board discussed two similar logo versions - one with a circular border and one without. The group had a lively discussion about the logos including the various features, colors, and building silhouettes. The board requested that County Staff bring back similar logo versions to the next meeting, with specific instructions to adjust the building's design. Mr. Callaghan made a motion to bring back 3 or 4 similar versions and to finalize the logo design at the next meeting after making these slight adjustments. The motion was seconded by Roberto Fernandez, III, and passed unanimously.

Status of Sites to Add to Inventory
Linda Briggs Thompson reported that staff have made progress in evaluating potential sites for potential inclusion in the inventory. They have gone through each site and identified the next steps required to move them forward in the designation process. These tasks vary by site and can include writing letters to the cities, preparing management statements, or completing other site-specific requirements. Their approach is to group sites with similar requirements and create a plan to move them forward in the designation process. They are working with the county attorney to establish timelines for each site's progression.

Update on Miramar Athletic Park Addition
Ms. Briggs Thompson provided an update on the Miramar Athletic Park Addition, which the board had previously visited. She reported that while the city had done some work, such as removing some trash, the site still needs significant improvement. Ms. Briggs Thompson reached out directly to park operations, sharing photos and offering to meet with them to discuss management ideas. She specifically emphasized the need to fence the area to make it look more like an official park space. The board discussed this as a potential compliance issue, with Ms. Briggs Thompson noting that enforcement would typically fall under the Environmental Protection Department or Resilient Environment Department. Corey Callaghan suggested that a letter from the Urban Wilderness Advisory Board might be helpful, but the board decided to wait and see how the city responds to Ms. Briggs Thompson's communications before taking further action.

Discussion ensued about other natural areas that are not part of the conservation 2000 bond and are being managed by any entity. Mr. Evans stated he would visit the Hollywood North Beach addition, which is off of A1A, south of Dania Beach Boulevard. Mr. Fernandez made a motion to allow Mr. Evans to go to the Hollywood North Beach Addition, to survey the property, take photographs, and then report back to the board at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Carabelli and passed unanimously.

Site Visit to William J. Kelley Rookery
The board discussed a potential site visit to William J. Kelley Rookery, a site located near Lyons Road and Commercial Boulevard. Linda Briggs Thompson described the site as a unique borrow pit with clear water where fish can be seen, best described as a mix of a green space and a natural area. The board members agreed this would be a site visit to explore the area, though it was not currently designated as an urban wilderness site. The location was described as having a lot of invasive plants around it, and the visit would allow board members to assess its potential and current condition. After discussion, the board settled on May 12th at 9am for the site visit.

New Business:

Board Membership

Linda Briggs Thompson reported that there are currently several openings on the board. She highlighted an application from Elizabeth Dutra, a conservation biologist from the Institute of Regional Conservation who lives in Oakland Park. While Ms. Dutra's district would be Commissioner Robert McKinzie's, Ms. Briggs Thompson noted she could potentially be appointed by other commissioners like Mayor Beam Furr. She mentioned that Ms. Dutra submitted her application in January, but the Intergovernmental Affair's staff responsible for all advisory boards is currently on maternity leave, which has slowed the process. She also noted that Corey Callaghan had submitted his own application that day. Mr. Callaghan stated he had reached out to Commissioner Alexandra Davis but had not heard back. Ms. Briggs Thompson mentioned Commissioner Steve Geller also has an opening. Mr. Evans stated he is happy to contact the Commission Aides regarding the pending applications.

Section Update

Michel Therrien provided an update on various projects. He shared drone footage from West Lake, showing new sea grass areas and tree islands being created, with native plantings like pigeon plum, paradise tree, mastic, sea grapes, buttonwoods, and mangroves. Ms. Carabelli inquired what the bulkhead structure made from. Ms. Briggs Thompson explained that the crib structure is a shoreline protection method with a narrow footprint, consisting of one vertical side and one sloping side filled with rocks. It's designed to help dissipate wave energy and potentially allow mangrove recruitment. She referenced a similar structure along the intercoastal waterway south of Sheridan Street which has been in place for 12 years, which was part of the airport's mitigation efforts. While the existing structure is still mostly rock with minimal mangrove growth, it creates an open ecosystem that acts more like a living shoreline than a traditional sea wall. Ms. Briggs Thompson noted that in some areas of West Lake, where it's easier and cheaper, they are using riprap (rock reinforcement), but in much of the West Lake shoreline along the Intracoastal Waterway, they are using the crib structure for its narrow footprint and potential ecological benefits. Mr. Therrien mentioned West Lake Park - Segment 4 project is nearly complete, with a five-year monitoring period planned.

Mr. Therrien discussed other projects such as applying for a grant at Easterlin to remove invasive species, mulching at the pollinator garden at Deerfield Island, and constructing a 15-foot high shore bird nesting platform at West Lake, funded by the FWC. He highlighted the partnership with 4H for plant restoration at Fern Forest and collaboration with Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. Mr. Therrien also shared progress on interpretive signs for the Deerfield Island boardwalk and detailed the naturalist team's activities, which included yoga for the blind, night hikes, birding events, and participation in the Broward Youth Climate Summit. The update covered invasive treatments at sites like Crystal Lake, Sand Pine Scrub, Highland Scrub, Fern Forest, West Creek, Military Trail, and Deerfield Island Park. For in-house treatments, the focus

is on Crystal Lake Sand Pine Scrub, primarily targeting the north end and areas that burned. At Highland Scrub, they are concentrating on grass emerging after a burn and removing schefflera on the south side. Fern Forest's prairie area, which burned earlier, is also receiving treatment. At West Creek Pineland, staff is treating areas that were mechanically reduced, while Military Trail treatments are focused on creating fire breaks. Deerfield Island Park is treating areas that were mechanically reduced and along the edges of the pollinator garden. Hollywood North Beach Park is working to reduce dead sea grapes to increase biodiversity. Regarding prescribed fires, Mr. Therrien mentioned conducting a small fire at Deerfield Highlands in December, with upcoming fires planned for Military Trail, Tradewinds, and the north prairie at Fern Forest. The treatments aim to manage invasive species, restore native habitats, and prepare for potential future prescribed burns. He also mentioned ongoing rare plant monitoring.

Ms. Briggs Thompson mentioned that they are preparing for a public meeting to discuss the Treetops Mitigation plan update. The meeting is scheduled for March 19th at 6:30 PM in the Tree Tops meeting hall. She noted that equestrians will be in attendance, and the goal is to incorporate their comments into the design. The plan is to both mitigate and create wetlands while also creating a greener and healthier equestrian trail through the area.

Mr. Therrien shared pictures of the interpretive signs that will be placed along the boardwalk, in Deerfield Island Park, including signs about Al Capone's history with the area, and the crabs of Deerfield Island. Mr. Callaghan inquired if the park was open, and Mr. Therrien reported that the park is not yet open, as the restrooms are in the process of being completed.

Additional New Business: None.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.