Urban Wilderness Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 21, 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 6:01 PM

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

Board Members Present:

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

Guests: None.

Public Input: None.

Introduction

Linda Briggs Thompson introduced new Board Member, Elizabeth "Liz" Dutra. Ms. Dutra shared her background in environmental sciences, including her work with NOAA. She is now a conservation program manager for the Institute for Regional Conservation. The other Board members and Staff introduced themselves and shared their backgrounds.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes from the February 19, 2025 Meeting: Roberto Fernandez, III made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2025, meeting and Marcey Carabelli seconded. The minutes are approved unanimously.

Logo Update

Michel Therrien presented two logo options. Both logos featured similar elements like a raccoon and a bird, with slight differences in size and placement. The group discussed potential future uses for the logo, such as placing it on signs at Urban Wilderness sites or on letterhead. Vice Chair Ken Evans suggested thanking the designer for their work. After discussion, Chair Corey Callaghan made a motion to choose the bottom logo with two birds, which Roberto Fernandez seconded. The board voted unanimously to approve this logo.

Status of Sites to Add to Inventory

Linda Briggs Thompson outlined a multi-step process for adding sites to the Inventory and ultimately designating them as Urban Wilderness. First, they identify potential sites through site visits and board votes. Next, they notify the cities or landowners about the potential addition, which in this case involved sending letters to Fort Lauderdale, Coral Springs, Parkland, Wilton Manors, Coconut Creek, and the State of Florida. The UWAB will then hold a public hearing, which requires 30 days' advance notice and publication. The public hearing will involve presenting site descriptions, aerial views, and discussion of the reasons for designation. After the public hearing, in close collaboration with the County Attorney, a list of sites to add together with a Resolution will be submitted to the County Commission. Once sites are added to the Inventory, they will begin the designation process, which requires creating legal descriptions and statement of management. The management statement can be as simple as identifying who is responsible for managing the site. The group discussed potential dates for the public hearing and ultimately decided to schedule it for either October 8th or 15th, with a preference for October 15th. Chair Callaghan made a motion to recommend these dates, Vice Chair Evans seconded, and the Board unanimously approved. The hearing will likely be held at Plantation Heritage Park and will be an evening event to encourage public participation.

Site Visit to William J. Kelley Rookery

The group discussed postponing the previously scheduled site visit due to heavy rain. Chair Callaghan suggested that if they were going to block off a morning for a visit, they should try to visit two or three sites instead of just one. Ms. Briggs Thompson agreed and noted that site visits can also be done on Saturdays. They decided to wait until the September meeting to discuss and plan a site visit, with Chair Callaghan making a motion that Staff provide potential dates during the September meeting and a slight itinerary of two to three sites to visit. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Evans and unanimously approved. No specific sites were mentioned for the potential visit, and they left the selection open for future discussion.

<u>New Business</u>:

Board Membership

Ms. Briggs Thompson reported that there are currently two board membership openings: one in District 7 with Commissioner Alexandra Davis and another in District 8 with Commissioner

Robert McKenzie. She explained that potential board members should have expertise in specific areas such as biology, botany, physical sciences, zoology, environmental science, archaeology, history, or hydrology. She noted that candidates must live in Broward County and cannot currently work for the County.

Section Update

Michel Therrien provided a comprehensive update on various projects and initiatives. He shared a drone video of the West Lake mitigation project, showing the removal of Australian pines and new plantings. Mr. Therrien discussed invasive species removal sites and noted that staff applied for Invasive Plant Management funding for Fern Forest, Hollywood North Beach, and Deerfield Island. He highlighted a coyote tracking study with 10 collared coyotes, showing their movement patterns across different parks and areas. He reported on ongoing monitoring efforts, including burrowing owl surveys, rehydration pump data, and prescribed fire preparations at sites like Highland Scrub, Kristin Jacobs, and Fern Forest. Mr. Therrien also showed updates on a shorebird nesting platform with least tern and skimmer decoys, rare plant monitoring, and work with the 4H program.

Mr. Therrien shared updates on naturalists programming, including yoga, night hikes, workdays, and STEAM environmental education.

Mr. Therrien and Ms. Briggs Thompson discussed a 1.4-acre disturbed, historic right of way parcel at West Lake used in recent years as temporary entrance into the Port. The Port is pursuing a permanent road through the area. Through the project, Parks would receive 5 acres adjacent to Tree Tops Park. Chair Callaghan expressed concern about wildlife connectivity under the permanent road, asking about potential wildlife crossings. The group discussed the potential benefits and challenges of the proposal. Ms. Briggs Thompson noted that the existing culverts currently maintain hydrological connection and this hydrological connection would remain. To move forward, the proposal would need approval by the County Commission at a regular commission meeting.

Additional New Business: None.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM.