Urban Wilderness Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 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 6:03 PM

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

Board Members Present:

Corey Callaghan
Marcey Carabelli (via Zoom)
Elizabeth Dutra
Ken Evans (via Zoom)
Roberto Fernandez, III
Diana Guidry
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: John Abbott

Public Input: None.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes from the September 10, 2025 Meeting: Brian Rosen made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2025, meeting and Liz Dutra seconded. The minutes are approved unanimously.

Status of Sites to Add to Inventory

Linda Briggs Thompson reported that, following the UWAB's October 15, 2025 Public Hearing, staff prepared an agenda item to place the sites reviewed at the Public Hearing onto the Urban Wilderness Park System. The agenda item was finalized by Amanda Tolbert (Assistant County Attorney) and submitted by Meoshi Jackson (Administrative Officer). The goal is to place the motion to adopt a resolution on the Agenda for the Broward County Commission Meeting on January 22, 2026. In response to questions from Chair Callaghan, Ms. Briggs Thompson

confirmed that the January 22, 2026 action is to add the Public Hearing sites to the inventory, not full designation, and explained that designation will require surveys, some of which already exist while others must be funded and completed, including more difficult partial-parcel situations and sites with prior survey issues, which will need to be corrected. Ms. Briggs Thompson also informed the board that the County Commission recently voted to remove three long-standing, non-county-owned inventory sites—the May Tract, Pompano Airpark, and Pine Ridge Trail—from the inventory. These sites are now proceeding through the plat process for development.

Public Hearing Follow Up - Information Requested

Ms. Briggs Thompson and Michel Therrien reported on two sites mentioned by attendees at the October 15, 2025 Public Hearing. The site referred to at the Public Hearing as the "Seven Acre" parcel, staff determined the commenter was most likely referring to Six Acre Wood Park, a city park in Parkland at 441 and Hillsboro Boulevard that is owned by the City of Parkland and was transferred from Broward County in the late 1980s. Ms. Briggs Thompson explained that there is not enough time to bring this site into the current public-hearing cycle, but that the usual process would be for the board to conduct a site visit, staff to complete a survey form, and the board to vote on whether to recommend the site for addition to the inventory. Chair Callaghan inquired if it is mandatory to do the site visits as a group citing scheduling challenges. Ms. Briggs Thompson replied that that is how this board has historically gathered information to understand whether a site should be listed. The board members noted that site visits are good practice and Diana Guidry emphasized that it is wise to do site visits. Chair Callaghan stated that he agrees it is good practice to do site visits; whether or not they do that as a group or individually is to be discussed further by the board. The group did not take a formal vote on 6 Acre Wood Park; it was framed as a potential future addition that could be placed on the inventory list after further evaluation.

Regarding the mangrove parcel north of West Lake Park, Ms. Briggs Thompson and Mr. Therrien reported that staff identified the site raised at the public hearing as a 5.11-acre privately owned parcel held by Port 1850 LLC, where the owner is pursuing a development proposal that would retain approximately 1.29 acres of mangroves, impact about 2.92 acres, and provide 1.24 mitigation bank credits, with the project under continuing review by Wetland Protection staff and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, particularly for effects on hydrologic flow. They explained that most of the surrounding mangrove area is publicly owned, that Broward County is seeking designation for its own nearby parcel, and that the privately owned tract raised at the hearing will remain under regulatory review rather than being advanced as a current candidate for inventory listing.

William J. Kelley Rookery

With respect to the William J. Kelley Rookery, Chair Callaghan summarized the board's field visit and concerns about site condition and the adjacent homeowners' association's maintenance obligations and asked how the board should proceed. Roberto Fernandez, III, stated that he supports adding the site for consideration, and said that if the adjacent homeowners' association could be made to fulfill its maintenance obligations, and if decoys could be used to attract birds

back, the site could again function as a rookery. Mr. Fernandez noted that conditions change and that, with existing habitat fragmentation, he preferred to add the site. Ms. Briggs Thompson responded that the site likely no longer functions as a rookery at present, but that rookeries can form in unexpected locations; she cited another urban rookery as an example.

Chair Callaghan expressed concern about the amount of garbage at the site, especially given that there is a legal mechanism to address it, and asked Ms. Tolbert what actions were within the board's authority. Ms. Briggs Thompson replied that staff have been trying to contact the adjacent owners for some time without success, and that she would begin working with Ms. Tolbert to discuss the legal requirements in the recorded agreement and what could be done to enforce the homeowners' association's obligations. In response to questions from Mr. Rosen and Vice Chair Evans, Ms. Briggs Thompson clarified that Broward County owns the rookery site, that access is via a small platform constructed and is supposed to be maintained by the adjacent complex, and that there is an agreement with the original developer that runs with each new owner, obligating the association to that maintenance. She added that staff know the current management company but have had difficulty reaching it. Mr. Fernandez then suggested that staff report back at the next meeting with an update on both the legal situation and the site's condition before the board decides how to proceed. Ms. Briggs Thompson agreed to speak with Ms. Tolbert and to review the title language and requirements. As a specific next step regarding designation and inventory status, Chair Callaghan made a motion to add it to the list of sites to add to the inventory in the next public hearing. Mr. Fernandez seconded the motion, and the board voted in favor with no opposition, thereby adding the William J. Kelley Rookery to the board's list of sites to be included for future inventory consideration.

Chair Callaghan stated that, building on the work following the UWAB's October 15, 2025 Public Hearing, he would like to keep the momentum going and proposed that at the February meeting they discuss dates for the next Public Hearing, towards the end of the summer, with a target of five sites to be added to the inventory. Chair Callaghan requested that staff reach out to cities such as Fort Lauderdale and Parkland to identify candidate sites, so that staff can bring a list of potential sites back to the board at the February meeting as part of the next steps for adding additional locations to the inventory.

New Business:

Board Membership

Ms. Briggs Thompson reported that there are two current board vacancies: one for Commissioner Alexandra Davis's District 7 seat and one for Commissioner Robert McKenzie's District 8 seat; she clarified that appointees do not need to live in the commissioner's district but must reside in Broward County and have expertise in environmental science or a related field, including archaeology or history. During the board membership portion of the meeting, Mr. Fernandez mentioned a potential candidate who has a PhD in environmental management and serves on the City of Sunrise sustainability board; Mr. Fernandez agreed to contact him about serving on this board. Ms. Briggs Thompson added that the board currently meets four times per year.

Section Update

During the Section Update, Mr. Therrien reported on a wide range of environmental management activities, beginning with mitigation work at West Lake Park, where former Australian pine spoil islands have been converted to seagrass habitat and are being monitored with transects; he described underwater survey photos showing species such as manatee, feather duster worms, pufferfish, anemones, and Florida fighting conch.

Mr. Therrien highlighted invasive plant control and restoration projects included contracted removal of about a half acre of pothos at Long Key Natural Area using hand tools to avoid disturbing an archaeologically sensitive ridge; intensive invasive treatments in the Fern Forest prairies, Military Trail Natural Area, Long Key, Pine Island Ridge, Everglades Holiday Park, and Miramar Pineland (where staff spend a large portion of each month controlling the vine dalechampia); and improvements observed at Woodmont Natural Area, as well as required mitigation-area treatments at Pond Apple Slough and contractor work at Pine Island Ridge and Miramar Pineland. Proposals for the 2026 season will be received soon. Mr. Therrien noted that his group assisted the Miramar Pineland park manager/naturalist and described a corporate volunteer event at Miramar Pineland that brought out 88 participants.

Broward County staff, in cooperation with the University of Florida's CrocDocs, recently captured data on what is believed to be a male American crocodile at West Lake, and Mr. Therrien outlined ongoing monitoring and survey work including photo monitoring, gopher tortoise surveys, burrowing owl protection and maintenance, rehydration pump data collection after a drought-related shutdown and restart, prescribed fire monitoring, chemical restoration, and planting efforts.

Mr. Therrien also presented on work at Helene Klein Pineland Preserve and Saw Palmetto Natural Area, detailing the construction of a greenway trail located primarily within the Florida Power & Light easement, Staff from Fairchild Tropical Garden, including technician Ryan Ray, rescued native plants along the edge to propagate and replant elsewhere on the site and eventually along the new sidewalk.

Additional recent restoration plantings noted included hundreds of plants in the Fern Forest north and south prairies, coastal strand and dune species at Hollywood North Beach, and torchwood at Deerfield Island. Mr. Therrien highlighted the seven-year partnership with Fairchild Tropical Garden that has documented numerous new occurrences and taxa of rare plants across county sites. Fairchild work is a continuation of a broader program.

Additional projects highlighted included staff members presentations at a recent NatureScape training, expanded prescribed fire operations with a successful scrub burn at Highland Scrub Natural Area, and an upcoming burn at Military Trail. He also highlighted that naturalist programming participation has notably increased, with some events now drawing several dozen attendees. He concluded by showing an example of STEAM-oriented environmental education at Roosevelt Gardens Park, featuring schoolchildren engaged in lessons led by county staff and volunteers.

Proposed Meeting Schedule

The board reviewed the proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule. The proposed dates were approved, with the exception of the May 13 meeting, which was moved to May 20, 2026.

Additional New Business: None.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.