ITEM 2:

Consider summaries for the September 12, 2024, regular meeting and the August 26 and August 29, 2024, regional public hearings.

DSL Staff Remarks:

None.

DSL Staff Recommendation:

Approve meeting summary.

ARC Recommendation:

( ) APPROVE
( ) APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____
( ) DEFER
( ) WITHDRAW
( ) NOT APPROVE
( ) OTHER:_____

Summary of the September 12, 2024, Acquisition and Restoration Council Meeting

Time: 9 a.m.
Location: Department of Environmental Protection
Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
Conference Room 137
3900 Commonwealth Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32399

ARC Members in Attendance:

Mara Gambineri, DEP, Chair
Lynetta Griner, Citizen Member, Vice Chair
Alissa Lotane, DHR
Rick Dolan, FFS
George Warthen, FWC
Elva Peppers, Citizen Member
Bill Palmer, Citizen Member

Item 1: Call to Order/Announcements

Chair Gambineri called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked Ms. Griner to lead the pledge. Ms. Gambineri introduced John Houser as a new employee in the Florida Forever Program and concluded by stating that ARC would be receiving public comment only on agenda items.

ARC then established a quorum with seven members present. ARC Coordinator Hank Vinson stated that Item 11 had been withdrawn at the landowner's request. He outlined public comment guidelines for both in-person and virtual attendees. There were no further announcements.

Item 2: Consider the June 2024 meeting summary.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve meeting summary.

Discussion: None.

ARC Action: Approved by unanimous consent.

ARC STAFF REPORTS

Item 3: Status report on land management reviews completed by the Division of State Lands from January to April 2024.

DSL Staff Recommendation: None.

Discussion: Hank Vinson with the DEP Division of State Lands stated the Office of Environmental Services had completed 10 additional land management reviews between January and April 2024, including one national estuarine research reserve, one wildlife management area, five state parks, and three state forests and found that all agencies were managing their respective sites in accordance with approved management plans. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: None required.

Item 4: Division of State Lands acquisition update.

Discussion: Mr. Robbie Parrish, Bureau of Real Estate Services, provided a recap of DSL acquisition efforts for FY 2023-2024. DSL had completed 103 transactions totaling just over 75,000 acres at a cost of over $200 million. DSL had spent all $300 million in ARPA funds a year and a half ahead of schedule. It was a record year for acquiring conservation easements;62% of total acres acquired and almost half of total funding expended. Mr. Parrish mentioned that DSL had closed on a large non-conservation project and acquired a property in central Florida for the Florida Division of Emergency Management . Mr. Parrish concluded his presentation by discussing Fiscal Year 2024-25 activity, including Board of Trustees approved acquisitions and projects either closed or in closing.

Chair Gambineri thanked Mr. Parrish and complimented DSL staff and partner agencies on their hard work. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Not required.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Item 5: Consider a 10-year update to the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (Lease No. 3462).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve management plan.

Discussion: Lia Samson with the DEP Office of Resiliency and Coastal Protection presented the management plan. Ms. Samson discussed the Research Reserve's location, acquisition history, natural communities, and listed species. She then outlined current programs and concluded by discussing the management plan's future goals regarding water quality, biodiversity, visitor experience, and cultural history. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Mr. Dolan moved to approve the management plan with Mr. Warthen seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 6: Consider a 10-year update to the Chinsegut Wildlife Management Area management plan (Lease No. 3774).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve management plan.

Discussion: Christina Omran and Matt Koenig with FWC presented the management plan virtually. Ms. Omran discussed the management area's location, acquisition history, natural and cultural resources, current facilities, and visitation/economic benefits. She concluded her presentation by discussing the management plan's future objectives regarding ecological restoration, outdoor recreation, and infrastructure.

Ms. Lotane stated that she had been involved in the rehabilitation of the nearby Chinsegut Hill Manor House and asked about FWC's coordination with the historic site. Mr. Koenig responded that FWC often coordinated with the historic site on management issues of mutual concern. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Ms. Peppers moved to approve the management plan with Ms. Lotane seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 7: Consider a 10-year update to the Mashes Island Park management plan (Lease No. 3371).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve management plan.

Discussion: Justin Ford and India Hodges with Dewberry Engineers, Inc., presented the management plan. Mr. Ford introduced Cody Solberg with Wakulla County and then discussed the park's location, acquisition history, natural resources, and facilities. Ms. Hodges concluded the management plan presentation by outlining the park's natural communities, imperiled species, resource management activities, and future infrastructure plans. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Ms. Griner moved to approve the management plan with Ms. Lotane seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

LAND ADMINISTRATION

Item 8: Consider whether a private access easement of approximately 10.34 acres within the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area is consistent with the Board of Trustees' Incompatible Use Policy (Lease No. 3586).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the proposed easement request.

Discussion: Jay Sircy with the DEP Division of State Lands presented the item. Mr. Sircy stated that the applicant requests an easement over an existing dirt road within the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area to access an adjacent mitigation bank property. Mr. Sircy concluded his presentation by stating the applicant would provide a net positive benefit dollar amount valued at 1.5 times the easement area's value.

ARC Action: Dr. Palmer moved to approve the easement request with Ms. Griner seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

Item 9: Consider whether a 0.55-acre private access easement and a 0.08-acre temporary construction within the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area is consistent with the Board of Trustees' Incompatible Use Policy (Lease No. 4034).

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve the proposed easement request.

Discussion: Jay Sircy with the DEP Division of State Lands presented the item. Mr. Sircy stated that the applicant requests utility and temporary construction easements within the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area to install a water line. Mr. Sircy concluded his presentation by stating the applicant would provide a net positive benefit via replacement lands at four times easement area's size.

Ms. Lotane stated DHR had requested DEP include an unanticipated finds clause in the easement document. She commented that DHR did not anticipate there being any historic resources in the project area. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Dr. Palmer moved to approve the easement request with Ms. Lotane seconding. ARC approved the item unanimously.

FLORIDA FOREVER

Item 10: Consider a request to remove 11 parcels totaling approximately 5,530.01 GIS acres in Baker County from the Camp Blanding Raiford Greenway Florida Forever project boundary.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve removal request.

Discussion: None.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 11: Vote on whether to amend the Carr Farm/Price's Scrub Florida Forever project boundary to add five parcels totaling approximately 132.45 GIS acres in Marion County with a tax assessed market value of $1,281,303.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Heather Obara with the Alachua Conservation Trust presented the item virtually. She discussed the project's location, size, resource value, and that the DEP Division of Recreation and Parks would manage the property as an addition to Price's Scrub State Park. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 12: Vote on whether to amend the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever project boundary to add one parcel totaling approximately 9.98 acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed market value of $55,000.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Kai Sucsy with the Putnam Land Conservancy presented the item virtually. He discussed the project's location and resource value. The project was surrounded by state conservation ands and would be managed by the DEP Division of Recreation and Parks as part of the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 13: Vote on whether to amend the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever project boundary to add three parcels totaling approximately 60.28 acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed market value of $511,850.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Kai Sucsy with the Putnam Land Conservancy presented the item virtually. He discussed the project's location and resource value. The project was adjacent to the Carl Duval Moore State Forest and Park and the Florida Forest Service would manage as part of the state forest. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 14: Vote on whether to amend the Osceola Pine Savannas Florida Forever project boundary to add two parcels totaling approximately 0.29 GIS acres in Osceola County with a tax assessed market value of $350.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Diana Pepe with FWC presented the item. The proposal was an inholding to the Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area. The proposal contained several listed species including the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow and was within one of the largest remaining areas of dry prairie habitat. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 15: Vote on whether to amend the Strategic Managed Area Lands List (SMALL) Florida Forever project boundary to add one parcel totaling approximately 38.34 acres in Highlands County with a tax assessed market value of $340,743.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Diana Pepe with FWC presented the item. The proposal was an inholding in the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area. The proposal had support from Archbold Research Station, the U.S. Department of Defense, Conservation Florida, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which had pledged $1 million to help with acquisition costs. Ms. Pepe concluded her presentation by outlining the proposal's listed species and natural community values. There were no further comments or discussion.

Mr. Zach Franco with Archbold Research Station spoke virtually in support of the proposal. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 16: Vote on whether to amend the Battle of Wahoo Swamp Florida Forever project boundary to add five parcels totaling approximately 366.71 GIS acres in Sumter County with a tax assessed market value of $1,386,360.

Withdrawn at landowner request.

Item 17: Vote on whether to amend the Taylor Sweetwater Creek Florida Forever project boundary to add four parcels totaling approximately 336.97 GIS acres in Taylor County with a tax assessed market value of $1,197,890.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Jeremiah Thompson with SVN Real Estate presented the item virtually. He discussed the proposal's location and its adjacency to Sweetwater Creek and other public conservation lands. Mr. Thompson then covered the proposal's natural community, listed species, and open space values. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the conservation mindedness of the property owner. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 18: Vote on whether to amend the Aucilla/Wacissa Watershed Florida Forever project boundary to add six parcels totaling approximately 408.39 GIS acres in Madison County with a tax assessed market value of $1,036,907.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Ramesh Buch with the North Florida Land Trust presented the item. He showed a landowner video, emphasized the proposal's natural and cultural resource value, and provided written comments from the landowner urging state acquisition. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 19: Vote on whether to amend the Northeast Florida Blueway Florida Forever project boundary to add 18 parcels totaling approximately 24.77 GIS acres in St. Johns County with a tax assessed market value of $1,929,003.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Discussion: Ramesh Buch with the North Florida Land Trust presented the item. He stated that a landowner and St. Johns County were there representing the project. He then discussed the proposal's natural and cultural resource values.

Ms. Vicky Payne, landowner, spoke in favor of the project. She emphasized the proposal's importance as a bird rookery, its cultural resource valuesand stated local, federal, and state agencies supported acquisition.

Mr. Courtney Pittman, Northeast Florida Regional Airport Interim Director, spoke virtually in support of the project. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 20: Vote on whether to amend the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor Florida Forever project boundary to add three parcels totaling approximately 531.26 GIS acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed market value of $1,690,460.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Kim Hall with the North Florida Land Trust presented the item. She discussed the proposal's location and natural resource/listed species values. She then read a written statement from the landowner emphasizing the property's importance.

Mr. John Hoffmeister, son of the property owners, also spoke in support of the project. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 21: Vote on whether to amend the Heather Island/Ocklawaha River Florida Forever project boundary to add three parcels totaling approximately 409.62 GIS acres in Marion County with a tax assessed market value of $1,791,159.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Keith Fountain with Keith Fountain Law presented the item virtually. He discussed the proposal's adjacency to other public and private conservation lands and the property's natural resource and wildlife values. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Item 21: Vote on whether to amend the Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever project boundary to add three parcels totaling approximately 372.79 GIS acres in Columbia County with a tax assessed market value of $358,936.

DSL Staff Recommendation: Approve boundary amendment.

Discussion: Justice Diamond with the Alachua Conservation Trust presented the item virtually. He discussed the boundary amendment's size, location, and adjacency to other conservation lands. He concluded his presentation by discussing the property's natural resource and widlife values. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously by voice vote.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Chair Gambineri reminded those in attendance of the Florida Forever project webinar on September 17, 2024, and the next ARC meeting on October 11, 2024. There were no further ARC comments or discussion.

ARC adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m. by unanimous consent.

Summary of the August 26, 2024, Acquisition and Restoration Council Regional Public Hearing

Date: August 26, 2024

Time: 4 p.m. EDT

Location: Alachua County Administration Building
Grace Knight Conference Room
12 SE 1st Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

In Attendance:
Ms. Callie DeHaven, Director of State Lands
Mr. Hank Vinson, Division of State Lands
Mr. George Frisby, Division of State Lands
Commissioner Desireé Mills, Levy County Commission Chair
Mr. Kevin Ratkus, Alachua County
Mr. Charlie Houder, Private Citizen
Ms. Joanna Reilly-Brown, Alachua Conservation Trust
Mr. Willy The Losen, Putnam Land Conservancy
Mr. Kai Sucsy, Putnam Land Conservancy

Mr. Vinson opened the hearing with an orientation for the meeting participants. Ms. DeHaven welcomed those in attendance and thanked Alachua County for use of the meeting space. She welcomed Commissioner Desiree Mills, Nassau County BOCC Chair. Mr. Vinson provided a brief overview of ARC's role in the Florida Forever proposal selection process and the purpose of the regional hearing. Ms. DeHaven then called for public comments.

Ms. Joanna Reilly-Brown spoke in favor of the Little Orange Creek Corridor and Waccasassa Flatwoods proposals.
Mr. Charlie Houder spoke in favor of the Waccasassa Flatwoods proposal.
Mr. Willie The Losen spoke in favor of the Little Orange Creek proposal.
Mr. Kai Sucsy spoke in favor of the Little Orange Creek Corridor proposal.
Commissioner Desireé Mill spoke in support of the Waccasassa Flatwoods proposal.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. DeHaven adjourned the public hearing at 4:35 p.m.

Summary of the August 29, 2024, Acquisition and Restoration Regional Public Hearing

Date: August 29, 2024

Time: 4 p.m. EDT

Location: Highlands County Commission Meeting Room
600 S. Commerce Avenue
Sebring, FL

In Attendance:
Ms. Callie DeHaven, Director of State Lands
Mr. Hank Vinson, Division of State Lands
Mr. Keith Singleton, Division of State Lands
Mr. Zach Franco, Archbold Biological Station
Ms. Verna Flexon, Citizen

Mr. Vinson opened the hearing with an orientation for the meeting participants. Ms. DeHaven welcomed those in attendance and thanked Highlands County for use of the meeting space. Mr. Vinson provided a brief overview of ARC's role in the Florida Forever proposal selection process and the purpose of the regional hearing. Ms. DeHaven then called for public comments.

Mr. Zach Franco provided written comments and also spoke in favor of the Highlands Hammock Corridor and Lettuce Creek Cattle Company less-than-fee proposals.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. DeHaven adjourned the public hearing at 4:20 p.m.