

Allen, Shauna R

From: Carolyn Kindell <ckindell@fsu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 9:16 AM
To: Parker, James
Cc: greg.wiley@marioncountyfl.org; pnesmith@waterandair.com; lmosura-bliss@waterandair.com; Daniel Hipes; Allen, Shauna R
Subject: Comments for Silver Springs Sandhills MP

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear James,

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan. The plan is thorough and we appreciate the succinct overviews provided by Table 6-1 Summary of Restoration Tasks (pg 57) and the Priority Schedule (pg 61). The figures are excellent. We offer specific comments below.

Page 3. 1.2 History and Objectives: the two primary purposes for acquisition listed at the end of the first paragraph are good as general statements, but we recommend the addition of a third general purpose, “conservation of natural and cultural resources.” Or, make consistent with the language as presented in the first paragraph on Page 6 by adding *“Additional objectives include the protection of the area’s valuable natural and cultural resources.”*

Page 12, Desired Future Condition of the Sandhill: 2nd paragraph, last sentence, regarding fire return interval- we recommend addition of the following text (in italics) to reflect the desired condition for prescribed fire; “The natural or historic frequency of fire in sandhill is every 1 to 3 years (Frost 1998) *and this is the frequency of prescribed fire in the Silver Springs Sandhills.*”

Page 13, top paragraph: Sherman’s fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger shermani*) is now classified as southern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger niger*).

Page 17, 2.4.1 Fish and Wildlife Resources Existing Conditions: please add a citation for the Water & Air 2018 Surveys to list of references.

Page 17, 2.4.2 Management Measures for All Imperiled Species: we recommend the addition of a property-wide survey for gopher tortoise.

Page 23, Special Status Species. Second paragraph, 2nd sentence: we recommend this be replaced with the following: *“The Silver Springs Sandhill is contiguous with Indian Lake State Forest where a tortoise population size of 622 was estimated in 2018 (FNAI 2018).”* That citation, to be added to list of references is, *Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI). 2018. Gopher tortoise survey of Indian Lake State Forest. Report to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Florida Natural Areas Inventory, Tallahassee, FL*

Page 24, Management Measures for Gopher Tortoise: the first paragraph is written as potential action but does not outline the measures to be taken. We suggest the first sentence in this section be: *“Marion County will consult with FWC regarding surveys to estimate gopher tortoise population size and viability, and regarding management for gopher tortoise on the property.”*

Page 27, Figure 2-3 Exiting Features Map: we recommend removal of the gopher tortoise burrow locations from this map. This plan is a public document, and tortoises are vulnerable to poaching.

Page 38. Figure 4-2: we recommend removal of this map (the conceptual site design in the MCPR) as it is historical; if it is important to include for historical reasons, then we recommend it be included as an appendix with supporting documentation. It is our understanding from the Land Management Advisory Group September 2019 meeting notes that this conceptual plan was presented to the LMAG. The concept changed substantially after that meeting, and the revised map, entitled “Proposed Recreation Concept Plan” on page 39 is the most current version for The Sandhills property. The change after the LMAG involved moving the “3D range expansion .. out of the northernmost sandhill and, according to text on page 42, moved “..south into the pine plantation – sandhill area..” This apparently was done to address LMAG member concerns about impacts of this 3 D range to the natural sandhill vegetation.

Page 40, Proposed Improvements: we recommend removing the reference to Figure 4-2, and if it is desired to maintain this historical information, place it in an appendix with the accompanying document.

Page 45, Invasive Exotic Animals and Management: we support the planned educational outreach to neighboring communities regarding the harm that feral pets can have on native wildlife, and the plan’s intention to monitor for and remove feral hogs.

Page 46. Prescribed Fire Management Plan: after the final sentence in this section we recommend adding the following language. *“In developing this plan, the County will explore partnerships with nearby state land managers (FWC, FFS, DRP, SRWMD) to help achieve prescribed fire objectives in this 10 year management cycle.”*

Page 47. Management Measures for Fire, paragraph 2: we recommend a target prescribed fire return interval of 1 to 3 years for sandhills. The citation can be FNAI 2010, already listed in the references.

Page 51- 52. 2-Year Management Objectives, Tasks/Capital Improvements: we recommend removal of pickleball courts from this list of Capital Improvements, as this is not planned for this property.

Page 52, 5.5.1, 2-Year Management Objectives, Resource Management: We suggest the following text additions.

- Under “Develop the prescribed fire management plan” add
 - *Explore partnerships with other entities to conduct prescribed fire.*
 - *Prioritize management units that contain sandhill (MU 5, 7).*
- Under “Continue prescribe fire program” add
 - *Contact FFS and other local state land managing agencies regarding possible assistance.*
 - *Apply prescribed fire in Management Unit 5.*
 - *Prepare remaining sandhill management units for prescribe fire and if possible apply prescribed fire in at least one additional Management Unit.*
- After “Listed plant and animal species” add *(esp. gopher tortoise).*

Pages 53. 10-Year Management Objectives, Resource Management: under “Continue prescribed fire management” we suggest adding a bullet:

- *Target prescribed fire return interval of 1-3 years for sandhill and for areas being restored to sandhill.*

We also recommend under “implement restoration plans...” that “Sandhill/ prescribed fire” be moved to the top of this list, to reflect the high priority of this objective and to be consistent with the order of the vegetation types as presented in following section.

Page 54, 6.0 Habitat Restoration, Successional Hardwood Forest: we recommend a first sentence be added that indicates: *“The first step for this altered community type is to develop a restoration plan.”*

Page 55, Restoration Resource Organizations and Agencies: this section needs a brief introduction that explains how, and for what purpose, Marion County plans to interact with the agencies listed.

Page 57, Table 6-1 Summary of Propose Restoration Tasks: we suggest that the order of the community types in this table reflect the order of their presentation in section 6.0.

Page 59, Priority Schedule: in the text portion of this section we recommend a bulleted list of the Primary Importance tasks that are currently listed in the last sentence of the first paragraph, in order to present these tasks in a manner consistent with the second and third level priorities. We also recommend the addition of two secondary importance tasks: *“Develop and implement restoration plan for the successional hardwood forest”* and *“Conduct gopher tortoise surveys on the entire property,”* and adding these into Table 7-1 a or b as appropriate.

Page 61, Table 7-1a: we recommend that “Develop the prescribed fire management plan” and Begin the prescribe fire program be Priority 1 for 2020 and 2021, to be consistent with the “Sandhill – prescribed fire” which is listed as Priority 1 in this table. We also suggest the addition of a task “Consult with FWC regarding gopher tortoise survey” as a Priority 1 activity for 2020.

Page 64, Summary of Management Objectives: we support all of the Specific Management Goals and Desired Outcomes. We suggest adding “, *especially gopher tortoise.*” at the end of the second bullet under management goals for The Sandhill site.

Appendix D. In the future, it would be helpful to include the affiliations of the Land Management Advisory Group members in the minutes.

Thank you for receiving these comments. Please contact me if any clarification on them is needed.

Sincerely,

Carolyn

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