

Environmental Science Forum (ESF)
Weedon Island Preserve Cultural & Natural History Center
Thursday, February 1, 2007

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by Forum at March 1, 2007 Meeting

Attendees:

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| 1. | Holly Greening | Forum Member, Co-Chair |
| 2. | Darden Rice | Forum Member, Co-Chair |
| 3. | Bruce Hasbrouck | Forum Member |
| 4. | Mark Mueller | Forum Member (Alternate for M. Grigione) |
| 5. | Doug Robison | Forum Member |
| 6. | Barbara Hoffman | Forum Member |
| 7. | Ray Wunderlich | Forum Member |
| 8. | Tom Muntz | Forum Member |
| 9. | Joseph Maier | Forum Member |
| 10. | Jake Stowers | Forum Member |
| 11. | Cathy Harrelson | Forum Member |
| 12. | Dr. Randy Runnels | Forum Member |
| 13. | Howard Rutherford | Forum Member |
| 14. | Walt Hoskins | Forum Member (Non-Voting Alternate) |
| 15. | Elizabeth Warren | Pinellas County Assistant Administrator |
| 16. | William Davis | Pinellas County Environmental Mgmt |
| 17. | Andy Squires | Pinellas County Environmental Mgmt |
| 18. | Dr. H. Bruce Rinker | Pinellas County Environmental Lands |
| 19. | Dr. Steve Harper | Pinellas County Environmental Lands |
| 20. | Pam Leasure | Pinellas County Environmental Lands |
| 21. | Lisa Baltus | Pinellas County Environmental Lands |
| 22. | Lori VanBemden | Pinellas County Environmental Lands |
| 23. | Lynn Smith | Pinellas County Environmental Lands |
| 24. | Joseph Morrissey | Pinellas County Attorney |
| 25. | Joe Lupardus | Pinellas County Parks & Recreation |
| 26. | Dave Kandz | Citizen |
| 27. | Tom Reese | Citizen |
| 28. | Allyn Childress | Citizen |
| 29. | Theresa Blackwell | <i>St. Petersburg Times</i> |
| 30. | Mary Romary | Citizen |
| 31. | Sharon Philyaw | Citizen |
| 32. | Jim Stewart | Citizen |

Handouts: List of Members and Alternates of Environmental Science Forum; Project Timelines for Pinellas County Parks and Environmental Lands; Resume for Dr. Randy James Runnels; Memorandum, Proposed Amendment of ESF Mission Statement; Draft of Forum Bylaws; Memorandum, Comments on Use of Brooker Creek Preserve Acreage for the East Lake Youth Sports Association Complex; ESF Meeting Minutes for 11 January 2007; Presentation Notes on Ecological Research at Shell Key Preserve; Aerials, a Soil Survey, and Species Lists for the Brooker Creek Preserve Pine Plantation; and Flyer on Proposed Bus Terminal and Land Swap near McMullen Booth Road and SR580.

I. **Welcome and Introduction:**

- Co-Chair Ms. Rice welcomed Forum Members and the public to the meeting. She reminded members of the public that they will have an opportunity to address agenda items by filling out a yellow or blue form. Two time periods will be provided in the agenda for citizens to speak.

II. **Additional Agenda Items:**

- Forum members did not provide any additional items for consideration.

III. **Approval of January 11, 2007 Meeting Summary:**

- Mr. Muntz asked that Mr. Rutherford, a Forum Member, be added to the attendance roster. He also questioned whether Ms. Hoffman and her alternate, Mr. Hoskins, can both sit as members of the Forum simultaneously. The Forum agreed that Ms. Hoffman be listed as a citizen or non-voting number for this meeting. Mr. Hasbrouck made a motion to accept the minutes with noted changes. Mr. Stowers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. **Forum Business:**

- ESF Member Replacement. Co-Chair Ms. Rice introduced Dr. Randy Runnels, FDEP manager of Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves and an adjunct faculty member at Eckerd College, as the newest member of the Forum. Dr. Runnels then provided a brief autobiographical sketch. Co-Chair Ms. Greening congratulated Dr. Runnels and welcomed him as a valued member of the Forum.

V. **ESF Mission and Bylaws:**

- Ms. Greening referred to a memorandum from Mr. Robison to revise the Forum's mission statement. Discussion was temporarily tabled. She next initiated a review of the Forum Bylaws authored by a sub-committee (Mr. Hasbrouck, Mr. Muntz, and Ms. Greening) and reviewed by Ms. Cole, counsel for the County. A lengthy discussion about the Bylaws ensued with a number of changes submitted forthwith. At Mr. Davis' request, Section 4.6.d was omitted, at least temporarily, until such time as the County Administrator can review its implications: Section 4.6.d states, "The Forum may address environmental projects of ecological significance in the County that are not located in County-managed parks and environmental lands. The decision to address such environmental projects will require a two-thirds majority of those present and able to vote, and is subject to approval of the County Administrator." Discussion then

ensued regarding Mr. Robinson's modified mission. A suggestion to modify the mission was accepted. Mr. Hasbrouck made a motion to adopt the modified mission statement that included a list of environmental and park lands. Mr. Robison seconded the motion. The motion failed to pass with 4 votes for and 7 votes against the motion. After further discussion, Ms. Harrelson made a motion to adopt the modified mission statement without a list of environmental and park lands. Mr. Stowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. It was agreed that the modified mission statement would be incorporated into the proposed Forum Bylaws. Two citizen comments followed Forum discussion. Mr. Hasbrouck made a motion to accept the Bylaws with noted changes. Ms. Rice seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. A revised copy of Bylaws will accompany the February minutes.

VI. Recreation Fields at Brooker Creek Preserve:

- Mr. Jake Stowers reported on the efforts of the ESF subcommittee. He reminded the Forum that membership included Ms. Rice, Ms. Greening, Ms. Paul (not in attendance), Ms. Hodgson as alternate for Ms. Paul, and Mr. Stowers. Mr. Stowers recognized Dr. Steve Harper (Research Director for the Environmental Lands Division) and other staff members (including Ms. Lisa Baltus, Land Manager for Brooker Creek Preserve, and Ms. Marcia Colby, the Division's GIS expert) for the historical aerials, species lists, and soil survey for the pine plantation. The committee reviewed a number of issues including species diversity, drainage, natural and anthropogenic changes in the area, and wildlife corridors. More information, however, is now required along with a site visit for the subcommittee (set tentatively for Thursday, 8 February 2007). Questions include seasonal changes for associated wildlife and vegetation, the likely effects of widening Keystone Road, and watershed drainage patterns. The subcommittee will provide an update to the Forum at its next meeting. Forum members followed the report with a brief discussion. One member of the public provided comment. Co-Chair Ms. Greening concluded that the Forum will not discuss any recommendations pending the subcommittee's updated report and evaluation.

VII. Introduction to Wall Springs Tract Project (Paul Cozzie):

- Since Mr. Cozzie was ill, Co-Chair Ms. Rice postponed discussion about the Wall Springs Tract Project until the next meeting of the Forum.

VIII. Research Data on Shell Key (Dr. Steve Harper):

- Co-Chair Ms. Darden Rice welcomed Dr. Steve Harper, Research Director for the County's Environmental Lands Division, who provided a 30-minute powerpoint presentation on Shell Key Preserve. Dr. Harper gratefully acknowledged the collaboration among staff, volunteers, members of the Sheriff's Department, and conservation organizations for the data presented. Dr. Harper focused on three major areas of long-term study: habitat changes for the island over time, utilization of the island by Fall and Winter bird species, and breeding shorebirds. He also referenced the January presentation by Ms. Pam Leasure, Land Manager of the island, who has documented some of the devastating effects

by predators, pets, and humans on island biodiversity. Dr. Harper's presentation was made available to all Forum members in paper format. A brief discussion followed. Future updates to be Forum will be provided.

IX. **Next Meeting Agenda Topics:**

- Subcommittee report on the recreation fields at Brooker Creek Preserve.
- Introduction to the Wall Springs Tract Project.
- "Penny for Pinellas" projects.
- Shell Key Management Plan update.
- Plans for the protection of the County's Parks and Environmental Lands.

X. **Future Meeting Dates, Times, and Locations for 2007:**

- Ms. Rice noted the dates, times, and locations for the remaining 2007 Forum meetings. The next meeting will be on Thursday, 1 March 2007, from 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm at the County's Extension Service in Largo (adjacent to Heritage Village and the Florida Botanical Garden). Driving directions will be provided.

XI. **Public Comment:**

- One citizen provided comments about a local issue involving a school bus terminal and a proposed land swap near the intersection of McMullen Booth Road and SR580.
- Mr. Hasbrouck motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Muntz. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.