

Florida Greenways and Trails Council

***Meeting Summary
September 18, 2008
Tallahassee, Florida***

Members Present

Bob Ballard	Greg Chelius
Bob Crim	Jerrie Lindsey
Clay Smallwood	Bill Thomas
Deno Hicks	John Waldron
Jeff Gove	Susan Matthews
Ken Reecy	Phil Laurien
Linda King	Sara Fain
Mike Dannenhauer	Joe Tyberghein
Susan Kennedy	Kent Wimmer
Kathryn Starkey	

Alternates Present: Mike Wisenbaker (for Fred Gaske)

Members Absent: Fred Gaske, Mike Grella

Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Staff: Jena Brooks, Jim Wood, Tammy Salmon, Heather Pence, Cindy Radford, Samantha Browne, Matt Klein, Marsha Connell, Robin Turner, Dean Rogers, Mickey Thomason

Others Present: Ken Bryan, former council member

Chair Linda King called the meeting to order at 9:05 A.M.

INTRODUCTIONS

Tammy Salmon introduced new Council members present, Sara Fain with the National Parks Conservation Association and Clay Smallwood with the St. Joe Company. Mike Grella and Linda King were re-appointed since the June meeting. Bob Crim announced this would be his last meeting as a Council member. He is taking a new position within DOT. He introduced Jeff Caster who will be serving in the interim until a permanent representative is appointed.

AGENDA

Chair Linda King suggested completing Council business in one day versus the two-days planned on the agenda, without omitting any content.

Motion to approve revised agenda:

MOTION: Chair
SECOND: Bob Ballard
VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SUMMARY

Motion to approve the June 2008 meeting summary

MOTION: Bob Crim
SECOND: Deno Hicks
VOTE: Passed unanimously as amended.

CHAIR REPORT

Chair King engaged the Council in a discussion about the protocol of snake bites on trails. She asked if OGT has signs posted on greenways and trails, if there are leaflets or brochures available, and what emergency response options are available to visitors.

Kent Wimmer announced that the Florida Trail Association (FTA), in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and law enforcement from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, are putting together an emergency response plan to provide to 911 systems in the various counties a map of trails and access points to reach victims, as well as providing contact lists of land managers to emergency responders.

Jerrie Lindsey responded that the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has produced a guide to all venomous and non-venomous snakes in Florida and asked if that could be interfaced somehow with what FTA is working on.

Bill Thomas asked if snake education would be something the Council would be interested in pursuing. He recommended Todd Rowley with Orange County. Mr. Rowley teaches young people camping skills. Mr. Thomas suggested collaboration between Orange County and the state in sponsoring an educational video on snake safety to be distributed to schools or available at state park sites.

Susan Kennedy said that Martin County has an emergency response system for their trails made up of volunteer patrols from all user groups. Because the users know the trails, they can respond quickly and provide the best access information. Martin County is working on how to spread out the response to reach the specific land managers since most calls are coming in to one location when they don't know who else to call.

Mr. Wimmer added that part of the plan he is working on involves kiosks at trailheads to provide safety information and getting the trailheads to have a 911 address and a GPS latitude-longitude marking.

Marsha Rickman, regional coordinator with OGT, added that Hillsborough County's 911 system implemented markers with 911 addresses all along their trail. They would like to present this information to the Council.

Action Item: Linda King suggested having a presentation at the next meeting of those things that are preventative in nature for the citizens that use the trails.

OGT REPORT

Jim Wood asked Ken Bryan, former member and chair of the Council, to come forward for a slide presentation, for the Council to thank him for his service, and to give him a framed picture. During Mr. Bryan's tenure, several updates to the acquisition program and Opportunity Map process were done.

Bob Crim also received a framed picture for his years of service on the Council.

Cindy Radford gave an overview of the acquisition workplan. She indicated there is approximately \$6.3 million to work with until 2009 with over \$600,000 that is expected to close by the end of the year. Current negotiations involve \$4.2 million dollars. She briefly reviewed the projects in current negotiations as well as those in the appraisal process.

Ms. Radford expressed the need to come up with a process by which projects move off of the A list that will not close. Rule 62S-1 does not address a mechanism to remove a project. Chair King agreed there needs to be a process in place and suggested a time limit for them to remain on the list.

Ms. Brooks offered that setting a time limit may not be best due to projects being revived and suggested they be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Mr. Ballard suggested a method similar to what the Acquisition and Restoration Council does wherein projects are taken before the Board of Trustees and Cabinet and evaluated every six months to be removed or shifted from an A to a B priority. Shifting a project to B status indicates the state is no longer actively working on it.

The council discussed projects where the seller no longer wants to sell and whether or not they should be moved to B status or removed entirely from the workplan and how to make that possible.

MOTION: Ken Reecy moved for consideration at the next meeting that staff recommend impasse projects where there is no longer a willing seller and staff recommends the projects be removed.

SECOND: Phil Laurien

DISCUSSION: Ms. Radford requested time to obtain a legal opinion on whether complete removal is within the rules and if not, the Council could vote to move the projects to the B list.

AMENDED MOTION: Bob Ballard moved to amend the motion to include the caveat of legal approval.

AMENDMENT TO

AMENDED MOTION: Jerrie Lindsey moved to further amend the motion to have staff include a recommendation as to which projects should be moved to B status and which ones are completely taken off the list, with the caveat of legal ability to do so.

SECOND: Phil Laurien

VOTE: Amended motion carried unanimously

REVIEW OF ACQUISITION PROJECTS

Cindy Radford briefly explained the application and acquisition process to the Council.

Six projects were presented for a vote on acquisition. A summary sheet of each project was provided by Ms. Radford. Applicants spoke on each project and answered questions from Council members.

Alachua to Lake Butler Trail,

Location: Alachua and Union Counties
Applicant: Alachua Conservation Trust
Speaker(s): Robert Hutchinson, Alachua Conservation Trust
Proposed Manager: Alachua Conservation Trust
Opportunity Map Rank: Low Multi-Use
Staff Recommendation: A

DISCUSSION: involved GRU's future intent with power lines, parcel connectivity, and questions that would be answered during the due diligence process. The project is also seeking funding through FCT.

VOTE: A=20 B=0

Inverness Depot (circa 1892)

Location: Citrus County
Applicant: John Dadowski
Speaker(s): John Dadowski, Steve Stackhouse- OGT Manager of Withlacoochee State Trail, Mickey Thomason - OGT
Proposed Manager: DEP Office of Greenways & Trails
Opportunity Map Rank: High Multi-Use
Staff Recommendation: A

DISCUSSION: Facilities would function as a trailhead and work space for Withlacoochee State Trail staff. This is a very heavily used trail with a very active citizen support organization. The property has potential to be income producing and OGT would have to address how that would be handled. A train museum was also discussed.

VOTE: A=20 B=0

Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway/McBride Trustee Addition

Location: Marion County
Applicant: Sandy McBride, Trustee
Speaker(s): Nathan Garcia - McBride Land Development Co., Mickey Thomason - OGT
Proposed Manager: DEP Office of Greenways & Trails
Opportunity Map Rank: High Multi-Use & Paddling maps
Staff Recommendation: A

DISCUSSION: Property is approximately 200 acres, surrounded on three sides by the Cross Florida Greenway and on the other side by the Ocala National Forest. Discussion included managing public lands with in-holdings nearby, whether Florida Forever funds would be more appropriate than OGT, and access and easements.

VOTE: A=10, B=10 Tie vote.

DISCUSSION Members discussed their reasons for voting the project an A or B. Members asked about the process of moving projects from A to B and vice versa. **Action item:** Jim Wood responded that OGT will be looking at how to do that. The Chair called for a re-vote after discussion.

VOTE: A=14, B=6

Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway/Wood Addition

Location: Marion County
Applicant: Terry J. Wood
Speaker(s): Mickey Thomason - OGT
Proposed Manager: DEP Office of Greenways & Trails
Opportunity Map Rank: High Multi-Use
Staff Recommendation: A

DISCUSSION: OGT identified this property as essential because of its topography and location. It is between the Greenway and the Ocala National Forest. The high ground provides recreational access and wildlife refuge during high water periods from surrounding wetlands. Members asked if the federal forest service was able to purchase property like this. Susan Matthews explained they do not typically do direct purchases. **Action item:** John Waldron requested that, in the future, the biological field inspection report include percentages of the ecological components.

VOTE: A = 19, B = 1

Palm Grove Canoe & Kayak Trailhead

Location: Taylor County
Applicant: Taylor County

Speaker(s): Melanie Cox – Taylor County, Rhoda Moehring, Dean Fowler, Ramona Griner, Pam Wessels

Proposed Manager: Taylor County

Opportunity Map Rank: Medium Multi-Use and Paddling maps

Staff Recommendation: A

DISCUSSION: The property is directly on the canal to the Steinhatchee River and includes a mobile home, small dock, and concrete boat ramp. Steinhatchee currently has no public river access for canoe and kayak. The project will connect to the Taylor Coastal Loop and the Old Steinhatchee Trail, the Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail, and the Florida Circumnavigational Trail. Questions included available amenities to tourists in the vicinity.

VOTE: A=20, B=0

Princeton Lakeside Park

Location: Dade County

Applicant: Miami-Dade Park & Recreation Department

Speaker: Alisa Turteltaub – Miami Dade Park & Recreation Dept.

Proposed Manger: Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation Department

Opportunity Map Rank: High Multi-Use

Staff Recommendation: A

DISCUSSION: This is an 11.63 acre site that includes a lake and will be a trailhead for the planned Princeton Trail and provide a buffer between developed and rural areas. It's adjacent to the C-102 canal and near the South Dade Trail. It would also connect to the Biscayne Trail. Depending on which side of the canal the trail ends up, the water management district's water control structure may be used as a crosswalk from the trail to the trailhead. The water management district will give permission for kayaking and a paved trail. Questions also involved possible restoration of habitat and removal of exotic species. This is in the direct path of migratory birds. The department will work closely with DERM to do this.

VOTE: A=19, B=1

Chiefland Dunnellon Easement

Jena Brooks went over minutes from a prior council meeting involving the Chiefland Dunnellon Easement. The council had previously voted favorably on this project and a motion had been made by Jerrie Lindsey to have the project return to the Council for further discussion in the future. At the earlier meeting, Sue Noyes represented Progress Energy and spoke to the Council about the possibility of co-locating a trail connector on the Chiefland to Dunnellon Corridor they own. Their concern was public response if power lines came in after trail development. The project was never officially put on the workplan and since OGT is now in discussions with Progress Energy on other issues, OGT is seeking the Council's re-affirmation of the vote to include this project in

negotiations. At this time, it wouldn't be a purchase project; yet, would be gained through negotiations as OGT and Progress Energy discuss property exchanges and shared use.

Edwin McCook with the Suwannee River Water Management District raised the question of expanding the discussions with Progress Energy to include connections further north. Discussion followed.

MOTION: Greg Chelius moved to formally put it on the workplan but also continue negotiations with Progress Energy.

SECOND: Jerrie Lindsey

AMENDMENT: Mr. Chelius amended his motion for purposes of clarification to say: put the project on the workplan and allow OGT to negotiate with Progress Energy for corridors from the north terminus of the Suncoast Parkway 2 to Monticello and beyond, to be known as the Nature Coast Extension North and South.

SECOND: Jerrie Lindsey

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Susan Kennedy moved to add the Suwannee River Greenway Extension and the Starkey-Pinellas Trail Connector to the workplan so that OGT may also consider them in negotiations for trail use with Progress Energy.

SECOND: Kathryn Starkey

DISCUSSION: Members questioned if such a motion was within the rules to add something to the workplan, but because these will not be purchase acquisitions but part of negotiated agreements, the Council is giving OGT permission to include them in discussions. Members clarified that approval is being given and that this approval is needed in order for OGT to later spend resources if the projects result in perpetual easements, for example.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

OPPORTUNITY MAPS UPDATE

Heather Pence explained the background of the Opportunity Maps and how they are used. The recreational trail network opportunity maps represent the vision for a connected trail network of corridors of statewide and regional importance. The maps guide the acquisition of trails under the OGT acquisition program. They are utilized in programs like Florida Forever for project evaluation and by other organizations such as the Fl. Department of Transportation.

In 2003, the Council revised the OGT acquisition rule to include the Opportunity Maps in the eligibility criteria of the program. An interactive website, FloridaTrailsNetwork.com, was developed through the University of Florida and allows uploads of new trail opportunities. There are three maps, multi-use, hiking, and paddling. The hiking map is based on the preferred routing study from the Florida National Scenic Trail which is currently being revised and will be presented to the Council at the December council meeting. Kent Wimmer addressed the progress of this map revision.

Ms. Pence summarized the events that took place over the previous nine months that resulted in the final maps being presented at this meeting. Over 300 comments were received, the council approved draft maps in June 2008, five public workshops were held, and the regional planners performed significant outreach. An additional 1,845 linear miles of multi-use opportunity corridor and an additional 667 linear miles of paddling trail were added. OGT staff then ranked each piece as high, medium, or low in priority. The ranking process considered such factors as land use, habitat, GIS analyses, Critical Lands Inventory Process (CLIP), the Century Commission report, and expert opinion.

Kathryn Starkey asked for a technical change in the layering on the map to show a connection at 169A between the Starkey Trail and the Pinellas Trail. The suggestion was made to have the red layer as the dominant layer over the purple.

MOTION: Bob Ballard moved to change the rankings on segments 53, 56, 58, 59 and 65 from medium to high and to change the ranking on segment 63 from low to high.

SECOND: Kathryn Starkey

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Kent Wimmer expressed concern regarding the priority of corridors. He would prefer to see more focus on spine development versus what appears to be a spaghetti network, distinguishing between trunk lines and secondary corridors on a statewide scale. He agrees with the efforts toward establishing the multi-use system along the coast and having more red line there; however, he sees too much red throughout.

Jim Wood responded that it is difficult at the state level to know what is a high priority for a local area and therefore deciding where a spine should go may not be in agreement with the local needs. The Opportunity Maps are more of a product of work of the local communities in coordination with the state. If OGT and the Council were to choose the state-level spines, they may not end up at high whereas to the community, it's extremely important. The approach has tried to be reflective of what people have in their local or regional plans and still bring that within the framework of a statewide map. The maps are intended to give some clarity of importance relative to both local and state levels. The rankings are only a piece of information to use in decision making and everything that is on the map is considered an important project. That there are so many on the map reflects the tremendous need.

MOTION: Bob Crim moved to adopt the amended Multi-Use Trails Opportunity Map.

SECOND: Phil Laurien

VOTE: motion carries unanimously

MOTION: Joe Tyberghein moved to adopt the Paddling Trail Network Opportunity Map.

SECOND: Deno Hicks

VOTE: motion carries unanimously

NEW BUSINESS

Acquisition Prioritization

Kent Wimmer expressed his views of the overall mission of the acquisition program and the Council. Mr. Wimmer would like to see money being spent on the best places for connections to be made to create the most effective statewide system. He would like to see the program be more proactive, where staff identifies missing links and actively pursues the land owner; yet, continue the current process of accepting applications. He compared the approach to that of the Florida National Scenic Trail, where they have a defined route and then approach the landowners to sell. He asked the Council members for their views on how the program funding is being utilized.

John Waldron responded that he views the program as a grassroots effort where the local community drives the system of trails. He thinks the current map structure and local input is a good system.

Bob Ballard added that because of limited funds, OGT is extremely opportunistic in their approach. No one is sitting and waiting for something to happen, they make it happen. The Opportunity Maps show where the needs are and that is kept in mind when interacting with the public on a variety of issues. Not every gain is done through a purchase.

Matt Klein, regional planner with OGT, said their efforts don't involve as much going directly to landowners as working with the train planner for the local government to discuss gaps and local interest in a trail.

Jim Wood stated that Mr. Wimmer's suggestion was considered in 2003 when the rule change was made. There was discussion about becoming an in-holdings and additions program and eliminating the application process. It was determined that didn't build on the local communities' efforts. It is often much easier for a local government who already has interactions with landowners to make something happen; whereas, OGT does not have the staff to stay on top of that many projects. So, a hybrid approach resulted. The regional planners are proactive. He added another concern about limiting focus to

completing a spine is that these projects may not be available or ready during an acquisition cycle while other projects are ready.

Greg Chelius suggested prioritizing the A category.

Ken Reecy agreed with Mr. Chelius and supports a hybrid approach that includes the regional planners showing the local communities the prioritized corridors, showing what is current and where the gaps are and letting them know that funding is available to help complete the state's missing connections that they could tie into.

Kent Wimmer, Kathryn Starkey, and Jerrie Lindsey all agreed. Ms. Lindsey suggested the maps reflect the existing trails and make the gaps more apparent.

Ken Reecy commented that there are several rural counties that are trying to develop a trail system plan in order to fulfill the criteria for the FCT program. However, they are hiring consultants and he would like to see OGT offer expert guidance and present the state's priorities to these counties before they design their plan.

Bob Ballard added that ARC is looking at doing away with the A and B process and going to a straight numerical ranking and perhaps OGT could do the same with the caveat that the director be able to call an impasse on a project and proceed to the next in line.

Katherine Starkey agreed with previous comments that a distinction is needed on the map to show what is acquired and where the missing links are. She suggested doing so with a dotted line to identify the breaks in connectivity.

Bob Crim stated the maps were intended to identify the trails and the priority of those trails, so perhaps an additional tool could be developed like a needs plan subset for the high priorities that would show how much is built and what the needs on each completed part are, such as a trailhead.

Action Item: Chair King asked OGT if they could re-color the map lines to reflect existing trail and missing pieces more clearly.

Jim Wood responded an existing trails overlay could be done that would include what is known; however, there are many projects around the state that OGT was not involved in and so gathering all of that information would be attempted yet not guaranteed to be comprehensive. There are 8,000 miles of corridor identified and who would determine the priority of those?

Susan Kennedy responded that the Council would like to know where all the gaps are as a starting point and then let the Council make the determination of priority. Staff could approach the local trail planners and receive expert opinion from Council members on their specific region once again for input on the status of a project to aide the full Council in ranking.

The Chair recognized Jim Muller, Muller & Associates, to speak. Mr. Muller made three points. First, he suggested trying to identify at least one key gap per year for acquisition. Second, he suggested informing the Council members of the stage of progression of the existing projects on the workplan to help them with criteria to select what is most important. Third, he suggested the maps reflect accomplishments at some scale.

Jena Brooks commented that internally, the list is already prioritized in the order presented. However, a property manager is not always available. Major gaps can be identified and pursued, if not all gaps around the state. Ms. Brooks asked the council how they would like to prioritize the gaps. She mentioned Santos Gap, the Greenway, and the Withlacoochee CSX.

Chair King suggested appointing a committee of 3 or 4 people with Kent Wimmer as the lead. Greg Chelius and Jim Muller were appointed by the Chair. Jerrie Lindsey indicated the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission would help.

The committee is formed for the purpose of coming up with a plan for future prioritization of acquisition projects and identification of such projects, with primary focus on missing gaps.

Action Item: Jim Wood added that at the December 2008 meeting, OGT will bring recommendations for the revisions to the A and B categorization.

Rule Provision

Chair King asked for OGT staff to find out if allowing an email vote by the council would be possible. OGT will check with the general counsel's office. Bob Ballard suggested OGT look at the Ocean Council since they have meetings via email. It was agreed by all that such an action would have to be publicly noticed in a timely manner; yet, will be further investigated to see if it can be incorporated into the by-laws.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting will be December 3, 2008 at the Jacksonville Hyatt downtown from 9:00am to 12:00pm or upon conclusion of business. The meeting is being held at the same hotel as the annual Public Land Acquisition & Management (PLAM) conference.

The following meeting was tentatively set for February 26, 2009 in Tallahassee at the DEP office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair King mentioned on behalf of Greg Chelius that the Trust for Public Land has organized a national event to convert parking spaces into park and trail spaces. OGT is a participant with a parking space designed like a trail. This took place at the Downtown Getdown the next day.

Jerrie Lindsey announced the FWCC is having a national public lands day event at the Aucilla River on September 27, 2008. She will send invitations. She also distributed a wildlife report projecting future conditions in Florida and asked that it be shared with as many people as possible.

Phil Laurien asked everyone to consider spreading the word about the cost of urban sprawl. A study concluded that by adding one person per acre that 2,000 square miles could be saved from development, which is about \$100 billion dollars, enough money to buy a transit system, critical natural resources, parks, etc. This money is saved from infrastructure expenses that would have otherwise been incurred. He suggested the CLIP statewide maps should be a driving factor for where greenways and trails try to link up critical migratory patterns and ecosystems. He further suggested that money for acquisition may come from infrastructure avoided if we could change our development patterns.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Bob Crim moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Kent Wimmer

The meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.