

## **Equestrian Trails & Facilities Referendum Committee**

Appointed by the North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation (NBCPR)  
Minutes of the Meeting of January 30, 2006, 6:00 p.m., at the Mims-Scottsmoor Library

### Committee Members Present

Donna McCone, Chairman  
Jennifer Hill  
Sabrina Jeffers  
Kay Miller  
Mary Page, Vice Chairman  
Carol Thompson  
Winnie Woods

### Committee Members Absent

Susan Canada  
Connie Carswell

### NBCPR Liaison

Gigi Henkel

### Staff Present

Terry A. Lane, North Area Parks Operations Manager  
Judy Inman, Administrative Secretary

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### I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McCone called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

### II. ROLL CALL

Jennifer Hill's absence of November 28, 2006, was excused. Staff was asked to contact Susan Canada and Connie Carswell to find out why they have been absent.

### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Sabrina Jeffers pointed out that on page four of the minutes, 15 acres should read 15 miles when referring to the railroad bed in Volusia County.

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**Minutes of the November 28, 2005, meeting were approved as amended at the motion by Carol Thompson, seconded by Winnie Woods.**

**AYE: Hill, Jeffers, McCone, Miller, Page, Thompson, Woods**

**NAY: None**

**Carried 7-0**

### IV. STAFF REPORTS

Terry Lane read an email from Mike Knight, Environmentally Endangered Lands Manager, regarding the Continental Acreage Property north and adjacent to Buck Lane Conservation Area in which he indicated there is not a large enough location of disturbed land for horse trailer parking on that parcel. A hiking trail head might be possible in the future. There are no plans to provide a trail connection to the Buck Lake Conservation Area. Mr. Knight stated he would make the committee aware of any potential acquisitions that might be suitable for an equestrian facility.

Mr. Lane presented a brochure for Buck Lake Conservation Area which is managed by St. John River Water Management District (SJRWMD). Mr. Lane reported he spoke with Nels Parson, District Recreational Manager, who connected him with Pete Henn Regional Land Manager. Mr. Henn will be

back February 10. Mr. Lane reported he entered at the east trail head where there is a caretaker and an easement for power lines running along the west side of the trail. Nels Parson indicated SJRWMD may be willing to enter into an agreement if Brevard County wants to develop a trail head on the Conservation Area property. Mr. Parson would like a formal presentation or diagram of what is desired. Mr. Lane thought the committee wanted stabilized parking with plenty of space for vehicles and trailers and a rest room.

Carol inquired of the acreage. Mr. Lane showed on the map where the caretaker is located.

Chairman McCone reported she has been there several times. There is a parking area to the left and she has seen up to 14 trailers there. The 1.2 miles north from there is just a straight road leading to the other areas. She reviewed other amenities in the Conservation Area. Chairman McCone asked Mr. Lane if he discussed developing at a site further in. Mr. Lane reported Parsons said that if the County wanted to work on certain areas throughout the trails to add to the amenities, SJRWMD would be open to that. Mr. Lane spoke to Mr. Parsons mainly about the trail head itself, near the caretaker where there is water and electricity. If the County builds a restroom and additional parking, SJRWMD will want the County to maintain it.

Gigi Henkel reported there is an equestrian area at C54, near Palm Bay and Indian River County line, which is run by SJRWMD would be a perfect model and suggested staff visit the site. Small covered paddocks were recently built and there is a pump-type water station for horses, some electricity, and an old cabin campsite. Basically there are small paddocks in the parking area. They are charging a few dollars a day and campers can call ahead to book the time.

Chairman McCone inquired if waders are necessary to investigate the site. Mrs. Henkel stated it is a drive in right to the horse camping area which is very horse accessible and friendly.

The website is <http://sjr.state.fl.us> then quick click recreation, land management, selected trail guides.

Sabrina Jeffers asked if the Committee has given up on doing something adjacent to the railway. Chairman McCone reviewed discussion from the last meeting and discussion ensued.

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**Motion by Sabrina Jeffers, seconded by Carol Thompson, for Mr. Lane to ask Barbara Meyer to give the Committee a formal report on the Rails-to-Trails Program.**

**AYE: Hill, Jeffers, McCone, Miller, Page, Thompson, Woods**

**NAY: None**

**Carried 7-0**

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In response to an inquiry from Carol Thompson, it was agreed the Rails-to-Trails connection does not go through Buck Lake. Discussion ensued. Winnie Woods noted the Committee was trying to find access from Buck Lake to the Rails-to-Trails. It was noted it is private property which Chairman McCone described as a swamp.

Chairman McCone reviewed the disappointing information given at the last meeting. Discussion ensued. Gigi Henkel noted other options can be explored. Carol Thompson stated a trail through a sub-division can be a good thing. Mrs. Henkel reported Orange County residents were very opposed initially to having a trail behind their houses, however in the end they were very happy with it as vandalism and robberies decreased because it is a utilized trail. Chairman McCone noted the huge value of equestrian property in other communities and states.

Chairman McCone noted that the future of the trail is uncertain; however, Buck Lake seems like a protected wilderness area that will be there for equestrians. Sabrina Jeffers asked if presenting a formal statement for Buck Lake means the Committee is obligated. Chairman McCone indicated SJRWMD is being asked for further information and requesting a representatives come to clear up what the options

are. Sabrina Jeffers would like more investigation for the corridor. Chairman McCone indicated Barbara Meyer is being asked to come back before the Committee. Mr. Lane will also ask Pete Henn to attend the next meeting.

#### Public Comment

Walter Pine stated Miami Corp is a moot issue. As of last Friday, Thelma Roper talked to Barbara Meyer and Mr. Pine talked to the State. Mr. Pine stated that apparently the State has entered into an agreement whereby FEC still retains title and it will become a part of the Rails-to-Trails. Miami Corp has been given certain benefits for relinquishing its claim which includes the 1.5 miles in North Brevard. Mr. Pine continued by explaining the easement issue which when he researched was a 50' non-encroachment easement that FEC controls, but there is an older 100' easement that requires notice. If the title is transferred, some extensive research will need to be done. It is not public record in Florida during negotiation. He suggested getting a complete copy of the full packet from the State by calling Cynthia Radford at 850-245-2052 X4079, who may or may not still be the contact. It may have a significant impact. The State is not looking into the easement because if it transfers all rights transfer with it. The County will need to look into it.

Thelma Roper reported on her conversation with Barbara Meyer in which Ms. Meyer said that once logging is completed in an area, the logging easement would be free and clear for the trail in perpetuity. It is pretty much in final negotiations with FEC and expected it to go to the legislature for funding sometime in February or March, from Titusville to Lake Monroe. When Miami Corp raised it's head, they discussed the issue of suing, and finally Brevard, Volusia, FEC, Miami Corp and DEP sat down and hammered out an agreement that Miami Corp signed off on. Once the purchase is made, the County does a management plan/design of the trail from Titusville to County line to be submitted to DEP.

Sabrina Jeffers was told bids had been put in to take up the rails and rock and possibly start design of the trail.

Chairman McCone thanked Walter Pine and Thelma Roper for going above and beyond to get the information.

Terry Lane will ask Barbara Meyer to give either written or oral report.

Mr. Pine suggested inviting Cynthia Radford as well, or someone from the State. Chairman McCone stated that is a great idea.

#### V. Old Business

Potential Properties—Mr. Lane presented a map and backup information on Government Owned Lands North of S.R. 46.

Chairman McCone reviewed parameters which it was agreed are to have 10-20 acres, connected to Buck Lake or railway. It was decided the trail crosses Aurantia where Aurantia crosses I-95 and runs by Folsom and Blounts Ridge Road. Carol Thompson suggested as a wild fantasy would be to find a connection from Buck Lake to the trail, if use of Buck Lake property would be allowed, which the County would need to develop and maintain. Discussion ensued

Walter Pine reported there is concern by the Clerk of the Court whether or not the money is there because other projects have run over budget, which Mr. Pine further explained, concluding that if Parks and Recreation is willing to make a statement that the money is in fact there, the Committee will be okay. Mr. Pine stated he disagrees with what the Clerk of the Court says, but the Clerk has the fiduciary responsibility to sign off. The Clerk of the Court says some of the plans of the County for funding project overruns are illegal. Chairman McCone stated it is probably important to ask the question as to availability of funds.

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**Motion by Mary Page, seconded by Sabrina Jeffers, for Parks and Recreation to determine fund availability.**

**AYE: Hill, Jeffers, McCone, Miller, Page, Thompson, Woods**

**NAY: None**

**Carried 7-0**

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Mr. Lane received confirmation that the Committee is asking staff to verify the \$230,000 for the Equestrian Trails and Facilities Referendum project identified in the flyer is available. The flyer states land acquisition, trail improvements, and restrooms.

Mary Page stated she thinks land acquisition shouldn't be eliminated. Chairman McCone thought that could include making improvements on existing government land at Buck Lake.

Chairman McCone thanked staff for all the work. Mr. Lane reported Terry Stoms, Park Planner for the department, put together the report.

Gigi Henkel reported her experience is that for most of the projects staff has worked on, there are sometimes alternative funding sources after a project is started. Carol Thompson noted the ability to raise funds for amenities.

Chairman McCone stated she is overwhelmed with information and reviewed the potential for connecting Buck Lake and the original concept of Rails-to-Trails. She asked for comments on which area to focus on most, and what the pros and cons are.

Carol Thompson noted property doesn't have to be purchased at Buck Lake, except maybe a connecting trail. Chairman McCone asked if Buck Lake could house an extensive equestrian environment.

#### Public Comment

Jim Sloan, 5420 James Lane, stated at first the Committee wanted a small Kentucky horse park, and asked what the minimum facility is. Chairman McCone stated that earlier the thought was for a huge project, with arena, equestrian center, but now is restricted to looking simply at a staging area where horses can be loaded, unloaded, as jumping off point that is comfortable for both animals and humans with the potential for limited paddock areas, water, restroom facilities, until more funding is found. She also noted the possibility to raise more funds.

Mr. Sloan stated he sort of represents the residents of Fawn Lake, who have stables and privately owned horse facilities along the eastern boundary and the residents are interested in helping.

Chairman McCone summarized the Committee is looking at Buck Lake which has a very extensive riding capability in several counties, and is complete. She asked what the advantage would be of Rails-to-Trails.

In response to a comment by Sabrina Jeffers, Chairman McCone stated the Referendum didn't mention Rails-to-Trails but rather was what the Committee saw was the highest and best use. Terry Lane read the elements identified in the Referendum brochure for Equestrian Trails and Facilities as land acquisition, trail improvements, restrooms at \$230,000.

Ms. Jeffers stated she is looking at the big picture. Who is to say that in the future the trail couldn't extend even farther than Lake Monroe. She thought it would be a fabulous thing to have different trail heads to get on and off. Donna asked if there is anywhere along the Rails-to-Trails to get off and ride. Gigi Henkel said she doesn't ride the rail bed but suggested taking what you can get when you can get it and worry about getting the rest later. The idea of Rails-to-Trails is wonderful, and she would love to see it go all the way to Canada, but money is an issue with only \$230,000. She suggested starting with a small facility and still looking at it and requesting money. She also suggested attending other public

meetings, i.e. SJRWMD who is asking for public comment and few equestrians show up. Sabrina Jeffers reported her initial ideas were from talking with people in the community, and she thinks it would be wonderful to ride that far up.

#### Public Comment

George Miller of Holder Park Drive stated that in riding the Rails-to-Trails, all that will be seen is someone's backyard, an orange grove, or riding along a highway, from point A to B and back. He personally thinks Buck Lake would be better. He noted SJRWMD is letting the trails grow over. Chairman McCone stated Mr. Miller probably rides more extensively on the trails in Brevard County than anyone else other than Ms. Henkel who has lived here longer. He also has extensive experience in the mid-west as an equestrian trail guide and therefore has a very valid knowledge of what it takes for an enjoyable wilderness experience. Chairman McCone questioned Mr. Miller, stating her understanding is that Mr. Miller believes that in this environment, if the County is given the opportunity to maintain some of the trails that are overgrown, that Mr. Miller could identify, and that would be a valid expense. Mr. Miller stated absolutely. One could ride in Buck Lake all day long and never ride the same trail.

Chairman McCone then recognized members of the Committee who enjoy endurance riding, asking if such events could be held at Buck Lake. Carol Thompson indicated 25 miles would be needed which could be straight or clover leaf. Mrs. Thompson noted the preference for the term distance riding. Mr. Miller thought 25 miles would be possible at Buck Lake and that there is a gate opening from Buck Lake, across S.R. 46 to Hatbill Park. Gigi Henkel reported there is an opening but Hatbill is pretty wet to ride. Mrs. Henkel pointed out the map shows approximately 30 miles of existing marked trails.

Sabrina Jeffers pointed out not everyone who has horses is able to trailer their horse. The Rails-to-Trails would benefit people living along the trail with access to the trail. Chairman McCone stated that is another thing to address which is not on the Committee agenda in that the Committee is not here to make connection for private property owners.

VI. NEW BUSINESS--None

VII. PUBLIC INPUT --There was no further public input.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

February 20, 2006, 6 p.m., at Mims-Scottsmoor Library.

IX. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at the motion by Kay Miller, seconded by Mary Page.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna McCone, Chairman