

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

THROUGH: Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director,
Everglades Restoration Resource Area

FROM: Ruth Clements, Department Director,
Land Acquisition and Land Management

DATE: September 11, 2008

SUBJECT: Five year management plan update for the DuPuis Management Area

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the five year update of the General Management Plan for the DuPuis Management Area (2008-2013).

BACKGROUND

- Section 140.25(6)(b), South Florida Water Management District Policies Code, directs the District to develop a General Management Plan that follows a designated format and provides recommended management actions for each Land Stewardship Management Area.
- The District has acquired 21,875 acres in the DuPuis Save Our Rivers (SOR) project area.
- The DuPuis Management Area is located in Martin and Palm Beach counties.
- This General Management Plan is an update of the 2003 – 2007 plan.

The management plan describes the historical, physical, and ecological aspects of the DuPuis Management Area, in conjunction with the stewardship activities that are necessary to properly manage these lands. The purpose of the management plan is to provide guidance to District land stewards for the implementation of appropriate and consistent land management practices and to identify goals and objectives for the management of the DuPuis area.

Goal 1: Manage natural communities and modified habitats to protect and enhance water, floral, and faunal resources

Objectives:

- Maintain an appropriate hydroperiod through maintenance and modification of area water control structures as needed.
- Continue to regularly apply fire to fire maintained habitats through a well-planned and documented prescribed burning program. Conduct burns on at least a 3-5 year rotation with approximately 50% of burning activity occurring from May through August.

- Continue an aggressive, integrated exotic plant management program. Areas of treatment will be prioritized based on severity of infestation and will be coordinated with burning and other land management activities. Treatments will be documented.
- Continue understory restoration by using shredding and mowing equipment in combination with prescribed fire to open up areas of overgrown saw palmetto and wax myrtle. District staff and contractors will treat approximately 500 acres each year.
- Continue appropriate forest management activities to enhance natural communities. Evaluate the need for additional cabbage palm removal using low ground pressure harvest equipment.
- Continue to reforest deteriorated areas of the old citrus grove and cleared areas north of State Road 76 with slash pine.
- Continue to enhance the monitoring and evaluation of restoration activities on plant communities and area wildlife.
- Coordinate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to manage wildlife species inhabiting the area. Continue to manage habitat and provide funding and assistance to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for the reintroduction of the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker on DuPuis.
- Provide resource protection through an established partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Law Enforcement. Review enhanced patrol law enforcement activities biweekly and review program annually.

Goal 2: Provide resource-based public use opportunities

Objectives:

- Maintain public use program focus and direction through continued coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- Maintain environmental education programs and outreach through a continued partnership with the Florida Center for Environmental Studies.
- Maintain present public-use improvements (roads, trails, signs, entrances, campgrounds, structures) using a combination of District maintenance, Department of Corrections field crew, construction contracts, and user group involvement.
- Complete the assessment and planning, and begin construction of equestrian campground bathroom improvements in Fiscal Year 2012.
- Develop a trail and boardwalk off DuPuis Grade in Fiscal Year 2008.
- Construct a 2-table picnic shelter at the DuPuis Grade picnic area and install a self-composting toilet at the fishing pier parking lot in Fiscal Year 2010.
- Construct a picnic shelter at the Governor House site in Fiscal Year 2011.

Goal 3: Maintain area infrastructure.

Objectives:

- Replace administrative office/visitor center roof and porch screening in Fiscal Year 2009.
- Add 2 bays to existing shop building and demolish old pole barn in equipment compound in Fiscal Year 2010.
- Demolish old shop building and construct new chemical storage building on same site in Fiscal Year 2011.
- Demolish second old pole barn and construct new equipment storage building on same site in Fiscal Year 2012.

How this helps meet the District's 10-year Strategic Plan: Each of the management goals and objectives outlined in the management plan furthers one or more of the strategies in the 10-year strategic plan for the Land Stewardship program. These strategies include maximizing resource based recreation, developing land management plans, restoring natural fire frequency, and treating and managing exotic plant species.

This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography: The DuPuis Management Area is located in Martin and Palm Beach counties. This board item impacts the District's Land Stewardship Division.

What concerns could this Board item raise? The plan provides guidance for the management actions that will occur on the property for the next five years including partnerships with other agencies that are consistent with District goals, compatible public use, and natural resource management.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item? The plan furthers both the District's mission and 10 year strategic plan.

RC/sc