

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

THROUGH: Tommy Strowd, Deputy Executive Director, Operations and Maintenance

FROM: Dan Thayer, Department Director, Vegetation and Land Management

DATE: July 15, 2010

SUBJECT: **Authorization for the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission to establish approximately 4,235 acres of District lands located within Martin County as part of the John C. and Mariana Jones / Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area.**

Background:

The agenda item proposes authorizing the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to incorporate approximately 4,235 acres of land located within Martin County, formerly known as the Nine Gems/Pal Mar East and Culpepper properties, as part of the John C. and Mariana Jones / Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area. The Wildlife and Environmental Area is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to provide resource protection and provide compatible public recreational activities including hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and camping. Pursuant to the acquisition agreement, the Nine Gems property will be identified as the William H. Lee Unit of the John C. and Mariana Jones / Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area.

How this helps meet the District's 10-year Strategic Plan:

Approval of this item is consistent with the District's Public Recreational Access and Use Policy and demonstrates a commitment to develop partnerships to manage appropriate resource based recreation in support of the District's 10-Year Strategic Plan. Opening this land to public use will provide a variety of resource based recreational opportunities compatible with the long term management of the property. This project is an integral component in the District's 10-year Strategic Plan to provide public use opportunities and recreational access to District lands.

Funding Source:

There is no funding associated with this agenda item.

This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:

Authorization for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to manage this property as part of an existing Wildlife and Environmental Area is being requested by the Operations and Maintenance resource area. The referenced properties are located east of County Highway 711 and north of Indiantown Road in Martin County. Concurrence with this action has been received from the Martin County Board of County Commissioners who was a partner in the acquisition of these properties.

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What concerns could this Board item raise?

The use of firearms for the purposes of hunting could be viewed as a potential safety issue. As the state agency charged with regulating hunting activities, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will establish adequate no hunting zones and other measures, as necessary, to address any potential conflicts between recreational activities and adjacent development.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

This proposal would provide the District a partner in the management of District owned lands, increase public use and recreational opportunities on District property, and expand allowable recreational activities consistent with District policy.