



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members
THROUGH:  Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director, CERP
FROM:  John Dunnuck, Department Director, Land Management & Operations
DATE: August 7, 2006
SUBJECT: Five-Year Management Plan Update for the CREW Management Area.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the 2006–2011 5-year update of the General Management Plan for the CREW Management Area.

BACKGROUND

- Section 140.25(6)b, South Florida Water Management District Policies Code, directs the District to develop General Management Plans for each of Land Stewardship Management Area that follow a designated form and provides recommended management for those areas. These plans are updated every 5 years.
- The District and its partners have acquired 28,540 acres of the CREW Save Our Rivers (SOR) projects.
- The CREW Management Area is in Lee and Collier counties.
- This General Management Plan is an update of the 2001 – 2006 plan.

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

This update has been evaluated by a management review committee, the CREW Land & Water Trust, and the general public.

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

Objectives:

- Continue the regular application of fire through a well-planned and documented prescribed burning program with a target of 1000 acres of flatwoods and marsh burned annually
- Continue an aggressive, integrated exotic plant management program to control infestations of all invasive exotic plant species. Treatments will be documented and coordinated with other management activities
- Continue to restore high value to degraded wildlife habitats based on historic information
- Continue to administer resource protection program with Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC)

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Goal 2: Provide resource-based public use opportunities.

Objectives:

- Maintain present public-use improvements (roads, signs, entrances, structures) using a combination of District maintenance, construction contracts, and user group involvement
- Improve public access through construction, acquisition, easements and/or cooperative agreements
- Open a new public use area at Bird Rookery Swamp with parking and a new boardwalk to open access to the old tram road trail network.
- Continue to support efforts of the CREW Land and Water Trust's environmental education and public use programs
- Develop and install interpretive signage at key points within the MA to enhance visitor experience and to educate visitors about the MA

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 program strategies in the 10-year strategic plan for the Land Stewardship program area such as: maximizing resource based recreation, developing land management plans, restoring natural fire frequency, and increasing treatments of exotic species.

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

The CREW Management Area is situated in Lee and Collier Counties and impacts the District's Land Stewardship resource area.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

The plan provides guidance as to what management practices should occur on the site 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.

If there are specific questions regarding this plan, please contact Fred Davis, Director of the Land Stewardship Division, at 561-682-6636 or fdavis@sfwmd.gov.