

Exhibit U

State Forest Management Plan Advisory Group Summary

(To be provided upon completion of meetings and public hearing.)

Withlacoochee State Forest

Management Plan Advisory Group

Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2014

Members Present:

Wendy Poag, Lake County Parks and Trails Division
Sally McDavid, Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen
John Thomas, Landowner / Cattle Interest
Dennis Johnson, Richloam Sportsman Association
Patricia Laird, SouthWest Association of Mountain bike Pedalers
Ralph Hancock, Florida Trail Association Suncoast
Eric Hoyer, Natural Resource Planning Service
Mickey Thomason, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Chris Reed, Southwest Florida Water Management District
Scotland Talley, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Keith Mousel, Florida Forest Service

Members Absent:

Ted Schrader, Pasco County Commissioner
Joe Meek, Citrus County Commissioner
Diane Rowden, Hernando County Commissioner
Christine Andenberg, Hernando County Audubon Society

Staff Present:

Wilbur Priest, Forestry Supervisor II
Denise Wilde, Ecology Forester
Vincent Morris, Forestry Supervisor II
Bill Korn, Director's Office
Jennifer Reed, Director's Office
Judi Tear, Government Operations Consultant I
Justin Draft, Forestry Supervisor II
Casey Chapman, Forest Ranger
Kawika Bailey, Forestry Operations Administrator
Bob Lindemuth, Senior Forester
Mona Neville, Forester
Ryan Grumbly, Forester
Michael Penn, Resource Administrator
Eddie Duval, Forestry Supervisor I

The Public Meeting of the Withlacoochee State Forest Management Plan Advisory group was called to order at 6:00pm in the Withlacoochee Training Center at the Withlacoochee State Forest, 24059 Childs Road, Brooksville, Florida, 34601.

Mr. Bill Korn gave an introduction. He explained that all state agencies are required by Florida Statute to hold a Public Hearing in preparation of management plans for Trustee-owned State lands. The Advisory Group for this meeting is to conduct the Public Hearing.

Mr. Korn then introduced several of the Florida Forest Service personnel including himself, Jennifer Reed, and Denise Wilde. He said that the meeting would not be recorded, but that meeting notes would be taken. He introduced Mike Penn, Keith Mousel, and Kawika Bailey. Several members of the public that were present at that time introduced themselves: Casey Chapman (who is also a FFS Forest Ranger), Zach Chapman (a hunter), Alton Chapman (a hunter), and Talbott Parten (Quail Forever).

Mr. Korn noted that representatives of four big facets of the FFS programs all had representatives present: Eddie Duval (Recreation) Justin Draft (Timber), Vince Morris

(Ecology), Kawika Bailey (Operations/Fire), and Mike Penn (Resources, supervising Mr. Draft and Mr. Morris). He noted that Mr. Bailey was previously working at Tate's Hell.

Mr. Korn, finished with introductions, progressed to the business end of the meeting. He related that the Public Meeting, as required by law, was announced in a prior County Commission Meeting for each of the five counties (Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Pasco, and Sumter), in legal ads in area newspapers, in the Florida Administrative Register, and in local area kiosks.

Mr. Korn noted that no County Commissioners were present due to it being a primary election night, although they all had been invited.

Mr. Korn then referenced the "Government in the Sunshine" Rule, which states that those delegated as members of the Advisory Group are forbidden to speak to each other regarding agenda items outside of a publicly noticed meeting. This holds true until their term concludes, which is when the Director submits the plan to DEP (usually about 2 months).

Mr. Korn explained the hearing tonight served to introduce the Advisory Group and their role was to listen to the general public and staff' response to their questions. He stated the proper time for the Advisory Group to speak and share opinions would be the workshop that would take place at 10am the following day.

The next point of order was to select a chairperson to introduce the agenda tonight and for procedural needs at the meeting tomorrow. Mr. Korn had previously asked Keith Mousel, WSF Center Manager, if he would be willing to serve in this role, and he agreed. Scotland Talley, FWC, nominated Keith Mousel as chairperson. The motion was seconded and carried. Mr. Mousel accepted the chair.

Mr. Korn reviewed how the Public Hearing would be conducted. Mr. Mousel would introduce himself and then each member of the Advisory Group will introduce themselves, as well as staff members. Mr. Korn said there would be a presentation, then an opportunity for questions and answers, and then anyone who had filled out a form and wished to speak would have five minutes to do so. He indicated that the Q&A portion was not the time for opinions. Mr. Korn stressed that the Advisory Group is here to listen and answer accordingly only, and not to debate.

The Advisory Group Meeting closed at 6:20 pm. Mr. Korn indicated that the Public Meeting and Hearing would convene at 6:30pm.

Withlacoochee State Forest

Management Plan Advisory Group

Public Meeting/Hearing Minutes

August 26, 2014

The Public Meeting/Hearing of the Withlacoochee State Forest Management Plan was called to order at 6:32pm in the Withlacoochee Training Center at the Withlacoochee State Forest, 24059 Childs Road, Brooksville, Florida, 34601. The Management Plan Advisory group members present were as follows:

Wendy Poag, Lake County Parks and Trails Division
Sally McDavid, Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen
John Thomas, Landowner / Cattle Interest
Dennis Johnson, Richloam Sportsman Association
Patricia Laird, SouthWest Association of Mountain bike Pedalers
Ralph Hancock, Florida Trail Association Suncoast
Eric Hoyer, Natural Resource Planning Service
Mickey Thomason, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Chris Reed, South West Florida Water Management District
Scotland Talley, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Keith Mousel, Florida Forest Service

Staff Present were as follows:

Wilbur Priest, Forestry Supervisor II
Denise Wilde, Ecology Forester
Vincent Morris, Forestry Supervisor II
Bill Korn, Director's Office
Jennifer Reed, Director's Office

Judi Tear, Government Operations Consultant I

Justin Draft, Forestry Supervisor II

Casey Chapman, Forest Ranger

Kawika Bailey, Forestry Operations Administrator

Bob Lindemuth, Senior Forester

Mona Neville, Forester

Ryan Grumbly, Forester

Michael Penn, Resource Administrator

Eddie Duval, Forestry Supervisor I

Keith Mousel welcomed the Advisory Group and members of the public to the Withlacoochee Training Center (WTC) and stated that the WTC is where wildland firefighters, first responders, and others are trained. He introduced himself as the Withlacoochee Forestry Center's Center Manager and stated that he has 27-28 years at the Florida Forest Service (FFS), mostly around the Withlacoochee State Forest (WSF), but also in Sarasota and St. John's County.

He next introduced the members of the Management Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) that were present (see above) and noted the following County Commissioners were also members, but were not present: Ted Schrader, Joe Meeks, Gary Breaden, and Diane Rowden. He then introduced Mike Penn, WSF Resource Administrator, who would be giving a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Penn stated the public input was very valuable to forest management and it is a challenge to balance competing uses and interests and there are many different user groups with different wants and needs. He stated the forest is public land, we are obligated to manage land properly, and for the purpose for which it was purchased.

Mr. Penn explained the PowerPoint presentation he was about to give would show the highlights of the plan and was not all-encompassing. It would show where we are and where we intend to go. He stated that it was to be an informal presentation and asked that the public ask questions as he proceeded, if they had any.

Mr. Penn next related some of his background: he has been with FFS for 15 years, working in Volusia County as an Other Public Lands Manager, and then he managed Goethe State Forest for seven years. He has been at WSF for five years. Prior to that, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service and private industry in Colorado for seven years. He said that his current job is

challenging but always very interesting. At this point his career has now been mostly spent in Florida.

Mr. Penn noted many WSF staff members present and that he may to defer to them to answer questions. Mr. Penn then proceeded with his presentation which highlighted the main points of the Management Plan, and went over the Goals included therein.

During his presentation, Mr. Penn was asked a question about how WSF was treating Air Potato, a non-native invasive plant. He replied there is currently an insect being used as a biological control agent.

Mr. Penn concluded his presentation and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Mousel again asked if there were any questions (there were none at that time) and stated that he did not introduce an absent MPAG member, Christine Andenberg. The public began to ask questions.

Q&A

Question #1. Mr. Chapman, a hunter, asked if there were to be any improvements to Lacoochee Park.

Mr. Penn responded there was an old park there with a ball field and that we were possibly going to partner with the community to create a picnic area, but there were no set plans.

Mr. Chapman expressed concern that any plans to the area would stop hunting there.

Mr. Penn replied there was no plan for that and hunting would always exist in that part of the forest.

Mr. Korn stated there were only two speaker forms, from Mr. Parten and Mr. McIntosh, and asked the public to please fill out a form and turn it in if they had any written comments, which would be discussed the following day.

Mr. Parten asked if there were any plans for specific basal areas in quail areas.

Mr. Penn responded that in one area, known as UERP, there were no specific plans for basal areas and we will manage timber with quail in those areas. Vince Morris then replied there were specific basal areas in plant communities, such as in the description of sandhill, where the basal area was 60-80. Mr. Penn concurred that 60-80 was appropriate, and as the timber grew to 60-80 basal area, it would be harvested to 30-50 basal area; each area was treated individually, and uneven-aged management would mostly be utilized.

It was then asked if there would be three tiers of age class, as with the Stoddard-Neel System.

Mr. Penn replied that was a good option, as well as other uneven-aged techniques.

Mr. Korn then held up a copy of the Management Plan to the audience, and stated it was available online and about 79 pages not including exhibits. He said there were copies available.

Question #2. A member of the public asked about the flatwoods and the hardwood reduction plan; they wanted to know if a goal-based plan existed.

Mr. Penn replied that hardwood reduction occurs with prescribed burning, and also in and around Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) clusters. In some areas that are overgrown FFS may use chemical treatment to start, but would rely on prescribed burning thereafter.

A different member of the public asked for clarification: were “oaks” hardwoods?

Mr. Penn replied, hardwoods include oaks, hickories, and other species. He elaborated that sandhills where there are quail historically burned every two to three years and were thus maintained as a fire climax ecosystem. Fire thusly kept oaks at bay and pines would regenerate in those areas.

Question #3. The same member of the public asking the last half of the previous question asked why FFS cut and left stumps.

Mr. Penn responded that FFS does this because we burn with ATVs and it was a safety issue: we leave stumps so FFS personnel who undertake prescribed burning on ATVs do not get hurt. He agreed the stumps are ugly, but they go away in several years.

Another member of the public stated it also prevents injuries to hikers.

Vince Morris stated it also saves the backs of the people doing the chainsaw work and prevents the chainsaw bar from going into the dirt.

The member of the public asked what happens to the stumps.

Mr. Morris replied the stumps will sprout and while prescribed burning will eventually remove the stump, prescribed burning only kills back the resprouts and never really kills the oaks; it only reduces their height. He stated this is mostly done in RCW clusters to reduce predation of RCWs around RCW trees and that accounts for maybe 6-8 acres out of 640 acres. This happens in the Citrus and Croom Tracts.

At this point, Mr. Korn explained the acronym “FNAI” that some of the public may have heard referred to is the Florida Natural Areas Inventory. They call for a “sparse mid-story of oak” and ideally, we use burning as the only source for oak control.

Gary McIntosh, who lives on the east side of the Croom Tract and maintains horse trails, had a comment about page 40, referencing Croom, where it states that hikers and bicyclists may use “all open named forest roads” and the State of Florida recognizes a horse as a vehicle. He started to ask that horses also be allowed on roads when Mr. Korn intervened and said he needed to bring his comments and concerns up during the public testimony portion of the hearing.

Question #4. A member of the public asked if FFS was going to add more places for water for horses.

Eddie Duval answered this question, saying water was deficient on the Citrus Tract and he was working with Sally McDavid. He listed the current sources of water for horses on the Citrus Tract: Tillis Hill, Mutual Mine, Holder Mine, a well/tank at Perryman Place, two water troughs that fill with rainwater, on Trail 14 and 12, Trail 13 and 11, and on Trail 13 south of Trail 2. He stated at one time there was a trough on CR491 near Trail 6 and also on Trail 9 off of Heatherwood. He explained there are no major issues with water, as most starting/stopping places were within 5 miles or so of water and there are no long-range plans to drop wells.

The member of the public asked if there was a capped well at Mansfield Pond.

Mr. Duval replied there was a test well there for SWFWD and in some places there were historic wells associated with windmills.

Question #5. A hunting member of the public asked if there was a way to tell an individual horse, much like there is for a vehicle or an ATV. He wanted to know how a hunter could tell one horse from another if he had an issue.

Mr. Duval replied they do not require a special permit or tag, like an ATV. Mr. Korn stated all open roads are technically state highways and newer acquisitions of state land had limited vehicle access. The original 113,000 acres had some closed roads, but lots of vehicular access year-round, which was unlike most State Parks. There were legal and street legal designations for OHVs. In the 1970s, special legislation was passed that allowed OHVs to access the Croom Motorcycle Area (CMA) (excepting the main road) without being street legal. There are no permits required for horses or hikers. In the CMA, the fee is for OHVs only, which serves to raise funds.

The member of the public then asked if there was any plan to have horses carry a tag or to register in any way.

Mr. Duval replied that there was not, although all horses must carry proof of a current negative Coggins test.

Mr. Korn stated that staff will be here after the meetings to answer questions and at this point we would be moving on to the public testimony portion of the meeting. At this point, there were

two members of the public that wished to speak and some written comments from FWC and the general public. Mr. Korn stated those wishing to speak would have five minutes to speak and it was important for us to hear from the public.

Public Testimony

Talbott Parten

Talbott Parten was the first speaker, representing Quail Forever (QF). They have been raising money to improve public land in Apalachicola, Citrus, and other lands. He expressed gratitude for the great work FFS is doing and that we have accomplished a lot with a relatively small budget. He indicated he would be reading from a written statement (attached the end of this document). He stated QF had similar goals to FFS and they were excited to partner with FFS.

He indicated QF would like to discuss a hardwood management program (Goal 1, Objective 1). They would like to help us fight hardwood encroachment through fire frequency; we could use their volunteers to accomplish this goal and perhaps use the STOP program.

Objective 10, Environmental Education, was another goal they would like to partner with us to accomplish. Mr. Parten mentioned pollinator planting projects, youth projects, and educating the public about bird dogs, upland management, and quail hunting.

Objective 11, our volunteer program, was another area that Mr. Parten indicated QF would like to partner on; they could help with volunteers, grants, and fundraising.

Mr. Parten then moved on to Goal 3, noting that FFS burns about 25% of the forest annually. His organization would like to see burn blocks decreased in size in quail focal areas and would like to partner with us to raise money for that purpose. He stated they were glad to see Objective 2, groundcover restoration, included in the plan.

Regarding Goal 4, Rare Species, QF would like to help as a maintenance partner even though quail are not a listed species. They would like to help with covey counts.

Mr. Parten said he would like FFS to consider using the Neel-Stoddard approach and maintain 40-60 basal area for quail in focal areas, to encourage more quail. He thanked FFS again for all the hard work and the opportunity to speak.

Gary McIntosh

Gary McIntosh was the second speaker, who had spoken previously in the Q&A section and was deferred. He stated he was a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Florida and for

eight years he had lived near the north end of Croom, was a neighbor of FFS, and was impressed with our work.

He referenced page 4, paragraph 2 in the management plan, where it states all open roads are open to hikers and bicyclists. He stated that the State of Florida considers a horse a vehicle and he would like all open roads to be open for horses as well. He stated he had an advisory opinion on that subject from the Attorney General.

A second concern of Mr. McIntosh was the eastern portion of Croom near Hog Island was often utilized by boy scouts, eagle scouts, and other groups, and they often used the State Trail in the area, yet no markers existed on the roads to warn vehicle drivers of hikers. Also, signs were needed where horse trails cross roads.

Mr. Duval stated that FR13 on the Sumter side of Croom and where FR13 crosses FR17 are problem areas.

At this point, Mr. Korn announced the MPAG will meet at the same location at 10am the following morning. Members will look at the written comments and then proceed around the group and ask for input, so that the advisory group can form recommendations. These recommendations will then be sent to the Bureau Chief, then to the Director's office. They will use a lot of the input and most things but not all will go into the plan. There will be another opportunity for public input when the Director submits the final plan to the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC). This happens for all Board of Trustees lands. ARC has a public hearing and other agencies have 45 days to review. During this time, the public can also give input.

A question was asked from the public: can the Management Plan be changed after the ARC meeting?

Mr. Korn replied that it can and DEP has the final approval of the plan. Mr. Korn said the ARC panel is delegated by the Trustees and the DEP State Lands Director will probably schedule it for the February meeting next winter and they need to have the plan for 90 days prior to the meeting. Jennifer Reed stated they are actually shooting for December.

A member of the public then asked if we will be working on fixing erosion on the trails, as some of them are quite bad. Mr. Korn replied that if they know of a specific road or trail that is problematic they should notify Mr. Penn.

Another person stated that dogs running loose and unattended had caused a problem with their horse. Mr. Korn replied day-to-day operational issues such as those should be brought to the immediate attention of Mr. Duval or Mr. Penn and that the public should not wait until this meeting to bring those kinds of issues up.

At this point, a third speaker asked to be heard.

Fred Fulcher

Fred Fulcher is Vice President of the Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen. He said he had lots of questions from members and people from out of state that want to bring their dogs with them. He would like to request FFS allow dogs at Tillis Hill. He understands dogs are allowed at the more primitive campsites, but people with dogs would like to be able to have them at the campsites with amenities as well.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Written Comments received at the Public Hearing

Rebecca Fulcher, Inverness FL

FFBCH

Currently no dogs are allowed in Tillis Hill campground. Most equestrians have dogs and like to camp with dogs. Many will not camp where dogs are not allowed. To allow campers to bring their dogs would bring many more campers to the Tillis Hill camp area.

Kelly Fredericks, Brooksville FL Concerned Citizen

Curious about feasibility of solar or wind-generated water sources on tracts that are water deficient to improve sources of wildlife and horse. Dogs access to Tillis Hill.

Gary McIntosh, Bushnell FL

Back Country Horsemen of Florida

Pg. 40 P2 Croom add equestrian to last sentence. Recreation safety study for hikers, bicyclists & equestrians crossing roads.

Talbott Parton, Thomasville GA Quail Forever

QF's response to management plan – burning requests, thinning, lowered basal area. Thank you for your hard work. (Note: see attached written statement)

Zachary Chapman, Webster FL Citizen, hunter

I would like to see the roads in Richloam in better shape. Some of the roads that used to be graded regularly haven't been graded in years. Some have been limerocked, but are already in need of repair. If all the traditionally graded roads were worked on at least twice a year, it would keep them passable most of the time.

Tom Loughlin, Tampa FL Quail Forever

Consider defining UERP in the plan (Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project).

Other Prepared Written Documents / Attached

Ted Schrader, Pasco County Commissioner (see attached)

Scotland Talley, FWC (see attached)

Talbott Parton, Quail Forever (see attached)

From: Ted Schrader [<mailto:tschrader@pascocountyfl.net>]
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2014 3:09 PM
To: Reed, Jennifer; Penn, Michael
Subject: Withlacoochee State Forest Resource Management Plan/Written Comments and Suggestions

Good Afternoon Ms. Reed and Mr. Penn:

Thank you for inviting me to serve as a member of the Advisory Group for the 10-year Resource Management Plan for the Withlacoochee State Forest.

I am sorry that I am unable to attend the public meetings and hearing on August 26 and 27 due to the fact that I am a member the Pasco County Canvassing Board and we must meet on these two days to canvass ballots from the primary election.

Therefore, I am providing my written comments as outlined below which I hope will be helpful at the upcoming public meetings and hearing:

- Suggest continuing efforts to improve and expand camping opportunities. (Potential revenue and increased service levels)
- Suggest the development of interpretive, educational and/or historical exhibits on management practices, ecosystems and historical activities in areas where visitors congregate.
- Suggest close monitoring of and control of exotic animals. This is a growing issue especially with hogs and the large snakes continuing to move north in Florida.
- Suggest continuing efforts to provide easy access points to the water bodies and rivers for paddling community
- Suggest continuing efforts to encourage and allow for concessions to encourage and provide easy access to outdoor activities such as running, bike riding and paddling including eco-tours. (Potential revenue and increased service levels)
- Suggest continuing to look for opportunities for special events involving outdoor activities such as running, paddling and biking. (Potential revenue and increased service levels).
- Possible development of a Cross Country running destination site compared to the site that hosts the High School and College meets in Tallahassee at one of the Regional Parks in the area. (Potential revenue and increased service levels)
- Increased promotions of what recreational opportunities are offered in the Withlacoochee State Forest

If you have any questions regarding the above comments and suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Ted J. Schrader

County Commissioner

Pasco County Board of County Commissioners

Historic Pasco County Courthouse

37918 Meridian Avenue

Dade City, FL 33525

Phone: 352-521-4111

Fax: 352-521-4105

E-mail: tschrader@pascocountyfl.net



"Bringing Opportunities Home"

The information transmitted, including attachments, is intended only for the person(s) or entity to which it is addressed and may contain material that is confidential, privileged and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and destroy any copies of this information. Under Florida law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public-records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.

CUSA18A7



**Florida Fish
and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission**

Commissioners
Richard A. Corbett
Chairman
Tampa

Brian Yablonski
Vice Chairman
Tallahassee

Ronald M. Bergeron
Fort Lauderdale

Richard Hanas
Oviedo

Aliese P. "Liesa" Priddy
Immokalee

Bo Rivard
Panama City

Charles W. Roberts III
Tallahassee

Executive Staff
Nick Wiley
Executive Director
Eric Sutton
Assistant Executive Director
Jennifer Fitzwater
Chief of Staff

Division of Habitat and
Species Conservation
Thomas Eason, Ph.D.
Director

(850) 488-3831
(850) 921-7793 FAX

*Managing fish and wildlife
resources for their long-term
well-being and the benefit
of people.*

620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida
32399-1600
Voice: (850) 488-4676

Hearing/speech-impaired:
(800) 955-8771 (T)
(800) 955-8770 (V)

MyFWC.com

August 26, 2014

Mr. Mike Penn
Withlacoochee State Forest
15019 Broad Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

RE: Draft Withlacoochee State Forest Management Plan

Dear Mr. Penn

I have reviewed the draft 10-year management plan for the Withlacoochee State Forest (WSF) and have the following comments and concerns:

Page 18: D. 4. Adjacent conflicting uses

The last two land management reviews raised issues with the extension of the Suncoast Parkway and expansion of the VA Cemetery. The FFS response to the LMR report indicated that these issues would be addressed in the updated management plan. Have these issues been resolved?

Page 30: Table of Endangered or Threatened species

FWC requests the addition of four FNAI tracked mammal species.

Homosassa Shrew (<i>Sorex longirostris eionis</i>)	G5T3 S3 N SSC
Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat (<i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i>)	G3G4 S2 N N
Big Brown Bat (<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>)	G5 S3 N N
Florida Long-tailed Weasel (<i>Mustela frenata peninsulae</i>)	G5T3 S3 N N

Page 42: a. Rock Lake Lodge

The quail hunted on the premises may have been pen-raised as that is a common practice (although wild populations were quite robust in this part of Florida through the seventies). Mourning doves are a migratory species and to my knowledge have never been pen-reared for hunting. I would suggest rewording to indicate they primarily hunted upland game birds on the property.

Page 45: 1. Dames Cave Complex

Due to the emerging threat of White-nose Syndrome (WNS) to cave roosting bats, FWC asked to be included in the assessment and planning of day-use opportunities.

Page 46: C. Hunter Access

Need clarification that participation in hunts is regulated in a variety of ways on the different units, with different equipment, and for different species. I suggest rewording to the effect that there are many opportunities to

participate in hunts on WSF for a variety of game species. Each area has specific regulations that are published annually in the WMA brochure. Also, check stations are manned during quota hunts, but not all hunts.

Page 56: A. Sandhill

The plan describes "Maintenance stocking of longleaf pine" as 60-80 BA which exceeds the FNAI recommended 20-60. FNAI has collected data on 7 sandhill reference sites on conservation lands in Florida (including one on WSF Citrus tract). At each reference site data is collected at 30 points. Only two reference sites had 10 or more points that exceeded 60 BA (Eglin AFB and Ocala NF). The average BA only exceeded 60 on Eglin AFB (63.7 BA). I would suggest that stocking at 40-60 BA is more appropriate for sandhill communities on WSF.

Another concern is the vague description of "some large trees greater than 16 inches" DBH. Both the Croom and Citrus tracts have robust populations of RCWs and require large diameter pines for cavity excavation. Based on a cursory review of literature a target of 15-20 large trees per acre is needed to ensure that sufficient cavity trees are available.

Page 76 - 78: S. Terrestrial Caves

Entrance zone:

Changes in airflow will also affect bat occupancy. Changes in airflow will cause bats to abandon roost sites (Richter, Humphrey, and Brack 1993, Ludlow and Gore 200, Martin 2001).

Twilight Zone

Tricolored bats (*Perimyotis subflavus*; formerly the eastern pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus subflavus*)), use the twilight zone as winter hibernacula.

Current Condition

Change eastern pipistrelle to tricolored bat and add that tricolored bats use caves almost exclusively during the winter when entering extended bouts of torpor/hibernation.

Management Actions

In 2014 FWC conducted winter cave surveys in WSF, searching for caves serving as bat hibernacula, with special focus on the tricolored bat. FWC also has been monitoring the caves for signs of the emerging fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome that has decimated cave bat populations from Georgia north to Canada. Both species of bats known to currently use/ historically use the caves on WSF, the southeastern myotis and the tricolored bat, are both susceptible to the fungus and have been documented with the fungus in more northern states. During 2014, FWC visited multiple caves at WSF, 2 of which were serving as hibernacula for tricolored bats. To date WNS has not been detected in Florida. Both the southeastern myotis and tricolored bat are listed as SGCN in FWC's state wildlife action plan.

When looking over the whole management plan, I am concerned that the only bat species that is considered is the southeastern myotis (*Myotis austroriparius*). The plan states that the tricolored bat is a common bat with

a wide range in roost habitat selection. The tricolored bat is listed as a SGCN by FWC in the state's Wildlife Action Plan, and has experienced steep population declines in northern portions of its range due to white-nose syndrome. Although the USFWS has not been formally petitioned to list the species as threatened/ endangered under the ESA, the service has begun an investigation to determine the validity of continuing the listing process for the tricolored bat. Based on cave surveys conducted in Feb. 2014, we know that multiple caves on the WSF are being used as hibernacula for tricolored bats. Although tricolored bats have been known to form summer roosts in caves, trees, and manmade structures, their winter roost requirements are specific to caves. During the winter, tricolored bats enter extended bouts of torpor and suppress their metabolism and immune system, subsisting on fat reserves that were established prior to entering torpor. Any disturbance of the torpor process can be detrimental to tricolored bats as it will cause them to use fat reserves faster, potentially causing them to starve and/or expend additional energy. This additional use of energy could potentially cause fatalities and reduced reproductive output, although little is known about the consequences of disturbance during torpor in tricolored bats in Florida.

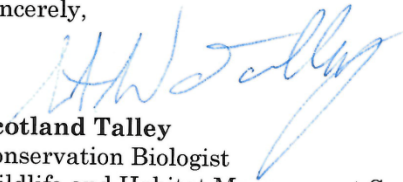
General Comments:

Overall the plan is generally well written and addresses all the required elements thoroughly for this very diverse forest.

I am happy to see the emphasis on prescribed fire in the plan with very aggressive goals for prescribed fire within natural community specific intervals. The emphasis on prescribed fire is significantly improving habitat for a number of fire-dependent species.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft 10-year management plan for the Withlacoochee State Forest and do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Scotland Talley
Conservation Biologist
Wildlife and Habitat Management Section
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
3377 E. US Hwy 90
Lake City, Florida 32055
(386) 758-0525 (office)
(386) 758-5799 (fax)
(386) 588-4407 (cell)
www.myfwc.com



To: Quail Forever Members, Volunteers, and Wildlife Enthusiasts,

The Florida Forest Service recently released a 10 Year Management Proposal for Withlacoochee State Forest. The proposal is attached in this email, if you are interested; please take a look at it. These plans are usually very broad in what they seek to accomplish, however this plan should benefit the quail at Withlacoochee. The public hearing is at the Withlacoochee Training Center on August 26 at 6:30 pm. A few individuals representing Quail Forever will attend the public hearing to ensure the needs of our chapters and organization are heard. Below, I have outlined QF's response to the proposal and some of the pages where these topics are discussed in the 10 Year Document. Please review these and relay any concerns.

The Florida Forest Service's mission is to "Conserve and Enhance Natural Resources." This is very similar to QF's mission of the "conservation of quail, pheasants and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs." As an organization, QF is very excited to partner with the Florida Forest Service to support Habitat Improvement through the Florida/Georgia Quail Coalition. The Florida Forest service accomplishes a lot at the Withlacoochee State Forest; an area of over 100,000 acres- all with a budget of only 2.6 million dollars a year. From improving Red Cockaded Woodpecker habitat to maintaining boat ramps and burning, they do a great job!

Plan Specifics-

GOAL 1: Sustainable Forest Management

Objective 1: Continue to update the annual silviculture management plan including reforestation, harvesting, prescribed burning, restoration, and timber stand improvement activities and goals. (Short Term Goal)

1. Objective 1 (pg. 10)- QF would like to discuss the development of a "Hardwood Management Plan." This will be especially important to fight hardwood encroachment in the sandhills and will result in improved quail habitat. We would like to see hardwood reduction included in the main mission and increased fire-frequency. QF will also inquire about the possibility of using volunteers or even the S.T.O.P program- Short Term Offender Program to accomplish some management goals; such as cutting and removing hardwoods.
2. Objective 10- We would like to help partner with their environmental education programs, from planting pollinator habitat with kids to interacting with youth and the community about bird dogs, quail hunting, and upland habitat.

3. Objective 11- WSF volunteer program- We want to help increase their volunteer hours and our fundraising events can directly benefit WSF.

GOAL 3: Habitat Restoration and Improvement

1. Objective 1- 116K acres of burnable habitat- about 30,000 burned annually; roughly 1/4 of the forest burned. Withlacoochee State Forest is currently in the process of developing smaller burn blocks for bobwhites within the focal area. QF wants to thank the FFS for working to improve quail. We also want to inquire how we can assist on expanding the acres of the focal areas.
2. Objective 2 (pg 13)- Stated Goal of restoration of ground cover- we are thankful for this inclusion and their objective to reduce hardwood encroachment.

GOAL 4: Listed and Rare Species Habitat Maintenance, Enhancement, Restoration, or Population Restoration

Pg. 32- Offer to volunteer with covey call counts to determine population density.

General Practices-

WSF currently maintains many miles of firebreaks. If necessary, QF would like to help increase the number of firebreaks to allow for smaller burn units.

The 10 year management plan includes goals for hardwood reduction, herbicide use to control hardwoods, and mechanical vegetation control. All of which are critical practices to improve bobwhite habitat and populations.

Finally, Quail Forever would like your consideration to maintain a 40-60 basal area in the bobwhite focal areas.

Thank you for reading this. If you have any additional concerns or comments, please direct them to me, my contact information is on the bottom of this page. We want to focus on improvements that are both affordable and realistic. Habitat improvements are QF's first priority. The Florida Forest Service operates on a limited budget; Quail Forever wants to ensure that any additional expenditure, changed use of funds, or other financial changes are spent on habitat improvement.

Thanks,

Talbott Parten | **Regional Representative, Florida and Georgia**
Quail Forever | 13093 Henry Beadel Dr | Tallahassee, FL 32312
p. (229) 289-8199 | tparten@quailforever.org
www.quailforever.org

Withlacoochee State Forest

Management Plan Advisory Group

Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2014

Members Present:

Wendy Poag, Lake County Parks and Trails Division
Sally McDavid, Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen
John Thomas, Landowner / Cattle Interest
Dennis Johnson, Richloam Sportsman Association
Patricia Laird, SWAMP
Ralph Hancock, FTA Suncoast
Eric Hoyer, NRPS
Mickey Thomason, FLDEP
Chris Reed, SWFWMD
Scotland Talley, FWC
Keith Mousel, FFS

Members Absent:

Ted Schrader, Pasco County Commissioner
Joe Meek, Citrus County Commissioner
Diane Rowden, Hernando County Commissioner
Christine Andenberg, Hernando County Audubon Society

Staff Present:

Wilbur Priest, Forestry Supervisor II

Denise Wilde, Ecology Forester

Vincent Morris, Forestry Supervisor II

Bill Korn, Director's Office

Jennifer Reed, Director's Office

Justin Draft, Forestry Supervisor II

Kawika Bailey, Forestry Operations Administrator

Michael Penn, Resource Administrator

Eddie Duval, Forestry Supervisor I

The Public Meeting of the Withlacoochee State Forest Management Plan Advisory group was called to order at 10:08pm in the Withlacoochee Training Center at the Withlacoochee State Forest, 24059 Childs Road, Brooksville, Florida, 34601.

All present were given a copy of the minutes of the pre-hearing Management Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) meeting and the public hearing held August 28, 2014. Keith Mousel welcomed the group and pointed out the location of the bathrooms and break rooms where coffee and water were available. He apologized for the temperature in the meeting room, explaining the A/C was out and that crews would hopefully arrive soon to remedy the problem.

Mr. Mousel explained this meeting was being held at the Withlacoochee Training Center (WTC), where 2,000-3,000 people annually are trained; 42 out of 52 weeks a year, the facility is used for trainings, meetings, etc.

Mr. Mousel described the Firefighter's Memorial directly outside the building, which had been remodeled to face the buildings. A statue of Smokey Bear is illuminated to face the three flag poles and granite walkway, which is engraved with the names of the eight firefighters FFS has lost in the line of duty. The Memorial was designed and built by FFS personnel, with the exception of some of the granite work, which was subcontracted. He invited the MPAG members to walk around the facility and especially to visit the Memorial.

Mr. Mousel stated lunch would be provided in the Dining Hall at noon, after which the meeting would reconvene at the present location. A sign-up sheet would be passed around to record who had eaten lunch, therefore satisfying the record-keeping requirements in case of an audit.

An MPAG member asked if inmates still cook the food.

Mr. Mousel replied affirmatively; Sumter Correctional Institution (SCI) inmates cook, mow, and turn beds at the facility.

Bill Korn explained the agenda for the meeting: Wilbur Priest and Jennifer Reed would work together on the Management Plan, which would be projected overhead on to a screen; comments would be tracked in the margins as the meeting progressed. Changes would be added directly if the group reached a consensus. Mr. Korn asked that members use a page number when referring to the plan to facilitate the process.

Mr. Korn referred to the minutes from the prior evening's meeting and asked for the members to take a few minutes of quiet time to read them over. He explained pages 1-3 covered the first meeting, pages 4-12 covered the second meeting, and pages 12-13 were the written comments received. Pages 13 and those after that contained the other written documents received, all of which would be reviewed during today's meeting. He asked the members to see if any changes were needed. Members then took 10 minutes to read over the minutes.

Sally McDavid stated under Question #4 on page 8, "Heather" should be changed to "Heatherwood" as that is the proper name of the street. On page 9 under Gary McIntosh's spoken comments, his affiliated organization should be changed from "Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen" to "Back Country Horsemen of Florida", as these were two different organizations and he was not affiliated with the former. Under those same comments, there was a typographical error and "spoke" should be changed to "spoken".

Denise Wilde stated Michael Penn's title on page 2 should be changed from "Center Manager" to "Resource Administrator". On page 4, "Michael Penn, FFS" should be stricken and replaced with "Keith Mousel, Center Manager". On page 5, "Keith Mousel, Center Manager" should be stricken and replaced with "Michael Penn, Resource Administrator".

Chris Reed stated Kevin Love had been omitted in the minutes as a MPAG member.

Mr. Korn replied Christine Andenberg was the official conservation member and had indicated to Mr. Penn that she would try to have another Audubon member attend. Mr. Keim, the Florida Audubon, Hernando Chapter conservation chair was hoping to attend or give written comments. He had called him earlier today but was unable to reach him.

Patricia Laird stated asked for clarification on page 6 at the bottom regarding basal area (BA). Mr. Penn had said 60-80 was appropriate; she believed Mr. Parten was asking for 40-60 BA.

Mickey Thomason stated his last name had been spelled incorrectly, with the "h" omitted, on pages 1 and 4.

Mr. Mousel asked the members if they approved the minutes with the aforementioned changes. Dennis Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Thomason seconded the motion. All members answered aye, none answered nay. The motion was carried.

Mr. Korn explained how handling of the draft of the Management Plan would proceed following the meeting. Any changes made as a MPAG group consensus would be included, although there could also be changes suggested by other FFS staff. A digital version of the MPAG amended plan then would be emailed within a week to the Forest Mgt Bureau Chief and the Assistant Director for their consideration. If anyone wanted to see the copy that would be sent up after all those changes, it would be made available. Minutes of this meeting would be forwarded to each MPAG member within next week and Mr. Korn asked that each member get any corrections back to FFS within a week. As email is the faster method of transmission, he requested the MPAG members write their emails on the member list, which would be sent around the room.

Response to Public Testimony and Written Comments

Talbott Parten

Mr. Parten's verbal comments from the previous night's meeting closely mirrored the written comments that were attached; Mr. Korn indicated both would be covered at once. Mr. Parten was representing Quail Forever.

Mr. Parten's first comment was that he would like to see hardwood management incorporated into sustainable forest management, similar to a Silvicultural Management Plan. Mr. Korn directed the members to page 4, stating what was suggested was more like an Action Plan or an Operational Plan. Such items are not put into this management plan but wording could be provided for direction. Mr. Parten would like FFS to fight hardwood encroachment and stated that QF had volunteers that could help. Mr. Korn stated the broader question was: is the plan adequate as written for hardwood encroachment?

Eric Hoyer stated Timber Stand Improvement indicates treatment of hardwood encroachment. The plan also addresses hardwood encroachment in the Ecosystem descriptions.

Scotland Talley concurred, stating Goal #3 addresses encroachment, as does Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) habitat enhancement.

Mr. Hoyer stated it might not be obvious to the laymen.

Mr. Korn related that "Hardwood Management Program" and other verbiage may be an issue of semantics.

Wendy Poag stated she would go against the grain: there were no performance measures included in the plan. “Acres Treated” or “did a burn occur” were often used, but no real outcome was otherwise indicated. Acres burned, for example, were quantified, but that was not a measure of hardwood control. Adaptive management was needed. Is burning effective in controlling hardwoods? A performance measure needed to be added. Perhaps FFS could reduce the hardwood to a certain amount per acres, such as 1% canopy cover in sandhills.

Mr. Korn stated Desired Future Conditions (DFC) called for a “sparse oak midstory” as the only measure, but asked what that number would be. He indicated “we know it when we see it”. FNAI has specifics, but we do not know how to put that in the Management Plan.

Ms. Poag replied that FFS knows what to aim for but other people reading the plan would not know the goal.

Mr. Talley related this is an issue many are still struggling with. It is hard to define what we are trying to achieve. In the Sherman’s Fox Squirrel (FWC) action plan, they know they need hardwoods but they struggle with how to describe it. A basal area measure is figured for Fox Squirrels, yet the plan also says generally that in areas with stream bottoms, hardwood patches are “sufficient”. This gets into the “art” of land management. FWC currently has no standard for themselves as to how many oaks should be left.

Ms. Poag asked how, then, do we reach DFC? That should be the goal, the performance measure.

Mr. Korn replied that we do a survey of 10% all timber stands annually; the data includes BA and height of hardwoods, although the majority of the data collected focuses on pine timber and invasive exotics on a stand level. Mr. Korn defined a stand as a commonly managed piece of woods, one that has a similar burn and harvest history. But as to what comprises a “sparse hardwood midstory”, we don’t know.

Mr. Thomason stated it seemed like a range of values would work. In fisheries, they (DEP) use a range of 20-80% submerged plants as a value for habitat. Much variability exists.

Mr. Talley stated on a large property, one is never truly “done” with management. Wildlife such as RCWs and other species are at the low end of what is needed in terms of hardwoods. Quail and Sherman’s Fox Squirrels are at the midrange, and migratory passerines area at the higher end, needing even more hardwoods. He likes a mosaic of diversity in stand conditions.

Mr. Hoyer asked Mr. Korn or Vince Morris if specifics for a specific site would be on an operational plan.

Mr. Korn replied the state lands accomplishment report, which is tabulated monthly, captures some of this data, but the presence of oaks is not captured.

Mr. Morris replied after many years of examining the issue they crafted the word “sparse”. Currently the trend is to start protecting oaks, whereas earlier the trend was to kill all oaks. The fire return interval addresses the encroachment issue. A 1-3 year fire return interval is optimal for sandhills and a 2-4 year fire interval is optimal for flatwoods. Where BA exceeds 30-40 sand post oak become prevalent, whereas where there is frequent fire, there are none. This is a point we have argued for years. Fire return intervals affect hardwood encroachment. Whether that makes hardwoods “sparse” enough is still under debate.

Mr. Korn asked if members had reached a point where they agreed on a change to an item in the plan. If not, he would like to move on.

Mr. Mousel indicated that this may be off-track and that performance measures should be included when FFS updates the annual Silviculture plan, which is an operational plan that includes all timber, including oaks, and not just pines. The relevant performance measure is the completion of the annual update. Revenue generating items are on the Timber Plan, but revenue depleting items are also included, such as prescribed burning, chemical treatment, etc.

Michael Penn stated this is a planning objective, updated annually.

Chris Reed concurred.

The next item that Mr. Parten relayed concerned goal 10 on page 6, environmental education. Quail Forever would like to partner with FFS on our environmental education plan and youth programs.

Ms. McDavid commented their involvement would help.

Mr. Korn and Mr. Talley both requested a list of volunteer names and contacts. FFS would love to have the help.

Mr. Korn asked if there were any thoughts on a need to change the plan; there were none.

Mr. Parten’s next item concerned goal 3, habitat restoration. He noted that WSF burns approximately 25% of their acreage annually, and while this is great, QF would like to see block size decreased in quail focal areas. They could help raise money to accomplish this. QF also liked the FFS policy direction in including groundcover restoration.

Ms. Poag asked why QF desired a decrease in burn block size.

Denise Wilde replied that she had studied quail for her thesis and explained that QF would be requesting this so as to create a greater dispersion of habitat within a quail’s home range. A smaller block size would allow burned and unburned areas within a single bird’s home range so there would be the diversity of habitat requisite for nesting, feeding, roosting, hiding, etc.

Mr. Reed stated that if FFS burns properly this will happen anyway.

Mr. Hoyer was not sure why we would want smaller burn blocks.

Patricia Laird noted that FFS uses roads as fire breaks.

Mr. Penn explained that in general, the Citrus and Croom tracts are laid out in sections and because of this FFS usually burns an average of 640 acres at a time, but sometimes half that amount. It takes just as many people to accomplish a 220 acre burn as a 640 acre burn. If FFS were to burn smaller blocks, the total amount of acreage burned annually would decrease.

Mr. Talley understood the challenges. He stated solid evidence existed that species with smaller home ranges need smaller burn blocks. Usually a block is burned, then the block adjacent to it. FFS could be more thoughtful about the arrangements. It is easier to burn next to a previously burned block and a challenge to burn elsewhere, especially with differing weather conditions. He suggested that perhaps if weather conditions are optimal, a non-adjacent block could be burned instead. From a wildlife standpoint, it is better to stagger blocks if at all possible.

Eddie Duval said this is an ongoing issue with quail hunters. They historically broke the Field Trial Area (Citrus tract) into 20 acre blocks for quail, but not a lot was gained from that effort. More manpower was needed, and more energy to create fire lines (often food plot strips were utilized). In the sandhill, it does not matter if a whole section is burned or only 20 acres, because the burn will still leave a mosaic pattern due the variation in soil types and vegetation. Trying to do 1/8 acre plots was a waste of fuel and energy because the variation of soil types within a section left a mosaic anyway. FFS does not need to burn one small block after another to accomplish this.

Mr. Korn stated several members of QF were present at the meeting so this was a valid point to discuss.

Wilbur Priest stated, similar to goal 1, this was not a plan change but should be addressed in FFS's operational plans, specifically a burn plan.

Mr. Korn agreed and asked if there were any "quail focal areas" – a term used by Mr. Parten.

Mr. Talley answered there was an UERP area on the Citrus Tract. (Note: defining "UERP" was discussed later in the meeting).

Ms. Poag stated this again goes back to performance measures. Readers of the plan see the number of acres burned, which is a landscape level accomplishment. Is it needed in the plan? Probably not. A mosaic, a diversity of habitats, is imbedded in the landscape. Prescribed burning is undertaken with multiple species in mind whether the burn is 20 acres, 640 acres, or 2000 acres.

Mr. Korn explained FWC had tried to include statistics in their management which included ranges and addressed structure, but that was met with moderate success. FFS and the Florida Park Service (FPS) were generally not doing this for each community. The amount of upland habitat within an appropriate fire frequency is a quantifiable measure and is being used by FFS and FPS. Mr. Korn believed the next step was to reach a point of knowing how much sandhill was in DFC and then using this a quantifiable objective? FFS has not yet been asked that question but is moving in that direction, as FWC already has. Mr. Korn asked if they should move on to the next item.

Dennis Johnson and Ms. Laird both expressed that this was an operational issue.

Mr. Parten's next item addressed rare species and extended another offer of volunteers. Mr. Parten wished FFS to use the Stoddard-Neel method and adhere to a 40-60 basal area in quail focal areas.

Mr. Korn defined the idea of basal area for the members: it is the square footage of all the tree trunks in an area. If one was to take an acre of land and cut all the trees at 4 ½' above ground and push them all to one corner, "basal area" would be the surface area of these trees. Mr. Korn further explained that above 100 BA is getting too thick and dense, and that BA is directed by FFS policy and this information is in the State Lands Handbook. A balance point is 60-80 BA; below that, there is too little shading. Mr. Korn explained FFS's Director David Core is a traditional silviculture guy and that the 60-80 basal area was an accepted norm for most timber stands. Mr. Korn restated that 40-60 BA was the suggestion and asked if a plan change was needed.

Ms. Laird asked for an explanation of the Stoddard-Neel system of management.

Mr. Talley explained that this was a single tree selection method and was a more artistic approach. It involved setting a reverse J-curve number and marking each tree in a diameter class.

Mr. Korn further explained it is to achieve an all-aged stand.

Mr. Talley said this was a "look up, look around" method.

Mr. Korn said it was developed with a focus on the North Florida red clay quail areas.

Mr. Talley said it was developed in pursuit of aesthetics.

Mr. Korn asked if the plan was adequate to maintain quail.

Mr. Talley replied if using FNAI as a reference, 60 BA was on the high end; they recommend 40-60 for sandhill and stated he also requested that change in his written comments from the previous meeting.

Mr. Penn responded that he was not opposed to decreasing the BA to 40, but would like to keep the upper end of 80 BA. He explained that FFS also manages for timber production and needs that volume to make timber harvest feasible. He could see 40-80 BA, but letting that grow up so there would be volume for timber sales, which is an FFS objective.

Ralph Hancock asked if WSF has a thriving quail population.

Mr. Talley replied it is improving. The goal is one bird per 3 acres. Two state owned conservation lands in the program have achieved the goal: Blue Springs Tract of Twin River State Forest and Apalachee WEA.

Mr. Penn asked if WSF is now at one bird per 5 acres.

Mr. Talley replied that WSF is just about at that point. For a frame of reference, he stated 1 bird per 3 acres on public conservation lands is fantastic. However, quail specialists talk about quail per acre, as much as 5-10 quail per acre. But this happens with lots of funding and effort.

Mr. Korn asked if an adjustment was needed to the plan.

Mr. Johnson suggested a change to 40-80 BA.

Mr. Talley agreed he would like to see that.

Mr. Mousel asked if a change from 60-80 BA to 40-80 BA was the group consensus. The members agreed and Mr. Mousel said the change would be made.

Mr. Morris added that this change should be noted in two places, including the sandhill portion of the plan.

Jennifer Reed noted that Tom Laughlin had also provided a written comment on the same item and also that he wanted "UERP" to be defined in the Plan.

Mr. Korn stated this was an additional written comment, but related. He referenced page 13 in the meeting minutes, in which Tom Laughlin from Quail Forever had asked that "UERP" be defined in the plan.

Mr. Reed stated it was not in the glossary of abbreviations.

Mr. Korn asked Ms. Reed and Mr. Priest to do a search to see if it was in the Plan. He said if it is not in, it would be added as it is a program and could be referenced. If it is in the Plan, it should be defined.

Mr. Talley defined "UERP" as the Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project. He referenced page 32 of the Plan and gave some background on the program. The name of the program originated from a summit at Tall Timbers. It was intended to include grassland birds, Sherman's Fox

Squirrels, Gopher Tortoises, and a full range of uplands species. It was to be a multi-agency project.

Mr. Korn noted that technically the lead job position – once in Tall Timbers is now housed as part of FWC.

Gary McIntosh

Mr. McIntosh's public testimony on page 10 of the meeting referenced page 40, paragraph 2 in the plan. It states that hikers and bicyclists are permitted on open roads. Mr. McIntosh wanted horses ("equestrians") to be added as well. Mr. Korn stated this was an omission and the change would be added.

Mr. Korn stated Mr. McIntosh's second statement was an operational issue regarding trails used by Boy Scouts and others. He wanted signs put up at all hiking and horse trail crossings.

Mr. Duval said WSF had tried to address this issue in the past. Where trails cross forest roads, emphasis has instead been placed on the trail itself to notify users they were approaching a road, and that is the present FFS stance. He explained signs on forest roads do not last long and are often vandalized, creating an expense for the state. In the area Mr. McIntosh spoke of, signs are posted on the trails to alert hikers of an approaching road crossing.

Ms. McDavid stated that she could not speak to Croom but was very familiar with Citrus. In Citrus, if a trail comes up to a road, one should stop and look before crossing. However, there are areas where there are hills and curves and people do speed through the woods in their vehicles, so it could be an issue. But in general, she does not think posting each crossing on the road is necessary.

Ms. Laird was aware of the low visibility area Mr. McIntosh spoke about.

Mr. Korn stated this was an operational issue and not at the level of the Management Plan. Mr. Penn, Mr. Duval, and Lita Hart (WSF Recreation Administrator) would be advised to follow up on the issue.

Ms. McDavid said it might be a good idea for areas with a blind spot.

Mr. Thomason asked how much interaction FFS has with FTA (Florida Trail Association).

Mr. Penn stated he did not have much interaction himself; that was more of a (WSF) Recreation Section issue.

Mr. Talley stated in goal 2, public access and recreation, an objective might be added to assess road and trail crossing safety concerns.

Mr. Duval asked if the group thought the terminology was acceptable.

Mr. Korn stated there was a suggestion on the floor to add an objective to the recreation section under goal 2 to assess safety concerns of trail crossings at public road. This would not be a road by road analysis, as that would be an operational plan.

Ms. Poag stated Lake County has signs in both directions and the crossing marked at trail crossings.

Mr. Talley remarked that longevity of the signs is an issue.

Mr. Korn stated that every road / trail crossing was marked in Pine Log State Forest. It was a lot of signs.

Ms. McDavid said so many signs would be intrusive and would detract from the forest experience.

Mr. Talley said we might add them just where visibility is an issue.

Mr. Korn again asked if an objective (#13) should be added or maybe it should go into the 5 year Recreation Plan.

Mr. Thomason stated it is an ongoing thing. Perhaps where there are recurring accidents it should be addressed.

Mr. Johnson said it was an aspect of safety.

A consensus was not reached to add verbiage to assess safety where trails cross roads, and it was decided it was an operational concern at the individual site.

Mr. Duval said he would bring it up with the Recreation Section and it was not a forest road issue, but more specific to recreation.

Fred Fulcher

Fred Fulcher stated in his testimony he wanted dogs allowed at Tillis Hill.

Mr. Korn noted the time was 11:30am, and that the group was maybe ¼ of the way done. He suggested they take 30 minutes for lunch at noon. The group agreed.

Ms. Reed noted that Mr. Fulcher also had written comments on the same topic as did his wife, Rebecca Fulcher, and another member of the public, Kelly Fredericks.

Ms. McDavid stated she also had brought emailed comments she had received on the same topic.

In his testimony on page 12 of the meeting minutes, Mr. Fulcher's stated members of his horseback riding organization as well as those inquiring from out of state wanted dogs allowed at Tillis Hill. Rebecca Fulcher and Kelly Fredericks also wanted dogs allowed at Tillis Hill. Additionally, Kelly Fredericks wanted windmills up (to power water wells).

Ms. McDavid stated she had comments from two members of her horseback riding group. A Ms. Janet stated most riders have dogs and are not using the camp because dogs are not allowed. She commented in bold capital letters that revenue was being lost. A Ms. Karen asked if anyone could inquire on her behalf about submitting a written request to have dogs allowed at Tillis Hill.

Mr. Duval stated that current policy does not allow "pets": this mainly refers to dogs, but also includes pot-bellied pigs, goats, etc. However, dogs are the issue. During past field trials they provided for dogs at a sort of camp. But State policy states that pets (dogs) can't be left unattended for more than 30 minutes.

Mr. Duval asked if campers could reasonably provide that. He continued to explain that on the Forest, a 10' leash is also required, which would be an issue with the horse group. FFS would struggle with how to accommodate them. He further noted Mr. Fulcher's views do not represent "all people in the nation": a previous poll had indicated that a higher margin of people did not want pets allowed. However, it appeared that those wanting pets allowed were more vocal. He stated that many people will work out a pet sitter, and most horse owners have more than just one dog to watch at home. Mr. Duval remarked that the out of state people represent only a small percentage of the users at Tillis Hill, but more than 50% of the people arriving from the north do have a pet. He refers these people to Ross Prairie and other areas allowing pets. Mr. Duval noted they do have other options.

Ms. McDavid asked how campers in primitive camps (where pets are allowed) get around the statutes.

Mr. Duval explained other camps allow pets, but not horses, The statute is still enforced for hikers and camp users. They could ask for pets to be allowed in Croom Motorcycle Area (CMA), but would run into similar problems to Tillis Hill. Pets are allowed in primitive areas and hunt camps.

Ms. McDavid asked if the 30-minute rule was a Florida Statute. She stated the (Florida) Park Service polled users and most did not want pets allowed, but this was years ago and opinions must have changed as State Parks have been pet friendly for some years. She asked how parks

can allow dogs to be left unattended for over 30 minutes: do the parks not enforce this, or is this statewide?

Mr. Duval replied it is in FFS Policy and Procedures.

Ms. McDavid asked if dogs are allowed at Holder Mine Campground.

Mr. Duval replied they were.

Ms. McDavid stated the last few years many horse people have been traveling with dogs. She explained they do not consider them “dogs”, but “fur babies”, and it would be harder to find a place to take care of them that meets their expectations. Ms. McDavid said some people do not camp during the weekend during her organization’s “annual shindig” because they cannot bring their dogs. She was asked if it is limiting revenue and responded that she believed it is. Ms. McDavid stated that as a camper, however, she can see the issue. She could see that dog owners might not properly clean up after their pets and as people leave the site to go to dinner, the “yapping” might get excessive. She stated she is not anti-dog, but can see the issues. Allowing dogs would create revenue, but rules would need to be spelled out and policed. Dogs would have to be picked up after and not left unattended. Enforcement would be the issue.

Mr. Duval clarified dogs are allowed in day use areas outside the camp, for hiking. However, Tillis Hill is a confined area. Furthermore, in that facility, they also have functions at the pavilion and the dining hall. The same issues would be encountered with those users were they to show up with dogs. Mr. Duval emphasized Tillis Hill is not just a camp; the other public facilities, activities, and situations there must be considered.

Mr. Mousel stated from a Management Plan standpoint, those are issues to be handled locally, and not addressed in the plan. Perhaps user groups should be polled; we may have good reason to exclude dogs.

Mr. Korn related this was an operational issue and Mr. Mousel should decide. FFS cannot keep all visitors happy, although Mr. Duval has certainly tried in his 40 years at FFS. Mr. Korn said we have to do what works and may need to revisit the issue.

Ms. McDavid said that a conversation and meeting to discuss the issue would go a long way and we need to not just include the horse people. All user groups need to feel listened to and be able to provide input.

Mr. Korn stated it was not a plan issue. He stated the remaining written comment was about a wind source and the group would pass on that as it was incidental.

Zachary Chapman

Mr. Chapman's comments on page 12 of the meeting minutes expressed the need for better roads in the Richloam Tract. He wanted the roads in better shape and asked those traditionally graded to be done twice annually.

Mr. Korn stated it was a valid question, but grading was an operational issue. However, the issue of overall road condition in Richloam should be discussed.

Ms. Laird asked how much harvesting took place in Richloam and stated logging activities destroy roads. She noted that FFS does try to repair roads after a harvest, but most roads are utilized by loggers during a timber harvest.

Mr. Penn answered most timber harvesting does effect roads and in their contract loggers must leave roads as they found them. However, this may be unrealistic, although they do try to reshape the roads. Mr. Penn agreed with Ms. Laird: the roads in Richloam are in bad shape. Mr. Penn explained road damage is only partially from logging: there is also a mud bogging problem with the public. FFS' road crew has decreased as has funding. Mr. Penn explained that FFS tries to limerock primary roads to allow main access for logging and they try to make it so logging trucks can get from a secondary or tertiary road to a limerocked road quickly. He stated it is an issue and a multipronged approach is needed. More enforcement is needed, along with funding and education. Mud bogging, jeep groups, and off-road vehicles are a problem on all tracts, but it manifests itself more on Richloam because it is wetter. The road crew is running ragged trying to get to what they can.

Mr. Korn asked if money is available for road care to be done prior to gun season.

Mr. Penn replied Jim Peters tries and that is a main goal. However, weather is a factor: 4' of rain creates a problem. The problem is also political. Mr. Peters starts on one area and a complaint is received from another area which must be attended to. Hauling equipment over five counties takes time. Mr. Penn stated this is a much-discussed issue, along with issues about littering and dumping.

Mr. Korn asked if Mr. Penn was referring to just litter or also dumping.

Mr. Penn replied dumping is an issue too. FFS had law enforcement, but they were rolled into FWC. They are out in the forest, but they have a lot going on. Mr. Penn stated FFS does not have nearly enough law enforcement: WSF has 160,000 acres spread over five counties and only 2 law enforcement officers specifically tasked with State Forest issues.

Ms. McDavid noted the poor road conditions prevent the people FFS wants to get in from getting in; she bought a 3rd vehicle expressly for the purpose of accessing the forest. She stated for most people FR 13 or FR 10 are the only ways to access the forest. As soon as it rains, one can camp out on CR 491 just south of Grover Cleveland Road and see the droves of “mudders” coming in on Trail 16. She stated on the Florida Military Vehicle group’s Facebook page, she can point out where on the forest their posted pictures are - the mound on Trail 19, among other places. She stated the Florida Military Vehicles group is a big problem; because they have “Military” in their title, they seem to think they have free reign- even though they are not a military organization, just citizens who own old military vehicles. Law enforcement is not there when this group rides the forest. Ms. McDavid wanted to make clear she is not criticizing law enforcement, as she understands their budget constraints and other issues. She related an incident in which rail buggies behind Heatherwood terrorized some residents and one horse got loose because of it. She stated the Sheriff’s office won’t get involved. Ms. McDavid described another incident in which someone was pulling gopher tortoises, law enforcement was called, and the person was told it would take law enforcement 1 ½ hours or more to get there. She reemphasized that law enforcement is not a presence and thought perhaps someone in Tallahassee with power needs to make some decisions. Until then, everything in the Management Plan will be affected, as this sort of thing is happening all over. Ms. McDavid referenced an incident in which the trash barrel holders at Bear Head were burned and restated too much damage is occurring; we need law enforcement.

Mr. Johnson related that in parts of Richloam, the Sportsman Association could help. He stated people can complain to the camp host or call Jim Peters, but only so much can be done. A road is fixed, then a 4WD vehicle comes in and spins donuts. He remarked it is covered in the plan that FFS will maintain access to the forest.

Mr. Korn remarked that forest staff does not interface enough with the public to hear and address all these complaints; therefore these issues come up during meetings. He stated Mr. Mousel needs to be made aware of specific issues and the problem with lack of law enforcement was not going to be solved at this meeting. He asked that if nothing warranted a change in the plan, the meeting needed to move on.

Ms. Laird stated the issue at hand was not specific to roads, but was a law enforcement issue. She asked how much FFS works with law enforcement and if something could be done.

Mr. Mousel responded that FFS has a good working relationship with FWC and FWC gets a bad rap because their officers are not seen in camps as often as FDACS officers were before the merger. Mr. Mousel related just last Friday night he rode with law enforcement for 8 hours and saw 50 tickets issued. They make an effort, but he understood the frustration from the public, who are seeing only a snapshot. However, once busted in an area for illegal activity, those people may not return.

Mr. Hoyer asked if law enforcement could patrol specific problem areas.

Ms. Laird said it may not be feasible to pick on one area when they have many areas to cover.

Mr. Mousel stated that FFS is reaching out to other county law enforcement patrols; however, if they cannot get to the area in their sedan, they are not coming. Citrus County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) would patrol Tillis Hill, Holder Mine, and Mutual Mine, but not much else. They would not go off the main roads.

Someone remarked the Sheriff's office does have a 4WD.

Mr. Mousel remarked they are city boys and would not go off-road.

Mr. Korn stated it was generally an operational issue. Law enforcement did not have a representative on MPAG and Mr. Korn said he wasn't sure if that was their fault or ours. Legislatively, they were not part of the MPAG membership. Mr. Korn asked, what is the answer to the problem with trash and vandalism? He related that the Center Manager can go out all night with law enforcement to give them the message. But it is an operational issue. Two law enforcement positions were funded with Florida Forever, but if that money goes away so do the positions. Mr. Korn stated as a matter of record FWC has heavy funding from marine interests. Law enforcement is required to log a certain number of hours on the water: Many officers are now required to log in 750 hours on an airboat or covering marine interests, and if an officer does not adhere to that, they could lose their job. Mr. Korn inquired about the number of CARL/Florida Forever funded positions.

Mr. Talley said funding is allocated across all positions. It is federal money with strings. It has been 15 years since the DEP/FWC merger, and the culture of marine / game wardens still exists; they are frustrated as well. Administratively and legislatively, they must produce two officers per county. Also, there are a few undercover officers.

Mr. Penn stated that FFS is well aware of the problem and is frustrated because it limits our productivity. It is a huge cost when vehicles get stuck, roads are destroyed, etc. However, much of the public does not know they are doing wrong. A shift in group thinking is needed. Also, the huge cost to taxpayers should be stressed.

Mr. Korn stated that the group would now break for lunch and should return at 12:45.

-Break for Lunch-

At 12:45, the meeting resumed.

Mr. Korn stated the meeting would now proceed to the individual MPAG members. He thanked Mr. Carlos Climent (WTC Manager) for lunch.

Mr. Korn stated the group first needed to return to Mr. Chapman's comments and get closure on that subject. He asked if, regarding law enforcement, there were any changes needed in the plan as written. He remarked that law enforcement is a challenge, and roads an operational issue. Seasonal complaints about roads are received prior to hunting season.

Mr. Hoyer stated perhaps under goal 8 on page 10, an objective could be added to increase cooperation with law enforcement in control of illegal behavior.

Mr. Priest stated that was not in the goal section.

Mr. Morris said it was addressed by goal 8 objective 3 and in the five year Road Management Plan.

Mr. Korn asked if anything should be added to the plan regarding roads, as per Mr. Chapman's comments about the level of maintenance. Should there be a change in the conceptual plan?

Multiple comments were made at this point by several MPAG members and FFS staff regarding the nature and content of the action plans written for WSF and what the most appropriate way would be to address road and law enforcement concerns in the Management Plan draft.

Mr. Hoyer suggested adding an objective to page 10.

Mr. Thomason related what he saw at Ocala National Forest (ONF), where at one time all roads were open and there was a lot of damage. ONF stated that not all roads needed to be open and they limited motorized access. At Santos, illegal jumps were being built for mountain bikes. ONF brought in the International Mountain Bike Association to operate the area with great success. Mr. Thomason suggested FFS could do something similar for mudders by creating a place for them and limiting access elsewhere. It worked for ONF.

Ms. McDavid stated that closing roads and posting them as such is one thing, but enforcement is another.

Mr. Thomason stated that increased law enforcement was needed.

Mr. Korn replied from an operational perspective more knowledge of priorities was needed. Specific priorities needed to be identified through dialogue with the public, landowners, and law enforcement. He suggested a group be assembled similar to the BioBlitz, when multiple biologists gather to survey an area. He restated this issue was operational, but asked if verbiage about roads needed to be added to the plan. Should it be addressed in the future? Perhaps it should not be in a specific section of the plan. A discussion with Tallahassee personnel was needed to see if it should be included. Mr. Korn stated that the eight goals in the plan were described in Florida Statute and were mandated. The place to mention roads/ road issues would

be in “Capital Facilities and Infrastructure”.... but there wasn’t any specific Florida Forever goal that addressed law enforcement needs on public lands.”

Mr. Mousel suggested verbiage to add:

Objective 4: Increase dialog with user groups and law enforcement to decrease damage to roads, vandalism, illegal dumping, and illegal uses. (Ongoing Goal)

Performance Measure: Decrease in road issues. Decrease in illegal issues.

Ms. Laird stated as Croom Motorcycle Area had been so successful, why not create a similar area for mud bogging? It might increase revenue and decrease problems.

Mr. Korn asked that the issue be held and returned to later. He asked if the group approved the wording that had been suggested by Mr. Mousel. There was a consensus and the wording for the new Objective was added in the Plan. Mr. Korn asked if there was a suggestion for a performance measure.

Ms. McDavid suggested a good measure would be a decrease in maintenance costs.

Mr. Korn asked if an objective to cover law enforcement issue needed to be added; he asked if the adopted wording covers the issue or was more needed.

Ms. McDavid stated opinion regarding what she saw as a real need to improve law enforcement efforts on the forest.

Mr. Korn asked if the same values were captured in the goal as on page 21, or if more narrative was needed in this section on Law Enforcement.

John Thomas stated that if law enforcement was needed and if it was not addressed now, it would just be worse later. He lives on CR 581 and stated he had called about someone killing a deer but was told law enforcement had to spend time on the water and did not have time for his issue. He had issues with people setting fire to his pasture west of CR 491; he was told that law enforcement could not catch them. He related that these people sleep all day then prowl at night. Mr. Thomas asked if these problems are not addressed specifically, have we done our job?

Mr. Korn suggested maybe Ms. Reed or Mr. Priest or Mr. Mousel could work on this section and describe law enforcement status and challenges and put in a section under law enforcement. He stated the problems needed to be identified in the text of plan that supported the added goal/objective.

Ms. Reed stated she would work with Mr. Talley on this as well.

Mr. Talley stated at the local level, Mr. Mousel has obviously been engaged in communication with law enforcement. They are aware of the issues, said Mr. Talley, but he compared it to a

“Whack-a-Mole” game in which they deal with one issue and others continually pop up in different places. Mr. Talley stated the real issues for all law enforcement are manpower and funding. Short of dropping trees on roads to keep people out, which was not feasible, he was unsure of an answer.

Ms. Poag stated that an informational or educational campaign, similar to Smokey Bear, was needed and currently no message was reaching schools.

Mr. Korn stated this was a local issue and apparently a big concern of both user groups and adjacent land owners. Therefore, it would certainly be appropriate to add language to the plan to capture that, as well as law enforcement challenges and issues.

Mr. Korn stated there was one more set of written comments received - from Mr. Talley. He asked that Mr. Talley cover that as the meeting proceeded around the room with each MPAG member having their turn to share comments. He asked each member state in general terms if the plan was good or bad and if they had anything to add. He asked members refer to a page number for specific comments.

MPAG Member Comments

Eric Hoyer

Mr. Korn stated Mr. Hoyer had to leave the meeting early, therefore he would comment first.

Mr. Hoyer’s first comment was he noticed the operating budget was stated as 2.6 million, but another part of the plan listed revenues which totaled only 1.3 million and therefore it did not add up. He asked if there were any plans to augment revenue with concessions for canoes and kayaks or horses, or to add user additional user fees.

Mr. Mousel stated concessions in CMA were being discussed. Canoe / kayak concessions were not being discussed as there were vendors outside the immediate area, and additional permits were bought for horses. Other than CMA, concessions had not been discussed. After the widening of I-75 was completed a CMA concession might work.

Mr. Priest mentioned the Friends of Florida State Forest (FFSF).

Mr. Mousel responded FFS does try to work through FFSF. He referenced pages 15-16 and said revenue comes mainly from timber, but there are other varied sources such as apiaries, CMA permits, cattle grazing, saw palmetto drupe permits, and camping fees which do not go back directly to the WSF budget, per se, but are funneled into an incidental trust fund for FFS statewide. Nine million dollars needs to be generated to keep FFS running. He stated it comes

back to WSF in an indirect manner. Mr. Mousel explained that revenue is also funneled through FFSF, a non-governmental organization (NGO). People can write a check to FFSF and earmark it for a specific project or for WSF in general. It is not enough to cover road maintenance, but it does offer some direct support. It helped offset a grant for CMA, provided the purchase of an ATV for exotics species control, and provided signage for trails. Mr. Mousel stated that he is always looking for ways to generate revenue. He noted that grazing can be a high source of revenue.

Mr. Penn stated staff center-wide should be added to the total dollar figure. This included fire control and not just direct Resource Section staff. Some of these personnel, such as fire control, do work on the forest but it is not their primary job duties. They may only be working on the forest 10-20% of their time.

Mr. Korn stated DEP was under the same gun to generate revenue in “growth areas”; some other areas being looked at recently by FFS throughout the state have included cattle and pine straw leases.

Mr. Priest noted the figures listed in the plan are averages taken over a number of years, and Exhibit A had details for the last 10 fiscal years.

Mr. Hoyer stated that was his last comment and thanked the group. He said overall it was a good plan and was well-written and comprehensive. Mr. Hoyer then left the meeting.

Scotland Talley

Mr. Talley referenced his written comments which were attached to the meeting minutes. He referenced page 18 of the plan and wished to discuss conflicting uses such as the Suncoast Parkway and the V.A. Cemetery expansion. He asked if those issues had been resolved. He understood future conflicts could not be resolved but wanted to know if those two issues had been.

Mr. Mousel responded that the Suncoast would continue to be an issue unless it was killed for good, which was not likely, and it looked like it was going though. He stated FFS has been working to get mitigation, possible purchase of lands, and funds for fire line maintenance, weather stations, and other items.

Mr. Talley suggested that a couple sentences be added to reflect the fact that the Suncoast Parkway is coming.

Mr. Mousel stated something could be added about the V.A. Cemetery; he was told the last time the VA had asked for land was to be the last time they could ask and it was written into the lease that they would not ask for more land.

Mr. Priest asked if there were any other conflicts that should be mentioned.

Mr. Duval suggested the expansion of I-75.

Mr. Mousel replied it was in the plan.

Mr. Duval asked about the (Sable Trail) gas pipeline.

Mr. Mousel stated it was going down the power line.

Mr. Priest explained that only 50' outside the right of way would be taken.

Ms. Poag stated the Sabal Trail natural gas pipeline was not mentioned in the easement section nor in the adjacent conflicting land use section.

Mr. Thomason stated he had heard DOT researching having a high-speed highway built from Tampa to Jacksonville. No members were aware of that project.

Mr. Priest stated that he heard Suncoast Parkway 3 would affect Levy County.

Mr. Talley referenced Table 3, Threatened and Endangered Species, on page 30. He indicated he had talked to Terry Doonan (FWC) about four mammal species that were not included: these were FNAI tracked species that were not listed. The Tricolored Bat was split from the Pipistrelle and would also be added as a FNAI tracked species.

Mr. Morris stated that if it were a candidate, it would be listed on the table.

Mr. Korn asked to clarify that the Tricolored Bat was not currently listed.

Mr. Talley replied it is a candidate species. The other species he wanted included in the table were: Homosassa Shrew, Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat, Florida Long-tailed Weasel and Big Brown Bat.

Mr. Morris remarked we had looked for those species, but not yet found them.

Mr. Talley stated they are within the range of WSF, but have not been found occurring on the property.

Ms. Poag asked if there had been a survey to look for them.

Mr. Korn asked if there were additional species.

Ms. Wilde explained the species listed on Table 3 were listed and FNAI tracked species that had been found on WSF; this data had been extracted from WSF's listed species geodatabase. Another separate protocol listed all listed and FNAI tracked species FFS was looking for; this list already contained the Homosassa Shrew, Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat, and Florida Long-tailed Weasel, but not the Big Brown Bat or the Tricolored Bat. It also included numerous other amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species that were listed or FNAI tracked but had not yet been found on WSF.

Mr. Korn clarified that Table 3 contained species that "are known to occur" on WSF, actually observed, and that this list did NOT include species that were being looked for.

Ms. Reed reminded everyone that if these species were sighted, the proper form would be needed to be turned into FNAI.

Mr. Talley commented that he would coordinate with Mr. Doonan.

Mr. Talley's next item concerned Rock Lake Lodge. He referenced page 42 of the plan, and stated the wording made it sound like pen-reared doves were released on the site.

Mr. Priest stated the passage described referred to the previous owners of the property.

Mr. Talley suggested the wording be replaced with "upland game birds on premises", because only the USWFS would have been able to release doves.

Mr. Duval stated we were dealing with historical data.

Mr. Mousel remarked the previous owners were raising quail and planting for quail.

Mr. Korn asked if there were any objections to changing the language. There were not, and the verbiage was changed.

Mr. Talley referenced page 45, which discussed the Dames Cave Complex and a possible future day use area. He also referenced page 6, objective 5, cooperation with the Karst Conservancy in developing day use areas. Mr. Talley had previously spoken with Terry Doonan and Kevin Oxenrider (FWC), who have concerns about White Nose Syndrome (WNS). WNS has been detected in Georgia and Alabama now. He asked that the plan include language stating FFS would work with the Karst Conservancy *and* FWC so WNS can be addressed.

Mr. Morris stated that would probably be done anyway.

Mr. Talley indicated the Tricolored Bat would probably be listed due to high mortality from WNS throughout most its range.

The language to include FWC was approved and added.

Mr. Talley expressed concern about the hunter access section. He stated it should be clarified that hunting is undertaken in different ways in different units. He felt the language in this section was too broad and made it sound like check stations were always open and operating.

Mr. Korn asked if anyone had a problem with changing the language in that section.

Mr. Talley stated there were many opportunities to participate in hunting. Each area has specific rule and regulations which are published annually. The check stations are open during quota hunts but not during all hunts.

Mr. Korn asked if everything else should be deleted.

Mr. Talley stated two sentences should.

Ms. Reed suggested “participation in game hunts regulated by FWC when necessary”.

Mr. Talley stated it gives the impression of more limitations than exist; the check station is not staffed during all hunts.

Ms. Reed suggested “staffed during some hunts”.

Mr. Talley agreed.

Mr. Talley stated his concerns with sandhill stocking had already been addressed. The last part of his written comments referred to pages 76-78, regarding terrestrial caves; he referred everyone to his written comments. Mr. Talley expressed concern regarding cave entrances and said the operation of airflow needed discussion. Kevin Oxenrider wished to add wording regarding bat occupancy.

Mr. Korn asked Mr. Talley if his written comments included specific language he wanted included.

Mr. Talley replied his comments were not specific wording he wanted but were meant to capture the general idea. He wished similar wording to be written as part of the plan on page 76.

Mr. Korn asked where airflow should be addressed.

Mr. Talley replied “airflow may affect bat occupancy” could be included.

Mr. Korn remarked this was very technical and asked Mr. Morris what he thought.

Mr. Morris replied it seemed accurate.

Mr. Talley replied Tricolored Bats use caves for winter roosting during torpor.

Mr. Morris asked if that level of detail should be included in the DFC.

Mr. Talley stated he had written to support the idea.

Mr. Morris stated maybe the plan should not be that detailed.

Mr. Korn noted Mr. Talley had included two lengthy paragraphs on the subject in his written comments in the meeting minutes. Mr. Korn referenced page 78, management actions, which indicated the intention to write a Cave Management Plan. He suggested the language be added, "...Cave Management Plan will be developed in cooperation with FWC".

Mr. Talley explained his comments were not meant to go directly into the plan, but to back up his ideas. He concluded by stating a good job was done on the plan; it was thorough and complete. He was glad the prescribed burn objectives were aggressive. He remarked he had recently driven around Richloam and Croom and liked seeing all the burns; FFS had been doing a good job and should keep it up.

John Thomas

Mr. Thomas stated he lived south of Inverness on CR581, east of the Citrus Tract. He leases grazing rights from FFS. Mr. Thomas stated he had very good luck with cattle and a 90% conception rate. He leases almost 300 acres. He subleases a good-sized piece up CR 491 from a dairy operation. Mr. Thomas referenced page 16; 3589 acres in WSF are under cattle leases, which generates \$60,000 in revenue annually. His fees are \$15,000 and he is very happy with it. He and his wife are both from Citrus County. They have cattle in Citrus, Hernando, Sumter, and Lake Counties. His family has owned land in Homosassa since 1891. He has two daughters that have herds and Mr. Duval knows his son, who is also in the cattle business. Mr. Thomas stated many young people, including people half his age, are looking for a place to raise cattle, and WSF has 160,000 acres. Mr. Thomas explained in order to raise cattle, you need fences and water; it is the cow's job to raise a calf. He shipped 5 semi loads this year and the price of cattle has doubled in the last year due to drought, which is a problem. He states the cattle will pay for pumps, wells, and fences on FFS land.

Mr. Thomas stated the other big issue is cogon grass: it is a challenge to kill it. Tropical Soda Apple is also an issue. He stated there is another plant that looks just like bahia, but livestock won't touch it, and there is lots of it on the Cason Tract. He compared land renovation to prescribed burning: without prescribed burning, FFS is out of business. Similarly, pasture renovation is vital to cattle. Sandhill needs to be renovated so it is in top condition and the pH is where it should be. After 3-5 years, this land is on a downhill slide. Mr. Thomas would like to take a chopper, aerator, or offset disk to some of the land to make it more productive.

Mr. Priest remarked that on most cattle leases no soil disturbance is allowed. He wondered if the other bahia-like grass Mr. Thomas was referring to was Natal Grass.

Mr. Thomas said he could get the name of the plant later, but it was a bad grass and cattle would not touch it. He stated he was glad to be invited and he had two leases and he would like to double that. He further stated FFS needed someone to tell people what they could and could not do, and what is and is not right. He stated farmers need renovation like FFS needs prescribed burning. He recalled a large historical fire and the damage it had caused, and stated it was necessary to renovate land to upkeep production.

Mr. Korn replied we are bound at the field level with contracts that come out of Tallahassee, and asking for changes is higher than his pay grade- but wise use and management of pasture sites was certainly something of interest and concern to Commissioner Adam Putnam. Mr. Korn stated the decreasing amount of agricultural land is certainly an issue, but generally FFS' plans and funding has focused on returning state forest land to native groundcover and trees. He said it was certainly a good point and he indicated he would carry the issue to his supervisor.

Mr. Thomas stated Babcock Ranch is 90,000 acres with cattle and row-cropped land. Why not put food on that land? He emphasized the need to maintain land.

Ms. Reed stated Babcock Ranch is doing exactly that.

Mr. Korn asked Mr. Thomas if a person with a cattle lease would work to put money into (pasture) restoration.

Mr. Thomas replied they would, and that his father-in-law has 33 acres of non-productive land south of Inverness planted in millet and rye. He replanted it six weeks ago and has covered up one ditch line. He is able to do this because the market has improved. Mr. Thomas stated you can grow corn, cattle, or hogs, you just need a good fence. He stated lessees are willing to spend the money, as 20-30 acres could bring in half a million dollars. Mr. Thomas thanked the group for the opportunity to speak.

Mike Penn asked Mr. Thomas if it had been his cattle that ate the sand pine in the seed orchard, ripping off the bark. This was in reference to a very unusual incident that occurred at the Seed Orchard several years ago.

Mr. Priest said it was a previous lease.

Mr. Thomas said that man lost 35 cows on a previous lease; he had only lost one.

Sally McDavid

Ms. McDavid thanked the group for their work and said she had learned a lot. She appreciated the work done, and everyone had been easy to work with and the cooperation had been great.

Ms. McDavid wished to discuss advertising for the MPAG meeting, which was not addressed in the plan. She stated it had been in the Citrus County Chronicle on the 3rd. She had asked if it would be a problem to put the notice out to her email list and Facebook page.

Mr. Penn had responded previously that it would be acceptable.

Ms. McDavid wondered if many users showed at the previous night's meeting because of the newspaper announcement; there had also been a front page article in the paper, which she asked about.

Mr. Penn replied FFS did not ask for the article, but the paper had called. He called them back, but they did not return his call and he did not talk to them.

Ms. McDavid expressed the article was a good thing. She realized FFS does the legal notice, but perhaps more could be done to let user groups know about the meeting.

Mr. Korn mentioned the possibility of a notification list, like that used for prescribed burning: FFS keeps a list of people to contact in case a prescribed burn is happening in their area. Florida Statute provides structure as to what announcements must be made.

Ms. McDavid said as with the newspaper and legal notices, FFS should also let user groups know about the meetings.

Ms. McDavid referenced page 2 in the introduction, which states, "The (Withlacoochee) river twists throughout its 70-mile northwesterly journey from the Green Swamp in northern Polk County to its mouth on the Gulf of Mexico, south of Cedar Key". She stated that the Withlacoochee River actually comes out at Yankeetown- not in the city limits, but near there.

Mr. Korn asked if the group approved of a change from "Cedar Key" to "Yankeetown"; the change was approved and the language changed.

Ms. McDavid referenced page 6, goal 2, objective 9, which stated that the estimated cost to update the WSF brochures and website was \$10,000. She related her group had an event for which a lady could not find a map for the trails. Her horse group was migrating to a new website, and had asked Lita Hart (Recreation Administrator) for a button they could include to navigate to our website. The person wanting a trail map could not find one and there was only a link to the SWFWMD site. Ms. McDavid asked what format we get for the brochures costing \$10,000.

Mr. Korn said they have a map on one side and information on the other.

Ms. McDavid stated on her organization's website they have a downloadable .pdf. It "keeps it green" and saves them money. She moved a kiosk in Citrus because they went through 1000 maps in 5 months. Now, people can print maps from their website; they just send them the URL of the website.

Mr. Korn expressed concern about the lack of maps on the FFS website.

Mr. Priest responded Ms. Hart is aware of the issue and they are working on Two Mile Prairie and Homosassa to get a scan code to get to a map on the webpage.

Mr. Mousel clarified it was a QR code and they had been redone.

Mr. Priest explained they were working on more detailed maps.

Ms. Reed remarked that trail maps are being worked on district by district; they are revamping the maps statewide.

Ms. McDavid referenced page 18, and expressed dismay that FFS lost an inmate crew leader, and by not being able to keep this position FFS probably lost \$80,000 worth of work. She asked if there were plans for further cuts.

Mr. Mousel replied FFS was not threatened with cuts this past fiscal year. He explained that when cuts occur vacant positions are let go before cutting a held position. However, those positions do not come back easily.

Mr. Korn concurred much manpower was lost because of that position cut.

Ms. McDavid referenced page 22 and asked for Nature Coast Back Country Horsemen to be added as a user group.

Ms. McDavid referenced page 40, Croom Tract, Item 2. She reiterated Mr. McIntosh's concern that equestrians be added to the last sentence of the first paragraph.

Mr. Korn stated the change had already been made.

Ms. McDavid thanked the group.

Wendy Poag

Ms. Poag stated she represented Lake County, but was also a member of the Florida Native Plant Society, Land Management Committee, as well as "representing" politicians, hunters, horse interests, people that have dogs, and various "tree-hugger" groups. She appreciated there were so many aspects to manage. She referenced page 1, Management Needs, and asked if there were not

more needs or if those were the most pressing. She asked why items such as exotics species and plant and animal inventories were not included.

Mr. Korn agreed, stated the point was well taken, and it would be revisited. He asked WSF to take another look at this and update the language.

Ms. Poag asked if there were any public access points in Lake County.

Mr. Mousel replied there was one on Bay Lake Road; hunters, bikers, and hikers could access Richloam from the trail.

Mr. Penn added, so could “mudders”.

Ms. Poag expressed curiosity about promoting access sites.

Mr. Mousel stated Bay Lake Rd. had a parking lot for the Van Fleet Trail which was adjacent to WSF and provided driving access to Richloam.

Ms. Poag wondered if any partnership was in place with the County for bathroom maintenance, patrolling, and other items.

Mr. Mousel replied there had been two partnerships with County governments. Years ago, a grant had provided for a bathroom and trailhead at Tucker Hill. Currently, the Good Neighbor Trail project was a partnership which also included DOT and was going to provide improvements to the old railroad bed in Croom.

Ms. Poag stated normally FFS does not reach out to counties, and is missing partnership opportunities.

Mr. Korn noted FFS has subleased some sites such as landfills and Whispering Pines to counties.

Ms. Poag expressed ecotourism is a different economic base for the State, as is agrotourism. Lands belonging to ONF, WSF, SSF, SJRWMD were not known or toured on the county level. She asked if this should be in the plan.

Mr. Penn responded that FFS is developing a MOA with Hernando County to assist with lease at Chinsegut Hill, and that FFS would manage the exotics. Also, a state lands tour had recently been planned with Citrus County tourism personnel.

Ms. Poag replied, but it is not a goal on the State Forest.

Mr. Korn replied it had been added on Welaka, and asked if specific wording should be added.

Ms. Reed stated this had worked well regards the Big Shoals Public Lands property – specifically on the City of White Springs website, where the City in conjunction with the Water

Management District, FFS, and FWC had touted ecotourism for mountain bikes. This includes Big Shoals State Park and is doing well.

Ralph Hancock stated he had been involved with them, too.

Ms. Poag asked about natural communities management. Had FFS had figured the percentage of land in DFC?

Mr. Korn replied it is not in there.

Ms. Poag referenced page 5, regarding monitoring public access resource impact, and asked why a performance goal, such as the number of visitor opportunities per day, was not listed. She stated user groups should be managed to control erosion. She asked if anything measured impacts or dollars spent.

Mr. Korn replied the DEP Land Management Review (LMR) process scores how well visitor impacts are managed, but it is not a specific Florida Forever goal/objective.

Ms. Poag asked if it was a goal on a different level.

Mr. Korn asked how one would measure visitor impact and how to determine how much use is too much.

Ms. Poag stated carrying capacity is the usual measure but is has not been defined.

Mr. Korn noted that Croom was hit hard by use by multiple recreation groups.

Ms. Poag asked if there was no goal, should there be an objective in this regard?

Mr. Mousel responded it would be possible if we had managed access. He stated the main forest had been in public access since the 1930's and impacts were hard to measure.

Ms. Poag stated the public always wants more trails and more boat ramps, but at what point does it degrade the experience?

Mr. Duval responded again, we were talking about carrying capacity.

Mr. Korn stated he would bring the issue up to management.

Mr. Penn said they were trying to figure how to measure that and over time, they will have more tools and will be better able to evaluate, but it is beyond FFS to develop it.

Mr. Duval remarked because some people don't need a permit, it can be hard to carrying capacity.

Mr. Talley elaborated, stating in some areas people over 60, or disabled, for example, are exempt and in other areas there are no exemptions. There are processes for rule changes and it very hard to decrease hunting opportunities, but easy to increase them. There is language in the statutes regarding “no net loss of hunting”.

Mr. Penn stated if Ms. Poag was interested FFS would be happy to give her a tour of the forest.

Dennis Johnson

Mr. Johnson stated in general the plan is good. He stated another objective was needed so FFS can find ways to fund an increase in the quantity, but not quality, of law enforcement, as the DOACS law enforcement has been lost. He stated it needed to be added as a specific goal (objective).

Mr. Korn replied FFS needs to increase dialogue with law enforcement to decrease damage to roads and to decrease vandalism.

Mr. Johnson agreed and believed if it was seen in the goals it would get more attention. He stated he used to be in law enforcement. He related one incident where a man had run on foot into the woods in Richloam. The Sheriffs’ Departments from Citrus, Lake, and Sumter did nothing because they did not know the roads. They called him because they knew he hunted the area and he brought them a map. Mr. Johnson stated Hernando County does the best job, but local law enforcement does not know where things are on the forest.

Mr. Korn asked if a consensus existed to add an objective to increase the amount of law enforcement presence.

Ms. Poag asked where in the plan it would go.

Mr. Thomason said wherever appropriate.

Ms. Reed suggested the wording “Increase quantity and quality of law enforcement presence to address issues on the forest”.

Mr. Korn said it’d be probably better to omit “quality”.

Mr. Morris agreed and said they might be insulted.

Mr. Johnson stated laws could be passed, but manpower was needed to enforce those laws.

Mr. Johnson stated his sportsmen’s group hosts a cleanup on Richloam. Sumter County sometimes provides dumpsters and other equipment, although for the first time in 14 years, they forgot the dumpster. He stated over 2 tons of household garbage was collected, including over 80

tires. He stated you couldn't go 15 feet in the forest without finding beer bottles and cans. He stated that was the end of his comments.

Mr. Korn replied everyone was in agreement.

Mickey Thomason

Mr. Thomason thanked the group for the opportunity and stated FFS was doing a good job with the balancing act required to manage the forest. He said the plan was good.

Mr. Thomason referenced page 5, objective 3, and stated it was the only objective with someone's name assigned to it. The group agreed the name should be removed.

Mr. Thomason referenced page 64, dome swamp conditions. He asked what part of DEP FFS is working with that does hydrologic restoration on FFS lands.

Mr. Penn replied much work was done on Baird through DOT mitigation, in particular with Allen Berdette. However, they have redistricted and are now out of Orlando so there is no one in that office with a hydrological background.

Mr. Korn moved that the last three words "performed by DEP" be stricken.

Mr. Thomason stated there was also a mudding issue. A goal should be added to recreation to assess the establishment of a mudding area; if they do not have a designated place, they will go anywhere.

Mr. Priest asked if it would be free, or would FFS charge a fee?

Mr. Thomason responded it was an operational issue. However, CMA should be used as an example: a need was met and it created revenue. He thought the issue, while a "Pandora's Box", should nonetheless be assessed. He stated there was a mudding site by Inglis that was making a fortune at \$15 a head.

Mr. Priest asked if we should assess the need for additional OHV sites.

Mr. Penn stated there are private bogging areas which incur a cost, but FFS is free.

Mr. Thomason stated wherever the party is, that is where they will go.

Mr. Priest replied there are probably places on Citrus where the grandkids go where the grandfather went.

Mr. Korn stated the Director often hears from the same people on issues and has expressed openness and desire to everyone and their thoughts on management and public use.

Ms. Laird said it could be made affordable, competitive, and make money.

Mr. Korn stated, so we want to assess opportunities for areas for.....

Mr. Duval stated the terminology is “sticky”.

Ms. Reed suggested “OHV”.

Mr. Korn suggested “off road vehicles”.

It was clarified that a licensed OHV is less than 50” and has other parameters as well, and what we’re talking about here are road vehicles.

Mr. Korn stated some wordsmithing would be undertaken to add relevant language.

Mr. Thomason indicated that was his last comments, and the plan was good.

Chris Reed

Mr. Reed stated the plan was a good one and most of his notes had already been addressed. He stated he thought Ecology in particular had done a great job and mentioned the geo-database, the RCWs, and the exotics.

Mr. Reed referenced page 47 and the targeted prescribed burn goal of 30,000 acres. He thought the goal should be closer to 35,000 acres, based on the amount of pyric communities.

Mr. Korn stated 30,000 was not as lofty, but appropriate especially if some of those communities had young or unthinned pine trees.

Mr. Mousel stated that acreage could be increased but the wild card was the Richloam Tract, which could be too wet, just right, or too dry to burn. FFS reached 15,000 acres this year, but also hit Citrus hard. If only 2000 acres are able to be burned in Richloam, 30,000 acres can be hard to maintain.

Mr. Reed responded sandhill has a short rotation and FFS should be able to make up the difference there.

Mr. Korn replied that FFS did not necessarily want to burn 30,000 acres annually, but to average that much, to hit a range.

Mr. Reed understood that 45,000 might be burned one year, and 20,000 the next.

Mr. Korn asked Mr. Mousel and WSF staff take a look and possibly bump that number up, or use a range.

Mr. Thomason said a caveat of weather or personnel could be listed.

Mr. Reed wanted fire to be considered for a long term goal, and to see a condition class pursued. He related TNC, USFS, and SWFWMD had moved to classifying units by status of fire return interval. Four condition classes were used, geared towards disturbance interval:

- Condition 1: area is within FNAI fire return / disturbance interval
- Condition 2: area is within one rotation of FNAI fire return / disturbance interval
- Condition 3: area is within 2 years of FNAI fire return / disturbance interval
- Condition 4: area needs more than fire to return to FNAI fire return / disturbance interval

Ms. Poag asked if such a statement could be made as “7,000 acres are within one year fire return interval”.

Mr. Reed replied once descriptions are in hand they can be done annually depending on what has been achieved.

Ms. Poag asked if it is part of an evaluation.

Mr. Reed replied DEP required them to do it.

Mr. Korn commented it is more geared to ecological condition.

Kawika Bailey stated condition class was more appropriate for the annual burn plan.

Mr. Reed responded it was a long term goal.

Mr. Penn asked Mr. Reed to please send that information to him.

Mr. Talley stated there was an ecological condition model on Osceola National Forest.

Mr. Korn responded it was an operational level matter.

Mr. Mousel expressed interest in getting it into the plan. However, he asked if, without going through the Forest Management Bureau, a precedent was being set for the rest of the state. He said it could be embraced as an entry into the fire history map, but should be discussed with Forest Management. He stated he would also like to see the descriptions.

Mr. Reed stated it was a good tool because it can be queried to see what is in and out.

Mr. Mousel stated FFS assessment was based on the rough -one year, two year, etc. - to see what areas needed to be burned.

Mr. Bailey was in favor of condition class and asked if it considered DFC.

Mr. Reed stated his next comment might be operational as well, but he wished to discuss invasive exotic animals. He noted exotic plants were covered on page 52, but there was a big hole in the plan with the omission of exotic animals – namely, hogs. How are levels maintained?

Mr. Korn asked if the statement in the 4th paragraph regarding feral hogs was not sufficient. If not, what would he like to see added?

Mr. Reed replied additional hunting or trapping opportunities. FFS could contract with USDA where hogs are changing natural communities, or hog/dog hunts could be held.

Mr. Korn asked if there is a problem with hogs.

Mr. Reed replied there is one, on Richloam.

Mr. Korn stated if a problem exists, it should be identified in the plan, including a statement of what to do about it.

Mr. Morris stated WSF kind of ignores hogs and perhaps it should be brought up with FWC as it is a game animal.

Mr. Mousel and Mr. Talley responded it is *not* a game animal and there is no hog size or bag limit on hogs during hunts on WSF.

Mr. Morris suggested we beef up the wording with newer information.

Mr. Korn suggested some verbiage could be added and asked Mr. Penn for his input.

Mr. Penn stated some things could be added but there was not any money available to deal with the issue. WSF gives special use permits for hog trapping, but where everyone wants to trap is at Rock Lake. He stated FFS is trying to do some things. Could there be a gun hunt opportunity?

Mr. Reed suggested that FFS allow dogs to be used during special hunts

Mr. Penn added, on Richloam.

Mr. Mousel related most WSF permits are for traps.

Mr. Korn asked if a consensus had been reached that a change was needed in the plan.

Ms. Laird stated the wording sounded like FFS is doing the trapping.

Mr. Mousel stated FFS holds the administrative permit, but issues it to those who want it.

Mr. Thomas agreed with Mr. Reed; permission exists, but it needs to be promoted. A specific vehicle is needed.

Mr. Korn replied FFS would take a look and see what words work.

Mr. Laird expressed a need to elaborate.

Mr. Penn related hog dog hunts could be set up but it would depend on the location. On Richloam it would affect prescribed burning as FFS would not want to burn during hunting.

Mr. Talley stated in some regions a summer hog dog hunt had been added – although he (personally) would not want to do that in the heat of summer.

Mr. Reed stated some places administer their own hunts, some contract it out, and some do it for free.

Mr. Penn asked if Mr. Reed could supply names.

Mr. Reed stated they encourage the hog dog hunts to take place at night.

Mr. Reed referenced page 7 goal 3 and stated the “measureables” could be beefed up. Regarding mosquito control, there should be a measure of need for an arthropod control plan (ACP).

Mr. Korn replied, only if it is requested by the local county mosquito control district. The ACP is not needed if no interest exists in treating. It is up to the County to initiate. If they want to spray then they must develop an arthropod control plan – to be approved by FFS - which includes where and what treatment is to occur.

Mr. Reed referenced goal 4, objective 4, on page 8; he had an issue with the performance measure, number of depression marshes surveyed. Mr. Reed suggested that FFS should highlight “target” marshes, and the performance goal should be the percentage of target marshes surveyed. Perhaps only those with T&E species should be surveyed.

Mr. Morris suggested the number of significant, focal marshes be targeted and where listed species occurred they should be checked annually.

Mr. Talley stated that if only those marshes previously having T&E species were surveyed, then other places where T&E species were might be missed. He related that striped newts had recently been found in new areas.

Mr. Priest suggested the number of acres surveyed.

Mr. Reed suggested certain areas to be survey should be identified and a percentage of those should be surveyed.

Mr. Korn suggested the number of marshes be targeted, and a percentage of those be surveyed.

Mr. Penn stated this could be done along with timber stand inventory.

Mr. Reed indicated that was his last comment.

Ralph Hancock

Mr. Hancock indicated that he had not seen the 10 Year Management Plan before and he was impressed with the job and the time and effort put in. He stated his learning curve as far as “what in hell are you talking about?” had gone through the roof.

Mr. Hancock referenced page 38, at the top, regarding solid waste dumping. He had read the part about sending a warning letter to offenders and wanted to know if it is known who they are, why they are not busted. Do the chops exist to prosecute them?

Mr. Duval responded that when a dump of illegal waste is found, law enforcement will go through it to look for indentifying marks. If they are found, law enforcement will take the case to a judge. They will prosecute.

Mr. Talley stated that junk mail is great for illegal dumps.

Mr. Thomas related an incident where he had a dumpster on his yard and someone had filled it- but they left mail. A Lt. Colonel was found to be the guilty party, and he asked what he could do to make things right. Mr. Thomas replied to him, “Don’t do it to anyone else.”

Mr. Hancock stated that trying to keep up with mowing trails was a problem where feral hogs were present. He stated it put him between a rock and a hard place: he would like to see fewer hogs, but he would not want to hike during a hog hunt or take equipment down a trail during a hunt season.

Mr. Korn stated that page 52 perhaps describes the problem more.

Mr. Hancock replied no, he was just reinforcing his view. If there were more hunts, there would be less time to hike, burn, mow, etc. He thanked the group for the opportunity to participate.

Mr. Korn thanked Mr. Hancock for volunteering on the Forest.

Patricia Laird

Ms. Laird stated most of her concerns had already been addressed. She referenced page 38, stating the leased property did not line up with the exhibits. She indicated it might warrant going back and checking page numbers.

Mr. Korn asked Mr. Priest for clarification.

Mr. Priest replied those were specific to landfills.

Mr. Korn said a comparison would be made and asked Mr. Priest to take a closer look.

Mr. Thomason stated perhaps a disclaimer should be included and leases and subleases could be detailed out; a more comprehensive list might be needed.

Mr. Priest said it included utility easements and such.

Ms. Laird referenced page 18, the inmate program. She recognized that an inmate supervisor position lost represented a huge loss of viable manpower.

Mr. Korn related the Andrews Nursery's inmate help had gone away too, and fluctuations with inmate programs happen. He stated while WSF had been fortunate because Sumter Correctional Institution (SCI) had always been supportive, FFS needs to have inmate supervisors.

Mr. Penn stated that everyone agreed and when times get better he would like to get that position back. However, more WSF employees have been getting inmate certified so they can be utilized for special jobs. He stated he would be going through certification soon and Mr. Morris is certified and uses inmates for RCW work. Dan Taylor, a forester, has also been certified.

Ms. Laird thought it sounded like a step towards rectifying the issues.

Ms. Laird asked about the Good Neighbor Trail (GNT) which was to go several miles through the forest on a trail 4WD vehicles commonly used.

Mr. Korn replied local government funds had been provided for the GNT.

Mr. Mousel stated the GNT would be a paved trail from the Withlacoochee State Trail through the forest to Richbarn Road. Places where it crosses the trail system would be reinforced so FFS will be able to cross it with fire equipment. Either side was to have permanent posts to prevent mud buggers, etc. from damaging it. Ms. Laird asked if the GNT would be an ongoing expense.

Mr. Mousel replied it would not.

Ms. Laird asked if there would be a place to access the GNT.

Mr. Mousel replied that a parking lot, made small intentionally, was to be created. It would not be big enough for horses.

Ms. Laird asked if there would be a day use area.

Mr. Mousel replied there would not, but there would be a kiosk and a sign that said “entering WSF”.

Mr. Korn stated he did not see anything about the proposed paved Good Neighbor Trail in the plan.

Mr. Priest and Mr. Morris both stated that it was a more recent development.

Mr. Korn stated it should be added to Exhibit N, “Planned Recreational Improvements map”, along with a small text insert in the plan.

Mr. Thomason indicated he had one more item he wished to discuss: page 16, item 7, aquatic preserves. He asked if Withlacoochee State River was an aquatic preserve.

Ms. Reed said she would check on that.

Mr. Priest said the National Wildlife Refuge is considered an aquatic preserve.

Ms. Reed said there are three or four: Apalachicola Bay, the Keys, and Estero Bay among them. These are regional areas of special concern.

Mr. Thomason asked if the table with adjacent managed lands had those listed.

Keith Mousel

Mr. Mousel stated he had some technical edits that he would not be going over.

Mr. Mousel referenced page 49, seed orchard, the paragraph starting with “To maintain a viable seed-producing orchard”. He wished to add that any new seed orchard would be within the existing boundaries of the present seed orchard.

Mr. Mousel referenced page 53, insects and disease. He wished to change the first statement, “currently there are no insect problems on WSF” to “currently there are no insect problems *related to pines* on WSF”.

Mr. Talley asked if there had been Red Bay laurel wilt on WSF.

Mr. Morris, Mr. Penn, and Mr. Mousel stated there was.

Mr. Talley noted it was expected to occur on WSF.

Mr. Morris stated it was on Headquarters and Croom but not on Richloam or Jumper Creek.

Mr. Korn asked that Croom and Richloam be added to the relevant sentence and Richloam and Jumper Creek left out.

Mr. Mousel referenced the same paragraph, last sentence. He stated there were no applicable control measures, but FFS had inoculated 25 trees on Headquarters in an attempt to keep them alive and free from laurel wilt. He stated that a sentence should be added to state that fact.

Mr. Korn referenced page 71, current conditions; a change was needed to reflect that Croom and Headquarters have laurel wilt.

Mr. Mousel stated Wandering Jew needed to be added to the list of other invasive exotic plants.

Mr. Korn asked what page that was on and if it was on a table as well.

Mr. Morris replied it was on page 50 but not on a table.

Mr. Korn said they will need to add it in

Mr. Reed stated it was also in Exhibit P.

Mr. Korn asked if there was anything else.

Mr. Morris stated the Table of Contents and relevant page numbers were all messed up on the draft.

Ms. Reed said it would be fixed.

Mr. Penn stated several people expressed they liked the plan and it how well it was done. He thanked Mr. Priest, to whom he had delegated the task, and said he had done a good job.

Ted Schrader (Written Comments)

Mr. Korn stated there were written comments from Pasco County Commissioner Ted Schrader which had been attached to the meeting minutes but not yet discussed. He asked everyone to take a minute to look them over and see if any important points were missed, needed discussion, or changed anyone's mind about the plan.

After a minute, Mr. Korn noted that Mr. Schrader's comments were mostly geared towards Recreation; specifically, to increase access points for paddling, bicycling, camping, etc.

Mr. Duval stated this had mostly been addressed and that FFS was looking to expand a hunt camp in Pasco County. Hogs had already been addressed.

Ms. Poag said Mr. Schrader's comments spoke to what she had said about measuring recreational impacts and the needs to know where you are. She stated that county governments are focused on increased amenities.

Mr. Duval said Mr. Schrader was probably not aware of a recent Pasco County track meet at Lake McKethan, among other activities.

Mr. Korn asked if there was anything that needed to be addressed on the plan. Was it necessary to increase promotion of recreational opportunities in the State Forest? No one expressed need to make any further changes to the plan.

No changes were suggested.

Mr. Korn thanked everyone for coming and reminded them they were legally bound not to discuss anything amongst themselves until ARC gets the plan. He stated that Director Jim Karels travels a lot and likes to read what people think, so he was sure he would be reading the minutes. He said they should be ready to mail out to everyone to read/review within the next week.

Mr. Mousel thanked everyone for coming and recognized it was not an easy process- especially without A/C in the building. He appreciated everyone taking their time for the meeting.

Mr. Thomason made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 pm.