



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon (Save Our Rivers) – Blind Creek

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments supported retaining the site in SFWMD ownership and conservation. Respondents indicated the area meets SFWMD core missions, has high value to wildlife, protects sensitive coastal resources, and provides important recreation opportunities.

Regarding all Indian River Lagoon (Save Our Rivers) parcels:

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Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. The property, as it is currently managed by the St. Lucie County Mosquito Control District, provides water quality protection/improvements, natural systems protection and restoration, and some flood control benefits.
2. The Queen's Island property supports the District's core mission of water quality protection/improvements and natural systems protection and restoration. They are located on the Indian River Lagoon in St. Lucie County and include mosquito impoundments that have been reconnected to the lagoon via culverts and pump stations, providing valuable recirculation of previously stagnant areas and improving water quality directly to the lagoon. This clearly enhances the value of the area as a nursery for aquatic species.
3. The sites include many endemic plants and animals and some cultural resources.
4. This area provides public access for a multitude of water and land based activities.
5. The property, is incorporated into St. Lucie County Mosquito Control District's Impoundments #5 & 6. It is primarily managed for mosquito control, but St. Lucie County uses current Best Management Practices (BMPs) based on improved Block Rotational Impoundment Management, modified open marsh water management, draw-downs, and wetland restoration.
6. The functional value of this land is very high; the use of this parcel is appropriate to the uniqueness and value of the land.
7. As well as providing mosquito control, water quality and natural system protection and restoration, the property is also designated as a preserve and open to the public. Public facilities on the property include a boardwalk/fishing pier and kayak/canoe access.
8. The property was purchased through a multi-entity effort utilizing funds from several different programs.

Regarding the properties generally

1. These properties along the Indian River Lagoon were brought cooperatively under the SWIM program. They provide for both water quality improvements (most mosquito impoundment improvements) and provide enhanced natural systems protection and restoration. These impoundments are actively managed by the county and exotic control is on-going.
2. The property use meets the District core mission for natural systems protection and restoration.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents did not believe there was a better use of the property.

Regarding all Indian River Lagoon (Save Our Rivers) parcels:

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Summary of SME comments:

1. Since the property is currently managed by St. Lucie County, perhaps it could be donated to the County or exchanged for other County lands to fulfill core mission needs in other areas of the County.



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Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, either through a continuation of the existing long-term lease with St. Lucie County, or, if the County would find it beneficial, by negotiating a transfer of the underlying fee-title to the County or the State subject to an acceptable conservation and flowage easement in favor of the District.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the many contributions of the property to the District's core missions, and further recognizes that those contributions would continue and would not be diminished if the property were owned and managed by the County subject to a conservation easement in favor of the District, rather than the current long-term lease under which the property is currently managed.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon (Save Our Rivers) – Queen's Island

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments supported retaining the site in SFWMD ownership and conservation. Respondents indicated the area meets SFWMD core missions, has high value to wildlife, and protects against sea level rise.

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. The property, as it is currently managed by the St. Lucie County Mosquito Control District, provides water quality protection/improvements, natural systems protection and restoration, and some flood control benefits.
2. The Queen's Island property supports the District's core mission of water quality protection/improvements and natural systems protection and restoration. They are located on the Indian River Lagoon in St. Lucie County and include mosquito impoundments that have been reconnected to the lagoon via culverts and pump stations, providing valuable recirculation of previously stagnant areas and improving water quality directly to the lagoon. This clearly enhances the value of the area as a nursery for aquatic species.
3. The sites include many endemic plants and animals and some cultural resources.
4. This area provides public access for a multitude of water and land based activities.
5. The property, is incorporated into St. Lucie County Mosquito Control District's Impoundments #5 & 6. It is primarily managed for mosquito control, but St. Lucie County uses current Best Management Practices (BMPs) based on improved Block Rotational Impoundment Management, modified open marsh water management, draw-downs, and wetland restoration.
6. The functional value of this land is very high; the use of this parcel is appropriate to the uniqueness and value of the land.
7. As well as providing mosquito control, water quality and natural system protection and restoration, the property is also designated as a preserve and open to the public. Public facilities on the property include: three miles of trails, two observation platforms and an elevated observation deck.
8. The property was purchased through a multi-entity effort utilizing funds from several different programs.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon (Save Our Rivers) properties generally

1. These properties along the Indian River Lagoon were brought cooperatively under the SWIM program. They provide for both water quality improvements (most mosquito impoundment improvements) and provide enhanced natural systems protection and restoration. These impoundments are actively managed by the county and exotic control is on-going.
2. The property use meets the District core mission for natural systems protection and restoration.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents did not believe there was a better use of the property than retaining it in conservation.

Summary of SME comments:

1. Since the property is currently managed by St. Lucie County, perhaps it could be donated to the County or exchanged for other County lands to fulfill core mission needs in other areas of the County.



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Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, either through a continuation of the existing long-term lease with St. Lucie County, or, if the County would find it beneficial, by negotiating a transfer of the underlying fee-title to the County or the State subject to an acceptable conservation and flowage easement in favor of the District.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the many contributions of the property to the District's core missions, and further recognizes that those contributions would continue and would not be diminished if the property were owned and managed by the County subject to a conservation easement in favor of the District, rather than the current long-term lease under which the property is currently managed.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: 10 Mile Creek – Reservoir/STA

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments supported retaining the site in SFWMD ownership and encouraged SFWMD to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to overcome financial and engineering obstacles to complete construction of the planned water storage and treatment facility.

Additional comments:

- The riverfront lands are ecologically valuable and benefit wildlife
- The planned reservoir on the site – when complete – will support water quality, flood control, water supply and natural systems restoration.
- This project was designated "Critical" from the beginning, and still remains as such. The UEC/IRL needs an STA/Reservoir of this magnitude for any significant positive results in water quality/quantity to be realized.

Summary of SME comments:

1. A project at the site was constructed that contributes to the District's core mission but due to deficiencies the project in its current state is closed and inoperable.
2. Ten Mile Creek was acquired as a joint District-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to provide seasonal and temporary storage of peak stormwater flows from the Ten Mile Creek basin and to slowly release those flows back into the creek to moderate the salinity levels and reduce sediment loads in the downstream St. Lucie River and Estuary; which, if completed, will support the District's Water Quality, Flood Control, Water Supply, and Natural Systems Restoration core missions.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Most comments indicated respondents did not believe there was a better use of the property.

Additional comments included:

- If a solution cannot be reached in the short term, SFWMD should pursue a lower risk water quality treatment. This would be a better use than current, and in addition, District credits for funds/in-kind services used in this endeavor could be earned for future match in District/Corps CERP projects.
- SFMWD should attempt to get this property operating as originally intended
- The area is of high value for public recreation. This, combined with the construction that has already been done, makes this area unsuitable for surplus.
- No better use, unless it would be to create widespread wetlands within a mosaic of other habitats

Summary of SME comments:

1. The District and the Army Corps are evaluating future alternatives for the main project, which could support the District's core missions of flood control, water quality protection/improvements, water supply and natural systems protection and restoration.
2. When completed the future project area should provide compatible recreation similar to the public use provided at other District STAs. Opportunities for hiking, biking, and equestrian trails may be suitable on the project perimeter.
3. When the 10 Mile Creek Reservoir is repaired, the area will be able to meet multiple core District Missions.



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Recommendation: Staff recommends continuing the use and management of the property as-is, for now.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes that the property has the potential to contribute to the District's core missions through the completion of the water storage and treatment facilities. These potential uses are currently being evaluated through the development of a feasibility study.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: 10 Mile Creek – 10 Mile Creek Oxbow

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments indicated respondents support preserving the area in conservation, as it provides important wildlife habitat and meets SFWMD core missions.

Summary of SME comments:

1. The property, in its current state, is basically an Oak Hammock Flood Plain Forest for 10 Mile Creek providing flood control, water quality protection and natural systems protection. as well as providing water quality and natural system protection, the property could be managed to support public access and recreational use.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Public respondents indicated the property's current role as conservation lands/ preventing development is the best use.

Summary of SME comments:

1. The property is more or less in a "natural" state. If and when the 10 Mile Creek Reservoir/STA comes on line, the floodplain will enhance the operational flexibility of the project and provide additional restoration opportunities.
2. If the agreement with the adjacent Community Development District is terminated or expires, there may be an opportunity with St. Lucie County. The County currently manages the Gordy Road Recreation Area just west of the STA. They also manage the 10 Mile Creek Preserve, an 8-acres site downstream of the oxbow and adjacent to the Gordy Road Structure. This site includes interpretive trail guides through the floodplain forest and oxbows.

Recommendation: Staff recommends continuing the use and management of the property as-is, for now.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes that the property has the potential to contribute to the District's core missions through its restoration and management. It is unclear whether this can or should be accomplished as part of the larger project or by pursuing public or private partnerships. These potential uses are currently being evaluated through the development of a feasibility study.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: 10 Mile Creek – Gordy Road Recreation Area

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments indicated respondents believe the parcel meets SFWMD core missions and support SFWMD retaining ownership of the parcel.

Additional comments:

- Riverfront lands are part of a wildlife corridor
- The area is needed for recreational access

Summary of SME comments:

1. The Gordy Road Recreation area within the Ten Mile Creek project, managed in partnership with St. Lucie County, is currently providing public use that should continue.
2. The property currently supports natural systems protection and restoration and indirectly supports the District's mission through public use, recreation and wildlife utilization.
3. This parcel is located near the Ten Mile Creek facility and is managed by St. Lucie County, under agreement with the SFWMD. Though the parcel does include some scrubby flatwoods and scrub and a small lake, and many recreational amenities, it does not further the District's core missions of flood control, water quality, water supply.
4. This tract lies outside of the reservoir/STA footprint. St. Lucie County manages it as a recreation area and has constructed several recreational amenities on it including a half-mile interpretive trail through a 44-acre scrub forest of oak and pine, compost restrooms, picnic pavilion, fishing pier and a 9-hole disc golf course. The nine-acre lake is designated "catch and release."

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Public respondents indicated the property's current role as conservation lands/ preventing development is the best use.

Summary of SME comments:

1. this site will support a future public use link to the entire project area.
2. A donation to the county may be appropriate.

Recommendation: Continue the use and management of the property as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

The site is under a long-term lease with the County, who manages it as a public use area with several developed recreation facilities.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) – North Fork of the St. Lucie River

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments indicate these are floodplain parcels that fulfill SFWMD's core missions. There is also a major county-operated nature center on one of these tracts.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- These properties represent the best hope to prevent basin runoff from polluting the Saint Lucie River and the Southern IRL
- These lands play a key role in landscape-level restoration projects
- All parts of the CERP-IRL-S plan need to be completed and SFWMD should take advantage of current low land prices

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. All of the parcels that make up the North Fork Floodplain Restoration, lie within the footprint of the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP). This project, when complete, is expected to provide significant water-quality improvement benefits to both the IRL and the Saint Lucie River Estuary by reducing the load of nutrients, pesticides, and suspended materials from basin runoff.
2. In their current state, these areas are Flood Plain Habitats for the North Fork of the St. Lucie River providing flood control, water quality protection and natural systems protection.
3. As part of CERP, the North Fork Floodplain Restoration includes acquired parcels and proposed acquisition of floodplain land along the North Fork St. Lucie. These parcels benefit the core mission of water quality protection/improvements as well as Natural System protection and restoration and can improve flood control. Proposed restoration activities within the parcels will reconnect historic oxbow communities, improving flow and function, protect the flood plain and reduce direct urban runoff.
4. These areas provide nursery habitat for a number of essential commercial and recreational fish species.
5. These areas are managed to allow public access and recreational opportunities and the Oxbow Eco-Center is located on a parcel, which provides outreach and educational programs on the St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon and their respective watersheds.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally

1. The properties purchased for CERP/IRLS are critical to implementation of this CERP project that has congressional authorization. Although the reservoirs and STA's have not been completed and the landuse is currently in an interim use the longterm use is aligned with all of the above missions

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicate the lands should be retained for conservation.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- SFWMD should continue to expand trails and recreational opportunities in this area
- Continue to acquire additional lands in the area and open them for public use



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Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. Partnerships with state and local governments, who manage recreation in the area of the North Fork parcels, may provide opportunities for blueway recreation.
2. There is a 7.0 acre mitigation site (Part of tract #FG100-026) that is located directly on the river within the CERP North Fork Floodplain Restoration project. This site was donated to SFWMD along with a management fund for its perpetual care. The preservation and protection of this parcel is required as a condition of the permit.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties

3. Additional project areas within the IRL when completed should provide project compatible recreation which is consistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired. State and local government partners should be sought for the management of the public use.
4. Future planned restoration activities in these areas will further the District's core mission of natural systems protection and restoration.

Recommendation: Staff recommends seeking an interested management partner to provide land management activities on tract FG100-026. Staff further recommends transferring the District's share of its split title with the State on tract FG100-005 to the State to enable the Florida Park Service to complete the construction of its planned canoe / kayak launch. Staff recommends that the ownership and management of the remaining tracts continue as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes that the subject properties are components of an Everglades restoration project and contribute to the overall mission objectives of the District. Staff further recognizes the need to build management partnership with other capable entities help effectively manage the land and resources. All of the parcels have a designated partner/manager except for tract FG100-026 which could benefit from a management partnership. Staff also recognizes the public value of the Florida Park Service's planned improvements of their canoe/kayak launch on tract FG100-005, and that having a percentage of the title to the tract held by the District interferes with their desire to charge a launch fee to help defray the cost of management.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) – C23/24 Component

In your opinion, how well does the current use of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicate the lands should be retained for construction of reservoir/STA projects or sold for other lands useful to CERP water storage/ treatment projects. Other comments indicated these properties are former citrus and pasture lands and have little ecological significance.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- These properties represent the best hope to prevent basin runoff from polluting the Saint Lucie River and the Southern IRL
- These lands play a key role in landscape-level restoration projects
- All parts of the CERP-IRL-S plan need to be completed and SFWMD should take advantage of current low land prices

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding the property within the project footprint

1. As part of CERP, these properties are intended to become water storage and treatment features to attenuate and treat water from the C-23 and C-24 basins to reduce freshwater flows from the watershed to the St. Lucie River and Estuary. The C-24 STA will also allow for diverting water to the North Fork St. Lucie consistent with the Minimum Flows and Levels that has been established for that water body. In addition, the proposed features will assist in meeting established Total Maximum Daily Loads for the region. This use would allow the properties to better address the District's core missions by attenuating flows on site that currently are discharged to the primary canal system.
2. Various parcels within the footprint for the C-23/24 components are leased for cattle, citrus or other purposes.
3. Land Stewardship and the Dispersed Water Management program are assessing multiple parcels in this area for wetland restoration and water retention by working with lessees on developing and implementing Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation plans.

Regarding the tracts that lie outside project footprint

- **Ft Pierce Field Station Parcel**
 1. The site of the former Ft. Pierce Field Station. The buildings and land at this site are currently vacant, and do not support the District's core mission. The property, in its current state, does not contribute to the District's core mission
- **Highway 70 Parcel**
 1. The properties, an active citrus grove and cattle pasture, were originally purchased in anticipation of the C-25 Reservoir/STA project. Since that time, it has been determined that both properties are outside of the planned Stormwater Treatment Area Project Footprint. The property in its current state, do not contribute to the District's core mission.
- **Snead Road Parcel**
 1. As part of CERP, this parcel was acquired for the eventual construction of the C-23/24 storm water treatment area. Because land acquisition varied slightly from the project described footprint, this ½ section parcel will no longer be located within the STA footprint. It is currently leased for cattle and does not well serve the District core mission.
- **Rim Road Parcel**
 1. This parcel was acquired for the eventual construction of the C-23/24 north reservoir. Land acquisition varied from the project described footprint, and it is not economically feasible to incorporate this parcel into the reservoir footprint as it would result in the need for a significant increase in levee length in return for limited additional storage. It does not well serve the District core mission.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally

1. The properties purchased for CERP/Indian River Lagoon South are critical to implementation of this CERP project that has congressional authorization. Although the reservoirs and STA's have not been completed and the landuse is currently in an interim use the longterm use is aligned with all of the above missions.



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In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of *Public* comments:

Comments indicate the lands should either be used for STA/reservoir construction or exchanged for parcels that are more useful for this purpose.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- SFWMD should continue to expand trails and recreational opportunities in this area
- Continue to acquire additional lands in the area and open them for public use

Summary of *SME* comments:

Regarding the property within the project footprint

1. The reservoirs are intended to reduce the extreme peaks of freshwater discharge to the estuary, and make a preferred source of water available to agriculture, to reduce reliance on well water from the Floridan Aquifer. The Stormwater Treatment Area will reduce sediment, phosphorus and nitrogen that would otherwise be released to the estuary thereby improving estuarine water quality. These improvements to the property will further the District's core missions of flood control, water quality protection/improvements, water supply and natural systems protection and restoration.
2. The project configuration has not yet been finalized by project planners and the construction is not anticipated to begin within the next several years.
3. These properties will serve the District's core mission more effectively when funding is available to support the design and construction of the IRL-S components that will reduce watershed runoff and provide for natural area function. In the interim, a combination of appropriate leasing and using the properties for dispersed water management could better meet District core missions.
4. The future plans for the property as proposed provide a myriad of functions including water quality protection/improvements, water supply, natural resource restoration, wildlife utilization and public access and recreation.

Regarding the tracts that lie outside project footprint

• **Ft Pierce Field Station Parcel**

1. This property would be a good candidate for surplus or exchange

• **Hwy 70 Parcel**

1. This parcel could have value for future construction of the north reservoir in that it could provide alternative access to the project site, or a staging area for equipment and construction trailers that is easily accessed from SR70. Continuance of leasing for revenue and eventual surplus may be the most appropriate use for this property.
2. Additional analysis is needed to evaluate how the parcel applies to the project partnership agreement and CERP cost share.

• **Snead Road Parcel**

1. This parcel could have value for future construction of the storm water treatment area in that it could provide a staging area for equipment and construction trailers, or a source of fill material that may be needed for ensuring a level STA. However, the current value is limited. Leasing revenue and eventual surplus may be the most appropriate use for this property.
2. Additional analysis is needed to evaluate how the parcel applies to the project partnership agreement and CERP cost share.

• **Rim Road Parcel**

1. This parcel could have value for future construction of the storm water treatment area in that it could provide a staging area for equipment and construction trailers, or possibly as a source of fill material. However, the current value is limited. Leasing revenue and eventual surplus may be the most appropriate for this property.
2. Additional analysis is needed to evaluate how the parcel applies to the project partnership agreement and CERP cost share.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties

1. Additional project areas within the IRL when completed should provide project compatible recreation which is consistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired. State and local government partners should be sought for the management of the public use. Partnerships with state and local governments, who manage recreation in the area of the North Fork parcels, may provide opportunities for blueway recreation.
2. Future planned restoration activities in these areas will further the District's core mission of natural systems protection and restoration.



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Recommendation:

Regarding the property within the project footprint:

Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Regarding the tracts that lie outside project footprint:

Staff recommends that these parcels be approved for disposal, exchange, or surplus.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Regarding the property within the project footprint:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.

Regarding the tracts that lie outside project footprint:

Staff recognizes that the continued ownership of these parcels do not support any District mission objective because they are areas of agricultural production (citrus and improved pasture) and a former field station that have been determined to not be necessary for the development of the reservoir/STA project.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) – Cypress Creek (Trail Ridge) Complex

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District’s core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents believe these lands further SFWMD’s core missions, provide wildlife habitat, and are essential to the IRL-S plan of extending the spatial extent of wetlands.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- These properties represent the best hope to prevent basin runoff from polluting the Saint Lucie River and the Southern IRL
- These lands play a key role in landscape-level restoration projects
- All parts of the CERP-IRL-S plan need to be completed and SFWMD should take advantage of current low land prices

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. The property in its current state, cattle pasture, provides minor core mission function through natural systems protection and restoration and secondary functions such as wildlife utilization and public recreation.
2. This 1,233 acre parcel is within the proposed 32,696 acre Cypress Creek/Trail Ridge Natural Water Storage and Treatment Area of the IRLS CERP project. It is strategically located directly adjacent to the C-23 canal and along with the other properties identified in the plan, is expected to be restored to provide natural system protection and restoration, as well as natural water storage and water quality protection. Properties to the west of this parcel, also proposed for acquisition, drain to the C-23 canal through a drainage ditch that bisects this property.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally

1. The properties purchased for CERP/IRLS are critical to implementation of this CERP project that has congressional authorization. Although the reservoirs and STA’s have not been completed and the landuse is currently in an interim use the longterm use is aligned with all of the above missions.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District’s core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments included:

- There is not a better use for the property
- Leasing should be discontinued and the property should remain a natural wetland
- All acres for this part of the plan should be purchased ASAP and restored

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- SFWMD should continue to expand trails and recreational opportunities in this area
- Continue to acquire additional lands in the area and open them for public use



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Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. The proposed restoration of the area would provide additional freshwater storage, contribute to water quality improvements, increase natural wetlands and upland habitat for wildlife and recharge the surficial aquifer. These planned improvements to the property will further the District's core missions of flood control, water quality protection/improvements, water supply and natural systems protection and restoration.
2. Restoration of the area is unfunded at this time.
3. Though full restoration of this parcel cannot be completed until other properties that drain through it are acquired or alternative drainage is provided, minor restoration activities on the property (ditch plugs or fills) that don't impact drainage for other properties in the basin could improve District core missions of water supply (through retention), natural systems protection and restoration on this parcel.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties

1. Additional project areas within the IRL when completed should provide project compatible recreation which is consistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired. State and local government partners should be sought for the management of the public use. Partnerships with state and local governments, who manage recreation in the area of the North Fork parcels, may provide opportunities for blueway recreation.
2. Future planned restoration activities in these areas will further the District's core mission of natural systems protection and restoration.

Recommendation: Staff recommends continuing the use and management of the property as-is, for now.

Basis of staff recommendation:

This was the first parcel acquired pursuant to the Indian River Lagoon South CERP project component that was originally conceived to provide more than 32,000 acres of restoration. This component is rather far out in the implementation sequencing of CERP. The mechanism through which the 32,000 acres of restoration will be achieved, such as public land acquisition or public-private partnerships, has not been determined. This 1200 acre parcel, on its own, is insufficient provide significant restoration as conceived by CERP since a large drainage ditch cuts through the property and provides drainage for the privately-owned land to the west.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) – Allapattah Complex

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments indicated respondents believe the area meets SFWMD core missions.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- These properties represent the best hope to prevent basin runoff from polluting the Saint Lucie River and the Southern IRL
- These lands play a key role in landscape-level restoration projects
- All parts of the CERP-IRL-S plan need to be completed and SFWMD should take advantage of current low land prices

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. Managed in partnership with Martin County and FWC, the current public use and recreation on the Allapattah property should continue and is consistent with District policy and legislative requirements.
2. Restoration is underway on the parcel north of Martin Highway, and the parcel along Beeline Highway. The portion west of Fox Brown Road is under District and Private ownership. One of the privately owned parcels has undergone hydrologic restoration through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetland Reserve Program. These improvements along with the improvements on adjacent lands, further the District's core missions of flood control, water quality protection/improvements, water supply, and natural systems protection and restoration.
3. As part of CERP, the Allapattah complex is an important component of the IRL-S CERP and is important to meet the District core missions of water quality protection/improvement, and natural systems protection and restoration. The District has acquired approximately ½ of the property identified in the PIR and has initiated restoration activities that are resulting in habitat improvement and increased water storage on the property. These activities reduce flows to the C-23 canal and ultimately to the St. Lucie estuary and provide important habitat for a multitude of species, including caracara, eastern indigo snakes, bald eagles, white pelicans and many varieties of wading birds. Active restoration with funding and support from NRCS is ongoing. Interim use of the property for cattle grazing is also ongoing, providing a small source of revenue and a property presence for on site management and to discourage illegal activities.
4. Parcels A, B, Turnpike Dairy & Williamson Ranch are co-owned by SFWMD & Martin Co. and are currently under contract with USDA-NRCS (WRP) for hydrologic restoration and is 100% reimbursed by NRCS. Parcel C is a planned DWM activity working with the lessee. The entire Allapattah Complex supports the overall goals and objectives of the SFWMD and the DWM program.
5. No, the property contains several cultural resource sites and historic home sites.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally

1. The properties purchased for CERP/IRLS are critical to implementation of this CERP project that has congressional authorization. Although the reservoirs and STA's have not been completed and the landuse is currently in an interim use the longterm use is aligned with all of the above missions

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents did not believe there was a better use of the property.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- SFWMD should continue to expand trails and recreational opportunities in this area
- Continue to acquire additional lands in the area and open them for public use



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Summary of *SME* comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. Restoration of this property will provide additional freshwater storage, contribute to water quality improvements, increase natural wetlands and upland habitat for wildlife and recharge the surficial aquifer.
2. Most of the area east of Fox Brown Road will be restored to short hydroperiod prairie and wet flatwoods and will create one of the largest contiguous areas of these valuable plant communities in Florida.
3. One of the parcels west of Fox Brown Road has been designated for use as a gopher tortoise recipient site for tortoises that had to be removed from lands used by District and Martin County projects.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties

1. Additional project areas within the IRL when completed should provide project compatible recreation which is consistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired. State and local government partners should be sought for the management of the public use. Partnerships with state and local governments, who manage recreation in the area of the North Fork parcels, may provide opportunities for blueway recreation.
2. Future planned restoration activities in these areas will further the District's core mission of natural systems protection and restoration.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) – C-44 Component

In your opinion, how well does the current use of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents believe these lands further SFWMD's core missions through the ongoing construction of the C-44 reservoir project and should be retained for that purpose.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- These properties represent the best hope to prevent basin runoff from polluting the Saint Lucie River and the Southern IRL
- These lands play a key role in landscape-level restoration projects
- All parts of the CERP-IRL-S plan need to be completed and SFWMD should take advantage of current low land prices

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding the property within the project footprint

1. The area is currently under construction and planned to have a western reservoir, and Stormwater Treatment Area cells on the east side. The reservoirs are intended to capture peak discharges from the C-44 basin to reduce freshwater flows to the St. Lucie Estuary, and make a preferred source of water available to agriculture. These facilities will further the District's core missions of water quality improvements, water supply, and natural systems protection and restoration.
2. As part of CERP, the C-44 Component includes a 3,400 acre reservoir and 6,300 acres of stormwater treatment areas (STAs). The objective of this Component is to capture and store local stormwater runoff from the C-44 Basin, treat some or all of the runoff, and return it to the C-44 (St. Lucie) Canal when needed. The Component will also attenuate excess water flow to the St. Lucie Estuary; improve water quality by reducing the amounts of phosphorus, pesticides and other pollutants in the runoff entering the Estuary, improving the health of the ecosystem; and increase available water supplies for the environment and human needs.
3. This project is currently under construction by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the District. The USACE's first contract is due for completion in 2014 (Intake Canal) and the construction of the reservoir and pump station is scheduled to begin in late 2014. The District has completed construction of most of the Relocations, currently has a 300 foot communications tower under construction, and intends to complete all Relocation construction efforts by 2015. These properties are currently serving the District's core missions.

Regarding tract JE100-065 that lies outside project footprint:

1. The acquired properties for the C-44 Component also included a 1,072 acre outparcel that is currently listed as surplus. This parcel was removed from the footprint in order to comply with voluntary Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines relative to a neighboring private airport located to the west of the C-44 Intake Canal. The outparcel is located east of the Intake Canal, south and west of the future stormwater treatment area cells, and north of Citrus Boulevard. Removing the parcel from the footprint meets the requirements of the FAA guidelines not to construct a wildlife attractant (STAs) within a 5,000 foot buffer of the airport.
2. Project phased construction underway, additional DWM activities are being evaluated based on current construction activities and planned activities to determine availability of lands associated with the planned construction schedules. The C-44 1,072 acre outparcel has potential for DWM projects, but is limited by FAA guidance due to the potential to attract birds in the flight paths of the Indiantown airport.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally

1. The properties purchased for CERP/IRLS are critical to implementation of this CERP project that has congressional authorization. Although the reservoirs and STA's have not been completed and the landuse is currently in an interim use the longterm use is aligned with all of the above missions.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

In your opinion, is there a better use of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments indicated there is not a better use for the property.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties generally:

- SFWMD should continue to expand trails and recreational opportunities in this area
- Continue to acquire additional lands in the area and open them for public use

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding the property within the project footprint:

1. The 3,400 acre reservoir and 6,300 acres of STA are components of the Indian River Lagoon South Project designed to restore large landscape-scale natural wetlands systems in St. Lucie and Martin counties to reduce nutrient loads and retain basin water in the natural landscape; create large impoundments and reservoirs to reduce the freshwater sent to tide and make it available for other uses; create thousands of acres of stormwater treatment wetlands to significantly reduce the nutrient loads to the estuary; and revitalize riverine and estuary habitats.

Regarding tract JE100-065 that lies outside project footprint:

1. The 1072 acre outparcel has limited use due to FAA guidelines and should be surplus.

Regarding the Indian River Lagoon South (CERP) properties

1. Additional project areas within the IRL when completed should provide project compatible recreation which is consistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired. State and local government partners should be sought for the management of the public use. Partnerships with state and local governments, who manage recreation in the area of the North Fork parcels, may provide opportunities for blueway recreation.
2. Future planned restoration activities in these areas will further the District's core mission of natural systems protection and restoration.

Recommendation:

Regarding the property within the project footprint:

Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Regarding tract JE100-065 that lies outside project footprint:

Staff recommends that the parcels be approved for disposal, exchange, or surplus with such deed restrictions as necessary to be compatible with its proximity to the reservoir and the County facility on Citrus Blvd.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Regarding the property within the project footprint:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.

Regarding tract JE100-065 that lies outside project footprint:

Staff recognizes that the C-44 project is currently under construction, and this area was left out of the project development plans. There are opportunities for dispersed water management activities that could benefit the District's core mission objectives, but the property does not need to be in private hands to accomplish this end; rather it could be accomplished as a condition of the exchange, sale, or disposal.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: South Fork of the St. Lucie River / Atlantic Ridge

In your opinion, how well does the *current use of the property* further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of *Public* comments:

Comments indicated respondents believe the properties support SFWMD core missions and support retaining the area in public ownership, particularly to limit development.

- Atlantic Ridge supports important wildlife habitat, such as scrub, and imperiled species, such as the Federally Endangered Florida Scrub Jay.
- The South Fork and Atlantic Ridge properties are two of the important pieces for the health of both the St Lucie and Loxahatchee Rivers. Water would naturally flow in each direction
- The South Fork, Atlantic Ridge and Medalist properties are regionally significant natural areas that are essential buffers to the Saint Lucie River and important to water supply through ground water recharge.
- The properties are well-managed, provide excellent habitat for wildlife and help serve several core missions of the District.

Summary of *SME* comments:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Regarding the Atlantic Ridge State Park property in particular

1. There is a known bald eagle nest on north side of Atlantic Ridge State Park.
2. Eleven distinct natural communities provide habitats for threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. The most dominant natural community in the park is the wet prairie, an important foraging area for herons and egrets, as well as the Florida sandhill crane and wood stork. This park is being developed for recreation and will eventually offer visitors a variety of opportunities, including hiking, fishing, horseback riding and wildlife viewing. Currently, there are no facilities.
3. The current use meets the District's core mission for natural system protection and restoration.

Regarding the Medalist tract in particular

1. The property in its current state provides core mission functions of flood control, water storage, water quality protection/improvements, natural systems protection and restoration.
2. As part of CERP and since this contains large areas of marshes and pine flatwoods, between the St. Lucie flood plain and the eastern ridge, it furthers the District's core missions of maintaining and restoring natural systems and water quality protection, as well as flood control through the ability of the property to store ground and surface water. The unique location of the property also preserves a rare habitat of scrubby flatwoods and is host to many endemic species.
3. The property in its current state provides substantial water quality benefits by reducing direct urban runoff into the Loxahatchee River. Furthering the District's core mission functions of water quality protection/improvements, natural systems protection and restoration.
4. This property supports the valuable core missions of Natural System and water quality protection. Its location at the wetland/upland transition of this sandy slope is key to providing substantial water quality benefits, as it reduces direct urban runoff to the Loxahatchee River.
5. The property contains scrubby flatwoods-rare in South Florida. Scrubby flatwoods contain many of the same rare and endemic plants that may be found within the coastal scrub. The area is not currently open to the public because there is no public access available.

Regarding the South Fork / Atlantic Ridge Properties Generally

1. The habitats provided on these properties attract many faunal species including numerous species of migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. These properties fall within the core foraging range of multiple wood stork nesting colonies.
2. The current use meets the District's core mission for natural system protection and restoration.
3. Some of the properties that have been purchased have not yet been fully restored. Under the CERP/Indian River Lagoon South these properties were identified as part of the natural lands complex which under the PIR includes ~90K acres of agricultural (mostly pasture) land that with hydrologic restoration of the historic wetlands on these sites would result in ~30K acre/ft of water storage and Water Quality cleanup.
4. These lands also fulfill the overall goal of CERP to restore the spatial extent of wetlands in south Florida.
5. Some of the property lies adjacent to the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and as such protects and preserves the unique character of the upper St. Lucie, as well as the areas downstream.
6. The functional value of these lands is very high; however, some parcels do not have adequate access and therefore cannot be accessed by the public and are difficult to manage.
7. The property in its current state provides core mission functions of flood control, water quality protection/improvements, natural systems protection and restoration. It also provides secondary benefits such as wildlife utilization and public recreation.
8. This property has been purchased as part of "Save Our Rivers" and supports the valuable core missions of Natural System and water quality protection. The parcels lie adjacent to the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and protect the character of the upper St. Lucie, as well as the areas downstream. The property is managed in coordination with the Halpatiokee Park and also provides important public use and recreational opportunities.
9. The on-going restoration/management of the area provides freshwater storage, improvements to water quality, an increase in natural wetland vegetation and upland habitat for wildlife as well as recharge to the surficial aquifer. These improvements to the property will further the District's core missions of flood control, water quality protection/improvements, water supply and natural systems protection and restoration.
10. The functional value of these lands is very high; and its use is appropriate with the uniqueness of the parcels.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

In your opinion, is there a better use of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership and conservation.

Other comments included:

- By filling in ditches these properties could hold more water and help restore on site wetlands. The managing entities on these properties have been working to restore hydrology by plugging these ditches. By continuing to support the Saint Lucie Issues Team it would be possible to fund more of these types of projects that restore the natural water levels on these properties.
- The South Fork property in particular is heavily used by members of the public. Thousands of visitors walk or bike these trails on an annual basis.
- Atlantic Ridge property is an important equestrian area that serves the local community.
- Filling the gap between Atlantic Ridge SP and Medalist through additional land acquisition should be a priority.
- Additional recreation and education opportunities should be explored on this site

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding the Atlantic Ridge State Park property in particular

1. No, the property is currently managed by the Florida Park Service and provides a myriad of functions including natural resource restoration, wildlife utilization and public access and recreation.
2. May want to consider transfer to the State.

Regarding the Medalist tract in particular

1. The functional value of this property is very high; however, it is somewhat over drained. The functional value could be improved if minor restoration activities were to be undertaken. Additionally, public use of the property could be improved if a more practical access could be acquired.

Regarding the South Fork / Atlantic Ridge Properties Generally

1. The current recreation management partnerships for these parcels with both the County and State parks departments should continue.
2. Hydrologic restoration needs to be completed on these properties in order for the full benefits of these natural lands to be realized.
3. No, the property is included as a restoration component of CERP, providing a myriad of functions including natural resource restoration, wildlife utilization and public access and recreation.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is. Staff further recommends acquiring a better access route to the Medalist property to allow for better management and to accommodate public use.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area. Staff further recognizes that the sub-par legal access to the Medalist property is detrimental to its efficient management and frustrates public use.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: PalMar

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Regarding Northern PalMar and the Chimney in particular:

Regarding all PalMar parcels generally:

- Respondents generally believe the area should be retained in public ownership as it is critically important to meeting SFWMD core missions, provides valuable wildlife habitat, and important recreation opportunities.
- This property was included in a snail kite inventory in 1997 and is still utilized by snail kites
- The property holds a great deal of water that slowly recharges the aquifer
- I give a grade of C+ to the current use of property to the District's core missions. Water quality is of utmost concern, whether in flood or drought. So far water quality has been somewhat stable, but Lake O is still polluted and that has affected the Indian River Lagoon as well as the Gulf and Atlantic.
- FWC was the designated manager within the CARL acquisition area and since state funds were used for the purchase FWC receives management funds as well.
- The Hungryland Slough wetlands are vitally important to the region's ecology and hydrological integrity – not to mention wildlife
- The highest and best use is their current use, adding more lots as they become available, continuing to manage as is currently done especially removing exotics and preventing drainage or fill.

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding Northern PalMar and the Chimney:

1. These "Save Our Rivers" lands within Northern PalMar and the Chimney strongly support the District's core mission.

Regarding Hungryland WEA

1. As part of CERP, Hungryland WEA clearly supports the District's core mission of natural systems protection as it is a large contiguous area that provides important water storage and wildlife habitat. The area also provides important connectivity to other natural areas and allows important public use that furthers environmental education.

Regarding All PalMar parcels generally

1. The lands within PalMar support the District's core mission of flood control by providing valuable regional storage within natural wetland communities. The large amount of small ponds, depression marshes and seasonal flow ways significantly support the core mission of Natural Systems protection.
2. PalMar East (9 Gems) is under a NRCS-WRP easement and work has been completed for hydrologic restoration of the site. The remainder of PalMar provides additional opportunities for Dispersed Water Management activities, although none are planned at this time.
3. The habitats provided on these properties attract many faunal species including numerous species of migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. This property falls within the core foraging range of multiple wood stork nesting colonies. It also serves as an important wildlife connector and corridor between several upland and wetland habitats.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership.

Regarding Northern PalMar and the Chimney in particular:

- The cattle pasture is only unused since January 2013; the chimney area of Pal Mar has been actively used for cattle grazing for decades until the most recent tenant was forced to relocate in January 2013. The chimney area of Pal Mar is dominated by land suitable for grazing.
- Consider purchase or exchange of private parcels by negotiating with the association that has the ability to speak and negotiate for 88% of the remaining privately owned parcels.

Regarding all PalMar parcels generally:

- The proposal of "land swaps" would negate SFWMD's core mission. Promoting large urban areas with the demands of fill and draining, urban water demands, costly infrastructure, would work contrary to the District's Missions. The "land swaps" would change one controversy for another that would be far more detrimental to protecting Pal-Mar's role in each and every one of SFWMD's core missions.
- More small parcels need to be purchased to remove hydrologic and management impediments
- The area contains hundreds of small lakes and seasonally inundated depression marsh systems
- The area provides linkage and landscape connection to Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Corbett WMA and excellent public recreation usage.
- Efforts toward restoration, and consolidation of public ownership on these lands should continue.

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding Northern PalMar and the Chimney:

1. The functional value of these lands is very high, improving management capability by acquiring or consolidating land parcels could more effectively support the District's core mission.
2. This area should be subjected to more detailed evaluation.

Regarding Hungryland WEA:

1. The functional value of these lands is very high, and this is the best use of this property to support the District's core mission.

Regarding All PalMar parcels generally

1. This area should be subjected to more detailed evaluation.

Recommendation:

Regarding Northern PalMar and the Chimney:

Staff recommends deferring a recommendation on this property to a future date to give the District an opportunity to seek additional partnership and land consolidation opportunities to better meet management needs mission objectives.

Regarding Hungryland WEA:

Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Regarding Northern PalMar and the Chimney:

Staff recognizes the contributions that the individual parcels that have been acquired to-date provide towards the District's core missions, and the additional benefits that would be possible with a consolidated block of ownership, particularly in those areas that are adjacent to the larger Hungryland property. However, the central and south Florida region has a number of locations that are like these tracts. They were subdivided and sold off decades ago, especially in the real estate boom of the 1920s. Speculation at that time was so rampant that properties were bought and sold site unseen. Most did not have practical vehicular access or available utilities, but the sales were driven by market speculation. Decades later, many of these properties have had their property interests divided several times over. Owners may be found all over the world. Therefore, identifying willing sellers within the area who will agree to reasonable terms is a challenge. Opportunities and constraints for these tracts, and similar properties characterized by noncontiguous public and private ownership, must be studied in greater detail before an informed recommendation can be advanced.

Regarding Hungryland WEA:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: DuPuis

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments supported retaining the site in SFWMD ownership and conservation. Respondents indicated the area meets SFWMD core missions, has high value to wildlife (particularly listed species, such as red-cockaded woodpeckers), and important recreation opportunities.

Regarding the 25-acre strip parcel in particular:

- Due to its location, this property affects a number of SFWMD water flow and water quality projects, such as Lake Okeechobee, the C-44 and L-8 canals, and FWC's JW Corbett WMA. It is also indirectly linked to the C-51 basin and projects to improve the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR
- The strip cannot be developed without negatively impacting the area's wildlife or management of DuPuis as a whole
- There is no development in the area that economically warrants, or could sustain, commercial use of the strip
- It is ill-suited for agricultural use, which would require drawing irrigation from the C-44 canal and degradation of water quality from runoff
- Habitat value of the strip is similar to that of the larger tract

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding Dupuis generally

1. As one of the first large tracts of land acquired under the SOR program, the Dupuis property has been in District ownership for nearly three decades. The site is very diverse and clearly supports the District's core functions of Natural Systems protection and restoration as well as water quality protection and water supply. It is a very diverse natural system that provides habitat for a number of important floral and faunal species, including a recently reintroduced and functional red-cockaded woodpecker population.
2. The property connects with the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area and together the properties provide the large expanses of natural land in Martin and Palm Beach Counties. Additionally, the property has a high public use value and is used by hikers, equestrians, hunters, campers and many other user groups.
3. DuPuis is an outstanding resource for providing nature-based recreation including hiking, hunting, equestrian use, and camping. The management partnership with FWC, and the current allowable public use and recreation on the DuPuis property should continue and is consistent with District policy, statutory requirements, and the purposes for which the property were acquired.
4. The West Palm Beach Field Station uses south western portions of this property for right-of-way maintenance activities on the L-8 Canal.

Regarding the 25 acre strip

None

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents did not believe there was a better use of the property.

Regarding the 25-acre strip parcel in particular:

- The strip should be retained for passive recreation and better maintenance of the C-44 canal



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Summary of *SME* comments:

Regarding Dupuis generally

1. Land Stewardship and the DWM program are investigating wetland restoration and water retention opportunities on this property.

Regarding the 25 acre strip

None

Recommendation:

Regarding DuPuis generally:

Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Regarding the 25 acre strip:

Staff recommends that the site be considered as a location for public use facilities, such as RV camping or a cabin rental concession, if funding or an opportunity for such use materializes, otherwise staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Regarding DuPuis generally:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.

Regarding the 25 acre strip:

Staff recognizes that proximity to the C-44 canal has an extreme effect on the hydrology of this parcel and restoration of the strip is not feasible. Staff further recognizes that DuPuis has become a popular regional destination, highly valued by the outdoor recreating public, and that providing public use facilities that would not be compatible with the natural character of the land to the south could provide greater access to the site.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Loxahatchee River / Cypress Creek – Loxahatchee River / Riverbend Park

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Regarding this property in particular:

- The property meets SFWMD core missions, provide wildlife habitat, and provide valuable recreation.
- Riverbend park plays an important role in protecting the Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River while encouraging responsible recreational use of the river and educating the public on a valuable natural and cultural resource

Regarding all Loxahatchee River/ Cypress Creek parcels generally:

- The parcels are important parts of Florida's ecological history
- The properties provide important wildlife habitat
- Poorly in its current unmanaged state. Development and implementation of a plan to restore the north half back to a pine flatwoods/wet prairie community is well within the District's capabilities.
- A portion of the area is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water and a Wild and Scenic River.
- Palm Beach County is a management partner.
- The property is considered so important to overall South Florida and Everglades restoration efforts that it is within the CERP program.
- The properties are vital to the protection of the Loxahatchee River and its watershed.
- Using the land for agriculture has contributed to degradation of surrounding lands. Another agricultural lease would preclude the possibility for restoration and continue degradation of nearby lands.
- Through planning for future restoration projects and supporting current County hydrologic restoration projects, the District is helping protect natural resources and restore the Loxahatchee River through management of the Cypress Creek properties.
- In terms of the natural area portion, the District has been doing an excellent job of restoring the property. They have prioritized removing exotic vegetation and getting the property on a burn rotation. They have also supported County efforts to help restore site hydrology and are actively working to plan future projects.

Summary of SME comments:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Regarding this property in particular

1. The southern portions of Riverbend Park are used for right-of-way maintenance activities on the C-18 Canal.
2. Riverbend Park significantly supports the District's core mission of Natural Systems protection and restoration. Significant restoration of the parcel has occurred, through the extensive treatment of exotic species and reconnection of important water ways, and as such the parcel provides important benefits to the Loxahatchee River. Additionally, the park provides important access to the Loxahatchee River, and furthers public education of water resources and natural communities.

Regarding the Cypress Creek Loxahatchee River project area in general

1. The current use meets the District's core mission for natural system protection and restoration.
2. The Loxahatchee River is a designated National Wild and Scenic River and provides an outstanding resource for canoeing and kayaking. The site also provides a trail link to the Palm Beach County managed Riverbend Park. Cypress Creek currently provides hiking, biking, and equestrian trail use and supports the multi-agency Ocean to Lake trail. These uses should continue and be incorporated into the project.
3. As components of the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration CERP, these properties currently support the district's core mission of natural systems protection by providing a buffer to the Loxahatchee River from adjacent agricultural and suburban areas; however, additional improvement to hold more water on site will be critical to these properties furthering the core mission of water supply (to natural areas) as well as improvement to wetland communities on adjacent properties.
4. Previous DWM activities were evaluated for the SFWMD owned portions. It was determined that on-site hydrology/drainage did not provide significant DWM activities beyond existing conditions. Much of the conceptual boundary is not in public ownership. There has been discussion of a public/private project on the Sunshine Boys Grove portion of the Cypress Creek parcel (northern triangular piece west of the Turnpike) that would result in construction of a flow-way to accept water from the Nine Gems property and to construct other structures.

In your opinion, is there a better use of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments indicated there is no better use of the property and respondents particularly valued the recreational opportunities provided by Riverbend Park.

Regarding all Loxahatchee River/ Cypress Creek parcels generally:

- The "pepper farm" area should be considered for another use; evaluate a conversion from a lease to a stormwater treatment area or dispersed water management area
- There is no better use of the property/ it should remain in conservation
- While the Cypress Creek Canal indeed has an impact on the wetlands immediately adjacent to the canal, those impact diminish rapidly within 1/4 mile or less of the canal. The original flowway and creek bed of Cypress Creek remain intact on District ownership. A single gated culvert on the west side of Gulfstream Citrus Road would reflood most of the wetlands between there and Mack Dairy Rd. The Loxahatchee River needs dry season base flows and reflooding wetlands provides that groundwater component.
- Much of the area is low and wet and unsuitable for development
- SFWMD should evaluate whether the leased "pepper farm" area would serve more of the District's Core Mission purposes if it were converted to Dispersed Water Management or similar uses as an STA.
- Development surrounding the Northwest Fork causes water to run off too quickly and at inopportune times. If this continues, there may be irreparable damage to this water body. Land acquired by the District/Martin County, and the surrounding private lands, could help alleviate these problems by acting as water storage areas that could release the freshwater as it is needed. Several methods could help accomplish this goal. For example, the District could install a water control device that will hold water in and on the land when it is not needed, and release it when it is. The release mechanism would also prevent any risk of flooding associated with the water storage. Alternatively, water could be diverted from active canals, stored in the surrounding lands, and allowed to drain back into the watershed more gradually.
- The land in this area should be used for the purposes for which it was purchased – water storage and increasing freshwater flows.
- The land should not be used for agriculture because the effects of agriculture directly oppose the stated goals of the District and County in purchasing the land.
- Restore the wetlands with spatial extent that allows water to spread out to prevent flooding, allowing recharge of the aquifer, allows the river to push back the saline water that is killing the cypress.

Summary of SME comments:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Regarding this property in particular

None

Regarding the Cypress Creek Loxahatchee River project area in general

1. Initiation of wetland restoration and water storage capabilities on these parcels would better support the District's core mission.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, either through a continuation of the existing long-term lease with Palm Beach County, or, if the County would find it beneficial, by negotiating a transfer of the underlying fee-title to the County subject to an acceptable conservation and flowage easement in favor of the District.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the many contributions of the property to the District's core missions, and further recognizes that those contributions would continue and would not be diminished if the property were owned and managed by the County subject to a conservation and flowage easement in favor of the District, rather than the current long-term lease under which the property is currently managed.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Loxahatchee River / Cypress Creek – Cypress Creek

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Regarding this property in particular:

- The property meets SFWMD core missions, provide wildlife habitat, and provide valuable recreation.
- The Cypress Creek parcel is critical to the restoration of not only Cypress Creek but the Loxahatchee River. This area represents a major component of the headwaters of Cypress Creek. Cypress Creek provides close to 30% of the total freshwater input to the Loxahatchee River.
- Without the restoration of this area it will make it much more difficult to meet the Minimum Flow Levels that have been established in the Loxahatchee River Watershed Management Plan.

Regarding all Loxahatchee River/ Cypress Creek parcels generally:

- The parcels are important parts of Florida's ecological history
- The properties provide important wildlife habitat
- Poorly in its current unmanaged state. Development and implementation of a plan to restore the north half back to a pine flatwoods/wet prairie community is well within the District's capabilities.
- A portion of the area is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water and a Wild and Scenic River.
- Palm Beach County is a management partner.
- The property is considered so important to overall South Florida and Everglades restoration efforts that it is within the CERP program.
- The properties are vital to the protection of the Loxahatchee River and its watershed.
- Using the land for agriculture has contributed to degradation of surrounding lands. Another agricultural lease would preclude the possibility for restoration and continue degradation of nearby lands.
- Through planning for future restoration projects and supporting current County hydrologic restoration projects, the District is helping protect natural resources and restore the Loxahatchee River through management of the Cypress Creek properties.
- In terms of the natural area portion, the District has been doing an excellent job of restoring the property. They have prioritized removing exotic vegetation and getting the property on a burn rotation. They have also supported County efforts to help restore site hydrology and are actively working to plan future projects.

Summary of SME comments:



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Regarding this property in particular

1. The West Palm Beach Field Station uses this property to gain access to Lainhart Dam to perform maintenance and other activities.
2. As part of CERP, these properties currently support the district's core mission of natural systems protection by providing a buffer to the Loxahatchee River from adjacent agricultural and suburban areas; however, additional improvement to hold more water on site will be critical to these properties furthering the core mission of water supply (to natural areas) as well as improvement to wetland communities on adjacent properties.
3. Current hydrological restoration activities on-going with additional Dispersed Water Management planned activities. Area is co-owned with Martin Co. No Dispersed Water Management activities are planned for Riverbend Park.

Regarding the Cypress Creek Loxahatchee River project area in general

1. The current use meets the District's core mission for natural system protection and restoration.
2. The Loxahatchee River is a designated National Wild and Scenic River and provides an outstanding resource for canoeing and kayaking. The site also provides a trail link to the Palm Beach County managed Riverbend Park. Cypress Creek currently provides hiking, biking, and equestrian trail use and supports the multi-agency Ocean to Lake trail. These uses should continue and be incorporated into the project.
3. As components of the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration CERP, these properties currently support the district's core mission of natural systems protection by providing a buffer to the Loxahatchee River from adjacent agricultural and suburban areas; however, additional improvement to hold more water on site will be critical to these properties furthering the core mission of water supply (to natural areas) as well as improvement to wetland communities on adjacent properties.
4. Previous DWM activities were evaluated for the SFWMD owned portions. It was determined that on-site hydrology/drainage did not provide significant DWM activities beyond existing conditions. Much of the conceptual boundary is not in public ownership. There has been discussion of a public/private project on the Sunshine Boys Grove portion of the Cypress Creek parcel (northern triangular piece west of the Turnpike) that would result in construction of a flow-way to accept water from the Nine Gems property and to construct other structures.

In your opinion, is there a better use of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Comments included:

Regarding all Loxahatchee River/ Cypress Creek parcels generally:

- The “pepper farm” area should be considered for another use; evaluate a conversion from a lease to a stormwater treatment area or dispersed water management area

Regarding all Loxahatchee River/ Cypress Creek parcels generally:

- There is no better use of the property/ it should remain in conservation
- While the Cypress Creek Canal indeed has an impact on the wetlands immediately adjacent to the canal, those impact diminish rapidly within 1/4 mile or less of the canal. The original flowway and creek bed of Cypress Creek remain intact on District ownership. A single gated culvert on the west side of Gulfstream Citrus Road would reflood most of the wetlands between there and Mack Dairy Rd. The Loxahatchee River needs dry season base flows and reflooding wetlands provides that groundwater component.
- Much of the area is low and wet and unsuitable for development
- SFWMD should evaluate whether the leased “pepper farm” area would serve more of the District’s Core Mission purposes if it were converted to Dispersed Water Management or similar uses as an STA.
- Development surrounding the Northwest Fork causes water to run off too quickly and at inopportune times. If this continues, there may be irreparable damage to this water body. Land acquired by the District/Martin County, and the surrounding private lands, could help alleviate these problems by acting as water storage areas that could release the freshwater as it is needed. Several methods could help accomplish this goal. For example, the District could install a water control device that will hold water in and on the land when it is not needed, and release it when it is. The release mechanism would also prevent any risk of flooding associated with the water storage. Alternatively, water could be diverted from active canals, stored in the surrounding lands, and allowed to drain back into the watershed more gradually.
- The land in this area should be used for the purposes for which it was purchased – water storage and increasing freshwater flows.
- The land should not be used for agriculture because the effects of agriculture directly oppose the stated goals of the District and County in purchasing the land.
- Restore the wetlands with spatial extent that allows water to spread out to prevent flooding, allowing recharge of the aquifer, allows the river to push back the saline water that is killing the cypress.

Summary of SME comments:

Regarding this property in particular

1. Land Stewardship and the Dispersed Water Management program are investigating wetland restoration and water retention opportunities on these properties.
2. Initiation of wetland restoration and water storage capabilities on these parcels would better support the District’s core mission.
3. These parcels were acquired to support restoration activities associated with the Loxahatchee River and provide important connectivity to other parcels in the watershed (Nine-Gems, Culpepper and PalMar) that will allow both improvement of overall water deliveries to Cypress Creek, tributary to the Loxahatchee Northwest Fork) and ecological connectivity. The properties can aid in flood control for the adjacent areas, as well as providing important overall groundwater level improvement that will positively impact wetland communities on adjacent properties. These parcels also include the historic Moonshine Creek, which is an historic tributary to the Loxahatchee. Rehydrating Moonshine Creek and preventing extensive drainage from the property through previously installed agricultural infrastructure could provide substantial benefit to the Loxahatchee River.

Regarding the Cypress Creek Loxahatchee River project area in general

1. Initiation of wetland restoration and water storage capabilities on these parcels would better support the District’s core mission.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Loxahatchee Slough

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicate respondents believe the property is meeting SFWMD's core missions.

Other Comments:

- The 257 acres owned by SFWMD fills a gap between the Palm Beach County owned Loxahatchee Slough and West Palm Beach's Grassy Waters Preserve, the primary source of that city's drinking water. SFWMD property is a critical link in maintaining hydrologic and conservation land connectivity.
- The district's property and the surrounding 13,000 acres of undeveloped, publicly owned marshes and uplands present a rich variety of habitats and species, including wood storks, sandhill cranes, endangered Everglades snail kites.

Summary of SME comments:

1. The habitats provided on this property attract some faunal species including many species of migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. This property falls within the core foraging range of one wood stork nesting colony. It also serves as a wildlife connector between wetland habitats and is likely utilized as a corridor for threatened and endangered species such as snail kites and crested caracara.
2. As part of CERP, these parcels are critical to the support of the District's core mission of natural systems protection as well as providing storage capability that is important to flood control. They provide attenuation in the natural system that can be meted slowly to aid in meeting both MFL and restoration flows to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. The parcels contain the historic Loxahatchee slough as well as environmental sensitive hammock and wetland communities, hydric flatwoods and deep water marshes that support a variety of wading birds and other wildlife. In addition, the parcels provide important connectivity for wildlife and people.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Public comments included:

- There is no better use of the property
- In the mid-2000s the District conveyed ownership of the 1400+ ac. Sandhill Crane tract because it didn't make sense for the District to own and manage this small tract immediately adjacent to Palm Beach County's 10,000+ ac. that were being managed and restored for the exact same purpose. I doubt that little, if any, management is being done by the District on this small tract. It would make better sense for the District to transfer ownership once again to the county and hold back a conservation easement to further protect it from development.
- This property should be utilized to effectively provide drainage while also preserving it in its natural to the greatest extent Florida.
- Recent addition of public recreation enhances the property's value
- Better information access for the general public. Perhaps develop a website that compiles public access areas of wetlands and natural areas available in Florida for wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, kayaking, etc. One website that combined resources of state, counties, cities, NPS, NWRs, etc.

Summary of SME comments:

1. The West Palm Beach Field Station operates Project Culvert PC-13 which is located at the eastern end of this property. An operational right-of-way is required in this location only.
2. There is no better use for this property.

Recommendation: Staff recommends negotiating a transfer of the title to Palm Beach County subject to an acceptable conservation and flowage easement in favor of the District.

Basis of staff recommendation:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Staff recognizes that this is the sole remaining parcel of District ownership within the Loxahatchee Slough area, and that another District parcel within the slough had previously been transferred to the County subject to a conservation and flowage easement. The adjacency of this site to the County's managed land, and conversely the large distance between this site and other District-managed lands, favors such a transfer of ownership.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: L-8 Reservoir

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicate the respondents believe these properties further SFWMD's core missions, and provide value by limiting development, providing wildlife habitat, ecotourism, and recreational opportunities.

Other comments:

- The full potential for use of this property for restoration of flows to the Loxahatchee River has not yet been met. Additional work is necessary so this property can have a meaningful contribution to flows to the River.
- The L-8 Reservoir was supposed to assist the restoration of the Loxahatchee River, however, the chloride levels have not been low enough for use in the river. Right now, the reservoir is being used for storage. If the salt levels can be brought down, the water may still be sent to the river to help meet the MFL requirements. Its purpose is not being fully implemented because of pollution.
- The L-8 reservoir has unique geological characteristics that provide water storage capacities not generally found elsewhere in Southeast Florida. Given this capacity, the reservoir can deliver vital water supplies to downstream users during drought conditions. This was demonstrated with supplemental water deliveries to the City of West Palm during several past drought years. During the major rain events, the reservoir captures excess runoff to provide additional flood protections for this urban expansion area.
- The unique location of the reservoir allows for additional water supply benefits for the natural systems as demonstrated by water deliveries to the federally designated "Wild and Scenic" Loxahatchee River. This water delivery is intended to meet the Minimum Flow and Levels (MFLS) of the river during dry season conditions.
- The L-8 reservoir's location and the role in capturing stormwater runoff are vital for the District's Central Everglades Pilot Plan (CEPP) and assurance of meeting the water quality criteria under the Settlement Agreement.
- By capturing and storing excess stormwater, the reservoir helps to meet the goal of protection of the Everglades as well as mitigating the downstream nutrient pollutants to the Lake Worth Lagoon.

Summary of SME comments:

1. These parcels/facilities provide important water storage capability that is critical to the District core mission of water quality protection/improvement and can contribute to flood control, water supply and natural systems protection and restoration.
2. The L-8 reservoir will be used as a Flow Equalization Basin to capture and then attenuate flows to STA 1E and STA 1W from the EAA C-51 basin, furthering the efficiency and nutrient removal capability for these features. Additionally, if water is available from the FEB it can be used to supplement flows eastward to help support the Loxahatchee River restoration.
3. The West Palm Beach Field Station has an ongoing interest in this property based on the new Pump Station project currently under construction as well as L-8 right-of-way maintenance activities.
4. The proposed use of the L8 Reservoir as a Flow Equilization Basin for the Eastern STA Flow-way is a critical component for the Everglades Restoration Program. The goal of the project includes both natural systems restoration and water quality improvement. It will also supplement water supply for the Eastern STA flow-way, enabling more effective management of the STA.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:



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East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Comments included:

- There is no better use of the property
- Properties fulfill SFWMD's core missions
- Sell the property and use the money to clarify the St. Lucie River
- Repair water quality and use it for river restoration
- Only if it is possible to create a better way to hold water, like a real wetland with a spatial extent that recreates the actions of a natural wetland preventing flooding, allowing recharge of the aquifer
- The critical enhancement that is needed to ensure water quality criteria are met under the Settlement Agreement is the design of a hydrologic connection to the J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area (60,348 acres). The suggested enhancement is to ensure the expanded L-8 reservoir's connection to currently proposed C-51 Reservoir project is compatible with the operations/maintenance, retains the ability to mitigate stormwater discharges and meets the required water quality standards of all downstream uses. This improvement of the L-8 Reservoir would enhance the long-term viability of the proposed C-51 Reservoir and provide cost-saving benefits to the State, the local 298 Districts, the water supply entities and local municipalities in addition to increased water quality treatment, stormwater mitigation and water supply deliveries.
- Continue existing plans
- Remove invasive plants
- Consider recreational opportunities

Summary of SME comments:

1. The planned use for this property is the best use

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Staff recognizes the benefits that the property has contributed towards the District's core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Unassociated Parcels – Whipoorwill Ave

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents support retaining the area in conservation and limit development. Comments indicated the area has value to plants and wildlife, recreation, and support SFWMD core missions.

Other comments included:

- With river access only, the pines of Whipoorwill Road adjacent to the south fork of the St. Lucie River provides a significant "oasis" for migrating birds and native species.
- The site is within a flood zone, which suggests that it acts also as a flood-protection buffer to adjacent residential development.
- Even though most of these properties are little known and little-used for recreation, they provide value as shoreline buffers and flood control.

Summary of SME comments:

- This nearly 8 acre site is small, and primarily of upland character. It is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was acquired (spoil disposal) and has no legal access from the land side. It does not well further the District core missions.
- Due to the relative small size of these parcels, no additional Dispersed Water Management activities are planned.
- This property may attract faunal species including some species of migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The amount of habitat this property provides may be limited due to the size of the property; however, it may serve as an important refuge or corridor to many species of wildlife in South Florida.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership and conservation.

Other comments included:

- The value to nearby residents would be enhanced if they could be made more accessible through the installation and maintenance of public use improvements, such as interpretive kiosks, parking areas, trails.
- Any "surplus" of the property should be to another public interest entity for use as a passive nature-based recreation area.
- SFWMD could try partnering with other governmental entities and/or residents to assist in mgmt for public recreation.
- Restoration is needed

Regarding all unassociated parcels:

- Place these properties with local governments or not profit organizations who will manage them for appropriate recreational purposes that will not add pollutant impacts to St. Lucie River System.

Summary of SME comments:

- Though the property can provide some modicum of buffer for the river from the adjacent residential communities, it is not large enough to have any real impact.
- The parcel is not needed for its intended purpose, and it provides limited benefit to the South Fork St. Lucie River.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the parcels be approved for disposal, exchange, or surplus subject to an acceptable 75-foot wide conservation easement along the South Fork of the St. Lucie River.

Basis of staff recommendation:

This small isolated parcel is no longer needed for its intended purpose as a spoil management site, it lies within a residential neighborhood. Road access is undetermined. Staff further recognizes that the site has substantial river frontage, and the retention of a 75-foot wide conservation easement from the river would serve as a buffer between the river and any potential improvements made to this parcel in the future.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Unassociated Parcels – Orchid Island

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents support retaining the area in conservation and limit development. Comments indicated the area has value to plants and wildlife, recreation, and support SFWMD core missions.

Summary of SME comments:

- This property may attract faunal species including some species of migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The amount of habitat this property provides may be limited due to the size of the property; however, it may serve as an important refuge or corridor to many species of wildlife in South Florida.
- Though this parcel is small, was acquired for spoil disposal and is no longer needed for that purpose, it does further the District's core mission of water quality protection and Natural Systems protection and restoration. The parcel is located within the flood plain, in a bend of the South Fork St. Lucie River and is managed by Martin County along with an additional parcel to the north.
- Due to the relevant small size of these parcels, no additional Dispersed Water Management activities are planned at this time.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership and conservation.

Other comments included:

- Any "surplus" of the property should be to Martin County for continued protection of the river ecosystem.
- Restoration of the site should be considered

Regarding all unassociated parcels:

- Place these properties with local governments or not profit organizations who will manage them for appropriate recreational purposes that will not add pollutant impacts to St. Lucie River System.

Summary of SME comments:

- Preservation and management by Martin County is an appropriate use of this property.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, either through a continuation of the existing long-term lease with Martin County, or, if the County would find it beneficial, by negotiating a transfer of the underlying fee-title to the County.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Although it is no longer needed for its intended purpose as a spoil management site, this parcel is a narrow peninsula, completely within the floodplain, contiguous to other public lands, and is currently managed by Martin County under a lease from the District. Staff recognizes that either a transfer of ownership to the County or a continuation of the existing lease are acceptable outcomes.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Unassociated Parcels – Mapp Road

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents support retaining the area in conservation and limit development. Comments indicated the area has value to plants and wildlife, recreation, and support SFWMD core missions.

Other comments included:

- This is a tract of mature pineland that has never been actively managed.
- The land appears to provide some natural flood protection for surrounding residential areas and may well be the area's last "natural system" for water storage and recharge area for ground-water.
- A narrow slough connects the east-side of the property with the south fork of the St. Lucie River.
- Martin County has identified the Mapp Road Parcel as the site of a future Stormwater Treatment Area and it is necessary to help Martin County meet TMDL's for the Saint Lucie River.

Summary of SME comments:

- This property may attract faunal species including some species of migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The amount of habitat this property provides may be limited due to the size of the property; however, it may serve as an important refuge or corridor to many species of wildlife in South Florida.
- This site was acquired as a spoil disposal site and is no longer needed for that purpose. It is currently and unused and unmanaged parcel of slightly less than 40 acres. The site has access from the South Fork St. Lucie and from Mapp Road. A portion of the access from the river side is within the flood plain. The site does not currently well support the District's core mission.
- Due to the relevant small size of these parcels, no additional Dispersed Water Management activities are planned at this time.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership and conservation.

Other comments included:

- The best use of this property would be as a Stormwater Treatment Areas. In the future, Martin County would look for funding opportunities to help make this project a reality. Restoration is needed

Regarding all unassociated parcels:

- Place these properties with local governments or not profit organizations who will manage them for appropriate recreational purposes that will not add pollutant impacts to St. Lucie River System.

Summary of SME comments:

- This parcel is located in a relatively developed area of Palm City, where public access to this portion of the South Fork St. Lucie is limited because of private land interests.
- Consider for surplus.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the parcel be approved for exchange or surplus. Staff further recommends that the District first attempt to negotiate a transfer to Martin County, either through an exchange of property interests or upon other acceptable terms, for use as stormwater management project.

Basis of staff recommendation:

This isolated parcel is no longer needed for spoil management and is separated from the river floodplain, except for a narrow 100' strip, by a golf course, a road (SW Thistle Terrace) and single-family residences. The continued ownership of this parcel does not support any District mission objective. Martin County has developed conceptual plans for the development of the site as a stormwater management project that will benefit the water quality of the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and associated estuary.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Unassociated Parcels – Kanner Highway

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments were mixed.

Other comments included:

- The tract supports SFWMD core missions
- The tract is not being used for a purpose that supports SFWMD core missions
- The area provides important wildlife habitat
- Limiting development in this area is critical to protecting water quality

Summary of SME comments:

- This nearly 20 acre site is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was acquired (spoil disposal) and does not well further the District core missions.
- Due to the relevant small size of these parcels, no additional Dispersed Water Management activities are planned at this time.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership and conservation, though restoration is needed.

Regarding all unassociated parcels:

- Place these properties with local governments or not profit organizations who will manage them for appropriate recreational purposes that will not add pollutant impacts to St. Lucie River System.

Summary of SME comments:

- The parcel is not needed for its intended purpose, and it provides limited benefit to the South Fork St. Lucie River.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the parcels be approved for disposal, exchange, or surplus.

Basis of staff recommendation:

This isolated parcel is no longer needed for spoil management and lies across Kanner Highway from the river floodplain, the continued ownership of this parcel does not support any District mission objective.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Region Being Reviewed: East Coast Region

Select Area Name: Unassociated Parcels – Pendarvis Cove

In your opinion, how well does the *current use* of the property further the District's core missions of Flood Control, Water Quality protection/improvements, Water Supply, and Natural Systems protection and restoration?

Summary of Public comments:

Comments indicated respondents support retaining the area in conservation and limit development. Comments indicated the area has value to plants and wildlife, recreation, and support SFWMD core missions.

Other comments included:

- The majority of the site is comprised of high quality mangrove habitat. These mangroves provide an important buffer from the urban development and can help clean the water (Water Quality). Even the sites uplands are important buffers because development could cause more nutrients and pollution to flow into our waterways.

Summary of SME comments:

- This 40+ acre site is actively managed by Martin County, and active restoration has occurred. The current use of the property supports the District core mission for natural systems protection and restoration. The county manages the site as a recreational facility, which includes a boat ramp.
- Due to the relevant small size of these parcels, no additional Dispersed Water Management activities are planned at this time.

In your opinion, is there a *better use* of the property that would provide more effective support for the District's core missions?

Summary of Public comments:

Several comments indicated that there is not a better use for the property than remaining in undeveloped public ownership and conservation.

Other comments included:

- Any surplus of the property should be to another public entity, such as Martin County
- By leasing this property to Martin County, the District is ensuring the protection of the natural resources without having to spend money on maintaining the site. Given the large percentage of the site that are mangrove wetlands this is the best possible use for the natural area.
- Restoration

Regarding all unassociated parcels:

- Place these properties with local governments or not profit organizations who will manage them for appropriate recreational purposes that will not add pollutant impacts to St. Lucie River System.

Summary of SME comments:

- The property does provide important public use with picnic facilities and a boat ramp for access to the St. Lucie River. These are valuable functions for the property, and continued management by the county for these purposes is appropriate.
- Consider donation to Martin County.



East Coast Region Land Assessment Evaluation/Recommendation Form

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, either through a continuation of the existing long-term lease with Martin County, or, if the County would find it beneficial, by negotiating a transfer of the underlying fee-title to the County.

Basis of staff recommendation:

Although it is no longer needed for its intended purpose as a spoil management site, this parcel is primarily a shallow mangrove cove with a developed boat ramp facility managed by Martin County under a lease from the District. Staff recognizes that either a transfer of ownership to the County or a continuation of the existing lease are acceptable outcomes.