

**2013 SFWMD Land Assessment Recommendations Summary
Region 2 - Kissimmee / Okeechobee**

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
		Disposal / exchange / surplus of site	
1	Kissimmee Chain of Lakes – Tiger Lake	Disposal, exchange, or surplus of the District’s fee-simple interest and the retention of a flowage and/or conservation easement over the portion of the property lying below the 54-foot contour.	The fee-simple ownership of the portion of the property above the 54-foot contour level is not necessary for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project, and its value to the District’s mission is primarily indirect and minimal at best. The District’s mission objectives would be adequately served with a flowage and/or conservation easement on the portion below the 54-foot contour. Staff recognizes that this is the only parcel around Tiger Lake that was acquired in fee-simple. The rest of the lakeshore below the 54-foot contour, which is indistinguishable from this property, was acquired as a flowage easement. The portion of the property that is above the 54-foot contour is a residential lot, with a house, yard, dock, and other structures. There is some native vegetation on the site, most of which falls below the 54-foot contour. The maintenance of this property takes time and financial resources that could be better spent elsewhere. However, there may be crediting implications related to the cost-share of the project with the Federal government that will need to be considered during the disposal/exchange/surplus process. This parcel is an orphaned outparcel lying separate and apart from any other land. The District’s mission is best served by focusing management and restoration activities on landscape-scale areas of regional significance, rather than having limited management and restoration funding diluted by small isolated sites with limited resource value from a regional perspective.
2	KR – Pool E / Paradise Run / Spoil Sites	Staff recommends that the parcels be approved for disposal, exchange, or surplus subject to an acceptable conservation easement along the bank of the oxbow channel on the southern parcel	This parcel is an orphaned outparcel lying separate and apart from any other land. The District’s mission is best served by focusing management and restoration activities on landscape-scale areas of regional significance, rather than having limited management and restoration funding diluted by small isolated sites with limited resource value from a regional perspective.
3	Unassociated Parcels – St. Cloud Field Station	Staff recommends disposal, exchange, or surplus of the property.	Staff recognizes that the field station intended to be built on this parcel was in fact built at another location and therefore this site is no longer needed for District purposes.

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
		Partial disposal / exchange / surplus	
4	KR – Kissimmee River Restoration Area – 4Es Parcel	For that portion of the property lying south of Hwy 98, staff recommends the disposal, exchange, or surplus of the District’s fee-simple interest and the retention of a flowage and/or conservation easement over the portion lying within the 100-year floodplain.	The fee-simple ownership of the portion of the property lying south of Hwy 98 outside of the 100-year floodplain is not necessary for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project, and its value to the District’s mission is primarily indirect and minimal at best. The District’s mission objectives would be adequately served with a flowage and/or conservation easement on the portion within the 100-year floodplain. Staff recognizes that this parcel came as part of the much larger parcel lying to the north of Hwy 98. This parcel is an orphaned outparcel lying separate and apart from any other land. The District’s mission is best served by focusing management and restoration activities on landscape-scale areas of regional significance, rather than having limited management and restoration funding diluted by small isolated sites with limited resource value from a regional perspective.
5	KR – Kissimmee River Restoration Area – Pearce-Lockett Estate Parcel	Staff recommends the disposal, exchange, or surplus of lands lying outside of the 100-year floodplain so long as the site remains open to the public.	Staff recognizes that the site has had many interested parties that expressed an interest in developing some sort of historic or public use facility on the property. These have included: a state park, a county park, a historic museum, an agricultural museum, a hostel for hikers using the Florida Trail, and a visitor/research center associated with the Kissimmee River Restoration. Unfortunately none of these proposals have ever panned out. The District has neither the funding available nor the specialized expertise necessary to restore the historic buildings to a condition suitable to public use, and the site deteriorates further every year that a willing partner is not found.
6	KR – Pool E / Paradise Run / Telex Marsh outparcel	Staff recommends that any such portion of the site for which Okeechobee County has no interest in managing under the existing lease, be approved for disposal, exchange, or surplus subject to an acceptable conservation easement along the bank of the oxbow channel.	Staff recognizes that the site is managed by Okeechobee County under a long-term lease, and therefore is managed at no cost to the District. However, the site is an isolated outparcel and serves little benefit to the District’s core missions. Staff further recognizes that the County accepted the management of the property primarily because of the launch facility on the northern end.
7	KR – Pool E / Paradise Run / Pasture parcel <u>and</u> Lake Okeechobee – North of Lake	Disposal, exchange, or surplus of the District’s fee-simple interest, on those southernmost parcels in this assessment area. Seek opportunities to exchange lands in the northern most parcels not needed for the implementation of Basin Management Action Plan for other lands within the basin. Land Within the Paradise Run Floodplain: Retain ownership and management of lands within the Paradise Run floodplain, along with an adequate buffer to benefit land management operations and to facilitate public access.	Staff recognizes that this property, in its present state and under its present agricultural use provides only incidental and indirect contributions towards the District’s core missions. Staff recognizes that the sites were historically wet prairie, but had been converted and used for improved cattle pasture. While useful as an interim management tool, it does not fall within the scope of the District’s core mission to maintain an agricultural use as a primary use of the land. Staff further recognizes that there are water-treatment, storage, and habitat restoration needs within the Lake Okeechobee watershed. The current watershed planning initiatives, such as BMAP, and Northern Everglades, are expected to identify those needs. The sale or exchange of this land could provide the financial resource to develop the necessary projects where they most-needed to be developed. Another alternative, proposed by several commenters at the land assessment public meeting, would be the sale of these lands to fund the acquisition of land in support of restoration of the Paradise Run/Pool E floodplain and historic river system.

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
8	Lake Okeechobee – Nubbin Slough	Staff recommends continuing the completion of the stormwater treatment cell. Staff further recommends developing dispersed water management and public recreation features on the northern portion of the site. Staff recommends the disposal, exchange, or surplus of the portions of the property outside of the project footprint that do not contribute to the District’s core mission.	Staff recognizes the value of the stormwater treatment cell towards the reduction of nutrients flowing into the Lake. Staff further recognizes the addition benefit that would be realized from developing dispersed water management and wetland restoration features. Staff recognizes that due to the close proximity of this property to the City of Okeechobee, there is potential for the development of popular recreation opportunities on portions of the property. Staff also recognizes the minimal contribution to the District’s core mission of upland pastures lying outside of the project boundary.

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
		No Change in Use (with ownership/management options)	
9	Unassociated Parcels – Clewiston Boat Ramp	Staff recommends negotiating a transfer of the fee-simple interest to another public entity or organization; first to the current managing entity if they express an interest, with a restrictive covenant to keep the primary use of the site as a boat ramp facility, and an access easement that allows the District to continue to use the facility to launch watercraft and access the Herbert Hoover Dike. If no other public entity or organization has an interest in accepting the ownership subject to suitable terms, then staff recommends that the use and management of the site continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the value of the site to public recreation, and recognizes that the District has no interest in retaining the underlying ownership.
10	Unassociated Parcels – Okeechobee County Boat Ramp	Staff recommends negotiating a transfer of the fee-simple interest to another public entity or organization; first to the current managing entity if they express an interest, with a restrictive covenant to keep the primary use of the site as a boat ramp facility, and an access easement that allows the District to continue to use the facility to launch watercraft. If no other public entity or organization has an interest in accepting the ownership subject to suitable terms, then staff recommends that the use and management of the site continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the value of the site to public recreation, and recognizes that the District has no interest in retaining the underlying ownership.

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
11	Unassociated Parcels – Sportsman’s Village Parcel	<p>Northern boat ramp parcel Staff recommends negotiating a transfer of the fee-simple interest to another public entity or organization; first to the current managing entity if they express an interest, with a restrictive covenant to keep the primary use of the site as a boat ramp facility, and an access easement that allows the District to continue to use the facility to launch watercraft. If no other public entity or organization has an interest in accepting the ownership subject to suitable terms, then staff recommends that the use and management of the site continue as-is.</p> <p>Southern wetland parcel Staff recommends the continuation of the current use as a littoral wetland.</p>	<p>Northern boat ramp parcel Staff recognizes the value of the site to public recreation, and recognizes that the District has no interest in retaining the underlying ownership.</p> <p>Southern wetland parcel Staff recognizes that this parcel lies within the Herbert Hoover Dike and consists of littoral wetlands that had to be acquired as part of the Central and Southern Flood Control project to obtain the necessary rights in the Lake’s littoral zone to support the water level regulation schedule of Lake Okeechobee.</p>
12	Lake Okeechobee – Lake Okeechobee Islands	<p>Seek opportunities to negotiate the transfer of ownership and management to another public organization, while retaining a flowage easement with appropriate conditions to protect water quality and areas of native vegetation.</p>	<p>Staff recognizes the importance of the properties remaining under public ownership and management. These sites were acquired to meet the water-level regulation schedule of Lake Okeechobee. Staff further recognizes, as reflected by the SME comments above, that these sites could benefit from greater vegetation and public use management. The District should seek and negotiate the transfer of these properties to an organization capable of employing greater public use and vegetation management resources</p>
13	Lake Okeechobee – Lemkin Creek	<p>Staff recommends continuing the management and development of the project, and to seek opportunities for acquiring the land necessary for completing the development of the project.</p>	<p>Staff recognizes the value of this project area to the District’s core missions as expressed by the SME comments. As a point of clarification, the State owns the wetland portion of the property referenced in the SME comments. Staff recognizes that opportunities may exist for recreation and/or management options of the State lands.</p>
14	Lake Okeechobee – Lakeside Ranches	<p>Staff recommends continuing the management and ownership of the Lakeside Ranch – Phase I, as is. Staff recommends continuing the implementation of a dispersed water management in the Phase II area.</p>	<p>Staff recognizes that there is no imminent cost-share agreement for the construction of water quality treatment facilities on the portions of the property left out of the first phase of construction. Staff further recognizes that periodic adjustments in the intensity of the cattle grazing operation necessary for vegetation management may provide some water quality improvements while keeping vegetation management costs in-check.</p>

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
		No Change in Use (with potential enhancements)	
15	KCOL – Rolling Meadows	Continue the use and management of the property as-is through the completion of the mitigation-funded restoration of the site.	Staff recognizes the contributions of the property by virtue of being acquired and used for mitigation to offset wetland impacts. Staff further recognizes the potential value as a conservation link between Lake Kissimmee State Park and Catfish Creek Preserve State Park, and the value of such a large wetland property within planning area the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Everglades Headwaters planning area.

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
		No Change	
16	KCOL – Catfish Creek	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the contributions that the property has provided towards the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.
17	KCOL – Lake Cypress NE Shore	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the contributions that the property has provided towards the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.
18	KCOL – Lake Kissimmee	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the contributions that the property has provided towards the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.
19	KCOL – Lake Kissimmee– Oasis Marsh Parcel, outside the floodplain	Staff recommends that the use and management of the properties continue as-is.	The fee-simple ownership of the portion of the property above the 54-foot contour level is only above that level by a matter of inches, the property lies on a very gradual slope. The District has initiated wetland restoration in the lower areas, which account for the bulk of the property. The lands above the 54-foot elevation on the west end of this property aids management of the wetlands by providing a dry staging area from which prescribed fire or vegetation management activities may be initiated.
20	KCOL – London Creek and Lower Lake Marion Creek	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes that much of the property was acquired as mitigation for offsite wetland impact, and nearly all of the pasture parcels actually fall below the 54-foot contour. District land management staff has been including the pasture parcels in their prescribed fire rotation and they have been slowly regaining some of their former wet-prairie character. Additionally, staff recognizes that this property would be an important connection in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s planned Everglades Headwaters refuge.
21	KCOL – North KCOL Marshes	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the contributions 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.
22	KR – Kissimmee Prairie	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the value of the property has to the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.
23	KR – Istokpoga Floodplain	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, for now.	Staff recognizes that the lands outside of the floodplain has limited contribution to the District’s mission in its present use as cattle operation. Staff further recognized that the property may be suitable for the construction of water treatment or storage facilities. The District should re-evaluate the continued ownership and use of the site once the Basin Management Action Plan is developed. There are several ways in which the property could provide dispersed water management benefits while serving as a wildlife corridor link to other public lands.
24	Lake Okeechobee – Grassy Island / Taylor Creek	1. Land East of NW 50 th St. continue the use and management of the property as-is. 2. Land west of NW 50 th St: defer until there is a recommendation from a feasibility study feasibility currently being conducted on the western portion of the property to evaluate alternatives or options for the site including water quality or water storage options, or conservation.	Staff recognizes the value of the completed Stormwater Treatment Area east Taylor Creek, and the value of the floodplain resources, the habitat value, and the public uses on the land west of Taylor Creek and East of NW 50 th Street. Staff further recognizes that land west of NW 50 th Street has potential to contribute more to the District’s core missions through dispersed water management or through the development of water storage and treatment facilities. These potential uses are currently being evaluated through the development of a feasibility study.
25	KR – Kissimmee River Restoration Area	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the value of the property has to the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area
26	KR – Restoration Area – 52-Acre Hammock Parcel	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Although it is small and has poor access from the landward side, staff recognizes that most of the site falls within the 100-year floodplain, contains a mature oak hammock over its entirety, contains cultural resources, is contiguous to other District lands, and is accessible to the public from the river.

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Basis of staff recommendation:</u>
27	KR – Restoration Area – Chandler Slough Lofton Frontage Parcel	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the value to land management of having the ownership extend to the road, and the complications to land management activities that are saved by not having a narrow strip of developed infrastructure between the natural area and the road. Staff further recognizes the utilization of the area as a trailhead of the Florida Trail.
28	KR – Restoration Area – Ft. Basinger Parcel	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is.	Staff recognizes the value of the site as a gopher tortoise relocation area for tortoises that must be removed from areas where District projects are being constructed.
29	KR – Restoration Area – Lamb Island – County Road 68 Parcels	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, for now.	Staff recognizes that the residential lot with a house on it is being used as officer housing. Staff also recognizes that the other parcel has a trailhead and provides land management access to the swamp. Staff should re-evaluate this property for the continued ownership and use of the site if the parcel with the house is no longer needed as officer housing.
30	KR – Restoration Area – Riverwoods Floodplain Parcel	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, for now.	Staff recognizes that, because most of the site falls within the 5-year floodplain, it must remain in district ownership. It is unlikely that a successful restoration of this drained and highly disturbed area could be accomplished in a manner that is feasible from a cost-benefit perspective. Staff should re-evaluate this property for the continued ownership and use of the site once all the post-restoration monitoring requirements for the Kissimmee River are fulfilled.
31	KR – Pool E / Paradise Run (except individual parcels)	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is	Staff recognizes the value of this site as a regionally significant wetland resource, as a popular public use area, and an important wildlife corridor link between Lake Okeechobee and the restored Kissimmee River. Staff further recognizes the future potential for restoration of the area if a dedicated funding source could be identified and made available for such purpose.
32	KR – Pool A – KICCO and Blanket Bay	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is	Staff recognizes the value of the property has to the District’s core missions, as evident from the comments, and the value as a popular public use area.
33	KR – Pool E / Paradise Run – Yates Marsh Parcel	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, for now.	Staff recognizes that the improved pasture outside of the floodplain contributes little to the District’s mission in its present use as cattle operation. Staff further recognized that the property is part of the established Public Use Area, and is a valuable tract for the Florida Trail. The site may be suitable for the construction of water treatment or storage facilities. The District should re-evaluate the continued ownership and use of the site once the Basin Management Action Plan is developed
34	Unassociated Parcels – Camp Mack Triangle	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, for now.	Staff recognizes that public access to this parcel is limited and that it is unlikely that a successful restoration of this drained and highly disturbed area could be accomplished in a manner that is feasible from a cost-benefit perspective. Staff should re-evaluate this property for the continued ownership and use of the site once all the post-restoration monitoring requirements for the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes are fulfilled.
35	KR - Pool D - River Acres Floodplain Parcel	Staff recommends that the use and management of the property continue as-is, for now.	Staff recognizes that, because most of the site falls within the 5-year floodplain, it must remain in district ownership. It is unlikely that a successful restoration of this over drained area could be accomplished in a manner that is feasible from a cost-benefit perspective. Staff should re-evaluate this property for the continued ownership and use of the site once all the post-restoration monitoring requirements for the Kissimmee River are fulfilled.