

**Babcock Ranch Preserve
Management Partners Workshop**

February 23, 2009

Attendees

Fred Johnson, Lee County Parks
Cathy Olson, Lee County Conservation 20/20
Ken Creveling, Urbanomics, Inc.
Ed Flowers, Division of Forestry
Lora Silvanima, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Jerrie Lindsey, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Jeff Rebon, Fish & Wildlife Conservation Law Enforcement
Mark Llewellyn, Genesis Group
Jeff McGrady, Fish & Wildlife Conservation
Lee Taylor, Fish & Wildlife Conservation
Mike Kemmerer, Fish & Wildlife Conservation
Jason Burton, Fish & Wildlife Conservation
Officer John Snow – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Dennis Grealish – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Meeting Notes

1. Law enforcement challenges
2. Conservation / Recreation / Ranching (Balance)
 - a. Conservation
 - Overall guiding principle
 - Funding sources recognized as focus
 - b. Recreation
 - public focus
 - a) Limited hunts on Web
 - b) Produces the most impact from a law enforcement aspect
 - c. Ranching
 - CMP ranching trumps recreation
3. Access will be an issue.
4. ATV use is specifically excluded from the Ranch.
5. Mudcutters and horsemen don't get along.
6. Most equestrian and bicycle riders come out of Lee County.



7. Hiking
 - a. Florida National Scenic Trail (long distance trail)
 - b. Hike for 2 hours or ½ day (5-7 miles)
8. Birders
 - a. Want to see Telegraph Swamp
 - b. Want to drive onto the property and walk a short distance

Web is a great for wildlife viewing

Ding Darling

Stormwater Treatment Area 5 (STA 5)

Six Mile Cypress

9. Camping
 - a. Car camping
 - b. Primitive camping
 - c. Old hunt camps might be available for use
 - d. Equestrian camping
 - e. RV camping – new town considering this
 - f. Cabin/cottage
10. Soft Packing
11. Eco Tour / History
12. Burning
 - a. Almost forces controlled camping
 - b. ADA and Fire Marshall issues with the existing lodge
13. Hunting
 - a. Sporting range
 - b. Consider sporting days
 - c. Up to date archery range (3-D archery range)
14. Bicycle Use
 - a. Obstacles
 - b. No trail sharing
 - c. Single track technical trails typically
 - d. Not provided on FWC property
15. Equestrian
 - a. Short length or long length
 - b. Southeast Distance Riders Association (long distance)



16. Nature Based Recreation – guidance
17. Special use type permit
 - a. Long distance riding
 - b. Star gazing
 - c. K-9 retriever trials (dog tricks)
 - d. Provide some guidelines for unique hunting experiences
18. Paddle opportunities
 - a. Seasonal
 - b. Water access from SR78 and head north
19. Potential fishing opportunities
20. Fees
 - a. Will be set by Babcock Ranch, Inc.
 - Day use fees (\$3.00/person, \$6.00/car load)
 - Board can set fee structure
 - b. Lee County does not have a park fee.
 - c. Crew facility (camping & water access)
 - Annual pass?
 - Day use pass?
 - d. FWC - \$25.00 for annual pass
 - e. DOF, FWC, FDEP – all have separate annual pass requirements
21. Historic uses potential and interpretation
 - a. Ranching history should be interpreted
 - b. Ranch history tour
 - c. Access to Cypress Lodge
 - d. Farm field in Lee County will sunset in 2011
22. Will the Tucker Grade access remain?



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(Joe Petrich – Notes)

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Meeting Notes

1. Intro: use the term “conservation” instead of “preservation”.
 - Terms:
 - ✓ conservation - use appropriately
 - ✓ preservation - can't use / can't touch
 - ✓ need to focus on conservation.
2. Access – Bakers property? Need to see where this is.
3. Noted: Okaloacoochee “OK” – currently has biking and equestrian (these user groups do not appreciate each other). Need to see Ok website; not sure equestrian is available.
4. Eaglewood – also has bike trails
5. The “hiker” experience can also be a dividing experience accessible for bird watches is / can be an issue. Birders like to park close and walk a short distance.
6. Florida Trail Association
 - Hikers – a couple scenarios:
 - ✓ Some hike for two hours or a half day. Beyond this primitive camping may be part of this extended hike.
7. Miaka State Forest – example for primitive camping sites.

8. Trail Head / Facility Needs - tailor to the user experience
 - a. Will vary for equestrian and camper / hikers.
 - b. Noted: seems that there should be opportunity for primitive backpacking and camping.

9. Jerrie Lindsey
 - a. Mentioned the "Adventure Lite" concept used in European countries / cities.
 - b. Primitive hiking but stay in a nice lodge at night with great meals.
 - c. There are a lot of British and German visitors to the area that would enjoy this type of experience.
 - d. Need to educate the public as to how to use the property.

10. Camping
 - a. Tent and car
 - b. RV – potentially at Kitson – need to review with them.
 - c. Car camping – need? Possibly low scale.

11. Site Access and Security – need to determine best and appropriate control points to serve the property.
 - a. Eastern side – Jack’s Branch and Cuban Camp. There are residential development projects on the east side near Jack’s Branch. Poaching is heavy!
 - b. Phasing of rec. opportunities will be a likely approach. Park Ranger / Manager sites – possible the old telegraph Cypress Clubhouse (wherever needs to be accessible).
 - c. Horseman – would enjoy camping sites associated with trail experience.
 - d. Strategy: minimize impacts by utilizing previously used sites. Example: hunt camps.
 - e. Sporting clays – used to be a site on Babcock near State Road 74 – a good generator of income. Lead shot clean-up issue worth reviewing.
 - f. At webb some rifle and pistol ranges
 - ✓ Noted: there is a need for archery and sporting clays in this area.
 - ✓ John Snow: 3D archery challenges are good and needed

12. Bike
 - Two different bike user groups
 - ✓ Some like obstacles
 - ✓ Others just casual riders

13. Horse Groups
 - a. Many like endurance events
 - ✓ For endurance, would need 25-50 mile trails and 10-15 miles for training rides.
 - b. Others like carts

14. Dog Trials – Birding



- A unique event that would need to be assessed with the management plan.
(Assume this is for birding such as quail?)

15. Canoe / Kayak

- a. Opportunities? (Need to assess in the field.)
- b. Some potentially in lower telegraph swamp area need to determine appropriate access point.
- c. Note that Fish Eating Creek has canoe/kayak, 45,000 people use facility / year.
- d. Potentially able to access creek at bridge on U.S. 78
- e. Doesn't Lee County have a kayak launch in a park site adjacent to Babcock?
(Need to verify.)

16. Fishing

- Fishing opportunities are in the creek and duck ponds near Bermont Trails.
(Very limited opportunity on the preserve.)

17. Fee Schedules & Costs

- a. No market analysis to support – Genesis team will be evaluating.
- b. There are some annual user package fees set up for state parks and WMA's and state forests.

18. Other Access

- a. Lower Telegraph Swamp
 - ✓ Review Argo Ranch. Need to define rates and assess w/ Lee Co.
 - ✓ Potential access through Kitsm – also need to assess with BRC.
- b. Wilderness Adventures Access
 - ✓ Need to confirm if this road will remain and be accessible by preserve users.

19. Lee County Side

- a. Hunting opportunities with dove fields on converted ag. Lands. Could charge \$20-30 per person per day.
- b. Also provides another potential area for specialty hunt opportunity – hogs, deer, and turkey.

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Meeting Notes

1. Mark – what is the priority between preservation, ranching, and recreation.
2. Dennis – balance, not an issue of what's a higher priority. Challenge – how do you balance these three priorities?
3. Ken – understand what's "left over" after ranching and preservation priorities.
4. John – sportsmen – limited hunting access in area. This property utilized for recreation.
5. Fred – See only two activities, recreation and ranching. Preservation is the guiding principle.
6. Kathy – conservation value was the reason for purchasing the property. Conservation has to be paramount.
7. Jeff – Ranching trumps recreation according to management plan.
8. Ed – Use the term "conservation" instead of "preservation". Conserve what's out there but have to be able to use it. If ranching goes away, don't have money. The priorities for the ranching operation and the conservation priorities have to be balanced.

9. Dennis – When you have more people visiting the area that’s when the trouble start. When people start coming then you have issues. Sherriff’s office not equipped to come onto BRP on an everyday patrol standpoint.
10. Kathy – Lee County has rangers but not for serious crimes and not for back country stuff. Not comfortable in the woods in general.
11. Emergency access points? – south & eastern boundary.
12. Dennis – need a designated LE crew for this property like they have at Fisheating Creek.
13. Kathy – ARGO property purchased by Lee County. Probably won’t be officially added the BRP but management coordination will happen.
14. ATV not allowed use on BRP.
15. Fred – ATV use has big revenue potential.
16. Kathy – there is some user conflicts between equestrian user and off-road bikers on near-by trails.
17. Ken – what about this property enables mangers to offer something different than surrounding public lands offer so they don’t compete?
18. Jerrie – There is a desire from public to have connections between public properties.

Hiking

1. Cypress slough
2. Telegraph creek
3. Kathy – birders want to be able to drive onto property.
4. Jerrie – most hikers like to hike 2 hours or less, fewer want ½ day and fewer are interested in overnight trips.
5. Kathy – Lee County has very few camping sites that are not car camping sites. Backpacking camping is not very available.
6. Needed at trailheads: restrooms, potable water.
7. John – if you allow people to camp everywhere you will conflict with ranching operation.

8. Can set up designated primitive campsite.
9. Jerrie – people might be interested in “soft” adventure. Provide more amenities.
10. John – ecotour here is very successful.
11. Kathy – for most people that’s all they want - the ecotour.
12. Jeff – problems with wild hogs and people when people are on the area.
13. John – rooms for both guided and un-guided recreation on the area.
14. Mike – years ago visitors could camp everywhere on Babcock-Webb, but that was a problem for management, especially when burning. Now there are only designated campsites on Webb.
15. Cathy – Kitson property is considering R.V. camping. Do we want to offer this before they do and compete with them?
16. Lee – BRP have old campsites out here that could be revitalized to be used for campsite.
17. Site that are appropriate for hiking through for soft camping
 - Cuban camp
 - Jack’s Branch
18. Jack’s Branch could also possible be turned into an office for LE staff or a nature center.
19. Kitson is creating a nature center on the private property so we may not need one on BRP.
20. RV camping – if offered, start out with lower capacity and can grow.
21. Kathy – equestrians would like camping opportunities.
22. Ken – swamp area is the prize on the area. How can we potentially accommodate birders that want to drive to the central point? Are there one or two destinations that birders could drive to?
23. John – access point behind fire tower and then go further to where old hunt camp is located.
24. Kathy – ADA and fire marshal challenges with Lodge.
25. Jerrie - Are equestrians interested in camping in group camp or trail camp?
26. Kathy – I don’t know.

27. Mike – joint use for trailheads.

Hunting

1. Jeff – add a shooting range
2. Kathy – Webb’s shooting range is often full
3. Mike – Webb currently has 2 rifle ranges, 1 pistol range, 1 shotgun station with thrower, 1 simple archery range.
4. Opportunities for BRP
 - Sporting clays
 - Up to date archery range, 3-D archery range
5. Lead was a problem from previous range on BRP
6. Fred - Special desires for local offroad bikers
 - Obstacles
 - Stabilized basic trail
7. Jerrie – usually on WMAs we don’t develop technical trails. Two different kinds of bike riders, technical and what I’d call explorer that is motivated less by challenge and exercise and more by exploring nature and seeing wildlife by bike. On WMAs we create trails or designate scenic roads for this second type of biker.

Equestrian

1. Buggy facilities – horse drawn carts
2. 25-50 mile trail for endurance riders
3. 10-15 mile trail for casual riders.
4. Keeping recreation horses away from ranch horses.

Other Recreation Opportunities

1. Need to not conflict with management plan.
2. Ed – might be opportunity here special use permit for certain events.
 - Equestrian endurance race
 - K-9 trials

3. Jeff – need people that come out here to come out to enjoy the resources, this is congruent with the management plan.
4. Fred – flying club?
5. Kathy – does not fit here.
6. Jerrie – paddling in a portion of the creek? May only be feasible as a guided tour certain times a year.
7. John – can paddling back into the ranch depending on the water level. Put in on 78 at bridge.
8. Jerrie – could be a potential revenue generator if provided through guided tours.
9. John – if you open this up, it could be a problem with people hunting from the creek.
10. Jeff M. – Fishing opportunity in the creek
11. Ranch will set the fees for the area. Market analysis was supposed to precede the RMP. Ranch LLC was responsible for the market analysis. Had to move forward with RMP without it.
12. Ken – some of the market analysis will be done through the RMP process by Genesis.
13. BRP LLC cooperation could set up their own fee structure. Not hampered by legislature mandates like other WMAs.
14. Kathy – on the 20/20 public lands, when fees are proposed the public objects.
15. Interpretive opportunity for ranching operations?
16. Jerrie – ranching history should be interpreted.
17. John – show how cows used to be taken off property. Old cow pens.
18. Jerrie – is there a way to re-route road to lodge so it doesn't go through the rancher housing and operations buildings?

Mapping Session

1. Kathy – ARGO ranch owned by Lee County can accommodate access to BRP. Gate locks on the property are 20/20 locks.

2. Farm fields in Lee County are “sun setting” in 2011. Plans for the property after farmers have left include gopher tortoise relocation on driest part of property.
3. Southern end of ranch property
 - potential for camping.
 - Potential for archery range
 - Potential for horseback riding campsite
 - Farm fields would make excellent dove fields.
 - Another specialty hunt area
4. Other access on southern end is on Kitson property.
5. Proposed R.V. site on Kitson property.
6. Curry Lake – good birding opportunity. Maybe duck hunting?
7. Casey – not many ducks on the property.
8. Need to address whether Kitson will be open to public coming through their community property to access BRP.
9. During the wet season you cannot cross the area east to west.
10. Need to get timber plan map from DOF