

To: Commissioners Doug Smith, Edward Ciamp, Harold Jenkins II, Sarah Heard and Stacy Hetherington

Subject: Rural Lifestyle CPA 21-08

In the discussion of the Rural Lifestyle CPA 21-08 Proposal, I would like to focus on the history, present and future of the Loxahatchee River Watershed (described in Martin County Objectives 2.2D, Figure 5) that seems to be overlooked. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have been here before, and we still have the receipts.

As it has been a while since the 1990's, lets revisit; the last time something like this was planned, over 700 local residents showed up to publicly voice their anger at what was and still is, a very bad idea. I want to remind everyone again of the agencies, organizations and public that contribute to the defense of the Loxahatchee River Watershed's environment, Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Loxahatchee National Wild and Scenic River and Hobe Sound. This history was summarized in the book, *Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee River* by Jim Snyder and Josh Liller and published by the Loxahatchee River Historical Society. The citizen's revolted against the proposed Hobe Sound Plantation development that proposed to turn 3,265 acres of farmland into a community of 4,700 homes. Bordering on the park and Kitching Creek, the plan called for drilling some 2,000 into the shallow aquifer that fed the river's headwaters. Not long after some 700 local residents showed up for a "town meeting" to mobilize against it. ... the developed folded under the weight of their ire.

Because of the size and possible impacts this project might bring to the environment and community, it was a DRI (Development of Regional Impact) providing an analysis, research, reports and a massive review by FDEP, SFWMD, USFS, etc. under the guidance of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Here is the science of why this is a bad idea:

Wetland Impacts – the 2,000 wells drilled into the surficial aquifer that would cause drawdowns of the park's wetlands. Do we really have enough fresh water to support this expansion?

Prescribed Burns – this is the park's most important management tool to maintain the fire dependent plant communities and reduce wildfires. If this project was approved, it would become a Critical Smoke-Sensitive Area and

render prescribe burning extremely difficult. When controlled burns don't occur, the fuel builds, creating a likelihood for the kind of explosive fires we see plaguing California and the West.

Because the State of Florida has never been able to purchase this property (3,265 acres), it can again impact the state park and river, but we now have a better understanding though the research conducted for the DRI how to better protect this property and the Loxahatchee River Watershed. We have over 36 published peer reviewed papers on just the vegetation within the watershed, not including fish and wildlife, plus the ongoing research. An example of the more pertinent publication are:

- Martin County Growth Management Department. 2000. *Loxahatchee River Basin Wetland Planning Project for Martin County* for Submission to USEPA
- SFWMD. 2006. Restoration plan for the NW Fork of the Loxahatchee River
- FDEP and SFWMD. 2010. *Loxahatchee River National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan*, that is being revised this year
- SFWMD. 2012. *Addendum to the restoration plan for the NW Fork of the Loxahatchee River*
- USACE. 2020. *Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project (CERP) Final Integration Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement*
- LRD. Ongoing. WildPine Lab houses an extensive library of research papers/reports and monitors the Loxahatchee River Watershed's water quality
- SFWMD. Scheduled for Adoption in September 2022. *Technical Document Supporting Rulemaking to Protect Water Made Available by the LRWRP (CERP)*

In summary, I seriously doubt if in the consideration of the Rural Lifestyle Proposal there has been the review and consideration of the past, present and future research and monitoring for the Loxahatchee River Watershed. To me it is irresponsible not utilize this information in these public documents regarding the protection of the National Wild and Scenic River, State Park, USACE LRWRP, etc.

Richard Roberts, Retired Florida Park District Biologist and Jonathan Dickinson
State Park Biologist

6/19/2022

cc: Martin County Conservation Alliance, Guardians of Martin County, Ginny
Sherlock, Sierra Club - Loxahatchee Group, 1000 Friends of Florida

EDUCATE *and* EMPOWER

Families often feel they will lose the dream of self-sufficiency for their child when they receive a diagnosis of a developmental disability. However, with proper supports, both families and individuals with developmental disabilities can thrive and achieve their chosen goals.

Caring people, that's what it takes! The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and our state and federal government support the principles of inclusion, self-determination, community living, successful transition to adult life, and integrated employment. Families, individuals with developmental disabilities, and their Waiver Support Coordinators must keep the dream of a full and rich life the goal at all times.

Collaboration is a powerful tool. If this philosophy is to succeed, families must be the driving force. Barriers need to continually be identified and broken down and necessary programs and policies put in place. We must all work together for the benefit of all people with developmental disabilities. Together, we can make this happen. Make time to get involved!



Family Care Council
— educate and empower —

*The mission of the
Family Care Council Florida
is to educate and empower individuals
with developmental disabilities
and their families,
partnering with the
Agency for Persons with Disabilities,
to bring quality services
to individuals with
dignity and choice.*

A Developmental Disability is a term that refers to a variety of conditions that interfere with a person's ability to function in everyday activities. Chapter 393, Florida Statutes, defines developmental disabilities as:

Autism • Cerebral Palsy • Down Syndrome
Intellectual Disability • Prader-Willi Syndrome
Spina Bifida • High-Risk (3-5 Years)
Phelan-McDermid Syndrome

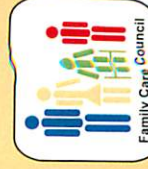


Family Care Council Florida
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Family Care Council

In 1993, the Florida Legislature passed legislation (Florida Statutes 393.502) establishing an all volunteer Family Care Council (FCC) to be located within each service area of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD). Each of the 15 FCCs is made up of Governor-appointed individuals with developmental disabilities who qualify for services from APD and the parents, siblings, grandparents, and guardians of individuals who have developmental disabilities. In addition, many councils receive vital support from interested individuals in their local communities.

APD has the responsibility for the health and safety of individuals with developmental disabilities. APD supports individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by helping them identify needs and funding to purchase supports and services.

The purpose of each FCC is to advise APD, develop a plan for the delivery of family support services, and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the services and supports provided under the plan.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FCCS

- Provide education and outreach to families.
- Review and make recommendations as to the effectiveness of the delivery of supports and services.
- Share information with other Family Care Councils



Each FCC represents a geographic area and works closely with the regional APD office to help families receiving services. The FCC also works closely with other local disability organizations and programs to access services and opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who may be on the APD Waiting List.

We invite you to become involved in your local area council. Everyone is welcome. It is important that you participate in decisions affecting the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Information about local councils is available on the FCC website, www.fcflorida.org.



AT THE STATE LEVEL

- Area councils join together through the statewide Family Care Council Florida (FCCF).
- The FCCF meets to share information and concerns with local area councils.
- FCCF members also serve on various state-level committees, initiatives, and task forces concerning Florida's residents with developmental disabilities.

