



Agenda Item Summary

File ID: 21-0606

DEPT-3

Meeting Date: 4/27/2021

PLACEMENT: Departmental

TITLE:

PAL-MAR INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this informational presentation is to provide a basic overview of the Pal-Mar area. The presentation will discuss the environmental value, history and unique challenges that are facing Pal-Mar.

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

PREPARED BY: **Name:** Mike Yustin

Title: Ecosystems & Restoration Management Project Manager

REQUESTED BY: Commissioner Jenkins

PRESET:

PROCEDURES: None

BACKGROUND/RELATED STRATEGIC GOAL:

Pal-Mar is a roughly 28,000+ acre wetland dominated system of environmentally sensitive lands in southern Martin County and northern Palm Beach County. The Pal-Mar area is a mosaic of wetland dominated habitats including cypress sloughs, open marshes and hydric pine flatwoods. Due to a lack of development, Pal-Mar has some of the highest quality wetland systems in Martin County and possibly the greater Everglades system. Pal-Mar is part of a very large Greenway system that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Okeechobee. A portion of Pal-Mar is within the headwaters to Cypress Creek, which is one of the most important tributaries to the Wild and Scenic Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

What we consider "Pal-Mar" is made up of: 1) the Pal-Mar Water Control District (PMWCD), established pursuant to Special Law, Chapter 2005-307 and Chapter 298, Florida Statutes; and 2) the John C. and Mariana Jones Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area (Hungryland). PMWCD is located in both Martin and Palm Beach counties. Hungryland includes PMWCD property in addition to the Culpepper Ranch and Pal-Mar East (Nine Gems) properties that are east of Pratt Whitney Road. The Pal-Mar Complex (IRL South) is not considered to be a part of Pal-Mar because it drains into the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and is not a part of the Loxahatchee River Watershed.

Hungryland is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. As required by

Chapter 2005-307, the County and Palm Beach County each hold a seat on the five-member PMWCD governing body called the Board of Supervisors. The remaining three seats are elected at-large by the landowners within the PMWCD.

Due to its environmental significance, Martin County has spent the last 50+ years working to preserve and protect Pal-Mar. More recent efforts, within the last 20 years, have focused on acquiring land within the area. By working with State agencies and utilizing funds generated from previous voter approved tax referendums, over 23,000-acres of the Pal-Mar area have been acquired by government entities.

Despite these efforts there is still close to 5,054-acres of Pal-Mar land, within the PMWCD, that remains in private ownership within an area known as Palm Beach Heights. Most of this land is part of an unrecorded subdivision made up of quarter to full acre sized lots that are commingled with properties acquired by Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The State/SFWMD has not contributed any funds to acquiring land within Palm Beach Heights in over 10 years. Having intermixed public and private lands in such small lots creates unique management challenges.

ISSUES:

None

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY REVIEW:

None

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

RECOMMENDATION

Hear the presentation.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

RECOMMENDATION

None

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

None

DOCUMENT(S) REQUIRING ACTION:

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Transfer / Amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Chair Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract / Agreement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant / Application | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

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