ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2015- 2016

Ponce Preserve and Ponce Preserve First Addition

FCT Projects 94-033-P4A and 03-064-FF3

March, 2016

Town of Ponce Inlet

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Summary of Activity

Recreational facilities at the Preserve were completed in January 2011 and continue to attract daily visitors. Earth Day celebrations have been held in the Preserve since 2014. Plans are now underway for this year's event, which will be held on March 5th. Educational programs have increased over the last year, with two night-sky programs offered by the Museum of Arts & Sciences in addition to four programs for the Volusia County ECHO Rangers program. Additionally, Volusia County's Lyonia Preserve held a program at the Ponce Preserve to highlight the differences in the vegetation in the two Preserves. The Town's new Parks & Recreation Coordinator is developing additional programs for the future, with subjects to include sea turtle nesting, the maritime hammock and Green Mound Indian midden. The Town requested the reduction in the required educational programs from 24 to 12 on December 1, 2015.

Future Land Use

The future land use designation of the project site is "Parks and Open Space." The zoning designation of the project site east of Peninsula Drive is "Public/Institutional" and the designation west of Peninsula Drive is "Conservation."

FCT Sign

A permanent sign acknowledging the assistance of the Florida Communities Trust was installed in the parking area of the project site in 2007. A second sign at the Atlantic Avenue parking lot was installed in February, 2016.

Archaeological - Historic Resource Survey

The Archaeological/Historical Resource Survey of the project site was completed in 2002. That survey showed that the project site contains remnants of the historic Green Mound. The Green Mound State Archaeological Site is surrounded by the project site, and is leased to the Town by the State of Florida. A topographic survey of the Mound has been completed for use in planning future access to and protection of this site.

Physical Improvements

All of the physical improvements to the park have been completed. The Town's Public Works Division maintains the constructed improvements.

Natural Resource Protection

The Town's Public Works Division monitors the site in conjunction with the tree management plan completed in 2008. Nearly all of the Red Bay trees in the Preserve have succumbed to Laurel Wilt disease. Where accessible, the dead trees are removed by Public Works staff.

Both the dunes created from the sand from the parking lot and the sea oats planted to stabilize them continue to thrive.

Resource Restoration and Enhancement

Restorative landscaping in the Preserve was completed in January 2011 upon completion of the recreational facilities.

Monitoring

The site is monitored for invasive exotic plants and feral animals by the Town's Public Works Division as part of its regular maintenance at the site. No feral animals are present on the site. Brazilian pepper trees and other invasive plants are removed when found.

Educational Signs

Educational signage identifying plants has been placed along the trails. Brochures have been developed and placed in the kiosk to compliment these signs. Educational signs have been placed along the boardwalk, in the observation tower and on the dune walkover to educate visitors on the plants and animals that frequent the Preserve.

Educational Programs

Currently, four educational programs have been offered at the Preserve through the Volusia County ECHO Rangers program since 2012. seven new programs were offered this year, including including two night sky programs by the Museum of Arts & Sciences, one bird watch walk throughout the preserve by the Halifax River Audubon Society, a program on Mangroves by the Volusia/Flagler Sierra Club, a home-school class about the Timucuan co-taught with Lyonia Preserve in Deltona, a Christmas Bird Count by Audubon, and a natural areas of Ponce Inlet tour organized by the local chapter of Florida Native Plant Society.

The third annual *Ponce Preserves the Planet* is being planned to celebrate both Earth Day and Arbor Day. The event, on March 5, 2016, will feature booths offering information on a variety of subjects, including conservation, native plants, recycling, bird identification and the natural world of the Preserve. Jim Sawgrass of the Muskogee Creek tribe will be presenting demonstrations and presentations on Native Americans.

Easements, Concessions or Leases

No new easements, concessions or leases have been considered over the last year.

Revenues

A Ponce Preserve donation fund was created by the Town in 2013, however no donations were received during this reporting cycle. Any donations will be used for the purchase of equipment for the educational programs.

Security

The Ponce Inlet Public Works Division and Police Department routinely patrol the project site. Solar lighting for the gazebo on the marsh boardwalk closest to the road has been installed as recommended by the Parks, Recreation and Tree Advisory Board.

Priority Schedule/Timeline

The physical improvements outlined in the Management Plan were complete as of March 2012. Educational programming continues to be scheduled, with a total twelve programs

offered during this reporting cycle. Additional educational signage was installed along the boardwalk, in the observation tower and on the dune walkover this year.

Management Plan Changes

With the physical improvements to the site complete, staff has requested a reduction in the number of required educational programs from 24 to 12. Once this request is approved, staff will complete the revisions to the Management Plan to reflect the current status and will request a transition to a 5-year reporting cycle.

Onsite Environmental Consulting at *Ponce Preserves the Planet*.

Dr. Seuss's story of *The Lorax* was incorporated into the theme of the event.

Mangroves program by the Volusia/Flagler Sierra Club.

Bird Watch Walk presented by the Halifax River Audubon Society.

Home-schoolers learning about the Timucuan on January 13, 2016.

Attendees at the Winter Night Sky Tour presented by the Museum of Arts and Sciences on February 19, 2016 had the opportunity to view the sky through telescopes as presenters pointed out stars not visible with the naked eye.