

Second Quarter FY11 Environmental Protection Department LAND CONSERVATION DIVISION

Mission Statement: To acquire, manage and improve environmentally significant lands to protect water resources, wildlife habitat, and to provide natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation.

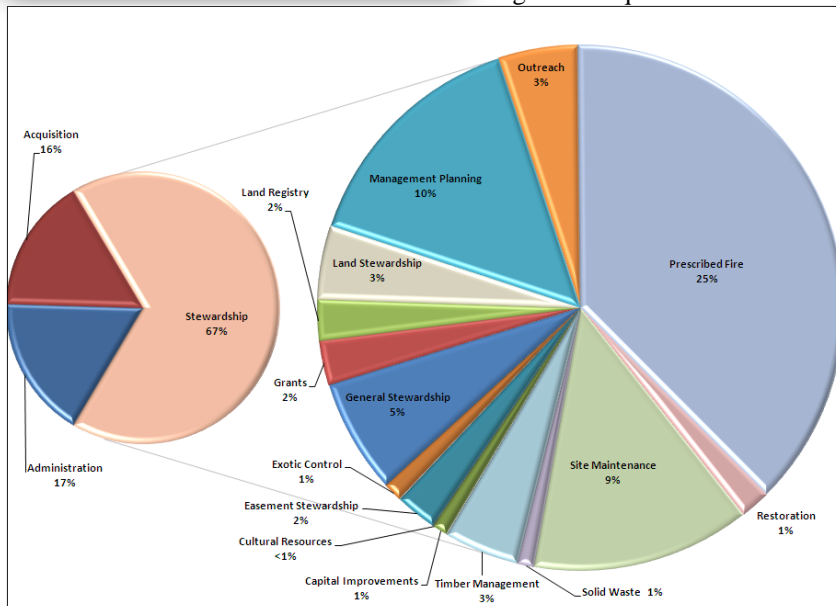
Summary: During the second quarter of 2011, the County Commission approved a major acquisition adjacent to San Felasco Hammock State Park bringing the total parcels conserved to thirty-eight. Table below. At the direction of the Commission, staff and the Land Conservation Board reviewed the Active Acquisition List for recommendations on how to spend the remaining Wild Spaces funds. The BoCC accepted the recommendation not to alter the list. The Wild Spaces Public Places Surtax expired December 31, 2010. A final estimate of the proceeds will be available in the next quarter, but estimates put the amount down 19% from the original 2008 estimates.

Accomplishments

| | Acres | Price | Acquisition Price Leveraged | Stewardship Leveraged (ac) | Unencumbered Balance (est) |
|----------------|--------|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| This Quarter | 208 | \$2,345,000 | 0% | 100% | |
| To date | 19,744 | \$91,317,497 | 63% | 51% | \$3,808,667 |
| Under Contract | 103 | \$170,000 | 0% | 100% | \$3,638,667 |



Notably, 477 staff hours were spent on Balu Forest stewardship last quarter. Tasks included updating the 2003 Management Plan. Balu Forest was purchased as a solid waste management facility. In the interim, the County Commission has directed Public Works and EPD to manage the property as a preserve. The charts below show the effort spent on the whole ACF Program last quarter.



Burn Baby Burn



Prescribed Burn at Barr Hammock.

As part of the County's FY11 budget reductions, the Wildfire Mitigation Team was eliminated. One position and some equipment were transferred to EPD to continue the Prescribed Fire function. Florida contains pyrogenic habitats meaning they need periodic fire to sustain them. Historically lightning strikes and later Native Americans would light the fires. Now land managers have to provide this critical function under carefully controlled conditions.

Unfortunately, these sites may catch fire from lightning, careless neighbors and users, or even arson. If the vegetation is not properly managed using prescribed fire, these wildfires can cause catastrophic damage to the ecosystem and neighboring property.

ACF has been working with the State of Florida Division of Forestry and been able to pull off two burns this year. We are prepared to burn additional acreage this summer, weather and other conditions permitting.



Prescribed Burn at Balu Forest.

For more information, contact Alachua County Senior Environment Specialist, David Hoyt at 352-264-6800 or dhoyt@alachuacounty.us.