

Parks and Conservation Resources Department

Department Purpose

The Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) department maintains and protects the inherent value of natural, cultural, and recreational resources through access, education, and stewardship that enhances the quality of life for our community and future generations. In addition to maintaining county parks, preserves, and other county land through land management and trades work, the department also monitors beach and water safety and provides visitor services to citizens. PCR also provides horticulture and sustainability education to the public through its University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) County Extension office.

Executive Summary

Novak Consulting completed a level of service (LOS) study for Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR). The data provided by the consultants will be key in helping the department define and set levels of service and develop key performance measures that report the department's outcomes, quality, and efficiencies. See attached for the report. Recommended budget revisions based on the report will be incorporated into the FY22 Proposed Budget to be presented on July 13.

PCR expects to complete the Unincorporated Youth Recreation Master Plan by October 2021 and expects to provide updates regarding current and future youth recreation to the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in early 2022. The department completed the Integrated Vegetation Management Program and shared new guidance with Visit St. Pete – Clearwater for ecotourism in FY21. PCR is also on track to complete both the Nuisance Wildlife Policy and Community Gardens Program in 2021.

Staffing Summary

Parks and Conservation Resources	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
General Fund	179.0	181.0	181.0	183.1	183.6
Total FTE	179.0	181.0	181.0	183.1	183.6

As of March 2021, Parks and Conservation Resources' PCR's staffing summary is as follows:

- Eight (8) vacant full-time positions totaling 8.0 FTE
- 25 vacant part-time lifeguard positions, at 0.5 FTE each, totaling 12.5 FTE

The increase of 0.5 FTE from FY21 to FY22 is due to a change in methodology in calculating FTE impacts for five part-time positions. No additional positions were added for FY22.

Budget Summary

Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) consists of two funds (General Fund and Tree Bank Fund), and seven budget programs (Administration, Beach & Water Safety, Education & Outreach, Land Management, Trades, Visitors Services, and Volunteer Services). The General Fund is the primary funding source for the department's activities. The Tree Bank Fund is used to

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address land maintenance issues such as the removal of exotic invasive plants.

Department Revenues

General Fund	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Request	\$ Change	% Change
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$147,260	\$282,804	\$218,591	\$157,000	\$162,400	\$167,100	\$10,100	6.43%
Charges for Services	\$5,922,642	\$5,942,483	\$6,076,837	\$5,731,890	\$6,340,930	\$5,833,190	\$101,300	1.77%
Fines and Forfeitures	\$30,389	\$101,059	\$148,427	\$65,070	\$98,310	\$90,250	\$25,180	38.70%
Rents, Surplus and Refunds	\$1,231,236	\$1,318,733	\$1,135,912	\$1,115,180	\$1,134,650	\$1,040,090	-\$75,090	-6.73%
Other Miscellaneous Revenues	\$36,685	\$58,430	\$3,484	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Revenues Total	\$7,368,212	\$7,703,510	\$7,583,252	\$7,069,140	\$7,736,290	\$7,130,630	\$61,490	0.87%

Tree Bank Fund	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Request	\$ Change	% Change
Fines and Forfeitures	\$56,373	\$79,737	\$43,131	\$52,250	\$158,000	\$56,760	\$4,510	8.63%
Rents, Surplus and Refunds	\$0	\$17,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Revenues Total	\$56,373	\$96,737	\$43,131	\$52,250	\$158,000	\$56,760	\$4,510	8.63%

General Fund Revenues

General Fund revenues increased by \$61,490 or 0.87%, for FY22 and is driven by the following programs:

- The Visitor Services Program supports the safe maintenance for Pinellas County parks, preserves, and management areas for visitors.
 - Charges for Services increased by \$101,300, or 1.77%, and is driven by an agreement with Solid Waste for Sand Key Park reef rentals and recycling (\$93,100) and beach access parking fee revenues at Fort De Soto Park (\$38,000).
 - Fines and Forfeitures increased by \$25,180, or 38.70%, and is driven solely by revenues for parking fine violations issued by parking enforcement.
 - Rents, Surplus and Refunds decreased by -\$75,090, or -6.73%. This decrease was primarily driven by the removal of revenue at Fort De Soto Park (-\$39,360) due to the contract expiring with Tampa Pilots for FY22 and the removal of trailered boat storage at Sutherland Bayou Marina (-\$23,650), as noted below.
- The Education and Outreach Program supports education and research in the areas of natural resources and urban sustainability through access to programs, partnerships, and educational facilities.

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- Intergovernmental Revenue increased by \$10,100, or 6.43%, and is driven solely by an annual grant reimbursement for the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program that is issued by Tampa Bay Water (TBW). This reimbursement is dependent on TBW's annual budget and includes a historical increase, estimated to be 3.0% for FY22.

Changes in User Fees for FY22 include the removal of trailered boat storage at Sutherland Bayou Marina (-\$23,650) due to the project being relocated and the addition of camping permit fees for primitive youth groups at Fort De Soto Park and Wall Springs Park (\$4,680). Park Shelter Reservation fees shifted from a solid rate of \$25.00 per day (FY21) to a price range of \$25.00-\$100.00 per day (FY22) for all shelters including medium and large units.

Tree Bank Fund Revenues

Tree Bank Fund revenues increased by \$4,510, or 8.63% due to civil penalties (Ordinance 76-16) levied for the County's tree ordinance when trees are removed without being replaced when land is purchased for alternative uses.

Department Expenditures

General Fund	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Request	\$ Change	% Change
Personal Services	\$10,774,717	\$11,413,305	\$12,212,311	\$14,185,730	\$12,806,650	\$14,097,960	-\$87,770	-0.62%
Operating Expenses	\$6,956,566	\$6,982,269	\$7,859,404	\$8,096,680	\$7,821,121	\$8,024,880	-\$71,880	-0.89%
Capital Outlay	\$233,249	\$358,775	\$331,936	\$525,000	\$462,500	\$478,100	-\$46,900	-8.93%
Debt Service Exp	\$39,851	\$19,926	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Expenditures Total	\$18,004,384	\$18,774,275	\$20,403,651	\$22,807,410	\$21,090,271	\$22,600,940	-\$206,470	-0.91%

General Fund Expenditures

General Fund operating budget decreased by -\$206,470, or -0.91% for FY22 and is primarily driven by a reduction in Personal Services (-\$87,770, or -0.62%) due to the reallocation of staff hour costs to the Cityworks implementation and capital projects in the budget programs for Land Management and Administration, respectively.

- Visitor Services Program
 - Operating expenditures decreased by -\$71,800, or -0.89% due to a reduction of workers compensation claims (-\$185,320), primarily at Ft. De Soto Park, and a reduction in operating supplies (-\$79,050).
 - PCR managed 21.7 park, preserve, and environmental land acres per 1,000 Pinellas County residents in 2019 and that decreased to 21.5 acres in FY20 due to population growth. The majority of PCR's expenditures support the maintenance and

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preservation of Pinellas County's over 21,000 acres of parks, preserves, and environmental lands.

- PCR had an average cost of \$0.93 per visitor in FY20 which was 2.2% higher than FY19 and 1.1% lower than FY18.
 - Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) completed the Novak level of service (LOS) study in early May 2021. Following the completion of this study, PCR will be equipped with data and recommendations to define PCR's LOS for the first time since the department's creation in FY11. It will also support PCR with the development of meaningful performance measures that indicate the department's outcomes, efficiencies, and quality. The cost of the Novak LOS study was \$78,800.
 - PCR is currently expected to complete the Unincorporated Youth Recreation Master Plan in October 2021. It will include a conceptual plan for the integration of Seminole youth sports programs into a single representative organization. It also seeks to review current unincorporated youth recreation in Pinellas County and provide recommendations for future programs. PCR is expected to present these recommendations to the BCC in early 2022. Costs associated with this master plan are \$168,000 and include a consultant and consultant-provided unincorporated recreation models. This will be paid for out of the Deepwater Horizon Fund Study, which allocated \$286,000 for the unincorporated Seminole Master Plan.
 - The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (UF/IFAS) conducted a feasibility study in partnership with PCR to review and determine the viability of ecotourism in Pinellas County. UF/IFAS also identified resources to disseminate to Pinellas County tourism providers in an effort to encourage natural-based tourism opportunities and promote proper management. UF/IFAS presented the findings and resources to Visit St. Pete Clearwater (CVB). CVB is in the midst of developing a five-year strategic tourism plan and will include the findings of this study in their planning. Costs to PCR for this initiative are built into the budget through staff labor hours (personal services) and printing costs (operating expenses).
 - Capital Outlay reflects a decrease of -\$46,900, or -8.93%, and is driven primarily by the reduction in non-recurring equipment costs.
- The Volunteer Services Program supports the management of PCR volunteers.
 - This program decreased by -\$57,000, or -30.26% for FY22 due to a decrease in salary and benefits due to the realignment of 1.0 FTE to a different budget program. This decrease was partially offset by an increase in costs for modifications to the Keep Pinellas Beautiful contract.
 - The total estimated dollar value of PCR volunteer hours decreased by -49.3% in FY20 (FY20 total \$1.5M), when compared to FY19 (FY19 total \$3.0M) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decrease in hours has allowed PCR volunteer services staff to invest time in streamlining the program to focus on specific areas, such as campground hosts, Heritage Village docents, auxiliary rangers, and master gardeners.

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- Education & Outreach Program
 - This program decreased by -\$83,480, or -4.03% due to a decrease in salary and benefits due to the realignment of 1.0 FTE to a different budget program. This decrease was partially offset by an increase in costs for the 4H Youth Community Garden development and maintenance, University of Florida faculty contracts, risk management, and fleet operations and maintenance.
 - PCR is on track to develop a countywide Community Gardens Program by October 2021. It will create a plan that incorporates professional and community feedback. This program is expected to be self-supporting with no budgetary impact.

- The Land Management Program supports the protection of Pinellas County parks, environmental lands, and natural resources. It also supports the maintenance of landscaping for countywide properties.
 - This program increased by \$412,630, or 10.28% due to an inflationary increase in salary and benefits, the addition of a new mid-year horticulture operations contract and the addition of a storage shed for equipment storage at Brooker Creek.
 - The total number of environmental land acres staff were able to actively manage increased by 33.0% from 5,131 acres in FY19 to 7,653 acres in FY20. This increase was due to favorable weather conditions that allowed all contracted land thinning to be completed. The cost for the contracted work was built into the FY21 Budget.
 - The Integrated Vegetation Management Program initiative creates guidelines for chemical applications and other vegetative alternatives on Pinellas County properties. It was completed and unveiled to the public in April 2021 in support of Earth Week. Costs associated with this initiative are budgeted through staff labor hours.
 - The Nuisance Wildlife Management Policy was delayed due to Cityworks implementation project obligations but is on track to have a draft of procedures by May 2021. The policy is expected to be completed by June 2021. This initiative will develop standard operating procedures for dealing with nuisance wildlife (alligators, feral cats, hogs, raccoons, squirrels, etc.) in lands under PCR's dominion. Costs associated with this initiative are budgeted through staff labor hours.

Tree Bank Fund	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Request	\$ Change	% Change
Personal Services	\$33,233	\$68,114	\$69,088	\$70,530	\$69,000	\$69,000	-\$1,530	-2.17%
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$25,500	\$25,500	\$25,500	\$25,500	\$0	0.00%
Capital Outlay	\$29,290	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Reserves	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$146,650	\$0	\$192,140	\$45,490	31.02%
Expenditures Total	\$62,523	\$68,114	\$94,588	\$242,680	\$94,500	\$286,640	\$43,690	18.11%

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Tree Bank Fund Expenditures

Excluding Reserves, Tree Bank Fund operating budget decreased by -\$1,530, or -1.59%, for FY22 due to a slight reduction in medical benefits.

- Land Management Program
 - Operating Expenses remain consistent at \$25,500 based on an existing contract for exotic plant removal.

COVID-19 Operational Impacts

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) made several shifts in operations. In FY20 and FY21, personnel were reallocated to support the County Staging Area, testing sites, and vaccination sites. However, with several testing and vaccination sites closing in FY21, PCR does not anticipate reallocating staff in FY22. Special events were also suspended due to COVID-19 but resumed normal operations in April 2021. A permanent shift in operations, PCR ceased the sale of annual passes via concessionaires at Tarpon Springs and Ft. De Soto Park. This process has been centralized within PCR Administration and annual passes are now being sold via a reservation system. Departmental costs savings associated with this shift in operations are staff labor hours and volunteer hours.

Decision Packages

Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) is requesting three decision packages for FY22. Following the Novak levels of service (LOS) study, additional decision packages for FTE and equipment may be requested.

- **Cale Parking Meter Upgrade to 4G Network**
 - Request to upgrade parking meters from 3G network to 4G network for continuous and improved service due to the discontinuation of the current 3G network by both AT&T (February 2022) and T-Mobile (early 2022). This upgrade also provides advancements to mobile parking technology and license plate recognition, both of which enables and support the County's cashless initiative with improved fiscal controls. The anticipated net impact is \$140,300 for FY22 (non-recurring).
- **Cellular Service Procurement for Tablets**
 - The department is going live with Cityworks (enterprise asset management (EAM)) in FY22. The current department tablets do not have cellular service which is required for application usage via a secured connection, thus the need for cellular service to be installed on 50 IPAD devices. The anticipated net impact is \$21,640 for FY22 (recurring).
- **License Plate Recognition Fee Enforcement**
 - Implementation of an enforcement software solution to collect parking fees more efficiently, alleviate the long lines at Fort De Soto Park, and improve patron convenience at Sand Key Park, Fred Howard Park, and the County boat ramps.

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There is an estimated net impact of \$250,000 for software installation for FY22 (non-recurring) and an estimated \$25,000 in annual recurring operating costs starting in FY23. The exact budgetary impact is unknown at the time and will require a request for proposal (RFP) specific to Pinellas County.

- **Novak LOS Study Recommendations:**
 - As noted above, additional resources may be incorporated into the Proposed Budget based on recommendations from the Novak LOS study.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – PCR Performance Summary Dashboard

Attachment 2 – PCR Budget Reports

Attachment 3 – PCR User Fees

Attachment 4 – PCR Organizational Chart

Attachment 5 – PCR Decision Packages