

Parks and Conservation Resources

Department Purpose: To maintain and protect the inherent value of the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the County through access, education, and stewardship that enhances the quality of life for the community and future generations.

Services include maintaining County parks, preserves and other county land through land management and trades work; monitors beach and water safety and provides visitor services to citizens. The department provides horticulture and sustainability education to the public through its County Extension office. The activities of the Parks and Conservation Resources Department (PCR) align closely with the BCC strategic goals to Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship and Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality.

Performance Summary:

- Following FY19 Budget discussions, an initiative was launched to evaluate and define levels of service (LOS) related to the operation and maintenance of the County's parks. A preliminary report providing a high-level overview of findings to date and recommendations for immediate action has been provided as an attachment. This is intended to support efforts to address known gaps while data collection is completed to support a full analysis and comprehensive recommendations, anticipated in July.

COVID-19 Performance Impacts

- Early in the current fiscal year, staff increased utilization of contracted resources to allow the department to exceed its goal of maintaining and treating 5,200 acres of park and preserve land. With COVID-19, the priority for PCR staff is now increased sanitization of facilities and park equipment and this has reduced staff capabilities for addressing invasive plant species in the parks and preserves.
- Increased sanitization measures, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), and employee social distancing requirements are likely to cause a per acre increase in operating costs, but this expense should be offset by reduced activity and expenses in other program areas within the department.
- Most work plan items are not directly impacted by COVID-19, the exceptions being the finalization of the Integrated Vegetation Management Plan which was impacted by social distancing measures in place in mid-March and the BCC update on Unincorporated Recreation Work Session, which has been postponed to later in the year.
- The most significant COVID-19 impact to date is decreased revenue collections, especially through beach parking fees and campground and picnic shelter reservation fees. Estimated revenue losses to date compared to FY19 are approximately \$1.3M.

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Opportunities for Efficiencies:

- In FY21, the department will explore newer technology in the area of parking management to reduce capital costs for parking meter replacement and reduce the amount of staff time dedicated to parking enforcement. This may include license plate readers for park vehicles to make enforcement more efficient; and pay by plate software to reduce the number of meters needed for park patrons. The department currently maintains 43 parking meters at beach parks and boat ramps which are nearing their end of life. Total capital replacement cost is estimated at approximately \$600,000 and new technology could be implemented at a fraction of the cost.
- The department is preparing a realignment proposal with the primary goal of placing more personnel in front line positions, particularly in the areas of horticultural and facility maintenance. The overall effect would be to reduce annual personnel costs, increase accountability, and increase staff visibility in PCR facilities.

Decision Packages:

Three decision packages requested for FY21:

- The department proposes to upgrade a part-time Education Specialist at Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Education Center to full-time status at a net impact of \$42,450 to assist in educational programming, volunteer management, and building security. This position upgrade would match staffing currently in place at Brooker Creek Preserve Education Center and is being requested with the support of the Friends of Weedon Island.
- The Horticultural program is proposing to convert a contractual position, which has been in place for over three years, into a full-time permanent position, with a net impact of \$34,600. The position supplements the mowing and landscaping functions at Fort De Soto Park to better address patrons' level of service expectations at the park.
- As part of the implementation of the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) program, the department seeks to add a full-time GIS analyst position to support efficient operations, research, and enterprise metrics that are consistent with industry asset management best practices. The position was identified as part of the EAM program architecture and would have a total FY21 impact of \$93,140.

Budget Summary:

PCR is supported by two funds: General Fund and Tree Bank Fund, with 62.1% of its FY21 budget allocated to Personal Services. The General Fund is the primary funding source for the department's activities.

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The Tree Bank Fund was created by the Board of County Commissioners, Pinellas County Code, Section 166-57, for the purpose of acquisition and maintenance of native vegetative communities within the county.

Expenditures

	FY17 Actual	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Budget	FY20 Estimate	FY21 Request
Personal Services	\$10,382,782	\$10,774,717	\$11,413,305	\$13,421,340	\$13,103,582	\$14,095,590
Operating Expenses	\$6,344,361	\$6,956,566	\$6,982,269	\$8,406,160	\$8,046,293	\$8,093,680
Capital Outlay	\$316,609	\$233,249	\$358,775	\$540,200	\$508,500	\$525,000
Debt Service	\$0	\$39,851	\$19,926	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
Total General Fund	\$17,053,752	\$18,004,384	\$18,774,275	\$22,407,700	\$21,658,375	\$22,714,270

	FY17 Actual	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Budget	FY20 Estimate	FY21 Request
Personal Services	\$0	\$33,233	\$68,114	\$72,770	\$47,428	\$70,530
Operating Expenses	\$42,906	\$0	\$0	\$25,500	\$25,500	\$25,500
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$29,290	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Reserves	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$87,570	\$0	\$161,140
Total Tree Bank Fund	\$42,906	\$62,523	\$68,114	\$185,840	\$72,928	\$257,170

Staffing Summary:

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Total FTE	171.0	179.0	181.0	181.0	183.1

Expenditure Budget Highlights:

General Fund

- Total expenses for PCR in the General Fund are increasing in the FY21 Request by \$306,570 (1.4%) to \$22.7M.
 - Personal Services increase by \$674,250 (5.0%) to \$14.1M.
 - FTE increase by 2.1 to 183.1.
 - Operating expenses decrease by \$312,480 (3.7%) to \$8.1M

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- Charges for the department's fleet replacement decreases by \$164,400 (15.2%).
- Operating Supplies decreases by \$125,920 (11.6%).
- Capital outlay decreases by \$15,200 (2.8%) to \$525,000.
 - Includes costs to add & replace various pieces of equipment that are not currently in the County's vehicle replacement program.

Tree Bank Fund

- Total expenses for PCR in the Tree Bank Fund are decreasing in the FY21 Request by \$2,240 (2.3%) to \$96,030.
 - Personal Services decrease by \$2,240 (3.1%) to \$96,030.
 - Reserves in the Tree Bank Fund increase by \$73,570 (84.0%) to \$161,140.

Revenues:

	FY17 Actual	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Budget	FY20 Estimate	FY21 Request
Intergov. Revenue	\$270,455	\$147,260	\$231,599	\$152,000	\$157,000	\$157,000
Charges for Services	\$6,023,352	\$5,922,642	\$5,942,482	\$5,756,950	\$5,016,890	\$5,731,890
Fines & Forfeitures	\$27,815	\$30,389	\$101,059	\$16,150	\$75,000	\$65,070
Rents, Surplus, and Refunds	\$828,220	\$1,231,236	\$1,175,720	\$1,175,720	\$1,169,950	\$1,111,570
Misc. Revenue	\$87,239	\$36,103	\$81,700	\$81,700	\$4,200	\$3,610
Total Revenue – General Fund	\$7,237,081	\$7,367,630	\$7,182,520	\$7,182,520	\$6,423,710	\$7,069,140

	FY17 Actual	FY18 Actual	FY19 Actual	FY20 Budget	FY20 Estimate	FY21 Request
Fines & Forfeitures	\$3,466	\$56,373	\$79,737	\$55,100	\$60,600	\$52,250
Rents, Surplus, and Refunds	\$61,036	\$0	\$17,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue – Tree Bank Fund	\$64,502	\$56,373	\$96,737	\$55,100	\$60,600	\$52,250

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User Fee Changes:

User Fee Description	FY20 Fee	FY21 Proposed Fee	Net Revenue Impact	Reason for Change
Park Road Closure	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$500 per request	Offset losses & reduce the number of requests
Campground - Area 1	\$30 - \$40 per night/site	\$32 - \$45 per night	\$122,840 - \$307,090	Market adjustment
Campground - Area 2	\$35 - \$45 per night/site	\$37 - \$50 per night		
Reservation Cancellation	\$30 - \$45 per cancellation	\$32 - \$50 per cancellation	\$1,200 - \$3,000	Market adjustment
Beach Access Parks- Parking Meters	Up to \$2 per hour	Up to \$2.50 per hour	\$51,820	Increase fee range to match local area fees

Revenue Budget Highlights:

- Total PCR generated revenues are decreasing in the FY21 Request by \$116,230 (1.6%) to \$7.1M.
 - General Fund revenues account for 99.3% of this amount.
 - Intergovernmental revenues, which include grants, increase by \$5,000 (3.3%) to \$157,000.
 - Charges for Services decreases by \$25,060 (0.4%) to \$5.7M.
 - These revenues include camping and shelter rental fees, beach parking fees, and boat ramp fees.
 - Due to COVID-19, the County closed many of its beaches and campground for more than seven weeks. These closures occurred during the busiest time of the year, Spring Break. It is projected that the cost of these closures will exceed \$1.0M in lost revenue in FY20.
 - Fines & Forfeitures increases by \$48,920 (302.9%) to \$65,070.
 - Rents, Surplus, and Refunds decreases by \$64,150 (5.5%) to \$1.1M.
 - Miscellaneous revenues decrease by \$78,090 (95.6%) to \$3,610.
 - Tree Bank Fund revenue decreases by \$2,850 (5.2%) to \$52,250.