



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

---

File #: 22-0182A, Version: 1

---

### **Subject:**

2022 Weedon Island Preserve Management Plan Update as required by two Lease Agreements with the State of Florida Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval of the 2022 Weedon Island Management Plan Update (Plan) as required by the lease agreements with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) State of Florida Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.

- Lease agreements require the Weedon Island properties be managed: "only for the conservation and protection of natural and historical resources and for resource-based public outdoor recreation with is compatible with the conservation and protection of these public lands."
- FDEP requires the Plan be updated every 10 years.
- The previous Plan was updated and approved in June 2012.
- FDEP requires public input of the draft Plan at an advertised public meeting.
- The Weedon Island Preserve Advisory Group held the required public meeting on January 14, 2022 and has approved the Plan for submittal to FDEP.
- The Plan will be reviewed by FDEP's Acquisition and Restoration Council for approval on June 10, 2022.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship

3.2 Preserve and manage environmental lands, beaches, parks, and historical assets

### **Summary:**

The Parks and Conservation Resources Department (PCR) has developed a draft of the 2022 Weedon Island Key Preserve Management Plan Update, which has been reviewed by the WIPAG and interested citizens. The Plan details management goals and objectives necessary to provide sound stewardship and protection of natural communities and historical resources at Weedon Island Preserve. There are no substantive changes to the existing management goals and objectives in place now.

### **Background Information:**

The County entered into Agreement Number 3985 in June 1993 and Agreement Number 3376 in September 1995 for management of Weedon Island Preserve and the conservation and protection of natural and historical resources and for resource-based public outdoor activities and education.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

Excluding the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the projected annual cost to operate

and maintain Weedon Island Preserve is \$745,000.00 (FY23-FY31) (Attachment 1, pg. 65, Table 9). Funding support for management of the Preserve is provided through PCR's general operating budget which includes salaries and all equipment for prescribed burning, exotic vegetation management, education, safety and security, and maintenance to existing facilities including recreational facilities and trails. The Tree Bank Fund is also used to help fund restoration projects.

Regarding CIP, restoration efforts are funded through the County's CIP funds (Penny for Pinellas) and grants and facility improvements are provided through the County's CIP funds. There are two Weedon Island Preserve CIP projects, Project 000083A - Weedon Island Preserve Salt Marsh Restoration (Attachment 3, page 1) and Project 004174A - Education Center Display Replacement at Nature Preserves (Attachment 3, page 2). Project 000083A - Weedon Island Preserve Salt Marsh Restoration also includes Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) grant funding.

Revenue generated from Rental Concession Services at Weedon Island is expected to be \$60,000.00 per year through FY31 (Attachment 1, pg. 64). The money generated from canoe and kayak rentals goes into the County general operating fund and is not used directly to facilitate the restoration or management of these lands.

No negative budgetary impacts are anticipated as a result of continuing the Management Plan.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Dr. Steven Harper, Division Manager  
Paul Cozzie, Director, Parks and Conservation Resources

**Partners:**

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Southwest Florida Water Management District  
Weedon Island Preserve Advisory Group

**Attachments:**

2022 Weedon Island Preserve Management Plan  
Appendixes for Weedon Island Preserve Management Plan  
CIP Project Budget Detail Report