

Turnbull Creek Land Preservation Committee



FINAL REPORT

Report Date		Prepared By
July 24, 2024		TCC Members

Members: Lamont Ingalls, Cathleen Planson, Robert Werner and Chip Weston

Chair: DONNA ATHEARN

Objectives/Goals:

- DETERMINE PRIORITY PROPERTIES TO APPROACH FOR THE CITY LAND PURCHASES ALONG THE TURNBULL CREEK.
- LOCATE GRANT SOURCES FOR THE CITY TO PURSUE TO ASSIST WITH CLEARING DEBRIS BLOCKING FLOW OF THE CREEK FROM MISSION ROAD NORTH TO HOLLAND PARK.
- LOCATE INTERESTED PARTIES TO COMBINE EFFORTS FOR THE CLEAN OUT PROJECT.
- LOCATE FUNDING FOR CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF THE CREEK WITH REGARDS TO REMOVAL OF INVASIVE PLANTS.
- FIND FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LAND USE OF THE CREEK WITH REGARDS TO EXPANDING THE CITY ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL.
- OBTAIN INTEREST FROM FEDERAL AND STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOURCES FOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.
- SEARCH FOR FURTHER CONSERVATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Summary of Accomplishments/Current Activities:

- **DETERMINE PRIORITY PROPERTIES TO APPROACH FOR THE CITY LAND PURCHASES ALONG THE TURNBULL CREEK.**

Under the current bond issue, Ron Neibert, Assistant City Manager, is looking to negotiate for the purchase of a key parcel of 10 acres, with 30% being buildable lots, at the northeast corner of Paige and the Turnbull Creek. Thinking forward to an eco-tourism plan, this location would make an excellent place for the addition of a historic park tour of the Creek history, or an inner tube pick up location.

- **LOCATE GRANT SOURCES FOR THE CITY TO PURSUE TO ASSIST WITH CLEARING DEBRIS BLOCKING FLOW OF THE CREEK FROM MISSION ROAD NORTH TO HOLLAND PARK.**

This was accomplished when the city agreed to the USDA opportunity for a 75% cost share program under the Emergency Watershed Management Program that provided money to remove hurricane debris and blockages from the creek and allow better water flow from Mission Road north along the creek to SR44. An amount of 1.3 million was approved for this scope of work by the City Commission in June 2023.

- **LOCATE INTERESTED PARTIES TO COMBINE EFFORTS FOR THE CLEAN OUT PROJECT.**

Committee member Donna Athearn met with the Volusia County Soil and Water Management Board in Deland and found several opportunities for partnerships with their group for publicity, county financial opportunities, volunteers for maintenance and restoration opportunities with historical grants.

- **LOCATE FUNDING FOR CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF THE CREEK WITH REGARDS TO REMOVAL OF INVASIVE PLANTS.**

USDANR officer, Brian Zelinski, may also continue to help with engineering assistance and locating funding grants through USDA for the removal of Brazilian pepper plants blocking the opened flow of the Turnbull creek.

FIND FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LAND USE OF THE CREEK WITH REGARDS TO EXPANDING THE CITY ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL.

Florida Agritourism opportunities may be available for using some areas under a lease agreement for farming around Turnbull Creek. Crops like sugarcane and syrup production that it once supported. More may be found with commercial beekeepers and hobby beekeepers, also wetland agricultural opportunities such as caladiums or ferns.

- **FIND FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LAND USE OF THE CREEK WITH REGARDS TO EXPANDING THE CITY ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL.**
- **SEARCH FOR FURTHER CONSERVATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

Financial Impacts:

The purchases of land along the creek thus far are about 9 million of the 15 million dollars that voters approved. There is still a large amount of opportunity for more sections south of Paige, where large tracks of vacant areas exist, on both sides of the creek.

North of the creek is a 7.63 acre that connects to Holland Park where more can be cleared of debris and used as nature trails for expanding ecotourism expansion.

Recommendations:

SUGGEST THAT THE CITY COMMISSION DIRECT THE CITY MANAGER TO DELEGATE A STAFF MEMEBER/DIVISION TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- **LOCATE GRANT SOURCES FOR THE CITY TO PURSUE TO ASSIST WITH CLEARING DEBRIS BLOCKING FLOW OF THE CREEK FROM JUNGLE ROAD NORTH TO HOLLAND PARK**

Providing a more open flow in the creek tidal waters, the area will benefit by providing more canoe and tubing opportunity for residents and visitors to the park to “enjoy the creek in our back yard”. This recommendation also looks into grants that can assist with fitting bigger and wider openings to increase flow under Mission Road, Jungle Road, and Pioneer Trail.

- **LOCATE INTERESTED PARTIES TO COMBINE EFFORTS FOR CONTINUING CLEAN OUT PROJECT.**

Volusia County Soil and Water Management Board is a wide source of information, and they hold meetings on the 4th Wednesday of each month at the ag center in Deland. This group is very interested in preserving what small sections of nature we have left, and they have a wealth of knowledge in their group as well as sources for funding and volunteering. It is Recommended to getting involved on a regular attendance with them and getting to know who they know.

- **FIND FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LAND USE OF THE CREEK WITH REGARDS TO EXPANDING THE CITY ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL.**

Wetland farming is supported by several agriculture associations. More can be found at Florida Agritourism Associates, PO Box 15878, Tallahassee, Fl 32317, (850)854-5355. The USDA supports many farms’ interests and assists farmers to be able to continue crop production lands. Lease opportunities may be available for the city to keep the lands occupied with active farming of sugarcane, cane syrup production with larger sugar producers, wetland farm crops like ferns and ornamental plants, and commercial beekeeping. This could also provide money to continue the maintenance and land improvements needed periodically along the creek.

- **SEARCH FOR FURTHER CONSERVATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

WE ALSO RECOMMEND CONTINUING TO INCLUDE DEVELOPING A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR THE TURNBULL CONSERVATION LANDS AS PART OF THE ANNUAL CITY COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN UNDER QUALITY OF LIFE MEASURES.

WE RECOMMEND ADDING THE CONTINUING EFFORTS FOR THE TURNBULL BAY AS PART OF THE ANNUAL CITY COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN UNDER ENVIRONMENT & RESILIENCY.

Miscellaneous: