

Railhead Scrub Preserve 10 Year Land Management Plan Update Public Meeting Summary

A public meeting was held on December 18, 2023 from 5:30-6:30pm at the Sugden Theatre located within the Collier County Library Headquarters Branch. The meeting was provided in hybrid fashion allowing for both in-person and zoom participation. Five neighbors of the preserve were in attendance. The following details a summary of questions and feedback provided to Conservation Collier staff.

Veteran's Memorial Blvd Comments: Meeting participants indicated interest in attending this meeting to learn about updates and information regarding the future Veteran's Memorial Blvd Extension project. Participants requested information regarding the conceptual project footprint and timeline for engineering and construction. Staff conveyed information provided by the Transportation Department and informed participants of upcoming opportunities to participate in public meetings directly related to the road construction project.

Trespass/Security Comments: Meeting participants shared feedback with trespass/security concerns in the area of the Railhead Scrub Preserve, noting observations of off-road vehicle trespass and historic burglary/theft incidents in the residential developments east of the preserve. Staff outlined the current and future efforts to reduce and respond to regional security issues and provided context for the current challenges of securing the site. Residents along the eastern boundary noted that instances of burglaries and late-night noise complaints of off-road trespassers have reduced following the completion of the Phase 1 Veteran's Memorial Blvd Extension. Participants who manage property within the industrial complex along the western boundary of the preserve expressed concerns about trespassers parking at their workplace. Staff provided an update on the recent law enforcement arrests and observations of significant reduction in trespass activity within the previous 4-months following enhanced monitoring and fencing investment.

Wildlife Management Comments: Meeting participants shared awareness and appreciation for most wildlife observations within the area surrounding the preserve and noted their value. One member of the public expressed experiencing on-going conflict with Florida black bear and interest in securing a bear-resistant dumpster to assist with the individuals existing efforts to secure the attractant. Staff provided contact information and will be following up with the regional FWC bear biologist to provide resources and support to the preserve neighbor.

Conceptual Public Access Comments: Meeting participants inquired about the type of public access that will be provided in future years at the preserve and confirmed that the timeline would coincide with road extensions development and completion. Staff provided information about conceptual trail design and amenities.

Prescribed Fire Comments: Staff provided presentation materials about the Prescribed fire program and the upcoming plans to complete small acreage prescribed burns at the site. Staff provided information that additional public presentations and meetings would be available for preserve neighbors along with additional mailing notifications of upcoming burns. Participants were familiar with prescribed burning and indicated interest in having public meetings at their communities to increase education and awareness of the upcoming management activities.

