

Outlook

"Your project. Our passion."

GRANT MONEY HELPS RESTORE OUR ADOPTED PARK

It's a bouncing baby...pine rockland?!? That's right, Johnson Engineering is the proud adoptive parent of the Seminole Wayside Park. We have taken this 30-acre picnic area and nature preserve of pine rockland and transitional rockland hammock plant communities under our wing and plan to restore it over the next year using grant funding obtained by our ecologists.

The Seminole Wayside was acquired in 1936 and is one of Miami-Dade County's oldest parks, rich in history, including a remnant coral rock wall along the eastern edge that was constructed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration.



Pine rocklands are home to many species that are not found anywhere else in the world. Without appropriate land management, these unique species are being eradicated.

In 2011, Johnson Engineering ecologist Sarah Webber met Jane Dozier with Miami-Dade County's Natural Area Management (NAM) department during a volunteer python surveying event. Their discussion about unique Florida habitats led to explaining how the beautiful pine rockland at Seminole Wayside was being overrun by exotic hardwoods due to lack of management funding. Within a week of their conversation, Johnson Engineering made the decision to adopt this park and begin the critical mission of restoration.

Pine rocklands represent a unique and incredibly diverse plant community, which supports many federal and state listed plants and animals. The natural areas of Seminole Wayside Park occur on the Miami Rock Ridge, which is an ancient natural geologic formation that extends from just north of present-day downtown Miami into Everglades National Park. Prior to South Florida's urban

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

A quarterly publication by:



Winter 2013

In This Issue:

Adopting Seminole Wayside Park for Restoration



2014 Brings New CUPCON Rules - Are You Ready?



New Lakeland Office Opens in January



FGCU Endowment Scholarship Recipient



Collier MPO Seeks Safer Streets



PEOPLE & PROJECTS: ON THE MOVE



Erik Howard, P.E., P.S.M.
on our utility team is now a dual licensed engineer, earning his State of Florida professional surveying and mapping (P.S.M.) license.



Josh Hildebrand, P.E.
transportation engineer, has earned his Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE) certification.



Jonathan Wadas, P.E.
water resources team, has recently earned his State of Florida Professional Engineering (P.E.) license.

development, over 185,000 acres of pine rockland existed along the Miami Rock Ridge. Today only about 1,600 acres remain in public ownership outside of Everglades National Park, making preservation and management of these areas ever more critical.

These unique communities are designated as critically globally imperiled and are home to many endemic species, meaning these species do not occur anywhere else in the world. Similar to pine rockland habitats, rockland hammocks are also designated globally imperiled, and once occupied approximately 7% of the rock ridge; today only 670 acres remain in county preserves.

The 1,600-acres of pine rockland habitat remaining in Miami-Dade County, is composed by hundreds of small habitat fragments, of which the average size is only 12.1 acres. Therefore, the Seminole Wayside represents a significantly sized pine rockland at 27-acres. Previous surveys of the park documented 27 rare, threatened, or endangered plant species. Federally listed species observed on the property include the federally endangered Small's milkpea, as well as federal candidate species the pineland sandmat, and the Florida brickell-bush. Of the 27 protected plant species documented within the Seminole Wayside, nine species are endemic, occurring only in the pine rocklands of Southeast Florida and nowhere else on the planet.

Pine rocklands and associated habitats are fire dependent communities. In the absence of fire, these habitats can become overgrown choking out many of the unique plants. Unfortunately, due to the economic downturn and budget cuts the County has had no money for land management activities within the park since 2006. As a result, many exotic and native hardwoods have started encroaching on the native areas. The overgrowth and central urban location has also resulted in homeless inhabitants, which has in turn caused the surrounding residential community to view the park negatively.

Over the past year and a half, Johnson Engineering has been busy writing grant proposals to help kick start the habitat restoration efforts and increase community involvement in the park's restoration. Early this summer, we were notified that we received a three-year grant through the Florida Forest Service's Endangered and Threatened Plant Conservation Program, in addition to another grant through Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Invasive Plant Management Section. The FWC grant will provide a much needed initial invasive plant treatment including invasive hardwood removal from the site. We will then be able to maximize the benefits from this grant through the Forest Service's grant, which will allow for maintenance treatments, prescribed burns, and supplemental planting, as well as development of educational literature and community outreach events to help increase community support of the park.

Johnson Engineering will be providing matching contributions for the grant in the form of in-house

surveying, delineating habitat boundaries to monitor and prevent hardwood encroachment, maintenance treatments, and hundreds of volunteer hours and grant writing.

Together with the County, FWC, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as many other important partners, Johnson Engineering is hoping to restore the critically imperiled habitat over the next year and turn around community support for the Seminole Wayside Park by this time next year.

For more information contact Sarah Webber at 954.626.0123 or sweber@johnsoneng.com. ■



Small's milkpea is endemic to the pine rocklands of Miami-Dade County.

ARE YOU READY FOR 2014 PERMITTING CHANGES?

Water use permitting within the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) may look a lot different in 2014, if the latest round of proposed statewide Consumptive Use Permitting Consistency (CUPCON) rule revisions go into effect the first part of the year. The new rules would create two categories of water use permits, Individual and General, rather than the multiple categories that exist currently.

Under the proposed rules, small uses will be eligible for a General Permit by Rule. These uses include single family residential irrigation, short term dewatering of less than 5 MGD with no off-site discharge (similar to 90-day No-Notice permit), and closed-loop systems, such as used for pool heating.



Projects eligible for Noticed General Permits include consumptive uses less than 100,000 GPD. Uses greater than 100,000 GPD and all dewatering projects that do not qualify for the General Permit by Rule must obtain an Individual Permit. However, the use of selected surface water and groundwater sources in designated geographic regions will be subject to lower thresholds for use of the Noticed General Permit. Withdrawals from the Lake Istokpoga and Indian Prairie Creek canal systems, Lower East Coast Everglades water bodies, and

North Palm Beach County/Loxahatchee River Watershed water bodies will require Individual Permits for uses of any size. Uses greater than 10,000 GPD from the Lower Tamiami aquifer in coastal southern Lee and northern Collier Counties, from the Sandstone aquifer throughout most of Lee and western Hendry Counties, and from the Mid-Hawthorn aquifer in most of Lee and northern Collier Counties will also fall under the category of an Individual Permit. The existing consumptive use permitting rules classify withdrawals from these sources as either Minor (less than 100,000 GPD) or Major General (between 100,000 and 500,000 GPD) permits.

The SFWMD has published revised portions of the Florida Administrative Code, Applicant's Handbook (FKA Basis of Review), and permit application and reporting forms to reflect the rule changes, which can be found on the SFWMD's web site. Many of the other Water Management Districts have done likewise.

The Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) began the statewide CUPCON effort in 2011 to improve consistency in the Consumptive/Water Use Permitting Programs implemented by the Water Management Districts. The Department's stated goals include making permitting more applicant-friendly and efficient, especially for those in multiple districts; promoting equitable treatment among applicants; providing consistent environmental protection; and incentivizing water conservation.

For more information contact Kim Arnold, P.G. at 239.461.3329 or karnold@johnsoneng.com. ■



NEW LAKELAND OFFICE OPENS IN JANUARY 2014

We are excited to announce the opening of our company's 9th office in Florida. The office located at 609 Mid Florida Drive, Suite 4, Lakeland, FL 33813, is the perfect central location which will allow us to better serve our clients within Polk County and surrounding areas. ■

FURTHERING EDUCATION

At this year's Florida Gulf Coast University President's Scholarship luncheon, one of our development design team members, Ryan Scott was recognized as the 2012-2013 recipient of the Johnson Engineering Endowed Scholarship. In 2005, Johnson Engineering established this scholarship to assist FGCU students in furthering their education. ■



Outlook

JOHNSON
ENGINEERING



Volume 40, Issue 45

PRSR STD
US Postage Paid
Permit #808
Ft. Myers FL

Office Locations

Corporate Headquarters
2122 Johnson Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

2350 Stanford Court
Naples, FL 34112

18501 Murdock Circle, Suite 404
Port Charlotte, FL 33948

17221 Camelot Court, Suite 101
Land O'Lakes, FL 34638

251 W. Hickpochee Avenue
LaBelle, FL 33935

9200 US Hwy 27 South, Suite A
Sebring, FL 33876

201 S. Berner Road, #3
Clewiston, FL 33440

6941 SW 196th Avenue, Suite 32
Pembroke Pines, FL 33332

609 Mid Florida Drive, Suite 4
Lakeland, FL 33813

Comments, questions or to receive future newsletters electronically, e-mail mkt@johnsoneng.com.
© 2009 by Johnson Engineering, Inc. All rights reserved. No materials or photographs in this publication may be reproduced without written permission from Johnson Engineering.

1.866.367.4400

www.johnsonengineering.com

Engineers | Surveyors | Planners | Ecologists | Landscape Architects | Geologists | Scientists



COLLIER MPO SEEKS SAFER STREETS

Southwest Florida communities are encouraging the creation of Complete Streets in which roads are designed to accommodate all users including those who walk, bike, drive, or ride the bus. With multiple people using today's transportation system, it's a top priority to make it safe. As a result, the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is conducting a study to evaluate pedestrian and bicyclist safety data.

The Federal Highway Administration estimates that only about 75% of hospitalized victims of pedestrian and bicyclist crashes with motor vehicles are identified with an official motor vehicle crash report. Since crash reports are the primary source of data, collected locally and at the state level, the Collier MPO and its Pathways Advisory Committee have concerns reported pedestrian and bicyclist crashes might not tell the whole safety story.

The Collier MPO recognizes the importance of these "untold stories" of crashes and near misses for evaluating safety. Therefore, our planning team helped the MPO develop a survey so the walking and bicycling public could share their experiences and identify their safety concerns. The survey was made available in English and Spanish, and was distributed in several ways to reach as many people as possible: online, on-the-ground intercepts, at public facilities, and at community events.

The results of the study affirmed there are more incidents than meet the eye. Those surveyed indicated that in the past five years, 47% had been in a collision or were forced from their path while bicycling or walking; and of these incidents, 86% were not reported to law enforcement. By bringing the locations and circumstances of these incidents to light, the MPO can now more thoroughly evaluate pedestrian and bicyclist safety issues and recommend optimal strategies to help drivers, walkers, bus riders and bicyclists travel safely in Collier County.

For more information contact Laura DeJohn, AICP at ldejohn@johnsoneng.com. ■

