



INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA  
AGENDA ITEM  
Assistant County Administrator /  
Department of General Services

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Date: February 28, 2018

To: The Honorable Board of County Commissioners

Thru: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

Thru: Michael C. Zito, Assistant County Administrator

From: Beth Powell, Conservation Lands Manager

Subject: Notice of Application for FDEP Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for Public Access Improvements to the Hallstrom Farmstead Conservation Area

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**DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITIONS:**

The Hallstrom Farmstead Conservation Area is located in southeastern Indian River County on Old Dixie Highway, south of Oslo Road and just west of US Highway 1. The 93-acre project area was purchased in November 2002 from Hallstrom Properties, Inc. and the St. Lucie Development Corporation in 3 parcels. Indian River County was awarded a 75% cost-share grant from the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) for the purchase of the Conservation Area. The purchase price and associated expenditures to acquire the site was approximately \$2.1M.

The conservation area includes the remaining privately-owned area of the historic Hallstrom Farmstead and adjacent areas of sand pine scrub, maritime hammock, scrubby flatwoods and bottomland forest in need of protection and restoration. In combination, the natural and cultural resources existing on the property provide opportunities for natural community restoration efforts by the County, and cultural resource preservation activities by the County and the Indian River County Historical Society (IRCHS), with joint efforts to provide public access, recreation and educational programs.

The Hallstrom residence and five acres of the historic farmstead are located near the center of the County acquisition. The IRCHS owns the five-acre core historic site; the Society and the County are working in partnership to plan and manage the stewardship of the historic farmstead and the adjacent natural areas. On March 10, 2018, from 11am to 4pm, the IRCHS will be celebrating the Hallstrom Farmstead's 100 Year Birthday Party. The public is invited. More information may be found at [www.irchistorical.org](http://www.irchistorical.org).

The FCT Grant Agreement contains several Special Management Conditions which are included in the Management Plan. Conditions that are addressed in the current work items include the development of two or more resource-based outdoor recreation facilities including a nature trail and outdoor classroom/picnic facility, and establishment of a pervious parking area that has minimal

impact on natural resources. A copy of the Special Management Conditions of the FCT Agreement are included as Attachment A.

### **The Project:**

On May 9, 2017 the Board of County Commissioners approved Work Order #5 which provided funding to MBV Engineering to develop Master Plans depicting public use improvements to three conservation areas, including the Hallstrom Farmstead Conservation Area. MBV work to be completed includes site planning, design and permitting for pedestrian paths, parking, restroom facilities, water and sewer utilities, driveway modifications, minor drainage with swales and culverts (where applicable), sidewalks and ADA access to bathroom facilities where applicable. MBV is providing site survey (provided by others), permitting and bidding services as related to the above activities.

This grant will leverage existing funding outlined in the County's Five Year Capital Improvements for Conservation Lands to construct the restrooms, parking, picnic pavilion and walking trail required to meet conditions of the FCT Grant Agreement. Currently, MBV is preparing a site plan and cost estimate which will be included in the grant application. Acceptance of the grant and scope of work, if awarded, will be subject to Board approval.

### **FUNDING:**

The Board approved increased funding for access improvements in December 2015, through an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan's Capital Improvements Element and updated the County's 5 Year Capital Improvements Program Schedule to allocate \$2.9 million dollars over a five-year period to be utilized toward public access improvements on conservation lands. Due to historical structures on site, ability to apply for matching grants, partnership and interest from the IRCHS, and public interest in this conservation area, the Hallstrom farmstead has been identified as high priority for public use improvements.

On December 5, 2017, the Board approved funding for access improvements through an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan's Capital Improvements Element as follows:

*For conservation capital projects, the focus is on improvements to conservation lands. Those improvements include construction of passive recreational access facilities such as boardwalks, and stabilization/preservation of historic structures. The projects will be funded from environmental land bonds, grants, optional sales tax, boating improvement funds, upland mitigation funds, secondary roads, Windsor property exchange donation, and park impact fees. The total expenditure amount for the projects within this category for fiscal years 2017/18 through 2021/22 is \$4,450,000, representing 1.41% of the overall CIP. Staff Report Dated November 27, 2017, to Jason Brown from Bill Schutt. The parking and restroom facilities for the Hallstrom Farmstead Conservation Area are included in Appendix A of the Five-year Schedule of Capital Improvements, adopted December 5, 2017.*

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) is a competitive program that provides grants for acquiring or developing land for public outdoor recreational use. The LWCF is a reimbursement grant program administered by the Florida Department of Environmental protection (FDEP). Grant funds may be used for outdoor recreation facilities such as picnic areas, trails, ballfields and support facilities such as restrooms and parking. The maximum grant amount is

\$200,000.00, and requires a 50% match by the County. The grant application must be postmarked by March 26, 2018. Grantees are allowed up to three years from the effective date of the agreement to complete development projects. Should the grant be awarded, funding would not be available for approximately 1 year. Funding outlined in the County's Five Year Capital Improvements program Schedule to construct the restrooms and parking at the Hallstrom Farmstead is \$150,000.

In 2003, Indian River County successfully applied for and received funding from the LWCF for the improvements made to the North Sebastian Conservation Area. The project was completed in 2008, and the County was awarded \$103,000 for the improvements under the grant award.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends authorizing staff to prepare and submit an application to FDEP for the LWCF Grant to provide funding for the construction of parking, restrooms, trails, and a picnic pavilion at the Hallstrom Farmstead Conservation Area. The maximum amount of the grant request is proposed to be \$150,000 with a County match of \$150,000.

**APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR MARCH 6, 2018**