



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

Date: June 26, 2017

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 Division of Historic Resources Special Category Grant for the Kroegel Homestead Conservation Area

DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITIONS:

The Kroegel Homestead Conservation Area was purchased in 2004 by Indian River County with grant funding provided by the Florida Communities Trust (FCT). The 2.61 acre Rodney Kroegel parcel contains the remnants of structures that belonged to a son of Paul Kroegel, first warden of the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the nation's first NWR (established in 1903). In large part due to the efforts of Paul Kroegel, President Teddy Roosevelt established the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in 1903, marking the beginning of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest and most diverse assemblage of lands for wildlife. The project is adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon, an estuary of National significance, and is an integral part of the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, which is located directly east of the Kroegel Homestead. The purpose of the project is to preserve and open to the public the Homestead, which is of state and national significance in "completing the story" of the natural and cultural heritage of the federal refuge system and of the nationally significant Indian River Lagoon. Per the management plan, public access improvements will be designed to preserve the natural and cultural integrity of resources on the property. In order to leverage funding and maximize cost effectiveness for management and improvements to conservation areas, staff continues to seek funding through various applicable grants. The Division of Historical Resources Special Categories Grant provides matching funds to provide renovation, reconstruction, education and public access to historically significant sites.

THE PROJECT:

This grant application centers on the historical structures located on the conservation area. There are five structures which include a large barn, garage/office, shed, photo darkroom and animal pen. The large barn is currently stable and houses many artifacts that have yet to be inventoried. The barn is not included at this time for renovation/stabilization and will be considered under a separate proposal. In order to further the management objectives of providing for public access, the garage/office, shed, photo darkroom and animal pen will be evaluated and reconstructed. Due to the age and condition of the structures, they are beyond the scope of renovation. Under the scope

of this grant, the garage/office will be repurposed as a small museum/docent education center; the animal pen will be re-purposed to house Indian River Mosquito Control sentinel chickens (consistent with the time period); the shed will be replicated for displaying tools and other artifacts; and the photo darkroom will be reconstructed to highlight Paul Kroegel's activities documenting the wildlife and other scenes from the early 20th Century with lantern slides. Included with the replicas to be constructed, the grant will include educational exhibits that highlight the story of the nation's first wildlife refuge, Paul Kroegel and other historically significant sites along the Indian River Lagoon (i.e. Archie Smith Fish House, Historic Jungle Trail, Captain Forster's Hammock Preserve and the Jones' Homestead). Visitors will be able to complete a self-guided tour with printed maps and a web app which will provide a story connecting each historic property and highlight the unique aspects of the contributions of the pioneers of Indian River County.

Partners who have shown an interest and provided letters of support are Pelican Island Audubon Society, the Environmental Learning Center, the Indian River County Historical Society, Senator Debbie Mayfield, the Indian River Land Trust, and the School District of Indian River County.

Beyond the initial improvements for public access already underway (MBV Work Order No. 5), this grant will enable the County to fully utilize the site for passive recreation and historical interpretation of the area. These improvements are not only consistent with the BCC approved Management Plan dated October 2004, but are also key elements requiring completion in the grant award agreement with FCT.

FUNDING:

In December 2015, the Board of County Commissioners approved an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Capital Improvement Element for public access on conservation lands providing \$2.9 million dollars over 5 years to be utilized toward public access improvements. Priority was given to establishing trails and related trail structures at conservation areas that are nearing final completion with the FCT outlined obligations. Funding sought from the Division of Historical Resources under this grant will provide \$70,500 for replica design, site preparation and construction. The County proposes to match \$18,500 of in-kind services and \$52,000 in cash (see table below) from the Land Acquisition Bond Funds – Other Buildings account number 14514639-066290.

| | Grant | Cash | In-Kind | Total |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Replica Design | \$ 7,750 | \$ 22,250 | \$ 0 | \$ 30,000 |
| Site Preparation & Construction | \$62,750 | \$ 22,250 | \$ 0 | \$ 85,000 |
| Sign Design & Interpretive Education Materials | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | \$ 16,000 | \$ 16,000 |
| Sign Construction | \$ 0 | \$ 7,500 | \$ 0 | \$ 7,500 |
| Sign Installation | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | \$ 2,500 | \$ 2,500 |
| Total: | \$70,500 | \$52,000 | \$ 18,500 | \$141,000 |

If awarded, the grant agreement will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval and the DHR funding would be available July 1, 2018. Concurrently, staff is pursuing elements related to the public access of Kroegel Homestead Conservation Area including site planning.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Department of Historical Resources Special Category Grant – Attachment 8B – Support Materials – Site Maps

Attachment B – Photos of Site