



ALACHUA COUNTY
Environmental Protection Advisory Committee

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Date: Oct 23, 2018

David W. Moritz, Chairman

Scott Knight, Vice-Chair

Stephen Hofstetter, Liaison

Camp McConnell Recommendations

After touring Camp McConnell and having several meetings to review our findings and discuss possible outcomes for Camp McConnell, which included determination of its environmental value and the cost-benefit of potential future uses of the site, EPAC recommends the following:

The currently undeveloped portion of Camp McConnell should be placed into preservation, secured in the same manner as other properties Alachua County has purchased and secured via the Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT).

The new preserve should be maintained in the same manner the county maintains its other preserves and made open to the public for daytime, non-motorized use with hunting and fishing prohibited, unless after proper review it is determined that there is an overpopulation of a species which is best handled by allowing selective hunting on the property.

The only changes we recommend for this undeveloped parcel are:

- Restore the existing boardwalk which is in a small swamp ecosystem.
- Mark the existing hiking trails with signs.
- Provide at least minimal interpretive signage.

Our investigation into the condition of the "camp" portion of Camp McConnell found that the buildings have fallen into a state of disrepair and the cost of their repair is prohibitive. For this reason, it might be difficult for the County to find an organization interested in purchasing the camp whose primary goal is to maintain the use of the land as a camp, which we feel would be the best use for Camp McConnell, if it is at all possible.

If it is not possible for the County to find an organization interested in

purchasing the property to use as a camp, then as the next best option, we suggest that the County seek an organization willing to lease the property to use as a camp.

If no organization comes forward to lease the property, we would then recommend the County create an independent non-profit organization whose goal would be to create appropriate uses for Camp McConnell and find business and public users of the Camp whose use of the Camp could at the very least fund its maintenance.

There are a number of uses of the Camp McConnell property which we feel would be appropriate. If a buyer cannot be found, then it might be useful to consider repair of the main building which would at least allow for it to be rented out for a variety of uses such as company or organization retreats and picnics, etc. The initial goal should be to make the property at least cover its maintenance expenses.

Other potential uses of the property – these would use the park on a part-time and/or shared basis:

- An "Environmental Park" - an educational center which Alachua County schools and other schools and organizations could use.
- A meeting location – for any organization wishing a more remote or isolated location.
- A campgrounds open to use for fee. This would probably require an investment in improved shower and toilet facilities.

Signed,



David W. Moritz, Chairman

On behalf of Alachua County Environmental Protection Advisory Committee

Nov. 6, 2018
Date