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CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 8(L)(4)

TO: Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: October 3, 2023

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing the
disbursement of up to
\$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust
Fund to restore and manage
Natural Forest Community on
property owned by Miami-Dade
County located at Camp Choe at
11300 SW 160 Street

Resolution No. R-856-23

The accompanying resolution was prepared by the Regulatory and Economic Resources Department and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Kionne L. McGhee.



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/gh

MDC001

Memorandum



Date: October 3, 2023

To: Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava 
Mayor

Subject: Resolution Authorizing the Disbursement of Up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund to Restore and Manage the Natural Forest Community at Camp Choe owned by Miami-Dade County

Executive Summary

The purpose of this item is to seek approval from the Board of County Commissioners (Board) for the disbursement of up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund for the restoration of the Natural Forest Community (NFC) at Camp Choe owned by Miami-Dade County located at 11300 SW 160 Street (see Exhibit A), which was contemplated at the time of purchase via Resolution No. R-749-22. This funding is coming from the portion of the Tree Trust Fund that is reserved for Pine Rockland purchases and restoration only.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the attached resolution authorizing the disbursement of up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund for the restoration of the NFC at Camp Choe. The implementation of the Pine Rockland Restoration Plan (see Exhibit B) will restore and maintain the NFC by removing the prohibited and nuisance species, planting native pine rockland species and providing long-term management of the native community.

Scope

The NFC properties are located at 11300 SW 160 Street in Commission District 9, which is represented by Commissioner Kionne L. McGhee.

Delegation of Authority

This resolution has no delegation of authority.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source

This resolution authorizes the disbursement of funds from the Tree Trust Fund for the restoration of the NFC at Camp Choe owned by Miami-Dade County. This disbursement is consistent with the Tree Trust Fund Ordinance codified in Section 24-39 of the Code of Miami-Dade County (Code) that allows these funds to be used for the purpose of acquiring and restoring NFC habitat within Miami-Dade County. The unencumbered balance of the Tree Trust Fund, specifically allocated for the acquisition and restoration of NFC as of January 31, 2023, is \$2,605,170.20.

Track Record/Monitor

The Senior Manager of Natural Resources in the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM), Michael Spinelli, will monitor the Agreement.

Background

Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

Page 2

In 1984, the Board recognized this unique community by designating approximately 14 acres as NFC, through Resolution No. R-1976-84. Subsequently, in 1989, the Board approved Ordinance No. 89-9 that established the Tree Trust Fund for the purposes of acquiring, protecting and maintaining natural forest communities and planting trees on public property. Since then, DERM has been administering the Tree Trust Fund and managing the funding of multiple acquisition, restoration, management and tree planting projects, per the provisions in section 24-39 of the Code related to the Tree Trust Fund.

The NFC at Camp Choe is a pine rockland, a globally-imperiled natural resource that occurs only in South Florida, the Florida Keys and some islands of the Bahamas. These pine rocklands, interspersed with hardwood hammocks, once covered 185,000 acres of Miami-Dade County. Factors such as development, drainage, fire suppression, fragmentation and exotic species invasion are the major threats to pine rocklands. By 1996, only 2% of the pine rocklands remained within the urbanized areas of the County and outside of the protective border of Everglades National Park. The acquisition, preservation and maintenance of the remaining habitat helps save multiple species that depend on this community from extinction.

This NFC was acquired by Miami-Dade County pursuant to Resolution No. R-749-22, which was adopted by the Board on September 1, 2022. As noted in that purchase item, an accompanying management plan was to be prepared and implemented by DERM to maintain and restore the NFC by removing the prohibited and nuisance species and provide long term management of the native community. The proposed disbursement of up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund, to be used towards the restoration of the approximately 14 acres of NFC as outlined in the Pine Rockland Restoration Plan (see Exhibit B), is consistent with the allowable uses of such funds pursuant to section 24-39. These restoration activities will be coordinated and managed through DERM and will be conducted over the next two to three years by County staff or by an outside contractor selected under a competitive bidding process. The restoration of the approximately 14 acres of NFC is expected to include the activities in the attached Pine Rockland Restoration Plan (see Exhibit B).

In accordance with Chapter 24-37(5) of the Code, I have received and considered the attached recommendation from the Director of the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources.



Jimmy Morales
Chief Operations Officer

Memorandum



Date: March 29, 2023

To: Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor

From: Lourdes M. Gomez, Director
Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Gomez", is placed over the printed name of the Director.

Subject: Recommendation for the Disbursement of up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund to Restore and Manage the Natural Forest Community at Camp Choe owned by Miami-Dade County

Pursuant to Section 24-39 of the Code of Miami-Dade County (Code), I am recommending the disbursement of up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund to the Miami-Dade Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM), for the restoration and management of the Natural Forest Community (NFC) at Camp Choe owned by Miami-Dade County located at 11300 SW 160 Street.

The up to \$558,000.00 requested for disbursement will be drawn from funds deposited into the Tree Trust Fund for the purpose of acquiring, maintaining, managing, and protecting NFC habitat within Miami-Dade County. The proposed activities are consistent with the goals and intent of the Tree Trust fund as codified in Section 24-39 of the Code of Miami-Dade County.

There are sufficient unencumbered funds currently available in the Tree Trust Fund to fulfill this request.

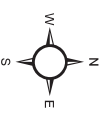
Exhibit A

Natural Forest Community Boundary at Camp Choe
Folios: 30-5030-000-0030 and 30-5030-000-0091



Legend

 NFC Apx. 14 acres



MDC005

The Natural Forest Community (NFC) boundaries approved by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners and represented by this map/data are the approximate boundaries and are not intended to represent the extent of all NFCs, nor are all NFC areas shown. It is not intended to be used to determine the exact location or extent of NFC boundaries or for regulatory purposes

Map prepared by C. Stocking
on 03/10/2023

Exhibit B

Pine Rockland Restoration Plan
for
Camp Choe Pineland
Prepared by
Miami-Dade County DERM
February 2023

Figure 1. -NFC Site Map



Camp Choe Pineland represents a fire suppressed remnant of the historical Miami-Dade County pine rockland ecosystem. It was designated as Natural Forest Community (NFC) by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) via resolution R-1764-84 and is identified as Parcel B on Miami-Dade County NFC Map #26. The NFC designated Pine Rockland area is approximately 14 acres. The current condition of the pine rockland varies. For restoration purposes this plan identifies 3 separate areas requiring complete restoration. **Area 1** is an approximately 1.12-acre portion of the NFC completely dominated by invasive exotic plants, including Brazilian-pepper (*Schinus terebithifolius*) and umbrella tree (*Schefflera actinophylla*). **Area 2** is an approximately 0.2-acre portion of the NFC that consists of mowed lawn with visible limestone outcroppings and no pine rockland vegetation. **Area 3** is an approximately 0.5-acre portion of the NFC very similar to Area 2 containing a mowed lawn with visible limestone outcroppings and no pine rockland vegetation. The remaining NFC is approximately 11.88 acres of pine rockland that is the highest quality area retaining many attributes of the pine rockland ecosystem but

which has been impacted by fire suppression, resulting in excessive cover of slash pine, native hardwood growth and non-native plant infestation, mainly Burma reed (*Neyraudia reynaudiana*).

Restoration Plan Purpose: To restore the entire approximately 14-acre NFC to a healthy pine rockland habitat that can ultimately be maintained by periodic prescribed burning and limited physical exotic plant maintenance.

Ecological Targets: Healthy pine rocklands have an open canopy of South Florida slash pine, a diverse understory layer, and an extremely diverse groundcover layer. Native hardwoods, palms, bracken fern, and climbing vines comprise less than 50% cover in the understory and groundcover layers; bracken fern cover is less than 5%. The groundcover layer comprises a mix of graminoids (grasses, sedges, and similar plants), forbs (non-graminoid herbs, e.g., wildflowers), ferns and allies, and creeping vines that collectively have a cover of at least 50%. Estimated time for completion of work required to achieve these ecological targets is 1 to 3 years.

Goals

- Thin slash pines where needed to achieve the appropriate canopy structure, with 50-70 mature trees per acre (>4" dbh)
- Palms (e.g., saw palmettos, cabbage palms) are thinned to achieve the appropriate understory structure, ranging from 10 to 25% cover
- Native hardwoods are thinned where needed to achieve the appropriate structure, ranging from 5 to 25% cover
- Native pine rockland groundcover is restored to comprise 25-75% cover, and areas of bare ground comprise 5-20% cover
- Replanting of previously cleared pine rocklands (Area 2 and 3) with slash pines and appropriate understory and groundcover plant species.
- Reduce average cover of native invasive, ruderal, and nonnative plant species to <2%
- Conduct a prescribed burn.

Objectives

- In **Area 1**, mechanically remove 100% cover of invasive species and native hardwoods, leaving bare substrate to the extent practicable. Chemically treat remaining stems and roots of invasive species. Haul away excess debris. Replant treated area with an appropriate number of slash pines and understory pine rockland plants using the pine rockland replacement requirements found in Section 24-49.4(b) as a guide. Monitor for and treat non-native growth.
- In **Area 2 and Area 3**, remove existing lawn material using mechanical and chemical methods as necessary and replant treated area with an appropriate number of slash pines and understory pine rockland plants using the pine rockland replacement requirements found in Section 24-49.4(b) as a guide. (Approximately 70 slash pines and 900 understory/groundcover).
- In remaining 11.88-acre area, cut and/or treat by hand all invasive species, and all native hardwoods. Cut slash pine 1" to 5" dbh, to increase canopy openness. Haul away excess debris. Allow for natural recruitment of pine rockland understory plants. Supplement natural recruitment with appropriate species as needed, focusing on the reintroduction of appropriate state and federal listed species.

***As per Dade County regulations, no Glyphosate will be used.**

Action Items and Timelines

Area 1

Contractor will use a mechanized brush cutter to demarcate the boundary between the area to be cleared and adjacent pine rockland. A brush cutter, excavator, or similar heavy machinery will be used to extract Brazilian-pepper, other invasive trees and shrubs, and native hardwoods, and haul them to an appropriate disposal location. All heavy equipment will have rubber tracks or tires. Vegetative material may be chipped on site, outside of the NFC restoration areas, then disposed of offsite. Any staging of chipped material will be outside restoration/pine rockland areas.

Mechanical clearing and debris removal in **Area 1** is expected to take 2 to 3 weeks. Initial monitoring for natural recruitment and follow-up exotic treatment will occur over a period of 6 to 12 months. Restoration planting will occur after the initial monitoring period. **Area 1** clearing and planting will commence and is expected to be completed within one year of fund acquisition. Follow up exotic control will be performed in years 1 to 3.

Area 2 and Area 3

Restoration planting in **Area 2 and 3** will commence prior to the first rainy season following the acquisition of funds and is expected to take 3 to 5 days. Daily watering will be required for the first month after installation on days with inadequate rainfall and as needed thereafter until establishment. Watering may be achieved using drip irrigation from onsite sources, preferably existing operational wells. (This aspect of the restoration project may be implemented by county staff or by contractor). **Area 2 and 3** planting and establishment is expected to be completed within one year of fund acquisition. Follow up exotic control will be performed in years 1 to 3.

11.88-acre area

Contractor will conduct slash pine thinning and exotic removal primarily by hand. Slash pines with a DBH of 1" to 5" and exotic hardwoods will be stump cut. Chemical treatment is anticipated to only be needed for exotic hardwood species. Contractor will also treat Burma reed (*Neyraudia reynaudiana*) and other remaining exotics by hand and conduct follow up chemical treatment as needed. This work, not including follow up chemical treatment of Burma reed, is anticipated to take 1 to 2 months, depending on size of crew. Pine thinning and initial exotic removal work in the **11.88-acre** area will be completed in year 1. Multiple follow up exotic treatments, as necessary, shall be performed in years 2 and 3.

All areas

Follow-up with invasive species and native hardwood control as outlined below.

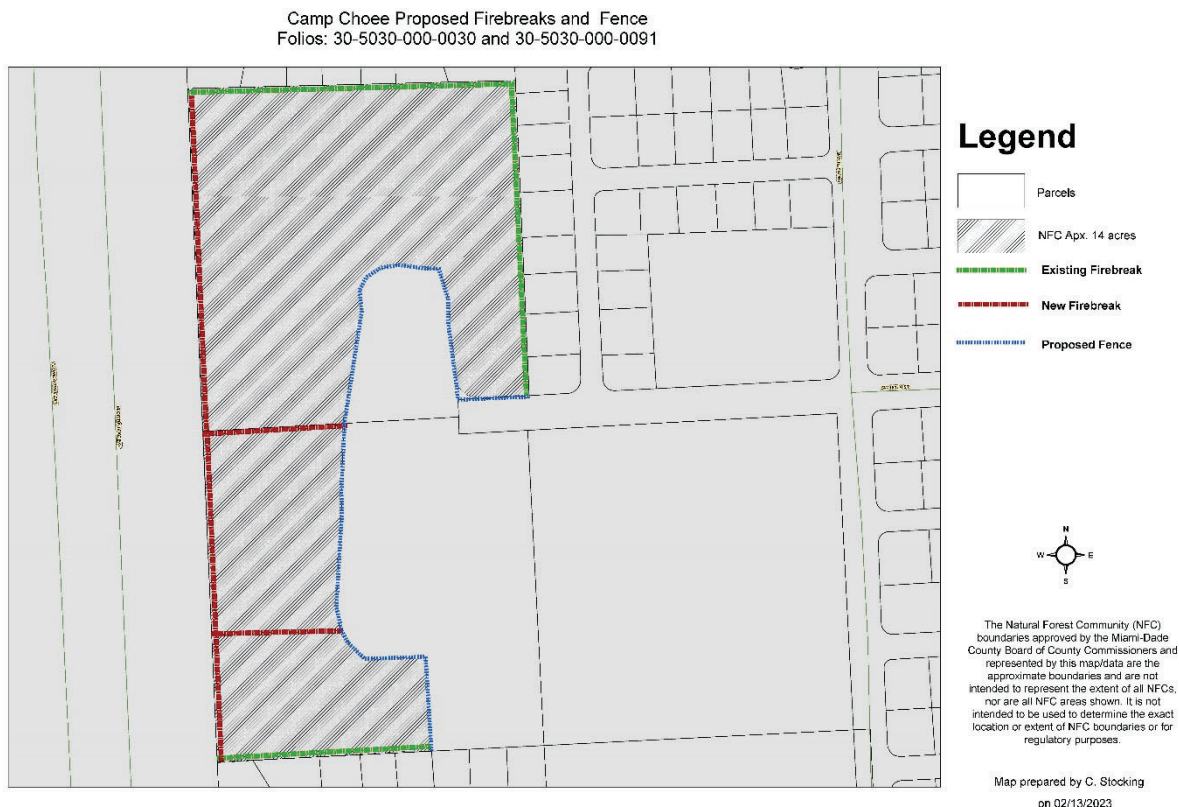
The contractor will employ the following treatment methods, including both initial and follow-up during the contract period. Invasive species treatments will include hand removal, directed foliar, cut-spray for invasive grasses, and basal bark and cut-stump with triclopyr for nonnative hardwoods (trees and shrubs). Native hardwoods will be thinned through cutting and/or treated with a basal herbicide depending on species. Vine treatment (stem treatment or cut-stump with triclopyr) is recommended in areas with more

than 10% native vine cover. No pineland croton (*Croton linearis*), larval host for listed butterflies, will be cut, removed, or treated with herbicides.

Native species in Areas 1, 2 and 3 may recover through natural regeneration, and replanting in those areas will proceed as needed depending on the amount of natural regeneration observed. It is expected that natural regeneration is most likely to occur in the portion of these areas that is closest to existing pine rockland. Direct seeding of native groundcover species, especially grasses, would be conducted if needed. Recruitment of native and nonnative weeds are to be expected in the first year following treatment. Mowing or weed whacking can be employed to suppress weeds. Planting of pine rockland “islands”, including slash pine, shrubs, palm, and groundcovers, will be combined with the installation of micro direct seed plots to increase pine rockland groundcover and move the site towards maintenance condition.

Firebreaks creation and reestablishment (see figure 2) is needed to facilitate restoration activities and prescribed burning. Firebreak work will require the use of machinery and can be coordinated with the mechanical clearing activities in Area 1.

Figure 2. -Locations of Proposed Firebreaks and Fence



Post Restoration

Once restoration activities described in this plan are complete, the site will be considered to be in maintenance condition. Additional funding for ongoing maintenance will be required.

NFC Access

Access will be through the existing north and south gates on the eastern side of the site.

Site Protection

Regulatory authorization for the work will be under a Miami-Dade County NFC permit that may be obtained immediately, or after the disbursement of restoration funds once a contractor has been approved. The NFC permit will provide a framework for protection of the NFC during restoration activities, including protective barrier placement and protection of rare plant populations. The flagging of sensitive or rare species as appropriate shall be conducted by DERM staff or the contractor. Clearing of the eastern edge of Area 1 utilizing GIS and a brush cutter is required before major invasive species removal commences.

Progress Reports

Progress and monitoring reports shall be provided weekly by contractor for work not performed by DERM staff. Monitoring reports shall be provided as needed for work performed by DERM staff such as planting and exotic control not involving the use of chemicals.

Following the initial restoration activity for the 11.88-acre area, a prescribed burn should be pursued to facilitate restoration activities. Replanting requirements for this area will be evaluated after an initial prescribed burn, giving adequate time for natural regeneration.

Fencing and Signage

NFC preserve signs are needed to identify the preserve and communicate NFC status of site. Recommended spacing of signs is every 100 feet. A total of 10 signs are needed.

A split rail fence is needed to demarcate the limits of the NFC. Approximately 1,700 feet of fencing is needed. Metal posts with replaceable wooden rails are recommended to extend the life of the fence and make it more fire compatible.

Project Cost Estimates

Project Activity	Estimated Cost	Year	Notes
Removal and follow up treatment of exotics. Slash pine, palm, and hardwood thinning in 11.88-acre area.	\$180,000.00	1-3	Area treated is approximately 11.88 acres. Initial pine, palm and hardwood thinning shall occur in year 1. Burma reed and other exotics may require up to 3 follow up chemical treatments. (Years 2 to 3).
Area 1 mechanical clearing. Removal and disposal of debris.	\$15,000.00	1	Area 1 is approximately 1.12 acres.
Replanting of pine rockland species in Restoration Areas.	\$35,000.00	1	Approximately 2,500 plants, 1 gal, including site prep. This includes Restoration Areas 1, 2, & 3.
Direct seeding	\$10,000.00	2	Obtaining and direct seeding of native groundcover and grass seeds.
Creation/reestablishment of firebreaks	\$25,000.00	1	5 days at \$5,000 per day. See figure 2 for locations of firebreaks.
Protective Barriers	\$5,000.00	1	Barriers to protect NFC during restoration work and firebreak creation.
Conduct the initial prescribed burn	\$15,000.00	3	Initial prescribed burn to be conducted subsequent to completion of restoration. Subsequent maintenance burns will occur as needed, ideally in 3–5-year cycles.
Installation of NFC preserve signs	\$2,000.00	2	Total number of signs: 10 Estimated cost per sign: \$200, includes installation
Installation of a split rail fence	\$40,000.00	2 or 3	Linear feet of fencing needed: 1,700 feet. Cost includes installation
5-year maintenance costs post restoration	\$165,000	4-8	\$30,000 per year for following up exotic and hardwood maintenance. \$15,000 for a second prescribed burn.
Contingency costs	\$66,000.00		Contingency
Total Estimated Cost	\$ 558,000.00		



MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: October 3, 2023

FROM: 
Gen Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 8(L)(4)

Please note any items checked.

- ☐ "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- ☐ 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- ☐ 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- ☐ Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- ☐ Budget required
- ☐ Statement of fiscal impact required
- ☐ Statement of social equity required
- ☐ Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- ☐ No committee review
- ☐ Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, or CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c)(2) ____ to approve
- ☐ Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 8(L)(4)
10-3-23

RESOLUTION NO. _____ R-856-23

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISBURSEMENT OF UP
TO \$558,000.00 FROM THE TREE TRUST FUND TO RESTORE
AND MANAGE NATURAL FOREST COMMUNITY ON
PROPERTY OWNED BY MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LOCATED
AT CAMP CHOEE AT 11300 SW 160 STREET

WHEREAS, this Board desires to accomplish the purposes outlined in the accompanying memorandum, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board, pursuant to section 24-37 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, authorizes the disbursement of up to \$558,000.00 from the Tree Trust Fund to be used for the restoration and management of the approximately 14 acres of Natural Forest Community on property owned by Miami-Dade County located at Camp Choe at 11300 SW 160 Street.

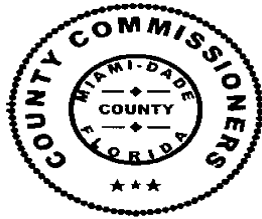
The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner **Anthony Rodriguez**, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Danielle Cohen Higgins** and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Chairman	aye		
Anthony Rodríguez, Vice Chairman	aye		
Marleine Bastien	aye	Juan Carlos Bermudez	aye
Kevin Marino Cabrera	aye	Sen. René García	absent
Roberto J. Gonzalez	aye	Keon Hardemon	aye
Danielle Cohen Higgins	aye	Eileen Higgins	aye
Kionne L. McGhee	aye	Raquel A. Regalado	aye
Micky Steinberg	aye		

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 3rd day of October, 2023. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK



Basia Pruna

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

Abbie Schwaderer-Raurell
Christopher J. Wahl