

July 1992

Grove Overview - 1992-07-06

Audubon Lake Okeechobee Watershed Campaign Office

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Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary
Memorandum

To: Norm
From: Scott Hedges
Date: 8:30 am 7/6/92
Re: Grove overview for you information in preparation for
conversation with Duver and me.

Sorry about this ¹⁰ 8 page fax. I hope the maps are legible. I thought you should have this info if we are going to have a discussion with Duver.

While it may be too late to address the inadequacy of the wetland mitigation plan here is where I think it is weak. The land classification of the site identifies only 77.2 acres on the project. Twenty one of these they are going to dike outside the grove. Thirty eight wetland acres will be diked within the grove. Viola, the computer drawings show all of a sudden there is only 17 acres of wetlands being destroyed!!!

In reality however, the coertype 310 (Native/Transitional Grassland) is a wetland but it is not considered in the plan as such. The reason this gets by the SFWMD is not clear to me. They have spit back exactly what the engineers have submitted. If one adds the Transitional Grasslands into the plan as wetlands, the total wetlands (conservatively) increase from 77 to 192 acres. I say this is conservative because there is a big wet prairie that is classed as improved pasture and also not included in the plan. The scam is worse when one considers the impacts of diking on the wetlands excluded from the project.

The wetlands which will now be forever destroyed are admittedly in bad shape because of drainage but I argue that this doesn't make them less a wetland. They have wetland soils and still support wetland plants. It doesn't require a lot of background to see on a current photo where the wetlands were. This is basically a non mitigation.

There is also the issue of the proposed draw down on the sanctuary. Because the military grade is impounding water it appears that we are isolated hydrologically. I don't have any good arguments to support the position that the grove will effect us.

I want to make sure that we are together on the decision of whether to comment on the district recommendation. That is to say, speak now or forever hold our peace. Personally I do not feel good about turning a blind eye to this nightmarish example of a totally bogus circumvention of wetland regulation.