



PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

FERNDALE PRESERVE

REQUEST

\$1.5
MILLION

\$1.5 million to design and construct a one-mile trail at Ferndale Preserve to connect the park entrance to park amenities on the western shore of Lake Apopka.

ANALYSIS:

- Planned lakefront capital improvements include an observation tower, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch, but there is no connection from the park entrance/parking area (currently only accessible from the lake).

BACKGROUND:

Ferndale Preserve is a 196-acre conservation and restoration property on the western shore of Lake Apopka. Lake County has included \$397,000 in the FY 2015/2016 budget for lakefront capital improvements, including an observation tower, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch. However, until a multipurpose trail can be constructed to connect the park entrance and the lakefront, the amenities will only be accessible from Lake Apopka. Funding in the amount of \$1.5 million is needed to provide access to the lake from the entrance parking area.

Lake Apopka is becoming a prime location for ecotourism. Lake County held a Lake Apopka Summit in February 2013 to discuss the importance of the St. Johns River Water Management District's Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration property to the surrounding area, highlighting ecotourism opportunities. Concurrently, the City of Apopka began a planning process which culminated in the completion of the "2014 Lake Apopka Ecotourism Concept Plan." The process included participation from more than a dozen state and local agencies, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders.

The result was an outpouring of support for ecotourism planning in and around the North Shore Restoration Area and the recent formation of the Coalition for Lake Apopka Ecotourism. The Coalition has identified Ferndale Preserve improvements as a priority for funding and completion.

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