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MyFWC.com

July 3, 2019

Lauren Valentine
DRMP
941 Lake Baldwin Lane
Orlando, FL 32814
lvalentine@drmp.cpm

RE: Lane Park Subdivision, St. Johns River Water Management District
Environmental Resource Permit Application #157882-1, Lake County

Dear Ms. Valentine:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff has reviewed the above-referenced permit application. We provide the following comments and recommendations as technical assistance in accordance with FWC's authorities under Chapter 379, Florida Statutes.

Project Description

The applicant, Michael Collard, Lane Park Commons, LLC, proposes construction of a 46-lot residential subdivision and associated infrastructure on a 13.19-acre parcel in Tavares. The project site is located on the northwest corner of the intersection between State Road 19 and Lane Park Road, bordering Lake Marquis on the west. According to the *Land Park Commons Tract Environmental Assessment Report* (report) dated April 2018, submitted with the application materials, habitats on the site consist of 9.8 acres of other open land (rural), 2.8 acres of wetland forested mixed, and 0.3 acres of vegetated non-forested wetland.

Potentially Affected Resources

The report indicates that a wildlife survey covering 100 percent of the site was conducted in April 2018, and that gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, State Threatened) burrows were found. The report recommends contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the need for consultation on the potential for sand skink (*Plestiodon reynoldsi*, Federally Threatened). FWC staff conducted a geographic information system (GIS) analysis of the project site and found that the site is located within potential habitat for Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*).

Comments and Recommendations

Gopher Tortoise

Due to the documented presence of gopher tortoises on site, FWC staff recommends that the applicant refer to the FWC's Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines (Revised January 2017) (<http://www.myfwc.com/license/wildlife/gopher-tortoise-permits/>) for survey

methodology and permitting guidance prior to any development activity. Specifically, the permitting guidelines include methods for avoiding impacts as well as options and state requirements for minimizing, mitigating, and permitting potential impacts of the proposed activities. Any commensal species observed during burrow excavation should be handled in accordance to Appendix 9 of the Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines. If you have any questions regarding gopher tortoise permitting, please contact Samantha Cobble at (352) 732-1225 or Samantha.Cobble@MyFWC.com.

Florida Black Bear

FWC received 83 reports of human-bear conflicts within roughly a two-mile radius of the project site between 2011 and 2017. Florida black bears are abundant in this area, which is within the Central Bear Management Unit identified in the 2012 Bear Management Plan. While black bears tend to shy away from people, they are adaptable and will take advantage of human-provided food sources, such as unsecured garbage, pet food, or bird seed. Once bears become accustomed to finding food around people, their natural wariness is reduced to the point that there can be an increased risk to public safety or private property. There are measures that can be taken to prevent or reduce conflicts with bears during planning and development activities, including:

- Maintaining clean construction sites with wildlife-resistant containers for any wildlife-attractant refuse; and
- Conducting frequent trash removal and using proper food storage and removal practices on work sites.

In addition, once the development is completed, residents can be provided with bear-resistant garbage cans as part of their regular waste service. If a homeowners' association is established, we recommend bylaws be enacted to require residents to take measures to prevent attracting bears into the neighborhood. Sample bylaw language is available at the bear management website (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/living/community-group/bylaw/>). We also encourage the property owner to provide residents with information on how to avoid human-bear conflicts, which is also found on the bear management website. This information can include:

- Options for keeping garbage secure which can include using bear-resistant garbage containers, modifying regular cans to be bear-resistant, or keeping cans secure in a garage or sturdy shed and then placing garbage on the curb the morning of pick-up rather than the night before (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/living/attractants/>);
- Removing bird and wildlife feeders, or modifying them to exclude bears (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/wildlife-feeders/>);
- Using electric fencing to secure outdoor attractants like fruiting trees/shrubs, gardens, compost, and small livestock (<https://myfwc.com/media/1886/electricfence.pdf>);
- Proper methods to compost in bear range;
- Securing pet food; and
- Cleaning and securing barbeque grills.

Information may also include guidelines for how residents should respond to bears in the area, such as:

- What to do if they encounter a bear, whether from a distance or at close range,
- How to keep pets and livestock safe in bear range, and
- When and how to contact the FWC regarding a bear issue.

FWC staff is available to assist with residential planning to incorporate the above features. Additional information about Florida black bears can be found on our website at <http://www.myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear>.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the proposed project. For further assistance, please email our office at FWCConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com. For specific technical questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact Laura DiGruttolo at (352) 433-5499 or Laura.DiGruttolo@myfwc.com.

Sincerely,



Fritz Wettstein
Land Use Planning Program Administrator
Office of Conservation Planning Services

fw/ld
ENV 1-12-2
Lane Park Subdivision_39469_070319

cc: Michael Collard, Lane Park Commons, LLC, dbeyer@collardproperties.com
Nicole Martin, SJRWMD, nmartin@sjrwmd.com