



**Natural Resources Management Department**

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Building A, Room 219  
Viera, Florida 32940

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**TO:** Frank B. Abbate, County Manager

**THRU:** John Denninghoff, P.E., Assistant County Manager

**FROM:** Amanda Elmore, Deputy Director, Natural Resources Management Dept.

**SUBJ:** Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation (CEER) #2024001

**DATE:** 04/01/2024

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CEER #2024001 was received by the County from Matthew Heyden.

**Citizen Statement:**

Invasive plants such as Brazilian Pepper are out of control, and slowly but surely exterminating the native plants that are supposed to be here.

**Citizen Recommendation:**

For years we have used inmates to do highway cleanup. While it's a great program, they learn nothing. Hand picked non violent inmates that could benefit from the training and would be interested in a career afterwards, with a REAL future because folks that can do this work are impossible to hire. I have years of experience as a volunteer doing this work, enlisting as many as 140 volunteers. It's hard work....but INCREDIBLY satisfying as the results are instant. When folks are used that don't know what they are doing, the results are terrible. However, when folks know the plants....the natives that are struggling are instantly exposed to sunlight, and when the pepper is killed, the auxins that they release that exterminate surrounding plant life is stopped. This is only a program for folks that want win, win, win. The county gets to protect all public property. Inmates that begin to work in the program gain an immediate sense of self esteem because each day, they accomplished something EXTREMELY important. The county saves a fortune financially, and protects the most important asset. Finally, inmates that have never had an opportunity for self employment, have actual knowledge and skill that makes them valuable. More valuable than a lawn crew...which anyone can do.

**Staff Analysis:**

Invasive plant removal on public lands is valuable, as is the rehabilitation of inmates. Natural Resources Management Staff (NRM) has sporadically utilized inmates for land management. However, these efforts mainly involved hand-weeding and less intense physical activities. Removal of invasive plants, such as Brazilian pepper, typically involves chain saws or heavy equipment, and herbicides to stump-treat for the prevention of regrowth. Specialized licensing is required to oversee the use of these herbicides. NRM does not have appropriate oversight staffing to train and supervise inmates in these intensive efforts. NRM will continue leveraging partnerships to ensure the most effective utilization of available resources.

**Staff Recommended Action:**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject the recommendation.

## Recommendation Details

### Contact Information

**Full Name:** matthew heyden **Email Address:** mheyden716@aol.com  
**Mailing Address:** 6534 Ridge Ct  
Titusville fl 32780 **Alt Email Address:** mheyden716@aol.com  
**Phone Number** 321-338-5857

### Group/Organization

Space Coast Audubon

### Recommendation Information

#### Recommendation Title:

invasive species

#### Areas Affected:

County Wide

#### Department:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

#### Problem

#### Description:

Invasive plants such as Brazilian Pepper are out of control, and slowly but surely exterminating the native plants that are supposed to be here.

#### Recommendation Description

#### Attachments

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There are no attachments for this recommendation.

## Administrative Action

## Evaluation

## Recommendation Timeline

User	Status	Date	Remarks
CEER WebUser	Citizen Submitted	Dec 8, 2023	
Karen Conde	Department Assigned	Dec 20, 2023	NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT Assigned

Awaiting action from department director