



**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) #2024031

**DATE:** 04/01/2024

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CEER #2024031 was received by the County from Kristin Lortie.

**Citizen Statement:**

Currently the SR524 corridor of Cocoa is receiving an influx of new residents due to development, addition to multiple existing neighborhoods that share one small park Junny Rios Martinez Park. This park has a limited walking path around it. One of the newest developments on SR524 is called "Integra Trails", yet the development has no direct access to the 380-acre Cocoa Conservation area behind it. The only current access point for the Cocoa Conservation area is through a mobile home development 5 miles away. The city website states "The City is currently working to expand the overall area and provide additional amenities to the public: <https://www.cocoafl.org/facilities/facility/details/Cocoa-Conservation-Area-19> In 2003, the City of Cocoa received grant money to purchase the initial conservation area, and created a management plan for enhancing this area, including recreational access for passive recreational access for residents. This management plan included 2 addition access points - one on SR524 and one on Cox Road. Neither of these access points have been constructed, so local residents do not have trailhead access along SR524 or Cox Road. Brevard County has recently requested grant funding for drainage improvements following Hurricane Irma. The area is the Mud Lake/West Cocoa area located where the 380-acre Cocoa Conservation area is located.

**Citizen Recommendation:**

Drainage grant projects occurring in the conservation area footprint have the opportunity to coordinate with the Cocoa Conservation Area management plan for enhancing passive recreation for residents. Access to this area would help the residents gain access to nature spaces for walking and enjoying local wildlife. Grant funding is available from Florida Communities Trust for improving the recreation area <https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and->

Main Line: (321) 633-2016

Website: [Brevardfl.gov/NaturalResources](https://brevardfl.gov/NaturalResources)

recreation-grants/. The City of Cocoa and the County working together toward the efforts of improving storm runoff while improving the conservation area would provide multiple benefits to residents. Enhancing passive recreation in this area by combining county grant funding with the existing management plan could make the grant funding more efficient while providing health and wellness benefits for Cocoa and Brevard County residents. Please gain efficiencies in county projects by aligning existing grant money with the existing management plan. Adding an SR524 and/or Cox Rd trailhead, raised walkway, and expanding trails and signage are basic steps that would provide numerous benefits to local residents that do not currently have any nearby park walkways outside of the Junny Rios Martinez Park footprint. Back-up Documents:

1. Link to Cocoa's Hidden Treasure Powerpoint presentation about the CCA:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eqs7EL8QJ4bsB9\\_Gn0J0Vw65et166\\_L6/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eqs7EL8QJ4bsB9_Gn0J0Vw65et166_L6/view?usp=drive_link)

2. Link to 2003 Site Plan for Cocoa Conservation Area:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O5N7v0Jyz2Mw\\_-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O5N7v0Jyz2Mw_-BHBFWHnV8JxGxIQTFo/view?usp=drive_link)

[BHBFWHnV8JxGxIQTFo/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O5N7v0Jyz2Mw_-BHBFWHnV8JxGxIQTFo/view?usp=drive_link) 3. Link to county grant documents:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1386CRcOqjZu37LO2EBTtBX998WCK4I3c?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1386CRcOqjZu37LO2EBTtBX998WCK4I3c?usp=drive_link)

4. Here is a link to the 2003 Cocoa Conservation Area Management Plan:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KjSJ8Y8Qu51VV99acBAUQ-0R0IsMOWh/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KjSJ8Y8Qu51VV99acBAUQ-0R0IsMOWh/view?usp=drive_link)

#### **Staff Analysis:**

Brevard County is actively pursuing state and federal funds for flood mitigation projects in the Cocoa Conservation Area. Additionally, Brevard County has been, and will continue to, coordinate with the City of Cocoa to leverage funding sources to restore and improve natural drainage and enhance passive recreation for citizens.

#### **Staff Recommended Action:**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject the recommendation as already being implemented.

## Recommendation Details

## Contact Information

<b>Full Name:</b>	Kristin Lortie	<b>Email Address:</b>	kristin.lortie@gmail.com
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	5524 Brilliance Circle Cocoa fl 32926	<b>Alt Email Address:</b>	
		<b>Phone Number</b>	720-935-8780
<b>Group/Organization</b>	N/A	<b>Recommendation Information</b>	

**Recommendation Title:** Improve Resident Access to Cocoa Conservation Area with County Grant Projects

**Areas Affected:** County Engineering

**Department:** DEVELOPMENTAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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**Problem Description:**

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**Recommendation  
Description**

Enhancing passive recreation in this area by combining county grant funding with the existing management plan could make the grant funding more efficient while providing health and wellness benefits for Cocoa and Brevard County residents. Please gain efficiencies in county projects by aligning existing grant money with the existing management plan. Adding an SR524 and/or Cox Rd trailhead, raised walkway, and expanding trails and signage are basic steps that would provide numerous benefits to local residents that do not currently have any nearby park walkways outside of the Junny Rios Martinez Park footprint.

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**Attachments**

There are no attachments for this recommendation.

**Administrative Action**

**Evaluation**

**Recommendation Timeline**

User	Status	Date	Remarks
CEER WebUser	Citizen Submitted	Dec 29, 2023	
Karen Conde	Department Assigned	Jan 3, 2024	NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT Assigned

Awaiting action from department director

2024031 - Links Contained Within Citizen CEER Submission

<https://www.cocoafl.org/facilities/facility/details/Cocoa-Conservation-Area-19>

<https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/>

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