

Request for Offers (RFO 23-01)
Voluntary Site Visit
August 25, 2023 at 11:00am
Lake Panasoffkee Cattle Lease, SWF Parcel No. 19-528-162X
Meeting Minutes

SWFWMD Attendees; Mark Maggard, Land Manager; Chris Reed, Manager- Land Management Section; Mike Singer, Real Estate Services Section Manager, Chris McKendree, Lake Panasoffkee Land Manager

FDACS Attendees; Tammy Hinkle, Environmental Manager

Mr. Maggard kicked off the meeting at 11:00 a.m. and provided directions for sign-in and an overview of the meeting. Mr. Reed then provided formal introductions of District and FDACS staff. Mr. Maggard then verbally reviewed the terms and conditions of the lease agreement, the Request for Offers (RFO) process. The timeline and date for responses was discussed in detail as well as the “offer receipt and opening” conditions of any offers presented. The Due Date for responses is September 05, 2023, by 2:00pm and will only be considered if all “offer receipt and opening” conditions are met (see RFO condition 1.12).

Following the discussion of offer receipt and opening” conditions, Mr. Maggard, pointed out key points in the lease such as the bid opening procedure, wells and water options onsite, invasive species control (specifically Tropical Soda Apple), number of animal units (75 total) and the definition of “animal unit”, that there is no hunting except for feral hogs, and the term length. Ms. Hinkle then pointed out that FDACS Best Management Practices (BMP’s) are required and the responsibility of the lessee to know and apply on the lease.

Questions received;

- **Q** -Is the opening of bids open for the public to attend
 - **A**- Yes, there are both in-person and virtual options, the link to the virtual option will be posted on the District Website.
- **Q**- Can you apply fertilizer to the lease?
 - **A**- Yes, however the lessee must document and retain application records in accordance with Best Management Practices.
- **Q**- Has any seeding been done onsite previously? Can the lessee harvest seed?
 - **A**- No seed harvest has been done onsite before, but seed harvest activities can be permitted after written District-approval keeping in mind that Brunswick grass is present.
- **Q**- Is the lessee responsible for taxes on the lease property?
 - **A**- No, taxes are not levied on this particular cattle lease.
- **Q**- Is the lease bid by head of cattle or by acres available to lease?
 - **A**- The submitted offer is to be based on price per acre.
- **Q**- Can you clarify “Animal Unit”?
 - **A**- The stocking rate is determined by Animal Unit, which is defined as One (1) bull or one (1) cow with or without one (1) un-weaned calf.

- **Q-** Can you confirm the total acreage of the lease?
 - **A-** Total acreage of the lease is four hundred seventy-nine (479) acres.
- **Q-** Are there restrictions on herbicide applications?
 - **A-** Follow all Herbicide Labels and BMP's.

Mr. Maggard directed attendees to the tour portion of the site visit and associated map. Attendees then followed in vehicles from the meeting location (stop number 1 on the map) to stop number 2. At stop number 2 Mr. Maggard made clarification of a partially constructed cow pen onsite and that hunters access the adjacent Wildlife Management Area (WMA) via Hanover Road.

Questions received at Stop 2;

- **Q-** Can you use an airboat in the wetland for spraying aquatic vegetation to create open water for the cattle?
 - **A-** No, aquatic vegetation may not be controlled with herbicide or by any other method within the bounds of the lease.
- **Q-** Is there an estimated percent cover of Brunswick Grass?
 - **A-** No quantification of Brunswick grass is available.
- **Q-** How recently were cows on the property?
 - **A-** The previous lessee removed their cows in July 2023.
- **Q-** Can the successful lessee be notified of hunts on the adjacent WMA?
 - **A-** Hunting dates for hunts held on the WMA are posted online via the wildlife management area brochure.
- **Q-** Are the wetlands seen from stop number 2 part of the lease? Are there problems with alligators?
 - **A-** Yes, the wetlands are part of the lease. No, there have not been problems with alligators.

Mr. Maggard then directed attendees to the to stop number 3 of the site visit. At stop number 3, Mr. Maggard, drew attention to the water tank. The District will get the water tanks operational prior to the execution of the lease, but the lessee will be responsible for the payment of utilities linked to usage of the water tanks (pursuant item #24 in the lease agreement).

Questions received at Stop 3;

- **Q-** Is Brunswick grass considered an invasive species that the District would treat?
 - **A-** No, the District will only treat Florida Invasive Species Council (FISC), formally Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) category 1 &2 plants.

Mr. Maggard then directed attendees to the to stop number 4 (the original meeting location, stop number 1) of the site visit. At stop number 4, Mr. Maggard, pointed out the fire lines that were observed along HWY 44 while driving the tour route and the lessee responsibility of maintenance. In addition, Mr. Maggard noted that if the lessee wishes to bring mineral troughs onto the lease, the lessee would be responsible to rotate in accordance with BMP's to avoid erosion to the soil surrounding them.

Questions received at Stop 4;

- **Q-** How many times per year are fire lines required to be disked?
 - **A-** Fire Lines should be disked at least once a year, pursuant condition 12D in the lease. Disking should be completed prior to wildfire season (March/April)
- **Q-** How wide do fire lines need to be?
 - **A-** Fire lines should be a minimum of 8-feet wide.
- **Q-** Will the District provide a disc to the lessee?
 - **A-** No, the lessee is responsible for providing their own disc.
- **Q-** Is the District done mowing the lease for the current year?
 - **A-** Yes, the District is done mowing the lease for the current fiscal year. Any subsequent mowing would be the responsibility of the lessee.
- **Q-** Can the lessee disturb the soil to treat Brunswick grass? I.e. disc and replant
 - **A-** No, a 'no-till' approach must be used in the treatment of Brunswick grass. Spot treatment or broadcast treatment with EPA-approved herbicides specific to Brunswick grass according to the label and BMP's may be used.
- **Q-** Do equestrians have access to the lease pastures?
 - **A-** No, the recreation users do not have access to the lease pastures with the exception of hunter ingress/egress.
- **Q-** Can the lessee use dogs to herd or work the cows on the lease?
 - **A-** Yes, dogs may be used for working cows, but not for the removal of feral hogs.
- **Q-** Can the lessee cut and sell hay?
 - **A-** Yes, any haying must be done pursuant to Lease Condition 13 "Haying".
- **Q-** Can site visit attendees re-visit the site before the Bid Opening?
 - **A-** Yes, contact the District for potential opportunities.
- **Q-** Can the District provide the price per acre for the previous lease?
 - **A-** The previous lease was bid at under the same terms and conditions including up to 75 animal units for \$35 per acre.

Mr. Maggard closed the question and answer session after asking for final comments from the attendees. He then gave closing remarks and provided his contact information for any follow up questions. The voluntary site visit concluded at 12:35 p.m..

Any questions and answers received via email or phone outside of the voluntary site visit are the same or similar in nature to the questions received at the site visit and addressed above.