

AGENDA ITEM # 2

F. LAKE JACKSON ECOPASSAGE FEASIBILITY STUDY SCOPE OF SERVICES

REQUESTED BY: MPO Staff

TYPE OF ITEM: Consent

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The purpose of the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study is to determine what type of mitigative action is required to re-establish a wildlife linkage between Lake Jackson and Little Lake Jackson.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Option 1: Approve the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study Scope of Services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002 a biology student from the Florida State University came to the Board of County Commissioners requesting that there be some action taken to preserve wildlife along the North Monroe Street corridor in between Clara Kee Boulevard and Old Bainbridge Road (**Figure 1**). This request was the product of an increasing number of animal deaths along this corridor resulting from years of having historic migratory routes impeded by the physical location of North Monroe Street (US 27).

The issue was brought to the attention of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), who in turn, has provided \$100,000 to fund a Feasibility Study. This money cannot be used for any other type of project since it comes from the Environmental Mitigation Fund at FDOT Central Office. Since North Monroe Street is a State of Florida road, the Tallahassee-Leon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff has offered to manage the project for FDOT.

Figure 1 - Lake Jackson Ecopassage Study Area



The intention of the project is not to single out a specific species of animals for which to provide a mitigative action(s), but to study the existing conditions of not only animal, but vegetative habitats, hydrological conditions, and roadway conditions. The types of mitigative action(s) that may result from the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study range from the construction of animal tunnels to a “wildlife wall” (a wall that prevents animals from crawling over onto the road and attempting a crossing), or a combination of both. The study will provide options for moving forward with options through an Implementation Plan.

HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

The Lake Jackson Ecopassage project lies wholly within Leon County, but on a state roadway, and therefore the project falls under the jurisdiction of the MPO. It will be the responsibility of the MPO to approve the actions within the Scope of Services as it pertains to products resulting from the Lake Jackson Feasibility Study.

This project is a new type of project for this Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District, MPO, and community, and could take up to eighteen-months (18) for completion from the Notice to Proceed. It is envisioned that any mitigative action(s) that results from this study will come in the form of an Enhancement Application through the MPO utilizing Federal funding. Therefore, the project methodology must adhere to Federal standards to qualify for funding under the Federal Enhancement Program.

The Public Involvement component of the project includes three types of activities: Focus Workshops, Community Meetings, and a technical group that was created by the Board of County Commissioners in November of 2002 known as the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Project Advisory Group. These activities will continue throughout the length of the project. Additionally, the project will have a web-site to provide access to information an upcoming activities.

To ensure that the Scope of Services adequately covered all issues, the FDOT District 3, FDOT Central Office, Federal Highway Administration, Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, Northwest Florida Water Management District, Leon County Growth Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Florida State University reviewed the document and provided comments.

Lastly, the FDOT and County Attorney have reviewed and commented on the Joint Project Agreement (JPA) for this project. The JPA will be executed after the consultant has been selected, but prior to the execution of any agreement for services by the consultant.

NEXT STEP

After approval of the Scope of Services, staff will be advertising the project in June and hopes to have a consultant selection ready for the MPO in September.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY MPO SUBCOMMITTEES AND STAFF

Transportation Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

At their May 6, 2003 meeting, TCC Members unanimously approved the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study Scope of Services.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

At their May 6, 2003 meeting, BPAC Members unanimously approved the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study Scope of Services.

Transportation Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC)

At their May 8, 2003 meeting, TPAC Members unanimously approved the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study Scope of Services.

MPO Staff

MPO staff recommends approval of the Scope of Services for the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Approve the Lake Jackson Feasibility Study Scope of Services.

Option 2: Provide other direction.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Option 1: Approve the Lake Jackson Feasibility Study Scope of Services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Lake Jackson Ecopassage Feasibility Study Scope of Services.