

## **Minutes for July 18, 2007 Pine Rockland Working Group Meeting**

Thanks to Karina Becerra and the staff of the Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus Environmental Center for providing meeting space and an informative field trip.

Thirty-five participants from 14 different agencies, NGO's, schools, etc. participated.

### **Brief Outreach, Science and Conference Committee Updates and Other News**

Outreach – Nothing new to report.

Science – Jim Snyder (USGS) will forward the draft annotated bibliography from Joe O'Brien's (USFS) "Best Management Practices for Pine Rockland Fuels Management" project to the Science Committee for additions.

Jim is looking for information on pine rockland soils.

The USGS-hosted web page for the PRWG has been updated. Contact Jim regarding potential additional postings or uses for the web page.

Conference – Chris Bergh (TNC), Hillary Cooley (NPS), Sonya Thompson (MDC-NAM), Mike Ross (FIU) and Keith Bradley (IRC) will meet to develop time, place and budget for the winter 2008 Pine Rockland Conference. This will be modeled on the 2006 event which included a Miami-based conference followed by a Bahamas-based workshop.

Other – Mary Truglio (FWC) announced the State Wildlife Grants Program and the fact that it has a focus on pine rocklands in the current RFP.

### **Presentations and Discussions**

#### **Further discussion on "Pine Rockland Management Plan for Miami Dade County Envi. Endangered Lands Program Properties." Keith Bradley, IRC**

Following up on outstanding questions from the presentation on this plan during the last meeting, Keith led discussion focused on four structural elements of pine forests; pine canopy, shrub layer, herbaceous layer and edges.

#### **Further discussion on "Developing Corridors to Alleviate Problems of Urban Fragmentation on Rare Plant Populations in S. Florida." Joyce Maschinski, FTG**

Following up on the presentation on this project during the last meeting, Joyce described current efforts to develop an action plan, implement a pilot project and start a pine rockland seed bank.

### **Miami-Dade County Fire Program Update. Sonya Thompson, MDC-NAM**

Sonya described Miami-Dade County's 1600 acres of pine rocklands which range in size from 0.5 – 850 acres. All sites are fragments of historic stands and many have advanced hardwood succession and/or exotic plant invasion. NAM has plans to burn 15 of these sites this year and anticipates assistance from FDOF and Everglades National Park pursuant to a newly completed agreement. Many of these burns will take place in the winter.

### **Mapping Everglades Pineland Vegetation Using LIDAR. Pat Houle, FIU**

Pat described the LIDAR technology and its applications for veg monitoring based on experiences with her pilot study in Everglades National Park. Distinguishing between pine, hammock and marsh is readily achievable and more detailed analyses are under development.

### **Outcomes of Lower Keys Pine Rockland Workshop. Anne Morkill, USFWS**

Anne described the recent workshop which brought members of the science, management and local communities together to share information and ideas about pine rockland management in the Keys. She sought input on management options for storm surge altered pinelands and non-fire, wildland-urban interface fuel management approaches.

### **Basic Sea-Level Rise Analysis for Big Pine Key, Florida. Chris Bergh, TNC**

Chris showed draft images of Big Pine Key shoreline location and rough percentages of intertidal, transitional and upland land cover based on modeled sea-level rise scenarios from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report (2007) and from Rahmstorf et al. (2007).

### **Roundtable discussion – future of the PRWG**

The PRWG sprang out of the “William B. Robertson Jr. Memorial Pineland Fire Ecology and Management Workshop” which took place in February 2004. At that time the following mission, description, goals and vision were identified for the group;

*The mission of the Pine Rockland Working Group (PRWG) is; “to maintain and restore the pine rockland natural community, associated species, fire and other natural processes upon which they all depend.”*

*General description and goals; “A collaborative, interdisciplinary, international effort, the PRWG will increase basic understanding of the ecosystem and appropriate management practices by identifying, obtaining support for and communicating the results of new research and coordinated monitoring efforts. It will build appreciation for the pine rocklands among all sectors of the community in order to gain support for conservation and sustainable management practices and to ensure safe interactions between people and the flammable forest. And it will forge mutually beneficial relationships between resource managers to help them accomplish their individual goals.*

*Vision Statement; "The members of the PRWG envision a future in which the pine rocklands of today are all still with us at the turn of the next century, but in better condition, and with a constituency of supporters in South Florida and the Bahamas to help keep them that way into the future."*

In July 2007, meeting participants felt that the PRWG should continue to work towards those goals, to meet regularly and to coordinate a biannual Pine Rockland Conference.

The idea of a "pine rockland report card" was discussed as a means of tracking PRWG progress toward goals and overall status of pine rocklands.

Pursuing a State Wildlife Grant to bolster the PRWG's efforts was discussed.

Following the 2008 Pine Rockland Conference, Keith Bradley will take over as chairman of the PRWG from Chris Bergh.

**There will not be a PRWG meeting between now and the Pine Rockland Conference in winter 2008. Details on the Conference will be forthcoming.**