

SUMMARY OF THE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION LANDS (C.A.R.L.) PROGRAM
January 1987

1. Application

Filed on form 18-1A, which may be obtained from the Evaluation Section, Division of State Lands, applications must be received on or before August 1 to be considered during current CARL cycle. Late applications are considered during the next cycle, unless they are accepted out-of-cycle by an affirmative vote of four or more Committee members. Applications are accepted from any source, which generally includes state agencies, local governments, conservation organizations, land owners, realtors, etc. Applications may be rejected if incomplete, but the sponsor is first notified and provided the opportunity to supply the essential information.

2. Public Presentations

Project sponsors or their designees are allowed to provide oral testimony and visual or written materials in support of proposed projects at public meetings held in Tallahassee. Each project sponsor is given fifteen minutes for presentation. Committee members may request additional information from sponsors.

3. 3-Vote Meeting

After reviewing applications (including an analysis by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory) and public testimony, the Committee votes to determine which proposals will be subjected to the full review process. Proposals that receive three or more votes are considered further; proposals receiving less than three votes may be considered during a subsequent cycle if reconsideration is requested in writing.

4. Resource Planning Boundary

Proposals voted to full review are first analyzed for their major resource attributes as indicated by the application materials. A statement of each project's public purpose and resource-based goals is developed by the Evaluation Section and reviewed by Committee staff. Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) examines applications, particularly maps showing boundaries, to determine the need for boundary additions or deletions based upon existing information within the FNAI Database, general topography, aerial photography, knowledgeable sources, etc. The FNAI Resource Planning Boundary (RPB) is then circulated to Committee staff members for review by them and appropriate field staff. Suggested revisions to the FNAI RPB are submitted by staff with written justification for boundary modifications. The resultant RPB developed by Committee staff is used to determine the exact area to be thoroughly assessed, which generally encompasses the maximum RPB.

5. Assessment

The area within the RPB is assessed for following:

- a. General location and size of project.
- b. Natural resources, including community types, endangered and threatened species, other plants and animals, forest resources, geologic resources, water resources, etc.
- c. Archaeological and historical resources.
- d. Outdoor recreational potential, including both active and passive forms of recreation.
- e. Conformance with Florida Statewide Land Acquisition Plan, Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, and State Lands Management Plan.
- f. Vulnerability and endangerment.
- g. Acquisition category: Environmentally Endangered Lands or Other Lands.
- h. Ownership patterns and ease of acquisition
- i. Estimated cost with respect to availability of other funding, alternative acquisition techniques, management costs, etc.
- j. Suitability and proposed use, including functional usability, manageability, and designated management agencies.
- k. Precise location relative to urban areas, Areas of Critical State Concern, and other public lands.

Each agency represented on the Committee or the FNAI is assigned lead responsibility for the completion of one or more assessments or portions thereof. At least one staff member or their designee must conduct an on-site evaluation of each proposed project. The assessment may suggest further revisions to the RPB or to the proposed purpose and resource-based goals. Assessments are compiled by the Evaluation Section and then distributed to all Committee members, staff, and the FNAI for review.

6. Committee Review

Each project assessment, including the final RPB, is evaluated by the Committee to determine if it accurately and adequately assesses the merits and faults of a proposed project. The Committee may direct staff to modify the assessment or RPB for any project proposal.

7. Public Meetings

Following Committee approval of the project assessments, copies of assessments are sent to respective project sponsors along with notices of forthcoming public meetings to be held at several locations throughout the state. These hearings are scheduled to obtain additional oral testimony on the project proposals, as well as testimony on projects which are currently on a CARL Priority List. All public meetings are announced 30 days in advance in newspapers of general circulation in the vicinity of each meeting, and 7 days in advance in the Florida Administrative Weekly. Additionally, notices are mailed to all legislators, county planning departments, and others on the CARL mailing list that is maintained by the Evaluation Section.

8. 4-Vote Meeting

After reviewing public testimony and other pertinent information, the Committee votes to determine which of the assessed projects to consider further. Assessed projects receiving four or more votes are considered further; projects receiving fewer than four votes may be considered during a subsequent cycle if reconsideration is requested in writing.

9. Project Design

The RPB approved by the Committee is the starting point for the Project Design. The RPB is based predominantly on resource concerns, while the Project Design analyzes ownership patterns, regulatory controls, alternative acquisition techniques, and related factors which may affect boundary considerations and the ease of acquisition. The initial draft of the Project Design is prepared by a team composed of representatives of three Bureaus within the Division of State Lands: Land Acquisition, Survey and Mapping, and Appraisals. Primary considerations during the Project Design include:

- a. Cost-benefit analysis and recommendation.
- b. Sovereignty and existing public ownership.
- c. Private ownerships and prospective development plans which endanger resource values.
- d. Information on trends regarding future development, zoning changes, annexation, etc.
- e. Coordination with the land acquisition programs of other agencies or organizations (e.g., federal, other state, water management districts, local governments, The Nature Conservancy, etc.).

The draft Project Design is then submitted to the FNAI, the Committee staff, and to the proposed management agencies for final review and for recommendations on acquisition phasing. A time sequence for acquisition is recommended in order to acquire the most critical parcels first, with primary consideration given to resource management concerns and parcels' endangerment and vulnerability. Additionally, acquisitions which exceed budgetary limitations can be divided into phases that coincide with fiscal years.

10. Committee Review

Each Project Design, including the design map with proposed phasing and acquisition techniques, is evaluated by the Committee to determine if any modifications are required.

11. Second 4-Vote Meeting

After the Committee approves each Project Design, the Committee votes to determine which projects shall become CARL projects. Only projects that receive four or more votes at this step will become CARL projects. Projects receiving fewer than four votes may be reconsidered during a subsequent cycle if requested in writing.

12. Ranking Projects

Before the Committee ranks projects, public meetings (see step 7) are held to gather public testimony on the existing CARL Priority List. The Committee reviews information obtained during the public meetings along with other information before ranking projects. Projects are ranked by several means:

- a. The entire list, including newly approved projects, are independently ranked by each committee member. The independent ranks are then combined for each project, and the projects are ranked from lowest total score to highest.
- b. New projects are ranked as above and then added to the bottom of a previously approved CARL Priority List.
- c. Projects with exceptional resource value, those that are especially endangered by development, or those providing bargain sale opportunities may be inserted into the list at an appropriate rank by affirmative vote of four or more committee members.

13. Boundary Map

Before a project can be placed on a CARL Priority List that is presented to the Board, it must have a Boundary Map completed. Boundary Maps generally show ownership boundaries, jurisdictional lines, and sovereignty lines. The Bureau of Survey and Mapping solicits bids for most boundary mapping projects, which includes title work.

14. Submission to Board

The Preliminary CARL Priority List is submitted to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (i.e., the Governor and Cabinet) along with the CARL Annual Report during the first Board meeting in July. The Board may approve the list, strike individual projects from the list, or reject the list, but they cannot otherwise alter the priority ranking of projects. The Board must act upon the Committee's list within 45 days of its submission to them. Interim lists may be developed at any time if requested by four or more members of the Committee. Interim lists are treated in the same manner as the Preliminary CARL Priority List.