



## Legislation Text

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### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2010 Grant Submittal (B)**

**This item involves the submittal of a grant application agreement to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the granting of \$25,000 to the City to conduct sandhill restoration at Boulware Springs Nature Park.**

In March 2010, City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs staff was approached by a representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regarding a grant opportunity that would provide \$25,000 to the City for the implementation of restoration activities. No matching funds are required, however; FWS does require at least an equal amount of in-kind services be provided. City staff developed a project plan for sandhill restoration activities at Boulware Springs Nature Park. The grant application agreement and project plan have been reviewed by the FWS as well as the City's Legal Department. Both approved the plan as provided.

Boulware Springs Nature Park is unique in that the majority of the park acreage is of sandhill habitat type, which is a declining habitat in the State of Florida. It is also unique in that some rare plant and wildlife species have been able to exist on this oasis within the urban context. One such animal, the gopher tortoise (a State listed threatened species) is known on the site and is considered a keystone species. Restoration activities will center on creating improved habitat for this species.

In recent years, City staff has tried to implement restoration activities at Boulware Springs Nature Park in the form of hardwood removal, invasive exotic control, and prescribed burning. Efforts by staff have been small-scale and minor due to limited funding opportunities for this type of activity. Obtaining this grant will provide much needed funding to conduct large-scale restoration in a timely manner.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Service grant application agreement provides for \$25,000 to be used solely on the Boulware Springs Nature Park restoration project. Only the use of in-kind services as outlined in the application project plan are required by the City, and can be accomplished with existing staff.

The City Commission: 1) authorize the City Manager to execute the Florida Fish and Wildlife Service application agreement and other grant-related documents, subject to approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality.

#### Alternative Recommendation

The City Commission decline the request to execute a Florida Fish and Wildlife Service grant application agreement.