

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: March 19, 2008

Division: Growth Management

Bulk Item: Yes X No

Department: Planning

Staff Contact Person: Charlene Wylie

AGENDA ITEM WORDING:

Retroactive approval of a grant application to the National Scenic Byways for \$1.4 million to purchase Key deer habitat along U.S. 1 in Big Pine Key; retroactive approval is necessary due to application deadline.

ITEM BACKGROUND:

The National Scenic Byways (NSB), a program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), announced the opening of their grant cycle to the states on February 14, 2008. Florida released this information to their scenic highway programs on February 19, 2008. The application deadline for Florida applicants was March 10, 2008.

This grant will be matched 20% with funds from the Monroe County Land Authority (MCLA), and will be used to purchase critical habitat along U.S. 1 in Big Pine Key. The purchase of the grant is for resource protection which will enhance the scenic corridor and assist in protecting of the county's intrinsic natural resources. An incidental benefit is meeting mitigation requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:

N/A

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approval

TOTAL COST: \$1,750,000 **BUDGETED:** Yes No

COST TO COUNTY: \$0 **SOURCE OF FUNDS:** NSB Grant and
MCLA Funds

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes No X **AMOUNT PER MONTH** **Year**

APPROVED BY: County Atty X OMB/Purchasing Risk Management

DOCUMENTATION: Included X Not Required

DISPOSITION: **AGENDA ITEM #**



Project Summary 2008

SB-2008-FL-54821: Key Deer Habitat Preservation

State Submission Date

Mar 7, 2008

Division Submission Date

not submitted

State Priority

0

This application must be completed online at <http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/>, and submitted electronically and in printed form.

Project Category

Which category best describes the location of this project?

- Project that is associated with a highway that has been designated as a National Scenic Byway, All American Road, or one of America's Byways.
- Project along a State or Indian tribe scenic byway that is carried out to make the byway eligible for designation as a National Scenic Byway, an All-American Road, or one of America's Byways.
- Project that is associated with the development of a State or Indian tribe scenic byway program.

Choose from the following categories of eligible work the type that best fits your project.

- Byway Programs
- Corridor Management
- Safety Improvements
- Byway Facilities
- Access to Recreation
- Resource Protection
- Interpretive Information
- Marketing

Is this application a resubmission of an unfunded project from a previous year?

- Yes
- No

Project Location

State(s) involved in project:

Florida

Indicate the byway's regional location within the State. Reference prominent landmarks such as parallel major highways, natural features, counties, or large cities, that makes the byway(s) easy to locate in a road atlas.

The Florida Keys are a series of islands that stretch off the southern-most tip of Florida. The Florida Keys Scenic Highway is located along the entire length of U.S. 1 (Overseas Highway) in the Florida Keys, starting in Key Largo at MM 106 and ending in Key West at MM 0. See attachment 1.

Briefly describe the project's location(s) on the byway using references to route numbers, byway gateway communities, project location communities and landmarks so any reviewer can identify the project sites.

The project is located on Big Pine Key on U.S. 1, approximately 35 miles northeast of Key West. See attachment 2.

Associated Byways

State	Byway Name
FL	Florida Keys Scenic Highway

Is this project consistent with the Corridor Management Plan(s) for the byway(s) involved?

- Yes
- No / CMP not available

Congressional Districts

State	District	Representative (at time of application)
FL	18	Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana

Abstract

Project Description

Complete the sentence "This project will..." before adding remaining information.

This project will preserve 20 specific parcels in Big Pine Key along the scenic highway which are critical habitat for the federally endangered Key deer, which are found only on these islands. In addition to preserving a significant intrinsic quality of the scenic highway, it will preserve the beautiful viewshed while controlling and directing growth in a popular vacation destination.

Byway Benefits

Complete the sentence "This project benefits the byway traveler by..." before adding remaining information.

This project benefits the byway traveler by preserving a delicate ecosystem, allowing the traveler to see and understand how nature develops on a chain of isolated islands. Furthermore, by selecting specific high-quality parcels of habitat along the highway that adjoin the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail and other publicly held conservation lands, the traveler can experience this unique environment first hand either by vehicle, or by biking or hiking the trail.

Narrative

Project Summary

Completely describe all the major elements of your proposed project in a concise but complete summary.

This project will purchase 20 specified properties along the highway that are critical habitat for the federally endangered Key deer, that also adjoin the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail, U.S. Key Deer Refuge lands, and state and county conservation lands. Conservation of these properties will be used by Monroe County as mitigation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife for future development of the highway and in the Big Pine area.

Story of the Key deer in the Florida Keys: The Florida Keys has a unique ecosystem, with numerous plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. Because the Keys were formed as a series of isolated islands, and because they

are located in a subtropical weather system conducive to year-round nourishment, these plants and animals have developed amazing adaptations. Even more interesting is that each island contains an ecosystem slightly different from the others.

One of these amazing adaptations is found in the Key deer, a subspecies of the Virginia white-tailed deer. Due to the lack of fresh water and land limits, these deer evolved to look exactly like their northern cousins, but grow no bigger than the size of a medium-large dog. (See attachment 3) These deer are found on only two islands in the Keys - Big Pine Key and No Name Key - because the Slash pine habitat is located here. These shy and diminutive creatures are gentle and adorable, making them the sweethearts of the Keys, and a strong attraction for tourists coming to the Florida Keys.

History/Mission of the Florida Keys Scenic Highway: In 1999, members of Clean Florida Keys (the CME prior to the new Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance) sought the designation of U.S. 1 from Key Largo to Key West as a Florida Scenic Highway. This was a time when development and tourism in the Keys was reaching a peak. They felt that by designating U.S. 1 a scenic highway, it would raise awareness of the Keys' beautiful vistas and unique ecosystem, raise awareness of the value of maintaining and preserving the intrinsic qualities of the Keys, and encourage local governments to consider these features when adopting plans and approving development in environmentally sensitive areas. Their plan also was to maintain and restore native vegetation and habitats, and encourage more eco-tourism to the Florida Keys. (See Attachment 4)

Efforts to Protect Key deer: Protecting the Key deer is not just a goal of the Scenic Highway. This goal is shared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the National Key Deer Refuge, the Florida Department of Community Affairs, the Florida Forever Program, the Monroe County Department of Growth Management, and the Monroe County Land Authority. Each of these agencies are working in concert to identify, conserve and manage Key deer habitat, as well as control and direct the growth and development demands in this popular vacation destination. (See Attachment 5)

Summary of Project: This project is a joint effort by Monroe County Growth Management and the Monroe County Land Authority to protect 20 specific properties of Key deer habitat. These properties have been selected for their high quality of habitat, their proximity to the scenic highway, their proximity to the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail, and their proximity to other Key deer conservation lands. (See Attachment 6-11)

These properties will increase the contiguous acreage of habitat available to the Key deer, as well as preserve the lengthy spans of natural beauty along the highway and the heritage trail. By securing these properties, this project also directs growth and development to occur in small clusters outside the habitat boundaries, thereby reducing sprawl development along the highway.

This will be a tremendous accomplishment along the scenic corridor, fostering a balance between the demands from growth and tourism, and protecting one of the major resources which bring tourists to this area in the first place.

The grant will be administered by the Monroe County's Department of Growth Management, while the properties will be purchased and managed for native conservation by the Monroe County Land Authority.

Benefit to Byway Traveler

Describe how the proposed project will benefit a byway traveler, add to their travel experience or fulfill an important objective of your CMP.

The byway traveler in the Florida Keys has 106 miles of highway and overseas bridges to enjoy on their way from Key Largo to Key West. They expect hotels and restaurants to be available along the way, but want their drive to consist of lengthy spans of undisturbed beauty and interesting culture. There are many "eco-destinations" along this drive, and one of the most significant is the Key deer on Big Pine Key.

Unfortunately, the draw of tourists to this area to see the elusive Key deer is placing demands for more development, and thereby jeopardizing their limited habitat.

By directing this growth, and protecting the habitat, it is the goal of Monroe County to preserve both the tourist destination, the experience of the traveler, and the Key deer. This also enhances the experience of the traveler along the Florida Keys Heritage Trail, which is a bike/ped path that parallels the entire 106 miles of the highway.

Information about the Key deer can be found at the nearby National Key Deer Refuge, which is identified as a community visitor's center in the FKSH interpretive master plan.

This is consistent with the mission and goals of the Florida Keys Scenic Highway to preserve native vegetation and habitat, and to encourage more eco-tourism to the Florida Keys. (See Attachments 4 and 12)

Prior Projects

Describe any relationship between this project and previously funded National Scenic Byways grant projects. In addition, discuss how the proposed work relates to any multi-year work plan byway leaders have developed.

This project is consistent with the Scenic Highway's Corridor Management Plan (See Attachments 4 and 12).

The Interpretive Master Plan outlines the natural history of the Florida Keys, and identifies the Key deer as a critical element in the natural history of the Keys. It also identifies the National Key Deer Refuge on Big Pine Key as a Community Visitors Center and as 1 of the 8 significant sites in the Florida Keys.

Project Coordinator

Please provide contact information for a person responsible for this project.

Name: Charlene Wylie

Title: Scenic Highway Coordinator

Organization: Monroe County Planning

Address: 88800 Overseas Highway
Tavernier, FL 33070

Phone: 305-852-7102

Fax: 305-852-7103

E-mail: wylie-charlene@monroecounty-fl.gov

Work Plan

Milestone/Task	Start Date	Duration	Responsible Party	Justification
Establish funding agreement with State	AAD*			
Enter LAP agreement with Florida Department of Transportation	AAD + 30 days*	30 days	FDOT and Monroe County Board of County Commissioners	Contract with LAP certified organization required by FDOT.
Acquire property appraisals in accordance with Uniform Relocation Act	AAD + 60 days*	30 days	Monroe County Land Authority	This step is required by the FHWA.
Negotiate purchase agreements with Landowners	AAD + 90 days*	30 days	Monroe County Land Authority	This step is in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act.
Complete purchases of properties.	AAD + 180 days*	30 days	Monroe County Land Authority and Board of County Commissioners	This step finalizes the purchase of the properties.

* AAD = Actual Award Date (estimated to be August 01, 2008)

Budget

Cost Breakdown

#	Description	Total Cost	Requested	Match
1.	Purchase price of parcels	1,750,000	1,400,000	350,000
2.	Property Appraisals	25,000	0	25,000
3.	Project Management/Negotiations	20,000	0	20,000
Total		\$1,795,000	\$1,400,000	\$395,000

Matching Funds

Source	Type	Description	Amount
Monroe County Land Authority	Cash		350,000
Property Appraisals	Cash		25,000
Monroe County Land Authority	Non-Government Services	In-kind services for tasks associated with Uniform Relocation Act	20,000
Total			\$395,000

Funding Allocation

Do the byways involved in the project cross any Federal Lands? (Check all that apply)

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- USDA Forest Service

If this project is selected for funding, please indicate your preference for carrying out the project (check one):

- FHWA allocates the funds for the project to the State DOT
- FHWA allocates the funds for the project to one of the Federal Land Management agencies marked above (provide contact information below)
- FHWA allocates the funds for the project to an Indian tribe or tribal government (provide contact information below)

If funding should be allocated to a Federal land management agency or Indian tribal organization, please provide contact information for that organization:

Name:
Title:
Organization:
Address:
Phone:
Fax:
E-mail:

Application Checklist

The following statements are for informative purposes. Please read and check each statement.

- I understand that this is a reimbursement program - funds are not available up-front.
- I have reviewed and responded to the Complete Application statements as outlined in the Grants Guidance.
- I have been in touch with the State scenic byway coordinator and have responded to recommendations or requirements of the State.
- I have verified with the State byway coordinator that this proposed project can receive authorization to proceed from the State and FHWA division before the end of the fiscal year for which the application is made.

Attachments

Use this as a checklist to verify that all attachments are provided with your printed application.



- Location of Florida Keys Scenic Highway**

Location map of the Florida Keys Scenic Highway

Digital version: [Attachment 1 - Location of FKSH.pdf](#) (1.0 MB)



- Location of Big Pine Key**

Location map of the Big Pine area in relation to scenic highway

Digital version: [Attachment 2 - Location of Big Pine Key.pdf](#) (293.6 KB)



□ **Picture of Key Deer**

This is a picture of the Key deer from the CMP.

Digital version: [Attachment 3 - Picture of Key Deer in CMP Story.pdf](#) (165.5 KB)



□ **Information from CMP**

This attachment consists of the relevant pages from the CMP (corridor story, goals, action items) confirming that this project and it's purpose is discussed and supported by the CMP.

Digital version: [Attachment 4 - Key Deer and the CMP.pdf](#) (1.3 MB)



□ **Habitat Conservation Plan**

This is a page from the CMP which discusses the habitat conservation plan for the Key deer with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, for control of growth in Big Pine and No Name Keys.

Digital version: [Attachment 5 - Habitat Conservation Plan.pdf](#) (132.0 KB)



□ **Map of Specified Parcels**

This map is an overall map, showing the location of the project parcels in Big Pine.

Digital version: [Attachment 6 - Overview Map of Parcels.pdf](#) (1.3 MB)



□ **Map Insert 1 of 5**

This map is a close-up view of the first set of parcels in Big Pine Key. The project parcels are highlighted in yellow, and the public conservation lands are hatched in red.

Digital version: [Attachment 7 - Map Insert 1 of 5.pdf](#) (1.4 MB)



□ **Map Insert 2 of 5**

This map is a close-up view of the second set of parcels in Big Pine Key. The project parcels are highlighted in yellow, and the public conservation lands are hatched in red.

Digital version: [Attachment 8 - Map Insert 2 of 5.pdf](#) (1.4 MB)



□ **Map Insert 3 of 5**

This map is a close-up view of the third set of parcels in Big Pine Key. The project parcels are highlighted in yellow, and the public conservation lands are hatched in red.

Digital version: [Attachment 9 - Map Insert 3 of 5.pdf](#) (1.3 MB)



□ **Map Insert 4 of 5**

This map is a close-up view of the fourth set of parcels in Big Pine Key. The project parcels are highlighted in yellow, and the public conservation lands are hatched in red.

Digital version: [Attachment 10 - Map Insert 4 of 5.pdf](#) (1.4 MB)



□ **Map Insert 5 of 5**

This map is a close-up view of the last set of parcels in Big Pine Key. The project parcels are highlighted in yellow, and the public conservation lands are hatched in red.

Digital version: [Attachment 11 - Map Insert 5 of 5.pdf](#) (1.3 MB)

□ **List of Property Values**

This is a table of all the properties with their identification numbers and estimated values.

Digital version: [Attachment 12 - Land Values.pdf](#) (6.4 KB)



□ **Letter of Support from CME**

This is the letter of support from the CME for the Florida Keys Scenic Highway.

Digital version: [Attachment 13 - CME Letter of Support.pdf](#) (47.1 KB)



□ **Letter of Support from the FKOHT**

This is the letter of support from the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail.

Digital version: [Attachment 14 - FKOHT Letter of Support.pdf](#) (225.9 KB)

Signatures

Application Completeness

I certify that this application is complete and correct, and is eligible for National Scenic Byways funding. (This should be completed by the State's scenic byways coordinator.)

Please print name:	Title:
Signature:	Date:

Matching Funds Certification

I certify that the matching funds for this project are available for use at the time of application.

Please print name: Mark Rosch	Title: Director, Monroe County Land Authority
Signature:	Date: