

# Memorandum

To: Rob Loflin, Natural Resources Department Director  
From: James Evans, Environmental Biologist  
Subject: Sanibel Community Park/Frannie's Preserve Extension Trail and Pond Apple Park/Shipleigh Trail Connector Project  
Date: 3/22/2012

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This memo is provided to update you on the status of two separate City and Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) partnership trail projects — the Sanibel Community Park/Frannie's Preserve Extension Trail and the Pond Apple Park/Shipleigh Trail Connector Project.

## **Sanibel Community Park/Frannie's Preserve Extension Trail**

The Sanibel Community Park Trail was originally designed as a 0.58 mile loop trail intended to get visitors to Sanibel Community Park out into the newly restored City-owned conservation lands located to the south of Community Park and the CHR Casa Mariposa property (Fig. 1, dark blue line). The trailhead is sited between the Community Park sand volleyball court and the parking lot. Along the trail visitors will encounter various natural habitats including the newly planted slash pine flatwoods habitat created through a grant provided by the Florida Forest Service in 2010, open field/wildflower meadow habitat, and open water ponds. Visitors to the park have the opportunity to see bobcats, songbirds, wading birds, turtles and occasionally an alligator sitting along the edge of one of the ponds.

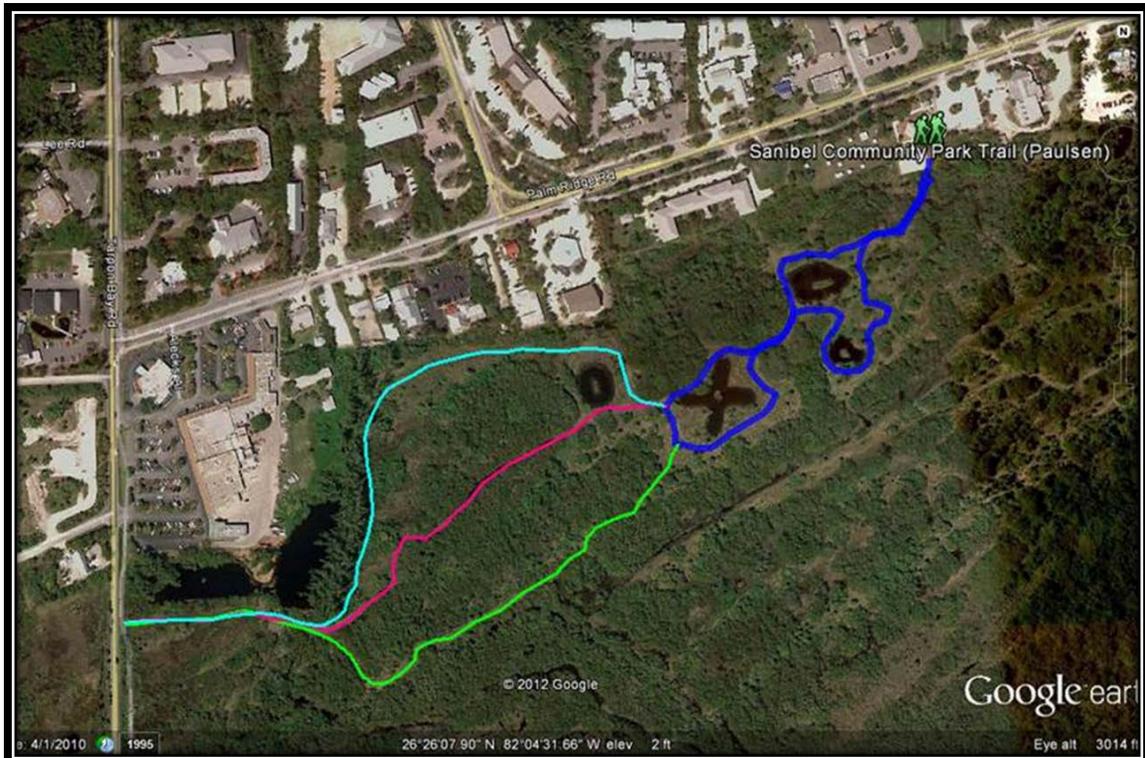
The conceptual design of the Community Park Trail was presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee on January 26, 2012. During that meeting, the committee provided valuable feedback on the trail and suggested that staff look into partnering with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation on extending the trail through SCCF conservation lands to the tarpon Bay Road Shared Use Path (SUP). On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Natural Resources staff met with Erick Lindblad, Executive Director of the SCCF, to discuss the potential for extending the loop trail to the Tarpon Bay SUP. During that meeting, we identified three potential routes through SCCF property (Fig. 1): 1.) a northern route that utilizes existing firelines behind the commercial properties along Periwinkle Way; 2.) a central route that uses an existing fireline that runs through the center of a buttonwood forest; 3.) a southern route that connects the southwestern end of the Sanibel Community Park loop trail and runs parallel to historic sections of the Sanibel River along upland spoil and existing firelines. SCCF and Natural Resources staff felt that using the southern and central routes (Fig. 2) would provide visitors with a more natural experience and would allow them to view a larger array of natural habitats, including West Indian tropical hardwood hammock, wetland savannah, and a dense canopied buttonwood forest, as well as views of the historic Sanibel River. The addition of the southern and central trail options through Frannie's Preserve will extend the loop trail from 0.58 miles to 1.34 miles, with the option of one-way travel from Community Park to the Tarpon Bay SUP (0.67 miles).

The trail would be accessible to hikers and bikers using off-road or “mountain” bicycles. Lower elevation sections of the buttonwood canopy trail on Frannie’s Preserve may not be accessible during the wettest times of the year. In the event that the central route is flooded, the southern route can be used to get to the Tarpon Bay SUP and back to Community Park. Proposed amenities for the trail include an informational kiosk at the Sanibel Community Park trailhead describing the trail and various habitats and wildlife that visitors may encounter. Directional arrow signs will be placed along the trail to help guide visitors. Resting areas with benches or picnic tables will also be available at select points along the trail. Alligator habitat warning signs will be posted at all waterbody access points along the trail to notify visitors that they are near alligator habitat and to not feed wildlife. An additional kiosk or informational sign may need to be considered along the Tarpon Bay Road SUP trail access point.

**Estimated cost for constructing the Sanibel Community Park/Frannie’s Preserve Extension Trail:**

- Informational kiosk at trailhead - \$2,000
- Directional arrows - \$250
- Alligator Warning signs - \$150
- Bulk mulch for lower portions of the trail - \$500 (labor)
- Small Culvert and fill to connect firelines through existing trail - \$1,000
- Picnic table - \$600
- Bench - \$300
- Permitting (if necessary) - \$ 1,000 (staff time)

**Total Project Cost Estimate: \$5,800**



**Figure 1. Sanibel Community Park/Frannie’s Preserve Extension Trail Alignment Options**

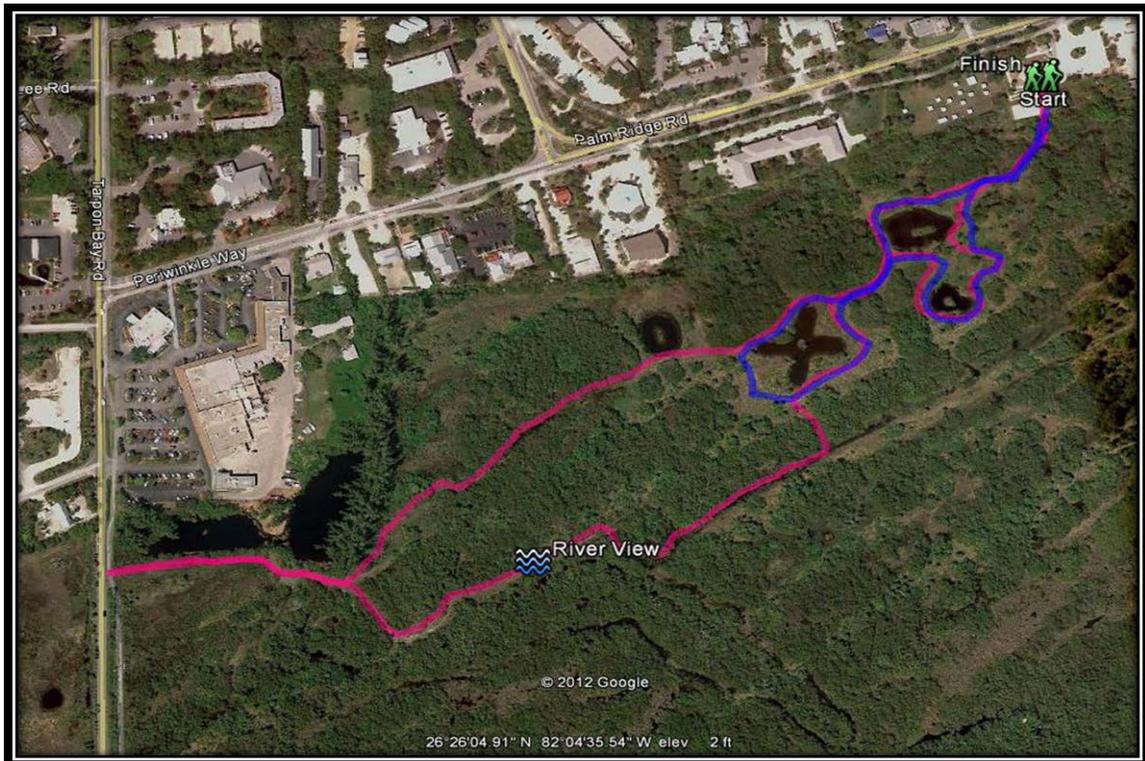


Figure 2. Sanibel Community Park/Frannie's Preserve Extension Final Trail Alignment

### **Pond Apple Park/ShIPLEY Trail Connector Project**

The Pond Apple Park/ShIPLEY Trail Connector Project will allow visitors to hike and bike from the Pond Apple Park trailhead, located adjacent to the Sanibel-Captiva Chamber of Commerce, to Roadside Park (Fig. 3). A connector boardwalk trail through the City-owned Schlosser Preserve will link the Pond Apple Park Loop Trail to the ShIPLEY Trail located on SCCF's newly acquired Bailey Homestead Preserve. The project will result in a 2.4 mile loop trail (1.2 mile one-way) that takes visitors through various upland and wetland habitats, including a pond apple slough, native slash pine flatwoods and West Indian tropical hardwood hammock. The trail will be accessible to hikers and bikers using off-road or mountain bicycles.

The proposed project will require construction of approximately 420 linear feet of boardwalk, 8 feet in width, with a protective handrail over the entire Schlosser Preserve portion of the trail (Fig. 3). The area where the boardwalk is to be constructed is wetlands and remains flooded throughout the rainy season. To make the Pond Apple Park trail fully accessible throughout the rainy season (July–October), 270 linear feet of low-elevation (<6" above the ground) boardwalk with a toe rail, 6 feet in width, will be required along the wettest portions of the Pond Apple Trail (Fig. 3). In addition, approximately 1,500 linear feet of pit shell (90 yd<sup>3</sup>) will also be required to raise the elevation of the existing trail in areas with pooling water or muck soils (Fig. 3).

The proposed boardwalk through the Schlosser Preserve will be 8 feet wide to accommodate hikers and off road bicycles and to provide for simultaneous use of the boardwalk by birdwatchers near the open water viewing area. Because the board walk will be elevated more than 6 inches off the ground, a protective handrail will be required to be installed along the entire length of the boardwalk. The

boardwalk will be constructed of recycled composite Trex-style materials, similar to other City boardwalks and beach walkovers.

Natural Resources staff is currently working on a Florida Department of Environmental Protection Recreational Trails Program grant application for the Pond Apple Park/Shipleigh Trail Connector Project that will be submitted by March 30<sup>th</sup>. Due to restrictions in the grant limiting the project to a single parcel of land, the grant application will only request a 50:50 cost share for funding of the Schlosser Preserve boardwalk. The grant request is estimated to be between \$100,000 - \$120,000. In preliminary talks with SCCF, Erick Lindblad has indicated that \$82,000 from the Starr Thomas Memorial Fund is available for the boardwalk and that SCCF would be willing to participate in a 50:50 cost share with the City and raise additional funds to complete this project. Additional funds may be available through the Sanibel Audubon Society, the Sanibel Bicycle Club, and through other local partnerships.

Natural resources staff will be presenting the project to the City's Parks and Recreation Committee on March 22<sup>nd</sup> to get their comments and feedback.

**Estimated cost for completing the Pond Apple Park/Shipleigh Trail Connector Project:**

Schlosser Preserve Boardwalk (420 LF estimated at 8 foot width) – \$164,207 (\*materials only-Trex composite material; SCCF Hammerheads to provide labor)

Pond Apple Park Trail Improvements

Boardwalk - \$47,250 (Constructed cost - 270 LF @ \$175/LF Trex composite material)

Pit shell - \$2,000 (1,500 LF; 6' wide; 3" deep)

Directional arrows - \$150

Alligator Warning signs - \$150

Permitting - \$ 1,000 (staff time)

Kiosk at Roadside Park/Shipleigh Trailhead (to be provided by SCCF not included in budget)

**Total Project Cost Estimate: \$214,757\***

\*Note: Project costs are based on initial estimates and do not reflect actual bid prices.

Estimates do not include labor for Schlosser Preserve Boardwalk. Use of pressure treated lumber for in ground supports and/or decking would substantially reduce initial cost and may reduce slickness of surface when wet, but would increase long-term maintenance costs.

**Attachments for Council Packet:**

Letter of Support from Sanibel Audubon

Letter of Support from SCCF

Letter of Support from the Sanibel Bicycle Club

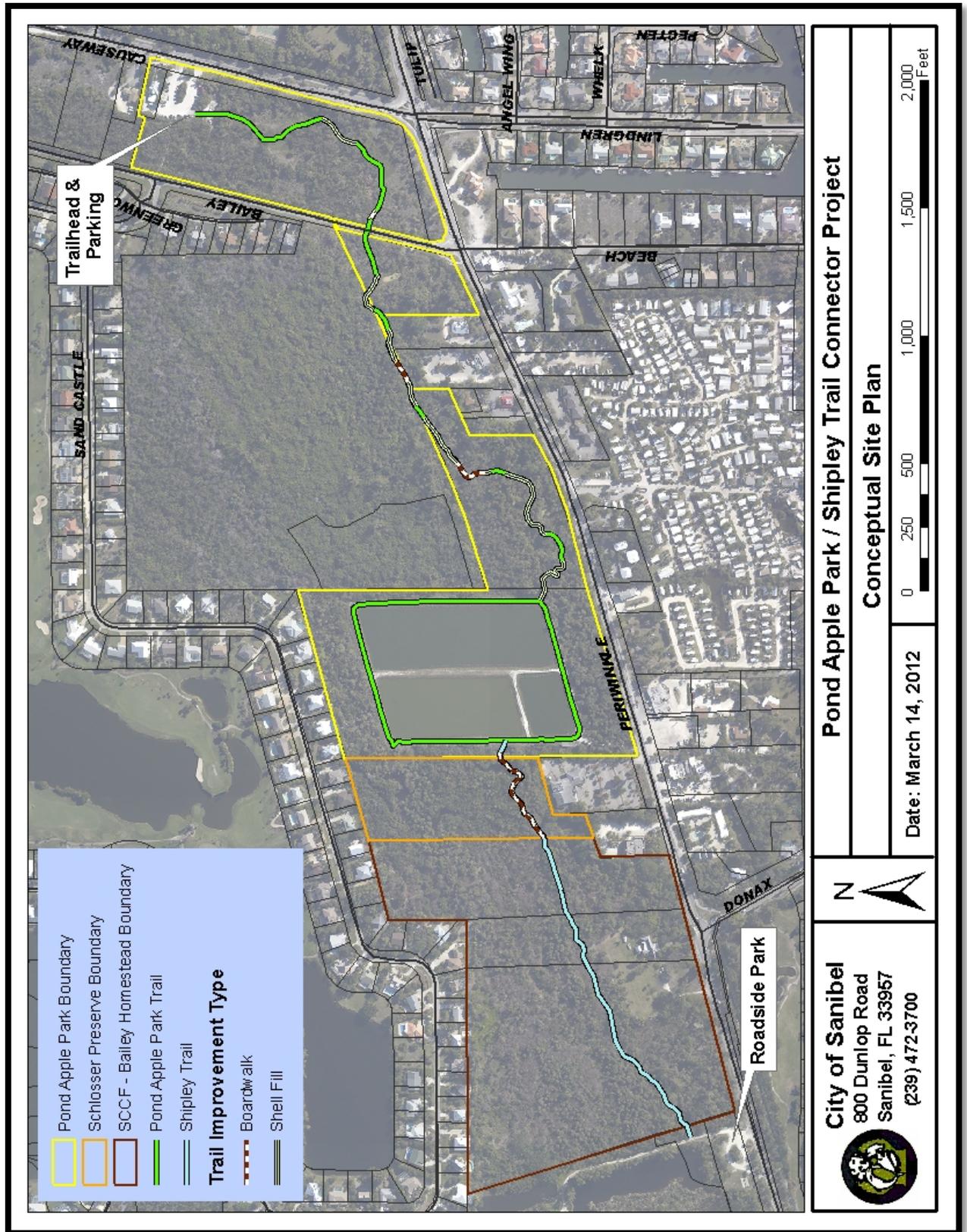


Figure 3. Pond Apple Park/Shipley Trail Connector Project



Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 957  
Sanibel, Florida 33957

March 6, 2012

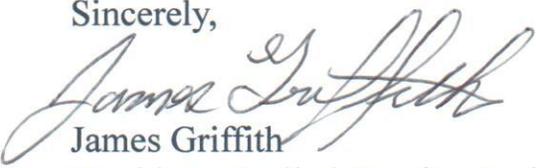
Mr. Rob Loflin, Director  
Natural Resources Department  
City of Sanibel  
800 Dunlop Road  
Sanibel, Florida 33957

Dear Rob:

The 247 members of Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society want to go on record as strong supporters of your efforts on behalf of the City of Sanibel to provide an all-weather trail, including necessary boardwalks, through Pond Apple Preserve that will connect to the planned trail into and through the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation's newly acquired Bailey Homestead Preserve. The realization of these projects will provide an outstanding venue for the public to observe, enjoy, and embrace our Island's wildlife and vegetation treasures.

Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society is prepared to participate with limited financial assistance to help make this project happen. We would be pleased to discuss our interest and support at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
James Griffith  
President, Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society

Cc Ms Judie Zimomra



# SCCF

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation

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Erick Lindblad

*Executive Director*

SCCF is dedicated to the conservation of coastal habitats and aquatic resources on Sanibel and Captiva and in the surrounding watershed through:

- Marine Research
- Land Acquisition
- Natural Resource Policy
- Native Plant Nursery
- Environmental Education
- Sea Turtle Conservation
- Wildlife Habitat Management

March 20, 2012

Judie Zimomra, Sanibel City Manager  
800 Dunlop Rd  
Sanibel, FL 33957

Dear Judie,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of SCCF I am writing to express support for the construction of a boardwalk connector across the City's Schlosser Preserve between the Pond Apple Park trail system and the "Shipley Trail" to be developed on the SCCF Bailey Homestead Preserve.

In association with SCCF's Shipley Trail, this boardwalk will provide a great connection within the City's existing system creating a continuous path from the Chamber of Commerce to Roadside Park on Periwinkle. It will provide access to a variety of habitats including canopied Buttonwood slough, and West Indian Hammock away from busy roadways.

SCCF is offering to provide up to a 50% match for materials costs and a commitment to secure volunteer labor for assistance with construction. SCCF's construction volunteers, the "Hammerheads" will be available for the project.

We have received \$82,000 in memory of Starr Thomas which would become a significant part of SCCF's matching funds. We would like to be able to place signage on the boardwalk, approved by the City, in memory of Starr and her association with the development of Sanibel's initial bike path system.

We are hopeful that the City will authorize staff to move forward with planning and permitting and that funds for this project would be authorized during the coming budget cycle or appropriated from funds which might be available in the current year.

We look forward to partnering with the City on this Community project.

Sincerely,

Erick Lindblad, Executive Director



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## *The Sanibel Bicycle Club*

Dr. Rob Loflin, Director  
Natural Resources Department  
City of Sanibel  
800 Dunlop Road  
Sanibel, FL 33957

Dear Dr. Loflin:

The Sanibel Bicycle Club consists of over 250 members that have organized to support healthful and safe recreational cycling on Sanibel.

The recent acquisition by the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation of the Bailey Homestead property provides a wonderful opportunity for the City to connect the walking/cycling trail within that property to the existing trail in the City's Pond Apple Park.

Both of these trails presently offer a visitor the opportunity to explore and appreciate the beauty of our local flora and fauna. But if the trails can be connected, we can convert these two loop trails into a continuous trail that will greatly increase the number of users.

And for cyclists, by creating a trail that essentially bypasses the existing bike path along Periwinkle Way, with its many intersections of driveways and roads, cycling safety will be considerably enhanced.

For these reasons, the Club enthusiastically supports any effort to construct a "connector" trail between these two paths.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Miller  
President