



Tampa Audubon Society

"To conserve and restore our ecosystems, focusing on birds, wildlife, and their habitats, through education, advocacy, and community involvement."

Tampa Audubon Society
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March 10, 2017

The Honorable Howard Wiggs, Mayor
City of Lakeland
228 S. Massachusetts Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33801

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF LAKELAND'S SEVEN WETLANDS PARKS

Dear Mayor Wiggs,

I understand the City of Lakeland wishes to enhance their existing wastewater wetland treatment system by improving habitat and adding the necessary infrastructure to allow for public access to the property, creating a public park. On behalf of the Tampa Audubon Society, I fully support this endeavor.

Since several of our members have personally visited the City's Wetland system, we can attest to the habitat variety and animal species diversity, particularly the bird life. Upon their visit, they observed a large flock of Wood Storks, currently a threatened species. Additionally, the existing habitat provided at this facility allows for many more species of flora and fauna to call the Wetland home and any restoration efforts will improve this function. Allowing public access to this Wetland system will offer the City of Lakeland the opportunity to further public education on the importance of habitat restoration and conservation, leading to sustainable spaces for the plant and animal species that call Florida home. Given its central location and close proximity to Highlands, Hardee, Manatee and Hillsborough counties, we envision the education impact to be truly regional.

The City's grant request for Seven Wetlands will directly support public outreach and educational efforts, enhancing the public's knowledge of not just the bird species found in central Florida, but the restoration of reclaimed lands to a functioning water reuse system, sustainable habitats for a wide variety of plants and animals, and a success story for regional cooperation among numerous public and private agencies.

Sincerely,

Mary Keith, President
Tampa Audubon Society

Board Members: Sandy Reed, Nancy Murrah, Pat Lewis, Doug DeNeve, Pam DeNeve, Sherry Keller, Roger Sheets, Connie Anderson, Megan Campbell, Mark Fears, Susan Fears, Cheryl Merz