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November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Mr. Kirk Blouin, Town Manager  
Town of Palm Beach  
360 South County Road  
Palm Beach, FL 33480

Re; Audubon Islands Sanctuary – Bingham Island update

Dear Mr. Blouin,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet on November 5<sup>th</sup> to apprise you of progress on the Bingham Island Project.

We were happy to be able to explain the brief history of the island, our goals for 2018 and beyond and address some questions your office had concerning the project. We thought it would be helpful and informative to provide some additional detail on the project for all parties and to assist in our coordination and communication with your and Joshua Martin's office, the Town Council and interested parties.

Project Location:

Audubon Islands Sanctuary, focus on northernmost island – Bingham Island – accessed via the Southern Boulevard Causeway, Palm Beach. The six islands are comprised of 25 acres, most of which are mangroves and not accessible.

#### Project Mission:

Remove invasive plants

Plant new native plants

Promote islands as bird sanctuary and “fly by” location for migratory birds consistent with Audubon’s policies.

Maintain property in perpetuity

#### Project Overview:

Removal of dead and exotic trees on Bingham Island, with additional removal of a few snags on the adjacent island to the east, in closer view of the homes on South Ocean Boulevard. Coordination of replacement of the fence by FDOT and beautification of the road-facing side of the sanctuary, with additional gumbo limbo and cabbage palms to make the entryway to Palm Beach more scenic. This work would be undertaken by FDOT. Planting along the existing paths of trees and vegetation to replace those removed, with sea grape, buttonwood, and other native species. Farther south in the tropical hardwood hammock, we will plant more gumbo limbo, strangler fig, cabbage palm and buttonwood to restore the hammock. Later phases of the project may be enhanced to add other native elements.

#### Benefits:

Improves habitat for birds

Restores a rare, antique South Florida habitat in decline elsewhere

Removes eyesores from the Palm Beach skyline (Australian pine snags and vultures)

#### Permits: Phase I

Audubon completed Phase I work under a prior permit # L-17-00002, Permit ID 386881 with the TOPB.

#### Permits: Phase II

Audubon applied to renew the permit for further work last week and shall formally submit for the permit this week. See attached Plan. The intention is to have a rolling permit that would allow continued work on the island without the need to renew the permit yearly.

### Town Codes

We wish to work with the Town offices to ensure we conform with and adhere to all aspects of the Town ordinances.

### This is NOT a park

Audubon intends this property to be a sanctuary for birds, not a park in any way or form. There have been some that see this project as a slow creep to creating another Park on Palm Beach. This is not the intention and counter to Audubon's mission. A sanctuary is a passive use, protected natural place reserved for birds.

### Sanctuary Access

The main island can be accessed via the western beach. There is no intention to lock off the Sanctuary. Mesozoic Landscapes, the botanist attached to the project, has already planted new mangroves down to the waterline to discourage easy entry into the property from Southern Boulevard causeway. Other access will be controlled by a new FDOT fence along the causeway.

### Prior and current uses

Prior to our involvement to assist in the restoration of the island it had been used for drinking, drugging and other non-permitted uses. With the completion of phase I and continued access by Audubon docents and restoration contractors, we have witnessed reduced human activity on the island.

### Oyster Reef Project

Audubon commissioned a bathymetric study of the island (see attached). In conjunction with ERM & the Nature Conservancy, Audubon contracted as a first step in partnership to implement an oyster seeding project to assist in cleaning the lagoon water. We believe we can obtain grants for this work at no expense to TOPB and with great benefits to the Palm Beach community.

### Future education possibilities

With approval and coordination with the TOPB we would like to enlist the help of volunteers to continue to clean the island, remove invasives (new

seaside mahoe is growing all the time) and plant new natives where possible to promote more bird activity and nesting. To this end, we would like to engage local scientists and schools to take advantage of and study this last "wild land" in Palm Beach. Under strict supervision and advance notice, certain school programs would be allowed on the island guided by teachers and docents. We invite the Town Council to review and provide guidance on these possible future activities that would benefit the town and students of botany, research projects, ecology, birds...etc.

### Signage

We invite the Town Council to review and provide direction on establishing a permanent notice board describing the island, its missions, its flora and fauna and celebrating its donors by listing them.

### Trash

Prior to and during Phase I, we worked closely with Paul Brazil to organize some trash hauling from garbage pickup from the roadside. Consistent with the plans for the causeway we would request a permanent trash bins, near the entrance to the Sanctuary to facilitate easy pickup of island debris removed by volunteers.

### FDOT coordination

We continue to work closely with FDOT and the bridge project and wish to provide a permanent access to the islands for future work and maintenance.

We look forward to working with your office closely. Please let us know if you have any questions. In addition, prior to the Town Council presentation we invite a phone call to review any other items that we should address.

Thank you again for your assistance,

Katie & Campion

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