

# Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area Partnership and Temporary Use of Facilities Proposal

[This template is provided to gather basic information to determine eligibility and interest in partnership and temporary use (i.e., the proposed use) of certain facilities within the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area (ONA). Additional information may be included at an organization's discretion.]

To minimize expense the BLM has broken the selection of suitable partnerships and temporary use into two phases. The BLM will determine if a use is suitable and partner eligible based on the information provided below. Upon identifying suitable use and eligible partners, those organizations should prepare Renovation Plans for the facilities to bring them up to a usable standard as required by the BLM and to make the suitable for the proposed use.

The information below is required by the BLM no later than close of business on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020.]

**Organization Name:** [The Nature Conservancy](#)

## Basic Contact Information

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**Mailing Address:** [Blowing Rocks Preserve 574 South Beach Road Hobe Sound, FL 33455](#)

**Physical Address (if different):** [N/A](#)

**Primary Contact Person:** [Cristin Krasco](#)

**Telephone:** [772-453-8112](#)

**Email:** [Cristin.krasco@tnc.org](mailto:Cristin.krasco@tnc.org)

**Alternative Contact Person:** [Chris Bergh](#)

**Telephone:** [305-872-7071](#)

**Email:** [cbergh@tnc.org](mailto:cbergh@tnc.org)

## Proposed Use

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**Units of Interest (Please check all that apply):**

- Unit F (this is our preferred unit)
- Unit G
- Unit H
- Unit I

**Proposed Use:** [Provide a concise overview of the Proposed Use. Please limit this to the highest level and provide details below]

The Nature Conservancy wishes to renovate unit F for the purpose of short-term lodging for visiting Conservancy volunteers, interns, staff, and conservation partners. Any of the units would meet our needs, but our preferred unit is Unit F.

**Detailed Proposal:** [Please provide a detailed proposal including the typical type of use, occupancy schedule, routine hours of operation, number of participants, site security considerations, etc.]

The Nature Conservancy owns and operates Blowing Rocks Preserve (BRP), a 73-acre natural area dedicated to habitat preservation and environmental education. BRP is located approximately three miles north of JILONA, and BRP staff have periodically utilized the existing housing unit at JILONA to host groups of Conservancy interns, staff, and visiting scientists.

BRP does not have on-site lodging. Due to increasing demand for affordable lodging associated with our work, and positive experiences with JILONA staff and facilities, TNC wishes to partner with BLM to renovate and utilize housing unit F as a residential structure for the purpose of short-term lodging for visiting Conservancy volunteers, interns, staff, and conservation partners. Although the structure would be utilized 24 hours a day, seven days a week, occupants would primarily be present at JILONA in the evenings, nights, and weekends, as their work would typically take them off-site during regular business hours. This presence would add to the site security at JILONA outside of public visitation hours.

Examples of potential bunkhouse users and schedules include:

- Interns who work with the Conservancy for periods ranging from one week to one year, who would require housing during their internship period. This could include a Student Conservation Association intern with a one-year appointment at BRP, or the Conservancy's Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future (LEAF) interns, a group of four high school students and one mentor who visit BRP for periods ranging from one week to one month each summer.
- Conservancy staff and partners visiting BRP for meetings. This may range from one individual visiting for one night to a team of individuals visiting for multiple nights.
- Alternative Spring Break college students who volunteer at BRP for several days to one week at a time. These groups may include 10-15 participants, and the group could utilize lodging at the Conservancy's designated bunkhouse as well as the JILONA bunkhouse, if it were available.
- Visiting scientists or educators from partner organizations who are conducting work at BRP or in the vicinity. This may range from one individual visiting for one night to a team of individuals visiting for multiple nights.

We estimate that a full renovation of the bunkhouse unit would take up to one year from the date that the Friends Agreement is executed. It is our hope that all utility work can occur in concert with existing plans for sewer, electricity, and water at JILONA in order to reduce costs and impact to JILONA operations and visitor experience.

**Past Accomplishments Relative to Proposed Use:** [Provide a description of the organization's past accomplishments/performance relative to the Proposed Use]

The Nature Conservancy has a long history of land management, native species restoration, and public outreach, including at Blowing Rocks Preserve, since its establishment in 1969. Within the Florida Chapter, the Conservancy owns and manages more than 55,000 acres of land and

conducts public outreach, education, and land management trainings on four preserves that range from 73 to more than 10,000 acres in size.

Within the Florida Chapter, the South Florida Program oversees Conservancy property and land management activities extending from Martin County to the Florida Keys, including Blowing Rocks Preserve and the newly established David Wolkowsky Key (DWK). DWK was the last privately-owned island within the Key West National Wildlife Refuge, and the Conservancy coordinated the donation of this valuable resource from private ownership to its integration into the federal refuge. Through a unique federal/private partnership, the federal government now owns the island and the Conservancy's South Florida staff provides management, including two resident staff who conduct site security, outreach, and land management activities.

## Eligibility

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**Organization eligibility** (Please check all that apply):

- Local Partner identified in the ONA's designating Act;
- Other Federal, State or local government entity
- Organization established by State legislator
- Non-profit organization

**Organizations Mission Statement:** [Please provide complete mission statement, and/or relevant details from organizations goals and objectives.]

The Nature Conservancy's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our vision is a world where the diversity of life thrives, and people act to conserve nature for its own sake and its ability to fulfill our needs and enrich our lives.

The Conservancy's Florida Chapter is establishing a state-wide Center for Conservation Initiatives (CCI/the Center). CCI will build upon TNC's long-term conservation experience and partnerships to expand and focus the land stewardship, education, outreach, and scientific research efforts on TNC lands with an eye to influencing conservation in surrounding landscapes and statewide.

The Center's cornerstones are Florida's four flagship preserves: Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserves in the panhandle, Disney Wilderness Preserve and Tiger Creek Preserve in Central Florida, and Blowing Rocks Preserve in South Florida. Beyond their natural resource values, each of these preserves will have enhanced staffing and learning spaces to support research, outreach, and educational programming for the Center's four focal areas:

1. Inspiring the next generation of conservation professionals through youth education and professional training initiatives
2. Serving as a platform to investigate TNC and partner's research questions and conservation strategies
3. Connecting people and nature through public engagement
4. Demonstrating and sharing innovative and effective stewardship practices

The preserves are geographically and ecologically diverse and each has a unique theme. At Blowing Rocks Preserve, new CCI programs and trainings will focus on marine and coastal

conservation as well as the ongoing management and interpretation of native maritime hammock, coastal strand, beach dune, and mangrove ecosystems found at BRP. Each preserve will also have new and/or expanded buildings including dorms, learning laboratories, and additional staff offices. Because there is no place to construct a dorm at BRP, we are hopeful that this partnership with BLM will come to fruition so that TNC can provide local housing to partners, staff, and interns.

**Support and Enhancement of ONA Values:** [Provide a detailed narrative demonstrating how organization's proposed use will support and enhancement of the ONA's Biological, Cultural and/or Historic Resources and/or education and scientific values relative to these resources.]

Conservancy staff and bunkhouse users such as interns or visiting work groups could support the ONA's values in the following ways:

- Cultural Resources and education values:
  - Collaborate with BLM and the Loxahatchee River Historical Society to provide public tours and programs to interpret natural history.
- Biological Resources and scientific values:
  - Restoration and preservation of native species. Blowing Rocks Preserve is home to a native plant nursery, which could contribute to propagation and planting of native terrestrial and estuarine plants for use at JILONA.
  - Species inventory and monitoring. Conservancy staff possess both botanical and wildlife monitoring experience and training.
  - Controlled burns. Conservancy firefighters follow all National Wildfire Coordinating Group standards and work seamlessly with federal fire programs.
  - Invasive species management. Conservancy staff possess Florida Restricted Use Pesticide Application licenses and are fully versed in invasive plant management techniques.
  - Shoreline restoration. Building from our experience restoring Blowing Rocks Preserve, Conservancy staff have chaired the South Florida Regional Climate Compact's "Shoreline Resilience Working Group" since its inception in 2014.

Conservancy staff welcome the opportunity to understand BLM needs and develop additional projects and priorities in partnership.

**Statement of Public Benefit:** [Provide a concise statement of the public benefit resulting from the proposed use.]

The Conservancy's renovation of a publicly owned asset would be financed by private funds. Conservancy staff and house users such as interns could provide assistance with natural resource management at JILONA, enhancing biological and aesthetic values on the property as well as public use. The presence of TNC users, especially during evenings, nights, and weekends, would provide additional on-site security. The restoration of the bunkhouse itself would also improve aesthetic quality of JILONA, including the view from the lighthouse.

## Partnership

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**Partnership, Coordination, and Engagement:** [Describe your vision for partnership, coordination and engagement, including how your organization and the proposed use will work with the BLM, existing partners and permittees.]

The Nature Conservancy has a demonstrated history of collaboration and engagement with partners. The Conservancy's core values include:

- Integrity Beyond Reproach: earn trust by building relationships, being competent, and following through on our commitments.
- Respect for People, Communities, and Cultures: work collaboratively with all sectors of society, including indigenous people, to develop practical conservation solutions.

The Conservancy has existing partnerships with BLM partners, including:

- Blowing Rocks Preserve staff work locally with teachers and students from the Jupiter Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy to conduct education and scientific studies of ecosystems at BRP.
- BRP staff partner with the Department of Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on exotic species management at the Nathaniel P. Reed Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge.
- The Conservancy has partnered with Palm Beach County on conservation land acquisition.
- Conservancy staff collaborated with Florida Atlantic University on analysis of living shoreline project suitability in Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties.

We wish to work collaboratively with the BLM and partners to determine what needs exist and how we can assist with areas including land management, reporting data to BLM on bunkhouse use, and public engagement. Blowing Rocks Preserve and staff offices are located less than three miles from JILONA, which is conducive to frequent interaction with BLM and partner staff, assistance with land management projects such as invasive species removal or controlled burns, and emergency preparations for events such as hurricanes.

## Next Steps

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The BLM will review all the information provided, and with subject matter experts review each proposal. Ultimately the District Manager will determine if a proposed use is suitable and the organization eligible. Upon notification of suitability and eligibility the organization must complete renovation plans to bring the structure(s) up to BLM standards and make them suitable for the proposed use. This should include:

- i. Utility connections, including sewer, electricity, water, etc.;
- ii. Adherence to current building codes based on proposed use;
- iii. Addressing ADA/ABA accessibility concerns, if relevant
- iv. A schedule for renovation work.

In addition, the organization at this time must provide a Statement of Adequate Funding to complete the renovation work, and conduct operations associated with the proposed use.