



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of State Lands

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 100

Salem, OR 97301-1279

(503) 986-5200

FAX (503) 378-4844

www.oregon.gov/dsl

State Land Board

State Land Board

**Regular Meeting
December 12, 2023
Agenda Item 2**

Tina Kotek

Governor

LaVonne Griffin-Valade

Secretary of State

SUBJECT

Protecting public safety and resolving property encroachments at the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve in Coos County

Tobias Read

State Treasurer

ISSUE

Whether the Land Board should authorize DSL to proceed with due diligence for a potential land trade at the entrance to the South Slough Reserve Visitor Center.

AUTHORITY

ORS273.553; relating to the management policy of the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

ORS273.554 and ORS Chapter 183; relating to the authority of the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve Management Commission to adopt rules necessary to carry out ORS 273.553

BACKGROUND

The Department of State Lands oversees the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve) on the southern Oregon coast. The Reserve manages nearly 7,000 acres of natural habitat which include open water channels, tidal and freshwater wetlands, riparian areas, and forested lands. This area is managed for long-term research, education, and public recreation with a focus on the stewardship and protection of natural and cultural resources. By statute, the Governor-appointed South Slough Reserve Management Commission provides for the administration of the Reserve and has the authority to establish rules to carry out the mission of the Reserve.

On June 7, 2023, during a special meeting of the South Slough Reserve Management Commission, the Commission directed Reserve staff to explore the feasibility of a land trade at the entrance of the Reserve's visitor center. The potential land trade was the result of discussions with the Lee Family who own and operate a business on land

adjacent to the Reserve's visitor center on Seven Devils Road. The Lee Family had originally requested permission to use the Reserve's existing driveway and establish a secondary driveway across Reserve land for commercial truck access to their property.

During initial research into the ownership boundaries, it was determined that encroachments existed on both Reserve land and the Lee Family property and that a land trade would be a mutually beneficial solution to resolve these encroachments and provide the Lee Family with the access they requested.

The Department received an Application to Exchange Land (Appendix A) from the Lee Family on September 7, 2023, to subdivide and trade parcels of equal size (approximately 0.29 acres). The area the Reserve would trade to the Lee Family is part of a land parcel acquired with grant funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 2021. This property was purchased for the purpose of creating a welcoming entrance and improving internet connectivity, safety, parking, and access for buses bringing school groups to the Reserve. This is a high priority project since Reserve operations are currently limited by unreliable internet at the visitor center. Subdividing and trading a portion of this parcel will require approval by NOAA, but it will not impact project plans for the entrance.

With funding and project support from the Friends of South Slough Reserve, designs for the new entrance are currently being developed that include moving the entrance approximately 100 feet north of its current location; therefore, trading the southern end of the parcel will not impede plans for the site. The Reserve will be pursuing grant funding in early 2024 to reconfigure the entrance. The trade is dependent on the Reserve securing project funding to complete the entrance improvements.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

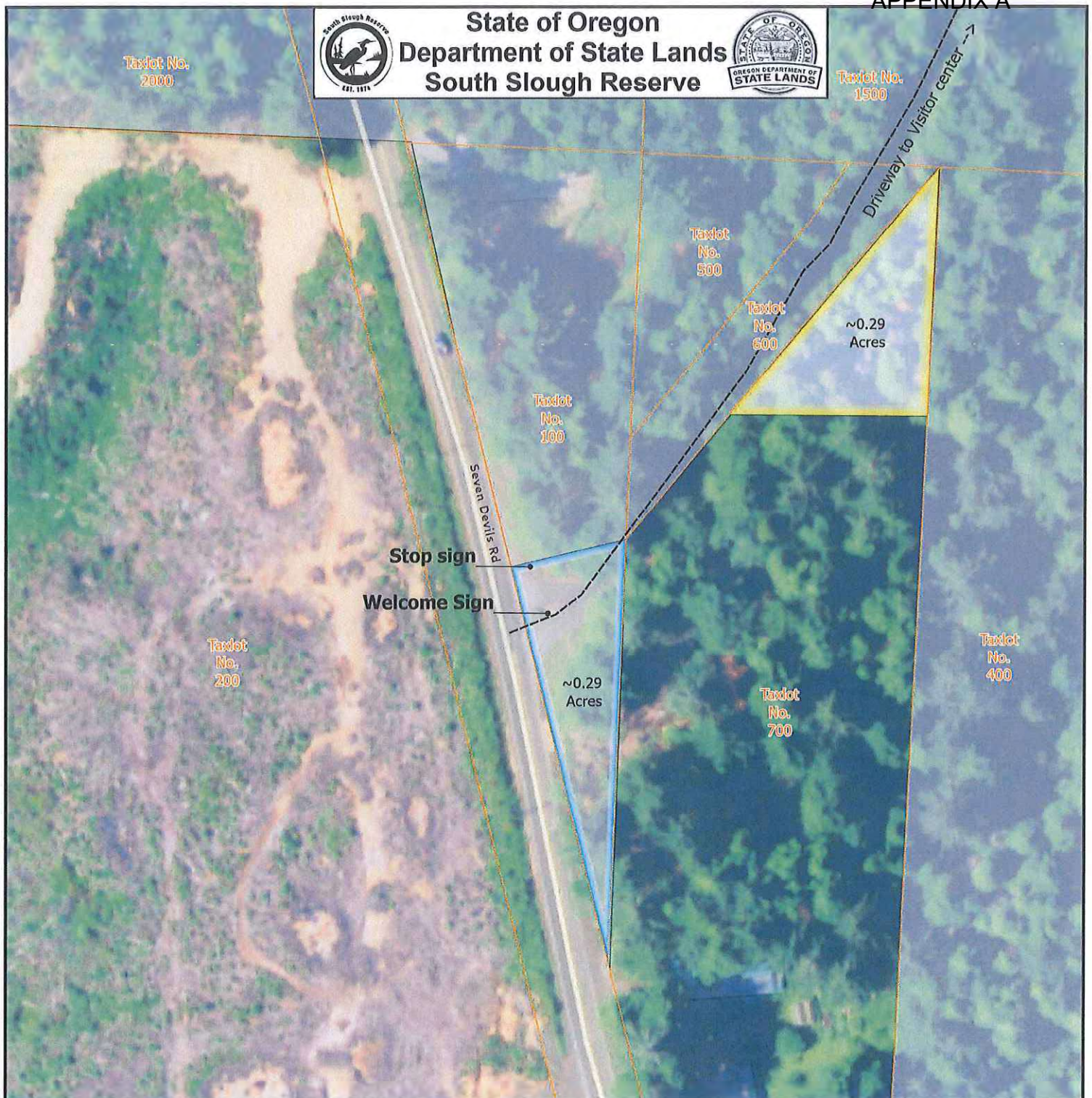
This land trade was discussed at public meetings of the South Slough Reserve Management Commission on June 7 and September 27, 2023. No public comments were received, and the Commission voiced unanimous support at both meetings for Reserve staff to continue work on this project. At the November 28, 2023, meeting of the Commission, the design plans for a reconfigured entrance were presented by the contractors hired by the Friends of South Slough Reserve who continue to demonstrate support for this project through contributions of funding and volunteer time.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Land Board authorize the Reserve, through the Department of State Lands' Real Property staff, to complete due diligence reports in support of this land exchange.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Map of SSNERR Lands for Exchange

**Exhibit A - Subject to Change**

T26S, R14W Section 26
Coos County

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Reserve Trade | Reserve Manged Lands |
| Lee Trade | Tax Lots |
| • GPS approximate locations | Reserve Driveway |
| Visitor Center | |

This map depicts the approximate location and extent of a Department of State Lands Proprietary authorization for use. This product is for informational purposes only and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. Users of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.

0 50 100
Feet



Map Projection:
Oregon Statewide Lambert
Datum NAD83
International Feet

State of Oregon
Department of State Lands
775 Summer St NE, Suite 100
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-5200
www.oregon.gov/DSL

