



Levy County Board of County Commissioners

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To: Levy County Board of County Commissioners
From: Mary-Ellen L. Harper, County Manager
Date: April 8, 2025
Subject: Quarterly Reports: First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025

Animals and Natural Resources

Animal Services

Name of Department	Levy County Animal Services
Name of Department Head	Brandy Cannon
Department Mission	Through collaboration with community partners, Levy County Animal Services will ensure a safe environment for the public, dogs, and cats in Levy County through education, enforcement of state and local laws, providing temporary care, and uniting animals with loving homes.

Department Staffing

	First Quarter FY 2025	Second Quarter FY 2025	Third Quarter FY 2025	Fourth Quarter FY 2025	First Quarter FY 2026
Number of Budgeted Full- Time Employees	7	6			
Number of Actual Full-Time Employees	7	6			
Number of Budgeted Part- Time Employees	2	2			
Number of Actual Part- Time Employees	2	2			
Comment					

Department Deliverables

Deliverable <i>(To be determined by the Department Head)</i>	First Quarter FY 2025	Second Quarter FY 2025	Third Quarter FY 2025	Fourth Quarter FY 2025	First Quarter FY 2026
	Adopted 47 dogs. Rescued 21 dogs. Adopted out 10 cats. 19 cats went to rescue.	Total animals in our facility this quarter adopted out to public – 22. Rescued 136 dogs. 17 cats went to rescue. 35 returned to owner.			

Department Highlights

The animal services department is proud to announce we have had more positive changes in our second quarter! We had a strong start by setting up a partnership with the Second Chance Animal Rehabilitation program at Cross City Correctional Facility at the beginning of January, which partners inmates at Cross City Correctional Facility with adoptable dogs for a 12 week training program. During this time, the dogs learn basic obedience and manners to help them become as adoptable as possible, and hopefully allows them to network to a broader audience to help them find their forever home! We were able to send two of our longest residents (Trigger and Ruger) to the SCARs program at the beginning of January, and they will be our first graduates of the program on Friday, April 4th! What's better? Both dogs already have loving homes lined up after they graduate, and we already are set up for 9 more dogs to start their training before the quarter is up!

However, our advancements in animal welfare and care did not stop with this partnership. Candace from the Humane Society of North Central Florida came to our facility to train our animal care team in dog behavior as well as cat and kitten handling. This will help us identify signs of stress in our dogs earlier, and have the ability to intervene and network them prior to significant kennel decompensation. In addition, our animal care team is now more comfortable with handling both tame and scared cats that enter our facility to ensure we are helping them appropriately decompress from the second they enter our doors. We also welcomed a new Kennel technician, Tammy Reed, to help give the dogs and cats more opportunities for socialization and play groups outside of the kennels, and once again working to minimize stress while in the facility.

In order to help some of our longest residents get more time outside of the kennels, two long-term residents Lola and Liberty got to take a "dog day out" with Tammy Goss and Tammy Reed, helping them socialize with people outside the facility, go for a ride, and pick out treats or toys at Tractor Supply. Allowing for enriching experiences like these help dogs become more adoptable, and helps ensure they are prepared for life outside of the kennel once they are adopted. It also helps give us more insight on how a dog behaves outside of the shelter environment so we can best market them and find positive resources to ensure they find adopters quickly!

We are happy to say that both of these dogs have since been networked to outside shelters, and have gone on to be adopted into their new homes.

As we have had an increase in the number of animals at our facility since the quarter, we were able to upgrade our data processing system at no cost to ShelterLuv, which helps us stay connected to other shelters and rescues through an internet-based system, and allows us to access the data from anywhere our animal care staff may be working - including when they are at other facilities for continuing education! This has only helped us network the dogs and cats in our care in a more efficient manner, and allows animal control officers to look up and input information even while on scene for a call. Our partnership with the Jacksonville Humane Society allowed this data processing transition to be very smooth, too, by sending out members of their team to help with onboarding and proper input of information into the system.

As our animal control officers have been able to access our new data processing system in the field, we have been able to return several dogs to their owners by having the ability to lookup microchips as soon as they are scanned. This has allowed us to decrease the number of animals that find their way to our shelter in the first place, and prevents people from having to make time to pick up their dogs from the shelter in the first place. This allows us to save time, energy, and resources caring for animals that are in need instead of on those that have simply wandered too far from their homes.

As we look to our community for further resources for our shelter dogs, we have partnered with Blue Pear Farms to set up newly adopted dogs for success! Blue Pear Farms is offering newly adopted dogs and their families to eat for free following the adoption of an LCAS dog, and is even offering free dog food to adoptive families to take the financial stress off adopters as they acclimate their new canine companion into their home. We are hoping with this added incentive, more people will be willing to adopt, and more dogs will win over loving new families!

As we stay on top of ensuring all animals in our facility are fully vetted as quickly as possible, allowing for same day adoptions of our adoptable dogs, we have used our veterinary resources to help with several cat hoarding cases to allow TNR opportunities for those providing for feral cat colonies. While this has been a very limited opportunity, we are proud to help decrease the number of community colony cats that are actively breeding and contributing to the feral cat overpopulation problem in Levy County. We hope to be able to continue to provide services like these in the months to come!

As we continue to improve our live outcome numbers with our new administration, we have been working tirelessly to build new rescue and shelter resources for our adoptable dogs. To date, we have had 88 dogs and 18 cats transferred out to partner organizations this quarter. Our partnerships have included Citrus County Animal Services, SPCA Florida, Faithful Friends Pet Rescue and Rehoming, Williston Animal Group, Operation Catnip, the Jacksonville Humane Society, and SPCA Brevard. These partnerships have been crucial to networking the dogs that enter our facility, and have been especially helpful as we have had four cruelty cases brought in during this quarter alone. Luckily, we have already gotten conclusions to two of those cases, and have closed a third cruelty case that had been open since May of 2024. This has allowed us to get these dogs fully vetted and available to find new homes with loving, caring families, while minimizing the number of dogs needing care within our facility.

Another partnership we have established this quarter has been one with the Veterinary Community Outreach Program at the University of Florida, which allows us to get more animals vetted outside our facility, and use our part-time veterinarian for maintaining the health and medical wellbeing of urgent dogs brought into our care. This has helped us keep up with monthly deworming, routine vaccination and booster schedules, and treatment of the many conditions our cruelty case dogs came in with. We have also utilized vetting resources from Dr. Victoria Caccavone with Morriston Veterinary Services and Dr. Broadhursts and their veterinary team with Jacksonville Humane Society to ensure all cruelty case dogs can receive prompt veterinary care even when our part time veterinarian is not within the facility.

As the number of cruelty cases that we have investigated with the Levy County Sheriff's Department has increased over this quarter, so has the need for updated training of our animal control officers. To help assist in this matter, the Jacksonville Humane Society set up a task force training with the LCAS & LCSO to ensure all our officers are able to correctly process an animal cruelty case, and ensure all necessary evidence is secured. This will only help ensure that animals within the community are being provided with adequate care, and allowing us to be more prepared for animal cruelty cases in the future.

Our partnership with the Jacksonville Humane Society has also allowed us to send our Department Manager Brandy Cannon and Administrative Assistant Amie Skinner to go to Jacksonville Humane Society for a three day shelter administration training. This has helped our shelter better market our adoptable animals, and helps us make new partnerships for our shelter.

As we finish up our quarter, we have also set up new office hours to help prioritize animal care, while still making us more accessible to the public. We now open at 10:00 AM during the week to allow our animal care team adequate time to feed the animals and keep our facility clean, ensuring our animals are healthier, cleaner, and get plenty of attention on top of it. It also allows us to give each person that comes to adopt an animal our full attention, as the animal care team is not trying to care for the animals while also assisting with adoptions. We also have extended our Thursday hours to 5:30 PM to ensure people have a day of the week they can stop by after work to see all our dogs, and even pick up their pets that may have strayed away from home!

We are so motivated by all the positive changes that have happened this quarter, despite the high number of dogs that have been brought into our facility due to cruelty cases, stray intakes, and more. We are hopeful that with continued partnerships and networking, our numbers will continue to remain manageable, and our animals will continue have the best possible chance of a live outcome from our facility.

Mosquito Control

Department Information

Name of Department	Mosquito Control
Name of Department Head	Matt Weldon
Department Mission	The mission of the Mosquito Control Department is to effectively control mosquitos in our county by reducing the maturation of larvae into adulthood to provide a source of control of the mosquito numbers.

Department Staffing

	First Quarter FY 2025	Second Quarter FY 2025	Third Quarter FY 2025	Fourth Quarter FY 2025	First Quarter FY 2026
Number of Budgeted Full- Time Employees	4	4			
Number of Actual Full- Time Employees	4	4			
Number of Budgeted Part- Time Employees	0	0			
Number of Actual Part- Time Employees	0	0			
Comment	A new hire arrived D/T one of our Operators will be leaving soon.	1 Mobile Operator has departed from the County in March.			

Department Deliverables

Deliverable (To be determined by the Department Head)	First Quarter FY 2025	Second Quarter FY 2025	Third Quarter FY 2025	Fourth Quarter FY 2025	First Quarter FY 2026
Comment					

Department Highlights

- Passed our annual Droplet test
- Prepared trucks for Spray Season
- Rebuilt backpack sprayer
- The Mosquito Control team also played a vital role in supporting the Parks Department with maintenance efforts in preparation during the off season. Their assistance helped ensure that all necessary tasks were completed efficiently, contributing to a smooth and successful season kickoff.
- In January the Department attended CEU courses in Gainesville, provided by Florida Mosquito Control Association.

Parks and Recreation

Department Information

Name of Department	Parks & Recreation
Name of Department Head	Matt Weldon
Department Mission	The mission of this department is to maintain and improve the facilities of the parks thus providing adequate sites for the recreation and enjoyment of county residents and visitors.

Department Staffing

	First Quarter FY 2025	Second Quarter FY 2025	Third Quarter FY 2025	Fourth Quarter FY 2025	First Quarter FY 2026
Number of Budgeted Full- Time Employees	2	2			
Number of Actual Full- Time Employees	2	2			
Number of Budgeted Part- Time Employees	4	7			
Number of Actual Part- Time Employees	4	7			
Comment		Hired Park Attendants Blue Springs (3) & Henry Beck (1)			

Department Deliverables

Deliverable <i>(To be determined by the Department Head)</i>	First Quarter FY 2025	Second Quarter FY 2025	Third Quarter FY 2025	Fourth Quarter FY 2025	First Quarter FY 2026
	Grant of FWC dredging of Shellmound provided by FBIP.	Waccasassa Bay Channel Markers Replacement bid is complete, Agreement Contract with Live Flyer Inc. in the amount \$96,457. (FEMA)			
	Contractor Approved Shore Builders out of Newberry - Hwy 40 Grant	FEMA Inspections completed for storm damage from Hurricane Helene.			
Comment					

Department Highlights

Blue Springs

- Repaired sidewalk by pavilion #8 between sidewalk and boardwalk.
- Installed 4 new grills at pavilions #2, 3, 4, 5.
- Picked up 4 new picnic tables and delivered to park. (Purchased by Tourism Development Dept.)
- Grass maintenance – Leveled out and reworked tier beach in the kiddy area.
- Pressure washed entire Park including all buildings, fence, decks, steps, and top of seawall.
- Repainted the ramp area for the men’s bathroom with non-slip grey paint.
- Completed minor repairs and upgrades in the office including a new window ac unit.
- Repainted all 10 pavilions fascia and gable ends and the entire roof of pavilion #6.
- Replenished sand on beach, playground, and volleyball court.
- Prep and repainted outlook.
- Trimmed all low hanging limbs around park.
- Replaced non-slip runners in walkways.

Henry Beck Park

- Repaired BBQ grill in the Big Pavilion
- Removed and replaced existing concrete stairs at beach entrance by Big Pavilion.
- Pressure washed all concrete sidewalks, office building, basketball court, all picnic tables, playground, and pavilions.
- Installed 3 new grills at pavilions.
- Weather sealed wood on all pavilions, bridge, and tables in Big Pavilion.
- Picked up and distributed 4 new picnic tables around the park. (Purchased by Tourism Development Dept.)
- Repainted office building, bathroom and hand railings of steps and bridge.
- Replenished beach area and volleyball court with sand.
- Trimmed all low hanging limbs around park.
- Replaced non-slip carpet runners for walkways.
- Replace barrier rope with floats in river.

Shellmound Park

- Replaced broken dock board and back filled with lime rock from wash-outs.
- Straightened out the flag pole and applied concrete to the base.
- Picked up and distributed 4 new picnic tables around the park. (Purchased by Tourism Development Dept.)

Waccasassa Boat Ramp

- Repaired a leak in a pipe in the pump shed.

Bird Creek Park

- Repair gate due to vandalism.
- Remove existing pavilion roofs and storm debris that were damaged due to Hurricane Helene.

Hwy 40 Boat Ramp

- Repaired the garbage can holders.
- Replaced broken water boards on the dock.
- Replaced all piling caps that were damaged on the dock.
- Replaced/repainted a stop sign, manatee sign, and fixed garbage can holder due to vandalism. (With the help of the Road Dept. Signs)

Devil's Hammock

- Installed new hiking trail marker signs to replace old ones.
- Brought lime rock to fill deep holes in the road and raked smooth.
- Locked gate on 339A and posted "Hunting in progress" signs for March Turkey Season.

All Parks/MC Crew

All Parks/MC crew are responsible for mowing as needed, safety inspections daily, repairs (if any), and empty trash dispensers and replace liners twice a week to ensure cleanliness and maintain a pleasant environment for park visitors as well as picking up litter along the road side daily at all the locations listed below:

1. Peaceful Boat Ramp
2. Hwy 40 Boat Ramp
3. Bird Creek Beach
4. Waccasassa Boat Ramp
5. #4 Fishing Pier
6. Fowler's Bluff Boat Ramp
7. Camp Azalea Boat Ramp
8. Clays Landing Boat Ramp
9. Little Blue Springs
10. Shell Mound Campground/Boat Ramp
11. Blue Springs Park
12. Henry Beck Park
13. Devil's Hammock WMA