



Agenda Report

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

New Business - Miscellaneous

J.2.

8/2/2022

Subject:

Resolution calling for a Referendum of Bond Issue for Environmentally Endangered Lands

Fiscal Impact:

With voter approval, \$50M in Bonds to be paid for by a 20 year ad valorem tax not exceeding .1465mils

Dept/Office:

District 5 / D5

Requested Action:

Request that the Board consider adopting the attached Resolution calling for a Referendum of Bond Issue for the continuation of the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program.

Summary Explanation and Background:

This Resolution provides for a bond referendum on the November 8, 2022 ballot for the voters to consider whether Brevard County should issue bonds, not to exceed \$50M, to extend the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program which bonds would fund the acquisition and management of said lands. The bonds would be paid over a period of 20 years from an ad valorem tax levy not exceeding .1465 mills. The Resolution has been reviewed by the County Attorney's Office and the County's Bond Counsel.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Return a signed copy of the resolution to the Supervisor of Elections, the County Manager, and the County Attorney



August 3, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Frank Abbate, County Manager

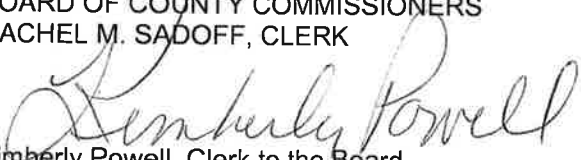
RE: Item J.2., Resolution Calling for a Referendum of Bond Issue for Environmentally Endangered Lands

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on August 2, 2022, adopted Resolution No. 22-079, ordering and providing for a Special Election Bond Referendum to be held at the General Election on November 8, 2022, on the question as to whether Brevard County should issue general obligation tax bonds not exceeding \$50,000,000 to extend the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program for the purpose of funding the acquisition and management of Environmentally Endangered Lands with the bonds to be paid over a period of twenty years from an ad valorem tax levy not exceeding 0.1465 Mills. Enclosed is the fully-executed Resolution.

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RACHEL M. SADOFF, CLERK


Kimberly Powell, Clerk to the Board

/ds

Encl. (1)

cc: Each Commissioner
Interim County Attorney
Parks and Recreation Director
EEL Program Manager
Supervisor of Elections
Finance
Budget

Original

RESOLUTION NO. 2022- 079

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, ORDERING AND PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION BOND REFERENDUM TO BE HELD AT THE GENERAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022, ON THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER BREVARD COUNTY SHOULD ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION TAX BONDS NOT EXCEEDING \$50,000,000 TO EXTEND THE ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING THE ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS WITH THE BONDS TO BE PAID OVER A PERIOD OF TWENTY YEARS FROM AN AD VALOREM TAX LEVY NOT EXCEEDING 0.1465 MILLS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA as follows:

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY FOR RESOLUTION. This resolution is adopted pursuant to Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, and other applicable provisions of law.

SECTION 2. FINDINGS. It is hereby found and determined as follows:

A. Brevard County desires to provide funding for the acquisition and management of environmentally endangered land and water areas (the "Project").

B. Issuance by the County of its general obligation tax bonds, in an amount not to exceed Fifty Million Dollars and No Cents (\$50,000,000.00), payable from the proceeds of an annual ad valorem tax not exceeding 0.1465 mills for a period of twenty (20) years levied on all taxable property within the County is the most appropriate and effective method of financing the Project.

C. Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, and Article VII, Section 12 of the Florida Constitution, authorize the County to issue such bonds upon approval by a majority of the electors voting in a bond referendum conducted pursuant to law.

D. November 8, 2022, is an appropriate and desirable date for the conduct of the bond referendum election.

E. All things required to be done prior to the calling of a bond referendum within the County on the issuance of the proposed bonds have been done and it is now desirable to call the necessary bond referendum.

F. The types of projects and lands sought to be acquired for preservation and upon which the bond proceeds may be spent include, but are not limited to, those depicted in Exhibit A, attached hereto.

G. For the purposes of this resolution, passive recreational opportunities may include greenways and trails connecting existing environmentally endangered lands owned governmental agencies and environmentally endangered lands to be acquired with the proceeds obtained from the bonds issued under the authority of this resolution.

H. The interests in land that may be acquired using the bond proceeds include fee simple, conservation easements and other innovative ownership techniques that promote the protection of environmentally endangered land and water areas.

I. It is the intent that the bond proceeds will be used for the expressed purpose of acquiring environmentally endangered land and water areas from willing sellers.

SECTION 3. BONDS. The proposed bond issue (the Bonds) to be submitted to the electorate for referendum approval consists of the issuance of general obligation tax bonds of the County in an aggregate principal amount not exceeding Fifty Million Dollars and No Cents (\$50,000,000.00), in one or more series as determined by subsequent resolution, bearing interest payable at such rate or rates not exceeding the maximum legal rate, as shall be determined at the time of the sale thereof, and maturing not later than twenty (20) years from the date of issuance for the purposes set forth in this resolution. The Bonds and the interest thereon will be payable from an ad valorem tax not exceeding 0.1465 mills levied on all taxable property in the County to provide funding for the continuation of acquisition and management of environmentally endangered land and water areas.

SECTION 4. BOND REFERENDUM. A special election bond referendum (bond referendum) is hereby ordered to be held concurrent with the general election in Brevard County on November 8, 2022, to determine whether or not the Bonds shall be issued.

SECTION 5. NOTICE OF BOND REFERENDUM. This resolution shall be published in full as a part of the notice of the bond referendum, together with a notice in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit B, in *Florida Today*, a newspaper of

general circulation in the County, such publication to be made at least twice, once in the fifth week and once in the third week prior to the week in which the election or referendum is to be held with the first such publication to occur at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.

SECTION 6. PLACES OF VOTING, INSPECTORS, CLERKS. As provided by law, the polls will be open at the voting places on the date of such bond referendum. All qualified electors residing within Brevard County shall be entitled and permitted to vote at such bond referendum on the proposition provided below. The places of voting and the inspectors and clerk for the bond referendum shall be those designated by the Supervisor of Election of Brevard County.

SECTION 7. OFFICIAL BALLOT. The ballots to be used in the bond referendum shall contain a statement of the description of the proposed issuance of bonds, and shall be in substantially the following form:

BALLOT
Brevard County, Florida

Caption: Environmentally Endangered Land and Water Areas Bond Referendum

Shall Brevard County issue bonds to extend the Environmentally Endangered Lands program to acquire, improve and maintain wildlife habitat, wetlands, woodlands, and lands that protect Indian River Lagoon and St Johns River, and maintain and improve nature education centers, with citizen oversight, which bonds don't exceed \$50,000,000 aggregate principal amount, bear interest not exceeding maximum legal rate, mature twenty years from issuance and are payable from levying annual ad valorem taxes not exceeding 0.1465 mills?

For the bonds

Against the bonds

SECTION 8. ABSENTEE VOTING. The form of ballots to be used in such bond referendum for absentee voters shall be the same as used at the polling places for said referendum.

SECTION 9. PRINTING OF BALLOTS. The Supervisor of Elections for Brevard County is hereby authorized and requested to (a) have sample ballots printed and to deliver such sample ballots to the inspectors and clerks on or before the date and time for opening of the polls for such bond referendum and (b) have official ballots for use in such bond referendum election printed and delivered in accordance with law.

SECTION 10. PAYMENT OF REFERENDUM EXPENSES. The County Manager is hereby authorized and directed to approve the payment of lawful expenses associated with conducting the bond referendum election and the clerk of the Board of County Commissioners is hereby authorized and directed to disburse funds necessary to pay such expenses.

SECTION 11. VOTER REGISTRATION BOOKS. The Supervisor of Elections for Brevard County is hereby authorized and requested to furnish to the inspectors and clerks at each place where the votes are to be cast in such bond referendum, applicable portions of the registration books or certified copies thereof showing the names of the qualified electors residing in the County.

SECTION 12. ELECTION PROCEDURE. The bond referendum shall be held and conducted in the manner prescribed by law and shall, as soon as practicable, be returned to and canvassed by the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County. The result shall show the number of qualified electors who voted at such bond referendum and the number of votes cast respectively for and against approval of the bonds. Upon certification by the Board of County Commissioners, the results shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board.

SECTION 13. ELECTION RESULTS. If the majority of the votes cast at such bond referendum shall be "For Bonds," the issuance of the Bonds shall be approved and the Bonds shall be issued as hereafter provided by the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County, Florida.

SECTION 14. SEVERABILITY. In the event that any word, phrase, clause, sentence or paragraph hereof shall be held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect any other word, clause, sentence or paragraph hereof.

SECTION 15. REPEALING CLAUSE. All resolutions or other actions of the County which are in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency.

SECTION 16. EFFECTIVE DATE. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

DONE AND ADOPTED in Regular Session of the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County, Florida, this 2 day of Aug. 2022.

ATTEST:


Rachel Sadoff, Clerk

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: 

Kristine Zonka, Chair

(as approved by the Board on 8/2/22)

EXHIBIT A
Environmentally Endangered
Lands Program
Project Areas

Legend
Projects
ACQ STATUS

Acquired Status



Acquired

Proposed Properties

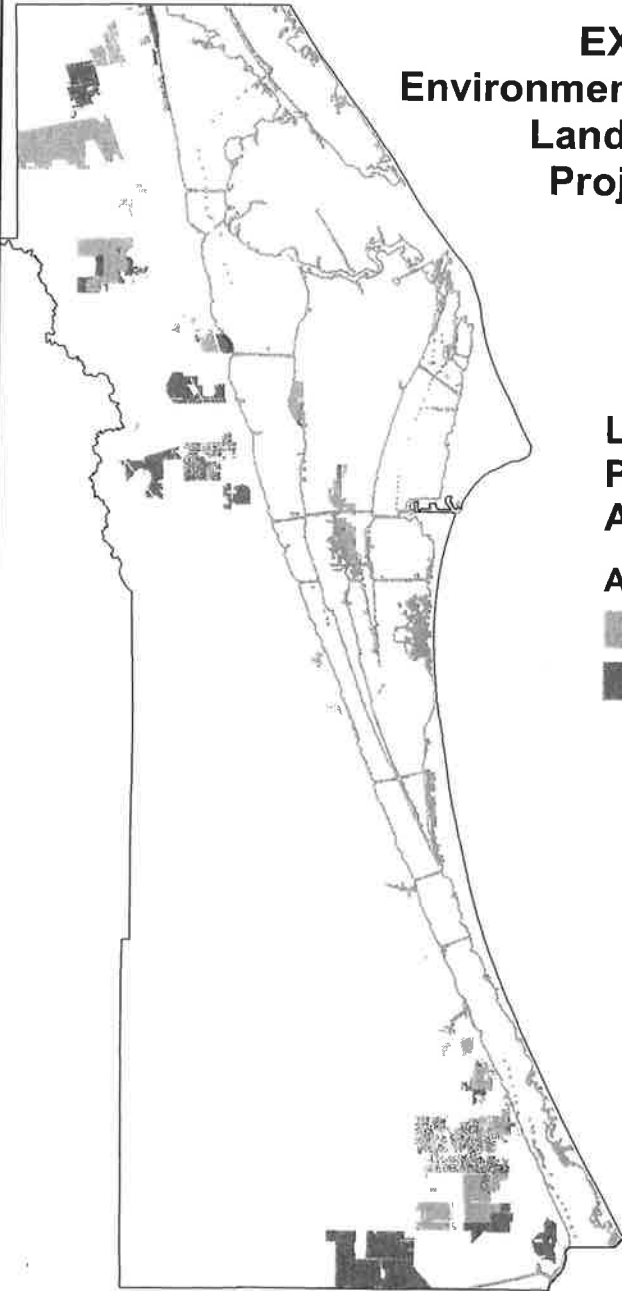
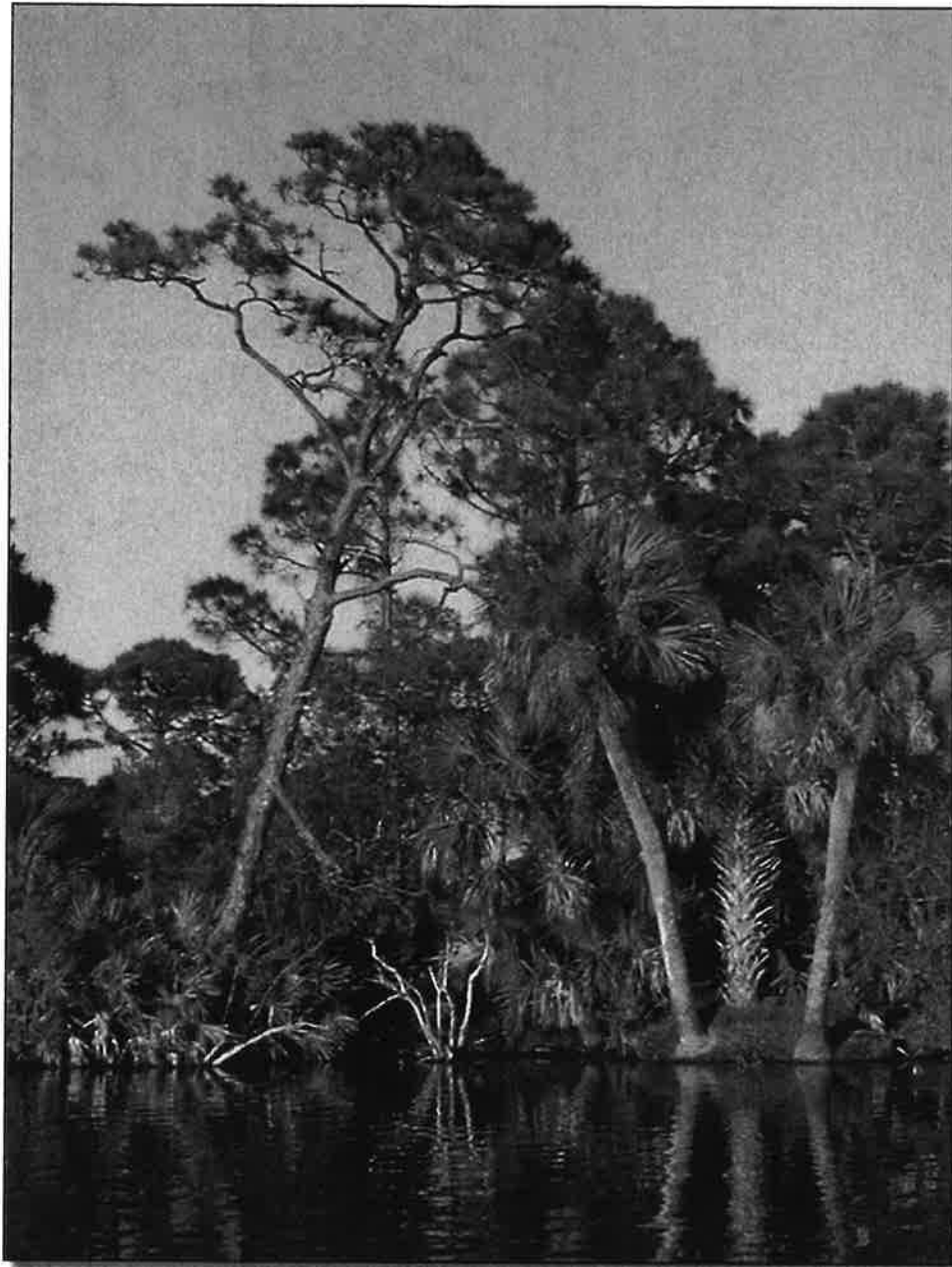


Exhibit "B"

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION BOND REFERENDUM ON THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER BREVARD COUNTY SHOULD ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION TAX BONDS NOT EXCEEDING \$50,000,000 TO EXTEND THE ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING THE ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS, WITH THE BONDS TO BE PAID OVER A PERIOD OF TWENTY YEARS FROM AN AD VALOREM TAX LEVY NOT EXCEEDING 0.1465 MILLS

Pursuant to law and the Brevard County Home Rule Charter, notice is hereby given that a referendum election shall be held on the question as to whether Brevard County should issue general obligation tax bonds not exceeding \$50,000,000 to extend the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program for the purpose of funding the acquisition and management of environmentally endangered lands, with the bonds to be paid over a period of twenty years from an ad valorem tax levy not exceeding 0.1465 mills. The referendum election shall be held on November 8, 2022, at which the question described in the following resolution number 2022-_____ adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County, Florida, on the _____ day of _____, 2022 shall be submitted to the electors:

[Set forth Resolution in full]



Operations and Funding Status Report
Brevard County
Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Referendum

Summary Overview

The Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program referendum and associated operational funding will sunset in 2024. Currently there is no mechanism in place to fund program operations beyond 2024. The following is a brief history summary of EEL Program funding.

1. In August 1990 Brevard County voters approved the first referendum for the EEL Program. It provided for an ad valorem tax with a maximum millage of 0.25 mil for 20 years and allowed bonding of up to \$55 million. \$43,090,000 was bonded over the 20 life of the referendum. The voter-approved maximum millage was assessed from 1991 through 2005 and was reduced in the last six years of the referendum resulting in a loss of nearly \$16 million in potential funding.
2. A long-term Financial Plan for the 1990 EEL Referendum was proposed to the County Commission in 1997 and was never adopted. This proposed plan included the establishment of a land management endowment fund and incrementally moving the program under the County's General Fund. At the time, the County Commission postponed the plan for future consideration until the referendum was due to sunset in 2011.
3. In November 2004 Brevard County voters approved the second referendum for the EEL Program. It provided for an ad valorem tax with a maximum millage of 0.2085 mil for 20 years and authorized bonding of up to \$60 million. \$45 million was bonded and \$4 million of that was defeased (paid back early) to reduce bond debt. The authorized maximum millage under the second referendum has not been assessed resulting in a loss of nearly \$30 million in potential funding to date. Together nearly \$46 million in potential funding for the EEL Program has not been collected.
4. In 2008, the State Legislature created a new rule that restricted the ability of a local government to raise voter-approved millage rates as needed within the voter-approved maximum rate range.
5. The 2008 recession caused declines in property values resulting in a revenue shortage which caused the EEL Program to begin reducing its operations budget in 2009. This resulted in a 26% loss in revenue and a 35% reduction in staffing over the following 8 years.
6. With the sunset of the first 1990 referendum in 2011 the program experienced an additional \$1 million loss in annual operating revenue. The option to bring the 2004 referendum millage rate up to the voter-approved maximum to make up for this loss in revenue, although still allowable under the County Charter, was now restricted by the new State rule enacted in 2008.

7. Between 2013 and 2018, the Program had to utilize \$3 million of the bond proceeds to support capital maintenance operations which limited the program's ability to continue land acquisition efforts.
8. Due to three consecutive years (2017, 2018 & 2019) of incremental rate increases by the County Commission at the maximum allowable under the new State law with a super-majority vote, the Program was able to prevent further budgetary reductions.

Preserving Brevard's Natural Landscapes

In 1990, Brevard County citizens overwhelmingly voted to protect unique places in our community by purchasing, protecting and maintaining Environmentally Endangered Lands. The referendum called for purchasing, protecting and maintaining environmentally endangered lands and making improvements as appropriate for passive recreation and environmental education. Due to the success of the program and ongoing public support, a second referendum was approved by the voters in 2004 to acquire even more endangered land and water areas to protect animal habitats, water resources, open spaces for public use and recreational opportunities.

The fundamental purpose of the Program is to protect the rich biological diversity and health of Brevard County's ecosystems, to manage for conservation, and to provide passive recreation and environmental education. The program has a primary focus on:

- Natural Communities by prioritizing the needs of threatened or endangered habitats, plants and animals.
- Forest Resources – by protection of forest types and their associated ecological values.
- Wetlands and Coastal Resources -
 - Conserve natural and aesthetic attributes
 - Improve buffers to enhance commercial and recreational saltwater and brackish fishing opportunities.
 - Improve the upland-wetland estuarine linkages.

Key Successes and Accomplishments:

- Preservation of 28,000 acres of upland and wetland habitats including over 37 miles of shoreline ecosystems that directly border the Indian River Lagoon and its major tributaries, along with more than 25 miles of additional frontage along smaller tributaries and major ditch systems that drain into the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Johns River.
- Creation of an extensive 75-mile multi-use trail network of passive recreation opportunities for citizens and visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of Brevard.

- The development and operation of three Management and Environmental Education Centers that provide regular educational programming and community events for Brevard citizens and visitors.
- Leveraged \$42 million in acquisition partner funding to acquire land considered critical to the long-term preservation of animal and plant diversity.
- Restoration and management projects on over 25,000 acres focused on improving natural systems to preserve ecosystem services such as: Water conservation, wildlife food sources, wildfire prevention, carbon sequestration, aesthetic and increased land values.
- Provides oversight, support and ongoing collaboration with volunteer scientific researchers to aid in the understanding, effective management and protection of biodiversity.
- Surveying, documentation and protection of cultural resource sites.



Over the past 30 years, these strategies have established an important conservation and educational framework integral to our local communities. With ongoing funding support, this framework offers a strong base to continue preserving and enhancing Brevard for its residents and visitors for decades to come.

Completing Wildlife Corridors

Protecting lands where white-tailed deer, Florida scrub jays, bobcats, black bear, otters, bald eagles and many other species is an ongoing and essential EEL strategy to create wildlife corridors for species that are key to Florida's diverse landscape and character. Although much has been accomplished, there are still many landscape connectivity gaps where acquisition is critical to complete these corridors. Incomplete acquisition of these landscapes limits the program's ability to implement land management actions that are critical to protect biodiversity and maintain listed species.

Most remaining lands identified within the EEL acquisition strategy are small tracts to fill important gaps existing between larger conservation areas. Completing these important habitat connections is critical to the long-term protection of biological diversity. The Indian River Lagoon will benefit from acquisition of key land linkages along the northern shoreline; proper management of shoreline parcels works to protect the biodiversity and water quality of this important waterway.

The Program has a long history of cooperation with local developers by offering development mitigation opportunities through direct land donation and habitat restoration projects. The Program has also received direct acquisition support from the United States Air Force to create off-site mitigation opportunities for development projects at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Brevard County Government has also utilized the EEL Program as a mechanism to satisfy project development mitigation requirements. State permitting agencies approved these donations and projects on the condition they would be managed by the County in perpetuity as conservation lands and developers were required to contribute a one-time management fee to the County to support long-term management. Most of these properties and project areas are also encumbered by conservation easements that are held by the permitting agencies.

Approximately \$15 million dollars from the first referendum to support future acquisitions and capital improvements remains unbonded. The potential for issuing these remaining bonds is unlikely due to the limited time remaining in the life of the referendum.

Maintaining Natural Areas for Future Generations

In the fragmented landscapes of Brevard County, it is critical to implement management actions on a regular basis to ensure the referendum objectives are met. Keeping prescribed fire cycles and controlling invasive exotic species cannot occur without active management. Most Florida habitats have evolved under the constant influence of fire and depend on its rejuvenating properties for long-term survival.

Prescribed fire and regular land management actions are of critical importance to maintain healthy and diverse plant and animal populations. EEL lands support a variety of threatened and endangered species including the Florida Scrub-Jay which is directly dependent upon ongoing habitat management for its continued survival. Protecting native biodiversity is the first and overriding objective of the EEL Program.

Further reductions in funding and/or staffing resources will further restrict the ability of the Program to maintain prescribed fire cycles. Over the past 25 years extensive resources have been committed to reintroduce recurring fire cycles into the fire-dependent natural communities managed by the Program. If fire cycles are unable to continue, many natural habitats will again become overgrown resulting in the decline of wildlife food sources and general biological diversity. Overgrown natural landscapes become a wildfire hazard which increases fire severity causing more potential harmful impacts to wildlife, plant species and adjacent homes and businesses.

If left unburned for long periods, EEL Sanctuaries become more vulnerable to wildfire, increasing the potential for impacts to nearby homes and businesses. Maintaining regular burn rotations reduces fuel build-up and protects homes and businesses from wildfire. Wildfires, unlike prescribed burns, can have a significant negative impact on natural habitats and wildlife.

The Program currently maintains over 100 miles of fire control lines throughout the nature sanctuary network. These fire lines require regular maintenance with a tractor and disk harrow to prevent vegetation from growing to prevent the spread of fire during both controlled and wildfire events. Fire control lines need to be maintained at least 3 times annually and in some cases more often depending on the type of habitat. The line width typically requires 3 passes with the tractor during each maintenance action with translates to over 300 miles per action and over 900 miles per year.

Invasive and exotic plant and animal species have established within our native habitats in Florida. To prevent invasive species from taking over our native landscapes, regular maintenance and monitoring is required to keep harmful species under control. The EEL Program has worked closely with the State of Florida Invasive Plant Management Program to invest over \$4.3 million dollars in State grant funding to remove non-native species and maintain exotic-free areas. Invasive plant spreading from surrounding private property must be monitored and controlled to maintain existing habitat restoration efforts.



Over the past 25 years, the Program has significantly reduced the negative impacts invasive plant and animal species have had on our natural landscapes. Ongoing efforts are critical to ensure that non-native seed banks and newly-introduced non-native species remain controlled. The suspension of these control efforts will allow for the re-establishment of many non-native species which are under a weekly maintenance schedule. The proliferation of feral swine has created a constant need to maintain regular control efforts to protect native plants and wildlife. Since there is currently no methodology to fully eradicate feral swine from Florida, it is critically important to maintain regular and varied population control methods to prevent this invasive species from outcompeting and overtaking our native wildlife species.

Site security monitoring and timely vandalism repairs are critical to protecting the ecological resources. Sites not patrolled by staff on a regular basis attract inappropriate activities both damaging ecological resources and compromising the recreational experiences of visitors. Limited staffing and declining financial resources have significantly delayed patrols from once a week to once a month. A host of problems can occur under a lack of safety monitoring, such as fence and gate vandalism, dumping, wildlife poaching, off-road vehicle damage and other inappropriate activities likely to gravitate to remote and unsupervised locations.

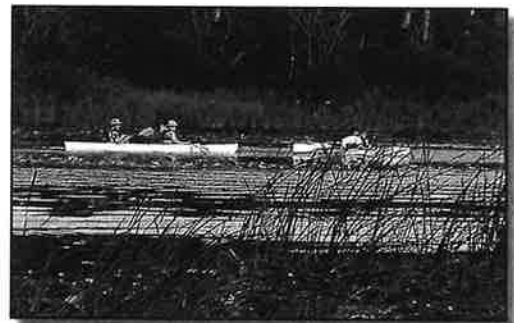
Repairs to vandalized or generally degrading facilities are a weekly occurrence. The Program currently maintains over 61 miles of boundary fences and 152 access gates that require regular maintenance to prevent off-road vehicle access, dumping and illegal hunting. Boundary signs along the boundaries must also be monitored and replaced frequently to meet statutory posting requirements.

Staff is also very limited in their ability to perform regular species monitoring in order to effectively measure accomplishments in achieving biodiversity preservation objectives. Although the program has established Friends Groups at the education centers and benefits from a significant amount of volunteer support annually, the volunteers cannot provide for the level of continuity necessary to adequately meet program objectives.

Site Specific Management Plans are required for all properties managed under the Program to guide the management of the site. These management plans are required to be updated and re-approved every 10 years. Most of the lands managed under the Program are State-owned and require a State Land Management Review every 5 years in order to determine if the site is being managed according to the goals and strategies of the approved management plan. The management plan approval and amendment process requires significant staff time and can take up to a year or more to complete depending on the status of site management priorities.

Creating and Maintaining Passive Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

More than 75 miles of public use trails for passive recreation including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, nature observation, paddling, fishing and camping provide outdoor opportunities for citizens and visitors. EEL has worked with 56 Eagle Scouts to date to construct many public use resources in support of visitor activities. Other facility resources include 49 miles of access and maintenance roads, 33 trailheads and parking areas with 51 information kiosks.



Oversight and maintenance of public use resources is essential to ensure proper function for visitors and to verify that facilities and amenities do not negatively impact plant and animal species. Without proper oversight, trails systems and parking areas can be vandalized or used inappropriately. A quick response to these issues helps discourage them from happening in the future. The Program's trail system requires staff inspection and maintenance at a minimum once a month and more often as storm events occur. Management actions include mowing, fallen tree removal, erosion repairs, boardwalk, overlook, bridge repairs and trail marker replacement. Trailhead

parking areas can be a magnet for inappropriate activities which can only be deterred by a regular staff presence.

Educating Visitors About Conservation Benefits

Three Management and Environmental Education Centers currently operate under the EEL Program: The Enchanted Forest, Sams House at Pine Island and the Barrier Island Center. These popular centers collectively host between 70,000 and 90,000 visitors annually. As annual visitation continues to increase, funding to maintain and grow these quality experiences has declined.



The Management and Education Centers are open to the public six days a week (Tuesday – Sunday) from 9am-5pm. One full-time and two part-time staff members (one part time at Barrier Island Center) are dedicated to the day-to-day operations of the center. This includes assisting visitors, scheduling and implementing educational programs, coordinating facility rentals, volunteer coordination, curriculum development and coordinating special events.

The budget and staff reductions at the centers have impacted program efficiency and the Program's ability to be responsive to community needs and interests for environmental education. Reductions in the land management positions and/or hours have made it more difficult for center staff to complete their regular weekly workload. Current funding limitations are preventing the Program from completing the development of its fourth and final education center proposed for the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary. The development of this last Management and Environmental Education Center is highly-supported by the Town of Malabar.

The regular maintenance and upkeep of the three Management and Education Centers requires regular staff support and funding resources. Each facility has grounds maintenance needs that include mowing, pressure washing, painting, window cleaning, access road repairs, signage, etc.

Sustaining Operational Support

The EEL Program administrative office provides operational oversight for annual budget development, annual expenditures, personnel management, land acquisition, contracts administration, advisory committee coordination, management plan development and amendments, purchasing, coordination of equipment and fleet maintenance, county

commission agendas, State management leases, equipment and supply inventory, safety training, incident / accident reporting, public records requests, grants management, warehouse storage and supply distribution, annual reporting and public relations.

Over the last 14 years, the administrative staff has been reduced by 50%. The Program's accounting support was absorbed by Parks and Recreation staff in Viera. Staff at the Program office have had to absorb more administrative responsibilities previously held by other staff such as office visitor reception, human resource issues, grants, contracts administration, public records requests and general office management.

The Program's annual operations budget (excluding land acquisition expenses) is between \$2.5 and \$3 million. Annual operations costs fluctuate depending on the need for capital expenses related to equipment initial restoration project costs.

The Value of Land Conservation to Brevard County Citizens

Numerous studies have shown that natural areas and open space contribute positive economic benefits to local communities. In recognition of the importance of cost-benefit analyses to assist program planning and annual budget allocations, the EEL Program is encouraged to identify and quantify the economic costs and benefits of EEL sanctuaries. In 2020 the program contracted with Closewaters LLC to evaluate program accomplishments in an effort to quantify the economic value of the EEL Program to Brevard County and the value to the County of continuing program operations into the future.

A variety of categories of value were analyzed:

- Eco-Tourism
- Contribution to restoration of the Indian River Lagoon
- Taxed value to constituents
- Volunteer labor
- Value to the development community for mitigation
- Leveraged State and Federal funding

The analysis determined that the Present Value of the Program to the County is \$496 million.

A variety of additional categories were identified as likely having significant economic value but were beyond the limited scope of this particular analysis. These categories include; quality of life, wildfire risk protection, local government development mitigation potential, water resource protection and aquifer replenishment, flood protection, carbon sequestration, air quality, human health benefits, endangered species protection, and environmental education programming.

As we consider our ability to keep up with the land management actions required to maintain program objectives with decreasing resources, it is clear a long-term funding strategy must be considered. The continued success of the Program relies on adequate staffing and equipment to carry out land management actions, educational programming and to maintain program infrastructure.

Funding History Summary

The EEL Program was approved by the voters of Brevard County to ensure the long-term preservation of our natural heritage and biological diversity for future generations. It is anticipated the Program will continue to see its millage rate lowered each fiscal year, and there is currently no long-term funding plan in place to address program operations after 2024 when the referendum sunsets.

In 1997, at the request of the County Commission, the EEL Program Selection and Management Committee recommended a Financial Plan to ensure the Program would meet its capital bond debt-service obligations and have sufficient funds for long-term management. The proposed plan used a combination of annually appropriated general revenue and EEL Program ad valorem revenue not required for bond debt to pay Program costs. The proposal recommended establishing an endowment fund and the maximization of the voter-approved millage collection at 0.25 mills.

The funding support structure established in the 1990 and 2004 referenda provided for two 20-year bonding periods. Due to the termination of the 1990 referendum in 2011, over \$1 million in program operational revenue was lost. This revenue loss coupled with the current funding limitations of the 2004 referendum, has created a need to establish an alternative long-term funding option to continue Program operations.

On September 23, 1997, the Board of County Commissioners chose to fund EEL operations through the use of the ad valorem millage that was not required for bond debt service. At that time it was noted, the Board of County Commissioners would consider funding options and financial resources to address the operations of the EEL Program pursuant to the directives of the 1990 voter-approved referendum after 2011. During the first 15 years of the Program, the maximum millage approved by the voters was levied at 0.25 mills. Starting in 2007, this millage rate was lowered and eventually declined 34% by the time the referendum ended in 2011. The reduction in the annual millage rate of the 1990 referendum represented nearly \$16 million in uncollected revenue.

In 2004, a second EEL referendum was approved by the voters to continue funding land acquisition and management in an additional 20-year timeframe. The structure of the 2004 funding source was similar to the 1990 referendum by funding program operations with the excess ad valorem taxes not required for bond debt service. The maximum millage rate of .2085 has never been levied. The millage levy began at 16%

(0.1760 mills) below the voter-approved maximum and has continued on a downward trend to its current rate 0.1114 or 46.6% below the voter-approved maximum. During fiscal years 2008/09 and 2009/10, the millage rate dropped 37% below the voter approved maximum. Further reductions of the millage rate of the 2004 referendum through Fiscal Year 20/21 will amount to an additional \$46 million of uncollected revenue.

The bonding associated with the 1990 referendum never reached its full voter-approved maximum capacity of \$55 million. The first referendum bonds were issued in 1991, 1993 and 2005 totaling \$43,090,000. Only \$45 million of the voter-approved maximum capacity of \$60 million has been issued under the 2004 referendum, and \$4 million of these bond proceeds were used to pay off bond debt in 2011.



Declining millage rates of the past 13 fiscal years have required the EEL Program to reduce the annual operations budget by 26% and staffing by 30%. The decline in operational resources has significantly impacted the Program's ability to meet operational goals and maintain effective operations efficiently. Many management tasks cannot be completed in a timely manner. For example, it is not possible with the decline in staff support to maintain more than 102 miles of fire control lines on EEL sanctuaries, keep up with annual prescribed burns, maintain over 75 miles of public use trails, control non-native species, regularly monitor plant and animal populations, meet the community's environmental education needs and be responsive in a timely manner to unforeseen daily issues.

**Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program
30 Year Anniversary Report 1990 – 2020**

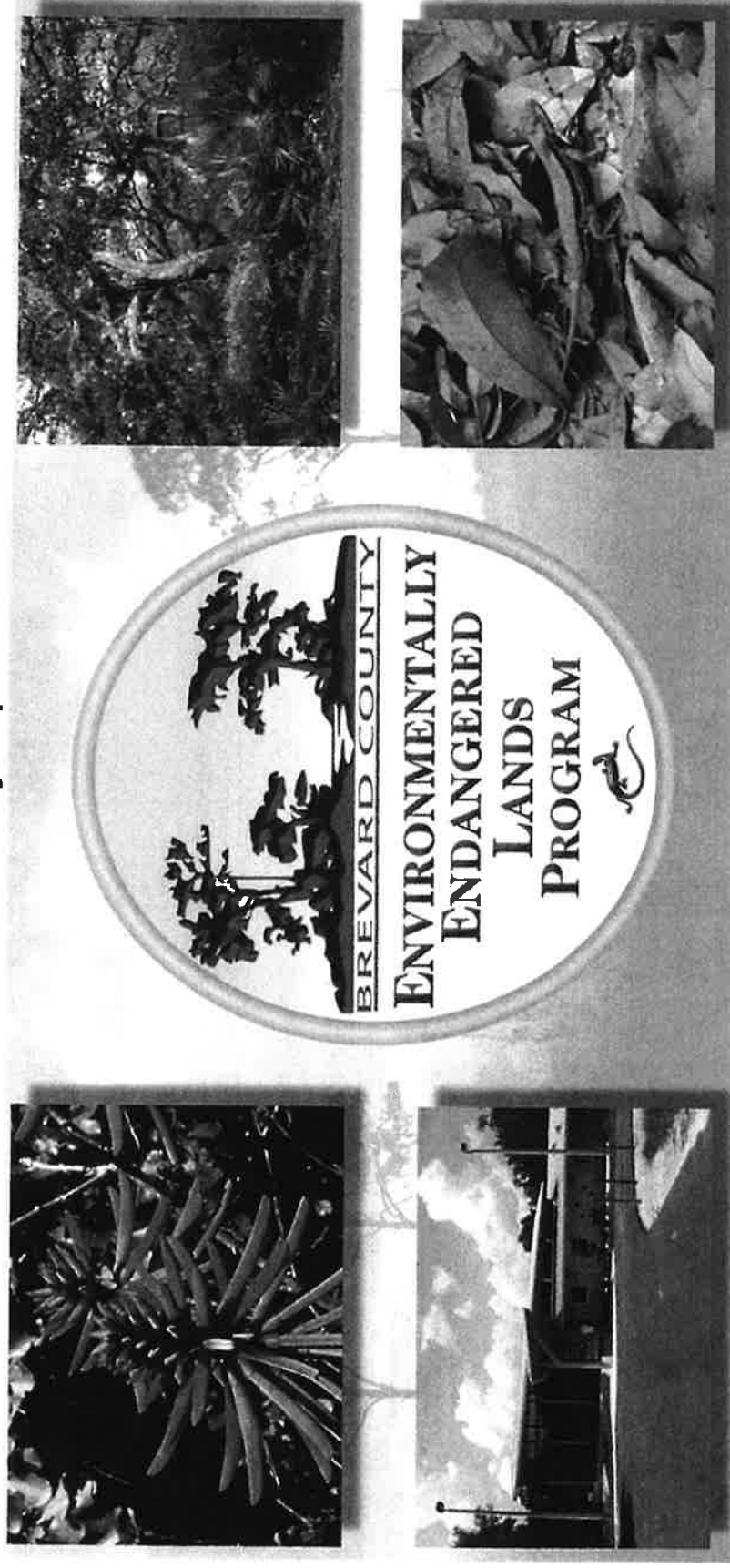


Figure 1: Cover photos clockwise from top left: Coral Bean, Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Logo, Malabar Scrub, Scrub Lizard, Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

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Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

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Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Program Mission

Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity
Through Responsible Stewardship
of Brevard County's Natural Resources

Program Vision

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program acquires, protects and maintains environmentally endangered lands guided by scientific principles for conservation and the best available practices for resource stewardship and ecosystem management. The EEL Program protects the rich biological diversity of Brevard County for future generations. The EEL Program provides passive recreation and environmental education opportunities to Brevard's citizens and visitors without detracting from the primary conservation goals of the program.

The EEL Program encourages active citizen participation and community involvement.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

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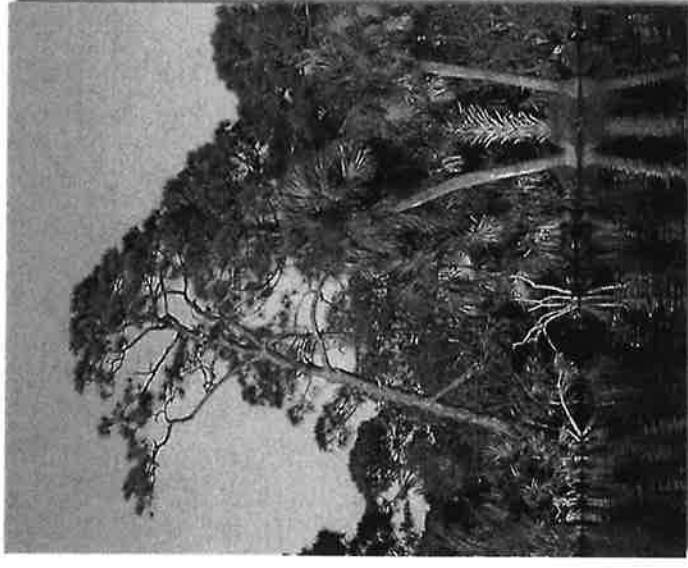


Figure 2: Image of Pine Island Conservation Area - Merritt Island

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Brevard's Conservation Legacy

Brevard County's commitment to long-term land conservation through the Environmentally Endangered Lands referendum has been viewed as a model by other conservation organizations in Florida and around the United States. The science-based land selection and management process was designed to ensure that all decisions were supported by the best available scientific research and represents:

- an effective conservation tool to ensure that ecosystems, natural communities and species are protected for future generations;
- a first step towards long-term protection of essential natural resources, open space, green space wildlife corridors and maintenance of ecosystem functions;
- a mechanism to enhance community, environmental, and economic values through strategic planning for balanced growth management, conservation and economic development;
- an opportunity to establish a nature sanctuary network that provides passive recreation and environmental education programs to Brevard County residents and visitors.



Figure 3: Image of the Enchanted Forest Amphitheater. Image of young Great Horned Owls at Cruickshank Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Preserving Brevard's Natural Landscapes

In 1990, Brevard County citizens voted to protect the unique environmental values of their community by approving the Environmentally Endangered Lands Referendum. The referendum called for acquiring, protecting and maintaining environmentally endangered lands and making improvements as appropriate for passive recreation and environmental education. Due to the success of the Program and ongoing public support, a second referendum was approved by voters in 2004 to continue acquiring endangered land and water areas to protect animal habitats, water resources, open spaces for passive recreation.

The fundamental purpose of the EEL Program is to protect the rich biological diversity and health of Brevard County's ecosystems, to manage the protected areas for conservation, and to provide passive recreation and environmental education. The EEL Program has a primary focus on:

- Natural Communities - prioritizing the needs of threatened or endangered habitats, plants and animals.
- Forest Resources - protecting forest types and their associated ecological values.
- Wetlands and Coastal Resources -
 - Conserve natural and aesthetic attributes
 - Improve buffers to enhance commercial and recreational saltwater and brackish fishing opportunities.
 - Improve the upland-wetland estuarine linkages.

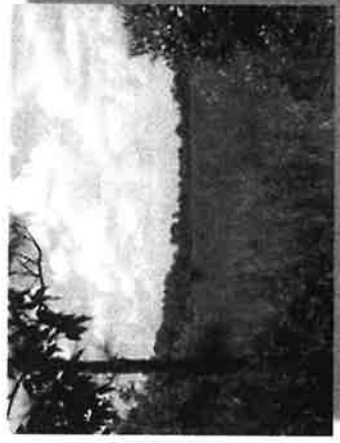


Figure 4: Image of Cuckshank Sanctuary, Image of Scottsmeer Flatwoods Sanctuary, Image of Maritime Hammock Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Principles of Conservation

The Program adheres to ten basic "Principles of Conservation" which are the foundation for balancing ecological management and public use issues with the responsibility of resource conservation. These principles are used to guide all decisions related to the implementation of the program and are based upon prudent scientific conservation concepts.

- Maintain all sites in a natural state and/or restore sites to enhance natural resource values.
- Protect natural resources values by maintaining biological diversity and using conservation as a primary goal for decision making.
- Balance human use with the protection of natural resources.
- Apply the most accurate scientific principles to strategies for conservation.
- Collect and utilize the most accurate data available for developing site management plans.
- Consider the interests and values of all citizens by using scientific information to guide management policy making.
- Promote effective communication that is interactive, reciprocal, and continuous with the public.
- Promote the value of natural areas to Brevard County residents and visitors through the maintenance of the quality of resource values, public service and visitor experiences.
- Promote the integration of natural resources conservation into discussions of economic development and quality of life in Brevard County.
- Provide a responsible financial strategy to implement actions to achieve long-term conservation and stewardship goals.



Figure 5: Image of Scottsmeer Flatwoods Sanctuary. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay provided by Steve Van Meter. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay in a pair of hands with its wing extended.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Key Accomplishments

- Preservation of over **28,000 acres** of upland and wetland ecosystems throughout Brevard County to protect plant communities and wildlife populations supported by **\$42 million** of partnership and grant funding from acquisition partners such as the State of Florida, St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Communities Trust, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, City of Cocoa Beach, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Air Force.
- Protection of over 37 miles of natural shoreline along the Indian River Lagoon and its major tributaries.
- Creation of 75 miles of multi-use trails for citizens and visitors to explore and enjoy the natural beauty of Brevard County.
- The creation and operation of three Management and Environmental Education Centers that provide regular educational programming and community events for Brevard citizens and visitors supported by **\$152,000** in grant funding.
- Restoration and management projects on over **25,000 acres**, supported by over **\$4.7 million** in grant funding focused on improving natural systems to preserve ecosystem services such as: water conservation, wildlife food sources, wildfire prevention, carbon sequestration, aesthetic and increased land values.
- Preservation of cultural and historical resource sites.
- Establishment of ongoing ecological land management practices that maintain these natural resources to ensure they remain sustainable and biologically diverse.

Over the past 30 years the EEL Program has established a conservation, recreation and environmental educational network within our local communities. Ongoing funding support is essential to ensure these accomplishments are maintained for future generations to enjoy.



Figure 6: Image of Cruickshank Sanctuary. Image of Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Image of Coconut Point Sanctuary. Image of a group of people outside the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Science-based Land Preservation

An important objective of the EEL Program is the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands for preservation, conservation and responsible long-term management. These lands are environmentally unique and irreplaceable. They contain excellent examples of natural communities, forest resources, plants, animals, coastal and wetland resources, and geologic features. These lands contribute to the environmental, economic and aesthetic values of Brevard County. Lands are evaluated based on rarity, vulnerability, and threat of local extinction in Brevard County and Florida.

The EEL Program operates under the following fundamental goal structure:

Primary Goal - To protect the rich biological diversity of plant and animal life in Brevard County.

Secondary Goal - To ensure that our ecosystems function properly and benefit Brevard County's natural resources.

Additional Goals Include:

- The protection of educational values of our natural landscapes.
- Protection of research or scientific values of our natural landscapes.
- Protection of cultural, passive recreational and aesthetic values of our natural landscapes.

We achieve these goals through support in three key areas:

- Local citizen and funding support
- State funding support through the Florida Forever Program and other agencies.
- Landowners who are willing sellers.



Figure 7: Image of a banded Florida Scrub-jay held in a hand. Image of a plant survey at Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Completing Wildlife Corridors

Protecting lands where white-tailed deer, Florida Scrub-jays, bobcats, black bear, otters, gopher tortoises, bald eagles and many other species occur is an ongoing and essential EEL Program strategy to create wildlife corridors for species that are key to Florida's diverse landscape and character.

Most remaining lands identified within the EEL acquisition strategy are small tracts to fill important gaps existing between larger conservation areas. Completing these important habitat connections is critical to the long-term protection of biological diversity.

The Indian River Lagoon benefits from the preservation of lands along its shoreline. Restoration and management of shoreline landscapes helps to protect the biodiversity and water quality of this important estuary for both commercial and recreational uses.

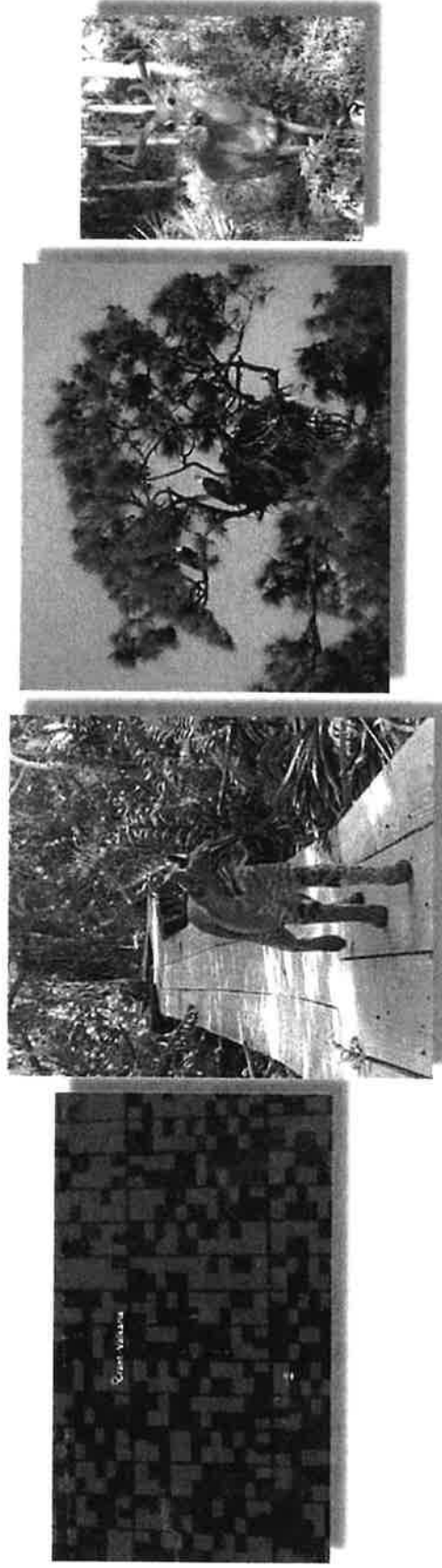


Figure 8. Image of conservation gaps at Grant Flatwoods Sanctuary. Image of a bobcat at Sams House. Image of a bald eagle's nest at Pine Island Conservation Area. Image of a white-tailed deer at Micco Scrub Sanctuary

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

North Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Laney Conservation Easement
Location: Scottsmeer
Acres: 38
Managing Agency: Private
2. North Indian River Lagoon Sanctuary
Location: Scottsmeer / Mims
Acres: 426
Managing Agency: US Fish and Wildlife Service and Brevard County EEL
3. Scottsmeer Flatwoods Sanctuary
Location: Scottsmeer
Acres: 1542
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
4. North Buck Lake Sanctuary
Location: Mims
Acres: 177
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
5. Buck Lake Conservation Area
Location: Mims
Acres: 7708
Managing Agency: St. Johns River Water Management District
6. Indian Mound Station Sanctuary
Location: Mims
Acres: 147
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

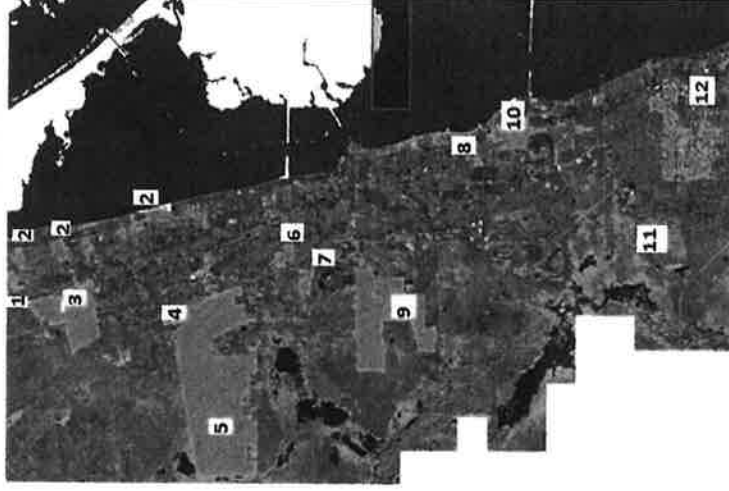


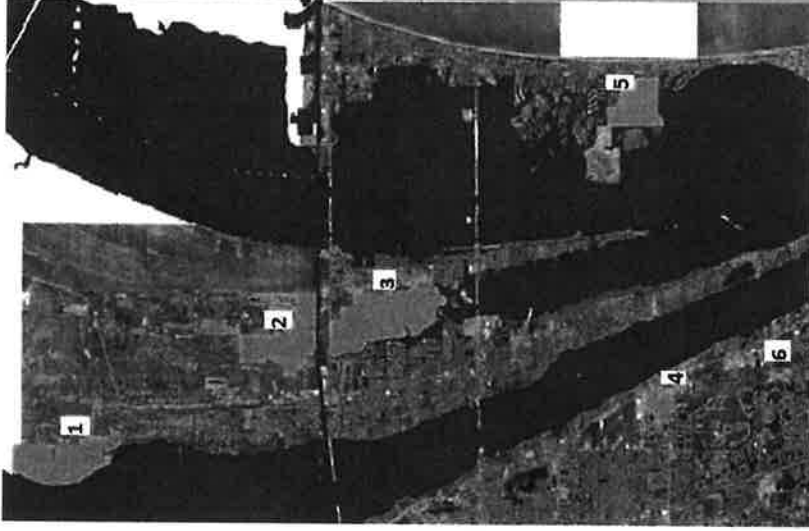
Figure 9: Map of the sanctuaries in the North Region numbered one through twelve from the North in Scottsmeer/Mims South to Cocoa

7. South Lake Conservation Area
Location: Titusville
Acres: 155
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
8. Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Titusville
Acres: 44
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
9. Fox Lake Sanctuary
Location: Titusville
Acres: 2568
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
10. Enchanted Forest Sanctuary
Location: Titusville
Acres: 481
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
11. Challenger Marsh Sanctuary
Location: Cocoa
Acres: 47
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
12. Grissom Road Complex
Location: Cocoa
Acres: 969
Managing Agency: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Brevard County EEL

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Central Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Pine Island Conservation Area
Location: North Merritt Island
Acres: 881
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
2. Kabboord Sanctuary
Location: North Merritt Island
Acres: 902
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
3. Ulumay Wildlife Sanctuary
Location: Merritt Island
Acres: 1320
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
4. Hellen and Allan Cruickshank Sanctuary
Location: Rockledge
Acres: 167
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



5. Thousand Islands Conservation Area
Location: Cocoa Beach
Acres: 338
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
6. Capron Ridge Sanctuary
Location: Viera
Acres: 21
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

Figure 10: Map of the sanctuaries in the Central Region numbered one through six from North Merritt Island South to Viera and East to Cocoa Beach. Image of Thousand Islands Conservation Area.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Mainland Brevard Preservation Accomplishments



1. Crane Creek Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne
Acres: 23
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

2. Turkey Creek Addition
Location: Malabar
Acres: 35
Managing Agency: City of Palm Bay

3. Malabar Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Malabar
Acres: 579
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

4. Jordan Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Malabar
Acres: 750
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



Figure 11: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Region numbered one through four located from Melbourne South to Malabar. Image of Crane Creek Sanctuary provided by Karen McLaughlin.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Mainland Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Micco Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Micco
Acres: 1784
Managing Agency: Brevard County
EEL



2. Grant Flatwoods Sanctuary
Location: Grant / Valkaria
Acres: 6480
Managing Agency: Brevard County
EEL and Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission



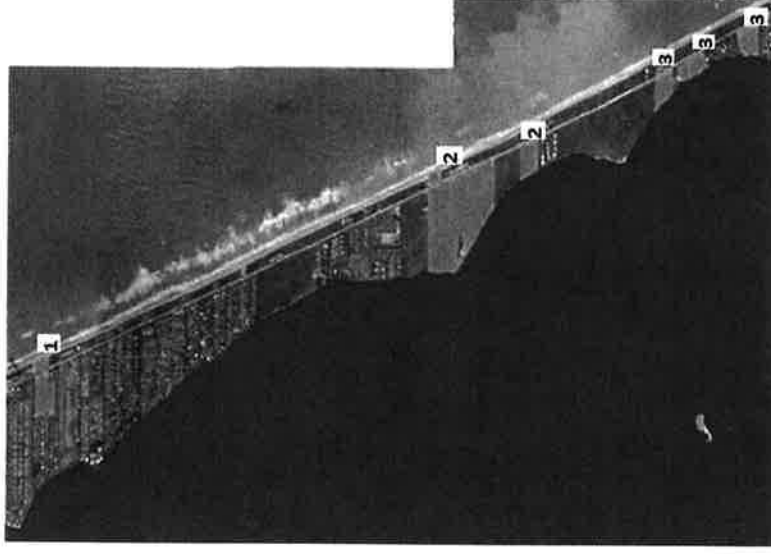
Figure 12: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Region numbered one and two located in Grant / Valkaria south to Micco. Image of a gopher tortoise. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay with a seed in its mouth.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Beaches Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Ocean Ridge Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 11
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

2. Coconut Point Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 62
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



3. Hog Point Cove Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 18
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

Figure 13: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Beaches Region numbered one through three located in North Melbourne Beach. Image of a Buckeye Butterfly provided by Steve Van Meter. Image of Maritime Hammock Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Beaches Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Hog Point Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 20
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
2. Washburn Cove Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 39
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
3. Maritime Hammock Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 167
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

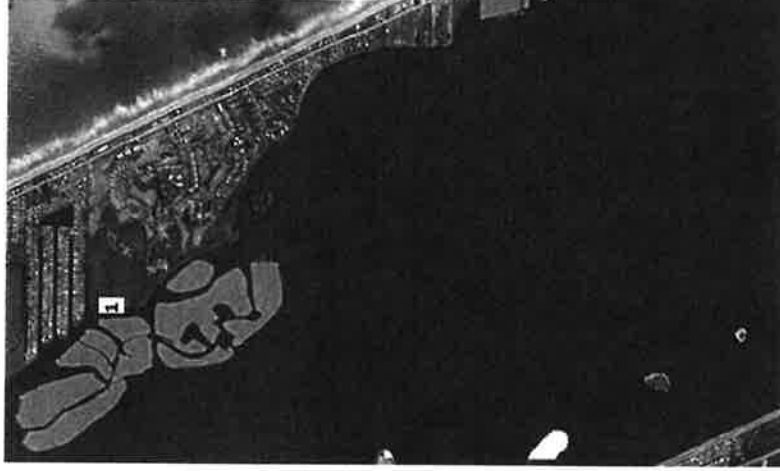


Figure 14: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Beaches Region numbered one through three in Central Melbourne Beach. Image of Tour de Turtles at Barrier Island Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Beaches Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Mullet Creek Islands
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 86
Managing Agency: Florida State Parks



2. Barrier Island Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 34
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
3. Hardwood Hammock Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 36
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

Figure 15: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Beaches Region numbered one through three from North to South in South Melbourne Beach. Image of a group of people standing near the sea turtle exhibit at the Barrier Island Sanctuary. Image of the Barrier Island Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Prescribed Fire

In the natural landscapes of Brevard County, it is critical to implement management actions on a regular basis to ensure the referendum objectives are met. Maintaining prescribed fire cycles and controlling invasive exotic species cannot occur without active management. Most Florida habitats have evolved under the constant influence of fire and depend on its rejuvenating properties for long-term survival.

The continued use of prescribed fire and regular land management actions are of critical importance to maintain healthy and diverse plant and animal populations. EEL lands support a variety of threatened and endangered species including the Florida Scrub-jay which is directly dependent upon ongoing habitat management for their continued survival. Protecting native biodiversity is the first and overriding objective of the EEL Program.

If left unburned for long periods, EEL Sanctuaries become more vulnerable to wildfire, increasing the potential for impacts to nearby homes and businesses. Maintaining regular burn rotations reduces fuel build-up and protects homes and businesses from wildfire. Wildfires, unlike prescribed burns, can have a significant negative impact on natural habitats and wildlife.

The EEL Program has implemented prescribed burns on 12,541 acres of the nature sanctuary lands.

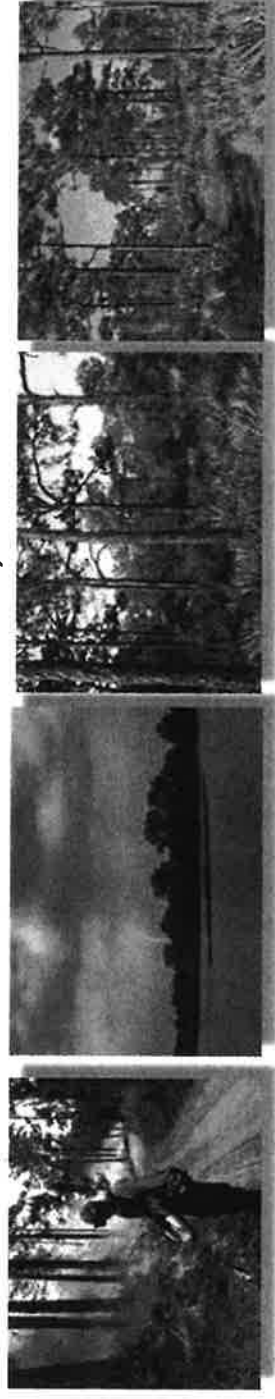


Figure 16: Image of a prescribed fire, Image of a lightning strike, Image of overgrown Pine Flatwoods, Image of restored Pine Flatwoods habitat after a prescribed burn.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Exotic Species Management and Habitat Restoration

Invasive and exotic plant and animal species have invaded many of the native habitats in Florida. To prevent invasive species from taking over our native landscapes regular maintenance and monitoring is required to eradicate harmful species.

The EEL Program has worked closely with the State of Florida Invasive Plant Management Program to invest over **\$4.3 million** in State funding to remove non-native species on 11,410 acres in an effort to maintain invasive free conservation lands. Invasive plant seed sources from surrounding private property must be monitored and controlled to maintain existing habitat restoration efforts.

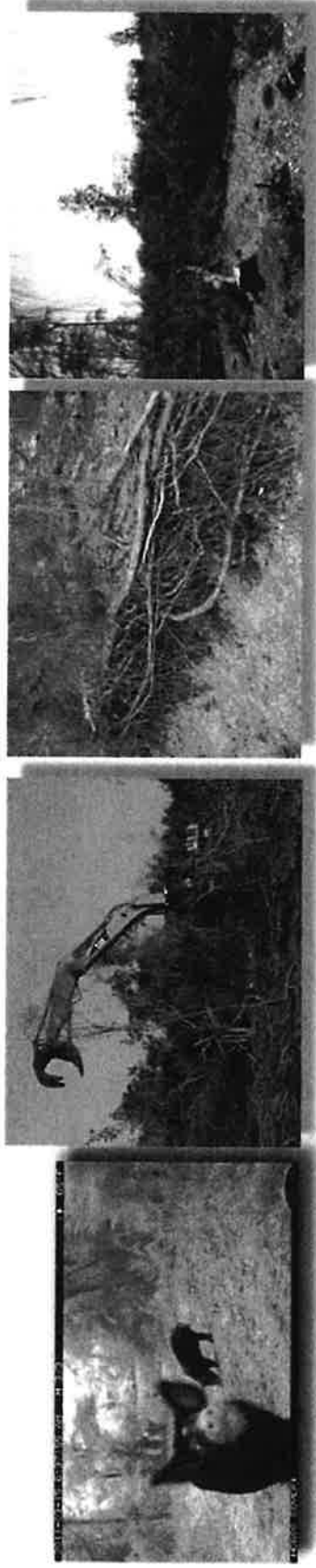


Figure 17: Image of a Feral Pig at the Enchanted Forest. Image of an excavator with grapple removing Australian Pine at Thousand Island Conservation Area. Image of roots removed from the Thousand Island Conservation Area. Image of Australian Pine removal at Thousand Island Conservation Area.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

General Maintenance

The upkeep of EEL Program facilities, lands, equipment and recreational resources is an ongoing need that requires staff resources and adequate funding support.

In order to achieve the EEL Program's ecological land management goals staff must routinely maintain the following public resources and assets:

- 102 miles of fire control lines that need to be either mowed or plowed with a tractor and disc-harrow at least twice annually.
- 49 miles of access and maintenance roads require routine maintenance such as grading, tree-removal and general mowing.
- 61 miles of fence line and boundary signs require periodic inspection and repairs.
- 152 Access gates require regular monitoring and periodic repairs.
- 33 Public trailhead and parking areas and 51 informational kiosks.
- 3 Management and Environmental Education Centers require ongoing upkeep.
- 1.25 miles of boardwalks and footbridges.

Illegal dumping occurs frequently with 106 tons of trash removed from the conservation lands to date.

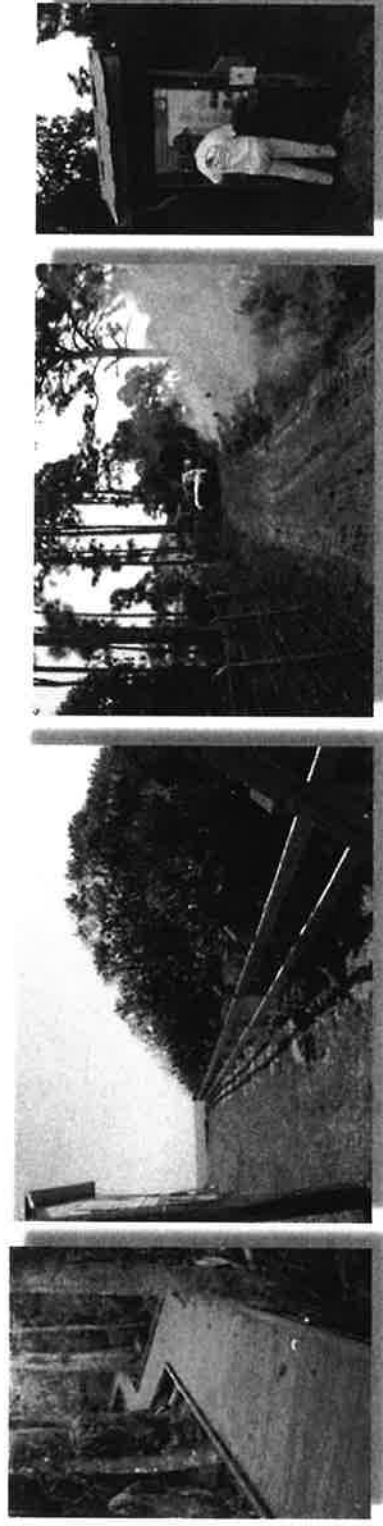


Figure 18: Image of the boardwalk at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Image of a boundary fence in the South Beaches Region. Image of a boundary fence at Cruickshank Sanctuary. Image of the kiosk at Pine Island Conservation Area.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Educating Visitors About Conservation Benefits

Environmental education contributes to public knowledge and awareness of the natural, historical and archaeological resource values of Brevard County. The EEL Program has implemented a comprehensive environmental education framework which has provided quality nature-based experiences for nearly 850,000 residents and visitors.

The result of a Master Site Plan process completed in the late 1990's set into motion a plan for the development of four Management and Education Centers. The Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center was the first to be completed and opened to the public in 2003. The Barrier Island Center opened in 2008, followed by the Sams House Management and Education Center which opened in 2010. Average visitation at the three centers over the last five years has been nearly 80,000 visitors annually. Due to operational limitations the fourth Management and Education Center, planned for the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary is on hold pending the outcome of a future long-term funding plan.

The three centers have provided environmental education programs to over 215,000 participants since the first center opened in 2003. Nearly 80,000 of these participants have been Brevard school children. The Program has received \$186,000 in grant funding to support its environmental education mission.

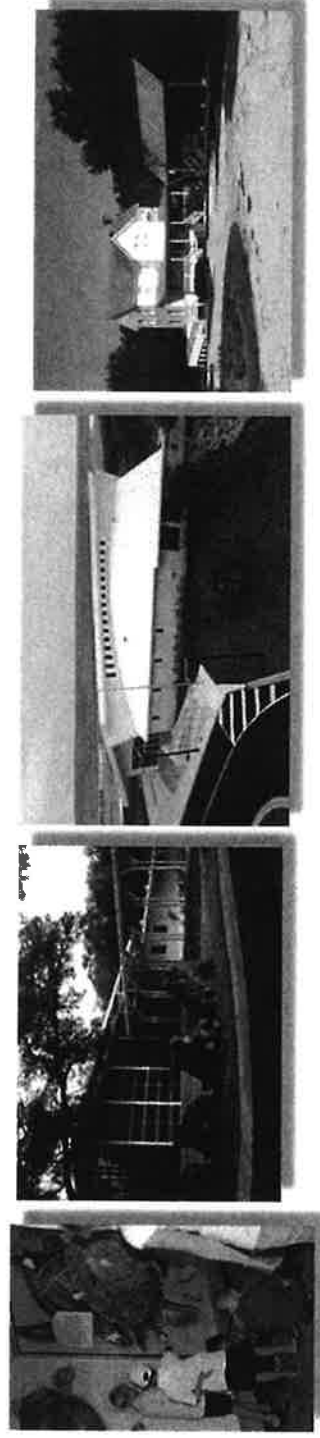


Figure 19: Image of the sea turtle exhibit at the Barrier Island Center. Image of the Enchanted Forest Center. Image of Sams House at Pine Island.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Creating and Maintaining Passive Recreation Opportunities

Finding a balance between public-use impacts and natural resource protection is a key challenge to implementing effective land protection and stewardship. The EEL Program provides a variety of passive recreation opportunities that are consistent with the program's conservation and protection goals of the voter-approved referendums.

More than 75 miles of public use trails for passive recreation including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, nature observation, paddling, fishing and camping provide outdoor opportunities for residents and tourists visiting Brevard County. EEL has worked with 56 Eagle Scouts to date to construct many public use resources in support of visitor activities.

Oversight and maintenance of public use resources is essential to ensure safe and proper functionality for visitors and to verify that facilities and amenities are not in conflict with site ecological goals. Without proper oversight, trails systems and parking areas can be vandalized or used inappropriately. A quick response to vandalism issues helps discourage it from happening in the future.

Periodic trail use monitoring data suggests that there are more than 170,000 visitors utilizing the sanctuary trails annually.



Figure 20. Image of the kayak launch at Pine Island. Image of Maritime Hammock Sanctuary. Image of the Thousand Islands Trail Head. Image of the footbridge at Malabar Scrub.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Volunteers and Friends Groups

The success of the EEL Program has been heavily dependent upon the involvement of citizen volunteers who play an important role in achieving the objectives of the EEL referendums. Three volunteer citizen advisory committees meet regularly to provide guidance, oversight and recommendations to staff and the County Commission.

The EEL Selection and Management Committee serves as an expert scientific advisory committee to EEL staff and the County Commission on all issues involving the acquisition and management of environmentally endangered lands within the EEL Program protected area network.

The EEL Procedures Committee serves as an advisory committee to county staff and the Selection and Management Committee regarding policies, procedures and standards for land acquisition.

The EEL Recreation and Education Advisory Committee serves as an advisory committee to EEL staff and the Selection and Management Committee regarding recommendations for public access, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities on EEL managed lands.

The EEL Program has also facilitated volunteer participation in a variety of ways including the establishment of five citizen-led non-profit support groups, providing local high school scholarship volunteer hours, AmeriCorps Civilian Conservation Corps, alternative university spring break outings, Boy Scout and Girl Scout workdays including hosting over 56 Eagle Scout Projects, and regular volunteer opportunities that assist with education center operations, environmental education programs, and trail maintenance.

Each year over 200 volunteers contribute 12,000 hours of time to the program. This represents an annual financial contribution of over \$276,000. Since 2005, volunteers have contributed over 149,000 hours of time worth over \$3.1 million to the County.



Figure 21: Image of an Advisory Committee. Image of AmeriCorps Civilian Conservation Corps Volunteers. Image of Eagle Scouts.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Program Funding Summary

The funding support structure established in the 1990 and 2004 referendums provided for two 20-year bonding periods. The termination of the 1990 referendum in 2011, emphasized the need to explore future, long-term funding options to continue Program operations beyond the termination of the 2004 referendum in 2024.

In 1997, at the request of the County Commission, the EEL Program Selection and Management Committee recommended a Financial Plan to ensure the Program would meet its capital bond debt-service obligations and have sufficient funds for long-term management. The proposed plan designated a combination of annually appropriated general revenue and EEL Program ad valorem revenue not required for bond debt to pay Program costs. The proposal also recommended establishing an endowment fund and the continued maximization of the voter-approved millage collection at 0.25 mills.

On September 23, 1997, the Board of County Commissioners chose to continue funding EEL operations through the use of the ad valorem millage that was not required for bond debt service. At that time, it was noted the Board of County Commissioners would consider funding options and financial resources to address the operations of the EEL Program after 2011.

The first referendum bonds were issued in 1991, 1993 and 2005 totaling \$45,608,969. \$45 million of the voter-approved maximum capacity of \$60 million has been issued under the 2004 referendum, and \$4 million of these bond proceeds were used to pay off bond debt in 2011.

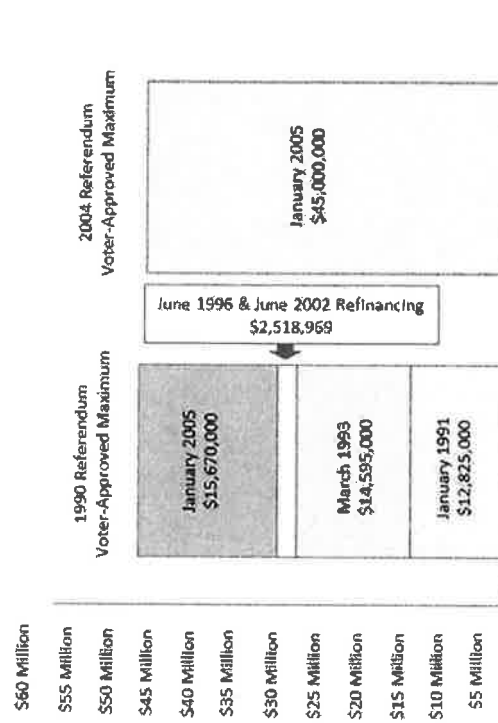


Figure 22: Graph of funding summary and bonding associated with the 1990 and 2004 referenda.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Environmentally Endangered Lands Referenda Milestones

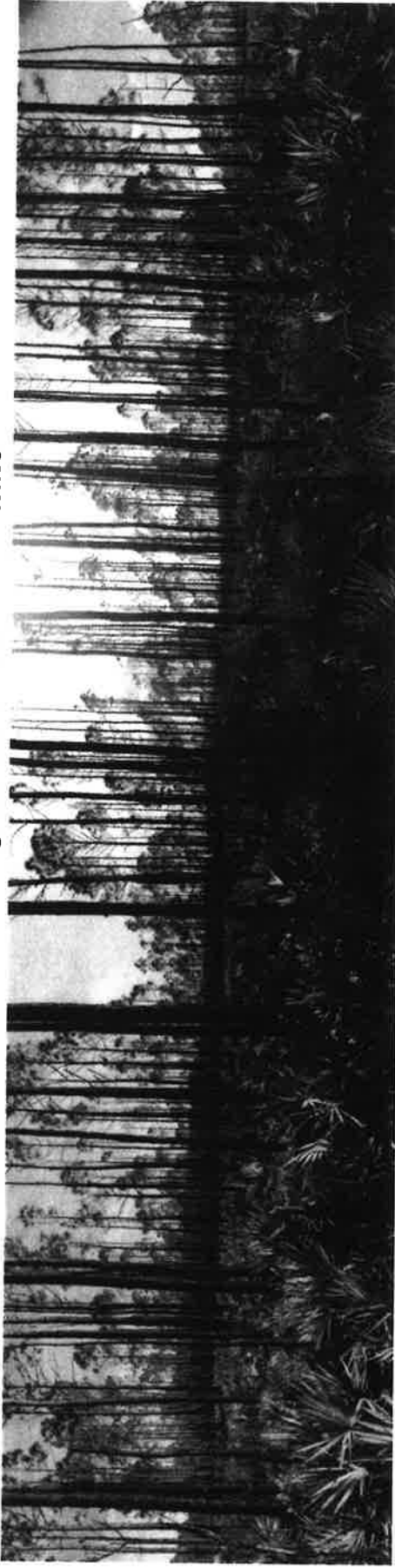


Figure 23: Image of Pine Flatwoods

December 1989: County Commission appointed the EEL Procedures Committee members to create the Land Acquisition Manual	July & August 1990: County Commission adopted the EEL Land Acquisition Manual and appoints members of the EEL Selection Committee	September 1990: First EEL referendum passes	1993: County Commission and State of Florida establish first project boundary and enter into Multi-Party Acquisition Agreement	September 1997: County Commission adopts the Sanctuary Management Manual but defers the proposed long-term Financial Plan until after 2011	July 1998: County Commission approves Master Site Plans for four Management and Environmental Centers	November 2002: Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center opens to the public	November 2004: Second EEL referendum passes	May 2008: Barrier Island Management and Education Center opens to the public	August 2010: Sams House Management and Education Center opens to the public	2011: \$4 Million of bond funds used to pay off bond debt	2011: First EEL referendum ends	2024: Second EEL referendum will sunset
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Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

The Value of Conservation to Brevard County

Numerous studies have shown that natural areas and open space contribute positive economic benefits to local communities. In recognition of the importance of cost-benefit analyses to assist Program planning and annual budget allocations, the EEL Program is encouraged to identify and quantify the economic costs and benefits of EEL sanctuaries. In 2020 the Program contracted with Closewaters LLC to evaluate Program accomplishments in an effort to quantify the economic value of the EEL Program to Brevard County and the value to the County of continuing Program funding into the future.

A variety of categories of value were analyzed:

- Contribution to restoration of the Indian River Lagoon
- Eco-Tourism
- Leveraged State and Federal funding
- Taxed value to constituents
- Volunteer labor
- Value to the development community for mitigation

The analysis determined that the Present Value of the EEL Program to the County is \$496 million.

A variety of additional categories were identified as likely having significant economic value but were beyond the limited scope of this particular analysis. These categories include; quality of life, wildfire risk protection, local government development mitigation potential, water resource protection and aquifer replenishment, flood protection, carbon sequestration, air quality, human health benefits, endangered species protection, and environmental education programming.



Figure 24: Image of a gopher tortoise provided by Jonny Baker. Image of Crane Creek provided by Karen McLaughlin. Image of Lyonia provided by Steve Van Meter.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

The Future of the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Over the last 30 years, the EEL Program has established an important nature sanctuary network in Brevard County that welcomes 250,000 visitors annually. Thirty years of ecological land management actions have successfully restored thousands of acres of natural ecosystems that require ongoing maintenance to ensure they remain healthy. Without active management to maintain fire cycles and control invasive and non-native species, the health of these ecosystems and the species they support will degrade and see diminished biological diversity. In natural landscapes that are fragmented by roads and development, it is vital that management actions continue in order to maintain the ecological processes necessary for healthy and biologically diverse ecosystems.

The funding mechanism established by the 2004 referendum will end in 2024. A funding source beyond 2024 has yet to be identified to provide ongoing management of the conservation lands into the future.



Figure 25. Image of a white-tailed deer. Image of an American Alligator. Image of a bald eagle with offspring provided by Steve Van Meter. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay. Image of a bird's nest with three eggs

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

EEL Contact Information

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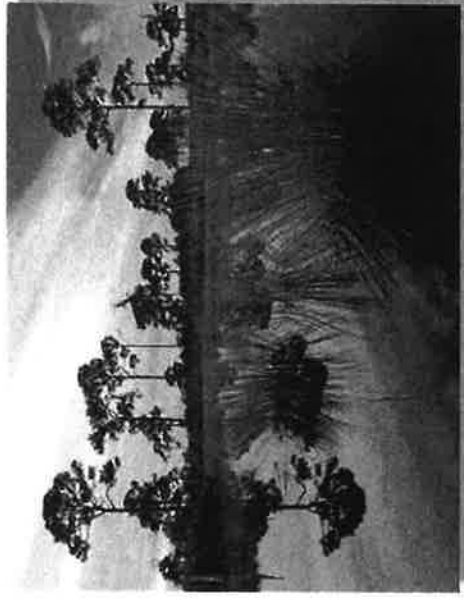


Figure 26: Image of Crickshank Sanctuary.

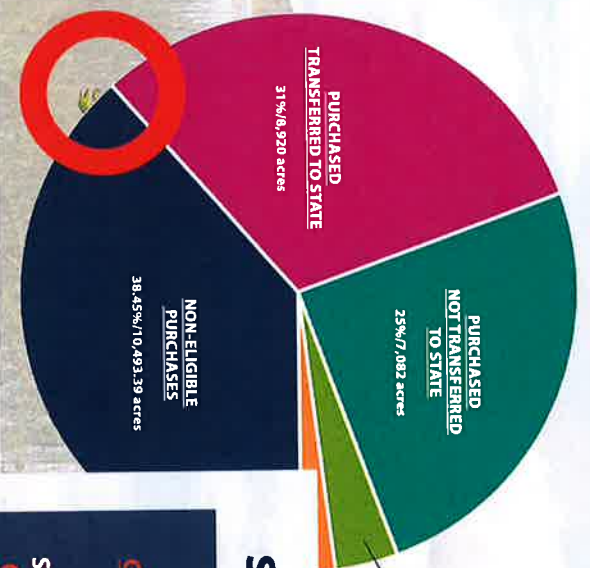
"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children." - John James Audubon

SUGGESTED REFERENDUM LANGUAGE

Government Environmentally Endangered Land and Water Areas Bond Referendum

Shall Brevard County issue more bonds (incur debt) to extend the Government Environmentally Endangered Lands program to acquire, improve and maintain wildlife habitat, wetlands, woodlands, ~~and lands that protect Indian River Lagoon and St Johns River~~, and maintain and improve nature education centers, with citizen oversight, which bonds (debt) don't will not exceed \$50,000,000.00 (FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS) aggregate principal amount, bear interest not exceeding the maximum legal rate, mature twenty years from issuance and are payable from levying increased annual ad valorem taxes not exceeding 0.1465 mills?

(SUBDIVIDED INTO TRANSFERRED, NOT TRANSFERRED, AND OTHER PURCHASES)



**“LUCKY” THE
LEPRECHAUN EEL**

28. SURRENDER OF PREMISES: Upon termination or expiration of this lease, LESSEE shall surrender the leased premises to LESSOR. If the event no further use of the leased premises or any part thereof is needed, LESSEE shall give written notification to the Director of Public Land Administration, Division of State Lands, Department of Environmental Protection, Mail Station 130, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32309-3000, at least six months prior to the release of any or all of the leased premises.

LANGUAGE

Bond Referendum

Shall Brevard County issue more bonds (incur debt) to Government Environmentally Endangered Lands program to acquire, improve and maintain wildlife habitat, wetlands, and lands that protect Indian-River Lagoon and St. John River, and maintain and improve nature education center, citizen oversight, which bonds (debt) don't will not exceed \$50,000,000.00 (FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS) aggregate principal amount, bear interest not exceeding the mature twenty years from issuance and an increased annual ad valorem taxes not ex

ONE TIME LOSS OF IMPA

- **Fox Lake Sanctuary is 2,568 acres**

- Roughly 1,041 of these acres are developable
 - Using the surrounding zoning of 1 unit/2.5 acres, this equals 416 units
 - Removing 30% for infrastructure this leaves 292 units
- 292 units multiplied by \$9,838.06 = **\$2,872,713.52**

Category	Amount
Coal	\$15,791.36
Tram	\$11,285.80
Fire	\$21,021.08
EMS	\$18,641.28
Correctional Facility	\$46,720.00
Library	\$1,488.00
Solid Waste	\$2,872.15
Education	\$2,872.15
Total Impact Fees	\$152,520.57

Average estimated property tax in the area is \$5,987.73

This takes \$1,748,417.16 off our tax roll per year

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Purchased in 2007 for \$25 million¹

2022 value is \$886,370²

Purchased in 2006 for \$3,636,000¹

2022 value is \$544,710²

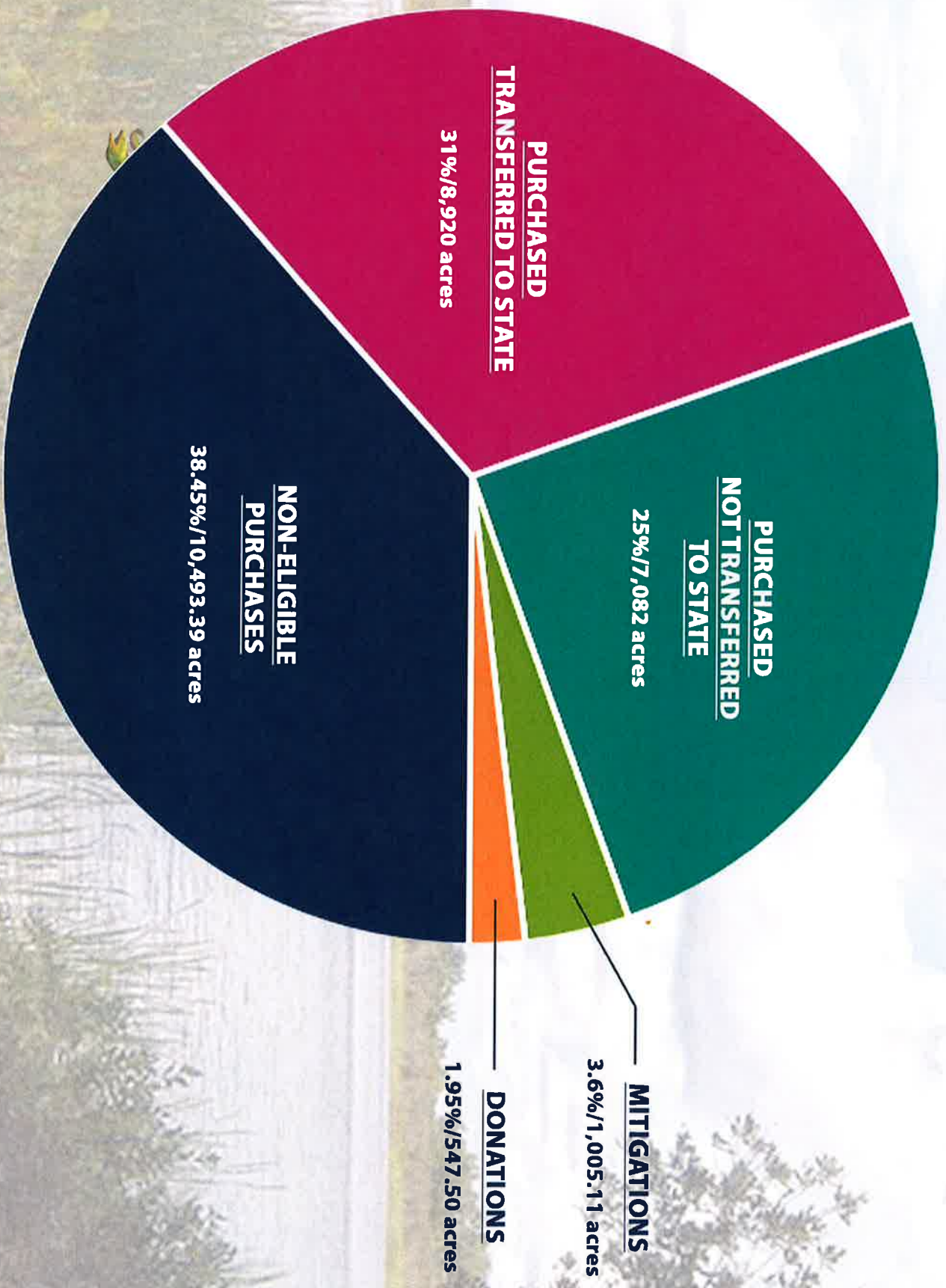
"Just because 70% of the people voted for it, doesn't mean you overpay."

"You have a fiduciary duty to the citizens of Brevard County to spend that money wisely when it has been appropriated by referendum and it has not been done so on these EEL's purchases."

-Scott Ellis, Former Comptroller, Forever Conservative

THE 28,048 ACRES OF EELS IS DIVIDED INTO 3 CATEGORIES:

MITIGATIONS, DONATIONS, AND PURCHASED ACQUISITIONS
(SUBDIVIDED INTO TRANSFERRED, NOT TRANSFERRED, AND OTHER PURCHASES)



LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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FINANCIAL LOSS TO THE COUNTY

ONE TIME LOSS OF IMPACT FEES

- Fox Lake Sanctuary is 2,568 acres
- Roughly 1,041 of these acres are developable
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- Removing 30% for infrastructure this leaves 292 units
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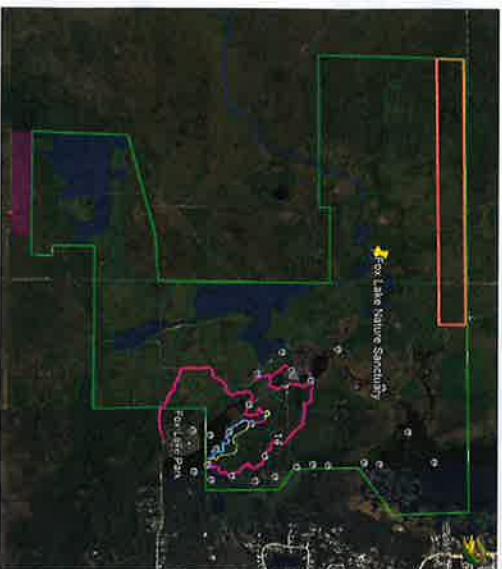
County Residential Impact Fee Schedule	
Transportation	\$1,271,076.00
Fire	\$15,791.36
EMS	\$11,285.80
Correctional Facility	\$21,021.08
Library	\$18,641.28
Solid Waste	\$46,720.00
Education	\$1,488,178.00
Total Impact Fees	\$2,872,713.52

RECURRING LOSS OFF TAX ROLLS

Average estimated property tax in the area is \$5,987.73

This takes **\$1,748,417.16** off our tax roll **per year**

PURCHASE PRICE VS. CURRENT VALUE



Fox Lake Sanctuary

Purchased in 2007 for \$25 million¹

2022 value: \$886,370²

Indian Mound

Purchased in 2006 for \$3,636,000¹

2022 value: \$544,710²

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¹Mike Knight, EELs Program Manager

²Brevard County Property Appraiser Website

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