



Agenda Report

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Resolution/Award/Presentation

E.3.

3/11/2025

Subject:

Presentation by Mr. Vince Lamb with Brevard Indian River Lagoon Coalition Program

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Dept/Office:

District 4 Commissioner

Requested Action:

Summary Explanation and Background:

A presentation for "Opportunity to increase bond funding for Conservation Lands Acquisition by the Environmentally Endangered Lands." Chairman is allowing up to ten (10) minutes.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Opportunity to increase bond funding for Conservation Lands Acquisition by the Environmentally Endangered Lands(EEL) Program

Summary Explanation and Background:

In November 2022, Brevard County voters with a 70% majority authorized the issue of up to \$50 million in bonds to be used for conservation land purchases to be repaid by a small ad valorem tax over twenty years. In 2024, the Commission voted to approved the issue of \$6 million in bonds., \$3 million for capital improvements and the balance for conservation land acquisition. Many consider \$3 million to be too small of a limit to operate a county conservation land acquisition.

Between 1990 and 2009, Brevard County ran an effective conservation land acquisition program that established the current sanctuaries totaling approximately 28,000 acres. A county referendum approved in 2004 authorized a maximum of \$55 million in bonds to be used to fund land purchases. The County Commission authorized bonds to be issued in the amount of \$45 million. These funds were used to acquire the Thousand Islands of Cocoa Beach, Ulumay Wildlife Sanctuary (Boyd and DiChritopher properties) on Merritt Island, plus Fox Lake Sanctuary and Scottsmoor Flatwoods in North Brevard. The Great Recession (2007-2009) caused Brevard County to suspend conservation land acquisition due to a weakened condition of county finances.

When properties are purchased for conservation, development is prevented and the land will be managed in its natural state to benefit wildlife and humans. The EEL Program maintains 80 miles of hiking trails that enable people to connect with nature. Where appropriate, bicycle trails are provided as well as equestrian trails. Residential lawn fertilizer and septic system discharges are two of the largest pollution sources that are harming the Indian River Lagoon and other waterways. Conservation lands absorb nutrient pollutants and reduce the pollution.

Opportunities still exist to purchase properties that can be maintained as natural areas throughout Brevard County. However, these opportunities are decreasing with each passing month.

Several steps are needed. The EEL Program needs to engage a qualified organization to assist with the negotiations with potential sellers. County staff is evaluating proposals Commission approval will be needed. Next, the EEL Program staff and the Selection and Management Committee welcome any input that Commissioners wish to provide.

The next key step is to increase the authorized amount of bonds to a number that reflects the desires of the board for additional conservation lands. If the Commission chose to increase the amount to \$25 million now, the amount could be increased to the full \$50 million after the efforts to utilize the \$25 million are successful.

Opportunity to increase bond funding for Conservation Lands Acquisition by the Environmentally Endangered Lands(EEL) Program

Requested Action:

1. Determine the interest of the County Commissioners in re-establishing a conservation land acquisition program via the EEL Program.
2. Determine the willingness of the County Commissioners to increase the bonding amount to enable conservation land purchases.
3. Provide guidance to the EEL Program staff and SMC committee regarding the operation of this conservation land acquisition program..
4. Approve an increased amount for issuing bonds for conservation land purchases or define a process for staff to recommend a number.

Ballot Language:

November 2022 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?

Prepared by Vince Lamb



Kimberly Powell, Clerk to the Board, 400 South Street • P.O. Box 999, Titusville, Florida 32781-0999

Telephone: (321) 637-2001
Fax: (321) 264-6972
Kimberly.Powell@brevardclerk.us

March 12, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioner Rob Feltner, District 4

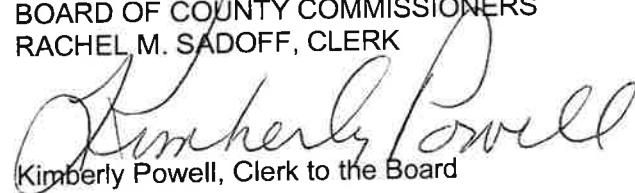
RE: Item E.3., Presentation by Mr. Vince Lamb with Brevard Indian River Lagoon Coalition Program

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on March 11, 2025, acknowledged the presentation for "Opportunity to Increase Bond Funding for Conservation Lands Acquisition by the Environmentally Endangered Lands".

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RACHEL M. SADOFF, CLERK



Kimberly Powell, Clerk to the Board

/sj