

Conservation Collier Annual Report



2019-2020



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1. Executive Summary

Responsibilities

The Conservation Collier Program (Program) is responsible for implementing the mandate of the electorate of Collier County as provided by public referendum votes in November 2002 and November 2006 confirming that mandate, to levy a 0.25 mill ad valorem property tax for a period not to exceed 10 years for acquisition, protection, restoration, and management of environmentally sensitive lands in Collier County for the benefit of present and future generations. Most recently, on November 3, 2020 the electorate voted to implement another ad valorem tax for 10 years. The implementation of this ad valorem tax is planned to start collection in FY22.

Lands Inventory

Conservation Collier has now implemented its mandate for 17 years. In March 2013, at the ten-year mark, the initial ad valorem tax levy ceased. The initial acquisition phase occurred from 2003 to 2011. In 2011 available funds were appropriated in a maintenance trust fund as the Program moved into a preserve management phase, including opening the preserves for public access and managing and hosting visitors. The Program remained in a management phase until 2017 when the Board authorized the use of management funds for the acquisition of more land.

During 2018-2020, four (4) projects totaling 237 acres were purchased for \$3,078,500 million; this does not include multi-parcel projects which are funded by off-site preserve donations. These funds are to be repaid during FY22 when the ad-valorem tax is implemented. Conservation Collier was approved in 2018 to continue acquiring in the multi-parcel projects (Red Maple Swamp and Winchester Head) using offsite preservation donations.

Since inception, the Program has acquired 4,345 acres meeting Program criteria in 21 different locations for a cost of \$107,500,000. Of the 21 currently acquired Conservation Collier projects, sixteen (16) have approved Final Management Plans (FMP) and (5) have approved Interim Management Plans (IMP). Thirteen (13) Conservation Collier preserves are currently open for public use in categories 1 through 4 with signs, trails and benches installed; the most recent Rattlesnake Hammock Preserve acquisition is scheduled to be open in FY21.

Program Costs

Land management costs for all preserves for the period of FY19 – FY20 was an average of \$600,000 per year. . Grants and funding assistance in the amount of \$348,363 were received between FY19 and FY20 to fund land management for an average of \$175,000 per year.

The cost for Program Administration and Acquisition operations for the period of FY19-FY20 was an average of \$105,000 per year.

The Net Operating expenses for FY19-FY20, including capital projects, were \$700,045 and \$762,720, respectively. The increase in budget was due to the acquisition of new preserves and the initial costs for exotic vegetation removal.

Ordinance

During 2018, the Conservation Collier Land Acquisition and Advisory Committee (CCLAAC) reviewed the Conservation Collier ordinance upon request of the Board of County Commissioners (Board). These revisions were approved by the Board on February 26, 2019 and recorded as Ordinance 2019-03.

Public Activities

Public activities at preserves between FY19 and FY20 included adult and youth hunts, hiking, camping, biking, tours, volunteering, presentations, and guided hikes. The Conservation Collier Program looks forward to adding more programming if interpretive staff are approved in FY22 to provide educational and outreach programs.

Conservation Collier preserves have been categorized to identify what public uses are currently available (approved as part of the Annual Report, 10/23/12 16D4). Table 1 describes these categories and identifies corresponding preserves.

Looking Ahead

Staff is working diligently to open two new preserves acquired in late 2018 and August 2020. Opening of new preserves is dependent on initial removal of exotic vegetation, permitting, and trail and parking lot installation. Given the limited annual budget, the opening of recent acquisitions may take more than one fiscal year to accomplish.

On November 3, 2020, the Collier County electors approved the Conservation Collier Re-establishment referendum with a 76.5% majority. Accordingly, the FY22 budget will be proposed to include a Conservation Collier Program tax levy of .25 mil that will generate up to \$25,287,900 for acquisition, management, and to repay the management trust fund. On February 23, 2021, the Board approved the FY22 Budget Policy which included implementation of the ad valorem levy in October 2021. As a result, staff started accepting applications on February 24, 2021 from property owners interested in selling environmentally sensitive land to the Program. The Applications for Acquisition Cycle 10 will be accepted through July 21, 2021. Properties will be evaluated by the committee and ranked by the Board in January 2022 to be acquired in FY22.

Please accept this report on the activities of Conservation Collier calendar years 2019-2020.

Table 1. Preserve Category Matrix

Preserves		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
		Primary Use - Easy access - Public amenities & parking	Intermediate Use - Few/no amenities - Limited parking & primitive trails	Neighborhood Use - No onsite parking - Amenities limited to benches, trails, and picnic tables	Seasonal Use - Parking & trails may be available - Closed during rainy season	Protection/Restore Resource Use - No public access no physical or legal access or unsafe for public
1	Alligator Flag				X	
2	Camp Keais					X
3	Caracara Prairie		X			
4	Cocohatchee Creek		X			
5	Robert H Gore III		X			
6	Freedom Park	X				
7	Gordon River Greenway	X				
8	Logan Woods			X		
9	McIlvane Marsh					X
10	Nancy Payton		X			
11	Otter Mound		X			
12	Panther Walk				X	
13	Pepper Ranch <i>Currently Seasonal, Off-season use by Appt.</i>	X			X	
14	Railhead Scrub					X
15	Red Maple Swamp					X
16	Redroot		X			
17	Rivers Road		X			
18	Rattlesnake Hammock					X
19	Shell Island					X
20	Wet Woods					X
21	Winchester Head					X

2. CCLAAC –Members, Summary of meetings and Actions for between 2019 and 2020

The primary purpose of the CCLAAC, as defined by the Conservation Collier Ordinance, has been to assist the Board in establishing an Active Properties Acquisition List with qualified purchase recommendations consistent with the goals of Conservation Collier. Between 2019-2020 there were 9 active members. Membership of the CCLAAC is intended to be comprised of broad and balanced representation of the interests of Collier County citizens, including:

- Environmental, land management, and conservation interests
- Agricultural and business interests
- Educational interests
- General civic and citizen interests throughout the county.

Members serving as of December 2020, and their backgrounds and areas of expertise are:

William Poteet, Jr. – Chairman (Business Interest) Re-appointed for a sixth term in February 2020, Mr. Poteet is a local Realtor and business owner who has been a member of the CCLAAC since its inception in March 2003. He has served as Chairman of the CCLAAC since August 2005 with unanimous re-election as Chair each year. He also served as a member of the Outreach Subcommittee and as Chairman of the Ordinance, Policy and Rules Subcommittee during active acquisition phases. He currently serves as the Chair of the Lands Evaluation and management Subcommittee. Mr. Poteet is an outstanding leader, assisting with the development of many Program policies.



Patricia Sherry – Vice Chair (General Civic/Citizen Interest) Appointed in April 2015, Ms. Sherry comes to Conservation Collier from a background of civic engagement. She served on the Town Council and Sewer Commission in her home state of Connecticut where she owned her own Income Tax Preparation business and Insurance Agency, gaining experience with government operations and property acquisitions. Locally, Ms. Sherry is currently serving on the Wastewater Authority, Historical and Archaeological Preservation Board and the Infrastructure Surtax Citizens Oversight Committee in Collier County.



Susan Calkins – (Education Interest) Ms. Calkins was appointed in January 2015. Ms. Calkins has resided in Naples full time since 1999. Prior to moving to Naples, she taught sociology and anthropology at Macomb Community College and served as the college's Director of International Studies. She has taught courses in eco-tourism. A Florida Master Naturalist, she has served on the board of the Friends of Rookery Bay and chaired the League of Women Voters of Collier County's Environmental Affairs Committee. She currently serves as League of Women Voters of Florida representative to the Everglades Coalition; Her community involvement has included: Immokalee Housing and Family Services Board; Hodges Center for



Lifelong Learning Advisory Board; and President of the American Association of University Women, Greater Naples Branch. She is a graduate of the Greater Naples Leadership Master's Program, a recipient of the 2007 Jefferson Award for Public Service and the 2012 Community Foundation Women of Initiative Award.

Michael Seef – (Environment-Education Interest) Mr. Seef was appointed to CCLAAC in September 2015 and was reappointed for a 3-year term in February 2020. He is a retired consultant/analyst who worked with major businesses like Quaker Oats and McDonnell Douglass, and also the Federal Government in Housing and Urban Development. Locally, Mr. Seef is a Board member of various environmental and educational organizations and is a Master Naturalist volunteering for CREW and Audubon. He has managed the Clam Pass Guide educational program and has volunteered in environmental educational programs in Australia and Japan. In his own residential community, he has managed the preserve and has instituted Florida friendly landscaping, butterfly gardening and ponds management.



Gary Bromley – (General Civic/Citizen) Mr. Bromley was appointed January 23, 2018 for a 3-year term. Mr. Bromley has lived in Collier County for 4 years, originally from Westchester, NY, where he served as an environmental educator. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in social science work and is currently retired. This is Mr. Bromley's first time serving on a County Board, but he is a member of the League of Women voters where he participates on the Environmental and Government Committees. He has also participated in efforts to place Constitutional Amendments on voter ballots and has participated with the Stone crab Alliance on environmental issues.



Brittany Patterson-Weber – (Environmental/Conservation/Education) Ms. Patterson-Weber was appointed on June 12, 2018, for a 3-year term. She is currently the Vice President of Education & Interpretation at Naples Botanical Garden, and a member of the Garden's executive team. She has spent the last 18 years in Florida and the Caribbean working in environmental education as both an educator and program/center Director at the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium (Ft. Myers), Pigeon Key Marine Science Foundation (Marathon), South Seas Island Resort (Captiva), and Ambassadors of the Environment by Jean-Michel Cousteau at the Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman. She also has done graduate work in Agricultural Extension Education. She has worked closely with professional partners like Collier County Public Schools, Collier County Pollution Control, and Rookery Bay's Coastal Training Program to educate both adults and children about living in Southwest Florida's environment.



Michelle Lenhard



– (Educational/General Civic/Ecology/Conservation) Ms. Lenhard was appointed on April 23, 2019 for a 3-year term. Ms. Lenhard relocated to Collier County 6 years ago from Ridgewood, NJ. She currently serves as the Naturalist Program chair for the Friends of Barefoot Beach having completed the Florida Master Naturalist Program training. While living in New Jersey she served on the local Board of Education for many years. During her tenure on the Board, she was the liaison to several State educational initiatives and achieved certification as a Master Board member from New Jersey School Boards. She and her husband owned and operated a Records and Information Management company as well as several Commercial Real Estate entities in

New Jersey. Michele’s educational background is in environmental science. Early in her career she worked in the Scientific Instrument Industry.

Thomas Iandimarino – (Environmental & Conservation/Educational/Ecology/Land



Management) Mr. Iandimarino was appointed September 24, 2019 for a 3.5-year term. Tom Iandimarino is the Gulf Coast District Ranger for Everglades National Park in Everglades City. In this position he manages the Visitor and Resource Protection Division, including Law Enforcement, Marine Enforcement Operations, Search and Rescue and the Field Training and Evaluation Program. He is a member of the National Advisory Council for the Field Training and Evaluation Program and helps lead new Park Rangers through fostering an environment that encourages innovation and creativity. Tom has a Bachelor of Science in Recreational Resources Management from Slippery Rock University. In Tom’s career as a United

States Park Ranger he has been fortunate to have worked in National Park sites in Tennessee, North Carolina, Indiana, California, Utah, Arizona and here in Florida.

Hannah Rinaldi – (Ecology/Conservation/Environmental Education) Ms. Rinaldi was appointed



on November 12, 2019 for a 2.5-year term. She currently owns and operates Naples Compost, a food waste pick-up service that processes waste into compost. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Millsaps College and a Master of Science in Science Education from University of South Florida. She has a broad background in science education as a former middle and high school biology teacher as well as a former eco-tour guide at Mote Marine. She has previously worked as a research biologist with Florida Fish and Wildlife monitoring seagrass habitats throughout the state of Florida.

3. Program Lands Acquisition Status

During the December 13, 2016 Board meeting (Agenda Item 10B) Commissioner Saunders presented an item calling for the re-establishment of funding of the Conservation Collier Program. During 2017 and 2018 several agenda items were taken to the Board to discuss the status of the Program. At the February 14, 2017 Board meeting the Board voted to use up to \$17 million of Land Management Trust Funds for acquisition and to restart the Program.

In April 2018 and July 2018, staff brought the CCLAAC-recommended Cycle 9 Active Acquisition List to the Board. for \$3,078,500 million; this does not include multi-parcel projects which are funded by off-site preserve donations. These funds are to be repaid during FY22 when the ad-valorem tax is implemented. Conservation Collier was approved in 2018 to continue acquiring in the multi-parcel projects (Red Maple Swamp and Winchester Head) using offsite preservation donations.

Pursuant to Board direction, staff placed a non-binding referendum on the November 3, 2020, general election ballot regarding the Conservation Collier Program. Specifically, the voters were asked to approve or disapprove re-establishing a not to exceed .25 mil ad valorem levy for ten (10) years to fund Conservation Collier's acquisition and management of environmentally sensitive lands. On November 3, 2020, the Collier County electors approved the Conservation Collier Re-establishment referendum with a 76.5% majority.

Accordingly, the FY22 proposed budget will include a Conservation Collier Program tax levy of .25 mil that will generate up to \$25,287,900. The FY 22 budget will appropriate Conservation Collier tax proceeds to repay approximately \$3,700,000 to the Conservation Collier Management Trust Fund for monies advanced to acquire strategic properties prior to the referendum. Further, consistent with Ordinance 2002-63 as amended, twenty-five (25) percent of annual gross tax receipts will be deposited into the Conservation Collier Management Trust Fund to provide for long term management of lands managed by the Conservation Collier Program. The balance of tax receipts will be deposited into the Conservation Collier Acquisition Trust Fund for use in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands. On February 23, 2021 the Board approved the FY22 Budget Policy which included implementation of the ad valorem levy. As a result, staff started accepting applications on February 24, 2021 from property owners interested in selling environmentally sensitive land to the Program. The Applications for Acquisition Cycle 10 will be accepted through July 21, 2021. Properties will be ranked by the Board in January 2022 to be acquired in FY22.

In addition to the cycle 9 properties, Conservation Collier also acquired properties between 2019 and 2020 with funds generated by the offsite preservation option for developers in the Land Development Code. No land donations were acquired in the multi-parcel projects between 2019-2020. Approximately \$18,500 was received as offsite preserve monetary donations between 2019-2020. Since inception, monetary donations received total \$715,500 See Tables 2 and 3 below for details.

Table 2. Monetary Donations

Monetary Donations: Conservation Collier received one monetary donation during the fiscal years of FY19 and FY20.

Owner	Land Acquisition Funds Provided	Management Endowment Provided	Date Received	Earmark
FPL Panther Substation	\$14,791.88	\$3,697.97	2/8/19	Multi-parcel projects (MPPs)

The Land Development Code off-site vegetation retention provision provides the criteria and process for land and endowment donations. Two approved multi-parcel projects (MPPs), Winchester Head (aka North Golden Gate Estates (NGGE) Unit 65) and Red Maple Swamp (aka NGGE Unit 53) are active in accepting donations. Per Board direction from April 24, 2018 (Agenda Item 11B), off-site preserve donation funds received are being used to acquire properties within the MPPs.

Multi Parcel Project Acquisitions with Donation Funds: Since the start of the offsite preservation option in 2010, monetary donations in the amount of \$715,400 have been received, with \$455,000 designated for land acquisition and \$260,700 designated for land management. A total of \$303,000 has been used for acquisition starting with the CDC parcel (Gordon River Greenway Addition) in 2015 and 10 parcels within the MPPs through 2020.

The following properties were acquired in 2019 and 2020:

Table 3. Multi-parcel Property Acquisitions 2019-2020

Owner	Acres	Location	Cost	Date Acquired/Status
Koch	1.14	Winchester Head	\$16,600	Acquired 2/24/20
Burdis	1.14	Winchester Head	\$16,600	Acquired 6/30/20
Farimont Arcadia	2.28	Winchester Head	\$33,200	Acquired 10/21/20
Hernandez	1.59	Winchester Head	\$23,150	Acquired 12/18/20
Total	6.15		\$89,550	

4. Program Land Management Status

Properties are presented alphabetically. All photos and maps shown were created and taken by Program staff unless otherwise indicated. Preserves are categorized for public use in the following manner:

Category 1 – Primary Use Preserve: easily accessible with public amenities and parking.

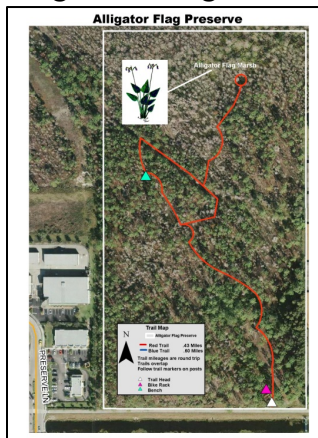
Category 2 – Intermediate Use Preserve: few to no amenities, limited parking, primitive trails.

Category 3 – Neighborhood Preserve: no onsite parking or amenities other than benches, trails, and picnic table.

Category 4 – Seasonal Use Preserve: may have parking and trails but will be closed during seasonal rainfall months.

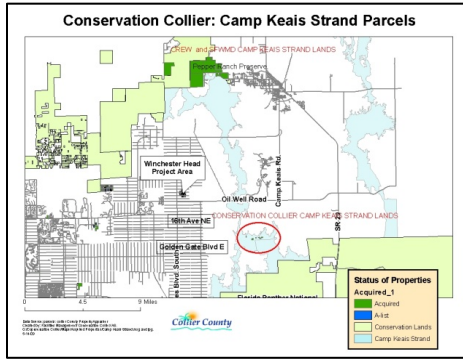
Category 5 – Resource Protection/Restoration Preserve: currently no public access due to lack of physical or legal access or where there are unsafe conditions for the public.

Alligator Flag – 7875 Immokalee Road, North Naples. This 18.46-acre Category 4, seasonal use preserve is located on the north side of Immokalee Road across from Gulf Coast High school. It was acquired in July 2006 at a cost of \$4,960,000 or \$268,741 per acre. It is open to foot traffic between dawn and dusk during dry season as the preserve floods in the summer. There is no dedicated parking and no restroom, but it does have an approximately 1-mile-long established trail system and resting bench. Visitation at this preserve is mostly from surrounding residents and from the nearby schools.



This preserve is representative of several of the typical habitat types in Collier County, including seasonally flooded cypress-pine-cabbage palm, cypress wetlands and pine flatwoods. Seventy-eight species of plants have been identified growing on the preserve, including 4 species protected by the State of Florida (3 bromeliads and 1 fern). Many species of wildlife have been recorded on the preserve, including wetland dependent and migratory bird species, black bear, deer, raccoon, and snakes. The preserve is also suitable for foraging by the state and federally threatened wood stork and is home to the state threatened Big Cypress fox squirrel. This preserve provides outfall to the Immokalee Road canal for an identified flow way connecting with the adjacent 160-acre Olde Cypress PUD preserve, to larger undeveloped areas to the north, and the 60,000-acre Corkscrew Marsh Complex to the northeast.

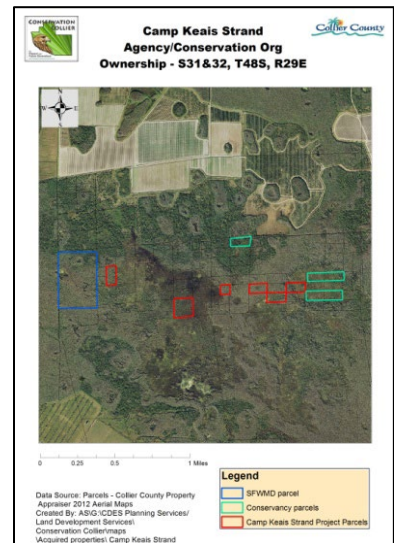
In 2019 and 2020, management emphasis continued to be focused on general trail and invasive exotic plant maintenance. In 2020, a comprehensive plant inventory was completed by a local botanist. The 10-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in December 2020.



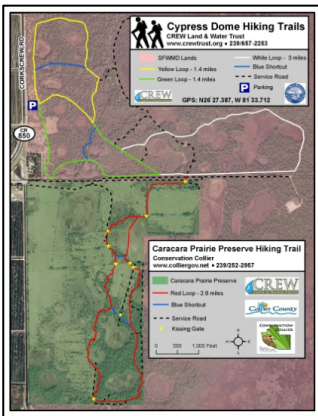
Camp Keais Strand Parcels - The Camp Keais Strand project, a Category 2 resource protection preserve constitutes 6 parcels totaling 32.5 acres within the Flow way Stewardship area of the Rural Lands Stewardship Area, south of Oil Well Road and east of Desoto Boulevard in Sections 31 and 32, Township 48 South, Range 29 East. These parcels were acquired between 2008 and 2009 for a total cost of \$81,250 or \$2,500 per acre. Three of the parcels are contiguous and three are non-contiguous. Because there is no legal access established to the properties and physical access to this area is dangerous and difficult,

staff has not visited the properties other than to view them from above by airplane at the time they were offered. To the best of staff's knowledge, the parcels are comprised of cypress forest, freshwater marsh, and mesic pine flatwood vegetation communities.

Most of the land in the vicinity is owned by large agribusiness in section sized parcels; however, within the two Sections where these are located, the parcels have been subdivided into 1 to 80-acre parcels and are owned by private individuals and agencies. The Conservancy of SW Florida and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) also own parcels within this area. An Interim Management Plan (IMP) update was approved by the Board on 12/8/15 (Agenda Item 16D9) and updated most recently on 1/26/21 (Agenda Item 16D3). The Conservation Collier Financial Plan does not provide for management of these parcels. The approved Interim Management Plan will be reviewed every 2 years for changes in conditions and is in effect a monitoring plan until current access conditions improve.



Caracara Prairie – 2320 Corkscrew Road. This Category 2, 367.7-acre, intermediate use preserve is located in the unincorporated northeast area of Collier County at the east end of Corkscrew Road at the Lee/Collier County boundary. It was acquired in December 2007 for \$5,032,000, or \$13,685 per acre in partnership with the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem (CREW) Trust, who contributed \$300,000 toward the purchase price. The parcel is surrounded on 3 sides by CREW lands. This preserve is open to the public year-round from dawn to dusk for hiking and wildlife viewing. A three-mile trail system connects with adjoining CREW Cypress Dome trails and parking, located approximately 1 mile north. Visitation at this preserve is growing during dry season but low during the wet season.



The preserve contains three distinct native vegetation communities, prairie, depressional marsh wetlands and mesic pine flatwoods. The pastures provide habitat for native Florida wildlife species

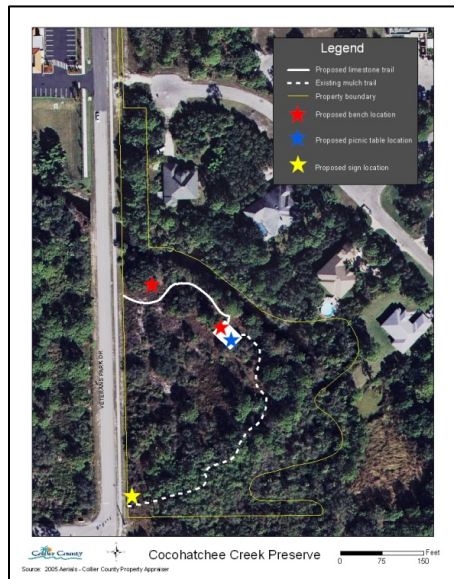
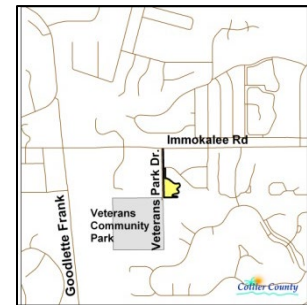
including the federally endangered Florida panther, state threatened Florida sandhill crane and the federally endangered crested caracara.

The preserve lies within Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)-designated priority panther habitat and within the FWC Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Wildlife Environmental Area (WEA), a designation that permits recreational hunting with FWC oversight. This preserve was also utilized for U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) panther mitigation for the Collier County Solid Waste Department’s Resource Recovery Park in 2014.

This preserve currently has a cattle lease which is planned to be phased out over time. Eagle Scouts have provided hiking gates, tables, resting benches and an information kiosk. In September 2019, 14 acres were burned with prescribed fire to reduce excess fuel levels and improve pasture quality. In October 2018, staff received notice from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that the leaseholder for the Oil, Gas, and Mineral Rights (OGMs) had applied for re-drilling an exploratory test oil well on the site (Permit Application #1335D) and had requested a surface lease. Staff had responded by requesting that specific protections for the site and its wildlife be built into the permit and requesting assistance from the County Attorney’s Office in regard to a Surface Lease. A one-year extension to the permit was provided to the lessee by DEP through June 2021.

Cocohatchee Creek– 1880 Veterans Park Drive, North Naples.

This 3.64-acre preserve is located along Veterans Park Drive just outside the entrance to Veterans Community Park off Immokalee Road in North Naples. It is a Category 2, intermediate use preserve. Parking, restroom facilities and handicapped parking are located at Veteran’s Community Park, a short walk away. A shell trail winds approximately 700 feet through the preserve to a picnic area under the oaks along the Cocohatchee Creek. The portion of the trail leading to the picnic area is handicapped accessible. Table, bench, and trash/recycle receptacles are provided. Visitation is approximately a dozen people a day. Two Eagle Scout projects have been developed here. The first is a seating area at the north entrance and the second is a viewing platform next to the creek at the picnic area.

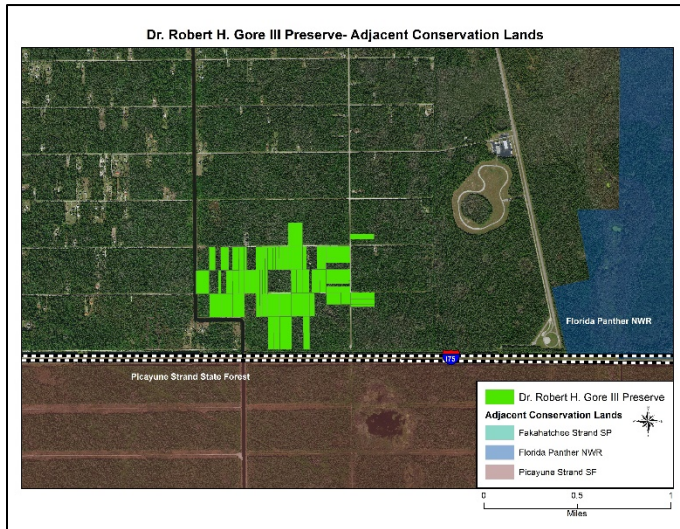


Two Eagle Scout projects have been developed here. The first is a seating area at the north entrance and the second is a viewing platform next to the creek at the picnic area.

This preserve contains one of the priority plant communities targeted in the Conservation Collier ordinance: riverine oak. Remnant patches of upland scrub (another Program priority) pine flatwoods and cabbage palm forest make up the remainder of the upland habitats. A portion of Cocohatchee creek is included within preserve boundaries. This small freshwater creek separates the preserve from the neighboring residential development and contains wetlands used by foraging wading birds. The preserve buffers and protects this creek, which flows north to the County’s Wiggins Pass. The preserve is also home to several gopher tortoises, a state species of special concern. Herbicide maintenance applications are applied as needed to control exotic weeds

and poison ivy. In 2019 and 2020 two plant restoration projects were done in two separate areas of the preserve to improve habitat. The management focus is on keeping the preserve free of exotic plants and trash, keeping the creek free of exotic plants, maintaining the trail, and monitoring the resident gopher tortoises. In 2020, a comprehensive plant inventory was completed by a local botanist. The 10-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in December 2020.

Dr. Robert H. Gore III – 4055 40th Ave SE, Naples, FL. The Dr. Robert H. Gore III Preserve



is a 171.2 acre, soon to be Category 2, intermediate use preserve acquired on November 19, 2018. The preserve is composed of 5 parcels acquired for a cost of \$735,000. It is located west of Desoto Blvd and north of Interstate I-75 between 36th Ave SE and 40th Ave SE in the North Golden Gate Estates in S33, T49S, R28E. The preserve is accessible via 40th Ave SE. The five parcels were offered by one owner who is the namesake of the preserve. There are 5 different plant communities which include several listed plant species. Wetlands exist onsite and provide habitat for wetland dependent

plants and wildlife. The preservation of these properties forms a contiguous conservation area connecting to a wildlife corridor that utilizes an underpass under Interstate 75 to connect through the greater Golden Gate Estates.

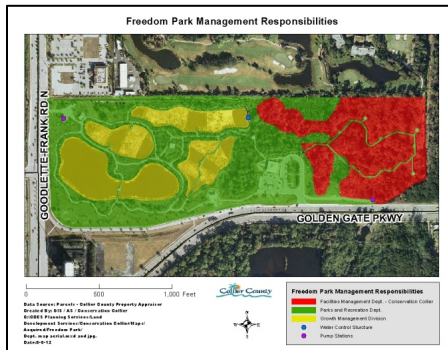
This preserve is scheduled to be opened to the public with trails, benches, and parking in 2021. Funding assistance from FWC contributed to the initial exotic removal, completed in 2019, that was matched by funding from the Conservation Collier management budget. Funding assistance from FWC for a follow-up maintenance treatment of the entire preserve has been secured for 2021. An initial public access trail, ¾ mile in length has been installed with future trail expansion planned following exotics removal.



Freedom Park – 1515 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples. This 12.5-acre Category 1, primary use preserve is part of the larger Freedom Park (50 acres total), formerly called the Gordon River Water Quality Park. After the County had acquired Freedom Park in 2004 under a Florida Communities



Trust (FCT) Grant, the eastern 12.5 acres were sold to the Conservation Collier Program for \$56,300.



Freedom Park is associated with the Gordon River Greenway Corridor, a 2-mile ecological trail corridor centrally located within the Naples-Collier County urban area. One overall Land Management Plan was developed and approved by the Board and FCT for management of both Freedom Park and

the Gordon River Greenway Park. The Freedom Park preserve portion is located on the eastern side of the park and encompasses natural wetlands. Responsibilities for this park are shared between the Parks and Recreation Department, Stormwater Department and Conservation Collier, as shown on the map. Conservation Collier benefits by the presence of onsite restrooms and parking maintained by Parks and Recreation. The Conservation Collier portion has a boardwalk on it that is also maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Habitat on the Freedom Park Preserve portion is freshwater tidal swamp with a small hammock containing a mix of wetland hardwood tree species and cabbage palms. Numerous wetland dependent bird species utilize the wetlands and listed wildlife observed includes tricolored herons, little blue herons, and snowy egrets.

This preserve is well used by the public. In June 2018, a people counter was installed to gauge visitation and to date estimates an average of 3,650 monthly visitors. Counts are approximations. Ongoing maintenance of multiple exotic species throughout the preserve continued through 2020.

Gordon River Greenway – 1596 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples. The 117.6-acre Gordon



River Greenway Park is a signature property and partnership project including Conservation Collier, Parks and Recreation, SW Florida Land Preservation Trust, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Naples Zoo, Naples Municipal Airport and City of Naples. Conservation Collier's portion is 50.51 acres at the south side of the Park. Joining with Parks and Recreation as one seamless project has enabled Conservation Collier to maintain the preserve qualities of the property, yet provide access via a paved trail and boardwalk, and access to parking, restrooms and other amenities that are not typically found on conservation lands. The Gordon River Greenway is a category 1 preserve, indicating it is a primary use preserve, easily accessible with public amenities and parking. There are over 2 miles of boardwalks and trails on the entire project with a third of a mile on the Conservation Collier portion. The initial 43-acre preserve property was acquired in April 2006 for a cost of \$2,085,900, or \$48,509 per acre. An additional 7.51 acres was acquired in November 2015

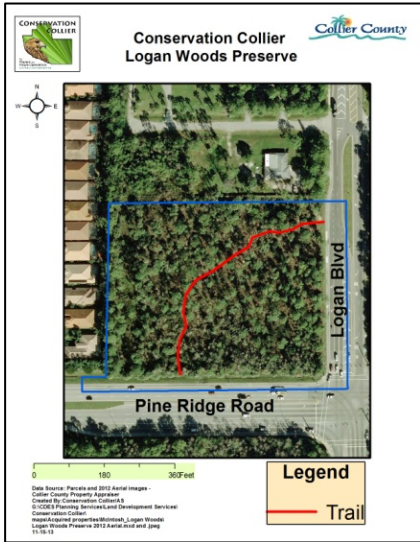
for \$400,000, or \$53,262 per acre. The development of trails, boardwalks and construction added \$1,755,496 for a total project cost of \$4,241,396. The Park was opened to the public in November 2014 and is extremely popular with residents and visitors.



Habitats seen from the trail on the Conservation Collier preserve portion include the Gordon River, wetland hardwoods, scrub and mangrove forest. The preserve is home to many species of native and protected wildlife including numerous species of wading birds, migrating bird species, alligators, gopher tortoises, and manatees. A 17-acre gopher tortoise preserve lies within the overall park, with a portion of that inside Conservation Collier's portion. The preserve also contains wetland mitigation areas Restoration plantings in upland areas where exotics were removed and plant signs along the trail were provided by Eagle Scout projects. FGCU work days provided restoration plantings in upland areas where exotics were removed, the creation of a mulch trail on the southern portion of the preserve, and screech owl and bluebird boxes. Numerous listed plant species have been observed within the preserve area and are being routinely monitored. Initial archeological surveys discovered an historic spoil pile on Conservation Collier lands but it did not qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Collection of artifacts or disturbance of archeological or historical sites is prohibited. Interpretive signage was installed in January 2021.

This preserve is well used by the public. In April 2018 a people counter was installed to gauge visitation. The average monthly visitor-ship through 2019 is estimated at 11,580 monthly. Counts are approximations. Exotic removal continued through 2020.

Logan Woods – 831 Logan Blvd, Naples. Logan Woods is a 6.78-acre Category 3 neighborhood preserve located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Logan Blvd. and Pine Ridge Road, about one mile east of I-75 at the Pine Ridge Raod exit. It was purchased in October 2005 for \$711,983, or \$105,012 per acre. The Transportation Department partnered with Conservation Collier to acquire future road Right Of Way both along Pine Ridge Road and Logan Blvd. Until this portion is needed for road expansion, it will be managed as preserve land. There is an approximately 700-foot mulched trail, bike rack, picnic table, bench, trash and recycle receptacles at the preserve. The preserve is used regularly by neighbors.



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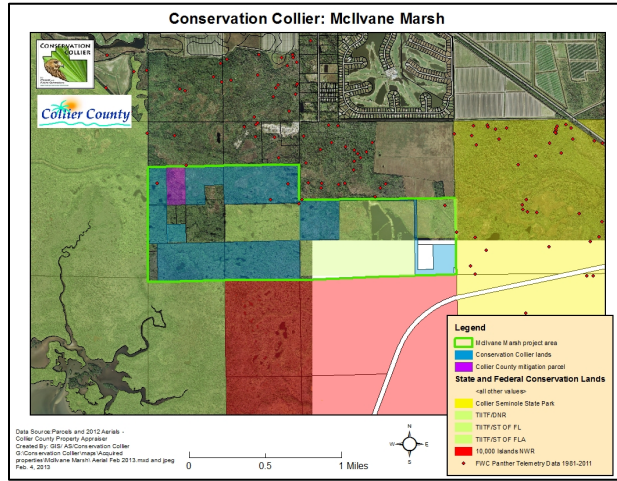
This preserve was acquired primarily as green space. The surrounding residential



community strongly supported its acquisition and made that support known to the Conservation Collier Committee and Commissioners. Their support was a critical factor in the decision to purchase this preserve. The vegetation community present is typical for Collier County – Cypress-pine-cabbage palm. It was severely infested with melaleuca and Brazilian pepper prior to acquisition. Extensive exotic removal was funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Invasive Plant Management. The University of Florida also removed melaleuca on a neighboring property to avoid reinfestation using their TAME Melaleuca Project. The primary goal for this preserve is to keep it clean and safe and to maintain the trail and picnic area for use by visitors. In 2019 and 2020, management was focused on exotic plant and trail maintenance. In 2020, a comprehensive plant inventory was completed by a local botanist. The 10-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in December 2020.

McIlvane Marsh - No address assigned. This Category 5, resource protection preserve is

located northeast of Marco Island and southwest of the intersection of U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) and County Road 92 (San Marco Road). The McIlvane Marsh is an 800-acre mangrove salt marsh with unpaved gated access from Curcie Road off CR 92. Conservation Collier owns 9 parcels totaling 378.87 acres in a mosaic pattern with the State of Florida (329 acres), Collier County Transportation Department (20 acres) and private owners (80 acres). It was acquired between May 2007 and January 2012 for a cost of \$2,804,791, or \$7,403 per acre. There is currently no public access. It has an approved

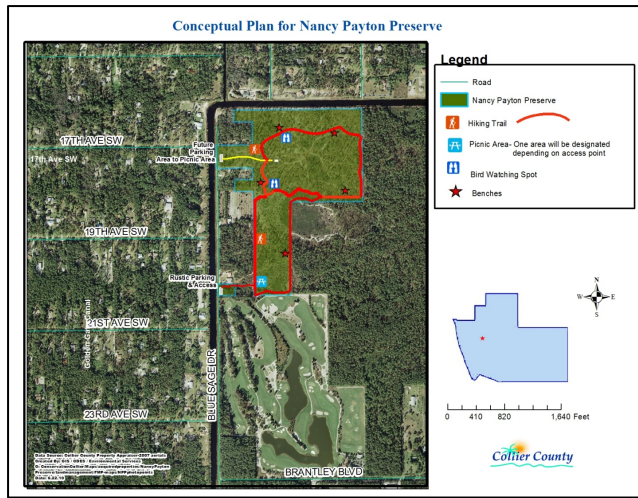


Interim Management Plan with the key objective to protect the habitat onsite, most recently updated on 1/26/21 (Agenda Item 16D3).

McIlvane Marsh is a tidally influenced wetland consisting primarily of open marsh and mangrove wetlands with small upland island areas on its northern and eastern edges. Approximately 15-acres of pine flatwoods uplands exist on the north side of the marsh and 6 acres of cleared uplands exist on the eastern edge of the marsh. Wildlife surveys should be developed and coordinated with surrounding conservation agencies to determine monitoring plan goals, techniques, and parameters. In 2020, initial exotics treatments were conducted on 134 acres in the northern units of the preserve, these units are scheduled to receive their first maintenance exotics treatment in spring 2021. Access to the preserve was greatly improved by mulching Brazilian pepper along the edges of Curcie Rd in 2020.



Nancy Payton – 1540 Blue Sage Drive, located east of Golden Gate City, taking White Blvd to 23rd St SW, turning south and then traveling west on Brantley Blvd. to Blue Sage Drive. This 71-acre Category 2, intermediate use preserve was acquired in sections between September 2005 and April 2010 for a total cost of \$2,507,250, or \$35,313 per acre. In December 2006, it was officially renamed the “Nancy Payton Preserve” by the Board of County Commissioners. Nancy Payton recently retired after working for many years for the Florida Wildlife Federation and has been very active in the preservation of this Collier County Belle Meade Area.



to 23rd St SW, turning south and then traveling west on Brantley Blvd. to Blue Sage Drive. This 71-acre Category 2, intermediate use preserve was acquired in sections between September 2005 and April 2010 for a total cost of \$2,507,250, or \$35,313 per acre. In December 2006, it was officially renamed the “Nancy Payton Preserve” by the Board of County Commissioners. Nancy Payton recently retired after working for many years for the Florida Wildlife Federation and has been very active in the preservation of this Collier County Belle Meade Area.

Management of this preserve balances resource restoration and protection with natural resource-based recreational and educational use. This preserve is covered under a US Fish and Wildlife Service “Safe Harbor Agreement” to implement management actions that will provide a net conservation benefit for the Red Cockaded woodpecker (Federal-E). The preserve opened to the public in May 2015. In 2020, the Collier County Transportation Department created a Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) to start maintaining and grading Blue Sage Drive on an annual basis. Conservation Collier will contribute to this annual cost based on the Board approved millage rate. Conservation Collier’s share is estimated to cost approximately \$2,000 per year. Payments towards the MSTU by Conservation Collier started in October 2020. The maintenance of the road will greatly improve the ability for the public to access the preserve.



The public can access this site and educational tours for summer camps and other groups have been conducted at the site. A nature trail, benches, picnic tables, and educational interpretive signs have been provided for visitors, with contributions by Eagle Scouts. The preserve is used by many hikers and horseback riders on a regular basis.

This preserve has faced problems with ATV riders since 2016. Staff continues to work with the CCSO and FWC law enforcement to attempt to curb the activity. In 2019 and 2020, management was focused on exotic plant and trail maintenance. In 2020, a comprehensive plant inventory was completed by a local botanist. The 10-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in September 2020.

Otter Mound – 1831 Addison Court, Marco Island.



Otter Mound Preserve is a 2.46-acre Category 2, intermediate use urban preserve located in southwestern Collier County in a residential area of Marco Island. The preserve was acquired between 2004 and 2007 for \$2,064,976, or \$839,421 per acre. The entire preserve site is a Calusa shell mound (c. 700 A.D.-1200 A.D.) that contains artifacts of both archaeological and historical significance.



Access to the preserve is from Osceola Court and Addison Court - with 3-space public parking available including handicapped space at the entrance.

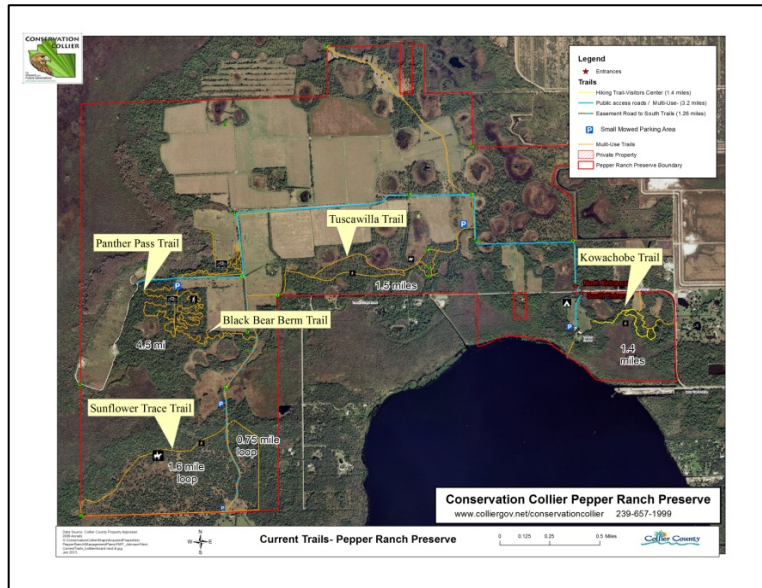
Otter Mound Preserve was purchased because it contains tropical hardwood hammock habitat, a priority habitat designated by the Conservation Collier Ordinance (2007-65, as amended, Section 10.1.a.). In addition, the preserve contains the following features that make it an important archaeological and historical site: undisturbed Calusa shell mounds, a historic pioneer structure (outhouse), and shell terracing that runs along the northern and western sections of the property. The location of the preserve in the urban area provides an opportunity for citizens, visitors, and school-age children to view this habitat type and some Island history without traveling far.

Otter Mound Preserve is well used by Marco Island residents and visitors including numerous local bike tours, neighbors who routinely walk the preserve and students and other local groups who gather for educational programs given by staff. The City of Marco Island partners with Conservation Collier to maintain the Right of Way in front of the preserve.



General trail maintenance by staff and volunteer groups (FGCU and the Sunrise Rotary of Marco Island), including hand pulling and chemical applications for exotics by staff, was ongoing through 2020. Visitation is high at this preserve, as local tour operations take their visitors here and the Marco Island Museum hands out brochures and recommends visitation to its visitors.

Pepper Ranch – 6315 Pepper Road, Immokalee.



Pepper Ranch Preserve, a Category 1 preserve located west of the town of Immokalee and north of Lake Trafford, is the largest of the Conservation Collier Preserves at 2,512 acres. It was acquired in February 2009 for \$32,525,080, or \$12,948 per acre. The perception continues to exist that Conservation Collier paid too much for the property, although it was actually some of the least expensive land (per acre) that was acquired by the Program – on par with lots acquired in North Golden Gate Estates.

Since its acquisition, staff has been working to remove exotic plant species, document wildlife and plants, develop trails, permit the ranch for mitigation, and provide public amenities. Currently there are approximately 15 miles of trails for use by hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders. A new cattle lease was approved in September 2019, primarily to maintain pasture areas and for security purposes, which also provides revenue of \$41,200 per year. A limited hunt program provides opportunities for young hunters to learn the skill and for County residents to hunt hog, a pest animal that damages habitat with its rooting, and some deer and turkey, if population surveys allow. The hunt program pays for itself with fees.



There is an active oil operation on the western side in 2 quarter sections (330 acres) where there is one operating and two non-operating wells. The producing well pulls approximately 80 barrels of oil daily. While most of the oil, gas and mineral rights on the preserve are owned by Collier County, the 2 quarter-sections have had the rights severed and are owned by a private entity and leased to an operator - Hendry Energy Services. The oil company maintains the lime rock ranch road.

A US Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation Bank exists within Pepper Ranch Preserve. Through the Conservation bank, Conservation Collier sells Panther Habitat Units (PHUs) to County Departments needing panther mitigation credits. A total of 8,669 PHUs were banked for development of future County projects at a cost savings of \$1,077,123.25. There are currently 6,141.41 PHUs remaining in the Conservation Bank.

Staff is also working with the Lake Trafford Management Team, a multi-agency group seeking to address water quality issues in Lake Trafford. Conservation Collier has collaborated with UF/IFAS on a project to redefine the watershed boundaries for Lake Trafford to determine what inputs may be affecting the lake’s water quality. That project was completed in December 2016, and the data will be used to inform future restoration of the preserve. It is anticipated that restoration activities

on the preserve will primarily involve blocking and filling ditches that lead into Lake Trafford with adjacent berm material.

The preserve boasts 10 distinct types of natural plant communities, including forests, hammocks, flatwoods, prairies, marshes, swamps, strands, and sloughs. Four hundred and fifteen (415) plant species have been recorded at the preserve. Fifty-two (52) bird species have been documented. with ten (10) listed species, including Audubon’s crested caracara, bald eagle, Florida sandhill crane, limpkin, roseate spoonbill, and wood stork.



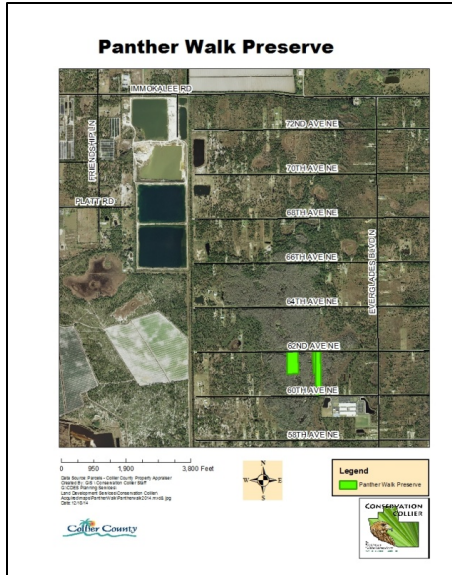
One of the major reasons to protect habitat is to protect the species that use it. The entire area of the ranch is included within the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission-designated Primary Panther Habitat. Panthers are routinely seen and recorded on wildlife cameras at the preserve. Other wildlife on the ranch includes Florida black bears, bobcats, big cypress fox squirrels, coyotes, deer, wild hogs, alligators, and snakes.

Public activities at the Preserve include festivals and guided hikes. In October 2019, a sunflower viewing weekend event was held for the public. Over 2,200 people attended. In 2020, a sunflower viewing was not offered due to Covid-19 and a below average bloom.

Management activities at the preserve between 2019 and 2020 included vegetation and wildlife monitoring, exotic plant removal, trail maintenance, assisting with youth hunts and leading general hunts, general camping, and Eagle Scout construction projects. A five-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in January 2019.

An RV pad and hookup were constructed in the campground in 2020. A volunteer campground host couple made residence in November 2020 after a Camp Host Agreement was approved by the Board in October 2020.





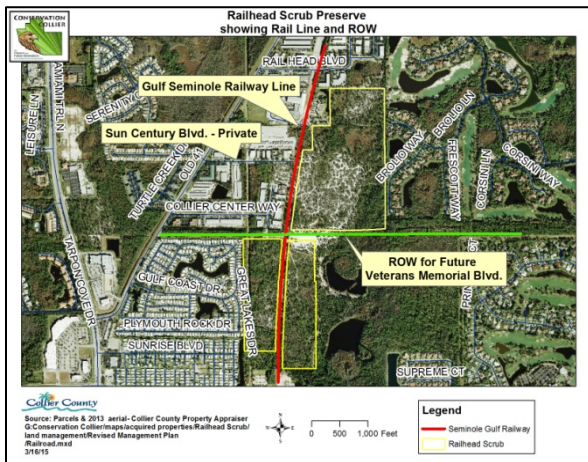
Panther Walk – 2845 60th Ave NE, Golden Gate Estates. The preserve is located west of Everglades Blvd., north of Oil Well Road, and extends between 60th Ave and 62nd Ave NE in North Golden Gate Estates in S31 T 47 R28. This preserve consists of 10.69 acres acquired between 2007 and 2014, with 5.00 acres of that a donation accepted under the Land Development Code off-site vegetation retention provision (LDC 3.05.07, H.1.f. iii. b.) and another 1.14-acres accepted as a straight donation. The cost for the purchased portions of the preserve (4.55 acres) was \$93,130, or \$20,468 per acre. In 2009, the adjacent Estates Elementary School held a preserve naming contest and the winning name of “Panther Walk Preserve” was chosen by a student and was approved by the Board. This is a Category 4, seasonal use preserve. A seasonally accessible trail allows visitors to cross the property between 60th and 62nd Aves NE.

Native plant communities within the preserve include high quality cypress wetlands, which are part of a larger wetland slough system known as the Horsepen Strand. To date, 64 plant species have been recorded on the preserve. Two listed plant species have been documented and the preserve contains habitat used by listed species including Florida sandhill cranes, wood storks, Florida panthers and mangrove fox squirrels.



In addition to its Estates zoning, this parcel is subject to the Golden Gate Area Master Plan, which has as Objective 1.3 to protect and preserve valuable natural resources.

Railhead Scrub – 14510 Old US 41, North Naples. Railhead Scrub Preserve is



an approximately 135-acre natural area located in the northwest corner of Collier County, south of the Railhead Industrial Park and east of Old US 41. One of the first large Program purchases, eighty acres of the preserve were acquired in July 2004 for \$21,967,050, or \$274,588 per acre. The remaining 55 acres were acquired in June 2007 for \$10,650,000, or \$293.636 per acre. Currently Railhead Scrub Preserve is a Category 5 (Resource Protection/Restoration) preserve and will remain so until acceptable access can be secured. The preserve contains approximately 117 acres of upland habitat, primarily pine flatwoods and xeric oak scrub/scrubby flatwoods, and 18 acres of wetland habitat including cypress and hydric pine flatwoods. Xeric oak scrub is the second-most preferred habitat type

identified in the Conservation Collier Ordinance (2007-65, as amended, Section 10.1.a.). This is some of the last undeveloped xeric oak scrub in Collier County, including less than 200 acres protected in Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and another 78 acres protected by the Hamilton Harbor PUD. The previous owners of the parcel had plans to develop it into an industrial park before it was acquired.

Public access to this site has been limited. When the first part of this preserve was acquired, in 2004, the County Transportation Department had acquired Right of Way (ROW) and had planned to develop a County road along the south side of the preserve – called Veterans Memorial Blvd. When the second portion of the preserve was acquired in 2007, the ROW bisected the north and south sides of the preserve. Veterans Memorial Blvd. was the planned access point for parking and preserve access; however, after the 2004 acquisition, Veterans Memorial Blvd. was delayed, first to the County’s 2017 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and then to the 2035 LRTP. Staff attempted to create a small parking area off the east side of Veterans’ Memorial Blvd. and utilize an existing 1-mile trail westward along the ROW for hikers to access the preserve, but persons trespassing with ATVs along the ROW to get to interior recreational areas damaged the gate and made the trail too dangerous for hikers.

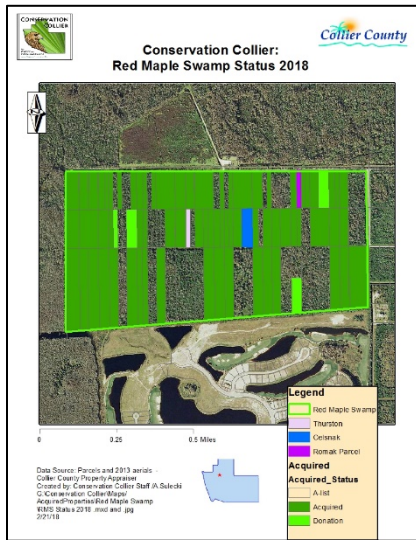


Along the western side of the northern portion and bisecting the southern side down the center, there is a railroad owned by CSX Railroad and leased to Seminole Gulf Railway (see red line on first Railhead map shown). This rail line presents an obstacle to public access from the west. For the public to cross it, the County would be required to bring the crossing up to federal railroad crossing standard, including grade elevation changes and installation of a railroad crossing signal, and to lease the crossing with annual fees, both of which are cost prohibitive. A June 2018 conversation with Seminole Railway management resulted in them advising they are no longer interested in providing pedestrian crosswalks. Additionally, the access road from Old US 41, Sun Century Blvd., is a privately maintained roadway. There is no visitor parking along this road. In 2019, staff arranged limited access through the adjoining Railhead commercial development and will partner with Florida Gulf Coast University to facilitate herpetological surveys, with all data provided to Conservation Collier.

In 2019 and 2020, breeches at the gates and along the fences continued. Trucks and ATVs continue to damage fences and trespass at the preserve. Police are called, but trespassers are generally gone by the time deputies get there. Camera installation and re-positioning continues despite numerous attempts to damage and dislodge cameras. Preserve maintenance, including exotic abatement, continues.



Red Maple Swamp – No address assigned. This Category 5 (currently) preserve is one of



two formally designated multi-parcel projects. This type of project has proved challenging for the Program. Challenges include fluctuating values ranging from \$7,500 to \$15,000 per acre over multiple years of buying, unwilling sellers within the project boundary, and lack of assurance that in-holding parcels can be acquired in the future - a particular challenge of the willing-seller environment. The project covers the entirety of North Golden Gate Estates Unit 53, located north of the Twin Eagles PUD and west of the County Fairgrounds. Between 2004 and 2018, approx. 216 acres out of a total of 305 (71%) were acquired. In the map, acquired parcels are shown as dark green, and donation parcels in pink. In 2020 a 2.5-acre parcel located south 41st Ave NW of was donated.

The most recent valuation for both multi-parcel projects was performed in July 2017 returning an average value of \$5,570 per acre. This is significantly lower than a 2008 appraisal of \$15,842 per acre, and a 2009 appraisal of \$7,500 per acre but higher than a 2016 appraisal value of \$3,650 per acre. Staff plans to do a project-wide appraisal in 2021 to send letters to property owners making offers.

Within NGGE Unit 53, exotic removals have been ongoing since 2013. State agency funding assistance will be applied to maintenance exotics treatments scheduled for spring 2021 in all three management units.

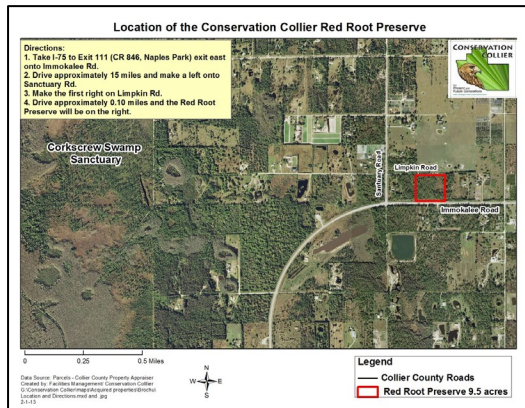
There is no current public access; however, the area is easily accessible via 41st Ave NW and Shady Hollow Blvd. West. The parking lot and trail access for SFWMD’s Bird Rookery Swamp and its 12 miles of hiking trails are located along Shady Hollow Blvd. West. Once enough parcels are acquired to allow for comprehensive management, staff will evaluate creating trails that can be linked up with Bird Rookery Swamp trails.



During 2019-2020, routine maintenance consisted of site inspections and continued exotic species management over 3 management units totaling 118 acres.

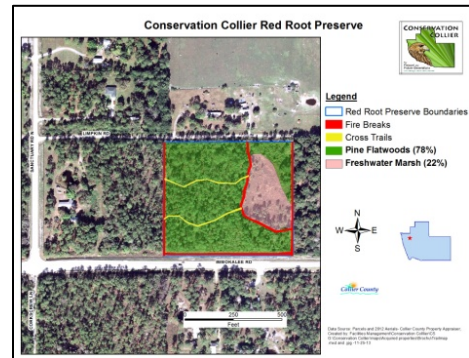
Redroot – 1330 Limpkin Road, Big Corkscrew Island Community. This 9.26- acre, Category

2, intermediate use preserve was acquired in June 2006 for \$440,000, or \$47,516 per acre. The parcel is located along Immokalee Road just east of the turn off on Sanctuary Road to get to the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. The access for the parcel is along Limpkin Road, which is the first right turn off Sanctuary Road. The entire cost of the parcel was \$460,000. The Public Utilities Department partnered with Conservation Collier for \$20,000 to acquire a 15,000 square foot (150' X 100') at the northwest corner for a future well site.



When the well site is constructed, visitors will be able to use a small parking area which will be placed on the well site. Currently, parking for visitors is along Limpkin Road.

There is a little over half a mile of trails on the property, which are often used by horseback riders. This preserve was primarily acquired to establish a conservation presence along Immokalee Road in the developing urban fringe. There are two types of vegetation communities existing at the preserve: pine flat wood and freshwater marsh. The parcel lies within FWC priority 2 panther



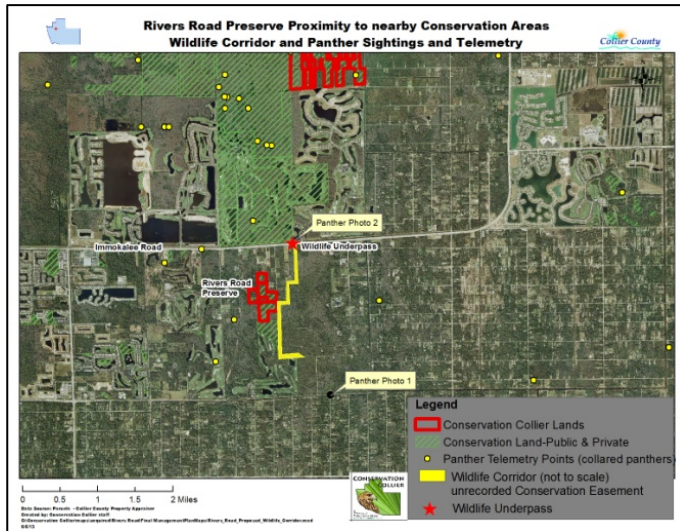
habitat. Some of the adjacent properties are cleared and developed but there still exists an intact ecological link with Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. This habitat requires prescribed fire. Staff conducted a prescribed fire in 2011 and completed a second one in December 2016, improving the habitat. Burned areas have regenerated and overall maintenance of trails continues.



Exotic plant maintenance continues on an annual basis. In 2020, a comprehensive plant inventory was completed by a local botanist. The 10-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in December 2020.

Rivers Road – 2021 Rivers Road, Naples, FL. Rivers Road Preserve is a 76.74-acre Category

2, intermediate use preserve acquired in 10 parcels between 2008 and 2010 for a total cost of \$5,128,300, or \$66,826 per acre. It is located south of Immokalee Road, between and accessible by private roads, Rivers Road and Moulder Road, 2.5 miles east of Collier Blvd. (CR 951) in S30 T48 R27.



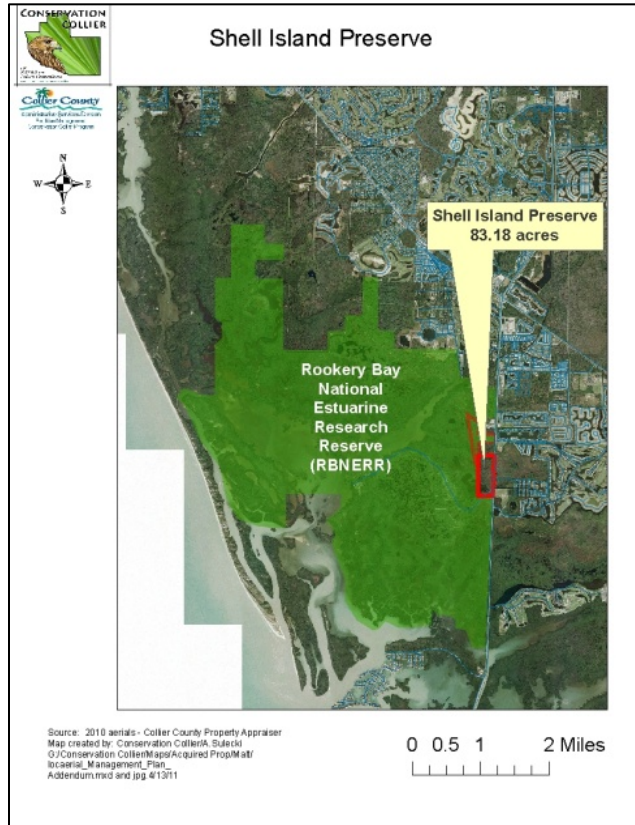
The 10 parcels were offered together by 6 different owners. There are 9 different plant communities which include several listed plant species. Wetlands exist onsite and provide habitat for wetland dependent plants and wildlife. The preservation of

these properties forms a contiguous conservation area connecting to a wildlife corridor that utilizes an underpass under Immokalee Road to connect through Twin Eagles Development with the 60,000 acres of Conservation lands including the Bird Rookery Swamp and the Corkscrew Marsh complex.

This preserve opened to the public with trails, picnic tables, and parking May 25, 2016. Fire lines and trails have been put in. Trail maintenance and exotic plant treatment continue on an annual basis. Eagle Scout projects have contributed a picnic table, benches, and a kiosk to the preserve. Trails at this preserve are used by hikers, trail runners, and horseback riders. A five-year update to the Final Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board in January 2020.



Shell Island – No address assigned. This 112-acre Category 5, resource protection/restoration



preserve was acquired in 2006 and expanded in 2019. The first 83.18-acre parcel was acquired in 2006 for a cost of \$4,750,000, or \$57,105 per acre. The original sales price was \$4,875,000 and Conservation Collier was unable to pay that as it was above appraised value. The Conservancy of Southwest Florida contributed \$125,000 above what Conservation Collier was able to pay to meet the owner’s price. The purchase price was higher than expected due to a 1989 Settlement Agreement between Collier County and the owner (OR BK 1488 PG 777) which the owner believed guaranteed him between 3 and 4 units per acre. A second 28.7-acre parcel that adjoined the preserve to the north was acquired in September 2019 for \$860,000, or \$29,965 per acre.

These parcels fulfilled Program qualifications by satisfying all applicable screening criteria. It is an example of one of the unique and endangered plant communities listed as

preferred by the Conservation Collier Ordinance (tidal freshwater marsh). The nearly pristine marsh habitat is considered an outstanding aesthetic feature.

This parcel provides habitat for wetland dependent species, water quality enhancement for the adjacent Rookery Bay, an Outstanding Florida Water, and will provide on-site attenuation of floodwaters. Wildlife includes wood stork (Federal Endangered (E), white ibis (State–SSC), snowy egret (State– Species of Special Concern (SSC)), tricolored heron (State-SSC), little blue



heron (State-SSC), and American alligator (Federally threatened due to similarity of appearance to crocodiles). A number of listed plant species were also observed on the property, including leather fern (Federal E) and several listed Tillandsia (Bromeliad) species. Restoration potential is high, as the only major restoration project would be to remove the old roadbed crossing the property.

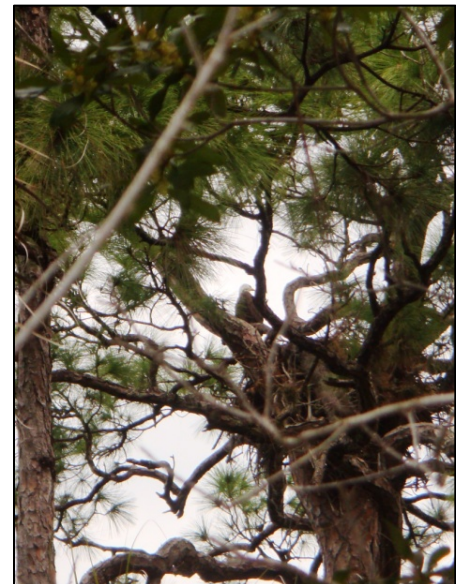
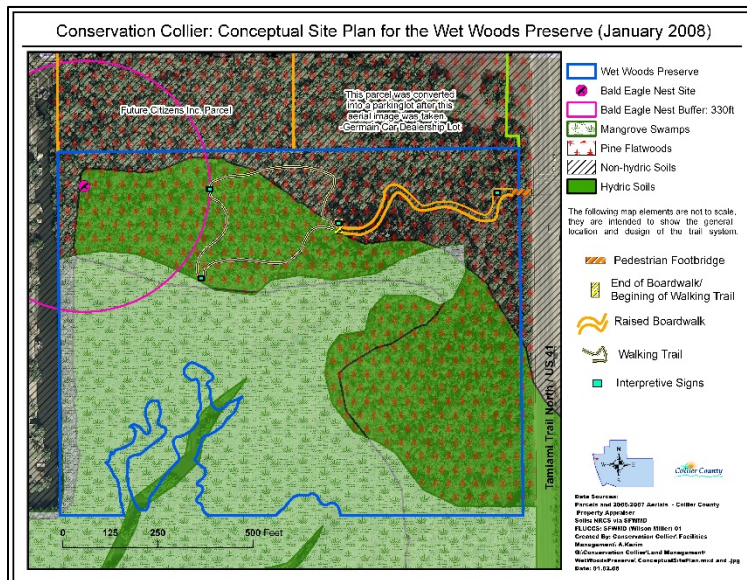
Legal and physical access exists from C.R. 951 on the east boundary, and from Shell Island Road. There is no vehicle access from C.R. 951, but there is access via Shell

Island Road, which cuts diagonally across the southeast corner of the property. Shell Island Road

is a part of this parcel but also provides access to state and Conservancy-owned lands to the west and is used by the public to access Rookery Bay for fishing and kayaking at the end of Shell Island Road. This parcel is directly adjoining the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (RBNERR) and serves to buffer and protect it from the effects of development on neighboring properties. The parcel is almost entirely wetlands, except for the approximately 4 acres of old raised roadbed (CR 22). This parcel has been utilized by Florida Gulf Coast University as a “wetland lab,” for student research.

While it remains remarkably clean, the preserve continues to be monitored for exotic re-growth. Providing public access to this preserve would involve building a boardwalk, as wetland soils are not appropriate for developing trails. Because a public boardwalk that is accessible from Shell Island Road exists approximately 0.5 miles west of the preserve and contains an observation platform that overlooks a lake that is part of the preserve, creation of an additional boardwalk is not necessary.

Wet Woods – 12815 Tamiami Trail N, Naples.



The preserve is a 26.77-acre natural area located within the urban boundary of Collier County in the northwest corner, immediately west of U.S. Highway 41 and south of Wiggins Pass Road in S16 T48 R25. It is being maintained as a Category 5 preserve until public access can be established.

This preserve was acquired in 2005 for \$2,160,000, or \$80,687 per acre. It was named Wet Woods Preserve by local school children, a name approved by the Board, in December 2006. The preserve contains various native plant communities including pine flatwoods, mangrove forests, and both saltwater and freshwater wetlands, with about 58% being wetlands and 42% uplands.

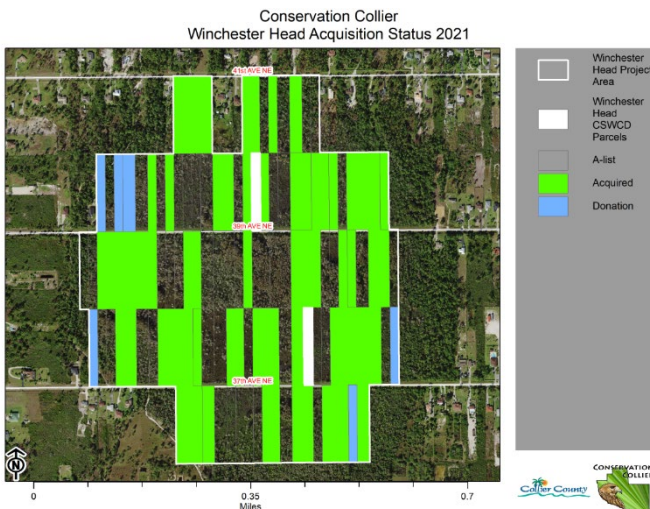
To date, 132 plant species have been recorded at the preserve. Of these, 110 (83%) are native and 22 (17%) are exotic. Seven listed plant species have been recorded at the preserve. Exotic species are treated annually.

Forty-four bird species, including many protected by the State of Florida and the Federal government, have been recorded on the property. A bald eagle nest that regularly fledges young is in the flatwoods portion.

Currently, there is no sanctioned public use of the site. The closest public road to the property is US Hwy 41 (Tamiami Trail North). A drainage ditch running north-south is located on the eastern edge of the property and separates the preserve from US Hwy 41. This ditch makes the preserve virtually inaccessible currently from US 41.

Exotic maintenance continued in 2019 and 2020. To provide public access, there would need to be parking and a boardwalk. Staff has looked for suitable parking solutions but has not found one yet and plans for a boardwalk in 2008 were halted following the economic downturn.

Winchester Head Multi-parcel Project – No address assigned. This preserve is one of



two formally designated multi-parcel projects and is currently considered a Category 5, resource protection/restoration preserve. Multiparcel projects have proved challenging for the Program. Challenges include higher prices for smaller lots, fluctuating values over multiple years of buying, unwilling sellers within the project boundary, and lack of assurance that in-holding parcels can be acquired in the future - a particular challenge of the willing-seller environment. The project covers a portion of NGGE Units 62 and 65. Between 2004 and 2020, approximately 93.6 acres out of

a total of 158.67 (59%) were acquired. In the map, acquired parcels are shown as bright green, targeted parcels with no color, donations as light blue, purple as those properties acquired during 2019-2020 and white as properties owned by the Collier Soil and Water Conservation District.

Two Vacant Land Market Analyses for both multi-parcel projects (and including Horsepen Strand) were contracted by the County’s Appraiser in July 2017. In earlier appraisals, property values have fluctuated. In 2008, values were \$16,375 per acre. In 2009, values dropped to \$10,000 per acre. In 2016, values were at \$13,500 per acre. The most recent 2017 Market Analysis reached an averaged value of \$12,500 per acre. Staff plans to have a project-wide appraisal done in 2021 to send letters to property owners making offers.

Conservation Collier has acquired eight parcels as donations under the Land Development Code off-site vegetation retention provision (LDC 3.05.07, H.1.f. iii. (b) in this area (shown in purple on the map). Exotic maintenance is being done on donation parcels to maintain them in the condition they were donated in. There is no current public access; however, the area is easily accessible via 2 paved County roads, 37th and 39th Ave NE. The project parcels are wetland and only accessible during dry season. Staff has continued to monitor the area and abate significant exotic maintenance issues as they occur.

5. Program Financial Status

Conservation Collier spent approximately \$107,500,000 on properties between 2003 and 2020, acquiring and managing 4,345 acres in 21 locations throughout Collier County. Acquisition and management funds were generated annually for 10 years from an ad valorem property tax of up to .25 mil, or \$25 for each \$100,000 in taxable property value for property owners in Collier County. Additional income was derived from investment and banking interest, grants, cattle leases, hunt fees, and the sale of Panther Habitat Units (PHUs). In March 2013, at the ten-year mark, the ad valorem tax levy authorization expired.

As taxes were collected, 15% of the net levy went into the Land Management Trust Fund (174) and 85% went into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (172). On May 25, 2010 (Agenda item 16.E.2), the Board of County Commissioners authorized a transfer of up to an additional \$10.3 million, above the ordinance mandated 15% of ad valorem taxes, from the “Land Acquisition Fund” to the “Land Management Fund” during FY2011 – FY2013 to ensure land management funding in perpetuity. On April 12, 2011 (Agenda Item 10F) the Board authorized early repayment of Bond Series 2008. Bond Series 2004 and 2008 were retired in FY 2013.

The Conservation Collier Program utilizes five active funds (172, 174, 179, 673, and 674,) to manage Program financial resources and has 1 inactive fund - 272. Fund 172, the Land Acquisition Fund, is used to account for property acquisition activity. Fund 174, the Land Maintenance Trust Fund, is the primary Conservation Collier operating and maintenance fund. This fund also contains long-term Conservation Collier Maintenance Trust reserves. Significant infrastructure improvements are managed through the Conservation Collier Capital Improvement Fund 179. Fund 673 was created in October 2018 to hold funds for the Pepper Ranch Conservation Bank. Pledged Caracara Preserve endowment funds and Caracara Preserve maintenance costs are accounted for in Caracara Preserve Trust Fund 674. Fund 272 was associated with a bond that has been paid and is not currently in use.

Sustained low interest rates and resulting low earnings on Conservation Collier Trust Funds are an ongoing financial concern. In FY14 and FY15, staff addressed this matter with the Board. Using conservative projections, a Ten-Year Financial Plan was developed which focused on reducing and containing expenditures, establishing a combined Conservation Collier Program minimum fund balance of \$32,000,000. FY 2018 saw an increase in expenditures associated with ramping up for new acquisitions per Board direction to begin Acquisition Cycle 9 using management reserves as funding. One additional land manager (Environmental Specialist) was hired in 2018 to take over the land management load being handled by the Program coordinator, so the coordinator could focus on acquisitions. Depending on what properties are finally approved for acquisition, another land manager may also be needed. The following tables show Conservation Collier expenditures during FY19 – FY20.

Looking forward the Program will have a new funding source of an ad valorem property tax of up to .25 mil for 10 years. Section 6.1.e. of the Ordinance provides that up to seventy-five percent (75%) of all revenues collected for Conservation Collier may be used for acquisition. Section 7.2.a. of the Ordinance provides that management funds shall be no less than twenty-five percent (25%) of revenues collected in one year.

Staff advised with the Referendum Ballot language agenda item 11.A. on January 28, 2020 that if the referendum were to pass, the CCLAAC has proposed that up to ten percent (10%) of the acquisition funding be available for use for amenities on an annual basis to improve access to existing and future Conservation Collier preserves. Amenities may include boardwalks, facilities, parking lots, and interpretive staff. This will be evaluated on an annual basis during the Board's review of the annual budget. This would result in an allocation of a minimum of sixty-five percent (65%) for acquisition, twenty-five percent (25%) for maintenance and a maximum of ten percent (10%) for access improvements.

In order to allow for longevity of management of the preserves, the end goal after the next phase of acquisition is to maintain annual operating costs that are equal to or less than annual revenue including interest, leases, and other revenue.

Table(s) 4 – Summary of Conservation Collier Financial Activity for FY19 and FY20

FY2020

Conservation Collier
 FY 20 Budget to Actual Comparison
 Funds 172, 174, 179, 673, 674

Expenditures by Cat.	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Personal Services	426,100	427,100	-	395,923	92.7%
Operating expenses	503,300	469,492	22,572	355,700	80.6%
Capital Outlay	53,800	215,002	77,798	94,246	80.0%
Land Acquisitions	147,000	1,741,000	-	1,540,369	88.5%
Transfers	369,600	1,403,700	-	-	0.0%
Reserves	31,487,400	30,453,300	-	-	0.0%
Expense Total	32,987,200	34,709,594	100,370	2,386,238	6.9%

Sources	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Misc. Rev.	(49,000)	(49,000)	-	(62,724)	128.0%
PHU Sales	-	-	-	(559,298)	n/a
Interest (without accrual)	(330,400)	(330,400)	-	(600,847)	181.9%
Off-Site Preserve Contr.	(3,000)	(3,000)	-	-	0.0%
Carry Forward	(32,255,000)	(32,953,294)	-	-	0.0%
Transfers	(369,600)	(1,393,700)	-	-	0.0%
Revenue Res.	19,800	19,800	-	-	0.0%
Revenue Total	(32,987,200)	(34,709,594)	-	(1,222,869)	3.5%

Expenditures by Function	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Admin	98,200	101,443	-	100,091	98.7%
Land Acquisitions	235,700	1,827,457	-	1,623,518	88.8%
Preserve Mgt	745,000	779,000	22,572	622,480	82.8%
Capital Improvements	51,300	154,694	77,798	40,150	76.2%
Expense Total	1,130,200	2,862,594	100,370	2,386,238	83.4%

FY2019

Conservation Collier
 FY 19 Budget to Actual Comparison
 Funds 172, 174, 179, 673, 674

Expenditures by Cat.	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Personal Services	442,400	442,400	-	418,319	94.6%
Operating expenses	528,700	723,409	24,000	320,697	47.6%
Capital Outlay	61,500	148,108	89,348	44,056	90.1%
Land Acquisitions	126,000	2,128,800	-	1,718,734	80.7%
Transfers	186,400	1,314,000	-	-	0.0%
Reserves	32,971,800	31,902,500	-	-	0.0%
Expense Total	34,316,800	36,659,217	113,348	2,501,806	6.8%

Sources	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Misc. Rev.	(26,700)	(26,700)	-	(38,838)	145.5%
PHU Sales	-	-	-	(211,464)	n/a
Interest (without accrual)	(322,800)	(322,800)	-	(763,284)	236.5%
Off-Site Preserve Contr.	(300,000)	(300,000)	-	(18,490)	6.2%
Carry Forward	(33,513,400)	(34,728,217)	-	-	0.0%
Transfers	(186,400)	(1,314,000)	-	-	0.0%
Revenue Res.	32,500	32,500	-	-	0.0%
Revenue Total	(34,316,800)	(36,659,217)	-	(1,032,076)	2.8%

Expenditures by Function	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Admin	109,800	124,459	-	109,606	88.1%
Land Acquisitions	220,500	2,223,300	-	1,801,762	81.0%
Preserve Mgt	768,800	974,358	24,000	573,232	61.3%
Capital Improvements	59,500	120,600	89,348	17,206	88.4%
Expense Total	1,158,600	3,442,717	113,348	2,501,806	72.7%

6. Conservation Collier Programs, Events, and Community/Educational Outreach

Pepper Ranch Hunt Program

Two separate hunt programs exist at Pepper Ranch Preserve - a public hunt program that is open to all Collier County residents, regardless of age, and an FWC sponsored youth hunt program that is open to children aged 12-17 (12-15 for youth turkey hunts). Although children from Collier County are given first choice of youth hunt participation, youth hunts are open to all Florida youths if openings cannot be filled by Collier County residents. Hogs are considered a nuisance species and are hunted without limit. Staff conducts annual deer surveys to set quotas.

2018-2019 Hunt Season:

A total of 8 hunts were conducted at Pepper Ranch Preserve during the 2018-2019 hunting season, starting in October 2018: 5 public and 3 youth hunts. Three (3) of the public hunts were hog hunts, 1 for deer and 1 for turkey. Youth hunts included 1 hog, 1 deer and 1 turkey hunt. Eighty-nine (89) applications were received for the hunting season, with 37 hunter permits issued. A total of 11 hogs, 1 male deer, 3 female deer, and 0 turkeys were harvested during the 2018-2019 hunting season.

2019-2020 Hunt Season:

A total of 6 hunts were conducted at Pepper Ranch Preserve during the 2018-2019 hunting season, starting in October 2019: 4 public and 2 youth hunts. One public hog hunt in April of 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 and reduced hunter interest. Two (2) of the public hunts were hog hunts, 1 for deer and 1 for turkey. Youth hunts included 1 hog and 1 turkey hunt. One hundred and thirty-five (135) applications were received for the public hunting season, with 35 hunter permits issued. A total of 4 hogs, 1 male deer, and 6 turkey were harvested during the 2019-2020 hunting season.

2020-2021 Hunt Season

A total of 8 hunts are scheduled at Pepper Ranch Preserve during the 2020-2021 hunting season, which is still ongoing including 5 public and 3 youth hunts. Three (3) of the public hunts are hog hunts, 1 for deer and 1 for turkey. Youth hunts included 1 hog hunt, 1 deer hunt, and 1 turkey hunt. One hundred and thirty-two (132) applications were received for the public hunting season. So far, 13 hunter permits have been issued. A total of 3 deer, 3 turkey, and zero hog have been harvested to date from the public deer hunt, youth deer hunt, public turkey hunt, youth turkey hunt, public hog hunts, and youth hog hunt that have taken place during the 2020-2021 hunting season.

Caracara Prairie Preserve Hunt Program

Caracara Prairie Preserve is established as part the Corkscrew Marsh Unit of the CREW Wildlife Environmental Area (WEA). This allows for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission regulated public hunting for hog and spring turkey to occur within Caracara Prairie Preserve as part of the CREW Corkscrew Marsh Unit.

FWC manages these hunts and data is captured for the entire WEA without separating out the Caracara Prairie harvest data from the rest of the Corkscrew Marsh Unit, but in speaking to FWC

staff, 1 turkey was harvested in the 2018-2019 hunt season; 7 turkey, 3 hog, 1 gray squirrel, and 1 rabbit in the 2019-2020 hunt season; and to date 1 male hog and 1 rabbit have been harvested in the ongoing 2020-2021 hunt season.

Pepper Ranch Sunflower Viewing – The Sunflower Viewing Weekend was an event hosted by Conservation Collier and the Parks and Recreation Department at the Pepper Ranch Preserve in 2019. Visitors were invited to enter the preserve October 11-13, 2019 in advance of opening for the season in November. Because the preserve is only open seasonally due to the water levels, staff opened the preserve for visitors to drive through to see the sunflowers this one weekend. The weekend viewing was highly successful with 2,200 visitors driving through the 3 days the preserve was open. In 2020, due to fewer sunflower blooms, wet conditions at the ranch, and COVID 19, a sunflower viewing weekend was not made available to the public. If conditions allow for sunflower viewing in 2021, a public viewing weekend will be made available.

Social Media

Conservation Collier staff maintain a Facebook page titled “Conservation Collier” that was created in 2011. Conservation Collier staff created an Instagram account in April of 2019 with the handle “conservation.collier.” As of January 2021, the Conservation Collier Facebook page has 8,945 followers and the Conservation Collier Instagram Account has 1,019. Staff post content on both sites related to environmental education, preserve awareness, volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events.

Conservation Collier maintains a website within the Collier County website at www.conservationcollier.com. Visitors can find information about preserves, preserve locations, amenities, contact information for staff, volunteering information, links to hiking information, and preserve public access opportunities. Land Management Plans, forms, all meeting agendas, agenda item backup, and meeting minutes are also maintained on the website.

Printed Materials

During 2019 the Outreach subcommittee developed outreach materials and distributed them at hotels, the Chamber of Commerce, museums, attractions, and other public locations throughout the County. The Committee has designed a rack card and a panel that will be placed at the Naples Preserve, to expand and complement the existing 8 preserve brochures.

7. Mitigation Programs

Conservation Collier has followed 2007 Board direction (6/26/07, Agenda Item 10A) in pursuing both wetland and Panther Habitat Unit (PHU) mitigation credit for those properties where the opportunity exists. Wetland mitigation credits have not been economical for the Program to pursue. The costs associated with wetland mitigation bank establishment within Conservation Collier lands are high, because only hydrologic restoration can provide the “lift” or “functional gain” necessary to generate credits. Credits are not provided by state or federal agencies for exotic vegetation removal since this restoration activity is already required as part of the Conservation Collier Program. The Program has pursued Panther Habitat Unit (PHU) mitigation credits at Caracara Prairie and Pepper Ranch preserves.

Caracara Prairie Preserve – Collier County’s Solid Waste Department has used all 2,272.72 PHU credits available at Caracara Prairie Preserve to mitigate for development of the Collier Resource Recovery Park. The Conservation Collier Program received a total of \$1,301,600 in revenue over FY14 and FY15 for the PHU credits. This revenue is estimated to fund 25% of routine management costs and 100% of costs associated with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) PHU mitigation requirements.

Pepper Ranch Preserve – The Pepper Ranch Preserve Panther Habitat Conservation Bank Agreement document was signed by the Board of County Commissioners in September 2018 and by USFWS in October 2018. The Panther Habitat Conservation Bank allows multiple County projects to be mitigated through the preservation and enhancement of Pepper Ranch Preserve. The agreement provided for 8,669 PHU credits expected to be used for development of future County projects at a cost savings of \$1,077,123.25. Between 2019 and 2020, 1,245 PHUs were purchased from various County Departments to mitigate for four different County projects generating a total of \$747,934 in revenue. There are currently 6,141.41 PHUs remaining in the Conservation Bank. Portions of the revenue are allocated annually for exotic vegetation removal and restoration of the Conservation Bank portions of the Pepper Ranch Preserve.

8. Partners

Conservation Collier is pleased to have developed acquisition funding, land management, research, project development, and other related Program partnerships with a multitude of agencies and organizations. These agencies and the nature of their partnerships are listed alphabetically below:

- Audubon of Collier County – Community and Advisory Committee Support
- Boy Scouts of America – 25 Eagle Scout projects have been completed or are in the process on Conservation Collier Preserves
- City of Marco Island – Management partnership – Otter Mound Preserve
- City of Naples – Gordon River Greenway partner
- Collier County Parks and Recreation Department –
 - Freedom Park and Gordon River Greenway Park management partnership – Management Plan approved through Florida Communities Trust (FCT) Grant Program in place.
 - Cocohatchee Creek Preserve – management assistance.
- Collier County Solid Waste Department – Caracara Prairie Preserve - panther mitigation credit (PHUs) for Resource Recovery Park.
- Collier County Facilities Management Department – Pepper Ranch Preserve – PHUs for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Big Corkscrew Regional Park and the Collier County Sports and Events Complex
- Collier County Public Utilities Engineering and Project Management Department – PHUs for the Northeast Water Treatment Plant
- Collier County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO) – Labor for preserve projects under the Weekender Workers Program
- Conservancy of Southwest Florida – Community and Advisory Committee Support
- Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed Trust (CREW) – Caracara Prairie Preserve - acquisition and education programs, Land donation in Red Maple Swamp
- Florida Division of Forestry – Prescribed fire within urban preserves
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
 - Exotic Removal funding
 - Pepper Ranch Preserve Youth Hunt partnership.
- Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)
 - Research - Caracara Prairie Preserve, Lake Trafford Management Team, Railhead Scrub Preserve
 - Volunteers
- Florida Southwestern State College (FSW) – Student Field Trips, Volunteers
- Florida Wildlife Federation – Community and Advisory Committee support
- Naples Airport Authority – Gordon River Greenway partner
- Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Rookery Bay NERR) – Management partnership for Shell Island Preserve and McIlvane Marsh management activities.
- South Florida Water Management District – Caracara Prairie Preserve – property management, wildlife monitoring, Lake Trafford Management Team
- Southwest Florida Land Preservation Trust – Gordon River Greenway partner

- University of Florida (UF) – Logan Woods Preserve-exotic removal, Lake Trafford Management Team
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Exotics removal grants under the Partners Program and Coastal Program for Otter Mound, Shell Island, Railhead Scrub, Rivers Road, Pepper Ranch and McIlvane Marsh.

9. Grants and Funding Assistance

Conservation Collier has actively pursued grants and funding assistance for both acquisition and management purposes. Currently, there have been no awards for land acquisition, but many for management, primarily for the removal of invasive, exotic species but also for needed equipment and plant community restoration. Exotic removal grants and funding assistance have come from state and federal government agencies, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Partners Program) and the State of Florida through the Invasive Plant Management Section. The table below shows the amount of funding assistance obtained between 2019 and 2020. Conservation Collier has had approximately 17% of all land management activities funded through grants. The total value of grants awarded to the Program for land management since 2003 is \$1,088,714.

Preserve	Agency	Grant or Funding Assistance	Amount Awarded	Fiscal Year Funding Assistance
Red Maple Swamp	State	Funding Assistance	\$38,912	2019
Pepper Ranch	State	Funding Assistance	\$106,569	2019
			\$145,481	
McIlvane Marsh	State	Funding Assistance	\$97,246	2020
Red Maple Swamp	State	Funding Assistance	\$63,156	2020
Dr. Robert H. Gore III	State	Funding Assistance	\$32,480	2020
McIlvane Marsh	USFWS Partners Grant	Grant	\$10,000	2020
			\$202,882	
		Total 2019-2020	\$348,363	

10. Volunteers

During 2019, Conservation Collier was the grateful recipient of 1,345 volunteer hours. During 2020, Conservation Collier was the grateful recipient of 1,019 volunteer hours.

Volunteer tasks accomplished include:

- Preserve monitoring and maintenance
- Trail creation and maintenance
- Hike leadership
- Mountain bike trail construction and maintenance
- FWC Youth Hunt guides
- Wildlife surveys
- Vegetation management

The above does not include Eagle Scout projects where total hours worked are not collected. The service of volunteers for Conservation Collier is governed by Collier County and Parks and Recreation Volunteer Policies. The following are Eagle Scout projects done for Conservation Collier between 2019 and 2020:

- Logan Johnson- Troop 2, Alligator District, SW Florida Council- Nancy Payton Preserve Trailhead Kiosk and Bench
- Lance Miller Troop 252- Alligator District, SW Florida Council- Nancy Payton Preserve Trailhead Kiosk and Bench

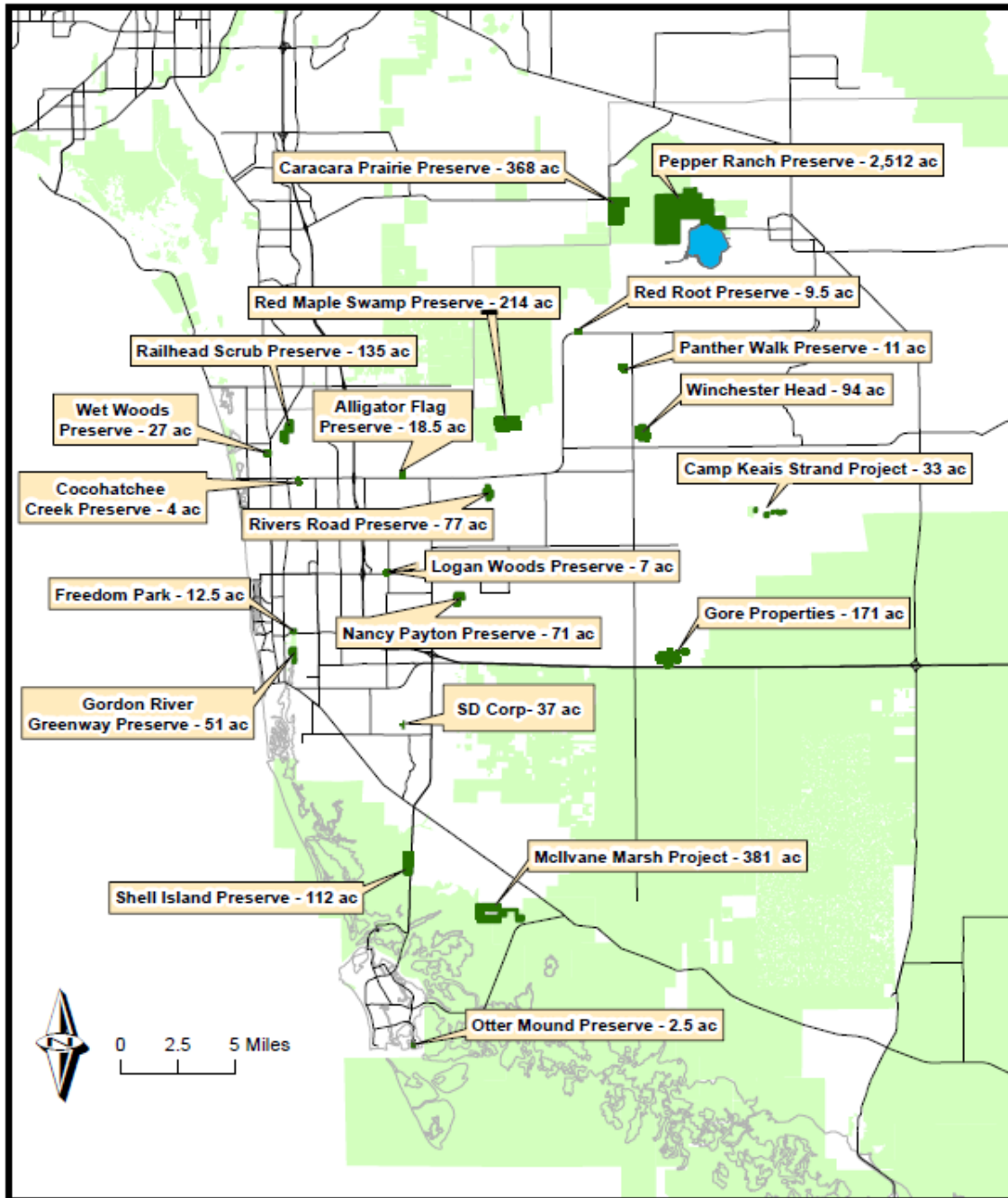
11. 2020-2021 Objectives

1. Acquire newly approved lands as part of Acquisition Cycle 10 and place them under management.
2. Continue to accept donation properties under the Land Development Code Offsite Preservation Option.
3. Continue to develop public access for acquired properties as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.
4. Continue to implement land management practices at all preserves as outlined in each Board-approved Land Management Plan.
5. Continue to implement the Collier County Hunt Program at the Pepper Ranch Preserve.
6. Secure grant funding and funding assistance wherever possible.
7. Look for any and all ways to reduce expenditures without sacrificing quality of land management and public access amenities.
8. Continue to pursue mitigation opportunities on acquired lands.

Exhibits

Exhibit A. 2020 Map of Conservation Collier Program Lands

**Collier County
Conservation Collier Program Lands 2020**



Legend

- Conservation Collier Lands
- Other Agency Conservation Lands

Exhibit B. Conservation Collier Program Public Amenity Work Plan

Conservation Collier Program Public Amenity Work Plan

Introduction:

The Conservation Collier Program is responsible for implementing the mandate of the electorate of Collier County as provided by public referendum votes in November 2002, and again in November 2006 confirming that mandate, to levy a 0.25 mill ad valorem property tax for a period not to exceed 10 years for acquisition, protection, restoration, and management of environmentally sensitive lands in Collier County for the benefit of present and future generations. A nine (9) member citizen's advisory committee named the Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Advisory Committee (CCLAAC) was appointed in early 2003 to make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on land purchases and Program policies. Members are appointed for 3-year terms.

Conservation Collier has been implementing its mandate for 17 years. During this time 4,345 acres have been acquired in 21 different locations. Two approved multi-parcel projects, Winchester Head and North Golden Gate Estates Unit 53, have continued to acquire through offsite preservation donations between 2019-2020.

Per the Conservation Collier Ordinance (2002-63, as amended, Section 2), the main objective of Conservation Collier is to acquire, preserve, restore, and maintain vital and significant threatened natural lands, forest, upland, and wetland communities located in Collier County, for the benefit of present and future generations. However, one ancillary purpose of the Program is "to have the acquired sites available, with minimal risk to the environmental integrity of the site, to educate Collier County's school-age population and the general public about the uniqueness and importance of Collier County's subtropical ecosystems and natural communities" (Collier County Ordinance 2019-03, Section 4.10.).

In 2011, the Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Advisory Committee (CCLAAC) categorized each preserve based upon its existing and proposed public access amenities. The "Conservation Collier Preserve Public Amenity Matrix" (Exhibit A) identifies all public amenities - existing and proposed - at all 19 Conservation Collier Preserves and categorizes each preserve into 1 of 5 categories. Additionally, the CCLAAC created a "Conservation Collier Public Amenity Priority List." This identified not only the public amenities recommended at each preserve, but also the priority in which these public amenities should be constructed. In 2013, after considering the current financial status of the Program, some planned amenities were postponed or reduced. With the exception Gordon River Greenway Preserve and Pepper Ranch Preserve, which receive a high volume of public visitation, the improvements proposed at each preserve represent the minimum amenities necessary to provide safe and economically feasible public access.

This plan may be revised annually, or as needed. **The Work Plan will be re-evaluated by the CCLAAC in 2021 and addressed in the next annual report.**

Background:

As mandated by Collier County Ordinance 2007-65, 15% of ad valorem taxes received through the Conservation Collier Program were placed into a “Land Management Fund” annually since FY 2003. This 15% transfer stopped in FY 2013, when the levy ceased. The “Land Management Fund” is separate and distinct from the Conservation Collier “Land Acquisition Fund” and is intended to generate enough interest annually so that only the interest will be used to fund recurring annual management activities at all Conservation Collier preserves in perpetuity. With interest rates around half a percent following the economic downturn, a reassessment of planned expenses was necessary to conserve principal in the Land Management Fund.

Concern about long term Program finances began in 2009, when data gathered on management costs, coupled with revenue forecasts and future interest rate projections, suggested that there would be insufficient funds in the “Land Management Fund” to complete all Board approved land management activities and potential public access improvements. CCLAAC budget workshops were held to discuss long term maintenance funding for Conservation Collier preserves during the July 13, 2009 and September 14, 2009 CCLAAC meetings. As a result of these workshops, on May 25, 2010, Agenda Item 16E2, the Board of County Commissioners authorized a transfer of up to an additional \$10.3 million, above the ordinance mandated 15% of ad valorem taxes, from the “Land Acquisition Fund” to the “Land Management Fund” during FY2011 – FY2013 to ensure land management funding in perpetuity.

In November 2010, the Collier County Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recommended that projected future interest rates be revised downward. These revisions severely impacted the projected “Land Management Fund” balance. Because of this situation and in order to ensure sufficient management funds in perpetuity, on January 25, 2011, Agenda Item 10B, the Board: directed the County Manager, or his designee, to prepare a Public Amenity Master Plan for all Conservation Collier preserves, suspend all Conservation Collier acquisitions until a Master Plan was approved by the Board, and approved the Conservation Collier Cycle 8 Active Acquisition List for purchase when funds are available. The 2012 Public Amenity Work Plan was the Board requested Master Plan drafted by Conservation Collier staff based upon recommendations by the CCLAAC. It was approved on October 23, 2012, Agenda Item 16D4.

Between 2013 and 2015, interest rates remained low, and the Public Amenity Work Plan was further revised. This 2016-2018 Public Amenity Work Plan represents the most current status of this plan.

Preserve Categories:

Conservation Collier Ordinance 2019-03 defines natural resource-based recreation as, “all forms of uses which are consistent with the goals of this program and are compatible with the specific parcel. Such uses shall include but not be limited to hiking, nature photography, bird watching, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, hunting, and fishing.”

To date, the Conservation Collier Program manages 21 separate preserves throughout the County, 13 of which are officially open to the public. See Exhibit A. Recreational opportunities offered at these open preserves are compatible and appropriate to their location, hydrology, and plant communities. Additionally, the natural resource-based recreational opportunities coincide with the approved Land Management Plans of these preserves. The “Conservation Collier Preserve Public Amenity Matrix” (Exhibit C) identifies all public amenities, existing and proposed, at all 21 Conservation Collier Preserves, and categorizes each preserve into 1 of 5 categories. Category descriptions are provided below. Regardless of category, preserves may be closed to the general public when deemed appropriate by staff (i.e., conducting a prescribed burn, after storm events, debris removal, levels of unusually high water, days when hunting is permitted, etc.).

Category 1 – Primary Use Preserve

- Easily accessible and enough space to construct parking on or near the parcel and other amenities such as restrooms may be available on or near the preserve.
- ADA accessibility (parking and trails) will be provided.
- May have a daily staff presence (as appropriate) and staff is available to conduct interpretive tours of the preserve by request.
- Occasional field trips and/or educational programs may be provided.
- Natural resource-based recreational opportunities offered will correspond with the preserve's approved Land Management Plan.
- Marked trails and interpretive materials will be available on-site.
- Capital improvements, such as boardwalks, canoe/kayak, launches, overlooks, picnic benches, and bike racks will be provided for visitors where feasible.
- Will be open to the public during daytime hours unless special arrangements are made.

Category 2 - Intermediate Use Preserve

- Has space to provide limited parking on or near the parcel without degrading the hydrology and plant communities and may be conducive to providing a primitive trail system. In such cases, an unimproved trailhead may be provided.
- Additional natural resource-based recreational opportunities may be offered where feasible and will correspond with the preserve's approved Land Management Plan.
- Restrooms may be provided on or near the site where feasible.
- Will not have a daily staff presence but staff will be available to conduct interpretive tours of the preserve by request.
- Interpretive signs, brochures, picnic tables and bike racks may be present.
- Will be open to the public during daytime hours unless special arrangements are made.

Category 3 - Neighborhood (Limited Use) Preserve

- Intended to be a "neighborhood" preserve. There is no space available for parking for either ecological, access, or safety reasons. Members of the public who would like to visit may have to walk or bike a distance from public parking areas.
- No restroom facilities will be available.

- Primitive trails will be provided.
- Interpretive signs, brochures, picnic tables and bike racks may be present.
- Additional natural resource-based recreational opportunities may be offered where feasible and will correspond with the preserve's approved Land Management Plan.
- Staff will be present for periodic site inspections and at other times as necessary for the proper management of the preserve.
- Staff will be available to conduct interpretive tours of the preserve by request.
- Will be open to the public during daytime hours.

Category 4 - Seasonal Use Preserve

- Parking may be available for the public on or near the site.
- Seasonal (usually winter months), marked, primitive trails will be available during appropriate times of the year.
- Restroom facilities may be available.
- Interpretive signs, brochures, bike racks may be present.
- Additional natural resource-based recreational opportunities may be offered where feasible and will correspond with the preserve's approved Land Management Plan.
- Staff will be present for periodic site inspections and at other times as necessary for the proper management of the preserve.
- Staff will be available to conduct interpretive tours of the preserve by request.
- Will be open to the public seasonally and only during daytime hours. The public is advised to check with Conservation Collier staff or on the Conservation Collier website for up-to-date information.

Category 5 - Resource Protection/Restoration Use Preserve

- Provide no public access. Public access may not be feasible due to the lack of physical and legal access or where the land stewardship activities could create unsafe conditions for the public.
- No restrooms or marked trails will be offered.
- Staff will be present for periodic site inspections and at other times as necessary for the proper management of the preserve.

Exhibit C: Conservation Collier Preserve Public Amenity Matrix

Preserves		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
		Primary Use - Easy access - Public amenities & parking	Intermediate Use - Few/no amenities - Limited parking & primitive trails	Neighborhood Use - No onsite parking - Amenities limited to benches, trails, and picnic tables	Seasonal Use - Parking & trails may be available - Closed during rainy season	Protection/Restore Resource Use - No public access no physical or legal access or unsafe for public
1	Alligator Flag				X	
2	Camp Keais					X
3	Caracara Prairie		X			
4	Cocohatchee Creek		X			
5	Robert H Gore III		X			
6	Freedom Park	X				
7	Gordon River Greenway	X				
8	Logan Woods			X		
9	McIlvane Marsh					X
10	Nancy Payton		X			
11	Otter Mound		X			
12	Panther Walk				X	
13	Pepper Ranch <i>Currently Seasonal, Off-season use by Appt.</i>	X			X	
14	Railhead Scrub					X
15	Red Maple Swamp					X
16	Redroot		X			
17	Rivers Road		X			
18	Rattlesnake Hammock					X
19	Shell Island					X
20	Wet Woods					X
21	Winchester Head					X

Exhibit D. Conservation Collier Preserves by Commission District

