

**Conservation Collier
Annual Report
2021**

**CONSERVATION
COLLIER**



*For
Present and
Future Generations*

www.colliergov.net/conservationcollier



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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 started in FY22 (October 2021).

Lands Inventory

Conservation Collier has now implemented its mandate for 19 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.

Since inception, the Program has acquired 4,368 acres meeting Program criteria in 21 different locations for a cost of \$107,860,000. Thirteen (13) Conservation Collier preserves are currently open for public use in categories 1 through 4 with signs, trails and benches installed. The Program has continued to acquire in the multi-parcel projects (Red Maple Swamp and Winchester Head) using offsite preservation donations.

Program Costs

Land management costs for all preserves during FY21 was \$769,342. Grants and funding assistance in the amount of \$205,872 were received during FY21 to fund land management. The cost for Program Administration and Acquisition operations during FY21 was \$112,000.

The Net Operating expenses for FY21, including capital projects, was \$880,910. The increase in budget was due to the acquisition of new preserves and the initial costs for exotic vegetation removal.

Public Activities

Public activities at preserves during FY21 included adult and youth hunts, hiking, camping, biking, horseback riding, tours, volunteering, and presentations. The Conservation Collier Program looks forward to adding more programming if interpretive staff are approved in FY23 to provide educational and outreach programs.

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.

On November 3, 2020, the Collier County electors approved the Conservation Collier Re-establishment referendum with a 76.5% majority. Accordingly, the FY22 budget included a Conservation Collier Program tax levy of .25 mil that generated approximately \$26,188,800 for acquisition and management. Acquisition Cycle 10 started in February 2021 at which time the Program opened up the application period for the Cycle. On January 25, 2022, the Board requested staff to obtain appraisals and perform due diligence on the A and B-list properties (Table 1).

FY23 budget will be proposed to include a Conservation Collier Program tax levy of .25 mil that will generate up to \$27,105,400 (this is the proposed number based on budget guidance it will change with taxable value).

Please accept this report on the activities of Conservation Collier calendar year 2021.



Gordon River Greenway by Molly DuVall

2. CCLAAC –Members, Summary of meetings and Actions for 2021

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. During 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 2021, 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.



Michelle Lenhard - Vice Chair (Educational/General Civic/Ecology/Conservation) Ms. Lenhard was reappointed on February 22, 2022, for a 3-year term. Ms. Lenhard relocated to Collier County 8 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.



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.



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. Tom stepped down from the Advisory Committee January 2022.

Hannah Rinaldi – (Ecology/Conservation/Environmental Education) Ms. Rinaldi was reappointed on February 22, 2022, for a 3-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.

Karyn Allman – (Environmental & Conservation/Ecology/Land Management) Ms. Allman was



appointed on September 28, 2021, for a 3-year term. Karyn is a Biologist/Ecologist who has lived in Collier County for over 15 years. She has a master's degree in Conservation Biology from the University of Kent Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology. Karyn grew up in Maine and spent her life exploring the outdoors as a part of her professional and personal life. She is a Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS), and recently worked as a Land Manager for Lee County Parks and Recreation Conservation 2020 program for almost 5 years. Currently, Karyn is a lead Scientist for the South Florida Water Management District, helping to restore over 6,000 acres of citrus groves in Hendry County into wetlands.

3. Program Lands Acquisition Status

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.

The FY22 included a Conservation Collier Program tax levy of .25 mil that generated \$25,287,900. The FY22 budget appropriated 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 were 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 was deposited into the Conservation Collier Acquisition Trust Fund for use in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands. The FY23 proposed budget will include a Conservation Collier Program tax levy of .25 mil that will generate up to \$27,105,400.

Acquisition Cycle 10 started in February 2021 with the timeline that followed previous Cycles after approval of the FY22 Budget Policy. The Cycle started knowing that acquisition funds would be available after October 2021. Of the \$25,287,900 tax levy generated, \$14,065,100 was allocated for Acquisition in FY22. The Cycle 10 Active Acquisition List was presented to the Board of County Commissioners on January 25, 2022. The Board requested staff to obtain appraisals and perform due diligence on the A and B-list properties on the Active Acquisition List (Table 1 below) and report back with findings. Table 1 provides the current status as of March 2022; property owners that are no longer interested are not shown below. The Board advised that depending on the results of appraisals they reserved the option to utilize Management funds (Fund 174) reserves for acquisition.

Table 1. Active Acquisition List (updated March 2022)

Property Name	Size (ac)	Estimated Value	Category	"A" Category
Big Hammock - Area I - Barron Collier Partnership	257.30	\$3,683,800	A	1
Dr. Robert H. Gore III Preserve Project (5 parcels)	17.59	\$193,500	A	1,3
HHH Ranch - Hussey Section 33	252.00	\$1,262,000	A	1
Marco Island Parcels (1 parcel remaining)	0.39	\$237,800	A	1
Parcels near Panther Walk Preserve (20 Parcels)	38.45	\$916,500	A	1
Rivers Road Preserve Project (3 parcels)	29.10	\$1,620,200	A	1
Pepper Ranch Preserve Project (5 parcels)	89.29	\$696,362	A	2
A-LIST SUBTOTAL	684.12	\$8,610,162		
Red Maple Swamp (NGGE Unit 53) Multi-parcel Project (remaining)	88.23	\$1,102,875	A	1
Winchester Head Multi-parcel Project (remaining)	63.28	\$1,044,120	A	1
Multi-Parcel Projects Total*	151.51	\$2,146,995		
Multi-Parcel Projects Total for Acquisition Cycle 10 (FY22)*	48.00	\$554,120		
TOTAL	732.12	\$9,164,282		
Dr. Robert H. Gore III Preserve area - Preserve expansion parcels*	157.08	\$1,884,960	A	3
Panther Walk Preserve area - Preserve expansion parcels*	39.75	\$1,150,643	A	3
Preserve expansion parcels total	196.83	\$3,035,603		
Agua Colina - Marco Island	0.63	\$1,427,000	B	
Big Hammock - Area II (Barron Collier Partnership)	744.2	\$1,116,300	B	
Sanitation & Bethune Rd Parcels (Barron Collier Partnership)	370.00	\$3,900,000	B	
B-LIST TOTAL	1,114.83	\$6,443,300		
TOTAL A & B List excluding Preserve Expansion	1,846.95	15,607,582.00	<i>Total if all A, B, and multi-parcel projects</i>	

4. Program Land Management Status

Management Funds are used to restore and maintain natural lands through activities including:

- Trail Maintenance
- Treatment and Removal of Exotic Plant Species
- Restoration of native plant communities through plantings
- Preserve Security and Resource Protection
- Prescribed Burning
- Vegetation Mowing



All preserves except for Camp Keais Strand are actively managed. Camp Keais is not currently accessible for management. Table 2 below (page 11) provides the status of each preserve including whether it is open to the public

Table 2. Preserve Status

Preserve name	Preserve acreage	Preserve status
Alligator Flag Preserve	18.46	Open - trails
Camp Keais Strand	32.5	Resource protection
Caracara Prairie Preserve	367.70	Open - trails
Cochatchee Creek	3.64	Open - trails
Dr. Robert H. Gore III	171.00	Open - trails
Fred W. Coyle Freedom Park	12.5	Open - trails, boardwalk, parking lot
Gordon River Greenway	50.51	Open - trails, boardwalk, parking lot
Logan Woods Preserve	6.78	Open - trails
McIlvane Marsh	380.9	Resource protection
Nancy Payton Preserve	71	Open - trails, parking lot
Otter Mound Preserve	2.45	Open - trails, parking lot
Panther Walk Preserve	10.69	Open - trails
Pepper Ranch Preserve	2512	Open - trails, biking, visitor center, restrooms
Railhead Scrub Preserve	135.36	Not open - will open when road is built
Rattlesnake Hammock Preserve	37.00	In process of permitting parking lot for public access
Red Maple Swamp Preserve	237.5	Resource protection - may provide public access in future
Redroot Preserve	9.26	Open - trails
Rivers Road Preserve	76.74	Open - trails, parking lot, biking
Shell Island Preserve	112.00	Resource protection - adjacent to State lands with boardwalk
Wet Woods Preserve	26.77	Resource protection
Winchester Head	93.56	Resource protection - may provide public access in future when more parcels acquired
TOTAL PROGRAM ACREAGE	4,368	

For more information about the Conservation Collier preserves check out the [Conservation Collier website](#).

5. Program Financial Status

Conservation Collier spent approximately \$107,860,000 on properties between 2003 and 2021, acquiring and managing 4,368 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 FY2013. To ensure adequate funding of the Land Management Fund, the Ordinance was revised in 2019 to provide that management funds shall be no less than twenty-five percent (25%) of revenues collected in one year.

The Conservation Collier Program utilizes five active funds (172, 174, 179, 673, and 674,) to manage Program financial resources. 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.

Sustained low interest rates and resulting low earnings on Conservation Collier Trust Funds are an ongoing financial concern. In FY14 and FY15 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. The Program will continue to have the \$32 million as the reserve “floor” with the goal of funding the management of the preserves in perpetuity.

Looking forward the Program has 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. Staff proposes to request this ten percent (10%) for amenities be included in the FY24 Budget Policy to be allocated in the Conservation Collier Capital Improvement Fund 179.

With the goal of funding the management of the preserves in perpetuity the established minimum Conservation Collier Program fund balance will be reviewed and adjusted after each acquisition cycle. Annual preserve management operating expenses will be programed at or below annual revenues from interest, leases, and other revenue to ensure this minimum fund balance is maintained.

Table 3. – Summary of Conservation Collier Financial Activity for FY21

**FY 21 Budget to Actual Comparison
Funds 172, 174, 179, 673, 674**

Expenditures	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Personal Services	440,100	440,100	-	419,738	95.4%
Operating expenses	666,200	696,036	-	458,983	65.9%
Capital Outlay	45,900	153,180	1,500	86,434	57.4%
Land Acquisitions	152,400	152,400	-	88,704	58.2%
Transfers	3,336,600	3,346,600	-	-	0.0%
Reserves	31,311,100	31,311,100	-	-	0.0%
EXPENSE Total	35,952,300	36,099,416	1,500	1,053,860	2.9%

Sources	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Operating Rev.	(33,900)	(33,900)	-	(51,285)	151.3%
PHU Sales	-	-	-	(747,687)	n/a
Interest	(721,100)	(721,100)	-	(136,009)	18.9%
Dev. Contribution	(26,700)	(26,700)	-	(70,839)	265.3%
Carry Forward	(31,873,300)	(32,020,416)	-	(32,060,500)	100.1%
Transfers	(3,336,600)	(3,336,600)	-	-	0.0%
Revenue Res.	39,300	39,300	-	-	0.0%
Revenues	(35,952,300)	(36,099,416)	-	(33,066,320)	91.6%

Expenditures	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Commitment	Actual	% Consumed
Program Administration	117,200	117,200	-	111,569	95.2%
Land Acquisitions	239,000	239,000	-	172,949	72.4%
Preserve Mgt	948,400	1,095,516	1,500	769,342	70.4%
EXPENSE Total	1,304,600	1,451,716	1,500	1,053,860	72.6%

Table 4. – Land Maintenance Expense & Funding Sources (5 Year Average)

Conservation Collier Program Land Maintenance Expense & Funding Sources (5 Year Average)	
Land Maintenance Expenses	<u>Actual</u>
Average Acres (FY17-FY21)	4,192
Maint Exp/Acre (CC Program funded)	\$147.15
Maint Exp/Acre (Grant funded)	\$37.89
Combined Maint Cost/Acre	<u>\$185.04</u>
Average Annual Land Maintenance Expense	\$775,704
Funding Sources	
CC Program Interest Earnings	\$463,692
Leases & Other Sources	\$40,181
PHU Sales (1)	\$60,000
Sub Total	<u>\$563,873</u>
Grant Sources	\$158,833
Average Annual Funding Sources	\$722,706
Coverage ratio including planned PHU proceeds	93.17%

(1) this figure represents the PHU sales financial planning estimate. PHU sales have actually averaged \$303,690 during the FY17-FY21 period.

(2) does not include LDC Program off-site preserve maintenance contributions because they are intended to provide perpetual maintenance funding. Off-Site preserve maintenance contributions have averaged \$23,869 during the FY17-FY21 period.

Coverage ratio without average PHU proceeds 85%

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.

2020-2021 Hunt Season

A total of 8 hunts are scheduled at Pepper Ranch Preserve during the 2021-2022 hunting season, which is still ongoing including 5 public and 2 youth hunts. Three (3) of the public hunts are hog hunts, 1 for deer and 1 for turkey. Youth hunts included 1 turkey hunt and 1 squirrel/rabbit hunt. Eighty-four (84) applications were received for the public hunting season. So far, 24 hunter permits have been issued. A total of 1 deer, 5 turkey, 33 grey squirrel and zero hog have been harvested to date from the public deer hunt, , public turkey hunt, youth turkey hunt, public hog hunts, and youth squirrel/rabbit hunt that have taken place during the 2021-2022 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. To date, 1 hog and 1 turkey have been harvested from the CREW Marsh Unit of the CREW WEA.

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 2021. Visitors were invited to enter the preserve on October 6, 8, & 9th in advance of opening for the season in November. The preserve is open seasonally from November-June each year. Staff opened the preserve for visitors to drive through to see the sunflowers early. The weekend viewing was highly successful with 440 visitors. We also offered a special sunset photography event.

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. During FY21, 258 PHUs were purchased from a County Division to mitigate for one County project generating a total of \$747,687 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.



Pepper Ranch Preserve sunflowers

8. 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 during 2021. 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 \$1,294,586.

Preserve	Agency	Grant or Funding Assistance	Amount Awarded	Fiscal Year Funding Assistance
Mcllvane Marsh	State	Funding Assistance	\$84,956	2021
Rattlesnake Hammock Preserve	State	Funding Assistance	\$18,697	2021
Pepper Ranch	State	Funding Assistance	\$102,219	2021
		Total 2021	\$205,872	

9. Volunteers

During 2021, Conservation Collier was the grateful recipient of 1,739 volunteer hours.

Volunteer tasks accomplished include:

- Preserve monitoring and maintenance
- Trail (including mountain bike trails) creation 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 following are Eagle Scout projects done for Conservation Collier during 2021:

- RJ Colo Troop 243-Alligator District, SW Florida Council- Nancy Payton Preserve Trailhead and parking Area, Wooden Fence November 2021
- Tristan Robbins Troop 2, Alligator District, SW Florida Council – Dr. Robert H Gore III Preserve Trailhead Improvement and Benches



RJ Colo Fence project Nancy Payton Preserve



Tristan Robbins Gore Preserve



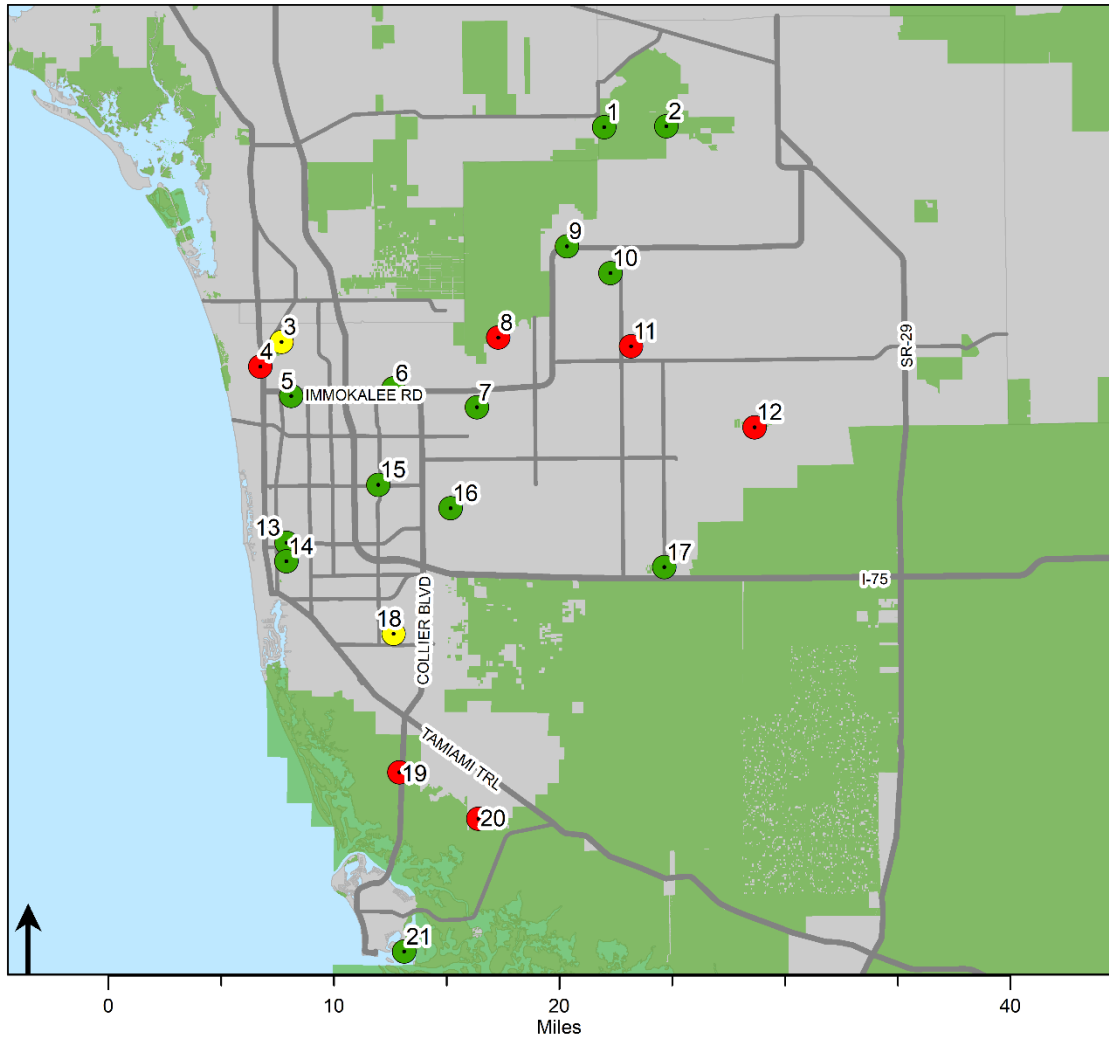
10. 2022 Objectives

1. Acquire newly approved lands as part of Acquisition Cycle 11 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.

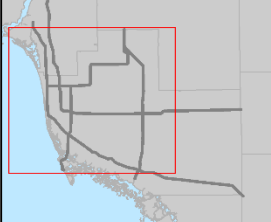
Exhibits

Exhibit A. 2021 Map of Conservation Collier Program Lands

Conservation Collier Preserves 2021



Conservation Collier Preserve Access	
●	Public Access
●	Planned Public Access
●	Resource Protection
	Other Conservation Areas
•	1. Caracara Prairie Preserve - 368 ac
•	2. Pepper Ranch Preserve - 2512 ac
•	3. Railhead Scrub Preserve - 135 ac
•	4. Wet Woods Preserve - 27 ac
•	5. Cocohatchee Creek Preserve - 4 ac
•	6. Alligator Flag Preserve 18.5 ac
•	7. Rivers Road Preserve - 77 ac
•	8. Red Maple Swamp Preserve - 214 ac
•	9. Red Root Preserve - 9.5 ac
•	10. Panther Walk Preserve - 11 ac
•	11. Winchester Head Preserve - 94 ac
•	12. Camp Keais Strand Preserve - 33 ac
•	13. Freedom Park 12.5 ac
•	14. Gordon River Greenway - 51 ac
•	15. Logan Woods Preserve - 7 ac
•	16. Nancy Payton Preserve - 71 ac
•	17. Dr. Robert H Gore III Preserve 171 ac
•	18. Rattlesnake Hammock Preserve - 37 ac
•	19. Shell Island Preserve - 112 ac
•	20. McIlvane Marsh Preserve - 381 ac
•	21. Otter Mound Preserve - 2.5 ac



CONSERVATION COLLIER


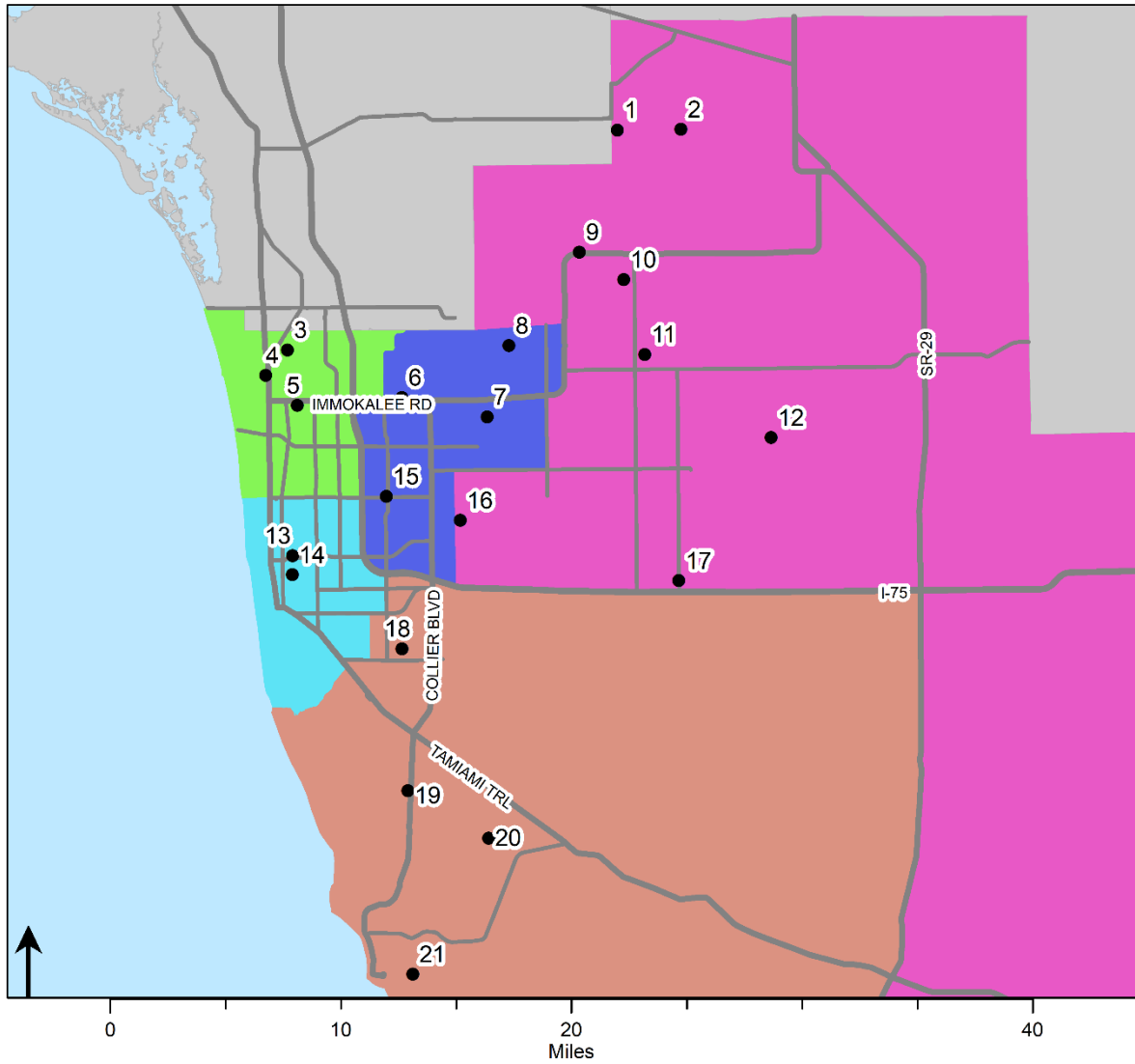
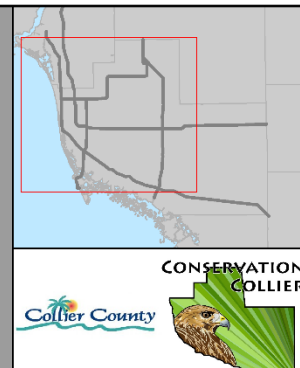


Exhibit B. Conservation Collier Preserves by Commission District

Conservation Collier Preserves by Commissioner District



- | | |
|--|---|
| ● 1. Caracara Prairie Preserve - 368 ac | ● 16. Nancy Payton Preserve - 71 ac |
| ● 2. Pepper Ranch Preserve - 2512 ac | ● 17. Dr. Robert H Gore III Preserve 171 ac |
| ● 3. Railhead Scrub Preserve - 135 ac | ● 18. Rattlesnake Hammock Preserve - 37 ac |
| ● 4. Wet Woods Preserve - 27 ac | ● 19. Shell Island Preserve - 112 ac |
| ● 5. Cocohatchee Creek Preserve - 4 ac | ● 20. McIlvane Marsh Preserve - 381 ac |
| ● 6. Alligator Flag Preserve 18.5 ac | ● 21. Otter Mound Preserve - 2.5 ac |
| ● 7. Rivers Road Preserve - 77 ac | |
| ● 8. Red Maple Swamp Preserve - 214 ac | ■ District 1 |
| ● 9. Red Root Preserve - 9.5 ac | ■ District 2 |
| ● 10. Panther Walk Preserve - 11 ac | ■ District 3 |
| ● 11. Winchester Head Preserve - 94 ac | ■ District 4 |
| ● 12. Camp Keais Strand Preserve - 33 ac | ■ District 5 |
| ● 13. Freedom Park 12.5 ac | |
| ● 14. Gordon River Greenway - 51 ac | |
| ● 15. Logan Woods Preserve - 7 ac | |



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 2022 and addressed in the next annual report. Staff will propose as part of the FY24 Budget Policy to have 10% of Acquisition Funds collected on an annual basis be set aside for amenities in a Project Fund.

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.).



Dr. Robert H. Gore III Preserve. Photo by Molly DuVall

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 D: 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