

**MANATEE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELMAC)
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER, 5TH FLOOR, MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
March 3, 2025**

Present were:

Mason Gravley, Chairman
Terry L. McKamey, Vice-Chairman
Scott Childress
Randy Cooper
Kate Horne
David Landers (entered during meeting)
Richard Larsen
Jonathan Lynch
Scott Tussing

Three seats are vacant.

Absent were:

Mike Burton
Craig Copeman
Barry Grooms
Lorraine Prosser
Brian Searcy

Also present was:

Commissioner Carol Ann Felts
Bryan Parnell, Deputy County Administrator
Debra Woithe, Environmental Lands Division Manager
Hannah Turbiville, Environmental Lands Program Coordinator
Mike Elswick, Resource Management Division Manager
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Chairman Gravley called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

AGENDA

EL20250303DOC001

1. **WELCOME**

2. **MINUTES**



Motion was made by Member Tussing, seconded by Member Lynch, and carried 8-0, with Members Burton, Copeman, Grooms, Landers, Prosser, and Searcy absent, to approve the minutes of January 6, 2025.

3. **ARBOR DAY 2025**



Ingrid McClellan, distributed a chart of all medians and public spaces that are landscaped. All projects, although some were funded by the private sector, are maintained by the County. She continued to review the projects and provided a history of Arbor Day projects and the County's status of being a Tree City USA. Two projects have been proposed at Palma Sola Scenic Highway Park and Lincoln Park. Other entities celebrating Arbor Day, are Bradenton Beach, Holmes Beach, and Anna Maria.

Discussion ensued regarding the condition of the trees planted last year.

A motion was made by Member Tussing, seconded by Member Childress, to support the plans for the Arbor Day events. The motion carried 9-0 with Members Burton, Copeman, Grooms, Prosser, and Searcy absent.

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4. **CONSERVATION ACQUISITION CANDIDATE PROPERTIES**

Debra Woithe, Environmental Lands Division Manager used a slide presentation to provide updates on ELMAC memberships.


Golf Course Road

Ms. Woithe used a slide presentation to address approval of the Golf Course Road property, which is 95 acres, with 47 percent of the property in the floodplain and flow way, Capital Improvements are planned, and there are grant opportunities. Conservation Referendum funds will not be used for the purchase.

Crane Park Addition

Ms. Woithe provided an update and noted staff is working on a contract.


Myakka Ranchlands

 This is an existing Florida Forever Project Boundary. The State is holding a workshop on March 11. Myakka Ranchlands is the bigger project. New projects added to the existing project boundary are the Anson Road Properties. The Anson Road Properties could be eligible for Florida Forever funds in April. There are several projects already in the Ranchlands. The Anson Road Property will fill a gap in the Ranchlands, and Florida Forever is seeking a commitment letter from Manatee County. Ms. Woithe suggested either 50 percent of the purchase price or \$5 million (whichever is less).

Hannah Turbiville, clarified the cumulative acres of the Myakka Ranchland is 54,000 acres.

Discussion occurred regarding the March 11 meeting will be in the Manatee Room from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and connections between properties in the Florida Wildlife Corridor are important to the State.

Sweet Bay Property

 Discussion ensued regarding uses on agricultural land, Sweet Bay nursery will offer natural habitat and agricultural uses, ways to meet the needs of the community, leery of conservation easements, owners may carve out a section of land they can use, easements do not allow a more intense use, County would write the conservation easement and can limit the uses, and conservation easements can cost less than fee simple purchase.

Mossy Island Ranch

Ms. Woithe continued the slides and noted this is a working ranch adjacent to the Myakka River State Park, and qualified for Florida Forever and Rural and Family Lands Program conservation easement by SVN Saunders. Florida Forever looks for half the easement value, and the property would stay in private ownership.

Gamble Creek Preserve

Under review by the County Attorney's Office, and no price is set.

Rye Cemetery Buffer

Under review by the County Attorney's Office, and there may be access issues.

North Pine Island

A minor deed correction is needed.

Thundercloud West

This is a proposed conservation easement, that could be in partnership with the Rural and Family Lands Program, and the County contribution would be 50 percent of the conservation easement. There is a development application approved for skeet shooting.


Discussion ensued regarding the habitat at Thundercloud, and the possibility for scrub jay habitat.

Alex Walter, Thundercloud Ranch, noted the property has been in his family a long time, but there are many things to consider, and he does not want to be rushed.

Prairie View Property

This is a proposed conservation easement and an excellent location for eco-tourism, with bluff habitat and upland area. The banks going down to a vast wetland are unique with rare species.

Veterans Park to Curiosity Creek Trail

 The is a proposed trail from Veterans Park though Curiosity Creek to Curiosity Creek Preserve. Staff would have to work with the developer of Curiosity Creek regarding a plan for a trail.

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5. **MISCELLANEOUS UPDATES**

The next tentative meeting is April 7, and the next regular meeting is May 5, 2025.


6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There being no citizens present, Chairman Gravley did not open Citizen’s Comments.

7. **PRIORITIZATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ms. Woithe noted recommendations would be needed for Thundercloud West and Prairie View, along with a letter of Commitment for Mossy Island.

Following discussion and clarification a motion was made by Member Larson, seconded by Member Landers, and carried 9-0, with Members Burton, Copeman, Grooms, Prosser, and Searcy absent, to recommend the Board of County Commissioners send a letter of commitment for Anson Road Properties (Myakka Corridor Addition) to Florida Forever.

 A motion was made by Member Landers, seconded by Member Tussing, and carried 9-0, with Members Burton, Copeman, Grooms, Prosser, and Searcy absent, to direct staff to proceed with due diligence in anticipation of a purchase contract review and approval by the Board of County Commissioners for Thundercloud West and Prairie View.

8. **NEW BUSINESS and COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ms. Woithe noted members serve in their seat until a new member replaces them, or they are reappointed.

9. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Gravley adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Minutes Approved: _____