

**MANATEE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELMAC)  
WORK SESSION  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER, 5TH FLOOR, MANATEE ROOM  
1112 Manatee Avenue West  
Bradenton, Florida  
November 4, 2024**

Present were:

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

Absent were:

Mike Burton  
Scott Childress  
Craig Copeman  
Carol Ann Felts  
Barry Grooms  
Jonathan Lynch  
Keith McMahan  
Lorraine Prosser

Also present was:

Commissioner Jason Bearden  
Charlie Hunsicker, Natural Resources Director  
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

Due to lack of a quorum, Chairman Gravley called a work session to order at 6:03 p.m.

**AGENDA**

EL20241104DOC001

1. **WELCOME**



Chairman Gravley welcomed Members and guests.

2. **MINUTES**


As there was no quorum and a work session was held, minutes were not approved.

3. **OYSTER RESTORATION OVERVIEW**

Damon Moore, Oyster River Ecology (ORE), used a slide presentation to review the history of ORE, project portfolio, restoration projects he worked on, ORE's mission, program areas include Oyster restoration, watershed restoration, and environmental education, results, permitted oyster reef restoration, cost per acre, Oyster Rag Pots (ORP) used as a base for oyster growth, test plot deployed on April 12, 2024, fresh water can kill oysters, plan on planting 300 acres by 2050 with a savings of \$125,340,000 using the ORPs instead of barge and backhoe, and the website is [www.oysterriverecology.org](http://www.oysterriverecology.org).


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(Enter Member Landers during presentation)

 Discussion ensued that oysters spawn when the water is about 68 degrees, Mr. Moore is working with the City of Bradenton regarding their discharge until they are able to improve their infrastructure, the rock reef at Robinson Preserve is a good spot for oyster restoration, rock and shell are also good ways to restore oysters, process to make the OPRs, history of oysters in the Manatee River, the salinity of the water plays a role in oyster growth, would like to achieve the same amount of oysters in the River today as there were in the 1800s, blue crab population also grows as oyster population grows, an acre of oyster (435,000) will filter over a billion gallons of water, and material from the green bridge can be used to create reefs out in the Gulf due to size.


4. **POST STORM PRESERVE UPDATES**

Mike Elswick, Resource Management Division Manager, used a slide presentation to display pictures of damage at the preserves, seeking FEMA funding, damage sustained at Robinson Preserve, Perico Preserve, Neal Preserve, Emerson Point, Leffis Key, and Geraldson's, and staff has been able to clear trails to give citizens access, but it may take months to complete clean up.

 Charlie Hunsicker, Natural Resources Director, has been working on a plan to deal with the sand on Anna Maria Island, which is being sifted and sorted so there is no debris on the beach. The sand that cannot be used on the beach will be stored at Hidden Harbor, and taken to Ft Hamer to raise and widen the road. Other natural debris will be taken to Duette to determine what the debris can be used for after it is mulched. The federal government will restore the beachfront storm damage and rebuild the dunes.

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5. **ANNUAL REPORTING PLANS AND WEBPAGE UPDATES**

 Debra Woithe, Environmental Lands Division Manager, used a slide presentation to note there are no new properties to discuss, and a new annual report will be put together, Committee findings will be presented to the County Commission, and there is the possibility to put another referendum to collecting the environmental lands millage.

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6. **CONSERVATION ACQUISITION CANDIDATE PROPERTIES**

Debra Woithe, Environmental Lands Division Manager, used a slide presentation to review existing project updates.

 Discussion ensued regarding growth on Erie Road, and the need for preserved property in the area as it will be adjacent to the trail.

Ms. Woithe continued the slides to discuss the following properties: North Pine Island, Anson Road, North Crooked River, and B Squared Ranch.

**UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE**

Ms. Woithe noted Chris Conley resigned, and the new County Commissioners will have an opportunity to appoint mem to those seats. She touched on upcoming vacant seats.

The next meeting is January 6, 2025, and reviewed a slide with 2025 scheduled and tentative meetings. The fiscal group; has been advised to access the remaining \$15 million in bond funds for properties under contract.

 Chairman Gravley stated he is now working for the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

7. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There being no citizen comments, Chairman Gravley closed citizen comments.

8. **PRIORITIZATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

There was no discussion.

9. **NEW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

There was no new business.

10. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Gravley adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_