

## Environmental Lands Program and Conservation and Parks Projects Referendum

### *Supplemental Information*

The Manatee County Conservation and Parks Projects Referendum, approved by Manatee County voters in 2020, established a 0.15 mill ad valorem tax and issuance of up to \$50,000,000 in bonds to **finance the acquisition, improvement, and management** of lands to protect water resources, preserve fish and wildlife habitat, and provide parks. The following natural resources value criteria below is used to evaluate nominated properties for environmental lands acquisition.

#### **Natural Resource Value Criteria:**

- **Ecological Quality** – quality of species or habitat, degree of alteration or degradation, level of restoration required
- **Rarity of Species or Habitat** – uniqueness, number of threatened, endangered or species of special concern supported by the property
- **Importance to Water Resources** – protection of or degradation to portable water supply or aquatic environment
- **Connectivity** – proximity to existing conservation lands or planned corridor, size of connection

#### **Conservation Easements for Agricultural Land:**

In addition to the natural resource value criteria, considerations for acquisition of easements for agricultural land include:

- **Land quality for agricultural use** - prime, unique, local or state-wide importance
- **Economic viability** - size, on-site farm infrastructure, proximity to off-site farm infrastructure
- **Compatibility of surrounding uses**
- **Degree of development pressure** - proximity to the urban service boundary, zoning, residential development
- **Proximity** to other protected agricultural, environmental lands or wildlife corridors/greenways
- **Enhancement or preservation** of wildlife habitat, air or water quality, hydrology, ground water recharge, scenic, historic, or other cultural features

#### **Conservation and Parks Projects Referendum won 71% voter approval**

- 0.15 millage and up to \$50 million bonds maturing with 20 years (R 20-105 Sect. 3)
- “To finance the acquisition, improvement, and management of land to protect drinking water sources and water quality, preserve fish and wildlife habitat, prevent stormwater runoff pollution, and provide parks” (R 20-105 Sect. 5)
- Annual public audits (R 20-105 Sect. 5)

#### **December 14, 2021 – Resolution 21-182 approved by BCC**

- Appointing ELMAC to implement the Referendum and establishing a BCC liaison to ELMAC.