

**MANATEE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELMAC)
SPECIAL MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER, 5TH FLOOR, MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
July 13, 2026**

Present were:

Mason Gravley, Chairman
Mike Burton
Robert Brown, (via Teams)
Kyle Fisher
Alyssa Gay, (via Teams)
Ruth Lawler
Merrie Lynn Parker
Charles Richards, (via Teams)
Scott Tussing

Absent were:

Kate Horne, Vice-Chairman
Scott Childress
Eric DiSilvestro
Richard Larsen
Jonathan Lynch

There are three vacant seats.

Also present were:

Tal Siddique, Board of County Commissioner, (via Teams)
Bryan Parnell, Deputy County Administrator, (via Teams)
Charlie Hunsicker, Natural Resources Director
Kara Koenig, Environmental Lands Program Section Manager
Kendall Carson, Environmental Lands Program Coordinator
Mike Elswick, Resource Management Division Manager
Hannah Bishop, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

 Chairman Gravley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

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1. **WELCOME**

 Chairman Gravley welcomed all to the meeting.

2. **MINUTES**

 A motion was made by Member Tussing, seconded by Member Burton, and carried 9-0, with Members Childress, DiSilvestro, Horne, Larsen, and Lynch absent, to approve the minutes of May 4, 2026.

3. **STAFF REPORTS**

 Kara Koenig, Environmental Lands Program Section Manager, utilized a slide presentation to review the Inspector General Audit, and Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Advisory Committee (ELMAC) ordinance updates.

EL MB FY 25-26/17

4. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

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

5. **COMMITTEE MEMBER APPOINTMENTS**

 Ms. Koenig provided an update on committee membership, noting Keep Manatee Beautiful representative would be presented to the Board at the July 28, 2026, meeting, reviewed the June 2026 term expirations, and planned advertising in December 2026 for Districts 1, 2, 3, and 6 seats.

6. **AUTHORIZATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION AND BALLOT LANGUAGE**

 Casey Bauer, Florida Conservation Finance Director, utilized a slide presentation to review who the Trust For Public Land (TPL) is, what is TPL's conservation finance program, track record, over 25 years of conservation finance, TPL ballot measures in Florida, results by precinct, Manatee County technical assistance request, key steps for successful ballot measures, feasibility study, bonds if constitutional amendment passes, bond with additional property tax, bond with additional property tax if constitutional amendment passes, other potential 2026 conservation finance measures, Manatee County 2020 conservation measure, TPL proposed ballot language for 2026, and the next steps.

 Discussion ensued regarding conservation funding measures implemented by other counties, feasibility research, background on Sarasota County's proposed \$250 million conservation bond referendum, the proposed ballot language, new and existing millage rates, Truth in Millage (TRIM) and potential tax impact on residents, Natural Resources data, campaign materials and timeline, the process for funding projects, and available resources.

Ms. Koenig stated the County Attorney's office and bond counsel provided feedback regarding the proposed resolution and ballot language, and would be meeting to discuss the proposed revisions.

 A motion was made by Member Burton, second by Member Fisher, and carried 9-0, with Members Childress, DiSilvestro, Horne, Larsen, and Lynch absent, to recommend approval of the proposed resolution and ballot language, to the Board of County Commissioners.

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7. **CONSERVATION ACQUISITION CANDIDATE PROPERTIES**
Candidate and Fee-Simple Property Prioritization Updates

 Kara Koenig, Environmental Lands Division Manager, reviewed the following updates and charts (Natural Resources criteria total points and Criteria total and risk of conversion):

- Anson Road Properties (557 acres) – Interested in fee-simple acquisition
- City of Bradenton Scrub Habitat (550 acres) – Conservation Easement consideration
- LMR Connector #1 (153 acres and #2 41 acres) – Interested in fee-simple acquisition
- Pope Ranch (120 acres) – Interested in fee-simple acquisition
- Taylor Grade Road (149 acres) – Interest in fee-simple acquisition
- QMF parcel (71 acres) – One of two appraisal inspections completed
- Sweet Bay Property (24 acres) – Unable to move forward unless referendum passes

 Discussion ensued regarding ranking on each chart (Natural Resources criteria and Criteria total and risk of conversion), total points, price per acre for each property, timelines for categorizing properties, Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), focus on higher-priority properties prior to the November election, additional properties will be presented at the next meeting, prioritizing and direction focus, funding strategies, the City of Bradenton Scrub and QMF parcels should be top priority to acquire, put focus towards the larger land parcels, connectivity, agricultural use in the resolution language, review the properties on the current list at the next meeting, and update the dashboard to reflect these properties.

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

No action required.

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

 Member Parker received feedback from the Inspector General's office regarding the Environmental Lands Millage funds, and requested Member Burton provide an outline of public speaking tips for campaigning in support of Environmental Lands.

Chairman Gravley encouraged Members to attend the July 28, 2026, Board of County Commissioners meeting, to support the proposed resolution and ballot language.

The next meeting will take place at 6:00 p.m., on August 3, 2026, in the Fifth Floor, Manatee Room, Manatee County Administration Building, 1112 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton.

10. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Gravley adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Minutes Approved: August 3, 2026