

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

30 Year Anniversary Report 1990 – 2020

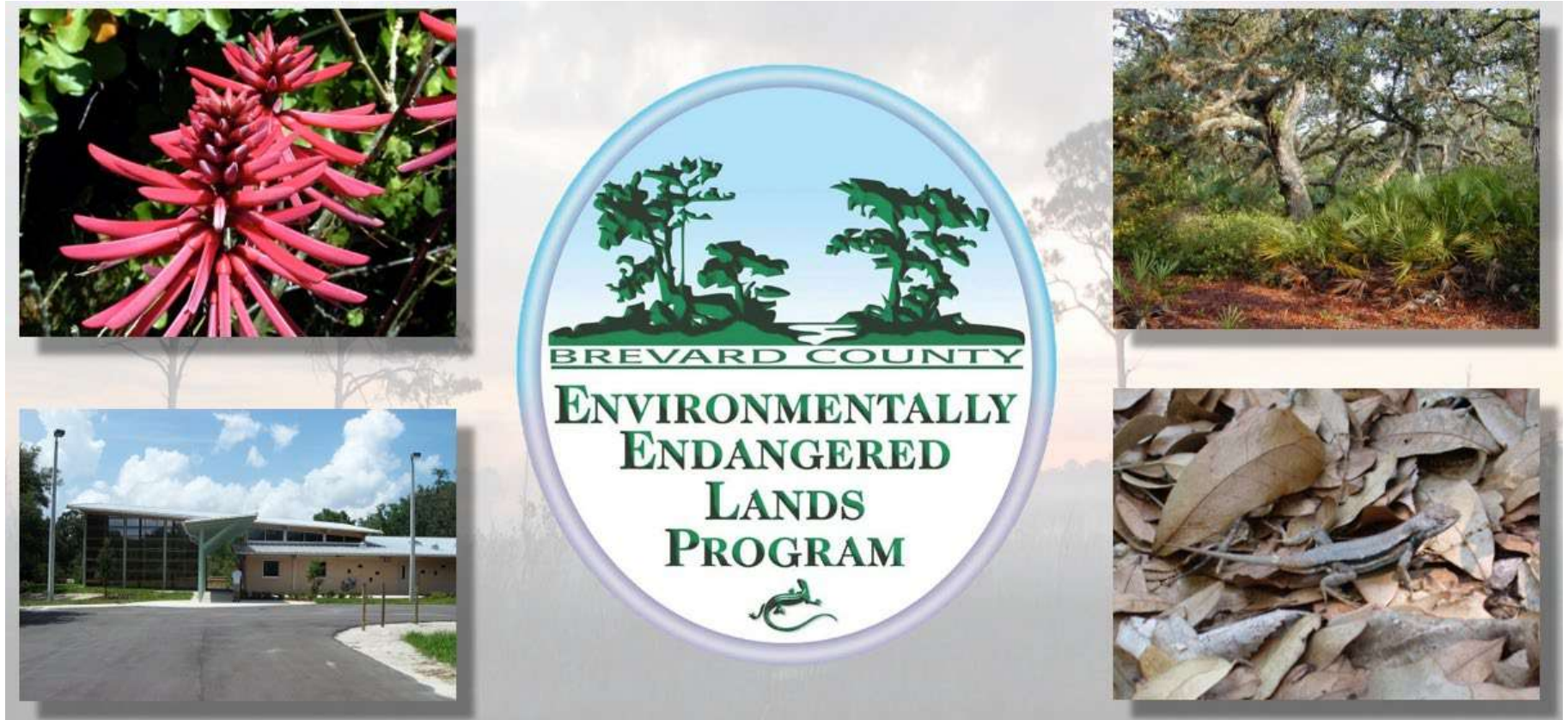


Figure 1: Cover photos clockwise from top left: Coral Bean, Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Logo, Malabar Scrub, Scrub Lizard, Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

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Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Program Mission

Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity
Through Responsible Stewardship
of Brevard County's Natural Resources

Program Vision

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program acquires, protects and maintains environmentally endangered lands guided by scientific principles for conservation and the best available practices for resource stewardship and ecosystem management. The EEL Program protects the rich biological diversity of Brevard County for future generations. The EEL Program provides passive recreation and environmental education opportunities to Brevard's citizens and visitors without detracting from the primary conservation goals of the program. The EEL Program encourages active citizen participation and community involvement.

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Figure 2: Image of Pine Island Conservation Area - Merritt Island

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Brevard's Conservation Legacy

Brevard County's commitment to long-term land conservation through the Environmentally Endangered Lands referenda has been viewed as a model by other conservation organizations in Florida and around the United States. The science-based land selection and management process was designed to ensure that all decisions were supported by the best available scientific research and represents:

- an effective conservation tool to ensure that ecosystems, natural communities and species are protected for future generations;
- a first step towards long-term protection of essential natural resources, open space, green space wildlife corridors and maintenance of ecosystem functions;
- a mechanism to enhance community, environmental, and economic values through strategic planning for balanced growth management, conservation and economic development;
- an opportunity to establish a nature sanctuary network that provides passive recreation and environmental education programs to Brevard County residents and visitors.



Figure 3: Image of the Enchanted Forest Amphitheater. Image of young Great Horned Owls at Cruickshank Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Preserving Brevard's Natural Landscapes

In 1990, Brevard County citizens voted to protect the unique environmental values of their community by approving the Environmentally Endangered Lands Referendum. The referendum called for acquiring, protecting and maintaining environmentally endangered lands and making improvements as appropriate for passive recreation and environmental education. Due to the success of the Program and ongoing public support, a second referendum was approved by voters in 2004 to continue acquiring endangered land and water areas to protect animal habitats, water resources, open spaces for passive recreation.

The fundamental purpose of the EEL Program is to protect the rich biological diversity and health of Brevard County's ecosystems, to manage the protected areas for conservation, and to provide passive recreation and environmental education. The EEL Program has a primary focus on:

- Natural Communities - prioritizing the needs of threatened or endangered habitats, plants and animals.
- Forest Resources - protecting forest types and their associated ecological values.
- Wetlands and Coastal Resources -
 - Conserve natural and aesthetic attributes
 - Improve buffers to enhance commercial and recreational saltwater and brackish fishing opportunities.
 - Improve the upland-wetland estuarine linkages.



Figure 4: Image of Cruickshank Sanctuary. Image of Scottsmeer Flatwoods Sanctuary. Image of Maritime Hammock Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Principles of Conservation

The Program adheres to ten basic “Principles of Conservation” which are the foundation for balancing ecological management and public use issues with the responsibility of resource conservation. These principles are used to guide all decisions related to the implementation of the program and are based upon prudent scientific conservation concepts.

- Maintain all sites in a natural state and/or restore sites to enhance natural resource values.
- Protect natural resources values by maintaining biological diversity and using conservation as a primary goal for decision making.
- Balance human use with the protection of natural resources.
- Apply the most accurate scientific principles to strategies for conservation.
- Collect and utilize the most accurate data available for developing site management plans.
- Consider the interests and values of all citizens by using scientific information to guide management policy making.
- Promote effective communication that is interactive, reciprocal, and continuous with the public.
- Promote the value of natural areas to Brevard County residents and visitors through the maintenance of the quality of resource values, public service and visitor experiences.
- Promote the integration of natural resources conservation into discussions of economic development and quality of life in Brevard County.
- Provide a responsible financial strategy to implement actions to achieve long-term conservation and stewardship goals.



Figure 5: Image of Scottsmeer Flatwoods Sanctuary. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay provided by Steve Van Meter. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay in a pair of hands with its wing extended.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Key Accomplishments

- Preservation of over **28,000 acres** of upland and wetland ecosystems throughout Brevard County to protect plant communities and wildlife populations supported by **\$42 million** of partnership and grant funding from acquisition partners such as the State of Florida, St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Communities Trust, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, City of Cocoa Beach, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Air Force.
- Protection of over 37 miles of natural shoreline along the Indian River Lagoon and its major tributaries.
- Creation of 75 miles of multi-use trails for citizens and visitors to explore and enjoy the natural beauty of Brevard County.
- The creation and operation of three Management and Environmental Education Centers that provide regular educational programming and community events for Brevard citizens and visitors supported by **\$152,000** in grant funding.
- Restoration and management projects on over **25,000 acres**, supported by over **\$4.7 million** in grant funding focused on improving natural systems to preserve ecosystem services such as: water conservation, wildlife food sources, wildfire prevention, carbon sequestration, aesthetic and increased land values.
- Preservation of cultural and historical resource sites.
- Establishment of ongoing ecological land management practices that maintain these natural resources to ensure they remain sustainable and biologically diverse.

Over the past 30 years the EEL Program has established a conservation, recreation and environmental educational network within our local communities. Ongoing funding support is essential to ensure these accomplishments are maintained for future generations to enjoy.



Figure 6: Image of Cruickshank Sanctuary. Image of Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Image of Coconut Point Sanctuary. Image of a group of people outside the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Science-based Land Preservation

An important objective of the EEL Program is the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands for preservation, conservation and responsible long-term management. These lands are environmentally unique and irreplaceable. They contain excellent examples of natural communities, forest resources, plants, animals, coastal and wetland resources, and geologic features. These lands contribute to the environmental, economic and aesthetic values of Brevard County. Lands are evaluated based on rarity, vulnerability, and threat of local extinction in Brevard County and Florida.

The EEL Program operates under the following fundamental goal structure:

Primary Goal - To protect the rich biological diversity of plant and animal life in Brevard County.

Secondary Goal - To ensure that our ecosystems function properly and benefit Brevard County's natural resources.

Additional Goals Include:

- The protection of educational values of our natural landscapes.
- Protection of research or scientific values of our natural landscapes.
- Protection of cultural, passive recreational and aesthetic values of our natural landscapes.

We achieve these goals through support in three key areas:

- Local citizen and funding support
- State funding support through the Florida Forever Program and other agencies.
- Landowners who are willing sellers.



Figure 7: Image of a banded Florida Scrub-jay held in a hand. Image of a plant survey at Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Completing Wildlife Corridors

Protecting lands where white-tailed deer, Florida Scrub-jays, bobcats, black bear, otters, gopher tortoises, bald eagles and many other species occur is an ongoing and essential EEL Program strategy to create wildlife corridors for species that are key to Florida's diverse landscape and character.

Most remaining lands identified within the EEL acquisition strategy are small tracts to fill important gaps existing between larger conservation areas. Completing these important habitat connections is critical to the long-term protection of biological diversity.

The Indian River Lagoon benefits from the preservation of lands along its shoreline. Restoration and management of shoreline landscapes helps to protect the biodiversity and water quality of this important estuary for both commercial and recreational uses.



Figure 8: Image of conservation gaps at Grant Flatwoods Sanctuary. Image of a bobcat at Sams House. Image of a bald eagle's nest at Pine Island Conservation Area. Image of a white-tailed deer at Micco Scrub Sanctuary

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

North Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Laney Conservation Easement
Location: Scottsmoor
Acres: 38
Managing Agency: Private
2. North Indian River Lagoon Sanctuary
Location: Scottsmoor / Mims
Acres: 426
Managing Agency: US Fish and Wildlife Service and Brevard County EEL
3. Scottsmoor Flatwoods Sanctuary
Location: Scottsmoor
Acres: 1542
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
4. North Buck Lake Sanctuary
Location: Mims
Acres: 177
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
5. Buck Lake Conservation Area
Location: Mims
Acres: 7708
Managing Agency: St. Johns River Water Management District
6. Indian Mound Station Sanctuary
Location: Mims
Acres: 147
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

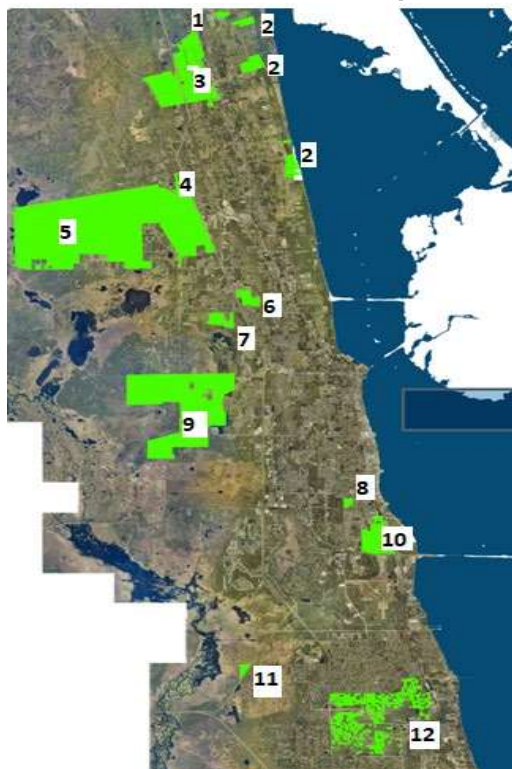


Figure 9: Map of the sanctuaries in the North Region numbered one through twelve from the North in Scottsmoor/Mims South to Cocoa

7. South Lake Conservation Area
Location: Titusville
Acres: 155
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
8. Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Titusville
Acres: 44
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
9. Fox Lake Sanctuary
Location: Titusville
Acres: 2568
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
10. Enchanted Forest Sanctuary
Location: Titusville
Acres: 481
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
11. Challenger Marsh Sanctuary
Location: Cocoa
Acres: 47
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
12. Grissom Road Complex
Location: Cocoa
Acres: 969
Managing Agency: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Brevard County EEL

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Central Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Pine Island Conservation Area
Location: North Merritt Island
Acres: 881
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
2. Kabboord Sanctuary
Location: North Merritt Island
Acres: 902
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
3. Ulumay Wildlife Sanctuary
Location: Merritt Island
Acres: 1320
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
4. Hellen and Allan Cruickshank Sanctuary
Location: Rockledge
Acres: 167
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



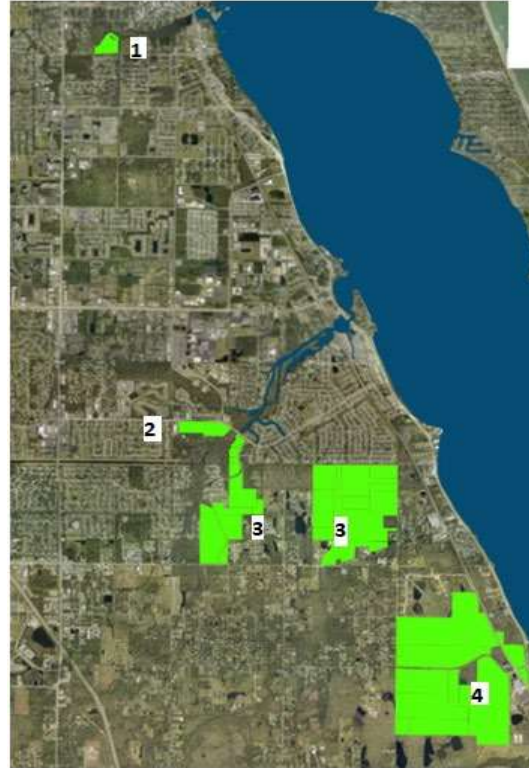
5. Thousand Islands Conservation Area
Location: Cocoa Beach
Acres: 338
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
6. Capron Ridge Sanctuary
Location: Viera
Acres: 21
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

Figure 10: Map of the sanctuaries in the Central Region numbered one through six from North Merritt Island South to Viera and East to Cocoa Beach. Image of Thousand Islands Conservation Area.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Mainland Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Crane Creek Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne
Acres: 23
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
2. Turkey Creek Addition
Location: Malabar
Acres: 35
Managing Agency: City of Palm Bay
3. Malabar Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Malabar
Acres: 579
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



4. Jordan Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Malabar
Acres: 750
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

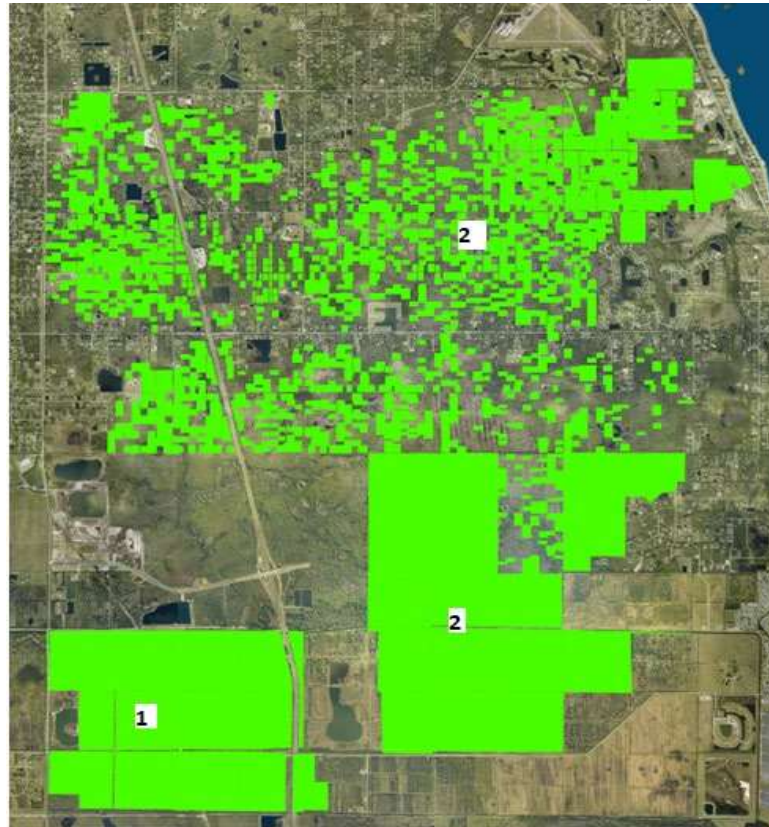


Figure 11: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Region numbered one through four located from Melbourne South to Malabar. Image of Crane Creek Sanctuary provided by Karen McLaughlin.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Mainland Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Micco Scrub Sanctuary
Location: Micco
Acres: 1784
Managing Agency: Brevard County
EEL



2. Grant Flatwoods Sanctuary
Location: Grant / Valkaria
Acres: 6480
Managing Agency: Brevard County
EEL and Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

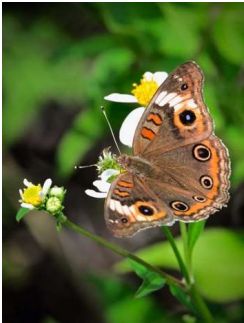


Figure 12: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Region numbered one and two located in Grant / Valkaria south to Micco. Image of a gopher tortoise. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay with a seed in its mouth.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Beaches Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Ocean Ridge Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 11
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
2. Coconut Point Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 62
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



3. Hog Point Cove Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 18
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

Figure 13: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Beaches Region numbered one through three located in North Melbourne Beach. Image of a Buckeye Butterfly provided by Steve Van Meter. Image of Maritime Hammock Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Beaches Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Hog Point Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 20
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
2. Washburn Cove Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 39
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
3. Maritime Hammock Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 167
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL



Figure 14: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Beaches Region numbered one through three in Central Melbourne Beach. Image of the Barrier Island Sanctuary. Image of Tour de Turtles at Barrier Island Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

South Beaches Brevard Preservation Accomplishments

1. Mullet Creek Islands
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 86
Managing Agency: Florida State Parks



2. Barrier Island Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 34
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL
3. Hardwood Hammock Sanctuary
Location: Melbourne Beach
Acres: 36
Managing Agency: Brevard County EEL

Figure 15: Map of the sanctuaries in the South Beaches Region numbered one through three from North to South in South Melbourne Beach. Image of a group of people standing near the sea turtle exhibit at the Barrier Island Sanctuary. Image of the Barrier Island Sanctuary.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Prescribed Fire

In the natural landscapes of Brevard County, it is critical to implement management actions on a regular basis to ensure the referendum objectives are met. Maintaining prescribed fire cycles and controlling invasive exotic species cannot occur without active management. Most Florida habitats have evolved under the constant influence of fire and depend on its rejuvenating properties for long-term survival.

The continued use of prescribed fire and regular land management actions are of critical importance to maintain healthy and diverse plant and animal populations. EEL lands support a variety of threatened and endangered species including the Florida Scrub-jay which is directly dependent upon ongoing habitat management for their continued survival. Protecting native biodiversity is the first and overriding objective of the EEL Program.

If left unburned for long periods, EEL Sanctuaries become more vulnerable to wildfire, increasing the potential for impacts to nearby homes and businesses. Maintaining regular burn rotations reduces fuel build-up and protects homes and businesses from wildfire. Wildfires, unlike prescribed burns, can have a significant negative impact on natural habitats and wildlife.

The EEL Program has implemented prescribed burns on 12,541 acres of the nature sanctuary lands.



Figure 16: Image of a prescribed fire. Image of a lightning strike. Image of overgrown Pine Flatwoods. Image of restored Pine Flatwoods habitat after a prescribed burn.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Exotic Species Management and Habitat Restoration

Invasive and exotic plant and animal species have invaded many of the native habitats in Florida. To prevent invasive species from taking over our native landscapes regular maintenance and monitoring is required to eradicate harmful species.

The EEL Program has worked closely with the State of Florida Invasive Plant Management Program to invest over **\$4.3 million** in State funding to remove non-native species on 11,410 acres in an effort to maintain invasive free conservation lands. Invasive plant seed sources from surrounding private property must be monitored and controlled to maintain existing habitat restoration efforts.



Figure 17: Image of a Feral Pig at the Enchanted Forest. Image of an excavator with grapple removing Australian Pine at Thousand Island Conservation Area. Image of roots removed from the Thousand Island Conservation Area. Image of Australian Pine removal at Thousand Island Conservation Area.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

General Maintenance

The upkeep of EEL Program facilities, lands, equipment and recreational resources is an ongoing need that requires staff resources and adequate funding support.

In order to achieve the EEL Program's ecological land management goals staff must routinely maintain the following public resources and assets:

- 102 miles of fire control lines that need to be either mowed or plowed with a tractor and disc-harrow at least twice annually.
- 49 miles of access and maintenance roads require routine maintenance such as grading, tree-removal and general mowing.
- 61 miles of fence line and boundary signs require periodic inspection and repairs.
- 152 Access gates require regular monitoring and periodic repairs.
- 33 Public trailhead and parking areas and 51 informational kiosks.
- 3 Management and Environmental Education Centers require ongoing upkeep.
- 1.25 miles of boardwalks and footbridges.

Illegal dumping occurs frequently with 106 tons of trash removed from the conservation lands to date.



Figure 18: Image of the boardwalk at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Image of a boundary fence in the South Beaches Region. Image of a boundary fence at Cruickshank Sanctuary. Image of the kiosk at Pine Island Conservation Area.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Educating Visitors About Conservation Benefits

Environmental education contributes to public knowledge and awareness of the natural, historical and archaeological resource values of Brevard County. The EEL Program has implemented a comprehensive environmental education framework which has provided quality nature-based experiences for nearly 850,000 residents and visitors.

The result of a Master Site Plan process completed in the late 1990's set into motion a plan for the development of four Management and Education Centers. The Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center was the first to be completed and opened to the public in 2003. The Barrier Island Center opened in 2008, followed by the Sams House Management and Education Center which opened in 2010. Average visitation at the three centers over the last five years has been nearly 80,000 visitors annually. Due to operational limitations the fourth Management and Education Center, planned for the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary is on hold pending the outcome of a future long-term funding plan.

The three centers have provided environmental education programs to over 215,000 participants since the first center opened in 2003. Nearly 80,000 of these participants have been Brevard school children. The Program has received \$186,000 in grant funding to support its environmental education mission.



Figure 19: Image of the sea turtle exhibit at the Barrier Island Center. Image of the Enchanted Forest Center. Image of the Barrier Island Center. Image of Sams House at Pine Island.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Creating and Maintaining Passive Recreation Opportunities

Finding a balance between public-use impacts and natural resource protection is a key challenge to implementing effective land protection and stewardship. The EEL Program provides a variety of passive recreation opportunities that are consistent with the program's conservation and protection goals of the voter-approved referendums.

More than 75 miles of public use trails for passive recreation including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, nature observation, paddling, fishing and camping provide outdoor opportunities for residents and tourists visiting Brevard County. EEL has worked with 56 Eagle Scouts to date to construct many public use resources in support of visitor activities.

Oversight and maintenance of public use resources is essential to ensure safe and proper functionality for visitors and to verify that facilities and amenities are not in conflict with site ecological goals. Without proper oversight, trails systems and parking areas can be vandalized or used inappropriately. A quick response to vandalism issues helps discourage it from happening in the future.

Periodic trail use monitoring data suggests that there are more than 170,000 visitors utilizing the sanctuary trails annually.



Figure 20: Image of the kayak launch at Pine Island. Image of Maritime Hammock Sanctuary. Image of the Thousand Islands Trail Head. Image of the footbridge at Malabar Scrub.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Volunteers and Friends Groups

The success of the EEL Program has been heavily dependent upon the involvement of citizen volunteers who play an important role in achieving the objectives of the EEL referendums. Three volunteer citizen advisory committees meet regularly to provide guidance, oversight and recommendations to staff and the County Commission.

The EEL Selection and Management Committee serves as an expert scientific advisory committee to EEL staff and the County Commission on all issues involving the acquisition and management of environmentally endangered lands within the EEL Program protected area network.

The EEL Procedures Committee serves as an advisory committee to county staff and the Selection and Management Committee regarding policies, procedures and standards for land acquisition.

The EEL Recreation and Education Advisory Committee serves as an advisory committee to EEL staff and the Selection and Management Committee regarding recommendations for public access, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities on EEL managed lands.

The EEL Program has also facilitated volunteer participation in a variety of ways including the establishment of five citizen-led non-profit support groups, providing local high school scholarship volunteer hours, AmeriCorps Civilian Conservation Corps, alternative university spring break outings, Boy Scout and Girl Scout workdays including hosting over 56 Eagle Scout Projects, and regular volunteer opportunities that assist with education center operations, environmental education programs, and trail maintenance.

Each year over 200 volunteers contribute 12,000 hours of time to the program. This represents an annual financial contribution of over \$276,000. Since 2005, volunteers have contributed over 149,000 hours of time worth over \$3.1 million to the County.



Figure 21: Image of an Advisory Committee. Image of AmeriCorps Civilian Conservation Corps Volunteers. Image of Eagle Scouts.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Program Funding Summary

The funding support structure established in the 1990 and 2004 referendums provided for two 20-year bonding periods. The termination of the 1990 referendum in 2011, emphasized the need to explore future, long-term funding options to continue Program operations beyond the termination of the 2004 referendum in 2024.

In 1997, at the request of the County Commission, the EEL Program Selection and Management Committee recommended a Financial Plan to ensure the Program would meet its capital bond debt-service obligations and have sufficient funds for long-term management. The proposed plan designated a combination of annually appropriated general revenue and EEL Program ad valorem revenue not required for bond debt to pay Program costs. The proposal also recommended establishing an endowment fund and the continued maximization of the voter-approved millage collection at 0.25 mills.

On September 23, 1997, the Board of County Commissioners chose to continue funding EEL operations through the use of the ad valorem millage that was not required for bond debt service. At that time, it was noted the Board of County Commissioners would consider funding options and financial resources to address the operations of the EEL Program after 2011.

The first referendum bonds were issued in 1991, 1993 and 2005 totaling \$45,608,969. \$45 million of the voter-approved maximum capacity of \$60 million has been issued under the 2004 referendum, and \$4 million of these bond proceeds were used to pay off bond debt in 2011.

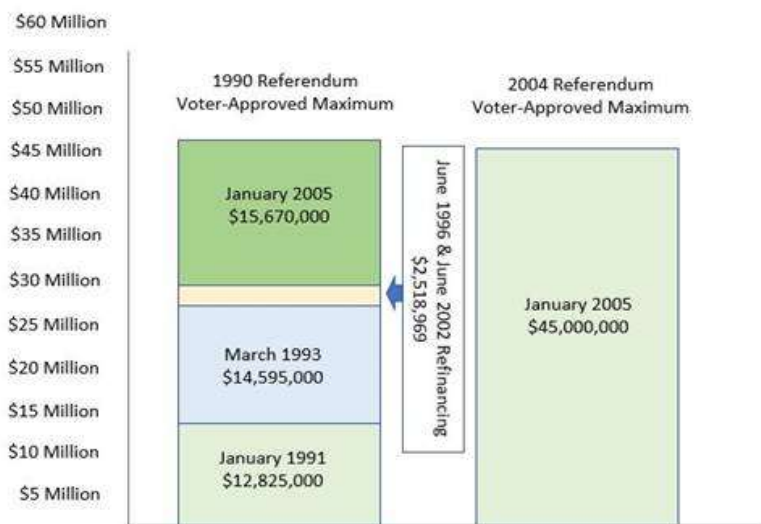


Figure 22: Graph of funding summary and bonding associated with the 1990 and 2004 referenda.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Environmentally Endangered Lands Referenda Milestones



Figure 23: Image of Pine Flatwoods

December 1989: County Commission appointed the EEL Procedures Committee members to create the Land Acquisition Manual	July & August 1990: County Commission adopted the EEL Land Acquisition Manual and appoints members of the EEL Selection Committee	September 1990: First EEL referendum passes	1993: County Commission and State of Florida establish first project boundary and enter into Multi-Party Acquisition Agreement	September 1997: County Commission adopts the Sanctuary Management Manual but defers the proposed long-term Financial Plan until after 2011	July 1998: County Commission approves Master Site Plans for four Management and Environmental Education Centers	November 2002: Enchanted Forest Management and Education Center opens to the public	November 2004: Second EEL referendum passes	May 2008: Barrier Island Management and Education Center opens to the public	August 2010: Sams House Management and Education Center opens to the public	2011: \$4 Million of bond funds used to pay off bond debt	2011: First EEL referendum ends	2024: Second EEL referendum will sunset
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Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

The Value of Conservation to Brevard County

Numerous studies have shown that natural areas and open space contribute positive economic benefits to local communities. In recognition of the importance of cost-benefit analyses to assist Program planning and annual budget allocations, the EEL Program is encouraged to identify and quantify the economic costs and benefits of EEL sanctuaries. In 2020 the Program contracted with Closewaters LLC to evaluate Program accomplishments in an effort to quantify the economic value of the EEL Program to Brevard County and the value to the County of continuing Program funding into the future.

A variety of categories of value were analyzed:

- Contribution to restoration of the Indian River Lagoon
- Eco-Tourism
- Leveraged State and Federal funding
- Taxed value to constituents
- Volunteer labor
- Value to the development community for mitigation

The analysis determined that the Present Value of the EEL Program to the County is \$496 million.

A variety of additional categories were identified as likely having significant economic value but were beyond the limited scope of this particular analysis. These categories include; quality of life, wildfire risk protection, local government development mitigation potential, water resource protection and aquifer replenishment, flood protection, carbon sequestration, air quality, human health benefits, endangered species protection, and environmental education programming.



Figure 24: Image of a gopher tortoise provided by Jonny Baker. Image of Crane Creek provided by Karen McLaughlin. Image of Lyonia provided by Steve Van Meter.

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

The Future of the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Over the last 30 years, the EEL Program has established an important nature sanctuary network in Brevard County that welcomes 250,000 visitors annually. Thirty years of ecological land management actions have successfully restored thousands of acres of natural ecosystems that require ongoing maintenance to ensure they remain healthy. Without active management to maintain fire cycles and control invasive and non-native species, the health of these ecosystems and the species they support will degrade and see diminished biological diversity. In natural landscapes that are fragmented by roads and development, it is vital that management actions continue in order to maintain the ecological processes necessary for healthy and biologically diverse ecosystems.

The funding mechanism established by the 2004 referendum will end in 2024. A funding source beyond 2024 has yet to be identified to provide ongoing management of the conservation lands into the future.



Figure 25: Image of a white-tailed deer. Image of an American Alligator. Image of a white-tailed fawn. Image of a bald eagle with offspring provided by Steve Van Meter. Image of a Florida Scrub-jay. Image of a bird's nest with three eggs

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

EEL Contact Information

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Figure 26: Image of Cruickshank Sanctuary.

“A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children.” - John James Audubon