

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Betsy Clayton, APR/CPRC
Communications Director
Lee County Government
239 533-2221
LeeCountyPIO@leegov.com

Lee Commissioners establish tiered system to rank properties proposed for Conservation 20/20
Board approves pursuing acquisition of nine parcels

Fort Myers, FL, Sept. 16, 2025 – The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted Tuesday to approve a two-tiered acquisition priority matrix for potential Conservation 20/20 properties, clearly identifying those properties with greatest environmental importance and evaluation score.

The priority system, which was approved by the Conservation 20/20 Land Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee (CLASAC), would rank parcels as:

- Tier I: High-quality new nominations will be considered for placement in Tier I as they are received and approved as such by the Board.
- Tier II: As acquisitions for Tier I nominations close or come to an impasse, Tier II parcels and new nominations will be considered depending upon their environmental importance, score values, and available funding.

Commissioners also authorized staff to pursue acquisition activity for nine nominations recommended by CLASAC within their respective tier. The parcels are:

- Three parcels of 10, 27.9 and 30 acres on Pine Island. The 10-acre parcel is adjacent to Pine Island Flatwoods Preserve and the other parcels are in the vicinity of Buttonwood Preserve.
- Four parcels totaling about 98 acres south of Cemetery Road and west of Jackson Road in the Buckingham area.
- 13 acres with about 1,500 linear feet along the Orange River, located at the intersection of Buckingham and Cemetery roads in Buckingham.
- 34.94 acres on Sanibel Island, adjacent to the City of Sanibel's Pond Apple Park.

Any successful negotiation for purchase will come back before the Board of County Commissioners for consideration at a regularly scheduled meeting.

CLASAC meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. Visit www.leegov.com/parks/conservation2020 to learn about the process of nominating land, view a nomination status map, see materials from public meetings and read annual and quarterly reports.

Conservation 20/20 was established in 1996 and more than 31,000 acres of conservation lands are part of the program.

The success of the Conservation 20/20 program is shared in tandem with partners, including the federal government, state government, special districts, nonprofits and municipalities.

Additional partners in the countywide conservation efforts include developers, due to the county's priorities. County Commissioners have created policies that prioritize open spaces, flow ways and wildlife corridors during the development process.

In many parts of the United States, conservation lands are purchased through privately funded organizations.

Of the county's total land area of 520,576 acres, the total amount of acres of conservation land is 141,758. This means that 27% of all land in geographic Lee County is held in conservation.

To receive updates from Lee County Government, sign up for the newsletter here: www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters. Follow Lee County Government on Facebook, www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc.