Environmentally Sensitive Lands Oversight Committee

Conservation Charlotte is a program of Charlotte County Government

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July 13, 2026
Community Services/Centennial Park
Large Administration Conference Room
1120 Centennial Boulevard
Port Charlotte, FL 33953

Members Present: Stephen Kalaf – Vice Chair
Shaun O'Rourke – Chair
Dianne M. Quilty
John Osanitsch
Christina Gonzalez
Linda Cotherman
Amber Mitchell

County Staff: Tina Powell
Jamie Scudera
Jason Thompson
Kalvin Bernard
Cal Keene
Morgan Cook

Call to Order / Roll Call:
The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Vice Chair Stephen Kalaf. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes:
The minutes from the May 18, 2026 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved as submitted.

Old Business:
Conservation Charlotte Renewal 2026 – Mrs. Powell let us know that this item was presented to the BCC in late June. The Public Hearing for this item will be on July 28 at 10am to make it onto the ballot. Additionally, once this item is on the ballot County staff can no longer advocate for this program and/or nominate parcels.

New Business:
New Members welcome – The committee welcomed new member Amber Mitchell.
Schedule meeting dates – The committee members are happy with the new 1pm timeframe. Our next meeting is September 21st. Cal Keene will put together a new calendar for the next fiscal year and email it to the members. This topic will be moved to Old Business for our next meeting for discussion.

Joint meeting with ANRAC – Stephen Kalaf also sits on the Agricultural/Natural Resources Advisory Committee and states there are similarities between that committee and ESLOC. He suggests a potential collaboration in discussing storm water MSBUs and other topics. Morgan Cook and Dianne Quilty helped provide more insight in what the ANRAC does. Mr. Kalaf states that a member of ANRAC is reaching out to Legal to see if collaboration would be permitted, and suggests communication begins between the two Chairs.

Site Nomination Presentations – The committee reviewed presentations of sites that were nominated via Conservation Charlotte and then assessed by the County. The sites presented include file numbers: 2026-44 and 2026-50. Packets were handed out to members and guests that included definition of rankings via the Ordinance, as well as nomination tracking sheets. Discussion ensued between committee members regarding file number 2026-44 (1145 Alton Road), noting that it is currently an undeveloped residential lot and does not have native habitat or natural communities present. Dianne Quilty made a motion not to consider file number 2026-44 for recommendation to the BCC. Stephen Kalaf seconded the motion. Motion approved. File number 2026-50 has been tabled for further discussion at a later date.

Staff Reports:
Land Management – Mr. Thompson stated Land Management is compiling the data from the Scrub Jay surveys. There are over 160 birds and 34-37 family groups. LM interns are getting experience with exotic treatments, surveys, and vegetative maintenance along the trails. LM is also gearing up for prescribed burns.

HCP – Ms. Scudera stated they are still trying to acquire properties.

Coastal – Ms. Scudera reported on the numbers of sea turtles, shore birds and sea birds.

Managers Comments – Mrs. Powell has been working on the referendum and preparing Charlotte Conservation Renewal for the BCC.

Member Comments – John Osanitsch wanted an update on getting a list of existing environmentally sensitive lands. Mrs. Powell has made a request to the GIS department for compiling information and is waiting their follow-up.

Linda Cotherman wanted to confirm the amount of funding for this program. Mrs. Powell stated that there is approximately 7.9 million dollars available for acquisition.

Amber Mitchell asked clarifying questions regarding the funds available and their use, which Mrs. Powell helped answer.

Shaun O'Rourke asks the process of obtaining and managing environmentally sensitive lands owned by the County that 1. Was not purchased through Conservation Charlotte or 2. Is not under the jurisdiction of Parks and Natural Resources. Mrs. Powell answers that the land in question would have to be given to PNR and designated usage by the BCC.

Dianne Quilty asked about the timeline regarding getting willing seller statements for nominated parcels. Mrs. Powell answered that Real Estate Services reaches out to owners for the willing seller statements and she will follow-up with them to get a full rundown on their process. Ms. Quilty also asked for a map showing ecological corridors, which Mrs. Powell will email to her.

Christina Gonzalez and Linda Cotherman requested a binder that includes Ordinances, previous agendas and minutes, maps, and nominated parcels. Cal Keene will work on this and provide at the next meeting.

Citizen Input:

N/a

Suggested topics for next business:

N/a

Meeting adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by: Cal Keene
Community Services Department