

# **Conservation Collier RR Land Trust Interim Management Plan**

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July 2007

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## **1.0 Purpose and Scope of the Interim Management Plan**

The RR Land Trust was purchased by Collier County in June 2007 through funds from the Conservation Collier program. The property will be managed only for conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources and for public outdoor recreation that will be compatible with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the site and its surrounding lands. Public use of the site will not be possible until legal public access can be established.

This interim management plan is intended to identify the key management priorities and issues within the site and give direction for management until the Railhead Scrub Preserve Final Management Plan is revised to include the RR Land Trust.

### Key Interim Management Objectives

1. Restrict unauthorized access
2. Remove debris from the site
3. Protect and manage the native habitat on site
4. Protect and manage the listed wildlife on site
5. Explore opportunities for grant funding

### Action Plan

- 1a. Erect Field fencing
- 1b. Install temporary 'No trespassing' signs
- 1c. Install signs restricting vehicular access and dumping
- 2a. Remove Debris
- 3a. Install signs that denote all plants and animals within the site as protected
- 3b. Remove and manage invasive exotic vegetation
- 3c. Survey, identify and monitor threatened and/or endangered plant locations
- 4a. Survey and monitor gopher tortoise burrows and listed species (possibly using students from Florida Gulf Coast University)
- 5a. Seek opportunities for grant funding through FLDEP, USFWS, etc.

## **2.0 Management Authority and Responsibilities**

The Collier County Conservation Collier program will be solely responsible for managing the RR Land Trust, but will seek to obtain grants.

## **3.0 Interim Site Plan**

### **3.1 Location and Site Description**

The RR Land Trust is located east of Old US 41 and south of Railhead Industrial Park in Section 30 Township 51 Range 27 within the northwest corner of Collier County, Florida. The 55.03 - acre site contains primarily scrubby flatwoods, but also contains: cypress, pine flatwoods, sand live oak, and freshwater marsh. RR Land Trust is located within the urban boundary of Collier County.

### **3.2 Signage**

In an effort to limit unauthorized vehicular use of the site and dumping, “No Trespassing”, “No Unauthorized Vehicular Access” and “No Dumping” signs will be posted along the border of the property where applicable.

Signs designating all wildlife and vegetation within the site as protected will also be posted along property borders. Signs may be written in both English and Spanish.

### **3.3 Easements, Concessions or Leases**

A 130’ railroad line property owned by CVX, a national railway line, and leased to Gulf Seminole Railway, a local railroad company, runs north-south down the center of the property. The tracks are not active at this time, but the leaseholder, advises that there is potential to make the rail active again in the future. Providing vehicular crossing over this railroad property (which includes bicycles) would be extremely expensive and will eventually be incorporated into the future road project adjacent to the north. Pedestrian access, however, would be more economically feasible.

Florida Power and Light (FPL) has a 50’ minimum active easement that runs north-south through the property 30’ east of the western property line, and Collier County maintains a 30’ stormwater drainage easement east of, adjoining, and parallel to the FPL easement (see Exhibit 2). The FPL easement may be utilized as a public trail. FPL stipulates that the easement must remain clear so that FPL property can be maintained and any plantings along the edges of the easement must remain under 14 ft. in height. Staff will research whether the stormwater drainage easement can be vacated.

### **3.4 Structures**

No known structures are present on the site at this time.

### **3.5 Surrounding and Adjacent Land Uses**

The property is located near U.S. 41 and Old 41, between Krehling Industries, Inc. to the south, two manufactured home communities to the west, land that will be developed for multi-family units to the east (currently named Imperial Lakes) and Conservation Collier land to the north. The Livingston Road right-of-way (ROW) (the future Veterans Memorial Blvd.) bounds it on the north side. Two future school sites are located along the future road ROW. The one closest, one parcel away on the east side, is planned to become a high school previously scheduled to open 2012 but now scheduled to open in 2016. The other school site is farther to the east, an elementary school due to open next year, but road access to this school will not continue west to this property until 2016. The property abuts the Railhead Scrub Preserve on its northeast corner across the road ROW.

## 4.0 Interim Management Objectives

### 4.1 Natural Resource Protection

#### Existing Vegetation:

Native canopy vegetation includes primarily slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), some cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*) scattered throughout, and a few cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) in isolated wetland areas. Native understory species present include live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), sand live oak (*Quercus geminata*), inkberry (*Ilex glabra*), rusty staggerbush (*Lyonia ferruginea*), hog plum (*Ximenia americana*), saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), and winged sumac (*Rhus copallinum*). Groundcover includes pawpaw (*Asimina* spp.), St. John's wort (*Hypericum reductum*), palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), rosemary (*Conradina* spp.), tarflower (*Bejaria racemosa*), shiny blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites*) goldenaster (*Pityopsis graminifolia*), savannah milkweed (*Asclepias pedicellata*), blackroot (*Pterocaulon pycnostachyum*), Chapman's gayfeather (*Liatris chapmanii*), prickly pear (*Opuntia humifusa*), tread-softly (*Cnidioscolus stimulosus*), blazing star (*Liatris* sp.), pinweed (*Lechea* spp.), and scrub morning glory (*Bonamia grandiflora*) and various mosses and lichens (*Selaginella arenicola* and *Cladena* sp.).

#### Unique Natural Features:

Approximately one quarter of the site consists of Scrubby Flatwoods, a vegetative community that is rare in Collier County. In general, Scrubby Flatwoods occur on sites slightly higher and better drained than flatwoods, but lower than scrub or and represent an ecotone between flatwoods and scrub habitats. The array of plants found here is variable in that the shrub layer has a higher frequency of "scrub" species than in pine flatwoods and the herbaceous layer is sparser.

#### Possible Listed Species:

The wild coco orchid (*Eulophia alta*), showy dawnflower (*Stylisma abdita*), and common wild pine (*Tillandsia fasciculata*) have been observed on the site. A vegetative survey of the property will determine the presence of other listed plant species. Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) are known to inhabit the site. The gopher frog (*Rana capito*) and the eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*) could inhabit gopher tortoise burrows on the property.

### 4.2 Site Security

Trespassing is occurring on the site. Vehicles are accessing the property via several entrance points along the north boundary. Trash is being dumped and vegetation is being disturbed where unauthorized vehicular access is occurring. Collier County staff will contract a company to install fencing around the section of the property that is east of the railroad. The fencing will be four feet high field fencing with an opening at the bottom for wildlife movement. Until public access can be established, temporary "No Trespassing" signs will be placed a minimum of every 500 feet along the property's boundaries in accordance with Florida state statute 810.011. "No Unauthorized Vehicular Access" signs will be placed along the fence where access is occurring. "No

Dumping” signs will be placed at access locations. Signs may be in both English and Spanish. Staff will request that the Collier County Sheriff’s Office patrol the area on a routine basis in an attempt to discourage illegal dumping and trespassing.

#### **4.3 Exotic Vegetation Removal and Maintenance Plan**

Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*), melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) and earleaf acacia (*Acacia auriculiformis*) are present mainly along the edges of the FPL easement. The earleaf acacia and climbing fern are extremely dense in some areas along the easement. The Brazilian pepper, air potato and melaleuca are present at an approximate 25-30% density along the entire FPL easement. The remaining property is relatively clear of invasive exotic vegetation.

Collier County will hire contractors to treat the exotic vegetation on the site. The woody vegetation along the FPL easement will be cut, treated and chipped. The chips will be spread out within the easement. Climbing fern will be treated by the “poodle-cut” method. Air potato will be foliar treated or cut, stem treated, and left in place. Collier County Sheriff’s Weekender Work Crew will be used to harvest the fruits of the air potato. In all other sections of the property where densities of exotic vegetation are low, the vegetation will be treated in place.

Once the exotic vegetation has been removed, County staff will determine whether fire management will be possible at the site. Any future fire related management activities will be addressed in the final management plan.

#### **4.4 Debris Removal**

Collier County will coordinate with a contractor or the Collier County Sheriff’s Weekender Work Crew for the removal of debris from the site.

#### **4.5 Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resource Protection**

The RR Land Trust is not within an area of historical and archaeological probability, and no historical or archaeological sites appear to be present in the property. The County will notify the Division of Historical Resources immediately if evidence is found to suggest any archaeological or historic resources are present at the America’s Business Park site. If such properties are identified on-site, staff shall cordon off the area, and a professional survey and assessment shall be instituted. The archaeologist shall prepare a report outlining results of the assessments and issue recommendations to County staff about management of any sites discovered, per provisions of the Land Development Code Section 2.2.25. This report shall be sent to the Division of Historical Resources. The County shall cooperate fully with direction from the Division of Historical Resources on the protection and management of archaeological and historical resources. The management of these resources will comply with the provisions of Chapter 267, Florida Statutes, specifically Sections 267.061 2 (a) and (b).

The collection of artifacts or the disturbance of archaeological and historic sites within the RR Land Trust will be prohibited unless prior authorization has been obtained from

the Collier County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources.

#### **4.6 Public Access**

Currently, no public access is available on the property. The creation of a path within the FPL easement and a pedestrian walkway over the railroad easement may be possible and will be determined during this interim management phase. A temporary gravel parking area within the County owned transportation parcel north of the RR Land Trust property and west of the railroad easement may also be possible and will be researched during this interim management phase. Public access will be limited to the section of the preserve located west of the railroad until **the legalities of pedestrians crossing the railroad easement have been resolved**. Staff will coordinate any public access with current and planned Greenways to the immediate north.

#### **4.7 Site Monitoring Plan**

Monitoring of the site shall consist of trash removal, fence upkeep, invasive exotic vegetation re-treatment and monitoring of listed species populations. Collier County shall be responsible for property maintenance with tasks contracted out as deemed necessary. The property will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the fencing is not disturbed and that no dumping has occurred. The site will be monitored for exotic vegetation re-growth semi-annually for two years following initial treatment. After two years, exotic vegetation will be monitored on a yearly basis.

#### **4.8 Partnerships**

Gopher tortoise relocation partnerships will be sought if the site has the potential to be a recipient site. Staff will seek out and evaluate potential for other types of partnerships for conservation, protection and educational opportunities.

5.0 Exhibits

EXHIBIT 1: Location Map

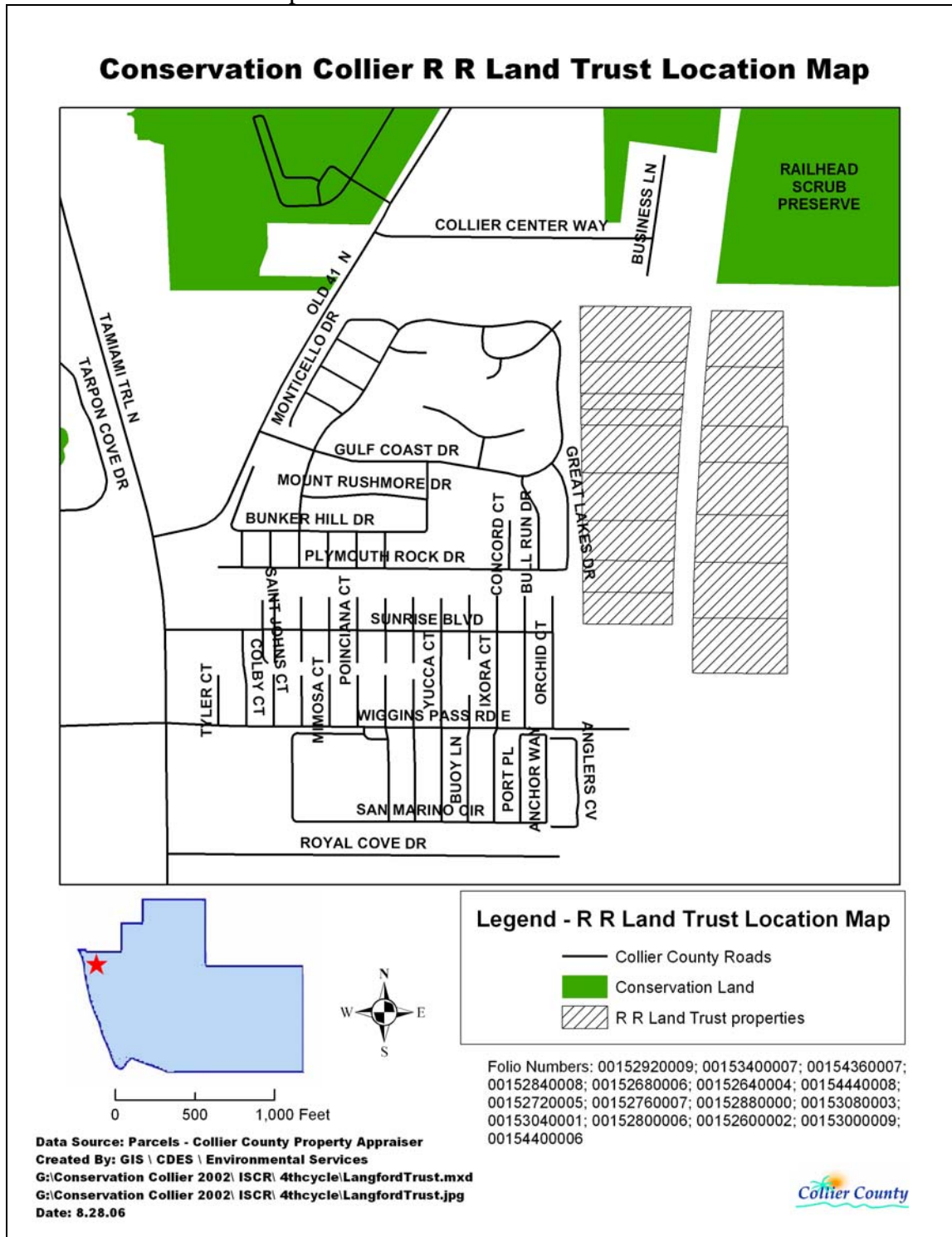




EXHIBIT 2: Aerial Map

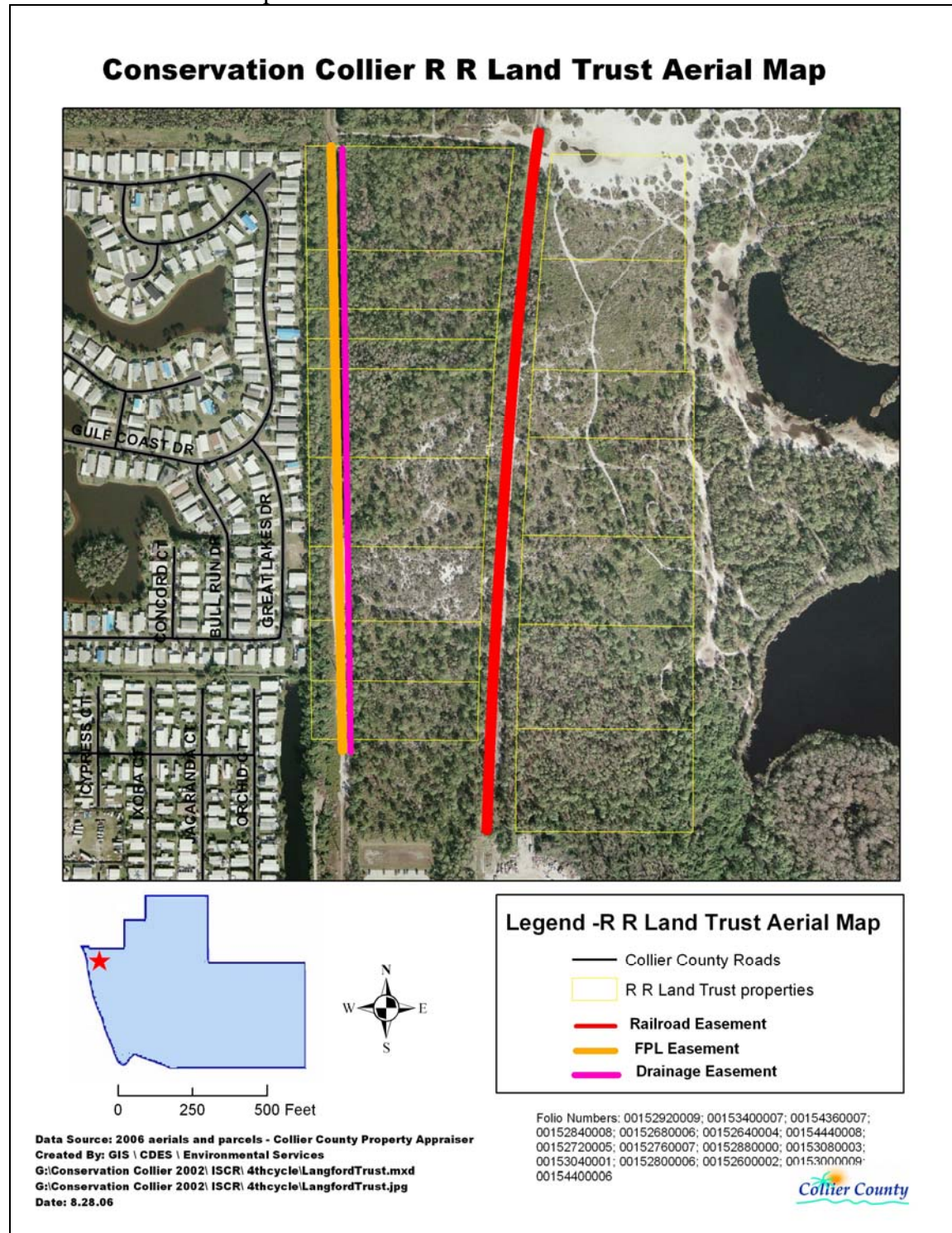


EXHIBIT 3: Estimated Cost Table

<b>Management Element</b>	<b>Initial Cost</b>	<b>Annual Recurring Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Exotics Control	\$50,000	\$10,000 or less	Initial cost depends on method of removal selected. Cost estimated on most expensive method.
Gopher Tortoise Survey	\$6,000		Based on Railhead Scrub Preserve Cost
Trash Removal	t.b.d.	t.b.d.	
Boundary survey for fence permit	\$5,000		Eastern half only
Fenceline clearing	\$5,000		Eastern half only
Fencing	\$32,500	t.b.d.	Eastern half only Initial cost estimated for 5,441 feet of fence priced at \$6/foot installed. Anticipated annual recurring costs cannot be estimated. These costs depend on the amount of fence destruction that occurs by trespassers.
Temporary "No Trespassing" signs	\$500	n/a	10 (20" X 28") bilingual signs and posts
"No Dumping" signs	\$250	n/a	5 (10" X 14") bilingual signs and posts
"No Unauthorized Vehicles" signs	\$500	n/a	10 (20" X 28") bilingual signs and posts
Signs protecting plants and animals	\$500	n/a	10 (20" X 28") bilingual signs and posts
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100,250 +</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	

