

DRAFT

Conservation Collier School Board Property Interim Management Plan

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1.0 Purpose and Scope of the Interim Management Plan

The School Board property was purchased by Collier County in December 2005 with 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.

This Interim Management Plan is intended to identify the key management priorities and issues within the site and give direction for management for the next two years. This document is meant to be the precursor to a Final Management Plan, which will outline more specific aspects of site management.

Key Interim Management Objectives

1. Protect, manage and restore (as appropriate) the native habitat on site
2. Determine what actions will be necessary to open the site for public access
3. Explore opportunities for grant funding and partnerships
4. Meet with community members who have an interest in this property and obtain feedback for Final Management Plan

Action Plan

- 1a. Remove and manage invasive exotic vegetation
- 1b. Assess the need for native vegetation restoration
- 2a. Install temporary Conservation Land signs along property boundaries
- 2b. After initial exotic vegetation removal is complete, determine and begin the appropriate actions necessary for developing public access.
- 3a. Explore possible exotic vegetation removal grants from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and FL Department of Environmental Protection (FLDEP).
- 4a. Notify surrounding property owners of purchase and meet with interested community members to receive input on management plan.

2.0 Management Authority and Responsibilities

The Collier County Environmental Services Department will be solely responsible for managing the School Board property, but will seek to obtain grants and utilize partnerships and volunteers for management activities.

3.0 Interim Site Plan

3.1 Location and Site Description

The School Board property is located east of Golden Gate City in Rural Fringe Neutral Lands north of Brantley Blvd. and east of Blue Sage Drive. The property is adjacent to a canal along the entire northern property line and along Blue Sage Drive. It is located in

Township 49, Range 26 and Section 24, in Collier County, Florida. The total acreage is 65 acres. The property is composed primarily of good quality pine flatwoods, portions of which are hydric, with minimal invasive exotics present.

3.2 Signage

Temporary signs identifying the property as Collier County Conservation Land will be posted at the access off of Blue Sage Drive. Temporary no trespassing signs may also be posted along site boundaries.

3.3 Easements, Concessions or Leases

No easements, concessions or leases are on the parcels or proposed for the future, unless they further conservation objectives, such as a conservation easement.

3.4 Structures

There is no well or other type of structure on the property.

3.5 Surrounding and Adjacent Land Uses

The School Board parcel is surrounded by Rural NGGE residential property, a nursery, vacant agricultural land, a golf course property and a canal.

4.0 Interim Management Objectives

4.1 Natural Resource Protection

Existing Vegetation:

Ground Cover: Heavy groundcover of Muscadine grape (*Vitis rotundifolia*) and Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), Scattered Sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*) and Swamp fern (*Blechnium serrulatum*)

Midstory: Scattered Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Sumac (*Rhus copallina*), Wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), Bumelia (*Bumelia sp.*) and Myrsine (*Myrsine floridana*)

Canopy: Primarily mature Slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), scattered Cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), occasional Laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*) and Dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine*).

Unique Natural Features:

The site contains mature Slash Pine habitat preferred by the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, a species that is listed as Endangered by the USFWS and Threatened by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC). The site also contains endangered Common wild pine (*Tillandsia fasciculata*).

Listed Plant Species

Listed plant species include those found on either the Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants 50 CFR 17.11 and 17.12, December 1999 (FWS) or the Florida Department of Agriculture, August 1997 (FDA).

The following listed plant species were observed:

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	
		FDA	FWS
Common wild pine	<i>Tillandsia fasciculata</i>	E	Not listed
Reflexed wild pine	<i>T. balbisiana</i>	T	Not listed
Butterfly orchid	<i>Encyclia tampensis</i>	C	Not listed
Threadroot orchid	<i>Harrisella filiformis</i>	T	Not listed

E=Endangered, T=Threatened, C=Commercially Exploited

Possible Wildlife Listed Species:

Listed wildlife species include those found on either the Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants 50 CFR 17.11 and 17.12, December 1999 (FWS) or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) (formerly the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission), August 1997 (identified on official lists as GFC).

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	
		GFC	FWS
Gopher tortoise*	Gopherus polyphemus	SSC	Not listed
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Picoides borealis	T	E
Florida Panther	Felis concolor coryi	E	E
Florida Black Bear	Ursus americanus floridanus	T	Not listed

SSC= Species of Special Concern, E=Endangered, T=Threatened

*A gopher tortoise was observed just across the property line, but a gopher tortoise burrow was present on the property.

The observed habitat and location would support the presence of the following listed species: Florida panther (*Felis concolor coryi*), Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) and Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*). A radio-collared Florida panther and Florida black bear were located on adjacent properties within 1 mile of the parcel. A Red-cockaded woodpecker cavity tree was observed on site.

Exotic Vegetation:

Minimal invasive exotic plant species observed include Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), and Earleaf acacia (*Acacia auriculiformis*). The initial cost of exotic removal is estimated to be approximately \$10,000. This is based on cost estimates provided by a contractor who routinely contracts with the County parks and Recreation Department for exotic removal, and considers that the low level of infestation would require treatment of only approximately 6 acres along property boundaries by cutting, treating the stumps and removing the debris to a waste facility.

Costs for follow-up maintenance, done anywhere from quarterly to annually, have been estimated at between \$100 and \$450 per acre. For this parcel costs would likely be in the lower range and would decrease over time as the soil seed bank is depleted.

4.2 Site Security

There are currently no obvious site security issues associated with the School Board property, however, a trail appears well used by some sort of vehicles. No evidence of off-road activities over the general landscape was noted. A sign identifying preserve status will be placed at the public access point and a determination will be made as how to best restrict vehicular access.

4.3 Exotic Vegetation Removal and Maintenance Plan

The Collier County Environmental Services Department will hire contractors to treat the exotic vegetation on the site. Staff will seek assistance from surrounding community for potential volunteers to supplement contracted exotic maintenance.

4.4 Debris Removal

Currently, staff is not aware of any large trash items existing on the property.

4.5 Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resource Protection

The School Board property is not within an area of historical and archaeological probability, and no historical or archaeological sites appear to be present on the property. The County will notify the Division of Historical Resources immediately if evidence is found to suggest any archaeological or historic resources are discovered. If such resources 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).

4.6 Listed Species Protection

Staff will evaluate needs for protection.

4.7 Public Access

Public access will be limited to special requests until exotics are removed, a trail can be established and appropriate public access is determined through development of a Final Management Plan.

4.8 Site Monitoring and Long Term Management Plan

Monitoring of the site shall consist of invasive exotic vegetation re-treatment and listed species population surveying. The Environmental Services Department shall be responsible for property maintenance with tasks contracted out as necessary and management partnership sought with the surrounding community. 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.

The Collier County Property Appraiser's Office Aerials indicate that a wildfire burned two portions of the property between 2004 and 2005. A site visit verified it was a very hot fire as many Slash pine trees in the center of the property and in the extreme south end have perished. These areas will continue to be monitored for new seedling growth and recovery.

4.9 Partnerships

Staff will seek out and evaluate potential for other types of partnerships for conservation, protection, educational, and funding opportunities. Staff will explore possible grants for invasive exotic vegetation removal including: USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (Conservation Collier Cooperative Agreement Modification would be required) and FLDEP Bureau of Invasive Plant Management Working Group Program.

5.0 Exhibits

EXHIBIT 1: Location Map

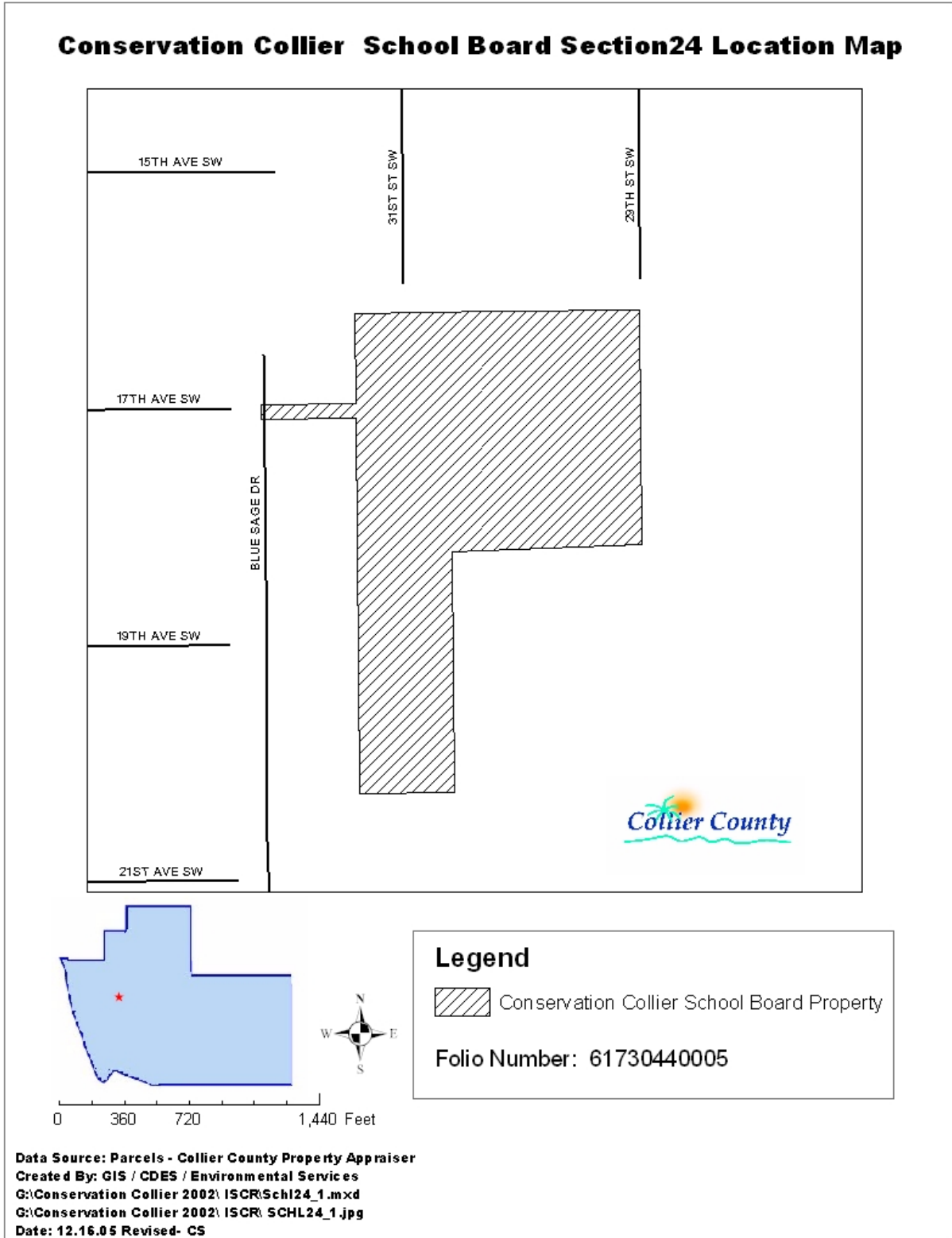


EXHIBIT 2: Aerial Map

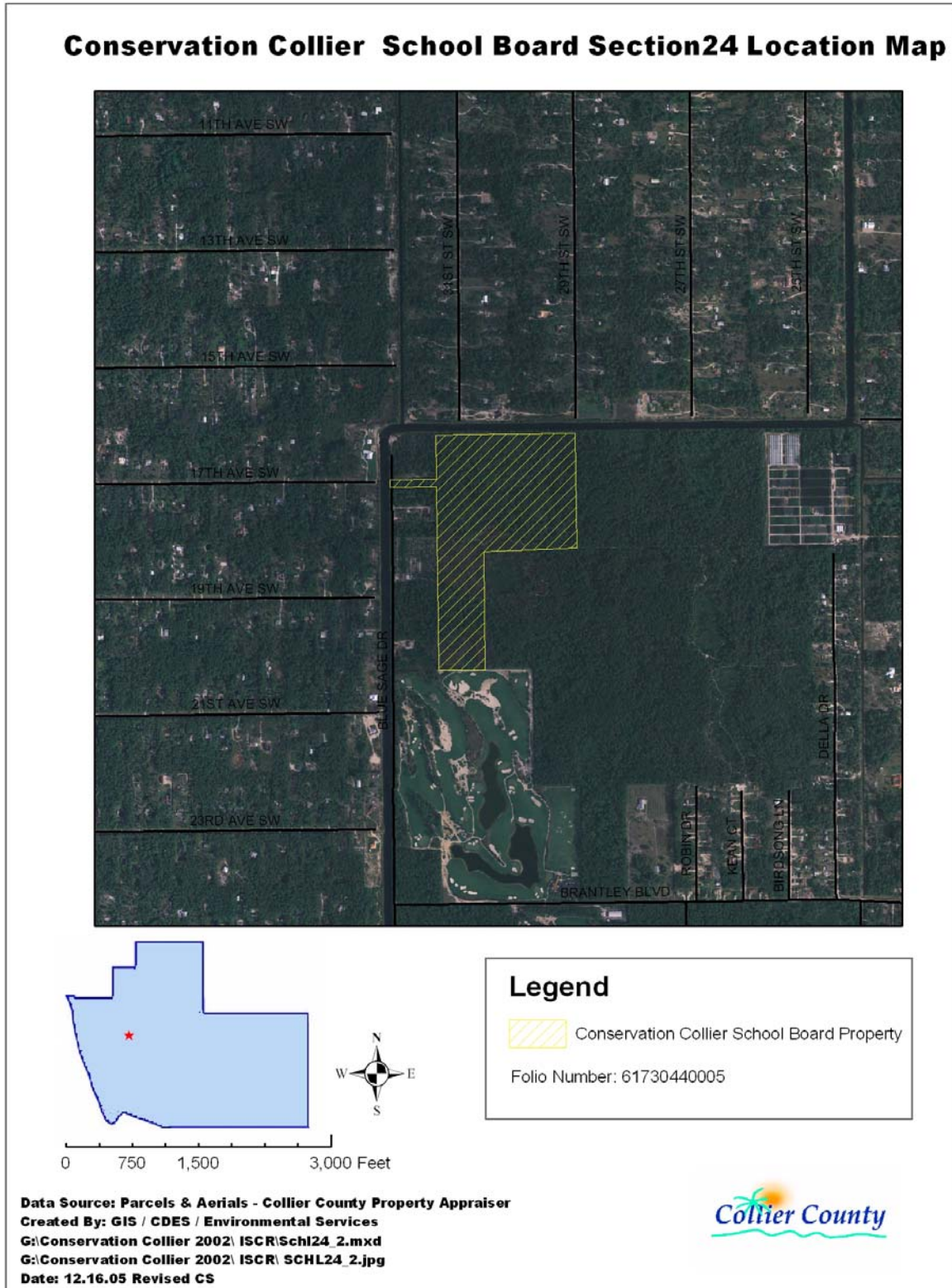


EXHIBIT 3: Aerial Map

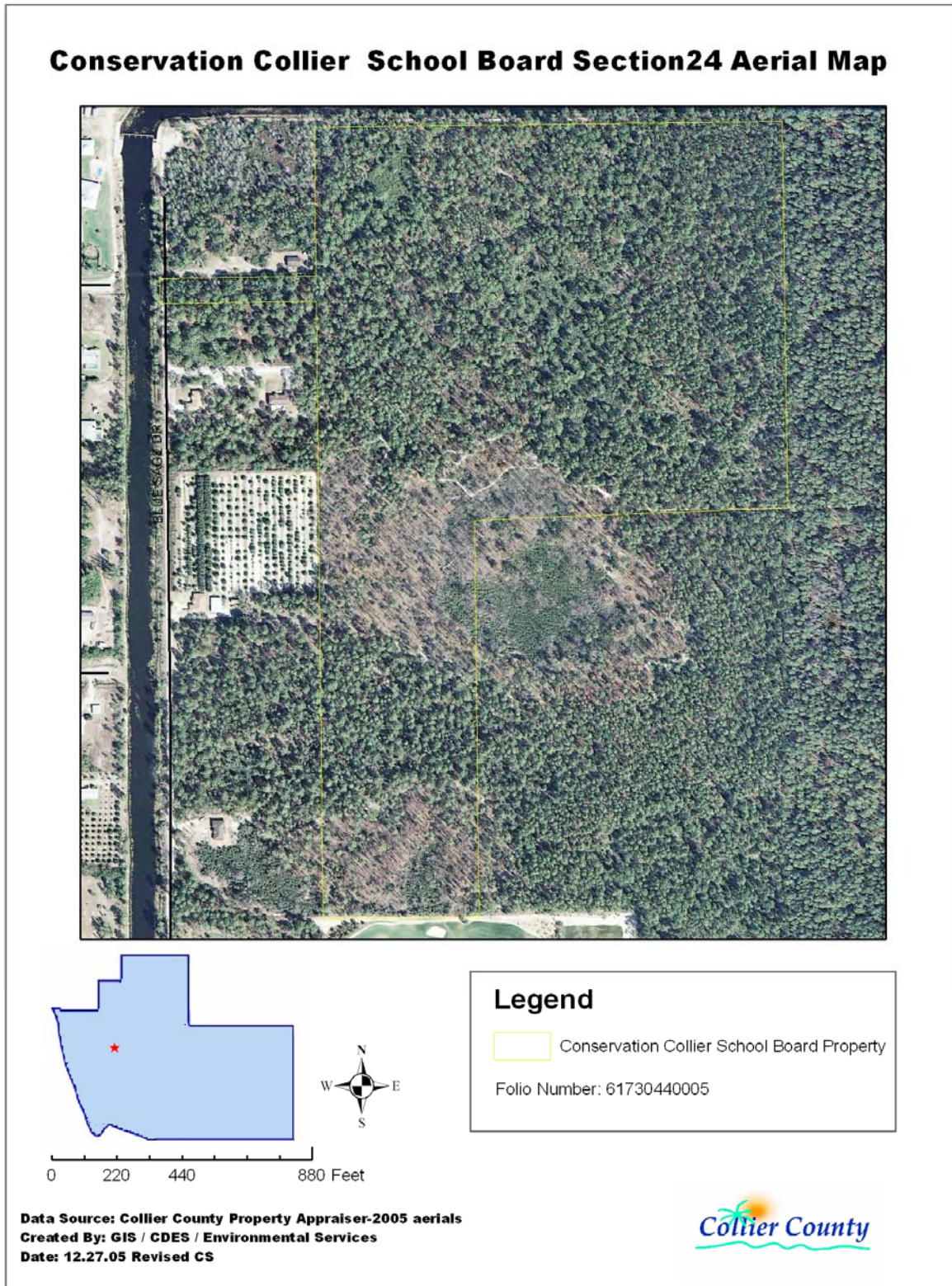


EXHIBIT 4: Estimated Cost Table

Management Element	Initial Cost	Annual Recurring Costs	Comments
Exotics Control	\$10,000	\$1,000	
Parking Facility	\$15,000	t.b.d	Maintenance costs unknown at this time
Access Trails	\$15,000	t.b.d.	Includes cost of ADA compliant section
Fencing	\$1,000 (2 gates and 200 ft. of fencing)	t.b.d.	Fencing may be appropriate at trail access points-\$3.00 per foot
Signs	\$1,200	n/a	2 signs with installation done by county staff-\$600 each
Table, benches, trash can	\$3,500	n/a	Recycled plastic
Trash Removal	\$0	t.b.d	t.b.d.
Total	\$45,700	t.b.d	

