

Conservation Collier Milano Property Interim Management Plan

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1.0 Purpose and Scope of the Interim Management Plan

The Milano property was purchased by Collier County in July 2006 with funds from the Conservation Collier program. The property will be managed for conservation, protection, enhancement of natural resources and for public outdoor recreation that will be compatible with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the site and the 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. Install temporary Conservation Land signs along property boundaries.
- 1b. Remove and manage invasive exotic vegetation and assess the need for native vegetation restoration.
2. After initial exotic vegetation removal and/or restoration is complete, determine and begin the appropriate actions necessary for developing public access.
3. 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, including adjacent public schools, of the purchase and meet with interested community members to receive input on management plan.
- 4b. Coordinate with local community groups to assist in trail development.

2.0 Management Authority and Responsibilities

The Collier County Environmental Services Department will be solely responsible for managing the Milano 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 Milano property is located north of Immokalee Road, east of Preserve Lane and west of Preserve Circle (a private road through the Fairway Preserve Apartments). It is located in Township 48, Range 26 and Section 21, in Collier County, Florida. The total acreage is 19.46 acres. The majority of the property is composed of cypress and wetland mixed forest; some sections are comprised of pine flatwoods.

3.2 Signage

Temporary signs identifying the property as Collier County Conservation Land will be posted at the southern boundary of the site facing Immokalee Road and possibly along the east and west boundaries. Temporary no trespassing / no dumping signs may also be posted along east and west 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 Milano property is located north of the Cocohatchee canal and Immokalee Road. Gulf Coast High School and Laurel Oaks Elementary are located south of Immokalee Road. It is south and east of the Olde Cypress Planned Unit Development (PUD) conservation area and preserve, and west of the Fairway Preserve Apartments. It is also east of a commercially developed portion of the Olde Cypress Planned Unit Development.

4.0 Interim Management Objectives

4.1 Natural Resource Protection

Existing Vegetation:

Ground Cover: **North** – alligator flag (*Thalia geniculata*), swamp fern (*Blechnum serrulatum*), false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*). **South** – sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), swamp fern (*Blechnum serrulatum*), and wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*)

Midstory: **North** – swamp dogwood (*Cornus foemina*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). **South** – saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), and buckthorn (*Bumelia* spp.), Brazilian pepper (*Shinus terebinthifolius*)

Canopy: **North** – cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), popash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*), strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*). **South** – slash pine (*Pinus elliotti*), cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), earleaf acacia (*Acacia auriculiformis*), melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), and Australian pine (*Casuarina* spp.)

Unique Natural Features:

The majority of the site contains mixed pine and cypress wetlands, and a very high quality wetland exists on the northern portion of the site. This wetland is also adjacent to a slough system that is under preservation on the development to the north.

Listed Plant Species

Listed plant species found on site include stiff-leaved wild pine (*Tillandsia fasciculata*), hoary air plant (*Tillandsia pruinosa*), and reflexed wild pine (*Tillandsia balbisiana*).

Possible Wildlife Listed Species:

No listed wildlife has been observed on site. However, according to a 2004 Preliminary Wetlands and Wildlife Assessment prepared by Johnson Engineering, the property is within the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Wood Stork Core Foraging Area (18.6 miles), a documented wood stork rookery. Also, according to the report, research of SFWMD Permit 11-01232-S indicated that "The Woodlands" (the adjacent Olde Cypress preserve property) at one time supported a viable population of Big Cypress fox squirrels (*Sciurus niger avicennia*) and provided some nesting and foraging habitat for listed wading birds. An approximate home range size for a Big Cypress fox squirrel is 25 acres (Closing the Gaps, FFWCC, 1994).

Exotic Vegetation Removal and Control:

Exotic invasive plants present include melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquinerva*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Australian pine (*Casuarina spp.*), and earleaf acacia (*Acacia auriculiformis*).

The initial cost of exotic removal would be relatively significant. Based on cost estimates provided by a contractor who routinely contracts with the County Parks and Recreation Department for exotic removal, costs for the level of infestation observed (25%-50%) to treat exotics with herbicide in place or to cut and stack the debris onsite would cost approximately \$1,750 to \$2,500 per acre. To cut and treat the stumps and remove the debris to a waste facility could cost \$2,500 to \$3,750 per acre, or more.

Based on the acreage involved (14 acres of infested land), total initial removal costs are estimated to be from \$35,000 - \$52,500 for the entire parcel, but could be more due to the size of some of Australian Pines and Melaleuca. Costs for follow-up maintenance, done anywhere from quarterly to annually have been estimated at between \$200 and \$450 per acre, per year for a total of \$3,600 - \$8,100 for 18 acres. These costs would likely decrease over time as the soil seed bank is depleted.

4.2 Site Security

There are currently no major site security issues associated with the Milano property. However, one trail exists diagonally crossing the property from the northwest corner to the eastern center. The trail appears to be utilized by residents of the Fairway Preserve Apartments to walk their dogs during the dry season. During wet season the trail has been seen with up to 3 feet of water cover. It may be desirable to field fence the property along the east and west boundaries next to the developed properties, leaving the areas adjacent to the Olde Cypress Preserve unfenced and maintaining the access point along the eastern boundary for Fairway Preserve Apartment residents. Prohibiting leashed dog walking would be difficult to monitor and enforce. Permitted activities can be denoted on the

entrance sign. Field fencing can be used for borders with developed properties. Cost, including installation, for field fencing is approx. \$5.50 per foot. Gates are approximately \$250.00 each. The total cost is estimated to be \$11,000.

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 the surrounding community for potential volunteers to supplement contracted exotic maintenance.

4.4 Debris Removal

Solid waste and litter will need to be removed from the southern part of the property. No dumping signs and a fence may need to be installed along the eastern property line to deter further dumping. Trash removal and trail maintenance can be accomplished using both contracted and volunteer labor.

4.5 Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resource Protection

The Milano 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 if any listed wildlife are found on the property.

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. The American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and safety concerns will need to be met before we can officially open the site to the public.

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 partnerships 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.

4.9 Partnerships

Staff will seek out and evaluate potential for other types of partnerships for conservation, protection, education, and funding opportunities. Staff will coordinate with Gulf Coast High School, Laurel Oaks Elementary and local Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops to assist with trail development.

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.

Staff will also work with the South Florida Water Management District to evaluate a possible removal of the berm that exists between the southern boundary and the canal. This was suggested by one of the local conservation organizations and staff will research the possibility to determine how this may benefit and alter the hydrology of the site.

A relationship will be sought with the neighboring commercial property owners to keep future access options open.

4.0 Exhibits

EXHIBIT 1: Location Map

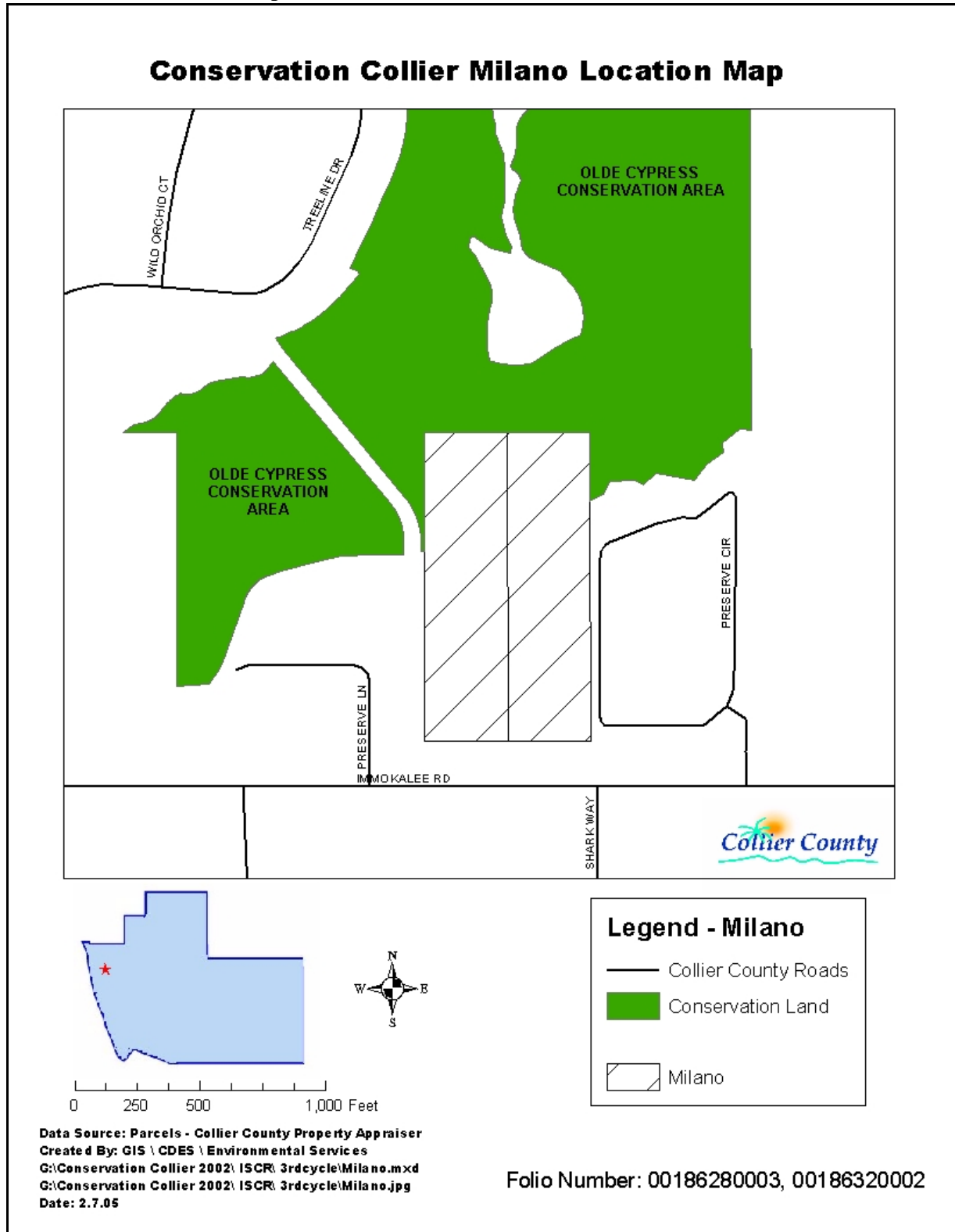


EXHIBIT 2: Aerial Map

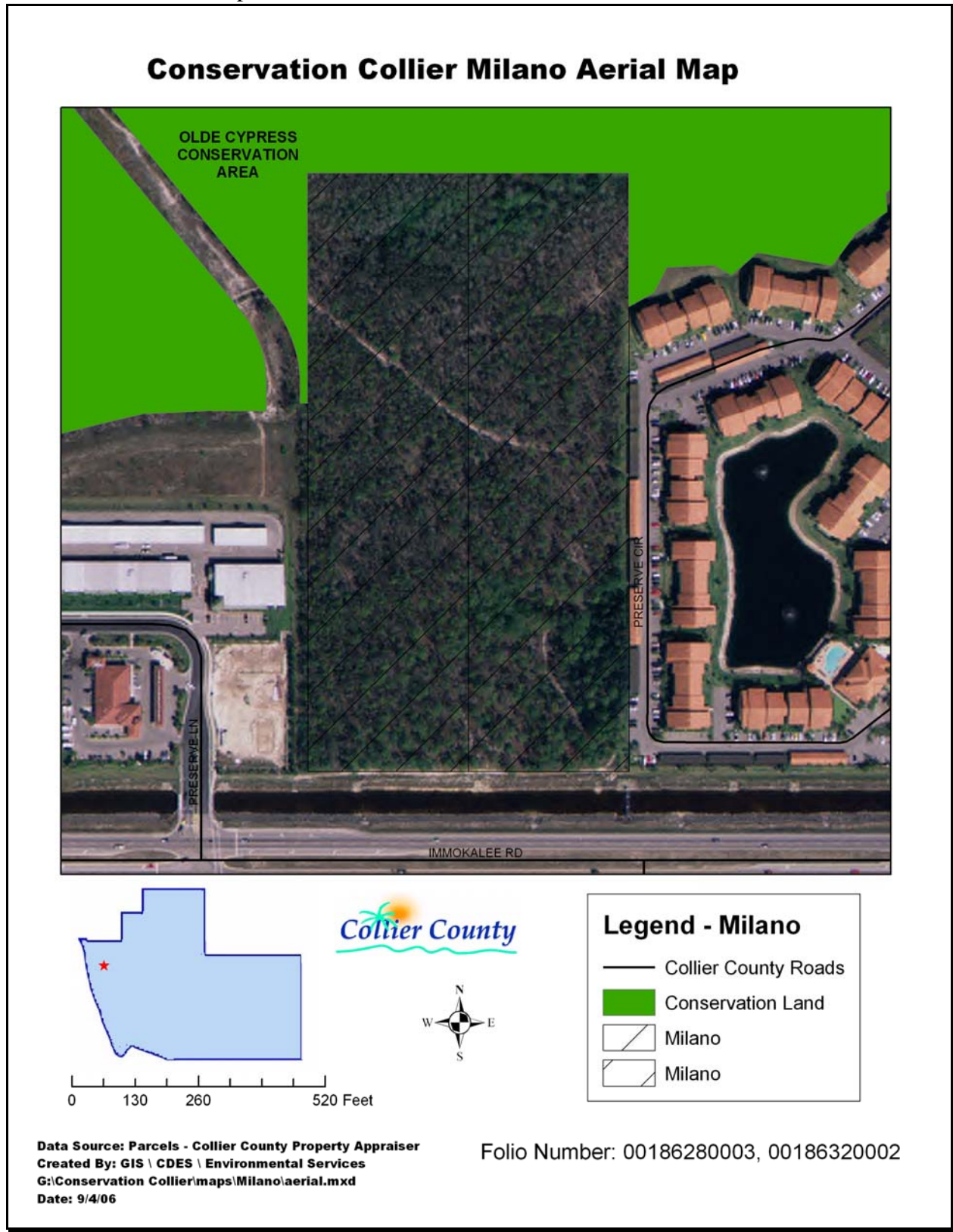


EXHIBIT 3: Estimated Cost Table

Management Element	Initial Cost	Annual Recurring Costs	Comments
Exotics Control	\$ 35,000-52,500	\$3,600- 8,100 annually	Grants will be applied for to assist with costs
Parking Facility	\$16,000+	t.b.d	Maintenance costs unknown at this time
Access Trails	t.b.d.	t.b.d.	Includes cost of ADA compliant section Grants and permits may be applied for to construct a raised boardwalk
Fencing	\$11,000	t.b.d.	Field fencing @ \$5.50 per foot plus gates
Signs	\$1,750	n/a	Educational signs and no trespassing / dumping signs
Table, benches, trash can	\$3,500	n/a	Recycled plastic
Trash Removal	\$0	t.b.d	t.b.d.
Total	\$67,250-+84,750	t.b.d	

EXHIBIT 4: Estimated Implementation Time Line

	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
	E	C	O	E	A	E	A	P	A	U	U	U	E	C	O	E	A	E	A	P	A	U	U	U	E
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Explore exotic vegetation grants	x	x			x	x	x																		
Determine what actions necessary to open site for public use and develop timeline for opening							x	x	x			o	r						x	x	x				
Install signs	x																								
Initial exotic vegetation removal					x	x	x					o	r				x	x	x						
Completion of final management plan																							x		

- It will be necessary to remove the exotics prior to determining what actions are necessary to open the site for public use and to develop a timeline for opening. The timing will be dependant on whether grant funding is awarded to assist in removal costs.