

THE MARTIN COUNTY

PUBLIC LAND ACQUISITION MANUAL



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Overview of the Martin County Public Land Acquisition

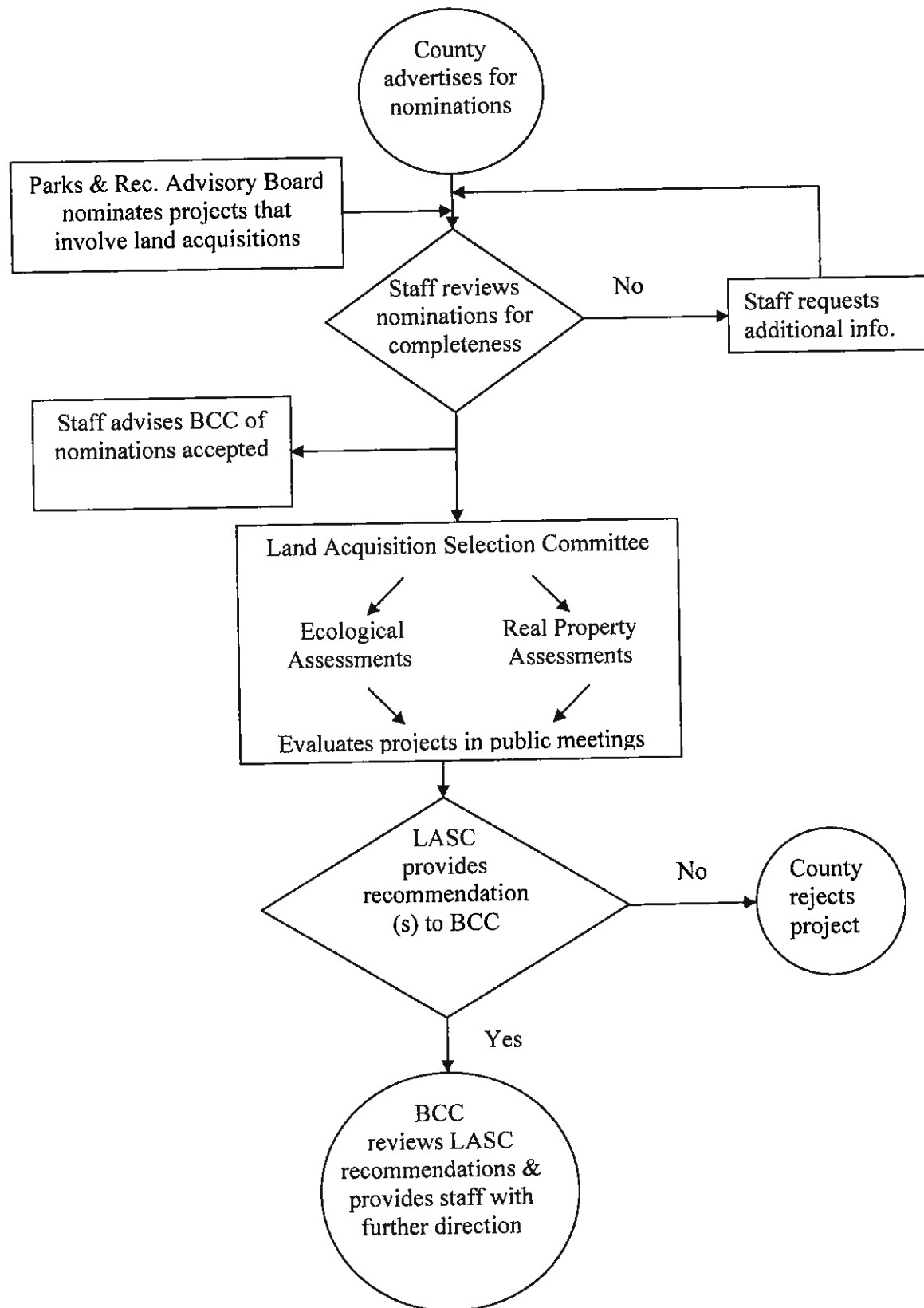
In 1996 and 1998, voters passed bond referendums and sales tax in support of parks, conservation and open space. In 2006, a sales tax referendum for clean water, wildlife habitat, beaches and parks was initiated by the Citizens for Conservation and Parks and approved by Martin County voters. This half cent sales tax over five years was projected to raise approximately \$60 million to be split 50/50 between purchasing conservation lands and creating and improving parks. Citizen oversight by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board provides recommendations for parks as outlined in the Parks Master Plan and citizen oversight by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee provides recommendations for all land purchases.

Under County Ordinance 711, the County has committed to use 50 % of its share of the proceeds of the half cent sales tax to acquire by fee simple interest, environmentally significant land for the purposes of: preserving, conserving and restoring the St. Lucie River, the Indian River Lagoon, and the Loxahatchee River, protecting drinking water sources, preserving natural areas and beaches, providing open space and protecting wildlife habitat and water storage/recharge areas. Land acquisition and preservation using the County's share of the surtax proceeds shall be limited to the properties known as Pal-Mar, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), Allapattah Flats, Atlantic Ridge, Indian River Blueways, beaches and those lands providing connections and wildlife corridors between publicly owned parks and conservation lands.

In addition, the County has committed to use 50% of its share of the proceeds of the half cent sales tax to plan and construct parks and recreation facilities: including the purchase of land required and completion of existing park facilities as outlined in the approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Specific properties to be purchased through the Half Cent Sales Tax Program shall be determined by the evaluation of proposed properties by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee with the final approval by the County Commission.

Martin County Process for Land Acquisitions pursuant to Half-Cent, 5-year Sales Tax



THE MARTIN COUNTY PUBLIC LAND ACQUISITION MANUAL

PURPOSE

This manual is to assist and guide the Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC) through the process which leads to the decision on the acquisition of land.

SCOPE

Planning for land acquisition can be initiated by receipt of a Project Proposal Information Form. In addition, planning can be initiated with the identification of a need to meet recreation or conservation objectives as specified in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. All lands acquired under the Half Cent Sales Tax Program must be lands voluntarily offered for sale by the property owner and the County must acquire fee simple interest in the land. For purposes of this process, the role of the LASC terminates when the County Commission approves a proposal.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms and definitions aid personnel in interpreting this manual.

- A. **Acquisition Study.** A compilation of facts, data and information which will support a recommendation by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee to the County Commission for a land acquisition decision.
- B. **County Commission Approval Memorandum.** A document presented by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee Chairperson to the Board of County Commissioners recommending a proposed course of action relative to land acquisition. The Memorandum may recommend matching fund acquisition by Martin County, the State, a private or Federal program or South Florida Water Management District.
- C. **Management Plan.** An explanation of when a management plan will be prepared is required for each approval memorandum submitted to the Board of County Commissioners. Such a plan shall include verbiage for management where acquisition is to be solely by Martin County. Management plans for conservation lands shall include as its goals the preservation and enhancement of the natural characteristics of the land and retain the environmental values for which they were acquired.
- D. **County Commission Approval.** Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners shall constitute the authority to proceed with a land acquisition action.

- E. Land Acquisition:** The gaining of fee simple title to land. This can be accomplished by direct purchase, exchange, and/or transfer between Federal, State and Local agencies, including individuals, partnerships and corporations and accepting donations.
- F. Level of Service:** The standard stated for acquiring land for community parks in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan is two acres per 1000 population.
- G. Martin County Public Land Acquisition Manual:** This document adopted by the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, serves as the Martin County Public Land Acquisition Manual.
- H. Land Evaluation Matrix:** A form to be used by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee to establish priority ranking for important resource elements.
- I. Martin County Public Land Acquisition Project Proposal Information Form:**
The form to be completed by the applicant or nominee which describes the proposed property in detail and provides the information requested on pages 13 through 20 of this Manual.
- J. Environmentally Sensitive Land:** Undeveloped area of land which has essentially retained its primeval character and influence without alteration. This includes areas that are regionally endangered and provide critical habitat for protected species.
- K. Resource-Based Recreational Land:** Lands used for recreation which are purchased due to their natural features which will provide specific outdoor recreation opportunities (hiking, camping, fishing...).
- L. Open Space Land:** Shall include environmentally sensitive land and resource-based recreational land preserved for conservation for aesthetic reasons.
- M. Priority Recommendation List:** A numerical list rating the evaluations of all properties approved by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee.
- N. Water Recharge Area:** An area important for replenishing an aquifer. Groundwater recharge is provided by infiltration of rainwater percolating through uplands, and seepage from water bodies, lakes and wetlands. Significant recharge areas for the surficial aquifer in the region are located in excessively drained sandy soils generally found on the Atlantic Coastal Ridge.

O. Wildlife Corridor: A route enabling animals to travel from one natural area to another to find mates, food, and shelter. Such corridors are essential for the continued survival and well-being of many animals, especially large, wide-ranging species such as the Florida panther, bobcat, fox, deer, otter, and other species. Wildlife corridors are also important for maintaining biodiversity in preserve areas in the region.

POLICY

Martin County will acquire and manage lands or assist in acquisition and management of lands by other governmental entities which are consistent with the open space/conservation and recreation goals, policies and objectives in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. Guidelines will be followed as set forth in this Land Acquisition Manual, enabling legislation, administrative rules, executed declarations and particularly the basic state policy: "It shall be the policy of the state to conserve its natural resources and beauty."

Basic policy is to acquire land only when other means of achieving goals and objectives are not appropriate. Donations of desired lands will be encouraged. All properties shall be managed in perpetuity so as to retain the environmental and recreational values for which they were acquired.

It is the policy of the County to work in a cooperative venture with each of the municipalities within Martin County. In addition, it is the policy of the County to work with the Martin County School Board in developing cooperative Natural Environmental Areas for educational purposes. Moreover, the County hopes to cooperate with the State of Florida through the Department of Environmental Protection for land acquisition and in the development and expansion of existing state parks in the County. Further, the County will cooperate with the South Florida Water Management District Board in the acquisition of water recharge areas and lands which will qualify under the "Save Our Rivers", Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"), or other programs. The County will give primary consideration to projects which can qualify for joint participation. If a property has been approved for acquisition under a matching funds program, the land will then automatically be managed by the County's matching-funds partner, unless otherwise stated by the Board of County Commissioners. If there is no matching-funds partner, the County will be responsible for the property management.

In carrying out the foregoing procedures, the Land Acquisition Selection Committee shall, in May and October of each year, review general land acquisition goals and establish new goals as, in its discretion; best realize the purposes of the Half Cent Sales Tax Program set forth in this manual. In re-assessing acquisition goals, the Land Acquisition Selection Committee shall draw on any relevant sources of

information, including comments and information provided by the Martin County Staff and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. It is the additional responsibility of the Land Acquisition Selection Committee and the County Staff to seek desirable properties to correct deficiencies as stated in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and meet the requirements of County Ordinance 711. The Land Acquisition Selection Committee's land acquisition goals thus established shall serve as the guiding criteria for project assessment and priority for the following year.

FUNDING

The funding of the acquisition of lands will be financed by the proceeds of the Half cent Sales Tax referendum, as approved by the qualified electors residing in the County and set forth in County Ordinance 711 as follows:

SECTION 6. USE OF REVENUES BY THE COUNTY AND THE MUNICIPALITIES IN THE COUNTY.

(1) County Use. The County hereby commits to use all of the County's share of the proceeds of the Surtax, if the Surtax is approved by a majority of the voters voting in the referendum, as follows:

- A. To acquire, by fee simple interest, environmentally significant land for the purposes of: preserving, conserving and restoring the St. Lucie River, the Indian River Lagoon, and the Loxahatchee River, protecting drinking water sources, preserving natural areas and beaches, providing open space and protecting wildlife habitat and water storage/recharge areas. Land acquisition and preservation using the County's share of the surtax proceeds shall be limited to the properties known as Pal-Mar, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), Allapattah Flats, Atlantic Ridge, Indian River Blueways, beaches and those lands providing connections and wildlife corridors between publicly owned parks and conservation lands;
- B. To plan and construct parks and recreation facilities: including the purchase of land required and completion of existing park facilities as outlined in the approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

- C. Up to 10% of the purchase price of any land acquired under 6(1)A may be used to restore the conservation values of that land.
- D. Proceeds from the Surtax may be used to service new bond indebtedness incurred for the purposes listed in 6(1)A and 6(1)B.
- E. All land acquisitions by the County under Section 6(1)A and 6(1)B above shall be in Martin County and will be properties voluntarily offered for sale by the property owner.
- F. The County will attempt, when available, to obtain matching funds from the federal government, the State of Florida, or any agency, district, branch or commission for the purposes described in 6(1)A and 6(1)B. However, fifty (50%) percent of the funds allocated under 6(1)H(i) shall be expended for land purchases which receive at least 50% matching funds.
- G. The maximum amount of monies to be used for any one project under 6(1)A or 6(1)B shall be limited to ten million (\$10,000,000) dollars in sales tax proceeds.
- H. The use of the funds derived from the Surtax shall be subject to the following:
 - (i) fifty percent (50%) of the County's portion of the funds derived from the Surtax, including any interest thereon, shall go towards the items described in 6(1)A.
 - (ii) fifty percent (50%) of the County's portion of the funds derived from the Surtax, including any interest thereon, shall go towards the items described in 6(1)B.
- I. The Lands For You Acquisition Committee ("LASC") established by Martin County shall provide citizen oversight and conduct and coordinate any necessary studies to determine appropriate lands under 6(1) to acquire from the funding of the Surtax. The LASC shall make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, and acquisitions funded by the Surtax shall be voted on and approved by a majority vote of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners.
- J. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) established by Martin County shall provide citizen oversight and prioritize projects included in the

approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan and submit them to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

(2) Municipality Uses. State law provides that municipalities are to receive a share of the Surtax revenues in accordance with the terms of any interlocal agreement entered into between the Martin County Board of County Commissioners as the governing body of Martin County, Florida and the governing bodies of the municipalities representing a majority of Martin County's municipal population or, in the absence of an interlocal agreement, in accordance with the state revenue sharing formula. Municipalities may only spend their share of the Surtax revenues to finance, plan, and construct infrastructure and to acquire land for public recreation or conservation or protection of natural resources, in accordance with Section 212.055(2) of Florida Statutes.

Revenues raised to implement the land acquisition program set forth in this manual shall be used solely for acquisitions coming before the County Commission with a favorable recommendation by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee. Proposals not receiving the approval of the Land Acquisition Selection Committee shall not be presented to the County Commission. The Land Acquisition Selection Committee will present a Priority Recommendation List for approved project proposals to the County Commission not less than every six months when purchases are to be recommended.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Selection Committee shall have the authority to adopt rules and procedures needed to carry out the intent of this manual. Prior to its adoption, any proposed rule or procedure which would change any express provision of this manual shall be referred by a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of the Selection Committee to the Board of County Commissioners for the Commission's approval.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Officials listed below are responsible for the functions indicated:

A. Martin County Commission

1. Approves land acquisition policies, procedures and priorities.
2. Approves standards and criteria for land acquisition.
3. Approves or denies in writing ALL land acquisition proposals submitted by the LASC.

4. Determines the annual budget for the land acquisition program.
5. Authorizes all expenditures of funds for carrying out this program.
6. Authorizes all bond issues, both public and private, for carrying out purchase of land.
7. Provides one member to the Land Acquisition Selection Committee.

B. Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC)

Membership shall consist of ~~seven~~six members appointed by the County Commission for a term of three years. One member of the LASC shall be a Commission member with a designated alternate, with one representative and a designated alternate to be appointed from the following groups: Environmental Studies Council, Inc., Guardians of Martin County, Economic Council, Board of Realtors, Martin County Chapter of the Treasure Coast Builders Association, Martin County Audubon Society, Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Martin County Conservation Alliance, and the Realtor Association of Martin County.

- a. In order to allow for continuity on the Land Acquisition Selection Committee, the terms of the members shall overlap. For the initial make-up of the committee, two members shall be appointed to serve for one year, two members shall be appointed to serve for two years, two members shall be appointed to serve for three years, and the commissioner shall serve to the end of his/her term. As terms expire, all new members shall serve for periods of three years.
 - b. The Selection Committee shall select one person from the Membership to serve as Chairperson and another member as Vice-Chairperson.
 - c. Chairperson shall serve a term of one year.
 - d. Chairperson may be re-elected.
2. Duties and Responsibilities.

- a. Evaluate and recommend County land acquisition policies, procedures, standards, criteria, strategies, schedules and priorities.
- b. Receive and review individual proposals nominated for purchase and make specific comments on or concur in land acquisition recommendations.
- c. The environmental assessment of the properties proposed will be primarily the responsibility of the representatives ~~form~~ from the Environmental Studies Council, Inc., Guardians of Martin County, Martin County Chapter of the Native Plant Society, Martin County Conservation Alliance, Martin County Audubon Society, and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.
- d. The economic assessment of the properties proposed will be primarily the responsibility of the representatives from the ~~Board of Realtors, the Economic Council, Inc. and the Treasure Coast Builders Association~~ Realtor Association of Martin County.
- e. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and Martin County staff will be expected to participate on the Selection Committee as advisors.
- f. The Selection Committee shall evaluate the features of each proposal's Acquisition Study using the matrix and explanations on pages 14 through 20 only and any other relevant information as provided by the Project Proposal Information Form.
- g. The Selection Committee shall prioritize acceptable proposals on Priority Recommendation List for submission to the Board of County Commissioners. This list shall be up-dated at least every six months.

C. Staff

1. County personnel shall be assigned by the County Administrator to provide assistance to the LASC.
2. Duties and Responsibilities
 - a. Receive all acquisition proposals.

- b. Seek desirable properties to correct deficiencies in levels of service indicated in the Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and to provide appropriate resource-based recreational land, environmentally sensitive areas, water recharge areas and wildlife corridors.
- c. Evaluate proposals for policy and procedural compliance with the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.
- d. Have independent evaluation appraisals performed for each of the recommended parcels as necessary. It is the County's policy to obtain two appraisals for acquisitions in excess of \$500,000.
- e. Insure appropriate review by LASC.
- f. Coordinate comments received.
- g. Arrange for discussions and meetings of Committee Members, County, State and local governmental agencies as required.
- h. Prepare Approval Memorandum recommendation for County Commission consideration at the direction of the Chairperson/Land Acquisition Selection Committee.
- i. Draft management plan for approval by LASC and Commission.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

1. All proposals received by May 1st and October 1st of each year shall be reviewed during the period between submittal and the next review period.
2. Proposals may be submitted by any person or group of persons who may be or may not be landowner of record.
3. Proposals shall be submitted to the Martin County Parks & Recreation ~~Engineering~~ Department / Ecosystem Restoration & Management Division office at the following address: 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996.

4. Proposals shall be submitted on the application form provided. Any pertinent information not requested in the application is encouraged.
5. All properties proposed for purchase must be wholly within Martin County.

LAND ACQUISITION CATEGORIES

The following are descriptions of some of the categories listed in the Evaluation Matrix. Recreational lands are described as resource-based and acquisition should be two-dimensional in that lands are purchased with outstanding natural resources. Environmentally sensitive and resource-based recreational lands are primarily set aside for protection and management, and secondarily for public enjoyment and appreciation. Resource-based and environmentally sensitive lands are to be acquired for both quantitative and qualitative needs with a goal to have a conservation resource based recreation program. The categories listed below may be used to evaluate land that first complies with the Half Cent Sales Tax Program requirements set forth in County Ordinance 711:

1. Natural Communities. Identify, acquire and protect those natural communities that are inadequately represented on protected lands, or represent the best examples of Natural Communities with priority given to the most endangered or the rarest.
2. Forest Resources. Acquire lands to maintain representatives of the various forest or timber type; and to conserve and maintain county forests so as to perpetuate their environment, economic, aesthetic and recreational values.
3. Vascular Plants. Identify, acquire and protect sites which contain rare, endangered and threatened plant species, with priority given to those sites that are critical to their survival, or are not critical but contain important assemblages of rare or endangered species.
4. Fish and Wildlife. Acquire lands that are critical to the survival of endangered and threatened animals, represent significant colonial bird nesting sites, or are necessary to maintain the county's native animal species diversity.
5. Water Resources/Recharge. Acquire significant (in excess of 50 feet) buffers along the special Waters category of Outstanding Florida Water rivers and lakes. Identify and acquire protective buffers around the different lake types. State assistance on specific Save Our Rivers acquisitions that have attributes desired for acquisition should be

considered as potential cooperative acquisition project with the State's water management districts. Acquire lands that are critical to developing a regional water supply system and prevention of salt-water intrusion into the ground water aquifers. Acquire lands to prevent the uncontrolled spread of private wells and urban development and to protect and preserve water recharge capability.

6. Coastal Resources. Acquire undeveloped barrier islands, peninsulas and seashores to conserve their significant natural, recreational, and aesthetic attributes, acquire upland and wetland buffers to protect significant commercial and recreational saltwater fisheries designated as State Aquatic Preserves, National Estuarine or Marine Sanctuaries, Areas of Critical State Concern, Special Water category of Outstanding Florida Water, or Department of Environmental Regulation Class I and II Waters.
7. Geological Features. Identify, acquire and protect examples of geological exposures, formations and outcrops that are inadequately represented on public lands or represent the best possible examples of those features.
8. Open Space and Resource-based Recreational Lands. Acquire lands which conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive lands; provide extensive buffers to intensive development, as well as activities such as camping, nature walks, fishing, picnicking, and lands providing connections and wildlife corridors between publicly owned parks and conservation lands, etc.

All lands shall first be classified according to the following system:

Class I – Environmentally Significant Land - This category includes environmentally significant land for the purposes of: preserving, conserving and restoring the St. Lucie River, the Indian River Lagoon, and the Loxahatchee River, protecting drinking water sources, preserving natural areas and beaches, providing open space and protecting wildlife habitat and water storage/recharge areas. Land acquisition and preservation using the County's share of the surtax proceeds shall be limited to the properties known as Pal-Mar, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), Allapattah Flats, Atlantic Ridge, Indian River Blueways, beaches and those lands providing connections and wildlife corridors between publicly owned parks and conservation lands.

Class II - Parks and Recreation Lands - This category includes land to construct parks and recreation facilities: including the purchase of land required and completion of existing park facilities as outlined in the approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

It is the intent of the Land Acquisition Selection Committee to only purchase lands in Class I and Class II in accordance with County Ordinance 711 with 50% of the County's share of the proceeds of the half cent sales tax being used to purchase land in each category. Any land that does not comply with the Half Cent Sales Tax shall not be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners for acquisition.

The following categories will assist the Land Acquisition Selection Committee in ranking the land that otherwise qualifies either as Class I and Class II. Possible point values shown in parentheses.

I. CLASS

Class I Environmentally Significant Lands

Class II Parks and Recreation Lands

II. NATURAL COMMUNITY TYPES

- A. Forested Xeric Uplands (8-10)
 (Sand Pine Scrub, Scrubby Flatwoods)
- B. Nonforested Xeric Uplands (8-10)
 (Oak/Palmetto Scrub, Coastal Strand)
- C. Hammock (8-10)
 (Tropical Hardwood, Cabbage Palm, Hardwood)
- D. Forested Mesic Uplands (5-10)
 (Pine Flatwoods)
- E. Nonforested Mesic Uplands (5-10)
 (Dry Prairie)
- F. Disturbed/Altered Lands (0-10)
 (Improved pasture, Agriculture)
- G. Nonforested Freshwater Wetland (5-10)
 (Freshwater Marsh, Sawgrass Marsh, Wet Prairie)
- H. Forested Freshwater Wetland (8-10)
 (Cypress Swamp, Hardwood Swamp, Bay Swamp)
- I. Forested Saltwater Wetland (5-10)
 (Mangrove Swamp)
- J. Non-forested Saltwater Wetland (8-10)
 (Herbaceous Marsh)
- K. Lakes 1) Natural (5-10)
 2) Man-made (0-10)
- L. Streams 1) Natural (5-10)
 2) Man-made (0-10)
- M. Open Water Estuarine (5-10)

- N. Mineral Based Marine/Estuarine (5-10)
(Exposed Limestone Cap Rock, Near-shore Rock Outcroppings)
- O. Faunal Based Marine/Estuarine (8-10)
(Sabellarid Worm Reef, Coral Reef, Oyster Bars)
- P. Floral Based Marine/Estuarine (8-10)
(Sea Grass Beds, Algal Beds)

III. FOREST RESOURCES

- A. Cypress Swamps (5-10)
- B. Hardwood Hammocks (5-10)
- C. Bottomland Hardwood Forests (5-10)
- D. Sand Pine Scrub (8-10)
- E. Tropical Hardwood Hammocks (8-10)
- F. Pine Sandhills (1-10)
- G. Pine Flatwoods (1-10)
- H. Loblolly Pine Forests (1-10)
- I. Slash Pine Flatwoods (1-10)

IV. VASCULAR PLANTS

- A. Listed Endangered Species (8-10)
- B. Listed Threatened Species (5-10)
- C. Proposed Endangered Species (8-10)
- D. Proposed Threatened Species (8-10)
- E. Special Plant Species (8-10)

V. FISH AND WILDLIFE

- A. Game Species
 - 1) Mammals (1-10)
 - 2) Birds (1-10)
 - 3) Freshwater Fish (1-10)
 - 4) Saltwater Fish (1-10)
 - 5) Amphibians (1-10)
 - 6) Reptiles (5-10)
- B. Nongame Species
 - 1) Mammals (5-10)
 - 2) Birds (5-10)
 - 3) Freshwater Fish (5-10)
 - 4) Saltwater Fish (5-10)
 - 5) Amphibians (5-10)

6) Reptiles (5-10)

C. Threatened and Endangered Species

- 1) Mammals (8-10)
- 2) Birds (8-10)
- 3) Freshwater Fish (8-10)
- 4) Saltwater Fish (8-10)
- 5) Amphibians (8-10)
- 6) Reptiles (8-10)
- 7) Invertebrates (8-10)

VI. WATER RESOURCES/RECHARGE

- A. River Systems (1-10)
- B. Lakes (1-10)
- C. Wetlands (5-10)
- D. Recharge Areas (5-10)

VII. COASTAL RESOURCES

- A. Beaches (8-10)
- B. Barrier Islands (8-10)
- C. Estuaries (8-10)

VIII. GEOLOGICAL FEATURES

- A. Classic Exposures, Formations, and Outcrops (1-10)

IX. RESOURCES BASED OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL

- A. Hiking (1-10)
- B. Picnicking (1-10)
- C. Outdoor Swimming (1-10)
- D. Horseback Riding (1-10)
- E. Hunting (1-10)
- F. Fishing (1-10)
- G. Camping (1-10)
- H. Site Appropriate Boating (1-10)
- I. Nature Study (1-10)
- J. Limited Active Recreation Facilities (1-10)

X. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Lands contiguous or in close proximity to other governmental agency ownerships (5-10)
- B. Adapted for public purpose with a minimum of alteration or additional expense (5-10)
- C. Incorporate services provided by other governmental agencies in its management (5-10)
- D. Utilized meeting multiple public needs (1-10)
- E. Parcel size (1-10)
- F. Number of out parcels (1-10)
- G. Access (1-10)
- H. Existing easements (1-10)
- I. Utilities (1-10)
- J. Integrity of parcel boundaries (1-10)
- K. Parking (1-10)
- L. Compatibility with surrounding area (5-10)
- M. Condition of site (1-10)

XI. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

- A. Grants, donations, or bargain sales (8-10)
- B. Resources protected through cooperative ventures with other governmental agencies (8-10)
- C. Surplus lands sold or traded to reduce costs or acquire other land with high resource values (1-10)

XII. MARKET CONSIDERATION

- A. Asking price below fair market value (5-10)
- B. Inflation rate for land is high (5-10)
- C. Number of owners (1-10)
- D. Willingness to sell (1-10)

XIII. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES

- A. Scenic vistas (5-10)
- B. Greenspace (1-10)
- C. Parcel helps meet recreational needs (1-10)
- D. Economic development is enhanced or protected (1-10)
- E. Endangered habitat and/or species preservation (1-10)

XIV. SIZE

of Acres

XV. COST

Total

XVI. IMPORTANCE OF ACQUISITION

- A. Potential for Development
- B. Imminence of Development

XVII. LOCAL SUPPORT

- A. (1-10)

APPENDIX

The following Sarasota County Ranking Criteria can be used as an additional tool by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee members.

Sarasota resolution number 92-272 establishes criteria for identifying and ranking environmentally sensitive lands:

The rank is determined by the presence of one or more of the attributes listed.

Rarity- This criterion incorporates the rarity of the site's community types, rarity of species, degree to which it provides habitat, and uniqueness of the site's special features.

Rank:

R1. Rare community type. Extraordinary example of a natural community. Diverse array of superb habitats; at least one of them scarce. Extensive old growth. Several rare species, including one or more classified as endangered or threatened by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (FGFWFC) or ranked as S1 or S2 by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) are highly dependent on this site for survival of the species. For these wildlife species, the site serves as an important breeding, resting or feeding area. For S1 or S2 plant species, a significant number of plants grow on the site. This site is significant not just for the County, but at the state, national, or regional level.

R2. Examples of natural communities with high diversity of native species. Habitat types well represented statewide, but scarce in Martin County. A few rare species, but not many ranked in FNAI S2, none ranked higher. Unusual geological features or unusual species diversity. May have some old growth, but no large tracts of "living museum" rarity.

R3. Community types still represented by extensive acreage in the County. A few uncommon species, but not significant occurrences of anything ranked higher than S3 on FNAI's scale, or threatened on the FGFWFC and USFWS lists. No major geological features or unusual diversity. No outstanding examples of natural communities.

R4. Common community types in early successional or weedy condition. Habitat types widespread through the County. No rare animals or plants. No significant occurrences of anything ranked higher than Species of Special Concern by the FGFWFC or S4 on FNAI's scale.

Connectedness- This criterion concerns the relationships between the site and related elements of the landscape.

Rank:

C1. Directly contiguous with large areas of protected natural habitat without significant barriers to dispersal along extensive boundaries or very large in and of itself. A critical link in a major natural corridor system.

C2. Moderate in size and not broadly joined to large areas of natural habitat that are currently protected, but close or connected by significant existing or potentially restorable habitat corridors.

C3. Moderate in size and isolated from natural habitats of significant size by marginal habitats (such as some agricultural environments). Narrow connecting corridors.

C4. Small in size, isolated from natural habitats by significant expanse or non-functional habitat or some other barrier to dispersal. No significant connecting corridors.

Quality. This is an index of the site's ecological quality and includes concepts such as species richness, and ecosystems integrity.

Rank:

Q1. Excellent quality. Current and past management practices have maintained site quality. The typical complement of species characteristic of the ecosystem is present and thriving. Minimal restoration is needed.

Q2. Good quality. Current and past management practices have basically maintained the typical complement of species, however, some habitat degradation is evident. Many of the natural complement of species are present, but species requiring undisturbed systems are likely to be absent. Minor restoration is needed (e.g. small burrow pits, small cleared areas, needs controlled burning but not major work).

Q3. Fair quality. Current and past management practices have altered the nature and quality of communities present. Many of the natural complement of species are present, but most species indicative of high-quality habitats are absent. At least most of the site is restorable. However, it may contain significant areas that need major restoration.

Q4. Poor quality. Seriously degraded. Low species and community diversity.

Manageability. Potential for long term viability.

Rank:

M1. Inherently well buffered from most external impacts. Minimal problems related to neighboring land use and trespass. Needed management can be conducted with minimal impact on neighbors or the site itself. Fire management is possible and relatively easy.

M2. Reasonably well buffered from most external impacts. Neighboring land uses may pose constraints on fire management, but not eliminate it or make it inordinately expensive. Some trespass problems anticipated.

M3. Not adequately buffered. Can be maintained but innovative maintenance methods or expensive techniques will be needed. The site may need significant exotic species control.

M4. Too small and/or degraded maintenance or reestablishment of normal ecosystem processes. Highly vulnerable to external impacts.

Water Resources. Important to maintaining water quality in either a natural stream system, recharge area or estuarine environment.

W1. Site is important for maintenance of water quality in a major stream system, recharge area or estuarine environment. Alteration of the site will degrade that environment. The site contains a major portion of the drainage system for the feature in need of protection, forms a broad buffer between the aquatic feature and an incompatible land use, or acts significantly to purify water entering the aquatic environment.

W2. Site is of moderate importance for maintenance of water quality in a major stream system, recharge area or estuarine environment. The site acts to buffer the aquatic environment from some incompatible land use but does not otherwise contribute to water quality.

W3. Site is of relatively low importance for maintenance of water quality in the aquatic environment.

W4. Site may be contributing to the degradation of the aquatic environment.

S1. Critically imperiled in the State because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or less than 1000 individuals) or because of extreme vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor.

S2. Imperiled in the State because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or less than 3000 individuals) or because of vulnerability to extinction due to some biological or man-made factor.

S3. Either very rare and local throughout its range (21-100 occurrences or less than 10,000 individuals) or found locally in a restricted range or vulnerable to extinction because of other factors.

S4. Apparently secure in the State (may be rare in parts of range).

The Sarasota County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Advisory Committee and the County's consultant shall use the aforementioned criteria when making its recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners with respect to the identification and ranking of environmentally sensitive lands.