

Executive Summary
Estero Council of Community Leaders
November 9, 2012 Meeting

Guest Speaker Rae Ann Wessel, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation

Rae Ann Wessel is Director of Natural Resource Policy, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), an organization in its 45th year of conservation efforts.

She described how much Florida has changed as far as where water comes from and where it goes. The Caloosahatchee River used to have between 300 – 400 twisting turns in it, being fed by underground springs, before the river was channelized and the springs destroyed. Now the river is being flushed by water releases from Lake Okeechobee during the wet season and deprived of water releases during the dry season, with devastating effects on fresh water grasses and shellfish.

The SCCF continues to work with the South Florida Water Management District's Governing Board and US Army Corps of Engineers to change their water release policy.

They also are working to protect a coastal mangrove forest from development of a new community, Eden Oak Preserve. The project proposes 300 homes and a 171 slip marina on 158 acres; 150 acres of this property is mangrove forest.

The SCCF is involved in many ambitious programs to protect our water quality and wildlife. To learn more, go to their website at www.sccf.org.

New ECCL Bylaws - John Goodrich

The most recent draft bylaws were provided to the membership as an attachment to the agenda of this meeting, which was emailed earlier this week. John explained that, due to Don Eslick's health issues, the newly-elected board would serve a total of 14 months, starting in November instead of January. The membership voted unanimously to accept the new bylaws.

Environment Report – Phil Douglas

Conservation 20/20: The Lee Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) voted to accept the Blue Ribbon Commission's report and to sunset the committee. The moratorium on new land acquisition was changed to 90 days.

Edison Farms: The 4000-acre Edison Farms property is in foreclosure. The lender alleges Edison Farms owes about \$77 million. There will be an on-line public auction on November 19 but the BOCC voted to not participate in the auction. They believe they will be able to buy the

property later at a reduced rate. The County will need to work with a consortium of environmental groups in order to purchase this land.

Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign: This amendment would assure adequate funding for restoring critical natural areas and protecting Florida's water and lands. One million signatures are required for this amendment to be placed on the ballot. Phil is asking for volunteers from each community to help in this drive and also get their board's approval for this amendment. He also will need volunteers to staff tables at upcoming art fairs at Coconut Point. To volunteer, contact Phil at pdindy@comcast.net.

Community Planning – Bob Lienesch (for Roger Strelow)

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) – TDRs allow the transfer of development rights of one property owner to another. The Board of County Commissioners approved \$25,000 to start up a TDR program. This will help protect the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) area, located just east of Estero, and where much of Lee County's drinking water supply comes from.

Corkscrew Woods – This residential development in the DR/GR, just east of Bella Terra, was given final approval by the BOCC. Through an ad hoc agreement on TDRs, the County will receive more than \$1MM in money to use for acquiring development rights or the equivalent.

Research & Enterprise Diamond – This is an area the County is trying to develop in order to attract business and to diversify the economy in Lee County. This "diamond" area includes the airport and the area south to Florida Gulf Coast University.

Jumpstart – This is an initiative to help with financing and structuring organizations in order for them to grow.

Estero Land Development (Jack Lienesch) – The County is required to update the Land Development Code and Lee Plan every five years. Dan Delisi is working on Estero's portion of the Plan and will present this at the December meeting of the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) meeting. There will be public hearings on the overall Plan in the February – March timeframe.

Historic Lighting – The area on US 41 from Corkscrew Road north to Broadway Avenue will be named a historic district so the ECP is looking into historical lighting for this area. They are getting designs and costs for lights which would be shorter than the standard aluminum pole highway lighting.

New Hess Gas Station – This new gas station is in violation of the Estero code for signage as their signs are on poles instead of monument signs. Lee County code enforcers have cited them with four code violations.

Transportation – Jim Boesch

US 41 & Sweetwater Ranch Traffic Light - The Transportation Committee and concerned Estero residents met this week, for the second time, with representatives of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding their request for a full-working traffic light at this intersection. FDOT officials stated the intersection doesn't meet several national guidelines for a signal.

They also refused to reduce the speed limit on US 41 from Corkscrew Road south from 55 mph to 50 mph. Once the construction on US 41 from Corkscrew Road north to San Carlos Blvd. is completed, that speed limit will be 50 mph.

Communications – Marilyn Edwards

News releases were issued regarding Rae Ann Wessel speaking at today's meeting and the naming of the Don Eslick Bridge. These stories ran on the News-Press website and Eco-Voice Digest.

Laura Gates wrote a feature article on Don for The Banner, and the Naples Daily News editorial page gave a starfish to the BOCC for naming the bridge after Don. A photo/caption was placed on our website under "Hot News" showing Don receiving this special tribute.

Nick Batos was interviewed on the Naples Daily News Sunday Newsmaker TV program on October 22. You can view this on their website.

The chamber music concerts at the Koreshan Art Hall have been featured in the Naples Daily News, Florida Weekly and Natureside. The first concert is November 17.

A Communications Round Table will be held on **Friday, January 18, at 9 a.m.**, Room 102B at the Recreation Center. We want to hear from the representatives how we can better share information about the ECCL. In addition, Howard Levitan will give a presentation on our new web page "Estero Today".

Voting Results – Nick Batos

Estero produced better voter participation than Lee County as a whole for each of the County Commissioners. We also had a larger percentage of registered voters who voted by absentee and early voting. The total countywide turnout was 68.9 percent while it was 76.85 percent in Estero.

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Lee County</u>	<u>Estero</u>
Cecil Pendergrass	68.7%	76.7%
Larry Kiker	63.6%	74.0%
Frank Mann	62.6%	74.4%

Historic Society Lunch

The Historic Society will be having a luncheon immediately following the December 14 ECCL meeting. Tickets are \$20.