



Executive Summary
Estero Council of Community Leaders Meeting
March 14, 2014

Rob Moher, President and CEO, Conservancy of Southwest Florida

Nick Penniman's book, **Nature's Steward**, provides the history of the last 50 years of the Conservancy's efforts to conserve Florida's natural environment. When Rookery Bay was threatened with development, a group of dedicated people protected this important area which has become the gem of the natural estuary and research reserve system in the United States.

From those humble beginnings, the Conservancy has grown to cover Collier, Lee, Charlotte, and inland counties Hendry and Glades, as they are all interconnected ecological systems. The Conservancy has a full team of scientists and policy experts who try to provide solutions, not just opposition. They also have a full-blown educational program.

Water and drilling are hot issues. Drilling is a significant issue because the Sunniland track runs from the north down to Big Cypress. Five million gallons a month of fresh aquifer water are needed to support this industrial process. The Conservancy doesn't think that's a good use of water when there isn't enough water to support future growth.

There are 30,000 acres of proposed new mines in Collier and south Lee County. Mining is being proposed in aquifer recharge areas and panther corridors, which is a major concern.

There has been a 1700 percent increase in pelican admissions to the Conservancy's hospital. This means something serious is going on in our environment and it's happening all along the coast.

To learn more about the Conservancy, go to <http://www.conservancy.org/> .

**Estero Fire Rescue District Chief Scott Vanderbrook,
Fire Commissioner Dick Schweers, Finance Director Bob Lienesch**

A volunteer is needed to serve as trustee for the pension fund. There are five trustees that serve on the Estero Fire Rescue Pension Board, including two firefighters and two Estero residents chosen by the Estero Fire District Board. The fifth trustee is selected by the other four trustees. Someone with the following experience attributes is required: actuarial science,



finance and accounting, investment management, pension board experience (preferably municipal pensions), and/or public service employees. The trustee does not need to be an Estero resident. Interested candidates should contact Scott Vanderbrook, www.esterofire.org.

Bonita Springs' Annexation Activities – Jack Lienesch & Don Eslick

847 ballots were mailed to residents in Pelican Landing and The Colony; 520 were returned, which is 59% of the voters. The majority of voters rejected annexation. Bonita Springs is in the process of annexing the Weeks Fishing Camp, adjacent to the Hyatt, and five homeowners who are adjacent to the city.

Incorporation Update – John Goodrich

There have been community meetings at Cypress Bend, Marsh Landing, Riverwoods Plantation, Village of Country Creek, and a public presentation at the park, with a total of over 500 attendees. There are five other meetings scheduled, including one on March 27 at 6 p.m. and one on April 8 at 11 a.m., at the park. Everyone needs to become registered to vote by Oct. 6. All the information regarding the incorporation effort is on the ECCL website.

Chairman – Nick Batos

There have been questions about how the Charter was set up. The county-manager form of government was selected, which includes seven council members representing seven districts. The council members will set policy, and a city manager will be hired to implement those policies.

The at-large system allows all residents to vote for all of their council members, just as with the Lee County Commission. This results in each council representative taking the entire community into consideration instead of concentrating on just their own particular district. Each council member can serve two four-year terms; they will be termed-out after eight years.

In order to stagger the terms following the first election, the three council members with the least amount of votes will serve a two-year term; the other four will serve for four years.

The council will determine who the mayor will be for two years. The mayor will run the meetings and represent the Village of Estero. The mayor will have no additional powers, which allows all council members to have an equal voice.

The council members will be paid \$6,000. This is similar to the \$500 per month the fire commissioners get paid. The mayor will be paid \$9,000. The council can vote to increase these amounts but it cannot be implemented until the next election.

The ECCL will be helping run public forums for the potential council candidates. All of the Incorporation Referendum information, including the Charter, is on the [ECCL website](#).

Chairman Emeritus Don Eslick

There are 1,000 acres of vacant commercial land that needs to be developed in a market-

responsive way that satisfies Estero's high standards. The ECCL has been working collaboratively with the landowners to try to accomplish this. Three different workshops have been conducted over the last 15 months, the most recent one being held in February (see www.EsteroToday.com, Community Planning). Once the results are in, there will be another meeting with the landowners. Colliers International will be working on a marketing plan which will go out to corporate America.

The decision on Lee Memorial's application for a hospital should be made in the next couple of months. There will be an email letter-writing campaign to Gov. Scott. The Agency for Health Care Administration, which makes the final decision, is under the governor's jurisdiction. There will be a sample letter on the website; you may use that letter or write your own. The ECCL is urging members to reach out in their communities to encourage neighbors to sign the letters on the website.

Environment – Phil Douglas

The Florida Water and Land Legacy amendment will be on the ballot in November. The ECCL supported this campaign and the membership helped to gather signatures. A resolution supporting this amendment was read and unanimously voted upon by the membership (a copy was included with the agenda and is on the website).

Community Planning – Roger Strelow

The Estero Plan is nearing a conclusion and has been presented to the County Planning department. The County's recommended changes to the Plan will be discussed at the Estero Community Planning Panel's meeting at 5 p.m., Monday, March 24. All residents are invited to attend.

The County's code enforcement department has been very supportive regarding the removal of improper flags, signs, etc. There soon will be a one-page flyer presented to business owners addressing this issue.

Transportation – Jim Boesch

The right-turn lane on Williams Road onto US41 southbound is now completed. The Transportation Committee has been working with the Department of Transportation to change the signs to direct traffic into the correct lanes to get onto I-75. The sign on the overpass is placed in the wrong lane, so it's very dangerous.

The Citizen's Advisory Council is discussing a number of changes to the 2035 and 2040 plans. Don Scott should be invited to speak to the ECCL to address some of these proposed changes.

Next meeting: Friday, April 11, 2014, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Estero Community Park. The guest speaker will be Sara Owens, President and CEO, Community Foundation of Southwest Florida.

For more information about the ECCL, go to www.EsteroToday.com.

Marilyn Edwards, ECCL Communications Director