

The ECCL Report: November 2017

Executive Summary: *165th meeting of the Estero Council of Community Leaders*

Another mine, Old Corkscrew Plantation, is being proposed in eastern Lee County which may affect residents along east Corkscrew Road, and ECCL members are urged to participate in the upcoming Hearing Examiner process on Dec. 6. The Village continues working on its Stormwater Master Plan in the wake of recent weather-related flooding, and major landscaping enhancements are coming to the U.S. 41 median. The ECCL is revitalizing its Healthcare Committee and seeking mentors for the newly formed Economic Excellence Outreach Council.

The next ECCL meeting will be Friday, Dec. 8, at 10 a.m. at Estero Community Park.

VILLAGE REPORT - Councilwoman Katy Errington

Estero Grande was on the agenda for the Nov. 14 Estero Planning and Zoning Board meeting. The developer has reduced density from 285 multifamily units to 198 units on a 30-acre parcel west of the intersection of Estero Parkway and U.S. 41. The developer is now requesting a reduction in the required number of parking spaces. This will be an “upscale” apartment complex.: “It should be a real asset to the north end of Estero,” Councilwoman Errington said.

Village Council recently added \$40,000 to the contract with JR Evans to develop a **Stormwater Master Plan**. The increase will allow the study to be updated to incorporate the most recent data from major storm events in August and September, including Hurricane Irma.

Landscaping of the U.S. 41 median throughout the Village of Estero is scheduled to begin soon. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has agreed to reimburse the Village for initial installation costs of \$750,000. The median landscaping is designed to create a consistent and distinctly “Estero” look. This project is scheduled for completion in summer 2018.

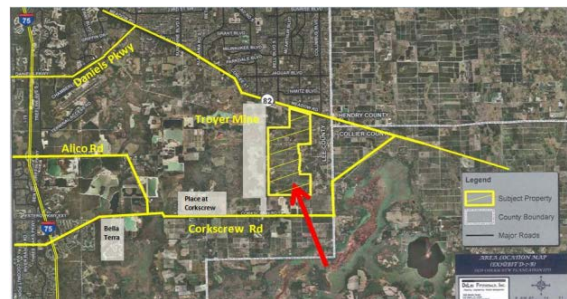
Village Council recently set its **legislative priorities** for 2018. These include:

- Support for state legislation to limit discharges from Lake Okeechobee.
- Opposition of any legislation that would preempt House Rule protections including mandating fertilizer standards and fracking.
- Support for funding of state projects which would advance enhanced transportation connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists along with “complete” streets.

- Opposition to the local bill for the merger of independent fire districts.
- Provision of improved flood mitigation within the Estero River basin through additional water storage areas.
- Extension of the Jeff Sommer Memorial Highway designation to include U.S. 41 from Corkscrew Road to Breckenridge Drive.
- Support for a bill which would require inspection and disclosure of septic tanks at the time of sale.
- Possible designation of Corkscrew Road as a parkway from Alico Road to I-75 to make it “truck free.”

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT - *Nicole Johnson, Policy Director, Conservancy of Southwest Florida*

A mining application for Old Corkscrew Plantation is scheduled to go before the Lee County Hearing Examiner on Dec. 6. This is a 4,205-acre property located in the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area (DR/GR) directly to the east of the proposed Troyer Bros. mine, near the eastern Lee/Collier county line (approximately 15 miles from Interstate 75). The landowner is seeking to mine 1,837 acres, and blasting is proposed. Mining depth would be 110 feet, and the duration of mining activity would be 40 years, generating truck traffic of about 725 loads per day.



History: Old Corkscrew was recently acquired by King Ranch. The initial application for rezoning — from agricultural to industrial planned development for the purpose of mining — was submitted to Lee County in September 2007. That application was found insufficient by Lee County staff. However, the most recent application, which is now deemed “sufficient,” is being considered under the “old rules” of the Lee County Land Development Code as they existed in 2007, pursuant to a ruling by the 20th Circuit Court. This means Lee County’s Map 14, which restricts mining to designated areas within the DR/GR, does not apply to Old Corkscrew Plantation.

Wildlife: About 39 percent of the site is primary panther habitat, and 61 percent is secondary panther habitat. The vast majority of the site (87 percent) is adult panther breeding habitat, and 13 protected species (including panther) live on this site.

Other Concerns: Truck traffic would exit onto State Road 82 but could travel to I-75 via Corkscrew Road. Old Corkscrew Plantation is outside of Lee County’s designated mining area, and although Map 14 cannot be considered, there are still significant concerns about impacts to conservation lands and listed species, as well as neighboring residents, including the adjacent residential community of Wildcat Farms.

Upcoming meetings: The Lee County Staff report should be available on Nov. 22, and the case is tentatively scheduled to go before the Hearing Examiner (HEX) on **Dec. 6**. Anyone wishing to comment on this mining application must first speak before the Hearing Examiner in order to speak before the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at a later date. The ECCL Environmental Committee will educate and prepare speakers during its meeting on **Nov. 16** at noon at FineMark Bank in Estero. Conservancy of Southwest Florida representative Julianne Thomas will participate in this discussion.

“Go to the hearing examiner, have your list of facts and concerns, and participate in the process,” urged Johnson. You may view the Conservancy’s Powerpoint presentation on Old Corkscrew mine [here](#).

HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE - *Suzanne Bradach, Lee Health Special Projects Director*

Lee Health Coconut Point Aerial view – Nov. 2, 2017



The ECCL Healthcare Committee held a revitalization meeting Nov. 14 to learn more about the special programs which will be offered at the new Lee Health Coconut Point facility and to discuss opportunities for community involvement. Hurricanes Irma and Harvey have caused some supply and workforce issues, but completion of the Coconut Point facility is still targeted for late

summer 2018, said Lee Health’s Suzanne Bradach.

She also discussed Lee Health’s recent purchase of 44 acres adjacent to the Coconut Point facility. Currently, there are no plans for this property, and the Healthcare Committee will be asked to provide input on its future use. The Committee also will be involved in educating the community about the Healthy Lee survey conducted by Lee Health every three years and implementing community programs to address the identified needs. Another important role of the Hospital Committee will be to support the Coconut Point facility “100 percent” and demonstrate need for Phase 2 hospital expansion including 80 beds, added ECCL Chairman Don Eslick. To view Lee Health’s presentation, [click here](#).

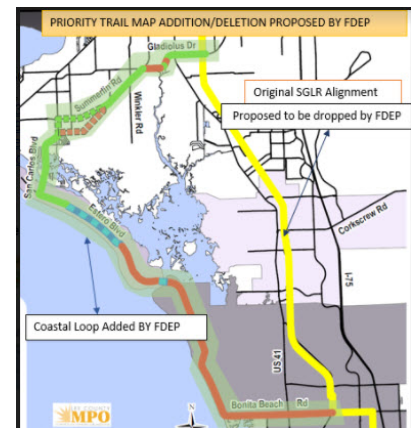
ECONOMIC EXCELLENCE OUTREACH COUNCIL - *Vince Modarelli & Dr. Sandra Kauanui, FGCU*

The ECCL is partnering with the Institute for Entrepreneurship at Florida Gulf Coast University through the newly formed Economic Excellence Outreach Council (EEOC). An organizational meeting was held on Nov. 15 with representatives from FGCU, the Village of Estero, Lee Health and the School District of Lee County participating. The goal of the EEOC is to invest in Lee County’s future workforce by providing workforce development through mentorship and to help implement the Village Center’s civic, cultural and healthcare components.

Dr. Sandra Kauanui, director of the Institute of Entrepreneurship, enlightened the ECCL on the success of FGCU's entrepreneurship programs. A "Runway Program" attracted 60 students who wanted to start their own business last year, and 85 more students have applied this year. FGCU is one of only three universities in the nation offering an interdisciplinary Entrepreneurship degree program, Dr. Kauanui noted. The Institute is also training high school students to think like entrepreneurs through a partnership with Junior Achievement. Further, the Institute trains military veterans in entrepreneurship, awarding more than \$100,000 in seed funding this year through a grant program.

FLORIDA SUNTRAIL/BONITA-ESTERO PATHWAY - Nick Batos & Peter O'Flinn

The Village of Estero and City of Bonita Springs have been working together to reinstate priority status for the Bonita-Estero Trail along the Seminole Gulf Coast Railroad as part of the SUNTrail system being constructed and connected throughout the State of Florida. With ECCL's assistance, more than 550 letters have been sent to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways and Trails strongly urging the priority designation which would make funding available. A form letter and additional information may be accessed on www.EsteroToday.com; view the ECCL [presentation here](#).



LEE VOTER FREEDOM - Al Meyer, Irv Nathanson & John Neville

Al Meyer of Grandezza, Irv Nathanson of Lighthouse Bay and John Neville of Breckenridge gave reports on petition drives in their communities for Lee Voter Freedom. This is an effort to make Lee County commissioner elections nonpartisan. Closed primaries mean nearly 60 percent of Lee County's registered voters can be excluded from voting in commissioner races. In order to get a referendum to be placed on the ballot, more than 30,000 signed petitions must be collected from registered voters by March 2018. More information and a downloadable petition may be found at www.leevoterfreedom.com.

TRANSPORTATION REPORT - Bob King

Limited information released from Lee County's Corkscrew Road study conducted by AIM Engineering shows that sections of east Corkscrew Road will soon be operating at 212 percent of capacity during peak hours. This finding supports the need for the road to be widened to four lanes. Even after the widening, however, Corkscrew Road will still be operating at 81-97 percent of capacity once construction on four new residential developments is completed within the next decade. Additionally, widening the road does not address egress problems for those who

live in communities on the south side of Corkscrew Road and are trying to turn left out of their communities; it only intensifies this safety issue, noted ECCL Transportation Chair Bob King.

Estero Parkway is the No. 1 capital improvement priority for the Village of Estero in the current fiscal year. The Village has designated \$175,000 for Phase One, which includes design and engineering. The ECCL Transportation Committee is identifying priority projects in five zones of the Village and will be advocating for several significant roadway improvements during the next six months, King said. *The next Transportation Committee meeting is Nov. 16 at 9:30 a.m. at FineMark Bank Estero.*

COMMUNITY PLANNING - Jim Tatoes

The Estero Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) heard plans for Estero Grande Parkside and NCH Healthcare on Nov. 14, in addition to a proposed dog park at West Bay Club. Estero Grande is seeking to reduce the number of required parking spaces for its 198-unit apartment complex while increasing the amount of green space in the development. NCH is seeking to operate a 24/7 emergency room within the Coconut Trace commercial center on the west side of U.S. 41 across from Coconut Point Mall. Hours of operation within this development are restricted by zoning to between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m.



Estero Grande Parkside

Estero Crossing has withdrawn its application for a mixed use development on 43 acres south of Corkscrew Road and west of Interstate 75. The property is now on the market and is being advertised with its current zoning for a “big box” store. The seller’s plan had included a 350-unit apartment complex and commercial development, but the developer encountered several delays due to opposition from neighbors and concerns of the Village. “It was overworked to the point where frustration resulted in the developer walking away,” observed ECCL Community Planning Chair and PZB member Jim Tatoes. This means plans for a frontage road from Corkscrew Woodlands Drive to a future stoplight at the Lowe’s entrance off of Corkscrew Road are now stalled.

To view the Community Planning presentation, including a chart of all developments currently under review, [click here](#). A map of Developments Under Review may be found on the [ECCL website here](#).

FINANCIAL REPORT - Bob Lienesch

Cash in the bank exceeded \$13,000 at the end of October. All communities, plus Lee Health, have paid their 2017 dues. Invoices for 2018 dues have been sent, and some communities have

already paid in advance of the January 31, 2018, due date. The full financial report for the month ended Oct. 31, 2017, may be [accessed here](#).

MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATION - *Jim Shields*

The ECCL welcomed the new Rookery Pointe representative, Joe Miceli, along with the alternate Cindy Marchant. The Membership Committee is looking for volunteers to help with membership recruitment. This would include community visits and in-person presentations, as well as social media marketing efforts. If interested, contact Jim Shields at jmshields@fl-office.com.

In 2018, the ECCL plans to invite public service providers to share in funding of the ECCL Communications Network. The ECCL currently creates and shares valuable, free content on cultural events, health and safety issues, environmental concerns, educational topics, economic development and transportation issues. The ECCL currently reaches 35 member communities with 18,000 doors, and its reach extends to 30,000 via social media and digital marketing which directs traffic to the ECCL website at www.EsteroToday.com. To view a presentation on membership and communications activities, [click here](#).