

5 Funding for Natural Resources and Sustainable Initiatives

PENNY FOR PINELLAS

On November 7, 1989, the citizens of Pinellas County voted to tax themselves over a ten year period to pay for needed improvements to County and municipal infrastructure. The revenue generated from the one-cent "Penny for Pinellas" Infrastructure Sales Tax has funded needed infrastructure projects identified in Pinellas County's Comprehensive Plan. The projects funded by the "Penny for Pinellas" include not only construction of County roads, bridges, buildings and related "capital" infrastructure, but also acquisition of the County's "green" infrastructure. This includes recreation and open space parcels and environmentally-sensitive areas, such as the Shell Key Preserve. Many of these environmentally sensitive properties, particularly in the rapidly developing northeastern corner of the County, would probably have been developed and lost forever as valuable natural assets to the County. In March of 1997, and again in March of 2007, voters approved, through referendum, an extension of the Once Cent Infrastructure Sales Tax through 2019. These significant events mean that the County can now continue to purchase environmentally-sensitive land for preservation and conservation purposes. These lands were identified by staff from Real Estate Management Division of General Services, working closely with the Department of Environmental Management. **Table 12** displays the Natural Resources and Endangered Lands Acquisition Project summary, which includes funds from both the Capital Improvements Program and the Penny for Pinellas. **Table 13** displays the lands that have been acquired as of 2006 through the Penny for Pinellas program.



Shell Key Preserve

During the first cycle of the Penny for Pinellas, \$35.2 million was allocated to purchase over 2,000 acres of park and preserve lands. From 2000 to 2009, it is anticipated that \$1.36 billion will be spent on such purchases, and \$1.9 billion is estimated to be spent between 2010 and 2019. It is estimated that an additional 7,000 acres of park and preserve land will be purchased through this program before the end of the most recent extension, in 2019. As of 2006, approximately 3,000 acres had already been purchased.

Some notable acquisitions of environmentally-sensitive lands using the sales tax have included joint acquisition with the Southwest Florida Water Management District for land in the Brooker Creek Preserve; 385 acres of the Mobbly Bay tidal swamp, on the east coast of the County near the City of Oldsmar; and over 305 acres of the Masters Bayou Tract in the area of Snug Harbor. In addition to the acquisition of these properties, several environmental enhancement projects have been completed, such as the removal of sediment from Lake Seminole, and drainage related projects, such as the Allen's Creek Watershed Management Plan, have resulted in the purchase and preservation of environmentally-sensitive lands for flood control and water quality enhancement purposes. The list below attests to the success of the Penny for Pinellas in acquiring and preserving our natural heritage. Without this funding source, acquisition of these lands would have been much more difficult.

**TABLE 12
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENDANGERED LANDS
ACQUISITION PROJECT SUMMARY**

PROJECT ID#	PROJECT (LOCATION)	PROJECT STATUS
845	Alligator Lake Habitat Restoration	Scheduled
1195	Beach Lighting	Scheduled
937	Brooker Creek Habitat Restoration	Scheduled
	Brooker Creek Preserve Projects	Planned
657	Coastal Habitat Restoration/Enhancement	Scheduled
1245	Environmental Lands Fencing	Scheduled
505	Exotic Vegetation Removal	Scheduled
965	FBG Environmental Remediation	Scheduled
656	Habitat Restoration & Enhancement	Scheduled
938	Mobbly Bay Habitat Restoration	Scheduled
944	North County Exotics Removal	Scheduled
847	Shell Key Coastal Restoration	Scheduled
844	South County Exotic Vegetation Control	Scheduled
1069	Tarpon Springs Shoreline Stabilization	Scheduled
951	Travatine Restoration	Scheduled
956	Turtle Monitoring	Scheduled
N/A	Upper Tampa Bay Recirculation & Restoration Project	Planned
	Weedon Island Preserve Projects	Planned
954	Weedon Island Salt Marsh Restoration	Scheduled

Source: Pinellas County Capital Improvements Program, Pinellas County Departments of Environmental Management, 2007.

N/A = not yet assigned; beyond the 6-year schedule

"Scheduled" indicates the project is included in the six-year (2008-2013) CIP list;

"Planned" indicates the project is anticipated to be implemented beyond 2013, up to the year 2020.

**TABLE 13
PARKLAND AND ENDANGERED LANDS
PENNY FOR PINELLAS PROJECTS ACQUIRED AS OF 2006**

PROJECT	ACREAGE
Allen's Creek Marsh	19.637
Alligator Lake	95.11
Anclote River Backwater Marshes	175.25
Anclote River Islands West	29.05
Anderson Park	1.14
Boca Ciega Park	14.4
Brooker Anclote Corridor	47.008
Brooker Creek Preserve	1392.035
Brooker Lake Property	189.89
Cow Branch	99.34
Dolly Bay	3
Eagle Lake Park	156.51
Eagle Lake Park-Historic Addition	6.6
Feather Sound Community Service District	9.86
Indian Rocks Beach Parking	0.822
Joe's Creek	125.54
King Islands	25.659
Lake Seminole	15
Lancaster Preserve	19.5
Live Oak Park	1.15
Mariner's Point	64.95
Mobbly Bay	97.36
Mobbly Bay-With City of Oldsmar	16.97
Ozona Preserve	3
Pinellas Trail	3.56
Shell Key	39.51
Snug Harbor	0.23
Sutherland Bayou Wetlands	16.11
Tiki Gardens	9.59
Wall Springs Park	168.497
Walsingham Park	2.3
Weedon Island	121.14
Yat Kitischee	14.4
TOTAL	2984.118

Source: Pinellas County Real Estate Department, 2007.