

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 9(A)(2)


TO: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: April 21, 2026

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution approving modified
Environmentally Endangered
Lands Acquisition List pursuant
to section 24-50.7

The accompanying resolution was prepared by the Department of Environmental Resources Management and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins.



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/uw

Memorandum



Date: April 21, 2026

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*
Mayor

Subject: Resolution Approving the Modified Environmentally Endangered Lands Acquisition List

Executive Summary

This item seeks approval from the Board of County Commissioners (Board) of the modified Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Acquisition List as recommended by the Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC). Board approval is required to make changes to the EEL Acquisition List.

In order to prioritize acquisition of environmentally endangered lands, the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program maintains the EEL Acquisition List which guides the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands in Miami-Dade County. EEL Program purchases are only negotiated with willing sellers; the placement of a property on the list does not guarantee that it will be purchased.

This item addresses changes to the EEL Acquisition List proposed by the LASC.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board adopt the attached resolution approving the modified EEL Acquisition List (Attachment A) as recommended by the LASC.

Scope

The EEL Program's scope is Countywide in nature with 11 of the 13 districts having EEL acquisition projects on the modified EEL Acquisition List. However, the acquisition proposals that are the subject of this approval are located in Commission District 8, represented by Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins and Commission District 9, represented by Vice Chairman Kionne L. McGhee.

Delegation of Authority

This item does not provide for delegation of authority to the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source

Approving the modified EEL Acquisition List is expected to have no fiscal impact to the County. Once a property is on the EEL Acquisition List, the County negotiates with willing sellers to enter into purchase contracts. There could be additional costs to the County if the County purchases the properties that are being added to the EEL Acquisition List. There is some delegated authority that this Board has previously approved for EEL purchases, as detailed

further below, but those prior Board resolutions already included funding sources and disclosed the fiscal impact. For example, negotiated contracts for purchase of approved EEL properties require additional Board approval, except for contracts under \$15,000.00 (per Resolution No. R-1619-95) and those related to the four Resilient Florida grant agreements with FDEP. Resolution No. R-986-23 previously delegated authority to the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to acquire the properties identified therein (by folio number) using the designated Resilient Florida grant and County match funds, subject to the parameters defined in the Resolution No. R-986-23.

Track Record/Monitor

The EEL Program Manager within the Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM), Janet Gil, will monitor the activities related to conservation lands acquisition and management.

Background

The historic loss, fragmentation, and degradation of native wetland and forest communities in Miami-Dade County has been well recognized. In May 1990, with the knowledge that remaining wetland and forest communities were endangered, the electorate of Miami-Dade County authorized the County to levy an ad valorem tax for two years to create the EEL Program and Trust Fund. The purpose of the EEL Program is to acquire, preserve, enhance, restore, conserve, and maintain environmentally endangered lands for the benefit of present and future generations. The County, in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, the State of Florida, and other funding partners, has acquired approximately 24,201 acres of land in Miami-Dade County since the inception of the EEL Program through April 30, 2025.

In order to prioritize acquisition of environmentally endangered lands, the EEL Program maintains the EEL Acquisition List which guides the purchase of these environmentally sensitive lands. Most purchases of environmentally endangered lands must be approved by the Board prior to purchase; however, certain purchases can be made administratively pursuant to prior resolutions of the Board.

The EEL Acquisition List consists of Priority A and Priority B lists which are used to prioritize land purchases. According to the Code of Miami-Dade County (Code), the Priority A List shall contain no more than ten projects which shall be selected by the Board from those acquisition proposals which receive the highest evaluations in accordance with the criteria provided for in Section 24-50.8 of the Code and for which acquisition is feasible. The Code states that the Priority B list shall contain acquisition proposals which are also deemed worthy of acquisition based upon the evaluation criteria provided in Section 24-50.8, and which may feasibly be acquired, but have not been assigned to the Priority A List. The Code also provides that the County may not actively pursue acquisition of Priority B parcels unless the share of the purchase price paid from the EEL Acquisition Trust Fund is no more than 50 percent of the total purchase price of the property or unless the seller donates 50 percent or more of the value of the property, as estimated in an appraisal report by an independent fee appraiser and accepted by the County.

As mentioned above, the Code limits the Priority A List to no more than ten acquisition projects. The Code defines an "acquisition project" for EEL as a parcel(s) of land approved by the Board

for acquisition by the County in accordance with the procedures provided in Section 24-50. Historically, each of the projects on the Priority A Acquisition List has consisted of numerous contiguous and non-contiguous parcels having similar natural features and plant communities. The last Priority A List approved by the Board consisted of eight acquisition projects. These eight acquisition projects have been approved by the Board multiple times over the years.

Section 24-50.10(1) of the Code allows for members of the public and government agencies to submit applications to nominate properties for acquisition by the County through the EEL Program. Section 24-50.2 of the Code defines acquisition proposals as parcels of land which are nominated or recommended for acquisition in accordance with Chapter 24, Article IV, Division 3. The acquisition proposals are evaluated by staff using specific considerations based upon the criteria provided in the applicable provisions of the Code.

The Miami-Dade County LASC was established pursuant to Section 24-50.6 of the Code with the primary responsibility to make recommendations to the Board as to the original EEL Acquisition List and subsequent updates thereto. Board approval is required to make changes to the EEL Acquisition List.

The LASC held a public hearing on September 5, 2025, and made recommendations that the Board approve a modified EEL Acquisition List. In making the recommendation to the Board, the LASC considered the last Board-approved EEL Acquisition List. If approved by the Board, the LASC's recommendations would result in multiple changes to the Priority A List and two changes to the Priority B List. The changes proposed to the Priority A List consist of the reclassification of the Black Creek Forest Acquisition Project to be listed under the Tropical Hardwood Hammocks Acquisition Project; the moving of Cutler Bay Properties from the Priority B List to the Priority A List; the movement of Kings Highway to the Priority B List; the formal removal of the Biscayne Wetland site from the Coastal Wetlands Acquisition Project (CWAP) as it is fully acquired; the updating of the remaining acreage for Black Point Wetlands and Cutler Wetlands within the CWAP reflecting acquisitions by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD); the renaming of the Calderon Pineland to the Sean W. McCrackine Pineland Preserve; the removal of the Church of Jesus Christ and Parsons Pineland from the Other Rockridge Pinelands Acquisition Project as it is fully acquired; and a correction to the unacquired acreage for the Federal Richmond Pineland.

The LASC also recommended changes to the Priority B List, which consists of the elevation of Cutler Bay Properties to the Priority A List and the reassignment of Kings Highway to the Priority B List.

The recommended changes to the Priority A List and Priority B List are described in detail below.

Priority A List changes

Black Creek Forest

The Tropical Hardwood Hammocks Acquisition Project focuses on acquiring and protecting these rare and imperiled ecosystems within the county. The Board first placed the Tropical Hardwood Hammocks Acquisition Project on the EEL Priority A Acquisition List in 1991. These

hammocks, comprised of multiple, contiguous and non-contiguous parcels, are rich tropical hardwood forests that grow on a thin layer of organic soil over limestone. They feature a dense canopy and a diverse range of over 120 native tree and shrub species, many of which are at the northern extent of their range in Florida. They provide essential habitat for a diverse range of plant and animal species, including many that are rare or endangered. Furthermore, these hammocks are crucial for preserving water quality by filtering runoff and preventing soil erosion. Due to extensive urban development and agriculture, the remaining hammocks are often small, fragmented islands of forest, highlighting the crucial need for ongoing conservation efforts to protect them.

The LASC recommended the reclassification of the Black Creek Forest Acquisition Project, moving it from an independent project on the Priority A List to being listed under the Tropical Hardwood Hammock Acquisition Project.

Given the ecological consistency of the unacquired portions of Black Creek Forest with the conditions detailed above, the LASC concluded that its inclusion within the Tropical Hardwood Hammock Acquisition Project was warranted.

Cutler Bay Properties Acquisition Project

The LASC recommended moving Cutler Bay Properties from the Priority B List to the Priority A List.

The acquisition project was evaluated as buffer land. The biological value and viability of the adjacent environmental land is high. Staff determined existing and potential impact to the adjacent environmental land if the buffer land is not acquired is high.

This acquisition project was not originally assigned to the Priority A List, however, based on staff analysis, the property is worthy of acquisition under the Priority A Acquisition List, as recommended by the LASC, and as requested by the Town of Cutler Bay, in accordance with the evaluation criteria provided in section 24-50.8 of the Code. The current property owner, the Town of Cutler Bay, desires to sell the property to the County for conservation purposes, and the acquisition of this property is therefore feasible. The Water and Sewer Department of Miami-Dade County property, which is also located in this proposed acquisition project, is concurrently being recommended for movement from the Priority B Acquisition List to the Priority A Acquisition List. This item seeks approval for the Priority A List designation of the WASD parcel at this time.

Although the County-owned Water and Sewer Department property is within this proposed acquisition project, that County property is not being approved for management by the EEL Program as part of this resolution. It is anticipated that a future proposal to approve that property for management by the EEL Program will be brought to this Board for the Board's consideration at a later date.

Coastal Wetlands Acquisition Project

The Coastal Wetlands Acquisition Project is mostly saltwater and mangrove-dominated wetlands

along the coast of the County, comprised of multiple, contiguous and non-contiguous parcels. The Board first placed the Coastal Wetlands Acquisition Project on the EEL Priority A Acquisition List in 1996. These habitats fuel both terrestrial and aquatic food chains. Wetlands contribute to water quality by removing excess nutrients and pollutants that originate in the uplands before reaching the estuary. Wetlands also offer important habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals that rely on the area as a nursery ground and provide protection against coastal erosion.

The LASC recommended that the Board formally remove the Biscayne Wetland site from the CWAP, as all associated parcels have been successfully acquired.

The LASC also recommended updating the remaining acreage for two preserves to account for significant prior acquisitions made by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), an acquisition partner to the EEL Program.

- Black Point Wetlands: Update the remaining acreage from 192 acres to 38 acres, reflecting the SFWMD's purchase of 154 acres.
- Cutler Wetlands: Update the remaining acreage from 780 acres to 151 acres, reflecting the SFWMD's purchase of 629 acres.

Miami Rockridge Pinelands (CARL) Acquisition Project

The Miami Rockridge Pinelands CARL Acquisition Project consists of multiple, contiguous and noncontiguous properties throughout Miami-Dade County comprised of pine rockland habitat. The Board first placed the Miami Rockridge Pinelands CARL Acquisition Project on the EEL Priority A Acquisition List in 1991. This action enabled the County to actively pursue joint acquisition negotiations with the State of Florida for these properties, which have a long history of state significance and local support. Pine rockland habitat is designated a Globally Critically Imperiled Natural Community by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) and is rich with rare and endangered flora and fauna. Numerous species endemic to South Florida are found in pine rocklands. Pine rocklands, like other upland forests in South Florida, serve as important stops on the Atlantic Flyway for migratory birds.

The LASC recommended moving Kings Highway from the Miami Rockridge Pinelands CARL Acquisition Project to the Priority B List. This was erroneously kept on the Priority A List even after Resolution No. R-660-96 recommended it be moved to the Priority B List.

Other Rockridge Pinelands Acquisition Project

The Other Rockridge Pinelands Acquisition Project consists of multiple, contiguous and non-contiguous properties throughout Miami-Dade County comprised of pine rockland habitat. The Board first placed the Other Rockridge Pinelands Acquisition Project on the EEL Priority A Acquisition List in 1996. Pine rockland habitat is designated a Globally Critically Imperiled Natural Community by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) and is rich with rare and endangered flora and fauna. Numerous species endemic to South Florida are found in pine rocklands. Pine rocklands, like other upland forests in South Florida, serve as important stops on the Atlantic Flyway for migratory birds.

The LASC recommended updating the EEL Acquisition List for the property currently referenced as Calderon Pineland to reflect the official and correct name, Sean W. McCrackine Pineland Preserve, which the Board of County Commissioners named after Sean W. McCrackine in Board Resolution No. R-784-24.

The LASC also recommended removing the Church of Jesus Christ and Parsons Pineland from the list, as all associated parcels have been successfully acquired.

Lastly, the LASC recommended a correction of the unacquired acreage for the Federal Richmond Pineland from 212 acres to 219 acres.

Priority B List changes

Changes to the Priority B List were limited to two reclassifications: the elevation of Cutler Bay Properties to the Priority A List and the reassignment of Kings Highway to the Priority B List. Both actions are documented in detail within the Priority A List section of this item.

Conclusion

Pursuant to Section 24-50.9 of the Code, the LASC recommended changes to the EEL Acquisition List require approval by the Board, therefore, the attached resolution is recommended for approval.

Although there may be some County-owned properties within the acquisition projects, this resolution does not approve any County owned properties for management under the EEL Program.



Roy Coley
Chief Utilities and Regulatory Services Officer



MEMORANDUM
(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: April 21, 2026

FROM: 
Geni Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 9(A)(2)

Please note any items checked.

- _____ **“3-Day Rule” for committees applicable if raised**
- _____ **6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing**
- _____ **4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing**
- _____ **Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget**
- _____ **Budget required**
- _____ **Statement of fiscal impact required**
- _____ **Statement of social equity required**
- _____ **Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor’s report for public hearing**
- _____ **No committee review**
- _____ **Requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3’s present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5’s ____, unanimous ____, majority plus one ____, CDMP 7 votes (majority of membership) ____, CDMP 2/3 members present but not less than 7 votes (majority of membership) ____, CDMP 9 votes (2/3 membership) _____) to approve**
- _____ **Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required**

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 9(A)(2)
4-21-26

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION APPROVING MODIFIED
ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS
ACQUISITION LIST PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-50.7

WHEREAS, this Board desires to accomplish the purposes outlined in the accompanying memorandum, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated in this resolution and are approved.

Section 2. This Board hereby approves the modified Environmentally Endangered Lands Acquisition List, attached hereto as Attachment A and made apart hereof.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner _____,
who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____
and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman | |
| Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman | |
| Marleine Bastien | Juan Carlos Bermudez |
| Sen. René García | Oliver G. Gilbert, III |
| Roberto J. Gonzalez | Keon Hardemon |
| Danielle Cohen Higgins | Vicki L. Lopez |
| Natalie Milian Orbis | Raquel A. Regalado |
| Micky Steinberg | |

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 21st day of April, 2026. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Abbie Schwaderer-Raurell

Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Acquisition List

Attachment A

EEL ACQUISITION PROJECTS: Priority A List

PROJECT # /	Project Name / Preserve Name	Habitat	Partially Acquired	Acres Unacquired	Location
1	Bird Key	A List		38	NW 79 St. & Bisc. Bay
2	Cutler Bay Properties	A List		9.9	SW 184 St. & Old Cutler Rd.
3	Coastal Wetlands:	A List			
	Black Point Wetlands (FCT)		xxx	38	SW 248 St. & 97 Ave.
	Cutler Pit and Mangroves			536	C-102 (SW 268 St.) & SW 107 Ave.
	Cutler Pit and Mangroves Addition			5	C-102 (SW 268 St.) & SW 97 Ave.
	Cutler Wetlands (FCT)		xxx	151	SW 216 St. & 85 Ave.
	R. Hardy Matheson Preserve Add'n		xxx	21	Old Cutler Rd. & SW 108 St.
4	Miami Rockridge Pinelands: (CARL)	A List			
	Goulds Addition (CARL)		xxx	29	SW 232 St. & 120 Ave.
	Navy Wells 23 (CARL)		xxx	2	SW 352 St. & 182 Ave.
	Navy Wells 39 (CARL)		xxx	1	SW 354 St. & 210 Ave.
	West Biscayne (CARL 13)		xxx	2	SW 288 St. & 190 Ave.
	Wilkins-Pierson (CARL)		xxx	10	SW 184 St. & 164 Ave.
5	Other Rockridge Pinelands:	A List			
	Andrew Dodge New Pines Preserve		xxx	1	SW 248 St. & 127 Ave.
	Bowers Pineland			10	SW 296 St. & 197 Ave.
	Sean W. McCrackine		xxx	1	SW 192 St. & 140 Ave.
	Federal Richmond Pinelands		xxx	219	SW 152 St. & 130 Ave.
	Hattie Bauer Pineland			5	SW 266 St. & 157 Ave.
	Ned Glenn Nature Preserve		xxx	10	SW 188 St. & 87 Ave.
	Pine Ridge Sanctuary			14	SW 300 St. & 211 Ave.
	Richmond Pineland-School Board/University of Miami			5	SW 152 St. & SW 130 Ave.
	Richmond Pineland-University of Miami/Coral Reef Retail			5.5	SW 152 St. & SW 127 Ave.
6	Oleta River Corridor:	A List			
	Tract A			3	NE 171 St. & US-1
	Tract B (FCT)			8	NE 165 St. & US-1
	Tract D			8	NE 191 St. & 24 Ave.
7	South Dade Wetlands (SAMP, SOR)	A List			
	C-111 & Model Land Basin		xxx	21,182	South Miami-Dade County
	Model Land Addition		xxx	6,379	South of SW 344 St.
	Friends-of-the-Everglades Addition		xxx	3,461	SW 344 St. & 137 Ave.
	Peters et al. Addition		xxx	62	SW 328 St. & SW 117 Ave.
	Stern-Alpert Addition			10	SW 376 St. & SW 182 Ave.
	Keyhole Wetlands Addition		xxx	153	US 1 & Card Sound Road
	Wink Eye Slough Addition			57	SW 344 St. & 167 Ave.
8	Tropical Hammocks:	A List			
	Black Creek Forest		xxx	45	SW 214 St. & 112 Ave.
	Castellow 31 (CARL)			10	SW 218 St. & 157 Ave.
	Owaissa Bauer Addition #2			10	SW 264 St. & 176 Ave.
	Holiday Hammock (CARL)		xxx	17	SW 400 St. & 209 Ave.
	Round Hammock (CARL)			32.6	SW 408 St. & 220 Ave.
	SW Island Hammock (CARL 4)			12.5	SW 392 St. & 207 Ave.
	Silver Palm Hammock Addition			19	SW 228 St. & 149 Ave.
	Vizcaya Hammock Addition			2	3300 South Miami Ave.

EEL ACQUISITION PROJECTS: Priority B List

Preserve Name	Habitat	Partially Acquired	Acres Unacquired	Location
1 Barnacle Addition (CARL and City of Miami)	B List		6	Main Highway
2 Cutler Wetlands North Addition Hammock	B List		37	SW 184 St. & Old Cutler Rd.
3 Dixie Heights Pineland	B List		27	SW 268 St. & 130 Ave.
4 Hammock Island	B List		100	SW 360 St. & L-31 W.
5 Homestead General Aviation Hammock	B List		4	SW 296 St. & 217 Ave.
6 Kings Highway (CARL14)	B List		31	SW 304 St. & 202 Ave.
7 Maddens (CARL 10)	B List		60	NW 154 St. & 87 Ave.
8 Notre Dame Pineland	B List		32	SW 280 St. & 132 Ave.
9 Railroad Pineland	B List		18	SW 184 St. & 147 Ave.
TOTAL A List Acres			32,584	
TOTAL B List Acres			315	