

# Sample Ballot

COUNTY OF INDIAN RIVER, FLORIDA

**BOND REFERENDUM ELECTION -NOVEMBER 2, 2004**

***WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION, ENVIRONMENTALLY  
SIGNIFICANT LANDS, OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT  
PRESERVATION***

To acquire and preserve land to protect water resources, drinking water resources, environmentally significant lands, historic sites, agricultural lands, open spaces, and/or wildlife habitat, shall Indian River County be authorized to issue general obligation bonds with maturities not exceeding 15 years at interest rates not exceeding the legal maximum in an amount not exceeding \$50 million payable from ad valorem taxes not exceeding 1/2 mill, with project spending subject to annual independent audit?

For Bonds \_\_\_\_\_

Against Bonds \_\_\_\_\_



Should Indian River  
County Preserve  
Environmental,  
Historic and  
Agricultural Lands?



**Board of County Commissioners**

Indian River County Administration Building  
1840 25th Street  
Vero Beach, FL 32960-3365

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Mailing Address Line 3  
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***On November 2, 2004, Indian River County voters will be asked to consider a referendum authorizing the issuance of bonds to acquire and preserve important environmental lands, historic sites and farmland.***

***WHY PRESERVE THESE LANDS?***

The acquisition of natural / environmental lands helps to:

- Protect water quality;
- Preserve the habitat of threatened and endangered species; and
- Provide open space and public recreation for present and future generations.

The acquisition of historic sites helps to:

- Preserve Indian River County’s unique cultural heritage.

The protection of agricultural lands through the purchase of development rights helps to:

- Sustain the County’s traditional economy and rural character.



***HOW WILL THESE LANDS BE PRESERVED?***

Selected lands will be purchased outright. Other lands will be preserved through the purchase of development rights. State and federal funds, as well as donations, will be sought to increase the total sum available.

***WHICH LANDS WILL BE ACQUIRED?***

Lands to be acquired include, but are not limited to:

- Endangered xeric (dry) scrub lands;
- Coastal tropical hammocks;
- Pine flatwoods & dry prairie expanses;
- Environmental lands along the St. Sebastian River, Indian River Lagoon and Atlantic Ocean;
- Sites eligible for listing on the National Historic Register; and
- Sites having sustainable agricultural operations.

***HOW WILL LANDS BE SELECTED?***

A 17 member Land Acquisition Advisory Committee (LAAC) with broad representation throughout the County has been appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to recommend lands for acquisition.

The LAAC includes elected officials from each municipality in the County, and representatives from various groups and agencies such as the Pelican Island Audubon Society, the Taxpayers Association, the Indian River Land Trust, the Chamber of Commerce, the Civic Association, the Sierra Club Conservation Committee, the Realtors Association, and the Indian River Mosquito Control District.



The LAAC has adopted procedures to determine which properties warrant protection. Acquisition will be through voluntary sale by property owners.

***EXISTING PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS***

Since the establishment of the County Environmental Lands Program in 1990, Indian River County has:

- Purchased 20 key parcels totaling more than 7,600 acres;
- Protected over 600 acres of primary groundwater recharge areas;
- Protected more than 2,400 acres in flood-prone areas, contributing to a reduction in flood insurance premiums countywide; and
- Protected Indian shell middens and remnants of three historic pioneer homesteads.

In protecting these resources, the County has spent almost \$24 million in bond funds approved by voters in 1992. Approximately \$32 million in matching funds were obtained from federal and state programs for a total land acquisition expenditure of approximately \$56 million.

***HOW MUCH WILL THE PROGRAM COST?***

The referendum, if approved, will allow up to a 1/2 mill ad valorem tax assessment over 15 years. This assessment would provide up to \$50 million for the purchase of environmental lands, historic sites and farmland. The cost of the bond, including interest, will be approximately \$68 million.

Bond funds may be used for initial management and capital improvements on acquired lands. Ongoing maintenance and operating costs will be funded by other sources.

The annual cost to a homeowner would be approximately \$44.00 per \$100,000 of tax assessed home value.

Following are some examples of annual cost to a homeowner with a \$25,000 homestead exemption, depending on the home value:

- \$150,000 tax assessed home value: approximately \$55.00 per year.
- \$500,000 tax assessed home value: approximately \$208.00 per year.
- \$1,000,000 tax assessed home value: approximately \$427.00 per year.

