



P.O. Box 759, Eustis Florida 32727

June 5, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Lake County Board of County Commissioners
315 West Main Street
Tavares, FL 32778-4407

Mr. Kirby Smith, Chair, District 3	KSmith@lakecountyfl.gov
Mr. Douglas B. Shields, Vice-Chair, District 1	DShields@lakecountyfl.gov
Mr. Sean Parks, District 2	SParks@lakecountyfl.gov
Ms. Leslie Campione, District 4	Lcampione@lakecountyfl.gov
Mr. Josh Blake, District 5	JBlake@lakecountyfl.gov

RE: Public Lands Bond Referendum

Dear Chair Smith and County Commissioners:

The Lake County Conservation Council, Inc. has received the draft ordinance prepared by Attorney Melanie Marsh concerning the Public Lands Bond Referendum. We are generally pleased with the language, but we have some suggestions regarding Section 8, which deals with the creation of the Public Lands and Trails Acquisition Advisory Committee. Under Section 8, the first sentence of section 2-131 (c) states as follows:

The PLTAAC will recommend spending policies from the 2024 referendum that generally achieve a project 50/50 funding balance between natural, passive use lands, and lands used for trail connectivity.

This language could be interpreted to allow funding for active parks on lands purchased for trail connectivity. We suggest that a provision be added specifying that none of the funds may be used to acquire or maintain active parks.

We also suggest that a funding split not be specified. The Committee may recommend that trail connectivity occur along the edge of natural, passive use lands. The ordinance specifies eight purposes for the funds; these purposes may align with natural, passive use lands or trail connectivity or both. The funding needed for a particular project will depend upon how much money is available from other sources. For all these reasons, we believe that the Committee should have the freedom to recommend the best use of the funds. The County Commission, of course, will still retain the power to accept or reject the recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration of our suggestions.

Sincerely,

Jane L. Hepting

Jane L. Hepting, President
Lake County Conservation Council, Inc.

cc: Attorney Melanie Marsh