



Preserving Paradise: A Half Cent at a Time CALL TO ACTION | Please Help NOW!

Dear Martin County Forever Supporter,

It's been nearly a year since we launched our outreach efforts to educate the community about the Martin County Forever Initiative. As someone who supports the preservation of Martin County's natural lands, water and way of life, we want you to know that NOW is the time to act.

On Tuesday, February 20, we have a 10:30 a.m. preset agenda item before the Martin County Board of County Commissioners.

Martin County Forever is asking the Commissioners to vote in favor of placing a referendum on the November 2024 ballot for a 10-year duration, half-cent sales tax to purchase and conserve natural lands in Martin County.

We URGE you to attend the meeting and speak in support of the ballot initiative.

If you can't attend, please show your support by sending an email or submitting your organization's Letter of Support, or Resolution of Support, to the Commissioners no later than Friday, February 16.

You can use this single email address comish@martin.fl.us and all five Commissioners and Senior County Staff will receive it.

To be clear, a YES vote by the Commissioners is NOT a vote to raise taxes. A YES vote just says: "I agree to let the Voters decide in November."

This is the democratic process in its truest and purist form. Let the people vote and decide their future and that of their community.

If you plan to speak at the commission meeting during public comment, or during the agenda item, you don't need to have a long speech - just 30 seconds to a minute is enough. Something simple and heartfelt is all that's needed. Key points are below to help you craft your message. Even more information is on our website at www.martincountyforever.com.

If you have any questions or need help writing your public comments or email message, please let us know and we'd be happy to help.

Please let us know if you can attend the BCC meeting or plan to send them an email. We can't thank you enough for your support!

KEY POINTS

- There are about 46,000 undeveloped acres in Martin County within four target areas that could potentially be acquired. Some of those lands are at high risk of development over the next decade if we don't act now.
- If acquired and conserved, these environmentally significant lands will help clean and restore our rivers and waterways, safeguard sources of drinking water, create wildlife corridors, provide more access to beaches and shorelines and increase recreational opportunities.
- Preserving natural lands also has economic benefits including increasing property values, promoting more efficient development, enhancing ecotourism, and helping farmers continue to farm.
- Guardrails have been put in place to limit how the monies can be spent and provide assurances to taxpayers that the funds raised through the sales tax will be used in the ways they were intended. Specifically:
 - Land targeted for acquisition will be limited to four regions – “Blueways” beach areas, Pal-Mar, Indian River Lagoon area, and Loxahatchee/St. Lucie Rivers
 - There will be a Citizen's Oversight Committee and an Annual Audit
 - The sales tax increase won't apply to groceries, prescription medicine or school supplies and also doesn't apply to purchases exceeding \$5,000
- About 37.5% of the sales tax money will come from people who don't live in Martin County.
- The sales tax revenue will be used to leverage additional matching funds from state and federal sources – stretching our local dollars even further! Projected cash flow over the 10-year tax increase period can also be used to borrow funds to make major land acquisitions during the first few years.

We can't thank you enough for your support!



www.martincountyforever.com