EAS Conservation Committee Report
October 12, 2026
Submitted by Daniel Roberts

Item 1: Request to conduct a feasibility study (memo below)

To: BOD Eagle Audubon Society

From: Daniel Roberts, Conservation Chair

Date: October 12, 2026

Subject: Request to consider a program development feasibility study (work to be done by me)

Program Title: "Sponsorship of Seascouts, Explorers, and Venturer Scouts to Facilitate Levels of Achievement" (age groups 14 to 20).

Purpose: An education program to facilitate scouting "Tailored Badge Programs, Levels of Scouting Achievement and Merit Badge Counseling" for youth and to provide a youthful partnership to enhance the scope and community effectiveness of EAS".

In order for EAS to be an effective Chapter it is important to balance local wildlife protection with strategic leadership to incentivize the community we serve. Successful fulfillment and performance of these objectives can be measured in increased resources including membership. EAS is especially effective in this endeavor addressing adult resources. I am suggesting we consider exploring our objectives as they apply to young people and their education as well.

I would like to ask the BOD to approve an exploratory program to investigate feasibility only of a potential relationship for EAS and Scouting America focusing on advanced scouting levels such as Explorers, Ventures, and Sea Scouts (Coed: ages 14 to 20). Merit badge and Study Categories could include STEM, Environmental Science, Sustainability, Soil and Water Conservation, Fish and Wildlife Management, Forestry, Oceanography, Nature, and Bird Study. This is not foreign to Audubon but is foreign to EAS. Several of these disciplines may possibly be facilitated by membership. Initially, I will volunteer to design and execute the feasibility study. I have a historical relationship with Sea Scouts (Ship 185, Apollo Beach, FL.) and the Greater Tampa Bay Area Scouting Council. I have presented an abbreviated history of the relationship of scouting and Audubon below.

A Review of the Cooperative Relationship of Scouting America and Audubon
Daniel Roberts, Conservation Committee, Eagle Audubon Society
October 12, 2026

The histories of Scouting and the Audubon Society in America represent two of the most influential, parallel grass-roots movements of the 20th century, which fundamentally shaped American conservation, outdoor youth education, and environmental policy.

The Intersection of Scouting and Audubon

- **Junior Audubon Clubs**: In 1910, the same year the BSA was founded, the National Audubon Society launched the Junior Audubon Clubs. These clubs supplied nature study materials directly to classrooms, summer camps, and Scout troops across the country, training millions of kids in bird identification and conservation.
- **The Bird Study Merit Badge:** When the BSA released its initial merit badges, Bird Study was among the original line-up. Scouts were required to track bird species, build birdhouses, and understand local wildlife laws—directly reinforcing Audubon's conservation initiatives.
- **Scouts as Conservation Foot Soldiers**: During the early 20th century, Scouts frequently partnered with local Audubon chapters to serve as game-law advocates, plant native flora, and construct avian sanctuaries in state parks.

Today, the legacies of both groups persist. Scouting America utilizes robust environmental science and forestry programs at massive bases like the **Philmont Scout Ranch**, while the National Audubon Society manages over 500 local chapters and a network of sanctuaries protecting millions of acres of American flyways.

Cooperative programs between **Audubon chapters and Scouting America (formerly BSA) in Florida** focus heavily on youth wildlife education, merit badge fulfillment, and community-driven environmental stewardship. Because both organizations share a deep mission for conservation, local Audubon chapters frequently serve as the project beneficiaries, educational guides, and land advisors for Scout units. The primary ways these organizations collaborate:

1. Eagle Scout Service Projects & Conservation Awards: Local Audubon chapters frequently sponsor or benefit from **Eagle Scout Service Projects**. Because the National Audubon Society requires local chapters to maintain large acreage, nature trails, and sanctuaries, Scouts often step in to fulfill infrastructure and ecological needs while earning their highest rank. Recent and ongoing joint projects include:

- **Property & Trail Restoration:** Scouts partner with chapters like the Tropical Audubon Society in South Florida to clear invasive plant species, install interpretive educational signage, and lay mulch along public nature trails.

- **Bird Hazard Prevention:** Scouts from the **Audubon Everglades** chapter have planned and executed window-strike prevention projects at local nature and environmental research centers.
- **Distinguished Conservation Service Award:** Scouts seeking this prestigious medal frequently coordinate with Audubon field biologists to perform regional community science work, such as monitoring shorebirds or helping with local Conservation Good Turns.

2. Tailored Badge Programs

Major Audubon Centers across Central and South Florida offer specific academic add-ons and workshops designed to satisfy the strict requirements of Scouting America badges and milestones.

- **Audubon Center for Birds of Prey** (Maitland, FL): Offers dedicated group programs where Scouts can tour the raptor rehabilitation clinics alongside a 30-minute "Think Like a Citizen Scientist" scout badge add-on.
- **Merit Badge Counseling:** Local Audubon members and chapter leaders often register as official Merit Badge Counselors within Florida Scouting Councils (such as the Greater Tampa Bay Area or South Florida Council) to teach core badges like *Bird Study*, *Environmental Science*, *Nature*, Oceanography and *Soil and Water Conservation*.

3. High Adventure Highlighting: Florida Sea Base

At the national level, Scouting America's **Florida Sea Base Conservation Programs** in the Florida Keys incorporate regional citizen science frameworks. While Sea Base works heavily with NOAA and marine laboratories, youth participating in local community cleanups or coastal restoration work follow the strict bird habitat preservation standards championed by Audubon Florida's Coastal Stewardship initiatives.

4. Community Science Partnerships

Audubon chapters invite local Cub Scout packs and Scouts BSA troops to participate directly in state-wide wildlife tracking initiatives, which double as educational group activities:

- Audubon Eagle Watch**:** Youth and adult volunteers are trained to locate and monitor Bald Eagle nesting sites, tracking the impacts of habitat loss and weather across urbanizing regions.

- **Nest Box Workshops:** Chapters periodically host hands-on workshops where youth build nesting boxes (such as for the Eastern Screech Owl) that can later be erected in state parks or council camps to support localized bird populations.

Item 2

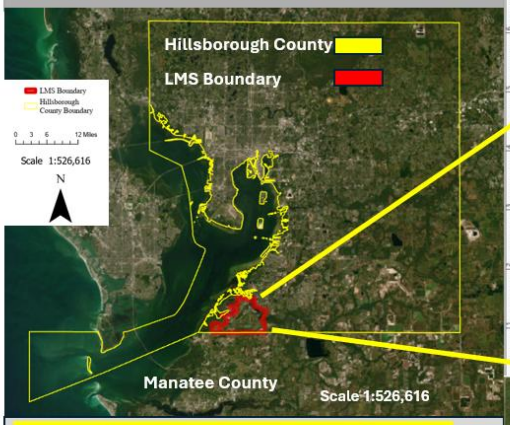
Summary report Little Manatee South (https://planhillsborough.org/lmsuea/)

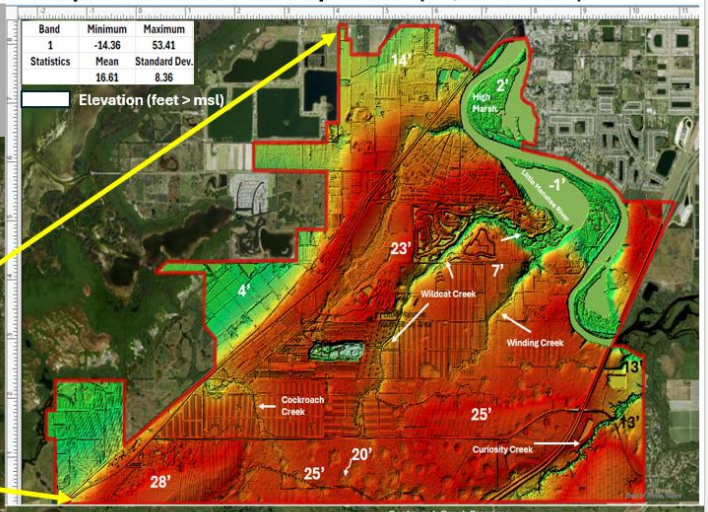
I have been working with several groups investigating the Urban Expansion Area into Little Manatee South. This work is directly related to habitat loss in the backyard of EAS. It is one of the most potentially destructive environmental maladies that I have witnessed in South Hillsborough County since the proposed nuclear power plant by TECO in the 70's where what is now the Rock Ponds on County Line Road. I would encourage members to contact me or Cori Campbell (Dr. Cori Campbell drcoricampbell@gmail.com) for more information on this issue if you have concerns for the little Manatee River watershed. I have discussed this with the AF Gulf Coast Regional Conservation Committee, and it may be discussed at the Assembly.

One of the problems associated with this area is there is not a lot of ecological data as it has been in private ownership for decades. I have developed a dozen georeferenced datasets cataloguing species, land and water features, demographic features, hydrology, wetlands, elevation models, parcel ownership, land use and land cover, and impact commentary. I have constructed and included an example site map of the footprint of the county proposed impact area below with an elevation model of wetland types in the proposed area footprint (red boundary). Little Manatee South is a very important semi-natural area adjacent to the high marsh and estuarine mangrove fringe of the Little Manatee River. It is extremely environmentally important to Tampa Bay, the aquifer recharge and surficial aquifer as well as the ecology of Hillsborough and Manatee Counties.

Little Manatee South: Recent Footprint for HC Urban Expansion (12,000 acres)

WHAT IS IN IT? WHAT ARE WE GIVING UP?
Water Bodies: Hayes Bayou, Bolster Bayou, Mill Bayou, Wildcat Creek, Curiosity Creek, Cockroach Creek, Redfish Creek, Winding Creek, Little Manatee River.
Preserves: Cockroach Creek (768 acres)

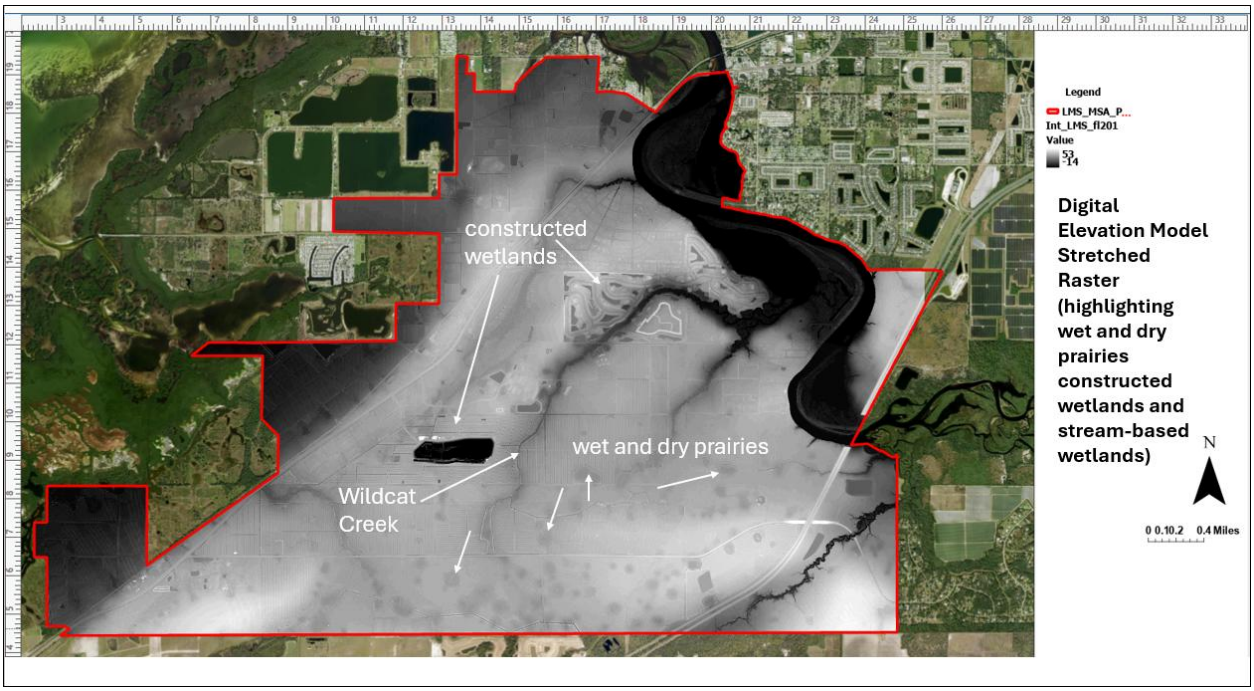


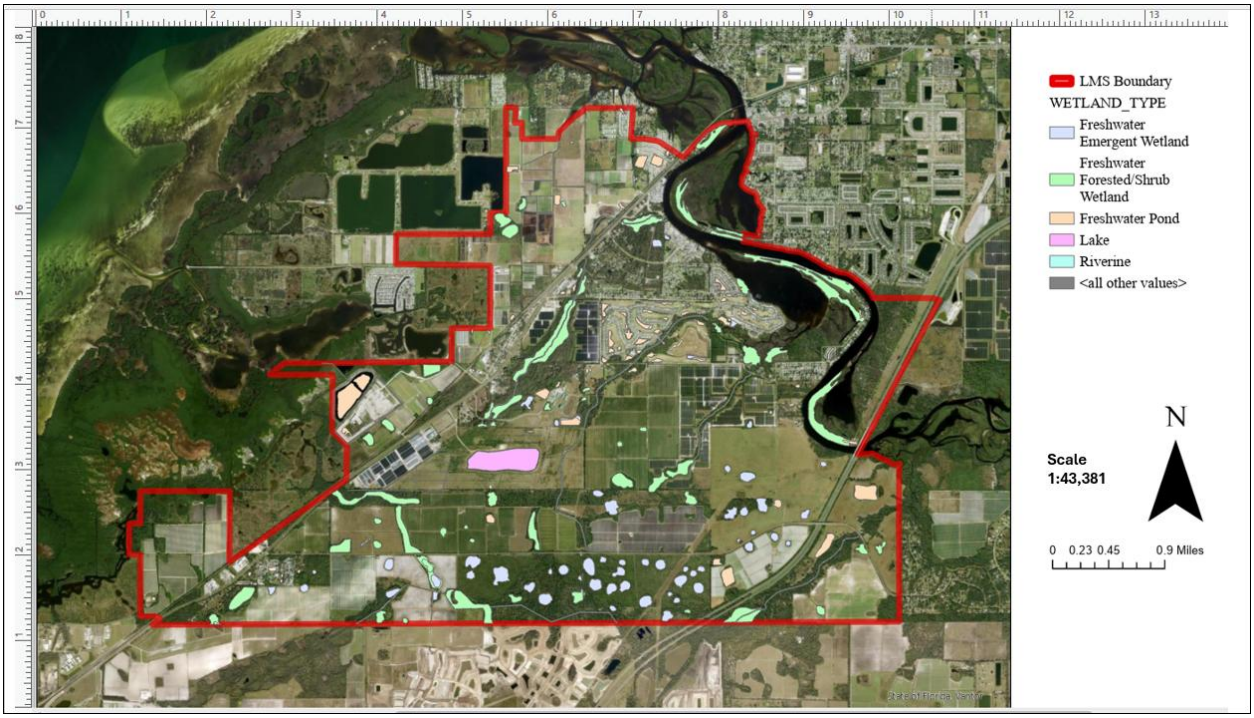


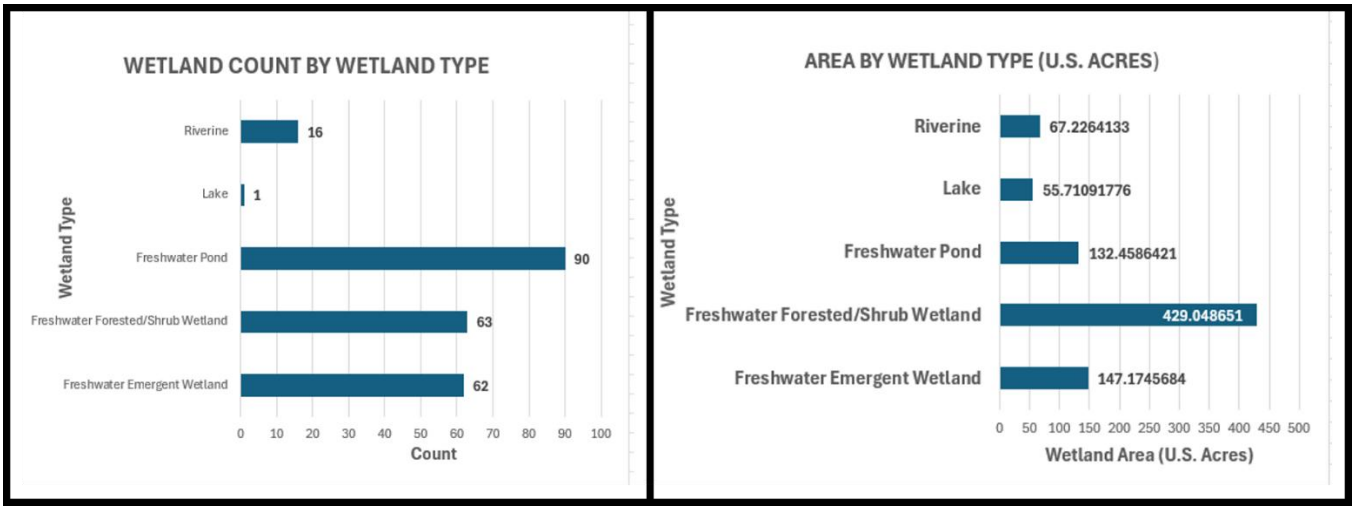


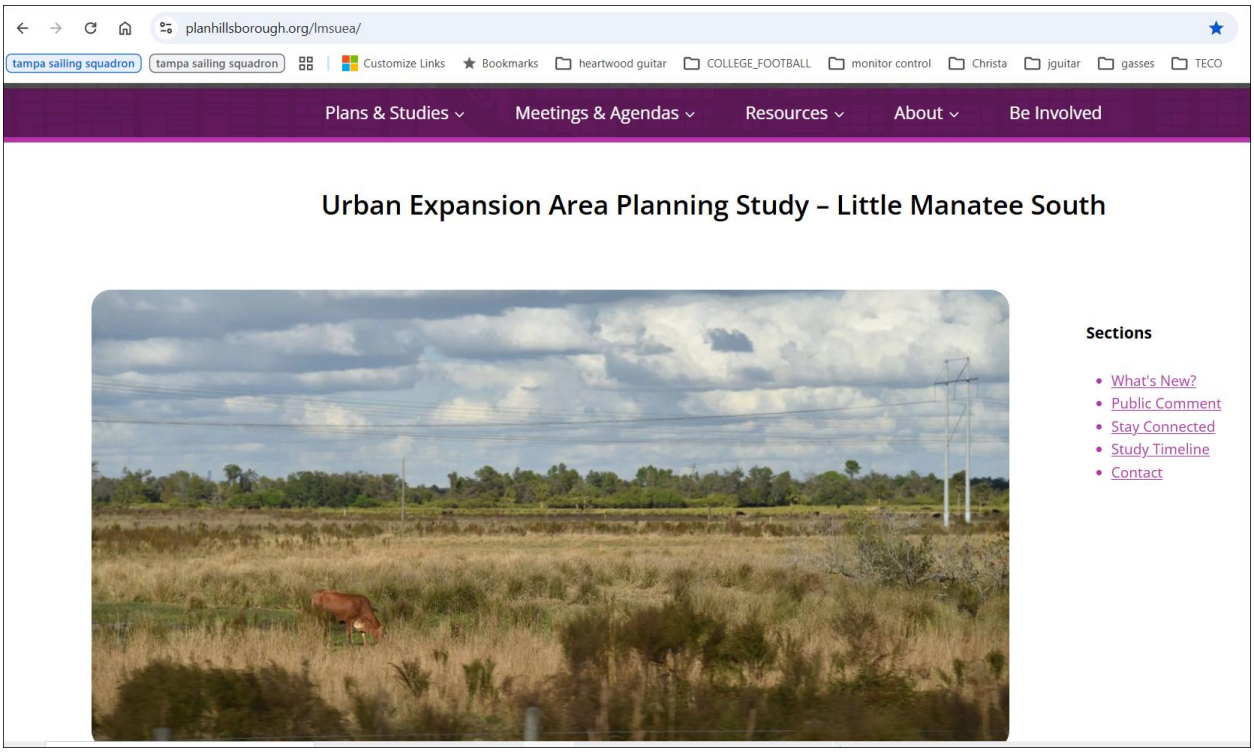
Freshwater Wetlands: 90 freshwater ponds (132 acres), 16 riverine features (67 acres),125 forested shrub and emergent plant wetlands (576 acres), Cypress Domes, Deep water estuarine wetlands: (590 acres), intertidal estuarine wetlands and high marsh: (371 acres), 48 miles of intertidal high marsh coastline, 34 miles of deep-water estuarine coastline

Freshwater wetlands as illustrated in a digital elevation model









https://planhillsborough.org/lmsuea/