



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources
Department*

City Council Regular Meeting Date: June 12, 2025

To: City Council
From: Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Date: June 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Approval of a 5-year Memorandum of Understanding among the City of Sanibel, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Sanibel Fire and Rescue District, and the U.S. Department of the Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate the cooperation of the parties to manage conservation lands more efficiently and economically on Sanibel, including the use of prescribed fire and mutual aid response to natural disasters and other emergencies.

BACKGROUND: This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is intended to update and streamline previous agreements that have allowed for the successful coordination among the City of Sanibel, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Sanibel Fire and Rescue District, and the U.S. Department of the Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Most currently these agreements include MOU #20-42 among the City, USFWS, & SCCF for "Efficiently and Economically Managing Conservation Lands" set to expire in FY 2025; MOU 09/10-011 and 2022 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) among the City, USFWS, SCCF, and Sanibel Fire and Rescue District related to prescribed fire last approved in 2022; and Mutual Aid Agreement 22-061 between the City and USFWS, expiring in 2027.

Combining the agreements helps to reduce workloads for each of the parties and provides linkages between the natural resources protection activities. The USFWS manages approximately 6,500 acres on Sanibel Island; SCCF owns and manages approximately 2,100 acres; and the City owns and manages approximately 600 acres of conservation lands. Since the parties share boundaries and are tasked with natural areas land management, working collaboratively provides for efficient and cost-effective management options that would not be available otherwise. The cooperation of the parties has been successful since the 1970's. Together the parties have controlled and managed invasives species, implemented prescribed fires, restored habitats and responded with mutual aid to hurricanes Charley and Ian.

The City, SCCF, and USFWS are each involved in the work of land management and environmental restoration including such activities as invasive plant removal, and the use of prescribed fire on managed conservation lands. The management goals of the City, SCCF, and

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary

the USFWS in protecting natural resources and enhancing wildlife habitat on conservation lands on Sanibel Island are similar and successful individual restoration projects on any part of the island are mutually beneficial to each of the parties and residents of the island. Further, coordination by the City, SCCF, and USFWS with the Sanibel Fire And Rescue District on prescribed fire operations and wildfire response will provide safe, efficient, and effective cooperative prescribed burning activities and subsequent contingency or suppression actions for any wildfire that may be converted from a prescribed fire.

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding among the City of Sanibel, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Sanibel Fire and Rescue District, and the U.S. Department of the Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate the cooperation of the parties to manage conservation lands more efficiently and economically on Sanibel, including the use of prescribed fire and mutual aid response to natural disasters and other emergencies and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary