

Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

New Proactive Approach towards Wildlife Conservation within Land Use Planning and Development Activities



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Conservation through “Influencing”

- FWC research predicts that public land acquisition programs alone cannot achieve sustainability of Florida’s wildlife
- FWC recognizes the conservation potential of private lands
- Set a Priority to foster stewardship by private landowners and partner governments
- Begun several major initiatives to meet Priority



The Changing Landscape

1994 Statistics from Cox et al.

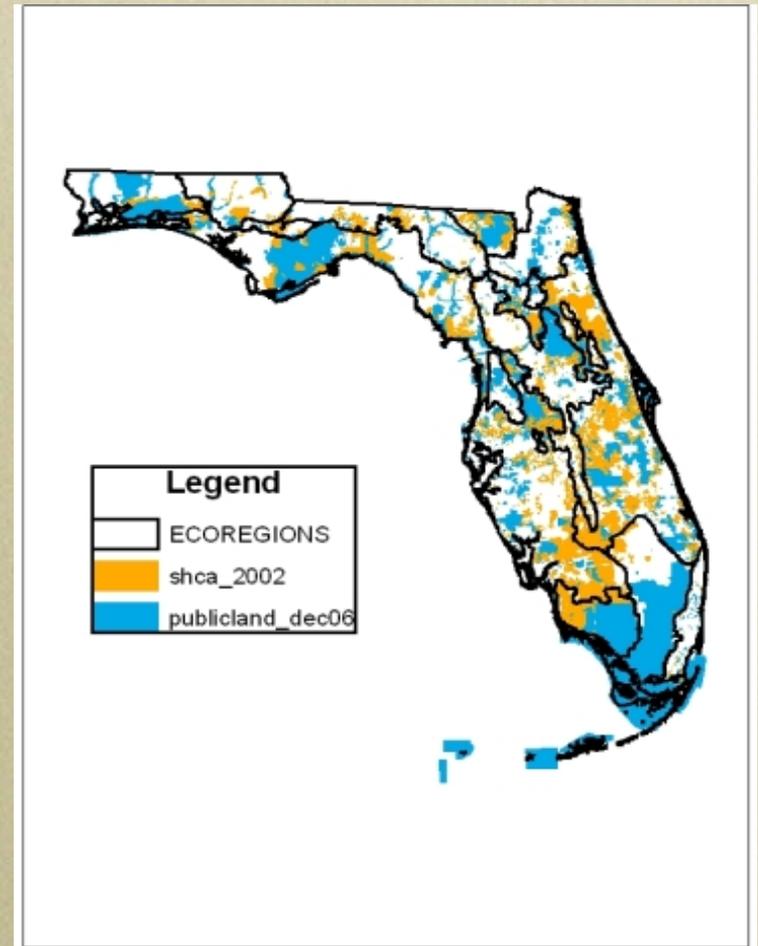
- 24% of Florida had been cleared for urban and agricultural use
- Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas estimated at 4.82 mil acres

Today (2006-2007)

- 1.5 mil ac acquired for conservation (pers comm - Stys)
- 142K ac converted to urban use
- 25 mil ac private land (FNAI 2007)

2060

- 7 mil acres of land needed for development (Zwick and Carr 2006)



Where We have been.....

FWC as a Reactive Entity

- More Often addressing Conservation Issues through Permitting rather than Conservation Planning

Reactive rather than Proactive

- Missed Many Opportunities to engage local activities *particularly in land use planning arena*
- **Having Minimal Impact on 1000s of small Projects with enormous Cumulative Effects**



Shift to Landscape Vision

- Project-by-Project planning often results in Habitat Fragmentation



Paradigm Shift at Multiple Levels within Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

- Identified “Proactive” and “Reactive” Activities
- “Environmental Commenting” workload favored Reactive activities
- New Proactive Activities
 - *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy*
 - Improving Technical Info: “*Conservation Blueprint*”
 - Translating into locally useful tools: “*Wildlife Conservation Planning Compendium*”
 - Online Query Engine in Development



Challenges Ahead in a Proactive Environment

- **Improve Quality and Consistency of Consultations by**
 - *Implementing a More Science-Based approach to Technical Assistance delivery*
 - *Facilitating collaborative reviews and consultations by FWC on emerging issues*
- **Gaining Earlier Access to Local Planning can**
 - *Encourage Attitude that Wildlife Resources are an Economic (+) and not a (-) to communities*
 - *Reduce regulatory “Surprises” that drive negative attitudes towards wildlife conservation*



Types of Land-Use Activities that Receive Technical Assistance from FWC

- ERP
- CPA
- DRI
- Sykes Act-INRMP
- Siting Act
- Transmission Lines
- Coastal Projects
- Working Waterfronts
- FDOT-ETDM
 - Other Roads in ETDM
- EAR
- LDC
- RLSP
- Sector Plans
- Habitat Mgmt Plans
 - Private lands

NOTE: FWC has Never had the staff resources to review every project associated with these types of land use activities



A “Two-Pronged Proactive Approach”

- **Develop Bottom-Up, Self-Serve Products**
 - Wildlife Conservation Planning Compendium
 - Wildlife Surveyor Certification
 - Web-Based Query Engine
- **Develop Top-Down services for Higher-level Land Planning Processes**
 - **Regional**
 - Multi-county Visioning initiatives
 - **Local (County)**
 - Evaluation and Appraisal Reviews
 - Rural Land Stewardship Programs
 - Sector Plans



Conceptual Tools for Bottom-Up Services

Wildlife Conservation Planning Compendium

- **1988 Wildlife Methodologies Guidelines for DRI reviews**
- **Reorganize by Habitat Suites**
- **Identify regionally important wildlife resources and issues**
- **Offer Habitat Management Guidelines**
- **USFWS**



Conceptual Tools for Bottom-Up Services

Wildlife Surveyor Certifications

- **Professional Application of the Manual**
- **Precedent with Certain Species**
 - **Sea Turtles**
- **Opportunity to Improve**
 - **Data Quality Standards**
 - **Quality Assurances**



Top-Down Efforts

County Comprehensive Planning

- ***Evaluation and Appraisal Review Process (EAR)***
 - Occurs every 7 years
 - Requirements for both self-evaluation and improvement
 - Includes conservation elements
 - Implemented by Comprehensive/Growth Plan
- ***Sector Planning***
- ***Rural Land Stewardship Programs***
- ***Local Development Code assistance***

NOTE: FWC Staff continue to review and provide technical assistance to some routine County CPAs



Proposed Top-Down Efforts

County Comprehensive Planning

Rural Land Stewardship Programs

- **Occur outside of Urban Development Boundaries (UDB)**
- **Minimum size requirement of 10,000 ac » Best tracts of habitat on private lands most likely to participate**
- **Ensure both natural habitats and rural practices into perpetuity**
- **Ensure that development can be a sustainable activity**



RLSP Concept

Credit Sending Areas

- Ag lands containing high quality habitat and water resources
- High Quality Wildlife Habitats help generate more transferable credits
- Require Buffer Zones against incompatible uses

Credit Receiving Areas

- Ag lands that have been heavily developed
- Targeted as the most likely area for future development
- Buffered to maintain small town atmosphere



Top-Down Efforts

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

- **Some Participating Counties are also obvious candidates for RLSP or Sector Planning**
- **Natural Resources generate Ecotourism \$\$**
 - **Rarely viewed as anything other than undeveloped land or an impediment to development**
 - **Communities don't always incorporate natural resources into their economic development plan**



Work Plan Inter-Relationships

- **Florida's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy**
 - State Wildlife Legacy Initiative
 - Conservation Blueprint
 - Century Commission activities
- **Landowner Technical Assistance**
 - Voluntary, Funded Landowner Stewardships
 - Safe Harbor, Partners For Wildlife, NRCS programs
 - Conservation Focal Areas
 - Informal development consultations (RLSP)
- **State and Local Government Entities**
 - Habitat Conservation Planning and RLSP
 - Watershed Planning
 - Corridors (transportation, power transmission, etc)



Partnerships in the Works

Examples Include:

- US Dept of Agriculture
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- FL Dept of Environmental Protection
- FL Dept of Community Affairs
- FL Dept of Transportation
- FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory
- Five Water Management Districts
- Private Landowners
- Non-Governmental Organizations



The End

Questions?

