

**PASCO COUNTY**  
**CHAPTER 3 - CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

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# SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION ISSUES

## Wellfield and Aquifer Recharge Protection

Although Pasco County is not currently experiencing a significant overdraft due to drawdown of the upper Floridan aquifer, the four major wellfields in the central and southwest portions of the County are areas of significant groundwater withdrawals. Also, according to the results of an Environmental Protection Agency methodology study, the Floridan aquifer system is susceptible to groundwater contamination throughout Pasco County. Given the future need for public supply groundwater and the potential of contamination, some degree of wellfield protection is warranted. This protection can be best accomplished through a Wellfield Protection Ordinance.

Since groundwater withdrawals are highly dependent upon recharge areas to ensure a continued source, these areas need to be conserved whenever possible. Currently, some wellfields are located in high recharge areas but other recharge areas are outside the boundary of the wellfields. Several studies indicate that groundwater recharge rates to the upper Floridan aquifer are highly variable in Pasco County and, according to the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the most suitable areas for recharge protection include the central, north central, and northeast areas of the County.

These areas coincide with the zone of maximum potential groundwater contamination predicted by the Environmental Protection Agency methodology study.

## Wetlands and Other Native Habitat

Wetlands, rivers, lakes, and upland native habitats provide many environmental benefits such as stormwater run-off filtration, aquifer recharge, protection of property from severe storm events and tidal surges, and habitat for wildlife especially endangered and threatened species. Historically, significant development has occurred adjacently to the Gulf of Mexico and along the Anclote and Pithlachascotee Rivers. Much of the recent land development has been focused north of the Pithlachascotee flood plain and adjacent to the freshwater swamp areas of Western Pasco County.

To ensure that wetland and other native habitat loss is minimized, protective mechanisms which limit the amount and degree of development encroachment; i.e., buffer zones should be implemented. Additionally, other native habitats should be maintained for wildlife use, especially a critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. Restoration and enhancement of altered wetlands and other native habitat should be encouraged whenever natural functions can be reclaimed as a means to increase the quality of Pasco County's current natural resources.

Requirements, such as buffer zones from wetlands and river corridor areas, would help to prevent further losses of these habitats.

## Water Resources

Significant surface and groundwater resources exist in Pasco County. These resources provide benefits in the form of environmental, recreational, and water uses. Continuation of urban and agricultural development adjacent to natural resources will eventually have impacts upon water quality maintenance unless specific policies are implemented. The riverine areas of the Anclote,

Hillsborough, Pithlachascotee, and Withlacoochee Rivers need special considerations to maintain or improve water quality conditions. These considerations could be in the form of various management plans; i.e., river protection, agricultural, and stormwater, which stipulate the implementation of the Best Management Practices for new development.

Groundwater resources not identified by the Wellfield Protection Objective will also require maintenance or improvement. Specifically, the degree of saltwater intrusion into the aquifer system must be addressed to hinder further encroachment. Also, water conservation techniques should be promoted to ensure the adequacy of the potable water supply, and high recharge areas should be protected from an increase in impervious surfaces.

## **CONSERVATION ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

GOAL 1. Protect and monitor the ambient air quality of Pasco County through appropriate management and land use techniques.

### **Air Quality**

OBJECTIVE 1.1 Maintenance of ambient air quality within Pasco County equal to or more stringent than the State and Federal National Ambient Air Quality Standards established in 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 58, and adopted within Section 17, Florida Administrative Code.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 1.1.1 Assess the quality of the County's air resources through adherence to National Ambient Air Quality Standards as stipulated in Chapter 62-4, Florida Administrative Code, and as monitored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- 1.1.2 Implement, within six months of notification of nonattainment status for any National Ambient Air Quality Standards' parameter, control strategies to reduce concentration(s) of subject parameter to achieve attainment level(s).
- 1.1.3 Reduce or stabilize vehicular emission levels by requiring the implementation of traffic mitigation techniques, such as level of service standards, turn signals, light synchronization, and public transportation.
- 1.1.4 Condition all appropriate land development approvals to implement the Best Management Practices for reduction of erosion, fugitive dust, and air emissions related to the construction of the development consistent with the Pasco County Land Development Code.
- 1.1.5 Evaluate all land development activities which will require a permit under Chapter 62, Florida Administrative Code, with regard to adverse impacts upon surrounding land uses. Chapter 6A, Florida Administrative Code, requires a permit to construct and operate a stationary air-pollution source.

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GOAL 2. Protect, enhance, and manage the natural land and water resources of Pasco County.

### **Water Resource Protection**

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Continue to reduce or eliminate potential adverse impacts to groundwater from adjacent land uses which could lower the quality or quantity of existing groundwater resources beneath domestic water supply wellfields by restricting activities and land uses known to adversely affect groundwater sources.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.1.1 Pasco County shall, in coordination with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), establish public water supply wellhead protection areas based upon the September 25, 2001, Pasco County Groundwater Protection Study by Metcalf & Eddy ("Pasco Groundwater Study") adopted herein by reference, for all public water supply wells that have a permitted pumping capacity of over 100,000 gallons per day (gpd), (hereinafter these wells are referred to as "major supply wells"). The wellhead protection areas shall be reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners on a biennial basis. Wellhead protection areas may be modified at any time by the Board of County Commissioners upon notice of an advertised public hearing for changes in technical knowledge, such as transmissivity or porosity; changes in pumping rates; reconfiguration of wellfields; abandonment or relocation of wells; the installation of new wells or wellfields; establishment of minimum flows or levels pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, changes in maximum contaminant levels, changes in laws or regulations that may impact the Groundwater Protection Ordinance mandated in Policy 2.1.2., or to accommodate changes in topography, such as newly approved mining areas, in a manner consistent with the methodology and standards established in the Pasco Groundwater Study.
- 2.1.2 To achieve the implementation of a science-based wellhead protection program pursuant to Conservation Element Policy 2.1.1, the County shall adopt a Groundwater Protection Ordinance that shall include wellhead protection areas for major supply wells based on the five-year and ten-year travel times as set forth in the Pasco Groundwater Study, and wellhead protection areas with a 500-foot fixed radius for public supply wells that have a permitted pumping capacity of less than 100,000 gpd (hereinafter referred to as "small wells").
- 2.1.3 Protect water resources by controlling surface and groundwater quality impacts of development by implementing the NPDES permitting program.
- 2.1.4 Coordinate with Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, SWFWMD, and other appropriate agencies to ensure compliance with regional plan policies addressing potable water standards and monitoring.

- 2.1.5 Coordinate with SWFWMD to annually update location and other data on public supply wells to ensure use of Best Available Data. (Map 2-1 "Major Waterwells, Public Wellfields and Zones of Contribution" will be updated as needed.
- 2.1.6 Ensure compliance with those provisions of the Tampa Bay Water Supply Governance Agreement regarding groundwater pumping reduction by continuously monitoring the actions of all parties to the Agreement and utilizing all legally available processes necessary to Enforce the Agreement.

## **Water Resource Management**

OBJECTIVE 2.2 To ensure an adequate present and future supply of potable and nonpotable water for Pasco County.

- 2.2.1 Require, during the site plan review process, where feasible, consideration of the maintenance of groundwater infiltration through the use of site Best Management Practices.
- 2.2.2 Protect areas of high volume recharges by managing quality and quantity of stormwater run-off.
- 2.2.3 Encourage the Best Management Practices for activities which cause significant lowering of groundwater levels through development order conditions.
- 2.2.4 Require development activities to adequately treat stormwater run-off through adherence to Chapters 17-25 and 40D-4, Florida Administrative Code.

## Water Quality and Quantity

OBJECTIVE 2.3 Maintain and enhance the quality and quantity of groundwaters and surface waters through utilization of natural resource and land use programs to meet or exceed Chapter 62-3, Florida Administrative Code, Water Quality Standards.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.3.1 Require mandatory setbacks around the Anclote, Hillsborough, Pithlachascotee, and Withlacoochee Rivers; Outstanding Florida Waters; Classified Shellfish Harvesting Areas; and postdevelopment wetlands (i.e., wetland mitigation and natural wetlands). The mandatory setbacks, as defined below, shall generally remain in native vegetation and prohibit the location of impervious surfaces, except to permit consideration of, where appropriate, bona fide agricultural activities, storm management facilities, water access facilities, seawalls and docks, or other activities which do not require the usage of impervious surfaces unless compatible with the Recreation and Open Space or Transportation Elements. The mandatory setbacks are as follows, as set forth in the Pasco County Land Development Code:
- a. A 50-foot setback from the mean annual flood line, as established by the Southwest Florida Water Management District of the Anclote, Hillsborough, Pithlachascotee, and Withlacoochee Rivers.
  - b. A 50-foot setback from the landward most wetland jurisdictional line or the ordinary high water, or mean high water of all areas identified in Section 62-3.041, Florida Administrative Code (Outstanding Florida Waters), and Classified Shellfish Harvesting Areas (Class II) as determined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
  - c. Setbacks from the landward most postdevelopment wetland jurisdictional line associated with any natural water body or wetland not cited in a. or b. above which are required by appropriate State regulatory agencies.
- 2.3.2 Protect flood plain and other natural areas which have beneficial hydrological characteristics through the Flood Damage Prevention section of the Land Development Code. Such protection shall include, but not be limited to, prohibiting new development which would have adverse impacts upon the 25-year flood plain without mitigation, other than for roadways providing access across the 25-year flood plain.
- 2.3.3 Encourage the appropriate use of wetlands for water quality improvement with adequate environmental and design controls through implementation of Chapter 40D-4, Florida Administrative Code, by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- 2.3.4 Encourage all commercial agricultural activities within the County to implement the agricultural Best Management Practices as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Pasco Soil and Water Conservation District. Upon recommendation of the Pasco Soil and Water Conservation

District, Pasco County may require identified commercial agricultural activities to develop a conservation plan in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and approved by the Pasco Soil and Water Conservation District. Such conservation plans shall require, at a minimum, reduction of agriculturally based pollutants in surface waters, groundwater, and sediment and minimization of soil erosion through the appropriate Best Management Practices.

2.3.5 Prohibit development activities which would cause the erosion of shoreline areas and encourage the implementation of the Best Management Practices whose aim is to prevent the loss of surface water shoreline areas from erosive activities as set forth in the Pasco County Land Development Code.

2.3.6 Require on-site stormwater treatment facilities for new development activities or a development order condition which will address the development's stormwater treatment needs and comply with Chapter 40D-4, Florida Administrative Code.

## **Water Conservation**

OBJECTIVE 2.4 Reduce per capita usage of potable water supplies.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.4.1 Reduce the per capita consumption of treated potable water including provisions for periods of drought pursuant to Chapter 40D-21, Florida Administrative Code, through the implementation of the Pasco County Utilities Department Water Conservation Plan.
- 2.4.2 Reduce the per capita consumption of treated potable water for development construction practices through the implementation of the Pasco County Utilities Department Water Conservation Plan.
- 2.4.3 Encourage water users to use the lowest quality water reasonably available and suitable to a given purpose, whenever facilities are available, for nonpotable applications (see Chapter 10, Potable Water and Wastewater Subelements, for additional policies) through development order conditions.

## **Mineral Resources**

OBJECTIVE 2.5 Promote the practices of efficient utilization and extraction of mineral resources which are designed to protect the natural environment from adverse impacts according to the Pasco County Land Development Code.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.5.1 Require the development of adequate reclamation plans which accurately describe the impacts and mitigations offered to protect habitats, ensure water quality, and ensure hydraulic integrity of aquifers.
- 2.5.2 Prohibit mining activities which will promote saltwater intrusion in or near the coastal zone and in other areas where groundwater levels are stressed.
- 2.5.3 Encourage the redevelopment of inactive lands upon conclusion of extractive activities, consistent with Future Land Use Element policies through the enforcement of the Pasco County Land Development Code and development order conditions which require reclamation of mined lands.

## **Agriculture**

OBJECTIVE 2.6 Protect soils and the quality and quantity of water resources by requiring use of the Best Management Practices with any development approval which includes agricultural use, encouraging use of the Best Management Practices for ongoing agricultural operations, and extending the use of lands for agriculture by permitting only compatible uses on adjacent lands.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.6.1 Review land development applications within predominantly agricultural areas for compatibility with agricultural land uses and to ensure that agricultural uses are not adversely impacted as set forth in the Pasco County Land Development Code.
- 2.6.2 Encourage the development of commercial forestry activities and management of urban forest areas.
- 2.6.3 Require in conjunction with any development approval which includes agricultural lands and encourage, for ongoing agricultural operation, the use of agriculture and silviculture Best Management Practices as developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- 2.6.4 Permit the use of highly erodible lands as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, for agricultural activities permitted or approved in conjunction with development only where such activities are undertaken in conjunction with a soil erosion management plan approved by the County and the Pasco Soil and Water Conservation District.
- 2.6.5 Ensure, through the Best Management Practices for wildlife, that agricultural practices are compatible with the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- 2.6.6 Encourage the use of agricultural Best Management Practices to eliminate the discharge of inadequately treated wastewater and stormwater run-off into waters of the State.

## **Wetlands**

OBJECTIVE 2.7 Pasco County shall protect identified wetland areas and existing wildlife habitat by implementing the following policies:

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.7.1 Environmentally sensitive lands for the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan shall be defined as set forth in Rule 9J-5.003(41), Florida Administrative Code, and any amendments thereto.
- 2.7.2 Industrial land uses shall not be designated adjacently to Category I wetlands. Where industrial land use designations have already been shown adjacently to Category I wetlands on the Future Land Use Map and have been relied on for development or zoning decisions, the designation may remain. However, any development which occurs in these locations must demonstrate that no significant adverse impact to the wetlands will result or that adequate mitigation/compensation will be provided to protect function and replace type for type.
- 2.7.3 Category I conservation areas shall mean those wetland areas which meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - a. Any wetland of any size that has a hydrological connection to natural surface water bodies or the Floridan aquifer.
  - b. Any wetland of any size that is within a lake littoral zone.
  - c. Any large isolated uninterrupted wetlands 100 acres or larger.
  - d. Any wetland of any size that provides critical habitat for Federal- and/or State-listed, threatened or endangered species.

Category II conservation areas shall mean those wetland areas which meet any of the following criteria:

- a. Consists of isolated wetlands or formerly isolated wetlands which by way of man's activities have been directly connected to other surface water drainage and are greater or equal to five acres.
- b. Are less than 100 acres and do not otherwise qualify as a Category I conservation area.

Category III conservation areas shall mean those wetland areas which meet all of the following criteria:

- a. Isolated wetlands less than five acres.
- b. Do not otherwise qualify as a Category I or Category II conservation area.

Limit the removal, alteration, and encroachment within Category I conservation areas to cases where no other feasible or practical alternatives exist that will permit a reasonable use of the land. The protection, preservation, and continuing viability of Category I conservation areas shall be the prime objective of the basis for review of all proposed alterations, modifications, or removal of these areas.

Removal, encroachment, and alteration of Category II conservation areas should be presumed to be allowed unless removal, encroachment, or alteration is contrary to the public interest.

Removal, encroachment, and alteration may be allowed in Category III conservation areas.

- 2.7.4 Identify wetlands on any proposed development site prior to the issuance of development orders which permit site alteration.
- 2.7.5 Pasco County shall coordinate with the Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District to identify and regulate wetland areas under their jurisdiction. When Category I wetlands, which provide critical habitat for listed species, are proposed for alteration, the proposal shall be submitted to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for review and recommendations.
- 2.7.6 No development shall occur in a Category I, Category II, or Category III wetland or wetland setback (as defined in the Conservation Element, Policy 2.7.3) except as follows:
  - a. Clearing and/or construction of walking trails.
  - b. Construction timber boardwalks/catwalks for direct access to water bodies, construction of wildlife management shelters, footbridges, observation decks, and similar structures not requiring dredging and/or filling for their placement.
  - c. Dredging and filling within wetlands if:
    - (1) Such activity is consistent with Policy 2.7.3 of this Element.
    - (2) Such activity complies with the requirements of all Federal, State, and regional agencies claiming jurisdiction over wetland alteration.
    - (3) Appropriate justification for alterations is provided to the County.
    - (4) Adequate mitigation of any adverse hydrological and physical alterations is provided in accordance with Policy 2.7.3 of this Element.

- 2.7.7 Maximum gross residential-density calculations shall be based on predevelopment upland and wetland acreages. Where proposed residential acreage contains wetlands and water bodies, except natural lakes, density credit will be allowed for those wetlands and water bodies, except natural lakes, provided that the areas so classified do not exceed ten percent of the developable, residential acreage.
- 2.7.8 Maximum gross nonresidential-intensity calculations shall be based on predevelopment upland and wetland acreages. Where proposed nonresidential acreage contains wetlands and water bodies, except natural lakes, intensity credit for Floor Area Ratio calculations will be allowed for those wetlands and water bodies, except natural lakes, provided that the areas so classified do not exceed ten percent of the developable, nonresidential acreage.
- 2.7.9 The Wetlands designation on Maps 2-5a, 2-5b, and 2-5c and the Wetland/Lake Overlay on the Future Land Use Map shall serve as a conceptual indicator of conservation, wetland, and lake areas. The precise delineation of these areas shall be determined through site-specific studies and field determinations through the development review process.
- 2.7.10 Require the transfer of density/intensity credit from the wetlands portion of any site, including associated buffers, to the upland portion of the same site (see Calculation of Residential Densities, Future Land Use Map). Development sites, which consist solely of wetlands and where the owner does not have an ownership interest in any adjacent property, may develop at one residential unit per 20 acres.
- 2.7.11 Pasco County shall periodically review the adequacy of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and Army Corps of Engineers monitoring and compliance procedures and, if necessary formulate an appropriate alternative management strategy.
- 2.7.12 Implement development regulation and incentives' strategies to encourage protection of wetlands including, but not limited to, density credits, conservation easements, and buffers.
- 2.7.13 Encourage efforts to restore man-altered wetland systems through inclusion within stormwater management systems as specified in the Pasco County Land Development Code.
- 2.7.14 Establish setbacks around postdevelopment wetlands (i.e., wetland mitigation and natural wetlands) as set forth in the Conservation Element, Policy 2.3.1(c).
- 2.7.15 Require that all wetland encroachments be mitigated according to Chapters 62 and 40D-4 and Section 404, Clean Water Act, and monitored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and Army Corps of Engineers. Pasco County shall periodically review the adequacy of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and Army Corps of Engineers monitoring and compliance procedures and, if necessary, formulate an appropriate alternative management strategy.

- 2.7.16 Encourage the development of educational programs to inform the public of the environmental benefits of wetlands through public dissemination of the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection brochures, public displays, and film strips.

## **Wildlife Habitat**

OBJECTIVE 2.8 Implement, as part of the development review system, measures that are based on locally adopted criteria and thresholds to identify the specific location and extent of native wildlife and their habitats, including State and Federally protected plant and animal species, within proposed development sites and protect these natural resources from the impacts of development and maintain populations of threatened and endangered species and species of special concern occurring in Pasco County.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.8.1 Implement the Pasco County Land Development Code requirements for tree removal and protection, landscaping and buffering, and MPUD Master Planned Unit Development, Open Space Management for the preservation of native habitats from land development activities through maintenance of natural vegetation on any project site.
- 2.8.2 Require the evaluation and proper management of endangered, threatened, and species of special concern by requiring that proposed development sites be examined for the presence of State and Federally protected plant and animal species. Criteria and thresholds for reviews to examine sites in this manner shall be specified in the County's land development regulations. At a minimum, the criteria will consider:
  - a. The Area of Potentially Significant Habitat as shown on Map 3-1 that has been identified by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a "hot spot of biological resources and rare species occurrence" or other available data sources.
  - b. The size and distribution of listed species populations within a proposed development site.
  - c. The feasibility and viability of on-site protection and management and whether the proposed development site includes a wildlife corridor.
  - d. The feasibility of maintaining a wildlife corridor.
  - e. The appropriateness of mitigation to an acceptable off-site location in the event that on-site mitigation is shown to be ineffective.

When listed species are found, the proposal shall be forwarded to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for recommendations to minimize the impact of development on those species found on the site. These recommendations shall be considered during the development approval process. Failure to receive recommendations from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission within the development review process time frames shall not preclude a project from being scheduled, considered, or approved.

- 2.8.3 Protect the endangered West Indian Manatee by requiring all development within its range to adhere to the Florida Department of Environmental Protec-

tion guidelines for protection of this species. These guidelines will be specified in development order conditions.

- 2.8.4 Protect all existing lands designated as conservation on the Future Land Use Map or listed in the Recreation and Open Space Element by reviewing proposed adjacent land developments for potential adverse impacts.
- 2.8.5 Participate in intergovernmental programs, such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Conservation and Recreation Lands and the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Save Our Rivers Programs, designed to conserve and manage natural vegetation and wildlife habitats.
- 2.8.6 Encourage the acquisition and management of major environmentally sensitive areas and designate them as "Conservation Lands" on the Future Land Use Map. This policy shall be implemented through participation in jointly funded, land acquisition programs of conservation lands and development order conditions designating conservation areas.
- 2.8.7 Initiate development and implementation of a local wildlife and wildlife habitat protection and management program, and coordinate with State and Federal wildlife programs.
- 2.8.8 Utilize the significant habitat inventory as depicted on Maps 3-1a, 3-1b, and 3-1c to monitor changes in land use cover and trends in the distribution of wildlife habitats throughout the County.
- 2.8.9 Conserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitat, and economically important agricultural resources by encouraging such mechanisms as, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. Transfer of development rights.
  - b. Clustering and setback requirements.
  - c. Conservation easements.
  - d. Postacquisition disposition mechanisms (e.g., leaseback options).
  - e. Fee simple purchase.
  - f. Land or mitigation banking.
  - g. Tax incentives.
  - h. Protection of wildlife corridors.
- 2.8.10 During the land use planning and development review processes, consider the effects of development on wildlife habitats. Where necessary to prevent fragmentation of habitat systems, the County shall require the preservation of wildlife corridors within developments.

- 2.8.11 Develop and implement, with assistance from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, a program of incentives designed to encourage private land owners to manage land holdings for wildlife attributes.
- 2.8.12 Initiate a public education program on the need to protect and manage the habitat of threatened and endangered species and species of special concern.
- 2.8.13 Implement Land Development Code provisions which provides for a quality development. (Incentives such as, increased in density [within the limits of the Comprehensive Plan] would be awarded to developments which undergo planned unit development review and which provide for environmental benefits which exceed those minimally required.)
- 2.8.14 Inventory State and Federally protected plant and animal species in Pasco County.
- 2.8.15 Assist the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the implementation of recovery programs for State and Federally protected plant and animal species occurring in Pasco County.
- 2.8.16 Recommend to property owners specific management and recovery strategies for protected species, as they are developed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The management techniques shall also be incorporated into the management plans for natural preserve lands owned or managed by the County.
- 2.8.17 Coordinate wildlife corridor planning and implementation activities with adjacent counties and municipalities.

## **Hazardous Waste**

OBJECTIVE 2.9 Require the proper management and disposal of all produced or used hazardous waste material.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.9.1 Implement the Pasco County Hazardous Waste Management Plan in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- 2.9.2 Disseminate educational brochures to inform citizens of effective methods for storing and disposing of household and commercial hazardous material in accordance with the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

## Natural Preserve Lands

OBJECTIVE 2.10 Ensure the protection of publicly owned or otherwise protected (through private ownership) natural preserve lands through the development and implementation of comprehensive management plans for these areas.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.10.1 Ensure the protection and proper use of natural preserve lands by working cooperatively with the owners of the said lands in developing and implementing comprehensive management plans. These plans should provide for:
  - a. Control of hydrological characteristics.
  - b. Removal or control of nuisance, exotic, plant and animal species.
  - c. Preservation of native vegetation.
  - d. Maintenance of greenways and habitat corridors.
- 2.10.2 Use the natural systems and land use cover inventory to help identify lands suitable for protection through public acquisition or through alternative means, including private management.
- 2.10.3 Request assistance in public acquisition of natural preserves under Federal, State and regional programs including, but not limited to, the Conservation and Recreation Lands and Save Our Rivers Programs.
- 2.10.4 Support the acquisition of a diversity of natural habitat types to ensure maximum density of wildlife species.
- 2.10.5 During the acquisition of ecologically important lands, give priority to acquiring the optimal acreage needed to maintain the integrity of the natural plant communities or ecological units involved and to establishing a system of interconnected or contiguous wildlife corridors.
- 2.10.6 Manage natural resources on publicly owned County lands in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Tampa Bay Water, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, as appropriate.
- 2.10.7 Provide multiple use opportunities on County-owned natural preserve lands consistent with natural resource protection and conservation, to provide for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, erosion control, maintenance or enhancement of water quality, aquifer recharge protection, and other such natural functions.
- 2.10.8 Develop site-specific, management plans for all natural preserve lands owned or leased by the County and annually review these plans to ensure compliance.

- 2.10.9 Encourage other entities to develop site-specific management plans for all natural preserve lands purchased within one year after acquisition.

## Exotic Species

OBJECTIVE 2.11 Prohibit the spread of exotic nuisance species and incorporate such programs into the management plans for newly acquired natural preserve lands, with the objective of a 90 percent reduction of exotic nuisance plants from previously uncontrolled levels.

It shall be the policy of Pasco County to:

- 2.11.1 Assist the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in eliminating exotic nuisance plant species.
- 2.11.2 Require the use of native plant species in the landscaping of new development projects and additions to existing projects.
- 2.11.3 Maintain and distribute a recommended native plant listing and other educational materials to increase public awareness of the need to utilize native plant species in the developed landscape.
- 2.11.4 Continue to require the conservation of native specimen trees which have a diameter at breast height of 18 inches or greater, and existing native vegetation in new development projects.
- 2.11.5 Develop a program to plant native trees in public rights-of-way and other public lands, whenever practical, thereby adding to the County's aesthetic appeal and providing habitat for urban wildlife.
- 2.11.6 Develop programs on County-owned or -leased lands to eliminate exotic nuisance plant species and incorporate these programs into the management plans for newly acquired, natural preserve lands.
- 2.11.7 Utilize the University of South Florida Institute of Systematic Botany definition of "native plants" to include only those species present in Florida prior to European influences (including the earliest explorers such as Ponce de Leon).
- 2.11.8 Utilize the Florida Exotic Pest Council's list of nuisance, exotic plants that are likely to occur in Pasco County.

# IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

## **Air Quality**

1. Conditioning of development orders to ensure that negative air quality impacts are eliminated or mitigated.
2. Formulation of contingency plans in event of nonattainment, air-quality determination.

## **Wellfield Protection**

1. Development of a Wellfield Protection Program in accordance with State guidelines which will provide standards for land development adjacent to public water-supply wellfields.

## **Water Quality/Quantity**

1. Establishment of land development regulations for buffer areas adjacent to surface waters and flood plain development.
2. Development of river protection ordinances for major rivers in Pasco County.

## **Water Conservation**

1. Development and implementation of a Countywide water conservation plan in coordination with the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

## **Agriculture and Silviculture**

1. Commercial agricultural and silvicultural activities should formally commit to use of the Best Management Practices through binding agreement.
2. When recommended by the Pasco County Soil and Water Conservation District, conservation plans will be required for specific activities.

## **Wetlands**

1. Revision of land development regulations to require submittal of agency approved wetland jurisdictional survey during development review process and setbacks.
2. Implementation of a transfer of development density/intensity credit program and other wetland protection mechanisms.
3. Requirement of wetland mitigation plans submittal.

### **Wildlife Habitat**

1. Revision of land development regulations to require, when appropriate: site evaluation surveys of critical habitat for endangered and threatened species and species of special concern; establishment of buffer areas between critical habitats and land development activities; and establishment of setbacks between Conservation and Recreation/Open Space land uses and other land uses.
2. Participation in jointly funded, land-acquisition programs for environmentally sensitive, wildlife habitat.

### **Hazardous Waste**

1. Development and implementation of a Countywide hazardous waste management plan in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to include such mechanisms as an Amnesty Days Program.