



CONSERVATION ELEMENT

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Goal:

~~Protect, conserve, enhance, or appropriately use the County's natural resources in a manner which maximizes their long-term viability and economic, recreational and natural value.~~

Protect, conserve, restore, enhance, and appropriately use Levy County's natural resources, including wetlands, floodplains, springs, rivers, aquifer recharge areas, estuaries, coastal resources, forests, wildlife habitat, working lands, dark skies, and environmentally sensitive lands, in a manner that supports long-term ecological health, water quality, rural character, public safety, recreation, resilience, and the County's agricultural, forestry, aquaculture, and nature-based economy.

Objective 1 Air Quality

Protect and maintain the air quality for the benefit of all citizens by meeting or exceeding State Air Quality Standards.

Open Space and Tree Protection

Policy 1.1 Enhance air quality by preserving trees, natural vegetation, and open spaces through provisions in the land development regulations for tree preservation, buffering, and recreation and open space.

Policy 1.2 Discourage industry that produces heavy air emissions from locating within the County.

Policy 1.3 Coordinate the review of proposed developments or activities that may have an adverse impact on air quality with appropriate agencies (i.e., EPA, DEP) to ensure that State and Federal air quality standards are met.

Objective 2 Natural Resource Protection

Objective 2 Natural Resource Protection and Conservation Lands

~~Maintain and enhance the environmental, economic and recreational quality of the County by conserving and protecting environmentally sensitive lands, ecological systems, and Natural Reservations.~~

Maintain, enhance, and restore the environmental, economic, scenic, recreational, and ecological quality of Levy County by conserving environmentally sensitive lands, natural systems, conservation lands, wildlife habitat, wetlands, floodplains, springs, rivers, coastal resources, and lands that support water quality, aquifer recharge, rural character, and ecological connectivity.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL)

Policy 2.1 Environmentally sensitive lands shall be designated and shown on the Future Land Use map series as an overlay zone based on the following criteria. ESLs shall include:

- a. Tide-influenced salt marshes, mangroves, shorelines and barrier/offshore islands.
- b. Historic and archaeological sites.
- c. State and federal preserves, refuges and wildlife management areas, including the Cedar Key Scrub Preserve and all other habitats of threatened or endangered species.
- d. Freshwater and coastal springs, swamps, marshes, wetlands as defined by the Department of Environmental Protection. Streamside management zones and



along the Suwannee, Wacassassa and Withlacoochee Rivers, and each of the rivers and spring-fed tributaries.

- e. County, Regional and/or State recreation areas.
- f. Wellhead Protection Areas.
- g. The 10 and 100-year floodplain.
- h. Coastal and Riverine Flooding Areas as defined in Future Land Use Element, Policy ~~1-2~~ 1.6 Conservation Land Use.
- i. Coastal High Hazard areas (areas seaward of the elevation of the category 1 storm surge line as established by a the Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) computerized storm surge model).

Policy 2.2 Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) designated shall be protected using the following guidelines and standards:

- a. Identifying ESL on the Future Land Use map series.
- b. Coordinating the review of proposed residential and non-residential development within or adjacent to ESL areas with the appropriate state resource agencies. Protective measures and mitigation, if applicable, shall be documented by the developer and approved by the appropriate regulatory agency prior to the issuance of County development approval, provided, however, that such prior approval is not required for land use applications associated with projects subject to the Florida Electrical Power Plant Siting Act, Sections 403.501 through 403.518, Florida Statutes.
- c. Limiting land uses in floodprone areas (i.e., 100-year floodplain) to rural/low density residential, agricultural uses and non-residential uses consistent with Conservation Element Policies, including but not limited to Policies 3.1 and 6.1, and Future Land Use Element ~~1-2~~ 1.6;
- d. Require that proposed Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) within ESL areas meet or exceed standards established in Chapter 380.061, Florida Quality Development.

Unique Natural Areas / Suwannee River System Protection

Policy 2.3 Unique natural areas within the 100-year floodplain adjacent to the Suwannee River system shall be identified and protected. The identification of unique natural areas shall be based on the best available information, including but not limited to, vegetative land cover mapping, resource investigations, and site investigations. Long range strategies for protecting unique natural areas shall be coordinated with state and regional resource management agencies. The review of proposed development shall be coordinated with the Suwannee River and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts.

Policy 2.4 County-owned facilities within the 100-year floodplain of the Suwannee River system shall be maintained in a manner that prevents any potential adverse impacts to the Suwannee River system such as erosion, release of inadequately treated stormwater or wastewater, or the accumulation of trash and debris.



Natural Reservations

Policy 2.5 The County will coordinate land use plans and the review of proposed developments adjacent to Natural Reservations with appropriate resource management agencies. Notification of requests to increase density or intensity on parcels that are abutting lands designated with the Natural Reservation Future Land Use Map designation, or abutting lands which have been acquired by government or non-profit agencies and are managed for the purpose of conservation, shall be provided to the entity responsible for the management of the land. Comments shall be requested related to the impact of the proposed development on the presence of listed species of plants, animals, natural community type, hydrological impacts, land management requirements, prescribed burning and recreational use.

Policy 2.6 Land development regulations shall be developed and used to promote compatibility with adjacent land uses and to minimize the impact of development on the natural resources in the area. For all properties abutting Federal or State Wildlife Management Areas and Federal or State Forests within Natural Reservation (NR) areas, the County will require a minimum 100-foot naturally vegetated buffer, in which structures are prohibited. Uses within the 100-foot naturally vegetated buffer will be limited to agriculture, silviculture, and passive uses such as footpaths, hunting and horseback riding. Variances from the prohibitions against construction of structures within the 100-foot buffer may be allowed only when, owing to the special shape, size or physical features, such as the presence of wetlands, the buffer would result in the preclusion of all reasonable use of the parcel. When a variance is permitted, encroachment into the buffer will be limited to the minimum needed to allow for reasonable use of the parcel. No variances will be granted allowing impacts to wetlands or listed species habitat within the buffer.

Policy 2.7 State, federal, regional or local government, and non-profit agency acquisitions of public/park lands will be designated as Natural Reservation on the Future Land Use Map through a Future Land Use Map amendment or the Evaluation and Appraisal amendment process.

Policy 2.8 Measures such as, the regulation of density, buffering, setback and open space requirements will be utilized to protect existing property designated Natural Reservation from encroachment by incompatible land use. Development on property abutting lands designated on the Future Land Use Map as Natural Reservation or lands which have been acquired and are managed by a government agency for the purpose of conservation, shall exhibit best environmental management practices such as designing in the context of the natural features of the landscape (including the consideration of topographic and stormwater features, existing vegetation, and soil types), to avoid and minimize adverse environmental and visual impacts. The major criteria for approval shall be the continued functioning, with ~~the minimum~~ minimal disturbance of the ecosystem that the development is impacting.

Policy 2.9 Septic tanks and drainfields shall be sited ~~in a manner~~ to protect Natural Reservation areas, and lands ~~that have been~~ acquired by and ~~are~~ managed by a government or non-profit agency for ~~the purpose of~~ conservation, from the discharge of improperly treated effluent. The use of advanced secondary treatment systems may be required in environmentally sensitive lands areas, when determined by the Board of County Commissioners to be necessary for the protection of environmental health and ecosystems.

Policy 2.10 Management Plans shall be prepared and implemented for environmentally sensitive areas within county-owned or controlled Natural Reservation areas.

Unique Vegetative Communities/ Multi-Jurisdictional



Policy 2.11 The County will assist regulatory agencies in protecting unique vegetative communities located within the various jurisdictions by regulating land uses contiguous to the unique communities.

Policy 2.12 The County will develop intergovernmental agreements to help protect, conserve, or preserve identified unique vegetative communities in contiguous municipalities or counties.

Policy 2.13 The County shall coordinate with federal, state, regional, local, nonprofit, and private conservation partners to identify opportunities for the protection, restoration, and long-term management of environmentally sensitive lands, wildlife corridors, springsheds, floodplains, wetlands, coastal resources, aquifer recharge areas, and lands adjacent to existing Natural Reservation or Conservation lands.

Policy 2.14 Proposed Future Land Use Map amendments, rezonings, subdivisions, special exceptions, or other development approvals adjacent to Natural Reservation, Natural Resources and Conservation lands, publicly owned conservation lands, or lands managed for conservation should be evaluated for compatibility with the long-term protection and management of those lands. Compatibility considerations may include buffers, setbacks, wildlife movement, prescribed fire, hydrology, stormwater runoff, lighting, noise, access, invasive species, and potential conflicts with resource management activities.

Policy 2.15 The County should encourage conservation design, clustering, open space preservation, native vegetation protection, low-impact development, and other site planning techniques that avoid or minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive lands while allowing compatible development consistent with the Future Land Use Element.

Policy 2.16 The County may consider ecological connectivity, wildlife movement, hydrologic connections, floodplain continuity, and the relationship between public and private conservation lands when evaluating land use changes, public acquisition opportunities, conservation easements, and development adjacent to environmentally sensitive lands.

Objective 3 — Soils, Minerals and Native Vegetative Communities

Objective 3 Soils, Minerals, Native Vegetation, and Natural Drainage Systems

~~Conserve and protect native vegetative communities, mineral resources, farm and forest lands, and preserve the natural drainage functions of the soils through the appropriate use of land.~~
Conserve and protect native vegetative communities, mineral resources, farm and forest lands, karst features, soils, wetlands, floodplains, and natural drainage systems through appropriate land use planning, development review, stormwater management, conservation design, and coordination with state and regional agencies.



Policy 3.1 Development proposals will be reviewed to ensure that environmentally sensitive features of the land are protected and impacts to wetlands are avoided, minimized, or mitigated commensurate with the quality of the wetlands system affected. Impacts to “high quality” wetlands on site will be limited to development of necessary improvements consistent with plans approved by state and federal regulatory agencies, for which no practicable alternative location exists, and mitigation shall be required consistent with conditions imposed by the regulatory agencies. High-quality wetlands are herein defined as undisturbed wetlands or wetlands that contain significant existing nesting habitat for listed wildlife species or significant existing habitat for listed plant species. Topographical characteristics, soil suitability and limitations, potential impact to on surface and groundwater flow and quality and a floodplain assessment shall be reviewed prior to issuance of any development approval.

The methods used to protect sensitive features of the land and to address physical and environmental limitations of the land shall be documented by the developer prior to the issuance of development approval, provided, however, that such prior approval is not required for land use applications associated with projects subject to the Florida Electrical Power Plant Siting Act, Sections 403.501 through 403.518, Florida Statutes.

Land Use and Natural Resource Map Series

Policy 3.2 A Land Use and Natural Resource Map series, showing county-wide environmental resources, locally important farm and forestry land, mineral resources, karst features, springs and the Springs Protection Zone (SPZ) and Future Land Use information shall be utilized in the review of proposed developments. The Developer shall document potential impact to these resources and methods used to protect, conserve, and preserve them.

The map series will show the following characteristics:

- a. **Natural Resources:** Soil types, native vegetative communities, mineral resources and geologic surface water and groundwater information.
- b. **Land Use Information:** Areas designated for urban and rural development. Future Land Use categories for Agricultural, Residential and Non-Residential land uses and Environmentally Sensitive Lands.
- c. **Development Potential:** A composite map illustrating the suitability and limitations for various types of land use and development including, but not limited to agricultural, residential, non- residential uses.

Soils

Policy 3.3 The County will continue its support of the Levy County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and its Cooperative Extension Service.

Policy 3.4 The *Soil Survey of Levy County* will be used to identify soil suitability and limitations to support land use decisions. On-site soil characteristics and constraints will be one of the determining factors in land use changes that involve the increase of intensity and density.



Policy 3.5 The review of proposed development will be coordinated with the County Agricultural Extension service, SWCD and other appropriate agencies to ensure that agricultural resources are protected.

Mineral Resources, Mining and Excavation

Policy 3.6 Areas identified as containing commercially valuable mineral resources suitable for extraction will be conserved and protected from the encroachment of incompatible land uses and development. Land development regulations and Future Land Use plans will be used to enhance compatibility among existing uses and future development in the area.

Policy 3.7 A buffer shall be required to physically separate mining operations and adjacent land uses to protect the public health, safety and welfare and to preserve the character of the area. The buffer shall be provided to minimize the impact of dust, noise, traffic and other undesirable impacts associated with mining activities.

Policy 3.8 Environmentally Sensitive Lands including, but not limited to, coastal resources and designated areas of critical state concern, will be protected from mining operations.

Policy 3.9 Promote the restoration and future use of mined or excavated lands through land development regulation reclamation standards.

Policy 3.10 The County will develop performance standards that will permit the monitoring and early detection of water contamination or excessive run-off into adjacent areas resulting from mining, agricultural or construction excavations.

Policy 3.11 Excavated slopes will be protected from erosion by:

- a. Immediate establishment of vegetative cover, terraces, mulches or a combination of these practices as appropriate, on excavated slope areas.
- b. Preservation of dense vegetative stands adjacent to excavation and site stripping activity to prevent water run-off.

Policy 3.12 Encourage the use of rejuvenation practices for managed forested lands to reduce or eliminate excessive water run-off or water contamination problems.

Policy 3.13 Run-off from excavation or construction sites shall be required to have the same volume, rate of flow and equal or improved quality relative to pre-development and ambient conditions.

Policy 3.14 All excavation activities, inclusive of pumping, will employ water conservation practices.

Policy 3.15 The County shall consider karst features, sinkhole-prone areas, soil limitations, groundwater vulnerability, and aquifer recharge characteristics when reviewing proposed Future Land Use Map amendments, rezonings, subdivisions, and development proposals that may increase density or intensity.

Policy 3.16 The County should encourage low-impact development practices, native landscaping, preservation of natural drainage patterns, minimization of directly connected impervious surfaces, and stormwater design that protects water quality, aquifer recharge, floodplain



function, and downstream receiving waters.

Policy 3.17 The County should encourage the preservation of native vegetation, significant trees, natural buffers, and vegetative communities that support wildlife habitat, water quality, erosion control, rural character, scenic resources, and heat reduction.

Policy 3.18 Mining, excavation, and other resource extraction activities shall continue to be evaluated for compatibility with adjacent rural residential, agricultural, forestry, conservation, public facility, and environmentally sensitive lands. Such evaluation may include impacts related to water resources, wetlands, floodplains, noise, dust, vibration, haul routes, reclamation, buffers, setbacks, wildlife habitat, and long-term post-mining land use.

Objective 4 — Forestry / Wildlife Habitat Conservation

Objective 4 Forestry, Working Lands, and Wildlife Habitat Conservation

~~Encourage the long-term conservation and proper management of forest lands in the County to ensure a continuous yield of forest products, habitats for wildlife, forest associated recreation, aesthetics, clean air and clean water.~~

Encourage the long-term conservation, productivity, and proper management of forest lands, agricultural lands, aquaculture areas, wildlife habitat, and resource-based lands to support Levy County's rural economy, wildlife resources, wildfire resilience, clean air, clean water, scenic character, and natural resource-based recreation.

Forest Lands

Policy 4.1 The County shall protect, conserve and encourage the continued productivity of forestry activities, discourage the encroachment of incompatible activities and promote compatibility among forestry and other uses by:

- a. Limiting the densities and intensities of future growth in areas predominately used for forestry/agriculture.
- b. Providing Subdivisions standards including, but not limited to, buffering, setback and clustering requirements.

Saw Timber Production

Policy 4.2 Encourage the use of state legislated incentives and assistance to private landowners through forest management programs that promote compatible mixed uses, aesthetics, and lengthened timber rotation as a means of sustaining saw timber production.

Tree Ordinance

Policy 4.3 Unique or endangered native vegetation that will be adversely impacted or destroyed by proposed development shall be protected and conserved through tree preservation and open space requirements in the land development regulations.

Development/Plat Review

Policy 4.4 Forestry resource managers will be consulted in the review of proposed developments that are adjacent to public and/or private lands actively used for silviculture. Comments and concerns from the forestry managers will be addressed during the plat review process.



Policy 4.5 Native vegetative communities and agricultural/forestry lands shall be preserved, to the maximum extent possible, through the provision of open space, lot coverage and public dedication requirements for residential and mixed use development.

Forest Management

Policy 4.6 The State of Florida's *Silvicultural Best Management Practices* guideline and standards shall be followed in all forest management activities.

Policy 4.7 The County will protect lives and property from wildfires on unmanaged lands. In conjunction with the appropriate state, federal and regional agencies and property owners, Levy County shall implement, maintain, and promote land management practices that enhance fire protection, wildlife habitat and sustainable silviculture practices, including the use of prescribed burns and the control of invasive exotics. To further the effectiveness of these practices, requirements shall be included in the Land Development Regulations to inform and educate existing and new property owners that these practices, prescribed burns in particular, may be regularly employed nearby and may affect their property. The Board may authorize and/or request prescribed burning by the Division of Forestry, in accordance with the State of Florida's *Silvicultural Best Management Practices* guidelines and rules.

Policy 4.8 The County recognizes that properly managed agricultural, forestry, aquaculture, and other working lands can contribute to open space preservation, wildlife habitat, water resource protection, aquifer recharge, rural character, and the County's natural resource-based economy.

Policy 4.9 Development adjacent to actively managed forestry lands, public conservation lands, or lands where prescribed fire is used as a management tool should be designed to reduce conflicts with forestry practices, prescribed burning, smoke management, access, wildfire mitigation, and natural resource management activities.

Policy 4.10 The County may support voluntary conservation and stewardship tools, including conservation easements, agricultural easements, forestry stewardship plans, rural land stewardship, transfer or purchase of development rights, best management practices, and partnerships with state, regional, local, nonprofit, and private land conservation programs.

Policy 4.11 When evaluating long-range land use policy changes or Future Land Use Map amendments involving substantial rural acreage, the County may consider potential effects on forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, resource-based recreation, wildlife habitat, supporting businesses, and the local economic multiplier effect generated by working lands and natural resource-based industries.

~~Objective 5—Endangered and Threatened Wildlife~~

~~Objective 5~~ Listed Species, Wildlife Habitat, and Habitat Connectivity

~~The County, in cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, shall identify the locations of, and protect endangered and threatened wildlife species.~~

The County Will coordinate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, water management districts, federal agencies, and other appropriate entities to identify, protect, and manage listed species habitat, wildlife corridors, native plant communities, and lands that support biodiversity and ecological connectivity.



Policy 5.1 The County shall regulate development and prohibit activities known to adversely affect the survival of endangered and threatened wildlife.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Policy 5.2 The habitat of any threatened or endangered species shall be managed to ensure survival of that species, with a population equal to or greater than existed prior to development. Mitigation activities shall sustain or increase the carrying capacity of that habitat in accordance with a State approved management plan (i.e., FDEP and FWC).

Policy 5.3 A portion of the land area in each subdivision or planned unit development that includes habitat for any listed, threatened or endangered species will preserve or restore native wildlife habitat. An adequate amount of land will be provided to support viable population of plant and animal species, including endangered and threatened species.

Wildlife Assessment and Management Plan

Policy 5.4 A wildlife assessment and protection plan, when applicable, will be required for proposed subdivisions and planned unit developments. Proposed development requests shall be referred to the appropriate regulatory agency to identify and ensure protection of threatened and endangered species and habitats.

Policy 5.5 The County shall request assistance from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) in the development of wildlife management plans to protect and preserve identified endangered wildlife and species of special concern.

Policy 5.6 The County should encourage the protection of connected open space, habitat corridors, riparian corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and native vegetative communities that support wildlife movement, listed species, and long-term ecological resilience.

Policy 5.7 Where proposed development may affect listed species or their habitat, the County shall coordinate review with appropriate state or federal agencies and may require documentation of agency coordination, habitat protection measures, management plans, or mitigation measures consistent with applicable law.

Policy 5.8 The County should encourage outdoor lighting practices that reduce glare, minimize light trespass, preserve dark skies, and avoid adverse impacts to wildlife, livestock, rural quality of life, and natural resource areas.

~~Objective 6 — Protect the Quality and Quantity of Current and Projected Water Sources~~

Objective 6 Water Resources, Springs, Aquifer Recharge, and Water Quality

~~Protect, appropriately use and conserve the quality and quantity of current and projected water sources within the County including surface water, springs, groundwater and waters that flow into the Gulf of Mexico.~~

Protect, conserve, and appropriately use the quality and quantity of Levy County's current and projected water resources, including groundwater, surface waters, springs, springsheds, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, rivers, estuaries, coastal waters, and waters flowing to the Gulf of Mexico.

Policy 6.1 Any activities known to adversely affect the quality and quantity of water sources will be prohibited by the County through adopted local ordinances and rules.



Policy 6.2 The County will coordinate plans for growth and development with the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to protect the hydrological characteristics of the area. A development review process shall be developed to enhance the coordination and use of technical assistance services available to the County from the Water Management Districts.

Policy 6.3 Standards and criteria in the land development regulations for potable wells, cones of influence and water recharge areas shall be used to protect the quality of existing and future potable water resources from contamination.

Policy 6.4 Natural groundwater recharge areas, wellfield protection areas and surface waters shall be protected from activities, such as, inadequate stormwater management, inappropriate use of septic tanks, intense development in karst sensitive areas and inappropriate densities and intensities of development in areas identified environmentally sensitive land.

Policy 6.5 Large volume withdrawals of groundwater that could result in significant adverse impacts on potable water supply and natural ecosystems due to cone of depression effects shall be evaluated for their effect on municipal wellfield supplies and natural ecosystems before being permitted. Development shall only occur when adequate water supplies are concurrently available to serve such development without adversely affecting local or regional water resources or the natural ecosystem.

Policy 6.6 The County supports the philosophy of “local sources first” and shall seek to protect its water resources from being exported to other regions of the state through several strategies, including:

1. Participating in the development of the five-year work plans of the Suwannee River and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts;
2. Requesting to receive notice of any applications for the transfer of the County’s waters, and advocating for water reuse and the development of alternate supply sources by such applicants;
3. Consider participating in a regional water supply authority pursuant to section 373.713 F.S. and/or section 163.01 Florida Statutes; and
4. Support appropriate legislation regarding consumptive use permitting and exercising vigilance through the County’s legislative delegation.

Wellfield Protection

Policy 6.7 Prior to the issuance of development approval, proposed developments that require water withdrawals exceeding **100,000 g.p.d.** from the Floridan aquifer shall be reviewed to ensure that the impacts of this development will not adversely impact the public interest and the environment.

The County will coordinate the review of proposed developments with the appropriate Water Management District to determine and/or identify potential impacts to:

- a. Surrounding land uses;
- b. Environmental quality;



- c. Public health, safety and welfare.
- d. Minimum flows and levels.

Policy 6.8 The land development regulations shall contain wellfield protection standards to protect public potable water wells from point and non-point source pollution or contamination. To protect the public potable water supply from possible contamination, the County shall establish wellhead protection zones (WHPZ) for existing and future community water systems. Primary and secondary protection zones shall be designated, and allowable uses are listed below:

- I. Primary WHPZ.** This zone is defined as land within a 200-foot radius of the wellhead.
 - A.** Allowable uses - existing residential uses, facilities and uses functionally related to the water supply system, open space, parks and playgrounds. For lots or parcels created on or before December 31, 1989, an exemption shall be allowed for one single-family dwelling unit that may be within the primary zone of an existing wellhead.
 - B.** Prohibited uses - Types of materials and substances listed, characterized, or identified as hazardous by F.A.C. Chapter 62-730.030. No impervious surfaces, except those that are existing residential uses or uses accessory to existing residential uses, playing courts, open-air shelters and other similar recreation facilities. For lots or parcels created on or before December 31, 1989, an exemption shall be allowed for one single-family dwelling unit that may be within the primary zone of an existing wellhead.
- II. Secondary WHPZ.** This zone is defined as land within a 660-foot radius of the wellhead.
 - A.** Allowable uses: residential uses served by central sewer facilities, uses functionally related to the water supply system, open space, parks and playgrounds.
 - B.** Prohibited uses -
 - 1. Types of materials and substances listed, characterized, or identified as hazardous by F.A.C. Chapter 62-730.030. No impervious surfaces, except those that are accessory to residential uses, playing courts, open-air shelters and other similar recreation facilities.
 - 2. Septic systems except for lots or parcels created on or before December 31, 1989.
 - 3. Any man-made retention area except for stormwater treatment facilities.
 - 4. The production, handling and/or storage of hazardous waste/materials.



5. Junkyard or salvage operations.
6. Effluent spray fields.
7. Landfills, sludge disposal sites, or animal waste holding ponds.

III. New Wellfields - Prior to development of any proposed wellfield, drawdown tests will be conducted by the applicant for the purposes of establishing the extent of the cone of depression. No wellfields may be developed that would include any of the prohibited uses listed above within identified cones of influence and/or within primary and secondary WHPZs.

IV. Existing Wellfields - Existing uses within the WHPZs that violate the provisions of this policy shall be reviewed and evaluated in coordination with the Water Management Districts to determine any risk to the health, safety and welfare from contamination of the water source. Remedial actions, when required, shall be identified and coordinated with the Water Management District at the conclusion of the review and evaluation.

Policy 6.9 Soil tests shall be required for all proposed developments prior to the issuance of septic tank permits, approval of sewer treatment plants, or approval of solid waste disposal sites.

Policy 6.10 Developers shall obtain all permits required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Suwannee River Water Management District or the Southwest Florida Water Management District prior to the issuance of a development permit, provided, however, that such prior approval is not required for land use applications associated with projects subject to the Florida Electrical Power Plant Siting Act, Sections 403.501 through 403.518, Florida Statutes.

Policy 6.11 New developments meeting a specified threshold size will be required to evaluate geologic hazards on-site prior to development.

Policy 6.12 Emergency conservation measures will be mandated to minimize the impacts of drought and protect the supply of potable water, upon request from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Suwannee River Water Management District. When deemed necessary, the County will consider developing an emergency water conservation plan and level of service (LOS) for use in establishing water conservation targets and measuring the effectiveness of water conservation initiatives.

Aquifer Protection

Policy 6.13 Aquifer Recharge Areas will be protected from development impacts through land development regulations to regulate filling and establish ~~imperious~~ impervious lot coverage and stormwater management standards. The retention of soils and covering vegetation to filter water and recharge the aquifer shall be encouraged for proposed development sites.

Policy 6.14 Innovative site design and construction materials (i.e. permeable paving blocks and other paving alternatives) which retain soil permeability will be encouraged through density bonuses or other incentives.

Policy 6.15 Preservation of open space lands shall be encouraged in areas of high natural



recharge, wetland areas, and in areas identified as Environmentally Sensitive Land.

Freshwater and Environmentally Sensitive Coastal Areas

Policy 6.16 Development in a natural freshwater, wetland and environmentally sensitive coastal areas will be prohibited or regulated to protect and preserve those areas strongly dependent on natural hydrologic processes. However, development necessary for essential public uses may be allowed in such areas consistent with Conservation Element Policy 3.1.

Policy 6.17 Through coordination and technical assistance from the water management districts in the development review process, water quality and quantity shall be addressed and protected. The owner/developer of any site shall be responsible for the management of managing runoff ~~in a manner~~ so that the volume of runoff does not exceed pre-development conditions.

Policy 6.18 The County shall consider springs, springsheds, Priority Focus Areas, basin management action plan areas, aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, and other water resource protection areas when evaluating proposed Future Land Use Map amendments, rezonings, subdivisions, and development proposals that may increase density or intensity.

Policy 6.19 The County should coordinate land use planning, wastewater planning, septic system management, stormwater management, and development review to reduce nutrient loading and protect springs, groundwater, surface waters, wetlands, and estuarine resources. Where a central sewer is available or planned, the County should encourage connection consistent with applicable law and adopted utility plans.

Policy 6.20 The County may consider soil suitability, groundwater vulnerability, proximity to springs, wetlands, floodplains, surface waters, and aquifer recharge areas when evaluating development proposals that rely on onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems.

Policy 6.21 The County should encourage stormwater practices that maintain or improve pre-development water quality, reduce runoff volume and pollutant loading, promote infiltration where appropriate, preserve natural drainage systems, and protect aquifer recharge, wetlands, springs, and downstream receiving waters.

Policy 6.22 The County shall coordinate future land-use decisions with water supply planning, public facility planning, water management district plans, and adopted level of service standards to ensure that development occurs where adequate water supplies and water resource protections are available.

Policy 6.23 The County should encourage water conservation, Florida-Friendly Landscaping, native landscaping, efficient irrigation, reuse where available, and other water-saving practices in public facilities, private development, agricultural operations, and landscaping standards.

Objective 7 Fisheries and Marine Habitat

Preserve, protect and enhance the coastal marine systems along the County's coastline and provide waterfront development guidelines.

Waterfront Development Guidelines



Policy 7.1 The County will regulate dredging, waterfront development, filling, construction of roads and similar activities ~~with~~ in proximity to coastal estuaries, grass beds, hammocks or salt marsh by enforcing land development regulations.

Policy 7.2 The County will protect offshore fishing beds from poor water quality and from the adverse impacts of development using shoreline development standards set forth in the Coastal Management Element.

Policy 7.3 The County will continually review and improve the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to protect and conserve the natural functions of existing soils, commercially important fish or shellfish locations, wildlife habitats, rivers, bays, lakes, floodplains, harbors, wetlands, estuarine marshes, freshwater beaches and shores and marine habitats. In addition, developers shall document measures taken to protect coastal resources and environmentally sensitive lands on-site for proposed developments.

Policy 7.4 The County will continually review F.D.E.P. pollution studies and consider for adoption recommended standards and guidelines to prevent or reduce water pollution.

Policy 7.5 The County will protect and preserve coastal resources through the implementation of standards and guidelines in the Coastal Management Element of this Plan.

Policy 7.6 The County encourages and supports the preservation of working waterfronts, as defined in s. 342.07, F.S.

Objective 8—Aesthetics

Objective 8 Scenic Character, Aesthetics, and Dark Skies

~~Protect and preserve the natural beauty and enhance the appearance of communities in the County through cooperative efforts of County, Municipal and private entities.~~

Protect and enhance Levy County's natural beauty, rural landscapes, scenic corridors, tree canopy, dark skies, and community appearance through coordinated land use planning, landscaping, lighting, buffering, signage, and development design standards.

Policy 8.1 Maximize open space and improve aesthetics through the implementation of the Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.) Ordinance.

Policy 8.2 Funding sources will be investigated for joint County and municipal beautification projects. Public education programs to promote environmental awareness shall also be encouraged.

~~**Policy 8.3** The County will consider for adoption, codes, ordinances and regulations addressing the issues of signs, noise, dust, smoke, odor, landscaping, tree preservation, and other methods to enhance compatibility between adjacent uses.~~

Policy 8.3 The County may consider updates to the Land Development Code addressing signs, noise, dust, smoke, odor, landscaping, tree preservation, buffering, outdoor lighting, glare, and other standards that enhance compatibility between adjacent uses and protect rural character, scenic resources, dark skies, and quality of life.



Policy 8.4 The County will prepare and adopt a Landscape Ordinances to promote compatibility between residential and nonresidential land uses. On-site preservation of valuable shade and ornamental trees shall be encouraged to improve the appearance of the development site.

Policy 8.5 The County shall encourage outdoor lighting practices that preserve Levy County's natural dark and starry skies, reduce glare, minimize light trespass, protect wildlife and livestock, support rural quality of life, and improve energy efficiency. The County may implement dark-sky lighting standards through the Land Development Code, including shielded fixtures, downward-directed lighting, lower color-temperature lighting, timers, motion controls, and limits on light trespass.

Policy 8.6 The County may identify and protect scenic rural corridors, gateway areas, and roadways that contribute to Levy County's rural character, natural beauty, agricultural identity, ecotourism, and sense of place.



Objective 9 Hazardous Waste

Protect natural resources ~~through the development and adoption of~~ by developing and adopting ordinances to provide standards and guidelines for hazardous waste management.

Policy 9.1 The County will incorporate provisions contained in the Hazardous Waste Management Plan into local ordinances.

Policy 9.2 Natural resources shall be protected from hazardous wastes, through implementing the hazardous waste assessment recommendations and through policies contained in the Solid Waste Sub- Element of the Infrastructure Element.

~~Objective 10 Wildfire Mitigation~~

Objective 10 Wildfire Mitigation and Resilient Land Management

~~Protect life, property, and the economy by eliminating or minimizing the present and future vulnerability to wildfire hazards.~~

Protect life, property, natural resources, working lands, and the economy by reducing current and future vulnerability to wildfire hazards through land use planning, development design, public education, prescribed fire coordination, fuel management, emergency access, and resilient land management.

Policy 10.1 Areas of high fire potential and populations in Levy County shall be identified, as adopted and mapped in the Levy County Local Mitigation Strategy, based on plant community type and development stage, canopy cover, hydrology, soils, slope and elevation. Mapping shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary in response to changing fuel conditions and fire occurrence.

Policy 10.2 The County shall work with the Division of Forestry to educate the public, especially those at high risk from wildfires, and make them aware of proactive steps they can take to mitigate wildfire damage.

Policy 10.3 The County shall advance the directives and policies of local emergency management operational plans and the Levy County Local Mitigation Strategy.

Policy 10.4 Residential subdivisions in areas identified as high fire potential shall comply with the following minimum standards:

a. Complete and implement a wildfire mitigation plan specific to that subdivision, subject to review and approval by the Florida Division of Forestry, which shall be incorporated as part of the development plan or subdivision plat. The mitigation plan shall address the following:

1. The characteristics of the site and wildfire hazard rating for the site.
2. Specific recommendations for reducing the wildfire risk before and after development.
3. Incorporation of wildfire mitigation features into the development design, as applicable or required by the land development code, such as: defensible project perimeters; interior project fuel breaks; individual site defensible space; landscaping guidelines and plant material suggestions; placement of structures.
4. Review of landscaping and building plans for wildfire mitigation features.
5. Review of factors related to emergency response, such as: water supply;



proximity to fire protection services; emergency access and infrastructure; and fuel management zones (greenspace) and vegetation maintenance.

b. Provide at least two ingress-egress routes.

c. Structures shall be designed to minimize the potential for loss of life and property from wildfire, through requirements in the land development regulations for outdoor sprinkler systems; fire-resistant building materials or treatments, landscaping with appropriate vegetation species, and site design practices such as fuel breaks and defensible space.

d. Streets, roads, driveways, bridges, culverts, and cul-de-sacs shall be designed to assure access by firefighting equipment, providing for weight class, cornering, turnaround and overhead clearance.

Policy 10.5 The County shall consider wildfire hazard when reviewing land use amendments for increases in density.

Policy 10.6 Residential subdivisions for which adequate wildfire mitigation cannot be provided, or that would preclude or severely limit the use of wildfire mitigation or natural resource management options such as prescribed fire, shall not be authorized in areas of high wildfire potential.

Policy 10.7 The County will explore the adoption of Firewise building code requirements in high-risk fire areas to reduce wildfire risk.

Policy 10.8 Cluster development will be encouraged in areas identified as high fire potential.

Policy 10.9 The County shall recognize prescribed fire as an important land management tool for forestry, wildlife habitat, conservation lands, wildfire hazard reduction, and ecosystem health. Development adjacent to lands managed with prescribed fire should incorporate design measures, disclosures, buffers, access, and fuel management practices that reduce conflicts with prescribed burning and wildfire mitigation activities.

Policy 10.10 The County should consider wildland-urban interface conditions when reviewing Future Land Use Map amendments, subdivisions, and development proposals in areas with high wildfire potential or adjacent to managed forests, conservation lands, or large undeveloped tracts.

Policy 10.11 The County shall continue to coordinate with the Florida Forest Service, FWC, FDEP, water management districts, emergency management agencies, and land managers to support wildfire mitigation, prescribed fire, habitat management, invasive species control, and protection of rural communities.

Objective 11 Conservation-Based Resilience and Natural Hazard Adaptation

Use conservation, open space, natural systems protection, floodplain management, wetland preservation, coastal resource protection, and low-impact development as strategies to improve



resilience to flooding, storm surge, drought, wildfire, erosion, extreme heat, and other natural hazards.

Policy 11.1 The County shall recognize wetlands, floodplains, forests, marshes, shorelines, dunes, riparian corridors, open space, and conservation lands as natural infrastructure that supports flood storage, water quality, aquifer recharge, shoreline stabilization, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, recreation, and community resilience.

Policy 11.2 The County should protect the natural functions of floodplains, wetlands, rivers, marshes, and coastal systems to reduce flood risk, protect water quality, support habitat, and maintain natural hydrologic processes.

Policy 11.3 The County should coordinate conservation planning, land acquisition, stormwater planning, floodplain management, wildfire mitigation, and local hazard mitigation planning to identify projects that provide both natural resource and public safety benefits.

Policy 11.4 The County should encourage nature-based solutions, low-impact development, living shorelines where appropriate, wetland restoration, open space preservation, native vegetation, and floodplain protection as tools to reduce hazard vulnerability and protect natural resources.