



## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT INTRODUCTION

The Recreation and Open Space chapter, or “element” of a comprehensive plan, is required by State Law. This Element is required to indicate a comprehensive system of public and private sites for recreation, including, but not limited to, natural preservation areas, parks and playgrounds, parkways, beaches and public access to beaches, open spaces, waterways, and other recreational facilities. The facilities identified by this Element also demonstrate Seminole County’s consistency with the principles of the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision.

Seminole County officially began its parks system in 1969 with the passage of a \$1.6 million bond issue resulting in the acquisition of four (4) major park sites: Lake Mills, Sylvan Lake, Red Bug Lake, and Sanlando. Prior to 1969, the County operated special facilities, which met a specific need such as boat ramps, but no developed park sites. In the early 1970’s, the County created the Parks and Recreation Division to provide for development and maintenance of both existing and new park facilities. The County also established a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to provide feedback to assist the Parks and Recreation Division in developing the County Parks System.

As of 2008, Seminole County manages a variety of park and recreational facilities, trails, and natural lands ranging in size from less than one (1) acre to 1,600 acres. The types of parks available include community, neighborhood, mini-parks, special use parks and facilities, linear parks (recreational trails), and passive resource parks (natural lands).

In 1990, the voters of Seminole County approved an ad valorem tax to fund over \$20 million dollars in bonds for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands, primarily for preservation, and where compatible, for passive recreational uses. Additionally, in 2000, voters approved a second referendum providing \$20 million dollars for trails acquisition and development, and an additional \$5 million for acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands.

Seminole County currently maintains approximately 960 acres of existing public parks, 6,622 acres of natural lands and 472 acres of trails providing both active and passive recreational opportunities to all Seminole County residents. These areas are comprised primarily of 5 (five) existing community parks ranging in size from 50 acres to over 1,000 acres with four (4) neighborhood and seven special parks also maintained by the County. In 1992, the County began operation of the softball complex, which also provides an additional community park. The County also maintains access for passive recreation such as hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use, at seven (7) Wilderness Areas containing 4,300 acres and approximately 25 miles of marked trails.

To assess the current park system and identify user preferences, the County conducted a survey of residents and park users in 1987, and again in 1999. As a result of the survey, the County has implemented ongoing master planning for continued development of the County’s park system.

The County’s long-range parks program was previously based on the development of a system of community parks, which provide both active and passive facilities and serve residents Countywide. The Capital Improvements Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes 3.6 acres per 1,000 in population for total park acreage and 1.8 acres per 1,000 in population of developed park acreage. The County’s population is approaching 430,000 residents. The County will continue to evaluate options for the provision of future active recreational facility needs through updating and implementing a Countywide Leisure Services Master Plan that will meet the recreational needs of a growing population.

Primary sources of information used to produce this element include the following:

- A. 1987 Parks Survey Report



- B. 1998 Parks Survey Report
- C. 1999 Recreation and Open Space Master Plan
- D. Parks Master Plans
- E. Spring Hammock Management Plan
- F. Seminole County Leisure Services Department
- G. Seminole County Greenways and Trails Master Plan
- H. Wilderness Areas Master Plans
- I. 1990 and 2000 Voter Referendums and related ordinances



## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

### **RECREATION**

#### **ISSUE REC 1 SITE AND FACILITY AVAILABILITY-LEVEL OF SERVICE**

The number of park sites and available acreage must be sufficient to serve existing and projected populations of unincorporated residents providing both passive resource areas and active uses. Existing parks are depicted in Exhibit REC: County Parks and Facilities.

Seminole County is committed to providing community and neighborhood parks as part of the completed park system. Neighborhood and community parks are also currently provided through private development requirements and by municipalities. The County currently requires large residential developments and planned unit developments to provide open space and active recreational facilities. An analysis of the location of the County's community parks and the use patterns of residents identified that these parks serve countywide populations. A Countywide service area is feasible based on the relatively small size of Seminole County.

Based on the adopted level of service of 3.6 acres per 1,000 population, the County will have sufficient total park acres to serve existing and future demands through 2025. In addition, at the level of developed park acres of 1.8 acres per 1,000 in population, the County will have sufficient developed park acres to serve existing and future demands through 2025. The County will assess options for expansion of park and recreational space based on the updated Leisure Services Master Plan during 2009.

#### **ISSUE REC 2 FACILITY TYPES**

Types of recreation facilities available to County residents must meet existing demands and be flexible enough to meet changing recreation interests of County residents.

From a historical standpoint, the County conducted a survey of County park users and residents in 1987 and again in the 1990s, in part, to identify recreational activities and facilities most frequently demanded by residents. These survey results assisted the Leisure Services Department in evaluating the adequacy of existing park facilities and in identifying additional facilities needed to meet the existing and changing recreational demands of residents. These surveys indicated a desire for a variety of facilities, both passive and active, at each park site. The most popular activities in existing parks identified include tennis, softball, racquetball, soccer, playgrounds, picnic areas, and nature trails. In addition to the survey, the County conducted an inventory of existing County facilities in the 1999 Recreation and Open Space Master Plan to determine existing facility deficiencies and additional facilities needed within park expansions and future parks to meet user preferences. The County shall continue to conduct surveys of residents and users on an as needed basis and in support of any future master planning/needs assessments to ensure that park facilities are adequately meeting user demands and preferences.

#### **ISSUE REC 3 ACCESSIBILITY**

The County's Leisure Services Department endeavors to ensure that handicapped, vehicular, trail, pedestrian, and bicycle access to parks and recreation facilities is adequate and safe. Further, the County continues to inform County residents of the location and types of available facilities.

In the course of ongoing development and improvement of County Parks, the County will strive to ensure that park recreational, restroom and other facilities are accessible to handicapped users. An evaluation of existing parks and facilities determined that current park facilities provide barrier

free access to users. If available, the County shall seek grant funding for the development of added recreational facilities for handicapped users.

Existing State and federal regulations require facility accessibility to handicapped users when employing grant monies. The County's Building Code shall ensure that all new park buildings are accessible to the handicapped.

#### **ISSUE REC 4 TRAIL PROVISION**

Demand continues to grow for trails that ensure the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists. A Countywide survey, conducted in 1998, identified trails as a top priority for patrons of the County Park System. Since then, the County created a plan for three showcase trails for the County trail network. The trail system is budgeted for completion by late 2009.

The three showcase trails are the Seminole Wekiva, Cross Seminole, and Flagler Trails. The Florida National Scenic Trail runs along portions of the three showcase trails. Having the distinction of such a revered system within the County brings opportunities for ecotourism, positive economic development impact, and partnerships with groups such as the Florida Trail Association. The Countywide Greenways and Trails Master Plan (Exhibit REC: Greenways, Blueways, and Major Trails) should be updated and used to guide priorities for new trail projects. Existing and new park sites should be accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists and contiguous where practical to multiuse trails. The 2000 Greenways and Trails Master Plan identifies additional trail corridors. Potential alternatives should be considered by the County, including, at a minimum, abandoned railroads, other rights-of-way and future roadway expansion design criteria and stormwater/mitigation sites. Seminole County shall continue to acquire these corridors, contingent upon available funding opportunities, and make providing trails a priority in the new planning horizon for the connectivity they provide to schools, parks, natural lands, and businesses.

#### **ISSUE REC 5 PASSIVE AND ACTIVE USE COMPATIBILITY**

Much of the County park acreage is resource based. Therefore, the County shall ensure that development of both active and passive recreational facilities is compatible with the preservation of natural resources.

The County is using a system of community and neighborhood parks to accommodate both resource and activity based recreational needs. With both passive and active uses located within the same park site, it is important to ensure that the quality of resource areas continues to be maintained and that active recreational uses do not encroach upon resource area boundaries. Through the development of master plans for individual park sites, environmentally sensitive areas and preservation areas should continue to be identified by the county. Guidelines for development of active uses adjacent to these areas should include, at a minimum, sufficient buffers, lighting requirements and setback requirements. Further, public access to preserve areas should be limited to designated trails, boardwalks and campground areas.

### **OPEN SPACE/SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE AREAS**

#### **ISSUE REC 6 SIGNIFICANT COUNTYWIDE OPEN SPACE AREAS**

Seminole County's abundance of significant natural resources includes wetland areas, which cover approximately 35% of the County, three major riverine systems (the Wekiva, St. Johns and Econlockhatchee Rivers), numerous lakes, and rare upland habitats. These areas, along with other regional habitats, form an interconnected system of prominent natural resources, open space and wildlife habitat. The County has adopted comprehensive plan policies and land

development regulations that serve to protect these river systems. Many of these policies and provisions were required by State statute to protect the natural habitat, groundwater resources, land use patterns, and community character. In addition, Seminole County's Natural Lands Program has acquired nearly 7,000 acres of environmentally significant lands for preservation and passive recreation. This action supports the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision principles. Through the work of the Congress of Regional Leaders initiative, a "green printing" process will assist in further identifying lands for potential acquisition and preservation.

Many of these natural resources provide a critical buffer to urbanized areas, thus protecting the quality and quantity of adjacent waters and associated habitats. Not only are the open space and corridor resources significant locally, these also provide important links to significant regional resources and park systems. Currently, open space areas and a substantial number of acres within the identified corridors are under ownership and/or maintenance by local, regional and state agencies.

The County currently requires use of conservation easements to preserve wetland and floodplain areas as part of the development review and approval process. Where wetlands are associated with a significant resource, dedication to the County is required. In addition to preservation of small open space areas through the development review process, the County shall continue to work with various public and private agencies to pursue the acquisition and preservation of large open space areas.

This effort should include an inventory of remaining significant natural resource areas, establishment of priorities, and development of strategies for preservation and acquisition. Preservation methods to be evaluated should include State and or federal programs, land banking, public and/or private land trusts, use of document stamp tax, mitigation and a public referendum. Guidelines and standards for use in the development approval process for developments adjacent or within these areas should also be established. The development of these standards should consider, at a minimum, the use of cluster developments, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, and dedication of preservation corridors.

## **ISSUE REC 7 EXPANDING PUBLIC USE OF SIGNIFICANT OPEN SPACE AREAS**

State and local agencies within and adjacent to Seminole County have acquired a significant amount of resource based open space as shown on Exhibit FLU: Greenways, Blueways, and Major Trails. A number of resource based parks are accessible for public use including, the Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve Little Big Econ State Forest, and County Wilderness Areas offering a variety of passive recreational facilities. Seminole County has acquired over 6,622 acres of natural lands since a voter approved referendum in 1990 and has seven wilderness areas open to the public which offer the potential for passive recreational uses including trails for equestrian use hiking and mountain biking. The State and St. Johns River Water Management District have purchased approximately 18,000 acres within the Econlockhatchee River Acquisition Area as an addition to the Little Big Econ State Forest. The County shall continue to coordinate with the Department of Environmental Protection and Water Management Districts to review and evaluate management issues, user impacts, and the availability of the existing equestrian/hiking and mountain biking trails. In addition, the County will endeavor to increase public awareness of the location and types of facilities available.

Seminole County should continue to evaluate the holding capacity of its own park system to accommodate future resource based activities. Additionally, the County is developing management plans that include passive recreational uses, where possible in acquired properties. The County has developed conceptual plans, but will further refine long-term management strategies for each property. These strategies include management techniques (such as prescribed burning), monitoring plans, and user access plans. Coordination with agencies involved with the development and management of resource areas is an integral part of plan development.



## **ISSUE REC 8 TRAIL COORDINATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND PROTECTION**

Seminole County has developed a Greenways and Trails Master Plan. The current success of the trail program has been a result of a coordinated effort between Seminole County, State agencies and the Cities in Seminole County. Voters demonstrated support for this program by passing a referendum in 2000 to fund the implementation of the Greenways and Trails Master Plan. Part of the success of the program stems from the work of the Seminole County Trails Board. This Board is comprised of residents of the cities and the unincorporated areas who share a common interest in improving the quality of life of the residents of Seminole County by working together to overcome obstacles and concerns in trail development. The Trails Advisory Board has been merged with the Natural Lands, and Parks Advisory Boards to form the Leisure Services Board to combine like interests. This Board will continue to work to preserve existing and promote additional trails throughout the County.

The County's three showcase trails, the Cross Seminole Trail, the Seminole Wekiva Trail and the Flagler Trail are examples of partnerships with the community, State, local agencies and trail support groups. The partnerships with the cities have accelerated and complimented our trails master plan, as with the City of Altamonte Springs concerning Phase I of the Seminole Wekiva Trail and the construction of the Rinehart trail with the City of Lake Mary. The Crossings Trail, which connects to the Rinehart Trail, was constructed in a Florida Power easement. The County is currently developing regulations to regulate driveway cuts across a trail and to protect trails from the encroachment of incompatible uses or inappropriate actions, such as cutting down trees on a trail. The County will work with the Cities to adopt similar provisions for trail protection.

## **ISSUE REC 9 CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL GROWTH VISION**

In 2007, the Central Florida Joint Policy Framework Committee created a regional growth compact consisting of regional growth principles. Among these, is a principle to "Preserve open space, recreational areas, farmland, water resources, and regionally significant areas." The Recreation and Open Space Element includes goals, objectives, and policies that significantly address each of these principles. The Implementation Element includes the complete list of these growth principles. These principles grew out of a Visioning process conducted during 2006 and 2007. The process involved approximately 20,000 Central Florida residents who were asked to answer the question "How Shall We Grow?" through a series of community meetings, presentations and surveys. The product of this process, "The Central Florida Regional Growth Vision", represents a shared vision of the preferred method for directing the growth of the seven county region that includes Seminole County, between 2007 and 2050. By 2050, the population of the region is expected to more than double from 3.5 million to 7.2 million residents, thus necessitating development of a guiding Vision.



## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### GOAL

The County shall provide a high quality recreation and open space system that provides lands, facilities and programs to adequately serve the needs of the current and future residents of Seminole County, and establish and maintain a system of open spaces, which preserves significant environmental lands, protects wildlife habitat corridors, and provides passive recreational opportunities.

### OBJECTIVE REC 1      **PARK SITE AND FACILITY PROVISION**

The County shall provide a system of park sites with a variety of both user-oriented and resource based facilities and recreational programs to serve the needs of current and future County residents through regular reviews and updates of the Countywide Park Master Plan.

#### **Policy REC 1.1      Community Parks**

The County shall continue to provide, through implementation of the Capital Improvements Element, a system of community parks that includes a community park within a 10-20 minute drive of every County resident, and provides that 30-40% of every community park should remain in open space for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, etc.

#### **Policy REC 1.2      Regional Parks**

The County shall continue to rely on the State of Florida to provide regional park facilities such as the Wekiva River Basin State Park and the Lower Wekiva River Preserve.

#### **Policy REC 1.3      Reserved**

#### **Policy REC 1.4      Large Development Recreation Requirements**

The County shall continue to enforce existing County Land Development Code recreation and open space requirements for planned developments and large residential developments to ensure trail connectivity, school/park linkage opportunities.

#### **Policy REC 1.5      Park Adequacy**

The County shall continue to assess park adequacy, future facility needs and user preferences and willingness to pay through, at a minimum, the following methods:

- A. Continued input from the Leisure Services Advisory Committee, special interest groups, and public meetings; and
- B. Park surveys conducted on a five (5) year basis.

#### **Policy REC 1.6      Park Facility Inventory**

The Leisure Services Division regularly updates their park and facility inventory through the park master plan process.

#### **Policy REC 1.7      Park Availability**

The County shall continue to expand accessibility and assess other alternatives to increase the availability of recreational facilities to the public.



**Policy REC 1.8**

**Park Master Plans**

The County shall continue to develop specific plans for future park sites to meet user demands and to identify and preserve environmentally sensitive areas. Guidelines for active uses adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas shall include, at a minimum, provisions for buffers, lighting, setbacks, and native landscaping.

**Policy REC 1.9**

**Spring Hammock Preserve**

The County has implemented the Spring Hammock Management Plan, which includes joint projects with the School Board, the Florida Division of Forestry, other educational institutes, and interested environmental agencies.

**Policy REC 1.10**

**Historical Sites**

The County shall endeavor to ensure the preservation of, and where appropriate, provide accessibility to significant historical sites on County owned and managed land through conservation and parkland master plans.



**OBJECTIVE REC 2 ACCESSIBILITY**

The County shall ensure adequate and safe public access to all County parks and recreational facilities, including vehicular, pedestrian, trail, bicycle, and handicapped access.

**Policy REC 2.1 Park Access Special Populations**

The County shall ensure that future park sites and recreational facility improvements provide for accessibility to handicapped users and shall ensure the adequate provision of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian accessways, including the implementation of the Countywide Greenways and Trails Master Plan.

**Policy REC 2.2 Park Access Pedestrian**

The County shall continue to evaluate its criteria to require pedestrian connections to public park sites and to require installation of additional pavement width with new development and the expansion of public roadways.

**Policy REC 2.3 Access Requirements**

The County shall continue to review and amend Land Development Code requirements for development of open space and recreational facility level of service requirements for planned developments, mixed use developments, and residential developments to ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access is provided to on-site and adjacent park sites, and where applicable, connections to the County's greenways and trails.

**Policy REC 2.4 Transit Access**

The County shall coordinate with LYNX, and other appropriate transportation providers, to evaluate and expand, if necessary, transportation routes to parks and recreational facilities to provide access to and from residential and urban areas to parks for all groups including the handicapped, lower income residents, the elderly and the general public.

**Policy REC 2.5 Public Awareness**

The County shall continue to expand ways to enhance the public awareness of parks and programs through a variety of print and electronic media formats such as the County's website, brochures, newsletters, public television, etc.

**Policy REC 2.6 Waterway Access**

The County shall continue to ensure access to waterways associated with the County's Parks and Facilities; provided, however, the County may regulate no wake zones and speed zones in accordance with law including, but not limited to, the rules of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.



**OBJECTIVE REC 3 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCE COORDINATION**

The County shall maximize the use of public and private resources in the provision of park and recreational facilities to meet current and future demands.

**Policy REC 3.1 Neighborhood Park Provision**

The County shall continue to require planned developments and large residential developments to provide and maintain neighborhood recreational facilities and open space as a part of the development review process.

**Policy REC 3.2 School Facility Joint-Use**

The County shall continue, through interlocal agreements, to evaluate the opportunities for the joint use of existing school and County recreational facilities and shall pursue the location and design of future park sites.

**Policy REC 3.3 Private Facility Use**

The County shall continue to provide interlocal agreements and cooperate with private recreational organizations for use of County parks and facilities in order to provide a variety of recreational programs.

**Policy REC 3.4 Private/Not for Profit Facility Use**

The County shall continue to make parks and recreation facilities available to private and not for profit groups for cultural programs, special events and festivals, which serve the public interest.

**Policy REC 3.5 School Board Environmental Study Center**

The County shall continue to support the School Board's Environmental Study Center at Spring Hammock Preserve to promote natural studies and environmental and historical awareness including proposals for expanding existing programs.



**OBJECTIVE REC 4      LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS**

The County shall continue to establish programs and enforce standards to ensure the acquisition and development of community, regional, and neighborhood park facilities to meet current and future demand.

**Policy REC 4.1      Levels of Service**

The County shall adopt and maintain the following levels of service through the implementation of the Capital Improvements Element, the development approval process and ongoing operations of the Leisure Services Department.

- A. Total Park Acreage: Seminole County shall ensure that sufficient park acres are available to meet future growth demands by maintaining the current level of service of 3.6 acres per 1,000 residents Countywide within urban community park sites.
- B. Developed Acreage: To ensure that adequate park facilities are provided to accommodate growth demands, Seminole County shall continue to maintain the current level of service of 1.8 developed park acres per 1,000 residents for total park acreage needs. This standard includes both active and passive recreational facilities.

**Policy REC 4.2      Service Area Park Facilities**

The adopted service area for park facilities are countywide as depicted in Exhibit REC: County Parks and Facilities.



## **OBJECTIVE REC 5 TRAIL PROVISION**

The County shall continue to implement its Greenways and Trails Masterplan to ensure safe access to park sites and shall evaluate available opportunities for the acquisition and development of bike/trail networks which will link park sites, schools, adjacent municipal/urban centers including pedestrian and bicycle trails.

### **Policy REC 5.1 Bike/Trail Provision**

The County shall coordinate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Florida Department of Transportation, County municipalities, School Board of Seminole County, and other appropriate agencies to study and implement options for future coordinated provisions of a bike/trail network.

### **Policy REC 5.2 Recreational Trail Development**

The County shall continue to develop and maintain the showcase trails, which include the Seminole Wekiva Trail, the Cross-Seminole Trail, and the Flagler Trail, as well as others identified in the Countywide Greenways and Trails Masterplan. These efforts shall include, at a minimum, application for available grant funding for trail development from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, other sources of government and private grants, and voter-based referenda.

### **Policy REC 5.3 Abandoned Railroad Acquisition**

The County shall continue to evaluate abandoned CSX Railroad rights-of-way for potential public use benefits and pursue acquisition if appropriate and feasible.

### **Policy REC 5.4 Road/Bike Lane Provision**

The County shall continue to evaluate and amend, if necessary, the Land Development Code regulations and public road design standards for bike paths in conjunction with roadway design and improvements.

### **Policy REC 5.5 Florida Trail/Rails to Trails**

The County shall coordinate with the Florida Trail Association, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, the Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways and Trails, and other organizations involved in the acquisition and development of trail systems within Seminole County.

### **Policy REC 5.6 Flagler Trail**

The County shall continue to allow the use of the Flagler Trail property by the Florida Trail Association and shall encourage the expansion of the Florida Trail within Seminole County.



**OBJECTIVE REC 6      FUNDING OF THE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN SPACE AND PARKS.**

The County shall continue to fund the acquisition and development of parks, open space and recreational facilities through the use of a variety of funding sources, as available, including the general fund, grants, partnerships with schools, municipalities, and developer contributions and user fees.

**Policy REC 6.1      Park Funding**

The County shall explore other sources of funds for acquisition and development of park lands in addition to the General Fund. Sources may include developer commitments, grants, partnerships with school and municipalities, user fees, and impact fees to supplement the General Fund allocations for the acquisition and development of parks, trails, and open space.

**Policy REC 6.2      Recreation Grants**

The County shall continue to pursue State and federal grants, including funding from the Florida Communities Trust program, for the acquisition and development of recreational and open space lands and facilities.

**Policy REC 6.3      Donation/Matching Funding**

The County shall continue to pursue donations of land and matching funds to secure grants for the acquisition and development of park sites and facilities.

**Policy REC 6.4      Natural Areas Acquisition**

The County shall continue to pursue the complete acquisition and preservation of Natural Areas through the Florida Forever Program, or its successor program, Natural Lands Program, and other appropriate mechanisms.

**Policy REC 6.5      User Fees**

The County shall apply the concept of user fees to offset the cost of maintaining and programming facilities where appropriate.

**Policy REC 6.6      St. Johns Water Management District Acquisition**

The County shall coordinate with the St. Johns River Water Management District (District) to designate priority open space areas for acquisition under the District's Five Year Land Acquisition Program.

**Policy REC 6.7      Bond Referendum**

The County shall consider the option of a bond issue to fund acquisition of additional park land and open space, and developed additional trails to maintain adopted level of service standards, if approved by a public referendum.



## **OBJECTIVE REC 7 OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION**

The County shall develop a system of open spaces through the preservation and/or acquisition of significant lands, native habitat and habitat of endangered, threatened and species of special concern, and through the development review and approval process.

### **Policy REC 7.1 Open Space Standards**

The County shall evaluate and amend, as necessary, the standards upon which Policies FLU 1.1 Environmentally Sensitive Lands through FLU 1.4 Conservation Easements, and Policy FLU 4.4 Urban Open Space, On-site Recreational Amenities and Buffering Performance Frameworks for Infill/Redevelopment Areas are based, and the Land Development Code's provisions to implement those policies, based on the findings of Evaluation and Appraisal Reports.

### **Policy REC 7.2 Environmentally Sensitive Lands Overlay**

The County shall protect Environmentally Sensitive Lands through continued implementation of Policies FLU 1.1 Environmentally Sensitive Lands through FLU 1.4 Conservation Easements, Policies FLU 12.8 Compliance Agreements Between Seminole County and the Florida Department of Community Affairs and FLU 12.9 Wekiva River Protection Area Environmental Design Standards, and Objective FLU 13 Protection of the Natural resources of the Wekiva Study Area and its policies as a means of preserving locally significant wetlands and major open space areas by maintaining the mosaic of high quality wetland habitat found in the Wekiva and Econ Basins, the Lake Jesup Basin, and the East Rural Area of Seminole County.

### **Policy REC 7.3 Wekiva and Econlockhatchee River Protection Zone**

The County shall enforce all clearing and building setbacks or protection/buffer zones and areas along the Wekiva River, and Econlockhatchee River and such other water bodies as imposed by rules of the St. Johns River Water Management District, any State agency or as may be otherwise imposed by law, provided that a minimum 200 foot clearing and building setback shall be set along the Wekiva River, as measured from the ordinary high water elevation or the landward limit of established conservation areas, to serve as a scenic and environmental buffer to maintain the status quo of the natural environment and prevent public harms.

As additional protection, development activity (including the placing or depositing of fill within wetlands and the one hundred (100) year floodplain identified by FEMA), within the Wekiva River Protection Area shall be prohibited except in cases of overriding public interest. Where wetland values are degraded due to overriding public interest, mitigation efforts shall occur. Floodplain impacts will require compensating storage.

### **Policy REC 7.4 Natural/Environmental Land Acquisition and Preservation Programs**

The County shall continue to coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and all other appropriate agencies to establish and revise regulations and programs for the acquisition and preservation of natural/environmental lands.

Policy REC 7.5 Agency Coordination



The County shall work in conjunction with the State of Florida, the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Lands, and other appropriate agencies involved in conservation lands to create a Countywide system and a Greenways/Trails/Blueways system.

**Policy REC 7.6 Acquisition Program-Local Assistance**

The County shall support and assist in the acquisition of projects significant resource areas located within Seminole County, including, but not limited to, Spring Hammock Preserve, Wekiva buffers, and the Lower Econlockhatchee River Projects. This support may include joint acquisition, development of conceptual management plans and property management. Acquisition and assistance programs to be pursued shall include the Florida Forever Program and its successor program, the Trust for Public Lands as well as the Nature Conservancy, Department of Forestry, and St. Johns River Water Management District.

**Policy REC 7.7 Significant Open Space and Natural Lands Acquisition**

The County shall continue to use funding resulting from the November 6, 1990, Natural Lands Bond Referendum and from the November 7, 2000, Natural Lands—Completing the Connection Bond Referendum, for the acquisition of significant native habitats, open space areas, and greenways. Lands to be acquired shall be designated based on criteria recommended by the Leisure Services Advisory Committee and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, and shall include, at a minimum, consideration of:

- A. Vulnerability to development;
- B. Species diversity and habitat completeness;
- C. The rarity and abundance of habitat types;
- D. Animal and plant species designated by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory and other agencies as endangered, threatened and of special concern;
- E. Long term management; and
- F. Passive recreational use potential.

**Policy REC 7.8 Central Florida Regional Growth Vision (How Shall We Grow?)**

The County shall endeavor for consistency with the principle of preserving open space, recreational areas, farmland, water resources, and regionally significant areas, as established by the 2007 Central Florida Regional Growth Vision (How Shall We Grow?).

**Policy REC 7.9 Open Space Standards for Private Development**

The County shall assess, during each Evaluation and Appraisal Report, the need to update the definitions, standards and guidelines within the Seminole County land development regulations for open space requirements for subdivisions, other new developments and redevelopments to implement the policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

**OBJECTIVE REC 8 SCENIC ROADWAYS**

The County shall continue to preserve the visual quality of scenic roadways in Seminole County.

**Policy REC 8.1 Scenic Road Designation**

The County shall designate roadway sections or entire roadways as scenic roadways based upon:

- A. Amount of existing vegetation cover and development along the roadway;
- B. Number of curbcuts, traffic signals, and other obstructions to through traffic movement; and
- C. Future land use designations assigned to properties along the roadway.

**Policy REC 8.2 Scenic Roads-Development Standards**

The County shall adopt standards for future development along designated scenic roadways by, 2010. Standards shall include, at a minimum:

- A. Building setbacks and heights;
- B. Signage, lighting, and outdoor advertising;
- C. Curbcuts and utilities in the right-of-way;
- D. Fences and walls, and other structures within the setback; and
- E. Minimum tree size, arbor, and supplemental landscaping requirements.

**Policy REC 8.3 Joint Projects**

The County shall continue to pursue interlocal agreements and joint projects with municipalities and private agencies for the designation, implementation and funding of scenic roadway programs where appropriate.

**Policy REC 8.4 Joint Funding**

The County shall identify and determine the feasibility of alternative revenue sources for the implementation of scenic corridor programs.