



Natural Resources of Regional Significance

Strategic Regional Policy Plan
Part IV

Presented to the NEFRC
Board of Directors
April 1, 2010

Florida is recognized as one of North America's most important reservoirs for biological diversity with approximately 668 terrestrial and fresh water vertebrate and some 3,500 vascular plant species. Many of these species of flora and fauna are not found anywhere else but Florida.

Regional Goal 4.1

Improve water quality in surface waters identified as NRRS in the region to meet human and ecosystem needs, and achieve state water quality standards.

- Regional Indicators

- ◇ Elimination of direct discharge of untreated water into surface waters where quality is unacceptable.
- ◇ Achievement of applicable state water quality standards.
- ◇ Continued support of a regional water quality issues committee.

Regional Goal 4.1

Improve water quality in surface waters identified as NRRS in the region to meet human and ecosystem needs, and achieve state water quality standards.

Corresponding Regional Policies

- **Policy 4.1.1**
 - ◇ Utilize water quality data and appropriate biological indicators to design water management practices that facilitate the maintenance or improvement of the existing water quality of the Natural Resources of Regional Significance and their direct tributaries to meet state water quality standards.
- **Policy 4.1.2**
 - ◇ To support essential non-withdrawal demands — including navigation, recreation and the protection of fish and wildlife — the discharge of freshwater to Natural Resources of Regional Significance shall be designed to imitate the natural discharges in quality and quantity, as well as in spatial and temporal distribution.

Regional Goal 4.1

Improve water quality in surface waters identified as NRRS in the region to meet human and ecosystem needs, and achieve state water quality standards.

- **Policy 4.1.3**

- ◇ Develop management practices for water resources identified as Natural Resources of Regional Significance and their direct tributaries that consider urban and agricultural non-point sources as well as point sources. Encourage the implementation of these practices by private landowners.

- **Policy 4.1.4**

- ◇ Identify existing and new funding sources to implement best management practices for water resources identified as Natural Resource of Regional Significance.

- **Policy 4.1.5**

- ◇ Maintain the function of wetland NRRS as they relate to the protection of water quality and provide strategic habitat for listed species through the implementation of planning and land management programs.

Regional Goal 4.1

Improve water quality in surface waters identified as NRRS in the region to meet human and ecosystem needs, and achieve state water quality standards.

- **Policy 4.1.6**

- ◇ Continue to support existing and identify additional opportunities for regional collaborative efforts to address water quality issues including but not limited to the St. Mary's River Management Committee, the St. Johns River Lower Basin Water Quality Commission, and the Tolomato-Guana-Matanzas Shellfish Task Force.

- **Policy 4.1.7**

- ◇ Support the Lower St. Johns River Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program in the region.

- **Policy 4.1.8**

- ◇ Educate and distribute information on surface water resources of the region.

Regional Goal 4.2

Assure an adequate supply of water both in quantity and quality for present and future human, economic development, and ecosystem needs.

- Regional Indicators

- ◇ No stormwater recharge standards or criteria exist for significant aquifer recharge areas within the region (1997).
- ◇ Percentage of local governments with adopted wellhead protection ordinances based on scientifically delineated capture zones.
- ◇ No prime recharge areas adopted in 1996.
- ◇ 376.61 mgd of fresh water used by all sources in northeast Florida in 1994.
- ◇ 148.7 gallons of water per day per capita withdrawn from all sources in 1994.
- ◇ Three (3) counties in the region categorized as water resource caution areas (1995).

Regional Goal 4.2

Assure an adequate supply of water both in quantity and quality for present and future human, economic development, and ecosystem needs.

Corresponding Regional Policies

- Policy 4.2.1

- ◇ Support the implementation of water conservation measures such as:
 - ◆ Utilization of native plant material and communities, including xeriscape practices as a first priority in landscape;
 - ◆ Adoption of measurable water conservation objectives and programs for implementation;
 - ◆ Development and implementation of leak detection programs;
 - ◆ Use of a conservation utility rate structure;
 - ◆ Implementation of water loss prevention programs;
 - ◆ Use of water saving devices and plumbing fixtures, and encourage retrofitting of water saving devices and ultra-low flow fixtures (Standard Plumbing Code);
 - ◆ Discourage the use of potable water for irrigation; and
 - ◆ Utilization of reuse water wherever and whenever possible based upon the economic, ecological and technological factors involved.

Regional Goal 4.2

Assure an adequate supply of water both in quantity and quality for present and future human, economic development, and ecosystem needs.

- **Policy 4.2.2**
 - ◇ Protect public water supply well capture zones from pollution sources which may adversely impact the quality of potable water sources
- **Policy 4.2.3**
 - ◇ Assist local governments to identify and protect future well field locations based on future potable water needs identified in adopted comprehensive plans.
- **Policy 4.2.4**
 - ◇ Maximize the use of alternative water supplies and conservation measures before consideration of interbasin transfer of water.
- **Policy 4.2.5**
 - ◇ Assure that adequate water supplies are identified for projected needs.
- **Policy 4.2.6**
 - ◇ Ensure new development is compatible with existing local and regional water supplies and needs.

Regional Goal 4.2

Assure an adequate supply of water both in quantity and quality for present and future human, economic development, and ecosystem needs.

- **Policy 4.2.7**

- ◇ Identify appropriate measures and land uses which ensure adequate recharge rates for Floridan Aquifer recharge areas and other significant aquifer recharge areas which support identified needs.

- **Policy 4.2.8**

- ◇ Encourage the SJRWMD to identify and adopt prime recharge areas for northeast Florida.

- **Policy 4.2.9**

- ◇ Adopt appropriate measures, including incentives, to protect the recharge functions within prime recharge areas to the Floridan Aquifer once they are designated by the SJRWMD.

- **Policy 4.2.10**

- ◇ Educate and distribute information on the ground water resources of the region.

- **Policy 4.2.11**

- ◇ Support the use of alternative water supplies and conservation strategies in communities experiencing saltwater intrusion.

Regional Goal 4.3

Conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance, the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance while protecting private property rights.

- Regional Indicators

- ◇ No coordinated regional greenways plan exists (1997).
- ◇ Percent of local governments with an incentive program to protect Natural Resources of Regional Significance.
- ◇ 22 greenways in the region 1996.
- ◇ Regional data base on Natural Resources of Regional Significance does not exist in 1996.

Regional Goal 4.3

Conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance, the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance while protecting private property rights.

Corresponding Regional Policies

- **Policy 4.3.1**
 - ◇ Maintain the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance through the implementation of planning programs and land management programs.
- **Policy 4.3.2**
 - ◇ Implement an incentive program that includes methods of land conservation which will encourage land uses compatible with Natural Resources of Regional Significance. Incentives such as:
 - ◆ Conservation easements;
 - ◆ Mitigation banks;
 - ◆ Transferable development rights;
 - ◆ Transferable densities; and
 - ◆ Tax incentives.
 - ◇ Provide technical assistance to local governments, private landowners, and other entities in the implementation of these incentives when developed.

Regional Goal 4.3

Conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance, the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance while protecting private property rights.

- **Policy 4.3.3**

- ◇ Create a data base of information which will provide, at a minimum, baseline data on the functions, type, size and location of identified Natural Resources of Regional Significance.

- **Policy 4.3.4**

- ◇ Update Natural Resources of Regional Significance maps as new data become available with full public participation and peer review prior to adoption of updates, consistent with the appropriate provisions of Chapter 120, Florida Statutes.

- **Policy 4.3.5**

- ◇ Review development approvals and proposed land use changes for potential adverse impacts to identified Natural Resources of Regional Significance. Maintain the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance as a condition of approval or adoption.

- **Policy 4.3.6**

- ◇ Plan and design expansions to the regional transportation system to avoid Natural Resources of Regional Significance as a first option and if not possible, to minimize the adverse impacts to Natural Resources of Regional Significance.

Regional Goal 4.3

Conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance, the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance while protecting private property rights.

- **Policy 4.3.7**

- ◇ Maps of Natural Resources of Regional Significance shall not be used in isolation and shall only be considered in conjunction with the goals and policies of this SRPP. The Natural Resources of Regional Significance maps are to be used for planning purposes only and as an information source to assist in decision making concerning, land use planning. Site specific data, when available, should be used to identify the extent to which any identified Natural Resource of Regional Significance is present on a site in connection with any comprehensive planning approvals or amendments or any other land use planning decision.

- **Policy 4.3.8**

- ◇ Protect functions of NRRS through actions such as best management practices, public education programs, less than fee acquisition, restoration, and other voluntary and innovative practices.

- **Policy 4.3.9**

- ◇ Increase funds for the acquisition, protection, restoration and maintenance of NRRS in northeast Florida.

Regional Goal 4.3

Conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance, the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance while protecting private property rights.

- **Policy 4.3.10**

- ◇ Develop a regional greenway system by acquisition of fee, easement or other incentive-based mechanism which connects existing and future public conservation lands; provides for protection and enhancement of natural, cultural, and historical resources; and provides open space for compatible human uses.

- **Policy 4.3.11**

- ◇ Acquire areas designated as NRRS which are not already in public ownership. Consider NRRS in the development of state, regional, and local acquisition programs.

- **Policy 4.3.12**

- ◇ Support the state initiative to implement Ecosystem Management.

Regional Goal 4.3

Conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance, the functions of Natural Resources of Regional Significance while protecting private property rights.

- **Policy 4.3.12**
 - ◇ Support the state initiative to implement Ecosystem Management.
- **Policy 4.3.13**
 - ◇ Develop partnerships which will efficiently, fairly and effectively implement natural resource protection.
- **Policy 4.3.14**
 - ◇ Management polices for public lands shall be consistent with the maintenance of existing ecosystems, restoration of degraded ecosystems, protection of important native communities, and preservation of important historical and archeological sites, where appropriate and consistent with the purpose of the ownership of the public lands.

Regional Goal 4.4

Protect the populations of state and federal listed species within the region.

- Regional Indicators

- ◇ Regional data base of site occurrence data for federal and state listed species and their viable habitat.
- ◇ Number of viable populations of threatened and endangered species in the region.
- ◇ Increased utilization of public/private partnerships for funding of natural system protection and management.

Regional Goal 4.4

Protect the populations of state and federal listed species within the region.

Corresponding Regional Policies

- **Policy 4.4.1**
 - ◇ Planning efforts in the region will be coordinated to protect federal and state listed species by coordination of regional and local planning with federal and state laws and guidelines for protection of such species.
- **Policy 4.4.2**
 - ◇ Through the Council's review functions and responsibilities, protect state and federal listed species.
- **Policy 4.4.3**
 - ◇ Promote the use of silviculture and agricultural best management practices.

Regional Goal 4.4

Protect the populations of state and federal listed species within the region.

- **Policy 4.4.4**

- ◊ Implement an educational program that will assist private land owners in implementing practices which are compatible with the protection of federal and state listed species and their habitats.

- **Policy 4.4.5**

- ◊ Develop and maintain a regional data base of known site occurrence data for federal and state listed species within the region.

- **Policy 4.4.6**

- ◊ Utilize public, private and other mitigation funds for habitat procurement and enhancement purposes to support viable populations of federal and state listed species.

Regional Goal 4.4

Protect the populations of state and federal listed species within the region.

- **Policy 4.4.7**

- ◇ For all areas identified on NRRS maps as having listed species present on the site, the actual determination of such areas as “Natural Resources of Regional Significance” within the context of the Strategic Regional Policy Plan shall be determined by the actual presence of listed species on such land. The NRRS map designation is indicative that listed species as shown on the map was observed at the site. Any landowner or his designated agent may at any time submit documentation to the Regional Planning Council and the local government that a particular property does not contain listed species. Such documentation may consist of (i) surveys of the property which have been conducted using methods generally approved by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for those listed species shown as potentially present on the property; (ii) demonstration that no habitat is present on the property which supports the listed species shown as potentially present on the property; or (iii) similar demonstration that no such species are present on the site. The Regional Planning Council or affected local government shall thereafter take appropriate steps to amend the NRRS map and any local government comprehensive plan, if applicable, to delete those areas if such documentation has been adequately demonstrated through peer review.

Regional Goal 4.4

Protect the populations of state and federal listed species within the region.

- **Policy 4.4.8**

- ◊ Threatened and endangered species and their habitats shall be protected, at a minimum, consistent with guidelines issued by appropriate state, federal and regional agencies.

- **Policy 4.4.9**

- ◊ Protect species of special concern where those species are actually present, consistent, at a minimum, with guidelines issued by appropriate state, federal, and regional agencies.

- **Policy 4.4.10**

- ◊ Management policies for public lands shall enhance and expand the habitat values provided for listed species where they are appropriate and consistent with the purpose of the ownership of the public lands.

Regional Goal 4.4

Protect the populations of state and federal listed species within the region.

- **Policy 4.4.11**

- ◇ Encourage protection of listed species and their habitat through the use of incentives such as:
 - ◆ Conservation easements;
 - ◆ On and off-site mitigation banks;
 - ◆ Tax breaks;
 - ◆ Transferable densities or density bonuses;
 - ◆ Management agreements; and
 - ◆ Best management practices.

- **Policy 4.4.12**

- ◇ Maintain a data base of agencies and their issued guidelines for the protection of listed species, and provide to local governments and landowners these data when requested.

- **Policy 4.4.13**

- ◇ Review existing and new species data, at a minimum, annually for consideration of updating of maps through the rule amendment process.

Regional Goal 4.5

Protect the functions provided by beaches, dunes and estuaries as they relate to habitat, storm protection and economic values afforded by these areas.

- Regional Indicators

- ◇ Completion of an inventory of undeveloped coastal areas within the region.
- ◇ Percent of local governments with shoreline protection ordinances.
- ◇ Number of acres of coastal areas either in public ownership or in some other type of long-term conservation/protection status.
- ◇ 2,585 acres of shellfish harvesting beds were classified as Conditionally Approved in March 1997.

Regional Goal 4.5

Protect the functions provided by beaches, dunes and estuaries as they relate to habitat, storm protection and economic values afforded by these areas.

Corresponding Regional Policies

- **Policy 4.5.1**

- ◇ Inventory, identify and accelerate acquisition of existing undeveloped beach, dune and estuary areas which provide significant resource values and storm protection values.

- **Policy 4.5.2**

- ◇ Encourage the restoration of damaged dune systems. Provide technical assistance to local governments in the development and implementation of Dune Reconstruction Plans.

- **Policy 4.5.3**

- ◇ Protect the primary dune systems of the region. Provide technical assistance to local governments in the development and implementation of dune protection plans.

- **Policy 4.5.4**

- ◇ Public access to the region's beaches shall be provided in a manner that meets identified recreational needs and that provides for the protection of dune and beach systems.

Regional Goal 4.5

Protect the functions provided by beaches, dunes and estuaries as they relate to habitat, storm protection and economic values afforded by these areas.

- **Policy 4.5.5**
 - ◇ Increase public awareness of the resource and economic value of the region's coastal, estuary and marine resources.
- **Policy 4.5.6**
 - ◇ Support community programs to protect sea turtles and their nests on the region's beaches.
- **Policy 4.5.7**
 - ◇ Support the continuation and expansion of the Gauna/Tolomato/Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- **Policy 4.5.8**
 - ◇ Protect and promote restoration of natural estuarine cycles and the long-term productivity of marine fisheries habitat.

Regional Goal 4.5

Protect the functions provided by beaches, dunes and estuaries as they relate to habitat, storm protection and economic values afforded by these areas.

- **Policy 4.5.9**
 - ◇ Achieve water quality that will support the designated use of Class III waters as classified by the state.
- **Policy 4.5.10**
 - ◇ Identify, inventory and prioritize for acquisition purposes existing undeveloped areas along estuaries which provide significant benefit and protection to NRRS.
- **Policy 4.5.11**
 - ◇ Assist in the completion of local manatee protection plans and the education of the public in the preservation of this species.
- **Policy 4.5.12**
 - ◇ Discourage the expenditure of public funds that subsidize development in high-hazard coastal areas.