

1.5 A BRIEF ASSESSMENT OF SUCCESSES AND SHORTCOMINGS RELATED TO EACH ELEMENT [163.3191(2)(H)]

CHAPTER TWELVE - CONSERVATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Element has 4 Goals:

Water Resources

Goal 12.1 Ensure the protection and improvement of the natural functions and quality of Volusia County's Water Resources.

Natural Communities and Wildlife

Goal 12.2 Protect, conserve, and enhance the ecological resources of the County, maintaining their quality and contribution to the quality of life and economic well-being of Volusia County.

Air Quality

Goal 12.3 Maintain and improve air quality for the protection of the natural environment and the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Volusia County.

Mineral and Soil Resources

Goal 12.4 Conserve and appropriately use mineral and soil resources.

The Goals have and continue to be successfully implemented. The EAR-based amendments will result in no changes to the Goals.

OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

Objective 12.1.1

To prevent the further degradation of the ambient water quality of the County's surface water resources, and to restore to acceptable levels those surface waters which exceed Federal, State and local pollutant standards.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County has expanded the water quality monitoring program that determines levels and trends of ambient water quality. The County maintains an active stormwater program that addresses surface water quality through various means such as control of new development, establishment of BMPs and other means. Marina siting standards are being updated through the Manatee Protection Plan, Boat Facility Siting process in combination with the State Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 9 Policies that will remain as currently worded.

Objective 12.1.2

To protect and enhance the natural hydrologic functions and wildlife habitat attributes of surface water resources, including estuarine and oceanic waters, as well as waters which flow into estuarine and oceanic water and the floodplains associated with these waters.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The Indian River Lagoon Overlay District and the Water Wise Ordinance protect water quality through reduction of runoff and retention of native plant species. The overlay also sets out stormwater and flood plain regulations designed to reduce negative impacts of development adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon. The County Wetland Ordinance ensures the retention of wetland buffers. The Wetland Ordinance as well as the Beaches and Dunes Ordinance address and restrict vertical sea walls. The County continues to target priority lands for acquisition.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 11 Policies that will remain as currently worded. However, Policy 12.1.2.4 may need further review because the regulation may have only been intended for seawalls along the river rather than the beach. Policy 12.1.2.10 will be omitted because the Halifax and Indian River Task Force no longer exist. Policy 12.1.2.11 will be renumbered.

Objective 12.1.3

To protect and appropriately utilize the physical and ecological functions of natural drainageways and drainage patterns.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County continues to target priority lands for acquisition and works with large landowners and other public agencies to protect connected ecosystems. The County Wetlands Ordinance allows for integration of wetlands into stormwater management systems, provided that the natural hydrology of wetland systems is retained. The implementation of the Land Use Map directs growth and development away from such areas.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 4 Policies that will remain as currently worded.

Objective 12.2.1

To provide for the protection of areas determined to be environmentally sensitive, and direct growth away from such areas.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County continues to target priority lands for acquisition through the Volusia Forever Program. The Future Land Use Map is intended to be a guide in locating land uses. For example, the intent of the Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA) category is to ensure development does not occur within the NRMA boundaries and adversely impact environmentally sensitive areas. The County's Zoning Ordinance has identified special use areas and provides limits on development in those areas. The County Wetland Ordinance establishes standards for mitigation of impacts to wetlands and buffers.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 6 Policies. Under Policy 12.2.1.1 the Natural Resource Management Area map should be updated. Also the County will expand on the term "areas" to specify target habitat such as scrub. There will be a minor syntax modification to Policy 12.2.1.4. The remaining Policies will remain as currently worded.

Objective 12.2.2

To minimize, and eliminate where reasonably achievable, impacts to ecological communities which degrade their natural physical and biological function as a result of land development activities.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County, through the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, completed a mapping inventory of ecological communities, which helps facilitate the land management program. The Tree Ordinance, Indian River Lagoon Overlay District, and the Water Wise Ordinance address the retention of native vegetation. The County, in cooperation with the Agricultural Extension office, provides programs for the removal of exotic plant species. The County needs to update mapping inventory of ecological communities.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 9 Policies that will remain as currently worded. An agency name will be updated in Policy 12.2.2.2.

Objective 12.2.3

To eliminate any net loss of wetlands and prevent the functional values of such wetlands to be degraded as a result of land development decisions.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County Wetland Ordinance is designed to eliminate any net loss of wetlands and to prevent the degradation of their functional value.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 8 Policies that will remain as currently worded, with the exception of Policy 12.2.3.4, where the minimum width of the wetland buffer should be added (50 feet) and the reference to the SJRWMD ERP process will be eliminated.

Objective 12.2.4

To protect habitats of wildlife species occurring in the County, particularly those which are threatened, endangered, or of special concern, to maintain, and enhance where necessary, existing species population numbers and distributions.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County reviews projects that are proposed in various sensitive areas and requires an ecological assessment to demonstrate compliance with all State and Federal regulations for the protection of listed species on all new developments. The County works with the FWC and USFWS to ensure that no listed species are taken in violation of State or Federal law. The County operates a scrub habitat conservation program that is designed to protect listed species native to scrub such as, scrub jays, gopher tortoises, and others. The County operates a manatee conservation program that implements Phase I of the Manatee Protection Plan, which addresses intergovernmental coordination, research, and education. The County is also in the process of approving Phase II, the Boat Facility Siting portion of the Manatee Protection Plan. The County implements the federally approved Habitat Conservation Plan for sea turtles on County beaches. This HCP protects sea turtles and dune habitats. The County maintains a pollution prevention program designed to reduce contamination by solid and hazardous waste. The County implements estuarine protection and restoration programs through its Northern Coastal Basin Program, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, and others.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 10 Policies and will remain as currently worded. Agency names in Policies 12.2.4.3 and 12.2.4.9 will be updated. A definition of "critical habitat" will be considered in Policy 12.2.4.3.

Objective 12.3.1

Maintain and improve air quality for the protection of the natural environment and the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Volusia County.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County is in attainment as defined by the Federal pollutant limits set by EPA. However, the County responds to air quality complaints, and coordinates with State agencies to resolve issues. The County operates and maintains public transit through the VOTRAN public transit system. The County Zoning Ordinance requires increased buffers adjacent to commercial, industrial, and transportation facilities.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 9 Policies that will remain as currently worded.

Objective 12.4.1

To minimize the impacts of mineral extraction activities on natural systems, while allowing appropriate utilization of the mineral resources.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County Zoning Ordinance sets forth standards for reclamation of excavation activities.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 4 Policies that will remain as currently worded. Policy 12.4.1.1 has not been achieved. However, the County will identify subject areas as per Policy 12.4.1.1 by 2013.

Objective 12.4.2

To incorporate the inherent limitation of existing soils in land planning and development, and minimize impacts which result in soil erosion.

Objective Achievement Analysis

The Objective will remain as currently worded. The County requires silvicultural and agricultural activities to utilize the most current BMPs to prevent soil erosion.

Policy Relevance

The Objective contains 3 Policies that will remain as currently worded. An agency name will be updated in Policy 12.4.2.1.