

1 **GOAL 1: The County shall maintain, protect, and enhance the diversity and integrity of the**
2 **County's natural resources and provide stewardship to maintain the County's quality of life**
3 **and economic vitality through the management and conservation of natural resources.**

4 **OBJECTIVE 1.1:** The County shall designate environmentally sensitive and locally significant
5 natural resources for conservation, protection, and enhancement, and Land Development Code
6 (LDC) provisions shall be maintained to implement this Objective and its Policies.

7 **Policy 1.1.1:** The County shall include the following as environmentally sensitive natural resources
8 requiring special protection to avoid adverse impacts to these resources:

- 9 a. Waterbodies designated as Outstanding Florida Waters, Aquatic Preserves, Scenic Rivers, and/or
10 other similar designations for protection by a local, state, and/or federal program;
- 11 b. Navigable waterways as designated by the state and/or federal government;
- 12 c. Wetlands as defined by the state and implemented by the applicable water management district;
- 13 d. 100-year floodplains and floodways as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency
14 Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FEMA FIRM);
- 15 e. State and/or federal owned natural reservation lands used for conservation and/or recreation
16 purposes such as State Parks, State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, and the Ocala National
17 Forest;
- 18 f. Habitat containing listed flora and fauna identified as protected species by the state and/or
19 federal government;
- 20 g. Rivers, lakes, and springs with a defined Minimum Flows and Level (MFL), as designated by local,
21 state, or federal agencies, particularly in conjunction with local and regional Water Supply Plans;
22 and
- 23 h. Those areas identified as High and Prime Groundwater Aquifer Recharge Areas ($\geq 12''$ annually as
24 identified by the applicable water management district; H/PARA) and Springs Protection Zones
25 (SPZ), as established in the Future Land Use Element (FLUE) and LDC.

26 **Policy 1.1.2:** The County shall include the following as locally significant natural resources due special
27 protection to minimize adverse impacts to these resources:

- 28 a. Surface waters of the State;
- 29 b. Native vegetative communities as identified by the State of Florida's Natural Areas Inventory
30 (FNAI) Program;
- 31 c. Commercially valuable mineral resources as defined by the state;
- 32 d. Soils, particularly those identified as prime farmland and locally important farmland as defined by
33 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service
34 (NRCS) which include the following soil series: Blitchton, Kanapaha, Micanopy, Fellowship,
35 Kendrick, Flemington, Gainesville, Lochloosa, Hague, and Zuber);
- 36 e. Good quality air, focusing on dust/debris and noxious odors;
- 37 f. Good quality and sufficient quantities of groundwater, particularly addressing potable,
38 agricultural, recreational, and other economically beneficial uses;

- 1 g. Wellhead and wellfields serving centralized potable water systems for municipal and local
2 governments or private systems regulated by the State of Florida Public Service Commission;
- 3 h. Fisheries, wildlife, and wildlife habitat;
- 4 i. Migratory wildlife routes and ecological corridors; and County-owned and/or managed regional
5 and/or resource-based parks.

6 **Policy 1.1.3:** The County shall require the identification of environmentally sensitive and locally significant
7 natural resources as part of the review process for development applications, focusing on land use, zoning,
8 subdivision, improvement plan, and site plan applications. The detail of the data in early development
9 review stages may be from generalized county, state, and/or federal sources, while later development
10 review stages will require more detailed site specific information to be generated by the applicant.

11 **Policy 1.1.4:** The County may utilize resources developed by federal, state, regional, and/or local sources
12 to identify and evaluate environmental characteristics and development potential, including, but not
13 limited to, the following sources:

- 14 a. USDA NRCS (f/k/a Soil Conservation Service) *Soil Survey of Marion County*;
- 15 b. FEMA FIRM, as amended;
- 16 c. Florida Department of Environmental Protection Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FDEP FNAI)
17 Program, including the *Natural Areas Inventory of Marion County, Florida*;
- 18 d. FDEP Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) publications including, but not
19 limited to, Species Richness Maps, species management plans, etc.;
- 20 e. FDEP Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP);
- 21 f. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and its jurisdictional agencies’
22 best management practices manuals;
- 23 g. St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and Southwest Florida Water Management
24 District (SWFWMD) publications and programs including but not limited to, Well/Wellfield
25 Capture Zones Maps, High & Prime Aquifer Recharge Area Maps, and Karst Sensitive Areas Maps;
- 26 h. Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority Water Supply Plan (WRWSA-WSP);
- 27 i. Marion County produced publications including, but not limited to, the Marion County Water
28 Supply Plan (MC-WSP), Marion County Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (MCAVA), Marion County
29 Springs Protection Zones (SPZs), and Marion County Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Zones
30 (ESOZs).

31 **Policy 1.1.5:** The County will make available to the public maps and other information to allow for the
32 general identification of environmentally sensitive and locally significant natural resources in the County
33 to the greatest extent practicable. When information is provided by non-county sources, the County will
34 facilitate providing that information to the public to the greatest extent practicable.

35 **OBJECTIVE 1.2:** The County shall protect, conserve, and enhance the quality and natural function
36 of environmentally sensitive and locally significant natural resources within the County, while
37 encouraging and supporting the appropriate use of such resources, as further defined in the LDC.

38 **Policy 1.2.1:** The County shall protect, conserve, and enhance environmentally sensitive and locally
39 significant natural resources from adverse impacts to the greatest extent practicable focusing on, but not
40 limited to, the following activities:

- 1 a. Protection of surface and ground water from activities that degrade and/or introduce pollutants
2 that may adversely affect its quality and/or quantity;
- 3 b. Protection of surface and navigable waters from activities that adversely impact their use,
4 capacity, quality and/or character;
- 5 c. Protection of flood storage and floodplain capacity from activities that materially impair
6 floodplain capacity or alter the characteristics of the existing one-percent (100-Year) Floodplain;
- 7 d. Protection of qualified central potable water system supply wells and/or wellfields from activities
8 that would adversely affect the public health and/or the ability to maintain such services;
- 9 e. Protection of identified habitats, such as wetlands, native vegetative communities, including
10 listed species, or critical migratory and/or estuarine habitats, from activities that destroy and/or
11 degrade such habitats from immediate or long-term effects from development, such as pollution,
12 siltation, and/or non-native invasive species;
- 13 f. Protection of natural reservations including federal, state, regional, and/or local government
14 owned conservation and/or recreation lands and facilities from activities that adversely impact
15 the intended purpose and/or use of those lands;
- 16 g. Protection of key soil types identified as prime and locally important farmlands and/or known to
17 include commercially valuable minerals from adverse impacts which would prevent and/or
18 discourage their continuing use and/or recovery when suitable environmental management and
19 best practices are used;
- 20 h. Protection of air quality from adverse impacts which would negatively affect other identified
21 resources and/or the quality and/or character of such resources or surroundings which would
22 create a public nuisance, such as wind-borne dust or odor.

23 **Policy 1.2.2:** The County shall require development design, construction, and management techniques to
24 protect environmentally sensitive and locally significant natural resources, including but not limited to the
25 following:

- 26 a. Compliance with stormwater management LOS standards as provided in the Stormwater Element
27 (SE) and reflected in the Capital Improvement Element (CIE);
- 28 b. The reduction of densities in specified habitats or areas when development is proposed within
29 those areas, unless development is clustered to protect and conserve the habitats, including those
30 adjusted densities provided in FLUE Objective 9.1;
- 31 c. The clustering of development to create open spaces that function to buffer and protect identified
32 resources on-site and off-site to development, and provide habitat linkages when possible;
- 33 d. The establishment and management of buffers and other land use controls between development
34 activities and identified resources, with emphasis on ensuring the buffer establishes a balance
35 between the scale and intensity of development and the scope, quality, and character of the
36 resource;
- 37 e. The use of Marion Friendly flora to prevent or discourage non-native invasive species;
- 38 f. The implementation of water conservation, irrigation, and fertilizer management provisions;
- 39 g. The implementation of design and development standards regarding setbacks, lot dimensions,
40 and building location/design, particularly when such sites abut or are determined to be
41 connected, such as but not limited to, hydrologically connected, to identified resources;

- 1 h. The use of mitigation for on-site resources through alternative on-site locations, off-site, or
2 monetary methods to ensure the protection/conservation of the resource; the intent of off-site
3 or monetary mitigation is to achieve a minimum of one-for-one mitigation/replacement, with
4 focus on maintaining the mitigation action within the County unless otherwise authorized,
- 5 i. The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and the Transfer of Vested Rights (TVR) Programs as
6 provided within the FLUE; and
- 7 j. The establishment of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) within which the provision of adequate
8 public facilities shall be provided to all developments.

9 **OBJECTIVE 1.3:** The County shall continue to encourage acquisition of environmentally sensitive
10 and/or locally important resources when such acquisition is determined to be in the public
11 interest and particularly when such acquisitions maintain and support the character and quality
12 of life of citizens and visitors, and may benefit economic diversity and development in the County.

13 **Policy 1.3.1:** The County shall participate to the greatest extent practicable in efforts to identify and
14 acquire environmentally sensitive and/or locally important resources for conservation and/or recreation
15 purposes. The County, upon affirmative determination by the Board of County Commissioners, may act
16 as a lead agency and/or participate in such resource identification and acquisition.

17 **Policy 1.3.2:** Funds for any land acquisition will be maximized to the fullest extent possible by bonding
18 funds when necessary and by actively seeking matching funds and grants through governmental (e.g., local,
19 regional, state, federal, etc.) or non-governmental (e.g., private and/or non-profit funds and/or trusts,
20 etc.) when available.

21 **Policy 1.3.3:** The purchase or acceptance of conservation easements in lieu of acquisition by fee simple
22 title will also be considered and supported when practicable.

23 **OBJECTIVE 1.4:** The County shall encourage and promote the appropriate and practicable use of
24 environmentally sensitive and locally important natural resources in a form which maintains the
25 character and quality of life of its citizens and supports economic development and diversity.

26 **Policy 1.4.1:** Recreation, agri-tourism, and eco-tourism activities which function to promote and support
27 natural resource conservation, protection, and enhancement, particularly when including an educational
28 component, shall be encouraged.

29 **Policy 1.4.2:** The County shall protect and provide for the extraction of commercially valuable mineral
30 resources, as may be authorized by the County through the LDC Special Use Permit process and/or other
31 regulating agencies (e.g., FDEP, SJRWMD, SWFWMD, etc.). Sites of commercially valuable minerals shall
32 be protected from the encroachment of incompatible land uses that would inhibit or preclude the
33 extraction of minerals, particularly uses that would increase the density of people in close proximity to a
34 mineral extraction operation. Land use changes on contiguous land areas that are incompatible with
35 mineral extraction operations shall be prohibited until extraction, mitigation, and reclamation or
36 restoration are completed where mineral extraction operations exist or can be reasonably predicted. LDC
37 provisions shall be maintained to implement this policy.