

Appendix 4

Referenced existing County Comprehensive Policies

Future Land Use Element (FLUE)

FLUE OBJECTIVE 6.2 - RURAL/AGRICULTURE

Areas identified for Rural/Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map are for agricultural activities including forestry and other agricultural uses, such as cattle grazing, cultivation of field crops, vegetable crops, dairies and those commercial or other uses on a limited scale serving or ancillary to agricultural activities, such as farm equipment and supplies, sales or service, farmers' markets, agritourism activities, composting, limited agricultural processing as provided in Policy 6.1.8 above, and agricultural products distribution. Rural residential uses, home-based businesses, heritage tourism and ecotourism activities, resource-based recreation and outdoor activity-based recreation are also allowed. Other uses involving animals not normally associated with agricultural activities, which would be suitable in the Rural/Agricultural areas, such as animal sanctuaries, kennels, and commercial animal raising, may be approved by the County Commission. New residential uses at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acres shall be permitted subject to the restrictions in Policy 6.2.7, except that the total allowable dwelling units may be increased pursuant to the Planned Development-Transfer of Development Rights program in accordance with 6.2.5.1 or the incentive bonuses for clustering of rural residential subdivisions in accordance with Policies 6.2.9 - 6.2.14.

FLUE Policy 6.2.10 Density and Intensity

The overall development density shall not exceed the maximum gross density of one dwelling unit per five acres for the Rural/Agriculture land use category, except as a result of the provisions for the family homestead exception found in Policy 6.2.14(c), of a hardship variance or other temporary permit issued by the Growth Management Department or as a result of incentive bonuses for clustering as provided under item 4 below, subject to the resource protection standards in the Conservation and Open Space Element. These standards include the following requirements:...

(d) As an incentive to cluster new residential subdivisions, if a new residential subdivision in the Rural/Agriculture area is clustered with a minimum of 50% of the development in open space, a total of 2 units in addition to the number units based on the gross density of 1 unit per 5 acres are allowed, plus 1 additional unit per every 10 acres of conservation area set aside as open space; plus 1 additional unit per every 20 acres non-conservation area set aside as open space.

FLUE Policy 6.2.12 Open Space Area in Clustered Subdivisions

A portion of a clustered rural residential subdivision shall be designated and maintained as undeveloped open space area.

(a) Percentage of site. Clustered Rural residential subdivisions shall designate a minimum of 50% of the site as open space area.

FLUE Policy 7.1.3 As part of the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan and any proposed amendments to the Urban Cluster, determine a sufficient and nonexcessive amount of land within the Urban Cluster to accommodate urban uses for a ten year and twenty year time frame. ...

(d) If this methodology determines expansion of the Urban Cluster is warranted, the evaluation of appropriate location shall be subject to analysis including the following economic, infrastructure, transportation, and conservation and recreation criteria:

- (1) rural character and viable agriculture land and the potential impact of expansion of the Urban Cluster on existing agricultural uses
- (2) economic development considerations including affordable housing
- (3) relationship to existing and planned future urban services and infrastructure
- (4) access to the regional transportation network and multi-modal transportation systems
- (5) Conservation and Preservation land uses
- (6) planned recreation/open space or greenway systems

FLUE Policy 7.1.23 All amendments shall be considered based on the applicable policies and objectives of this Element, shall be considered in light of the Basic Principles upon which the Plan is based, and shall be consistent with all Elements of the Plan.

Portable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element (PWSS)

PWSS Policy 2.1.6 The use of new package wastewater treatment plants may be considered outside of the Urban Cluster in areas not served by centralized wastewater treatment plants only in instances where the public health is at risk, or where rural employment centers or specialized uses, such as institutional, tourist/entertainment, material-oriented industrial development, or resource-based recreational uses are appropriate. For purposes of this policy, new package treatment plants for residential uses are specifically prohibited, except as a last resort to remedy a public health problem associated with existing septic tanks. A special use permit shall be required for any new package treatment plant and shall be considered only if:

- (a) Demonstration that:
 - (1) alternative systems of wastewater disposal are not feasible; and
 - (2) there will be no adverse impact on water quality; and
 - (3) there is assurance of proper long term operation and maintenance, including groundwater monitoring, by an entity that demonstrates financial and organizational capacity.
- (b) Provision for monitoring and inspection by the applicable federal, state, regional, water management districts, and local agencies to be assured that the plant is in compliance with provisions of the permit.
- (c) Provisions for corrective actions to be taken by the owner or operator in the event of failure including, but not limited to; changes in plant operation and maintenance, system repair or replacement, suspension or termination of a package treatment plant operation.
- (d) Provisions for posting bond or similar financial guarantee to ensure payment for corrective actions.
- (e) Provisions for connection to centralized wastewater service once the service becomes available.

Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE)

OBJECTIVE 3.1 - CONSERVATION LAND USE CATEGORIES

A conservation land use category shall be established to recognize and protect natural resources within privately owned lands in Alachua County utilizing appropriate regulatory, acquisition, and incentive mechanisms.

COSE Policy 3.1.1 Conservation areas shall consist of natural resources that, because of their ecological value, uniqueness and particular sensitivity to development activities, require stringent protective measures to sustain their ecological integrity. These areas shall include:

- (a) Wetlands;
- (b) Surface waters;
- (c) 100-year floodplains;
- (d) Listed species habitat;
- (e) Significant geologic features; and
- (f) Strategic ecosystems.

COSE Policy 3.1.2 In conservation areas, the following uses, if otherwise consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, generally shall be permitted to the extent that they do not significantly alter the natural functions of the conservation area:

- (a) Public and private conservation, recreation and open space uses.
- (b) Public and private wildlife preserves, game management and refuge areas.
- (c) Water conservation and retention/detention areas that are determined to be appropriate for stormwater management.
- (d) Agricultural uses, employing latest applicable best management practices.

COSE Policy 3.1.3 Conservation areas shall be developed only in a manner consistent with protection of the ecological integrity of natural resources, and in accordance with standards which are outlined subsequently in this Element.

COSE Policy 3.1.4 All conservation areas should be avoided as potential locations for personal wireless service facilities.

COSE Policy 3.1.5 Certain resources such as mineral resources and high aquifer recharge areas, because of their location, nature, or extent cannot be protected to the extent of conservation areas, but have been identified for protection in this Element. Policies applicable to these resources shall be those specific policies in Section 4 which apply to development activities within or affecting such areas and policies which apply generally to natural resources.

COSE Policy 3.2.1 Preservation areas shall consist of publicly owned lands, including lands owned and managed by non-profit conservation organizations, which are intended for use as natural reserves or managed conservation lands for the preservation of natural resources in perpetuity.

OBJECTIVE 3.6 - RESOURCE PROTECTION STANDARDS

Protect natural resources by requiring that all development activities be conducted in accordance with at least minimum resource protection standards.

COSE Policy 3.6.1 All development shall conform with the environmental regulations of federal, state, and local agencies as well as the Water Management Districts.

COSE Policy 3.6.3 Parcels that include or are adjacent to conservation or preservation areas shall not receive planning and zoning designations that are higher in density or intensity than the currently adopted designations unless adequate natural resources protection is ensured.

COSE Policy 3.6.4 The County shall prohibit subdivision of land after January 21, 1993 that would create new lots lacking sufficient buildable area, as defined by setback requirements and other development standards, outside of conservation areas.

COSE Policy 3.6.5 Development on land that includes conservation areas shall be sited and designed according to the following standards and consistent with policies under Objective 6.2 of the Future Land Use Element in the rural area:

- (a) The preservation of conservation areas shall be required on all development sites to the greatest extent possible, consistent with standards which are outlined subsequently in this Element.
- (b) Density or intensity shall be transferred from conservation areas to non-conservation portions of the property, to adjoining property under common ownership or management and within a unified development, or to other development receivership areas, at a rate consistent with that of the underlying zoning district, but not to exceed the maximum density allowed by the land use designation.
- (c) When there are no non-conservation areas to which density or intensity may be transferred, the development shall be clustered in the portion of the site that will result in least environmental impact.
- (d) When connection to central sewer is not required, septic wastes shall be disposed of according to the Comprehensive Plan, land development regulations, and health department standards, and without adversely affecting ecosystem health.
- (e) Existing landscape connections to other conservation areas shall be maintained so that fragmentation is avoided.

COSE Policy 3.6.6 Development on land that includes or is adjacent to conservation or preservation areas shall exhibit best environmental management practices with the emphasis on designing with nature, e.g. in the context of the natural features of the landscape, such as topographic and stormwater features, vegetative edges, and soil types, to avoid and minimize adverse environmental and visual impacts. The major criterion for approval shall be the continued functioning, with minimum disturbance, of the ecosystem which the development is impacting.

COSE Policy 3.6.7 Development shall not be allowed at the maximum densities and intensities of the underlying zoning district, if those densities would be harmful to natural resources.

COSE Policy 3.6.8 Development occurring along the edges of conservation and preservation areas shall be designed to protect and minimize the impact of development on conservation areas through the use of natural vegetative buffers.

(a) Buffer width shall be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on what is demonstrated to be scientifically necessary to protect natural ecosystems from significant adverse impact. This determination shall be made in consideration of at least the following factors:

- (1) Type of development and associated potential for adverse site-specific and off-site impacts;
- (2) Natural community type and associated hydrologic or management requirements;
- (3) Buffer area characteristics and function;
- (4) Presence of listed species of plants and animals.

(b) Absent scientific information which demonstrates that a larger or smaller buffer width is appropriate, the following buffer widths shall apply for the resources set forth in the table below.

Protected Resource	Buffer Distance (feet)*
Surface waters and wetlands less than or equal to 0.5 acre that do	50 average, 35 minimum

not include OFWs or listed animal species as described elsewhere in this table	
Surface waters and wetlands greater than 0.5 acre that do not include OFWs or listed animal species as described elsewhere in this table	75 average, 50 minimum
Areas where federally and/or state regulated vertebrate wetland/aquatic dependent animal species have been documented within 300 feet of a surface water or wetland	100 average, 75 minimum
Outstanding Florida Waters (OFWs)	150 average, 100 minimum

*If the buffer precludes all economically viable use of a particular property, development may be allowed within the buffer in accordance with policy 3.6.5, and where applicable, policies 4.6.6 and 4.7.4.

(c) Buffers shall be measured from the outer edge of the protected resource.

COSE Policy 3.6.9 The County shall encourage the control or elimination where feasible, of invasive vegetation within the protected area.

COSE Policy 3.6.10 The intensity of development on land adjacent to conservation and preservation areas shall be determined based on the unique characteristics of the conservation area. Land use shall be consistent with natural resource protection.

COSE Policy 3.6.11 Septic tanks and drainfields shall be sited in a manner to protect conservation areas from the discharge of improperly treated effluent. The use of alternative systems shall be required under appropriate circumstances to protect environmental health.

COSE Policy 3.6.12 All public projects, such as utilities, new travel corridors, and travel corridor modifications, shall be located and designed to avoid adverse impacts to conservation and preservation areas, except where it is demonstrated that there is no prudent and feasible alternative that avoids adverse impact. The County shall use an interdepartmental team to determine whether a particular project warrants adverse impact, based on an evaluation of the environmental, economic, and social costs and benefits of the proposal and alternatives. Inconvenience alone is insufficient justification for adverse impact.

COSE Policy 3.6.13 In the case of a public project for which there is no prudent and feasible alternative that avoids adverse impacts to conservation and preservation areas, the project shall incorporate appropriate design features that enhance habitat connectivity, provide for the safe passage of wildlife, and provide other significant environmental benefits. Mitigation shall be required as for private developments.

COSE Policy 3.6.14 Alachua County shall require mitigation of significant adverse impacts on conservation and preservation areas within the County. Mitigation shall include funding for the

acquisition and management, preservation, replacement, or restoration of significant ecological resources.

COSE Policy 3.6.15 The County shall identify and protect green infrastructure through the development review process by protecting conservation resources and natural areas and allow and encourage proven environmentally-friendly development techniques, like low impact development that minimize impacts to natural resources and water quality and maintain existing hydrologic conditions.

COSE Policy 4.2.1 Characteristics of soil suitability and capability shall be considered in determining appropriate land uses. Preliminary recommendations concerning soil suitability can be found in the Alachua County Soil Survey prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS). To insure that the soils at the development site can support the development, the County will require the developer to submit detailed information on soils which may require an independent soil analysis with detailed information on soils.

COSE Policy 4.2.5 Development shall be designed to include retention of the natural character of seepage slopes and shallow ground water tables that have been demonstrated to be essential to the hydrologic support of associated conservation areas. Specific standards to accomplish this shall be included in the development regulations. In the interim, the Development Review Committee shall require measures that execute this policy.

COSE OBJECTIVE 4.5 - GROUNDWATER AND SPRINGS

Protect and conserve the quality and quantity of groundwater and springs resources to ensure long-term public health and safety, potable water supplies from surficial, intermediate, and Floridan aquifers, adequate flow to springs, and the ecological integrity of natural resources.

COSE Policy 4.5.10 Withdrawals of ground water have the potential to result in adverse impacts on potable water supply and natural ecosystems. Development shall occur only when adequate water supplies are concurrently available to serve such development without adversely affecting local or regional water sources or the natural ecosystem, as determined in accordance with local and state law.

(a) The County shall take an active role in providing input to the water management districts permitting process for activities that use large volumes of groundwater.

(b) The County shall support the efforts of the Alachua County Health Department to seek delegation of water well construction permitting responsibility from both the St. Johns River and Suwannee River Water Management Districts to ensure that all new wells are properly constructed, modified, sealed or abandoned.

COSE Policy 4.6.16 Land uses that have the potential to pollute surface waters (are located adjacent to surface waters and that contribute significant nutrient loadings) shall be identified and regulated using the following measures to protect water quality and biological health.

(a) Buffers to surface waters shall be increased for activities which have been associated with surface water quality and biological health problems such as landfills, composting facilities, wastewater treatment percolation ponds or rapid infiltration basins (RIBs), spray fields, golf courses, dairies, row crops, septage or biosolids land application sites, septage stabilization facilities, and onsite sewage treatment systems or septic systems.

(b) The implementation of best management practices shall be required in buffers to surface waters to control nutrient loadings, including retrofitting if needed to maintain water quality and biological health.

(c) The use of pesticides and fertilizers shall be discouraged in buffers.

(d) The use of reclaimed water shall be regulated to conform with environmentally sound practices and not allowed to adversely impact surface water or groundwater by increasing nutrient concentrations. Nutrients present in the reclaimed water shall not be discharged in a manner that will cause impairment of surface waters, cause an imbalance of flora and fauna in the aquatic ecosystem, or cause eutrophication of the receiving waters. Land development regulations shall be adopted that include setbacks to surface waters for the use of reclaimed water for irrigation that are protective of the aquatic ecosystem.

(e) All fill material used onsite shall be free of phosphatic Hawthorn Group sediments or other phosphorous rich materials that may leach phosphorus causing surface water quality degradation and lake eutrophication.

(f) Any excavation that would lead to exposure of Hawthorn Group sediments or other phosphorus rich materials that could leach and adversely impact groundwater or surface water shall be mitigated by covering, backfilling or using other techniques to reduce phosphorus leaching.

(g) Fertilizer shall be regulated in buffers to surface waters to ensure that excess nitrogen and phosphorus are not leached into surface water bodies causing water quality degradation and/or lake eutrophication.

(h) The use of performance based treatment systems may be required in highly sensitive areas, such as in proximity to Outstanding Florida Waters, impaired waters, in springsheds where karst features are prominent and conduit flow is known to exist, or where the lot sizes are small and do not allow for adequate nutrient reduction to be met at the property boundary. These systems shall be designed and permitted under a defined performance standard criterion (e.g. Secondary or Advanced Secondary treatment standards). This measurable performance standard can be adopted as a risk based mitigation strategy for site specific concerns.

COSE Policy 4.6.17 Wastewater and stormwater discharges to surface waters and wetlands shall be allowed only if the following criteria are satisfied:

(a) The quantity, timing, and quality of the discharge maintain or improve water quality, biological health, and the function of the natural ecosystem.

(b) Downstream waters are not affected by nutrient loading.

(c) The project owner or developer prepares and implements maintenance and monitoring plan acceptable to the County.

(d) The project owner or developer corrects any failures in design or operation of the system that cause degradation of water quality, biological health, or the function of the natural ecosystem.

(e) The owner or developer posts a performance bond or similar financial guarantee to assure implementation of the maintenance and monitoring plan.

COSE OBJECTIVE 4.7 - WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS Wetland acreage and function shall be protected.

COSE Policy 4.7.1 Wetlands of all sizes shall be regulated without exception.

COSE Policy 4.7.2 Alachua County shall utilize the uniform statewide methodology adopted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Water Management Districts to delineate wetlands, as outlined in Rule 62-340, Florida Administrative Code, as the rule exists on January 1, 2001.

The County shall not be limited by the threshold or connection requirements utilized by these agencies for purposes other than delineation.

COSE Policy 4.7.3 Wetland ecosystems shall be protected by buffer widths established in Policy 3.6.8.

COSE Policy 4.7.4 Development activity shall not be authorized in wetlands or wetland buffers except when all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The applicant has taken every reasonable step to avoid adverse impact to the wetland and buffer; and

(b) The applicant has taken every reasonable step to minimize adverse impact to the wetland and buffer; and

(c) The applicant has provided appropriate mitigation for adverse impact to the wetland and buffer; and

(d) The applicant shows that one of the following circumstances applies:

(1) Minimal impact activity; or

(2) Overriding public interest; or

(3) All economically beneficial or productive use of the property is otherwise precluded.

The development impact area shall not exceed the rate of one-half (½) acre per ten acres of conservation area, including the footprint of principal and accessory structures and parking, allowing for reasonable access. Notwithstanding the above, mitigated impact may be allowed to any isolated poor quality wetland that is less than 0.25 acre in size, provided the total impact area is not greater than or equal to 0.25 acre per development. Poor quality shall be defined in the land development regulations based on factors relative to ecological value.

COSE Policy 4.7.5 Structural and hydrologic alterations to wetlands shall be designed to ensure that natural hydroperiods and functions are maintained. Draining or filling wetlands shall not be allowed, except as permitted by the most restrictive of federal or state law, water management district rules, or Alachua County land development regulations. All forestry operations conducted in wetlands shall, be conducted in accordance with the following policies and consistent with Objective 5.5:

(a) Silviculture activities shall follow the most recent applicable best management practices. The silvicultural policies and the references to best management practices in this Comprehensive Plan shall not be construed as authorizing new regulations that conflict with Section 823.14(6), Florida Statutes (Florida Right to Farm Act).

(b) The overall ecological integrity of the wetlands community shall be maintained as follows:

(1) Viable populations of the endangered, threatened, and species of special concern found onsite can be maintained onsite;

(2) Harvests are planned to provide for varying age and height diversity, supporting a variety of vegetative successional stages within the overall wetland ecosystem;

(3) The natural hydrology and hydroperiod of wetlands are not significantly modified on a long-term basis and state water quality standards are not violated; and

(4) There is no conversion of wetland system to upland systems.

COSE Policy 4.7.6 The County may provide incentives such as density bonuses to developments for restoration of previously degraded wetlands on proposed new development sites. The extent of degradation of such wetlands and necessary steps to restore them shall be evaluated during the development review process. The evaluation shall include consideration of the feasibility of restoration

and reasons for current state of degradation. Restoration of degraded wetlands shall be required where such degradation has been a result of new development or agricultural activities. The development regulations shall set forth the measures to be taken when restoration is required or intended.

COSE Policy 4.7.7 Any development activity permitted within an onsite, or affecting an offsite, wetland or buffer shall be mitigated at the expense of the landowner. Mitigation proposals shall be submitted to the BoCC for review in the form of a mitigation and monitoring plan, according to a natural resources permit process to be articulated in the land development regulations. Final Board of County Commissioners approval of a mitigation and monitoring plan must be received prior to wetland or buffer alteration. The Land Development Regulations shall authorize that the Board of County Commissioners shall approve, deny or approve with conditions any natural resources permit. In order to be considered, the mitigation and monitoring plan must ensure the long term viability of the mitigation project, advance the County's natural resources conservation objectives and policies, and meet the following minimum guidelines:

- (a) Mitigation shall include any one or a combination of: monetary compensation, or acquisition, restoration, enhancement, or preservation of wetlands, other surface waters or uplands.
- (b) Preservation shall not be considered when protection of the resource proposed for preservation is already ensured by federal, state, water management district, or local regulations.
- (c) Mitigation shall be determined by applying the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM), pursuant to Chapter 62-345, F.A.C.
- (d) Mitigation shall be permitted only within the boundaries of Alachua County and, to the maximum extent practicable, within the local watershed in which the impact occurs.
- (e) Alachua County shall prioritize receiving areas for mitigation within the county, and investigate the feasibility of implementing a local mitigation banking system.
- (f) Wetland mitigation activity conducted by a public agency may not be utilized for wetland mitigation credit by private persons unless approved by Alachua County.
- (g) The landowner shall post a performance bond or similar financial guarantee to assure implementation of the mitigation and monitoring plan.
- (h) No mitigation credits will be given for onsite preservation of wetlands.

COSE Policy 4.7.8 Development activity that occurs in violation of the County's Comprehensive Plan or land development regulations shall be required to mitigate, in addition to paying monetary penalties provided by the land development regulations. Mitigation shall include, at a minimum, onsite restoration of buffers, habitat, and hydrology of the original wetland area.

COSE Policy 4.7.9 The County shall support the development of a unified and coordinated wetland compensatory mitigation and restoration program by appropriate federal, state and local environmental regulatory agencies that will not weaken local regulatory authority and will ensure no net loss of wetland acreage and a measurable increase in restored wetland function and acreage.

COSE Policy 4.7.10 Use of certain wetlands for stormwater treatment or for tertiary treatment of wastewater may be allowed only for innovative designs which demonstrate that:

- (a) The continued natural functioning of the wetland system will be maintained or improved.
- (b) The natural hydroperiod of the wetland will be maintained.
- (c) Water quality, vegetation, and aquatic lifeforms will be maintained or improved.

(d) All substances that could adversely impact water quality, vegetation and aquatic lifeforms will be removed or treated prior to discharge to the wetland system.

(e) The wetland's ability to assimilate any nutrients in the effluent discharged to the wetland system will not be exceeded.

The project shall be monitored over time at the owner's expense. Any degradation of the wetland system that occurs during the monitoring period due to project design failure shall be corrected by the project owner or operator at the owner or operator's expense.

COSE Policy 4.7.11 The County shall require the use of native wetland plant species, where design allows, for the creation of wetland habitat and for biologically enhancing filtration and treatment of pollutants in newly constructed stormwater retention and detention ponds.

COSE Policy 4.7.12 The development regulations shall incorporate the policies in this element for wetlands protection and provide standards for development within or near wetlands. These regulations shall address, at a minimum, the following:

(a) location and extent of wetlands on site plans;

(b) provisions for wetlands delineation consistent with the uniform statewide methodology outlined in Chapter 62-340, Florida Administrative Code;

(c) measures to assure normal flows and quality of water during and after development;

(d) requirements for review and approval of any use, development, or capital improvement resulting in the conversion of existing wetlands to a non-wetland ecosystem through filling, drainage or other measures;

(e) clustering of development away from wetland areas;

(f) provision of undisturbed natural buffers;

(g) mitigation requirements;

(h) measures to be taken when restoration is required or intended; and

(i) modification and use of wetlands.

COSE OBJECTIVE 4.8 - FLOOD PLAINS AND FLOODWAYS

Protect and maintain the natural functions of floodplains, floodways, and all other natural areas having hydrological characteristics of the one hundred (100)-year flood elevation. Natural functions include water purification, flood hazard mitigation, water supply, and wildlife habitat and connectivity.

COSE Policy 4.8.1 The County shall encourage and contribute to watershed management through a variety of programs to include education initiatives, enforcement of wetland and surface water setbacks, and interagency partnerships and workshops.

COSE Policy 4.8.2 The County shall encourage watershed planning and shall:

(a) Define 100-year floodplains and floodways as conservation areas;

(b) Continue to maintain, and enhance where possible, the current biodiversity in floodplains of the County;

(c) Continue to cooperate with the Water Management Districts and other appropriate agencies in expanding or enhancing existing natural habitats associated with floodplains;

- (d) Recognize floodplains in the land development regulations as unique resources requiring protection and conservation;
- (e) Develop specific criteria for slope protection and erosion control in floodplains and along natural banks and shores; and
- (f) Enforce erosion control regulations to reduce sedimentation in floodplains resulting from development activities.

COSE Policy 4.8.3 Development regulations shall provide specific standards for development activities (including permitted land uses and development limitations) in areas of special flood hazard. These standards shall:

- (a) At a minimum, be consistent with General Objective 3 of the Stormwater Element, the Alachua County Flood Hazard Area Ordinance, Surface Waters and Wetlands Ordinance, Hazardous Materials Management Code, and other County regulations.
- (b) Recognize that, in some instances, the character of the area of special flood hazard is inappropriate for alteration due to the existence of other natural resource constraints.
- (c) Include a review process allowing for:
 - (1) Evaluation of sites for compliance with this policy; and
 - (2) The implementing of regulations on a case-by-case basis.

COSE Policy 4.8.4 Connectivity of floodways and habitat for wildlife and their mobility shall be accommodated by applying design criteria consistent with Stormwater Element policies.

COSE Policy 4.8.5 An undisturbed regulated buffer determined on a site-specific basis shall be required within the property lines of public lands within the one hundred (100) - year floodplain for the purposes of visual screening, stormwater treatment, erosion control, and public safety.

COSE Policy 4.8.6 The County shall participate in the acquisition planning process of federal, state, local and regional agencies for lands and unique natural areas located within the one hundred (100)-year floodplain.

COSE Policy 4.8.7 The County shall monitor the use of County-owned facilities on or within the one hundred (100)-year floodplain to ensure that the public use of these facilities does not threaten the facility or adjacent natural resources. Such facilities shall be maintained in order to prevent any potential adverse impacts such as erosion, release of inadequately treated stormwater or wastewater, or the accumulation of trash and debris.

COSE Policy 4.8.8 The County shall coordinate with the Water Management Districts during the Development Review Process for development located in the 100-year floodplain to allow them an opportunity to review and make comments on proposed development activities.

COSE Policy 4.8.9 Shallow wells, solid waste disposal sites, septic tank drainfields, and sewage treatment plants shall be located to prevent inundation by floodwaters.

COSE OBJECTIVE 4.9 – BIODIVERSITY

Maintain and enhance plant and animal species diversity and distribution within Alachua County by protecting significant plant and wildlife habitats, providing for habitat corridors, and preventing habitat fragmentation.

COSE OBJECTIVE 4.10 - STRATEGIC ECOSYSTEMS

Protect, conserve, enhance, and manage the ecological integrity of strategic ecosystems in Alachua County.

COSE Policy 4.10.1 Conserve strategic ecosystems that are determined through ground-truthing using the KBN/Golder report as a guide to maintain or enhance biodiversity based on an overall assessment of the following characteristics:

- (a) Natural ecological communities that exhibit:
 - (1) Native biodiversity within or across natural ecological communities.
 - (2) Ecological integrity.
 - (3) Rarity.
 - (4) Functional connectedness.
- (b) Plant and animal species habitat that is:
 - (1) Documented for listed species.
 - (2) Documented for species with large home ranges.
 - (3) Documented as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as breeding, roosting, colonial nesting, or over-wintering.
 - (4) High in vegetation quality and species diversity.
 - (5) Low in non-native invasive species.
- (c) Size, shape, and landscape features that allow the ecosystem to be restored to or maintained in good condition with regular management activities, such as prescribed burning, removal of exotic vegetation, or hydrological restoration.

The Alachua County 2001 digital orthophotographic series (for purposes of this policy, the date of this photography is March 1, 2001) shall presumptively establish the baseline condition of the strategic ecosystem property as of the effective date of this policy. The County shall adopt land development regulations that set forth additional guidance for the determination of whether and the extent to which strategic ecosystems exist on a property.

COSE Policy 4.10.2 Strategies shall be implemented through the land use planning and development review processes to ensure that each strategic ecosystem is evaluated and protected based on the integrity of the ecological unit.

- (a) The County shall create special area plans in cooperation with landowners to establish specific guidelines for strategic ecosystems prior to approval of land use change, zoning change, or development approval.
- (b) The County shall devise a schedule for creating special area plans, based on current development pressures and anticipated priorities.
- (c) The County shall create special area plans for each strategic ecosystem, in accordance with the schedule and with the standards under Objective 3.6.

COSE Policy 4.10.3 If an applicant seeks development prior to the County's creation of a special area plan for a particular strategic ecosystem, the applicant has two avenues for pursuing development. A special area study may be conducted at the applicant's expense. Alternatively, if the applicant demonstrates that the ecological integrity of the strategic ecosystem will be sufficiently protected, the applicant may proceed according to the clustering provisions in policies under Objective 6.2 of the Future Land Use Element.

COSE Policy 4.10.4 Management strategies for strategic ecosystems shall be developed with landowners in conjunction with special area plans or cluster developments and may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Prescribed burning.
- (b) Control of invasive species.
- (c) Silvicultural activities according to BMPs, with particular emphasis on maintenance and improvement of water quality, biological health, and the function of natural systems.
- (d) Reduction in the intensity of site preparation activities, including bedding and herbicide application.
- (e) Provision for listed species habitat needs, including restricting, at appropriate times, intrusions into sensitive feeding and breeding areas.
- (f) Cooperative efforts and agreements to help promote or conduct certain management activities, such as cleanups, maintenance, public education, observation, monitoring, and reporting.
- (g) Land acquisition.

COSE Policy 4.10.5 Each strategic ecosystem shall be preserved as undeveloped area, not to exceed 50% of the upland portion of the property without landowner consent and in accordance with the following:

- (a) Upland areas required to be protected pursuant to policies for significant geological features and wetland and surface water buffers shall be counted in calculation of the 50% limitation, however, the extent of protection of significant geological features and wetland and surface water buffers shall not be reduced by this limitation.
- (b) This limitation shall not apply to 100-year floodplains and wellfield protection areas, which are addressed independently through policies under Objectives 4.8 and 4.5, respectively.
- (c) This limitation shall not restrict in any way state and federal agency protections.

COSE Policy 4.10.6 The County shall provide regulatory flexibility to facilitate planning across multiple parcels that protects the integrity of the strategic ecosystem as an ecological unit. Existing cluster and PUD ordinances shall be revised to enhance long-term protection of strategic ecosystems.

COSE Policy 4.10.7 The County shall work with owners of agricultural and silvicultural lands to retain the ecological integrity and ecological value of strategic ecosystems through management plans and incentives. A management plan shall be required before any activity occurs in a strategic ecosystem that has not been used for agriculture or silviculture within the last 20 years, in accordance with the following:

- (a) The management plan shall provide for retention of the ecological integrity and ecological value of the strategic ecosystem.
- (b) The management plan shall be submitted to Alachua County for review and approval by appropriately qualified technical staff.
- (c) The management plan may be satisfied by Forest Stewardship Council certification, land acquisition, or participation in a conservation program sponsored by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- (d) Passive recreational and ecotourism activities shall be encouraged where consistent with protection of the ecological integrity of the strategic ecosystem.

The County shall, through community outreach and collaboration, facilitate participation of landowners in forestry certification programs, land acquisition programs, and federal and state cost-share conservation programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, and the Farmland Protection Program.

COSE Policy 4.10.8 Alachua County shall implement an ordinance that specifically addresses the preservation of strategic ecosystems, significant plant and wildlife habitat, habitat corridors, and vegetative communities.

COSE Policy 5.2.3 When land development involves a parcel that contains conservation areas, the County's open space requirements shall be fulfilled first with conservation areas, then with other allowable types of open space. Open space requirements are not intended to diminish other conservation requirements in this element.