

Task Force Meeting #3

Draft Guiding Principles

Natural Resources

1. Avoid, to the extent feasible, existing lands currently managed for conservation purposes; where avoidance is not feasible, minimize and mitigate impacts on these lands. These include:
 - Conservation lands under federal, state (including Florida Preservation 2000 Act lands and Florida Forever program acquired lands), local, and private sector ownership, including mitigation banks, and conservation easements
 - Land needed for proper management of conservation lands, e.g., smoke sheds for controlled burns
2. Avoid, to the extent feasible, lands proposed for management for conservation purposes; where avoidance is not feasible, minimize and mitigate impacts to these lands. These include:
 - Florida Forever proposed acquisitions
 - Lands identified as priorities through the Everglades restoration program
 - Lands identified as priorities through statewide or regional landscape scale conservation initiatives, including the Florida Ecological Greenways Network and Critical Lands and Waters Identification Process priority 1 and 2 designations, and the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape initiative
 - Lands identified as optimal boundaries of existing conservation lands
3. Minimize and mitigate impacts to endangered, threatened, rare, or endemic species and their habitats, as well as to rare or endemic plant communities. These include:
 - Underrepresented natural communities, watersheds containing rare and imperiled fish, and rare species habitat conservation priorities identified through statewide initiatives
 - Specific resources in the corridor, such as panther focus areas and sand skink and caracara consultation areas
4. Avoid, to the extent possible, degradation of fresh water sources and aquifer recharge areas; where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate impacts on these resources.
 - Priorities may include Outstanding Florida Waters and other water resources of statewide significance including the Peace River watershed, the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee, and the Caloosahatchee Estuaries
5. Maintain, and where possible, restore and enhance water quality and water shed integrity
 - Support Basin Management Action Plans for impaired water bodies
 - Use landscape-scale approaches for water resource management to protect and enhance sheet flows in watersheds and other sensitive areas
6. Minimize direct impacts to wetlands; where mitigation is needed, pursue regional or landscape-scale approaches

7. Avoid or minimize fragmentation of, or other negative impacts to, regionally significant or large contiguous agricultural lands and other rural lands with environmental significance, working with landowners to understand their future plans. These include:
 - Farmland preservation areas identified in local government comprehensive plans or other productive agricultural, forestry, and mining lands
 - Florida Rural and Family Lands Protection Program's agricultural lands
 - Agricultural lands with conservation easements and/or providing environmental services
8. Maintain and, where possible, restore and enhance the integrity and connectivity of regionally significant environmental lands, with emphasis on enhancing connectivity for wildlife, water, and other resources.

Cultural Resources

9. Avoid lands owned by Native American tribal nations; consult with tribal nations to identify opportunities for enhanced connectivity that would provide mutual benefit

Social Resources

10. Avoid the Avon Park Air Force Range and lands important to maintain the Range's military mission.
11. Maintain and enhance transportation connectivity to, from, and between working farms, forests, and mines; recreational areas, trails, and other eco-tourism attractions; rural employment centers; and other economically valuable rural lands.

Physical Resources

12. Follow, where feasible, existing transportation rights of way, utility corridors or easements, and other existing disturbed corridors through conservation, agricultural, and other natural lands.