

Emeralda Marsh Policies

GOAL 4 – EMERALDA MARSH

The Emerald Marsh area, including its waters, wetlands, floodplain, and pasture, is a natural resource of unique value to the people of Lake County and has been federally designated as a National Natural Landmark. Comprised of public and private lands nested between Lake Yale and Lake Griffin, the Emerald Marsh area supports a unique mosaic of wildlife habitat, functions as an important bird rookery, and provides regional ecosystem connectivity to the Oklawaha River system and Ocala National Forest.

OBJECTIVE 1.0 EMERALDA MARSH PROTECTION AREA

Lake County shall, through the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, preserve and protect the Emerald Marsh area as a natural resource of regional significance.

1.1 RECOGNITION OF EMERALDA MARSH PROTECTION AREA

The County hereby establishes the Emerald Marsh Protection Area (EMPA) depicted in Figure X, and described as follows. It is the intent of this designation to ensure long-term ecological integrity of the Emerald Marsh area through the promotion of land conservation efforts, responsible agriculture practices, and the protection of rural land use.

Legal Description:

Township 18S, Range 25E: All of sections 1-4, 9-17, 20-23, 27-29, and 32-34; sections 5, 6, 8, and 17 less lands W of the Oklawaha River; the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 24; the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 24; the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 24; the W $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 25 less lands S of Goose Prairie Road; section 26 less lands SE of Goose Prairie Road; the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 35; and

Township 19S, Range 25E: All of section 4 and 5; section 3, less lands S of CR44; the N $\frac{3}{4}$ of section 9, less lands S of CR44; section 10 less lands S of CR44; and

Township 18S, Range 26E: All of sections 4-9, 14, and 15; section 16 less SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

1.2 COORDINATE WITH STATE AND LOCAL CONSERVATION AGENCIES

The County shall coordinate with state and local conservation agencies, including but not limited to the SJRWMD and Lake County Water Authority, regarding natural resource issues that affect the health of the Emerald Marsh ecosystem. These efforts shall include coordination on water quality, water supply, flood control measures, and the relationship between such activities and the sustainability of wildlife and waterfowl habitat, as well as public access and management of preserve lands including Sawgrass Island Preserve and conservation lands held by the SJRWMD.

1.3 SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURE

The County shall support low impact agriculture within the EMPA and coordinate with existing landowners regarding the implementation of best management practices to reduce fertilizer and pesticide use. The County shall explore protective conservation easements that support sustainable agriculture consistent with natural resource protection.

1.4 SUPPORT LAND ACQUISITION WITHIN THE EMPA

The County, through its bonded natural lands acquisition program and in coordination with state programs such as the Florida Communities Trust, shall support ongoing efforts to protect environmentally-sensitive lands within the EMPA for permanent preservation through fee-simple purchase or less-than-fee conservation easements.

1.5 PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

Wetland impacts, including the depositing of fill in wetlands, shall be prohibited within the EMPA except as necessary to provide for legal ingress or egress to upland areas. In such circumstances, structural enhancements shall be required to maintain wetland connectivity and natural flow regimes.

1.6 INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

In order to protect rural character, the County shall limit the capacity of roads within the EMPA to no more than two-travel lanes. Extension of central water and sewer utilities within the EMPA shall be limited to the South Emeralda and East Emeralda Rural Transitional Districts. Development occurring at a density of one (1) dwelling unit per one (1) net acre within the South Emeralda and East Emeralda Rural Transitional Districts shall connect to central water and sewer facilities where available, and install reclaimed water lines in order to accommodate the present or future capacity to receive treated reuse water.

1.7 LAND USE STRATEGY WITHIN THE EMPA

The county shall adopt the following overlay districts and provisions for the EMPA. Notwithstanding this, no provision contained herein shall be construed as a right to develop at the maximum density or intensity described or a guarantee that a requested zoning or land use shall be granted. Additional conditions to ensure the protection of natural resources and community character as determined by the County may be required consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

Emeralda Marsh Core Conservation District

The Emeralda Core Conservation District is hereby established and identified in Exhibit X. It is the intent of this district to sustain agricultural practices and to provide for very low density development that requires minimum infrastructure and services. Unless otherwise vested, property within the Emeralda Core Conservation District, may be allowed to develop at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) net acres, or alternatively at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) net acres with PUD zoning and provided that a minimum of 25% of the net area of the development site is protected as open space.

South Emeralda Rural Transitional District

The South Emeralda Rural Transitional District is hereby established and identified in Exhibit X. It is the intent of this district to allow for transitional rural densities that provide compatibility between urban development south of the CR44 corridor and Emeralda Marsh public conservation lands to the north. Unless otherwise vested, property within the South Emeralda Rural Transitional District may be allowed to develop at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) net acres, or alternatively at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) net acres with PUD zoning and provided that a minimum of 25% of the net area of the development site is protected as open space. Property within the South Emeralda Rural Transitional District may be allowed to develop at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per one (1) net acre only if a minimum of 50% of the net area of the development site is protected as open space.

East Emeralda Rural Transitional District

The East Emeralda Rural Transitional District is hereby established and identified in Exhibit X. It is the intent of this district to allow for transitional rural densities that provide compatibility between the City

of Umatilla and public conservation lands including Sawgrass Island Preserve. Unless otherwise vested, property within the East Emeraldalda Rural Transitional District may be allowed to develop at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) net acres, or alternatively at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) net acres with PUD zoning and provided that a minimum of 25% of the net area of the development site is protected as open space. Property within the East Emeraldalda Rural Transitional District may be allowed to develop at a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit per one (1) net acre only if a minimum of 50% of the net area of the development site is protected as open space.

1.8 OPEN SPACE AND CLUSTERING

The County shall require clustering for all new development requiring PUD zoning within the EMPA, where the term clustering means that the built area of a development site is well defined and compact to enable the creation of contiguous expanses of common open space and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Within the EMPA, clustering shall be used to provide upland connectivity between wetlands, to protect corridors for wildlife movement, and to maximize buffers and open space adjacent to public conservation land. Open space created through clustering shall connect to the greatest extent possible with adjacent open space areas and public conservation land. At least 50% of the required open space on a development site shall be configured as a single contiguous tract.

1.9 DEDICATION OF OPEN SPACE

Open space required with PUD zoning within the EMPA shall be protected in perpetuity by fee-simple dedication, conservation easement, plat restriction, or similar legally recorded and binding instrument that runs with the land and establishes the conditions and restrictions on the use of the open space area.

Dedication and responsibility for maintenance of open space shall be to one or a combination of the following, which shall be designated prior to development:

- Conservation Agency such as the SJRWMD
- Non-profit conservation organization or land trust
- Lake County, subject to county approval
- Homeowners Association providing for binding legal commitments regarding preservation and management

The boundaries of the designated open space shall be clearly delineated on project site plans, including recorded plats, and marked in the field to distinguish these areas from areas suitable for development.

1.10 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STANDARDS

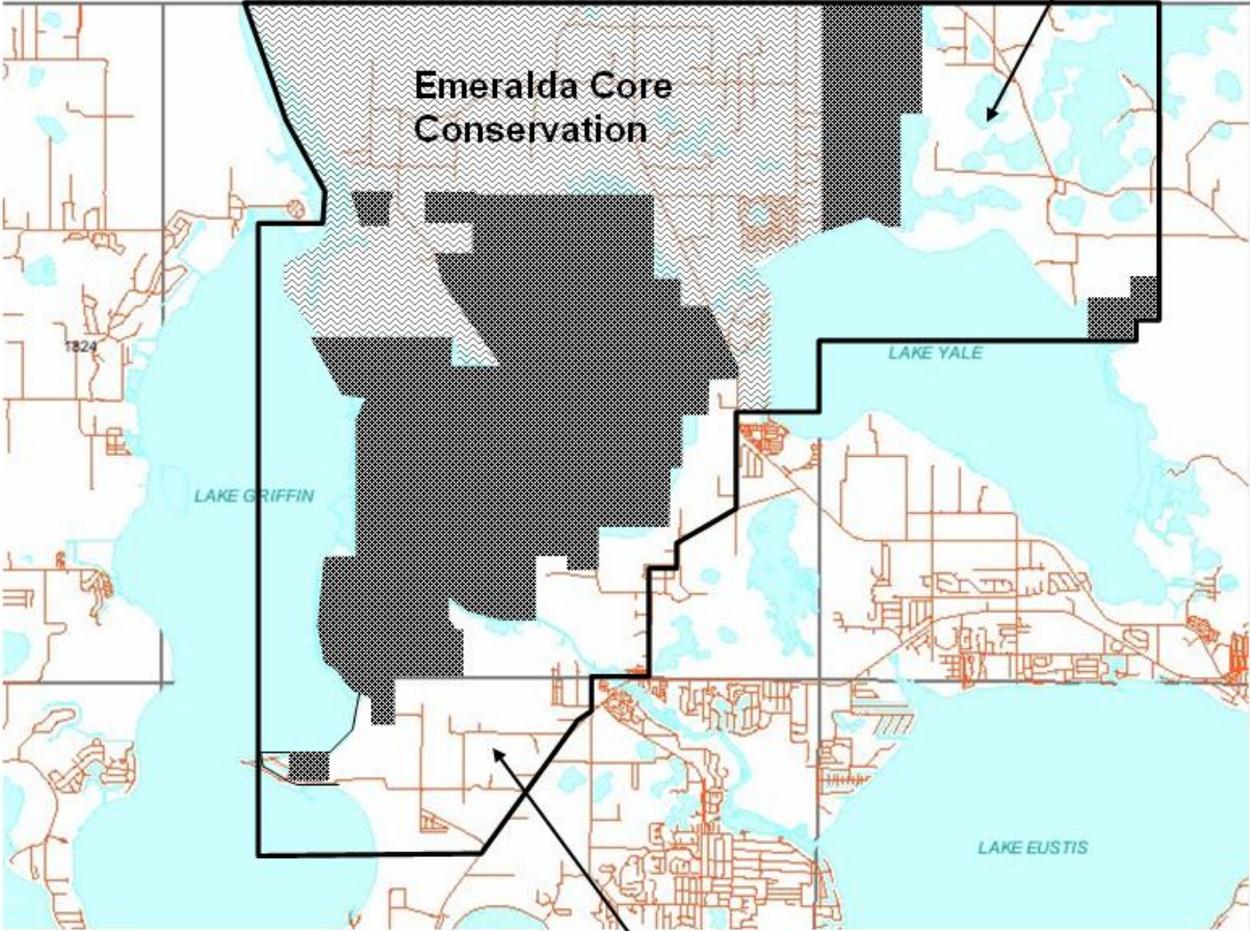
New residential development utilizing PUD zoning within the EMPA shall implement conservation subdivision design standards including:

- Clustering of dwelling units on smaller lots to create contiguous tracts of common open space for the protection of wildlife, natural habitat
- Maintain, enhance, and protect corridors for wildlife movement in coordination with adjacent properties.
- Protection of open space in perpetuity by easement, plat, or similar recorded binding instrument.
- Minimal site disturbance and alteration of terrain, through use of design techniques that protect native vegetation and minimize earth movement such as reduced pavement widths, stem-wall construction, swales, and native landscaping.

- Use of drought-tolerant Florida Friendly landscaping, and limiting lawn and landscaped areas requiring irrigation to no more than 50% of all pervious areas, including residential lots.

Emeralda Marsh Protection Area

**East Emeralda
Transitional**



 **Public Conservation**

**South Emeralda
Transitional**