

**Draft PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT  
NATURAL GROUND WATER AQUIFER RECHARGE SUB-  
ELEMENT  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES  
9J-5.011(2)**

Several premier conservation areas are located partially or wholly within Lake County, including, but not limited to the Green Swamp, the Wekiva/Ocala Greenway and the Wekiva Springshed. These fragile ecosystems are closely linked to natural resources within and beyond the county's boundaries, including the surficial and Floridan aquifer. Issues of water supply, groundwater and springshed protection are among the most important environmental considerations for the County.

The county is faced with the challenge of balancing development pressures with the preservation of the natural environment. To this end, Lake County will comply with all federal, state, and local environmental regulations and legislation.

*{The following Goal section consolidates and enhances references to studies scattered throughout the element, including former policies NAT 1.1-1, 1.1-3, 1.1-4, 1.1-5, 1.1-7, 1.1-9, 1.1-14, 1.2-3}*

## **GOAL NAT 1**

To coordinate with federal, state, and local agencies to the greatest extent possible in order to promote greater understanding of aquifer recharge, groundwater resources, and springsheds; and to support the development and implementation of Comprehensive Plan policies and Land Development Regulations to protect aquifer recharge, groundwater resources, and springsheds using best available information.

### **OBJECTIVE NAT 1.1 DATA COLLECTION AND STUDIES**

Lake County shall coordinate with federal, state, and local agencies to study, map, and describe aquifer recharge areas, the vulnerability of groundwater resources, springsheds, and karst features.

#### **Policy NAT 1.1-1: Aquifer Recharge Map and Definitions**

Lake County shall coordinate with the St. Johns River Water Management District, Southwest Florida Water Management Districts and Florida Department of Environment Protection to identify and map areas of high and significant recharge. Significant aquifer recharge within Lake County shall be defined as an annual recharge rate of greater than 13 inches per year with rapid soil permeability, as mapped by the St Johns River Water management pursuant to the Bluebelt Act (Section 193.625, Florida Statutes). High aquifer recharge shall be defined as an annual recharge rate

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of greater than 8 inches per year, as mapped by the St Johns River Water Management District.

**Policy NAT 1.1-2: Florida Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment**

Lake County shall coordinate with the Florida Geological Survey, Water Management Districts, and Department of Environmental Protection to prepare a Florida Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (FAVA) Map on a county-wide scale to determine areas within the county vulnerable to contamination of the Floridan aquifer.

Natural processes or human activities can introduce contaminants to ground water either through pollution of surface-water bodies or by infiltration through soils and sequences of sediments and rocks that overlay Florida's aquifer systems.

This map shall be prepared using technology developed by the Florida Geological Survey and designed to provide a detailed distribution of relative vulnerability based solely on natural properties of hydrogeology. The map shall not include anthropogenic factors such as land use and contaminant loading. An aquifer vulnerability model prepared using Lake County county-specific data, would help determine which areas within the county were the most and least vulnerable and allow for establishment of appropriate development standards, including the identification of primary, secondary, and tertiary protection zones as appropriate.

Applications of the FAVA map include but are not limited to well-head protection, springshed protection source-water protection, watershed and ecosystem comprehensive planning, land-use planning/zoning, land conservation and as a component of ground-water susceptibility models.

Areas Most Vulnerable to Contamination include primary and secondary protection zones within springsheds, and karst features such as springs and sinks. The Wekiva Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (WAVA) map produced by the Florida Geological Survey shall be used to identify primary, secondary zones of protection within the Wekiva Study Area.

**Policy NAT 1.1-3: Most Effective Recharge Areas within the Wekiva Study Area**

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Lake County shall utilize best available information from the St. Johns River Water Management District to identify and protect Most Effective Recharge Areas within the Wekiva Study Area described by Chapter 369, Part III, Florida Statutes. The U.S. Soil Conservation District defines Most Effective Recharge as 10-20 inches; however until such time that the St. Johns River Water Management District maps Most Effective Recharge Areas for the Wekiva Study Area, all Type "A" Soils shall be considered Most Effective Recharge pursuant to Section 11.3.1 of the Applicant's Handbook: Management and Storage of Surface Waters.

**Policy NAT 1.1-4: Study of Land Use Impacts**

Lake County shall assist the St. Johns River and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts in the preparation of reports as appropriate to evaluate the impacts of various land uses on hydrogeologic resources, including but not limited to recharge areas, groundwater, springs, wetlands, environmentally-sensitive conservation areas and land surrounding Outstanding Florida Waters. These reports shall be based on the conclusions of studies completed by appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies.

**Policy NAT 1.1-5: Intergovernmental Coordination and Technical Assistance**

Lake County shall collaborate with and provide technical assistance to Federal, State and local authorities in order to study surficial and Floridan aquifers and springshed systems, and to determine the most appropriate actions for protecting these resources. Authorities that the county shall cooperate with include but are not limited to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, St. Johns River and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts, U.S. Geological Survey, Florida Geological Survey and U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

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**OBJECTIVE 1.2    MONITORING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT**

Lake County shall coordinate with federal, state, and local agencies to establish and maintain monitoring programs and provide field support associated with the study of aquifer recharge, groundwater vulnerability, springsheds, and karst features.

**Policy NAT 1.2-1:    Aquifer Monitoring**

The County shall coordinate with the local governments and agencies including but not limited to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management Districts, U.S. Geological Survey, and Lake County Water Authority, to develop a comprehensive aquifer monitoring program. This program, using historic groundwater quality information as a base for ambient conditions, shall regularly monitor groundwater to determine the extent of future contamination, nutrient loading, or change in the potentiometric surface.

**Policy NAT 1.2-2:    Spring and Stream-to-Sink Monitoring**

Lake County shall cooperate with local governments, agencies, and interest groups (such as the Water-Action-Volunteer program), to monitor the quality and quantity of water flowing from springs and within spring runs, and also the quality and quantity of water entering aquifer through stream-to-sink features.

**Policy NAT 1.2-3:    Identification of Karst Features**

Lake County shall assist government agencies and research groups, including but not limited to the U.S Geological Survey, Florida Geological Survey, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Water Management Districts, to identify and monitor karst features.

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**GOAL NAT 2**

To maintain an adequate quality and quantity of aquifer recharge to protect potable water supplies, and ensure the protection of natural systems.

**OBJECTIVE NAT 2.1: CONSERVATION OF THE AQUIFER RESOURCE**

The County shall safeguard the quality and quantity of the surficial and Floridan aquifers, in order to protect groundwater recharge areas for the present and future water supply and ensure protection of natural systems. The following policies shall apply generally within Lake County.

**Policy NAT 2.1-1: Water Conserving Plumbing Fixtures**

The County shall require the use of low-flow plumbing devices and fixtures in new construction and renovations in accordance with the Florida Standard Building Code.

**Policy NAT 2.1-2: Golf Course Ordinance**

Lake County shall comply with the adopted Golf Course ordinance as it applies to reuse and drought management.

**Policy NAT 2.1-3: Hydrologic Determination of Land Use**

The hydrology of a site should be utilized to determine land use as opposed to land use determining hydrology. This entails discouraging any land use that would significantly alter ground water levels, recharge, water quality; or have an adverse effect on the environment.

**Policy NAT 2.1-4: Education**

Lake County, through the Public Outreach Program of Environmental Services, shall participate in enhancing the function and quality of the education of its citizens about:

- 1) the current water conservation policies,
- 2) fragility of the aquifer,
- 3) methods to reuse and conserve water,
- 4) well-abandonment problems and rules,
- 5) benefits of drought resistant plants (xeriscape<sup>TM</sup>); and

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6) methods of reducing pollution and nutrient loading through an education program that consists of, at a minimum, brochures, a speakers bureau, and slide show.

**OBJECTIVE NAT 2.2: PROTECTION OF HIGH RECHARGE AND AREAS OF AQUIFER VULNERABILITY**

Lake County shall recognize the need to provide special protection of high recharge areas and areas most vulnerable to aquifer contamination, including karst features. The county shall protect both the quality and quantity of groundwater in these areas to sustain potable water supplies and ensure preservation of natural systems such as springs, spring runs, wetlands, and the communities they support. The following policies pertain to areas of high recharge and areas most vulnerable to aquifer contamination, including but not limited to the Wekiva Study Area.

**Policy NAT 2.2-1: Secure Aquifer Recharge Lands and Sensitive Karst Features**

Where feasible, Lake County shall purchase or secure conservation easements on high and significant aquifer recharge lands, on areas of aquifer vulnerability, and on lands that contain sensitive karst features such as sinks or springs. The county shall actively pursue property acquisition to preserve natural recharge while also providing a direct benefit to the public.

**Policy NAT 2.2-2: Site Specific Review**

Lake County shall, at the applicant's expense, seek a site specific determination by an independent State-licensed geologist to determine whether a site lies within a bona fide high or significant aquifer recharge area, an area that is most vulnerable to contamination, or a Most Effective Recharge Area pursuant to St Johns River Water Management District Rule 40C-41.063.

**Policy NAT 2.2-3: Provide Net Retention for Aquifer Recharge**

Development within an area of high or significant recharge or in an area most vulnerable to contamination areas shall be required to maintain pre-development net retention in a manner that protects ground and surface water quality. The use of porous pavement and concrete, turf blocks and innovative technologies shall be encouraged as a method for fulfilling this policy. Exemptions may

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be given for agricultural activities utilizing Best Management Practices adopted by FDEP, USDA, SCS, and IFAS that protect ground and surface water quality. Notwithstanding this policy, the county shall require compliance with all agency rules adopted within the Wekiva Study Area.

**Policy NAT 2.2-4: Recharge Characteristics for Development**

For a development site located in an area of high or significant recharge, the County shall require that post-development recharge volume conditions approximate pre-development recharge volume conditions. Within the Wekiva Study Area, the County shall require that the first three inches of water be retained on site, or as an alternative, that a hydrological survey be conducted to demonstrate that post-development recharge volume is equal to or greater than pre-development recharge volume, consistent with St Johns River Water Management District rules.

**Policy NAT 2.2-5: Overlay Design Criteria**

The County shall develop and enact into the Future Land Use Element and Land Development Regulations, an overlay classification which sets specific design criteria and standards to protect the function of high and significant aquifer recharge areas and protect areas most vulnerable to contamination.

The following shall be addressed in regulating development and creating land development regulations:

1. requirements to minimize impervious surfaces (including foot pads) considering open space incentives, pervious parking areas, and maintenance of existing native vegetation and/or use of native or water wise plant materials suitable for on-site ecological and soil conditions;
2. incentives to utilize on-site retention of rain and storm water for active and passive irrigation;
3. incentives to implement “right plant – right place” and water wise landscaping standards;
4. minimum open space standards;
5. design standards for natural water retention areas;
6. establish standards to ensure water quality.
7. protection of the aquifer from saltwater intrusion;

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8. activities regarding the use of pesticides and fertilizers, including but not limited to enforcement of the adopted Golf Course Ordinance.
9. requirements that protect sensitive karst features such as springs and sink as undeveloped open space with ample buffering and native vegetation.
10. requirements regarding the use and maintenance of onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (OSTDS).

**Policy NAT 2.2-6: Developments within High and Significant Recharge Areas**

The County shall require that all development within high or significant recharge areas or in an area most vulnerable to contamination comply with the following measures, unless there is conflict with code provisions for buffers between developments, site stormwater requirements, and parking:

1. stormwater retention facilities shall be located in those areas with the highest rate of percolation, except in areas that contain sensitive karst features such as sinks which provide direct conveyance to the aquifer;
2. natural vegetation and/or use of water wise plant materials suitable for on-site ecological and soil conditions shall be used for required buffers, open space area shall be maintained in its natural state and protected from disruption during site construction; and
3. pervious parking materials, grass parking areas, and smaller parking stalls shall be permitted where it can be demonstrated to adequately serve the need of on-site use and result in greater recharge than under current code requirements.

**Policy Nat 2.2-6: Septic Tank Program**

In order to reduce the impact of septic tanks on sensitive groundwater resources, Lake County shall coordinate with the Department of Health to establish and implement a dedicated septic tank maintenance program in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, the Wekiva River Protection Area, the Wekiva Study Area and in Areas Most Vulnerable to Contamination. This program shall including but not be limited to septic tank inspection, repair, alteration, maintenance, regular-scheduled pumping, and siting requirements.

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**Policy NAT 2.2-7: Irrigation Rain Sensors**

Lake County shall require irrigation rain sensors on all new irrigation systems in accordance with the Florida Standard Building Code.

**Policy NAT 2.2-8: Golf Courses**

In order to ensure the development of environmentally friendly golf course construction, the county shall require golf course developers to meet requirements of the Audubon International Signature Program and enroll in its monitoring and evaluation program. This policy shall apply to all new golf courses constructed within the Wekiva River Protection Area, Wekiva Study Area, and Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern.

**Policy NAT 2.2-9: Sinkholes**

The County shall require that if development occurs on property containing a sinkhole or a stream or creek connecting to a sinkhole, a minimum 175 foot natural buffer shall be preserved on either side of the sinkhole, stream or creek, and necessary stormwater treatment occur outside of the natural buffer to contain nutrient and pollution runoff.

**Policy NAT 2.2-10: Homeowner Information**

As a condition of development approval, the County shall require that when development occurs within or adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas (including high recharge areas), homeowner's documents will be required to address the nature of the sensitivity and how to protect the natural features of the site. The County shall also require that the developer prepare and provide for distribution, brochures to enhance public awareness of these resources.

**Policy NAT 2.2-11: Wekiva Study Area**

Lake County shall support the protection of water quantity, quality, and hydrology within the Wekiva Study Area pursuant to Chapter 369, Part III, Florida Statutes, and shall amend the Comprehensive

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Plan and Land Development Regulations as appropriate to address statutory requirements and to facilitate the implementation of agency rules. Notwithstanding policies within this element, the County shall support and require compliance with rules adopted by the St Johns River Water Management District, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Health.

**OBJECTIVE NAT 2.3: PREVENTION OF CONTAMINATION OF AQUIFER RESOURCES FROM COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS, AND INDUSTRIAL USE**

The County shall evaluate existing and proposed commercial, business, and industrial land use to achieve a higher degree of protection for ground water resources.

**Policy NAT 2.3-1: Comprehensive Plan and LDR Updates**

Lake County shall amend its Comprehensive Plan and update its Land Development Regulations, using information collected by the DEP and other agencies during future ground water quality studies, to protect the aquifer. These updates shall address but not be limited to:

1. public wellfield siting, per the adopted Wellhead Protection Ordinance;
2. siting of industrial land uses which use hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste;
3. siting of additional household hazardous waste collection facilities for households and conditionally exempt small quantity generators of hazardous waste;
4. protection of the aquifer from saltwater intrusion;
5. activities regarding the use of pesticides and fertilizers, including but not limited to enforcement of the adopted Golf Course Ordinance.

**Policy NAT 2.3-2: Continued Enforcement of Regulations**

Lake County shall continue to cooperate with State and Federal agencies in enforcing regulations pertaining to the protection of the surficial and Floridan aquifers from regulated materials and wastes, including those material governed and/or equal, but receiving special exemption under, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Comprehensive Environmental

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Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), and/or other Federal, State and Local codes requiring the management of materials that may be harmful or dangerous to the environment.

**Policy NAT 2.3-3: Development of Local Regulations**

Lake County shall develop local regulations for inclusion into the Land Development Regulations, including a Lake County scale version of the State's FAVA map, to augment State and Federal regulations pertaining to the protection of the surficial and Floridan aquifers for commercial, business, and industrial use.

**Policy NAT 2.3-4: Disposal of Regulated and Hazardous Waste**

Lake County shall cooperate with all State and Federal authorities in the regulation and disposal of regulated and hazardous wastes as defined in 9J5.003 (38) F.A.C. by participating in programs at the local level.

**Policy NAT 2.3-5: Regulation of Hazardous Wastes in Significant Aquifer Recharge Areas and in Areas Most Vulnerable to Contamination**

Lake County shall prohibit the disposal of hazardous wastes in all areas of the County. Small quantity generator (<1000 kg per month) businesses that use hazardous materials or generate waste shall be regulated to ensure that proper handling and disposal practices are followed. The location of new businesses that use hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste shall be restricted within significant aquifer recharge areas and in an Area Most Vulnerable to Contamination. Large quantity generators (>1000 kg per month) shall be prohibited in significant aquifer recharge areas and in an Area Most Vulnerable to Contamination.

**Policy NAT 2.3-6: Compliance With Local Regulations to Provide Enforcement Capabilities**

The County will provide enforcement capabilities and procedures to achieve a higher degree of protection for the County's ground water resources.

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**Policy NAT 2.3-7: Coordinate Facilities producing, using, handling and storing regulated materials with Land Use**

The County shall utilize the information provided by the inventory of facilities producing, using, handling and storing regulated materials in making land use decisions to avoid incompatible development in areas with high ground water pollution potential.

**Policy NAT 2.3-7: Landfill Monitoring**

The County shall continue the present well monitoring program at the County's landfill to determine groundwater and surface water pollutant levels and shall expand the number of monitoring wells concurrent with any expansion of the landfills and any future establishment of landfills/monofills. Monitoring networks shall be properly maintained and upgraded in conjunction with technological advances.

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**GOAL NAT 3**

To ensure adequate protection of springshed areas vital to the health of Florida springs. Lake County shall recognize high recharge areas and karst features that contribute to spring flow and establish specific policies that provide for the long term protection of this resource. The following objectives and policies apply to springshed systems within the county, including but not limited to the Wekiva Study Area.

**OBJECTIVE NAT 3.1: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The county shall assign future land uses and establish development standards that are protective of springsheds through appropriate revision of the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations. In areas of undeveloped high ground water recharge within the identified springsheds, existing low density and intensity land uses shall be preferentially maintained as the best option for protection of the water quality and quantity.

**Policy NAT 3.1-1: Identification of Springshed Protection Zones**

The county shall recognize primary and secondary springshed protection zones identified by the Department of Environmental Protection Wekiva Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (WAVA) for the Wekiva Study Area, and shall cooperate with state and local agencies to identify primary and secondary protection zones within other springshed areas of the county.

**Policy NAT 3.1-2: Protocol for Determining Suitability**

The county shall develop protocol for determining suitability, with respect to spring system protection, of a particular site for proposed land uses during review of applications for future land use change (comprehensive plan amendment) or rezoning.

**Policy NAT 3.1-3: Zone of Protection Ordinances**

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The County shall develop and implement zone of protection ordinances and land development regulations to protect springsheds and areas that drain into sinkholes and other karst features. Regulations shall be developed in coordination with and using best available information from the Department of Community Affairs, Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management Districts, Department of Health, and Lake County Water Authority; and shall be based at a minimum upon the following criteria.

- a. Aquifer geology within the springshed
- b. The potential to contaminate or contribute nutrient loading to groundwater and spring systems
- c. The capacity to contain or eliminate the hazard of contamination or nutrient loading to groundwater and spring systems
- d. The objective of maintaining pre and post development recharge volume.

**Policy NAT 3.1-4: Intergovernmental Coordination**

Develop regional approaches and measures in cooperation with municipal governments, the Lake County Water Authority, and state agencies necessary to protect and restore groundwater and springs through intergovernmental coordination element of the comprehensive plan.

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**OBJECTIVE NAT 2.2: STORMWATER PROTECTION STRATEGIES**

In developed portion of identified high ground water recharge within a springshed, the County will establish specific stormwater protection strategies.

**Policy NAT 3.2-1: Springshed High Recharge Areas**

The County will actively pursue the following actions within developed areas of springshed high recharge areas:

- Institute stepped-up stormwater management practices and use of karst-specific and low impact design options through design and redesign of county operated stormwater management facilities and through added treatment criteria for new development or redevelopment areas;
- Heighten public education targeted to homeowners regarding proper lawn and landscaped area fertilization and irrigation;
- Emphasize use of natural xeriscape™ approaches to lawn and landscape design; Employ active street sweeping to collect lawn and landscape waste before it enters stormwater drainage systems;
- Establish water conservation programs; and
- Foster local stewardship "adopt a springs" type programs and other incentive and volunteer springshed awareness and protection programs.

**Policy NAT 3.2-2: Stormwater Management in Sensitive Karst Areas**

- Adopt the SJRWMD's sensate karst procedure, or equivalent, for the design and construction of stormwater management systems in karst areas.
- Provide pre-treatment, in the form of swales, berms, ponds, or dry basins, to runoff that currently discharges directly into sinkholes, solution pipes, or springs.
- In the most sensitive karst areas, consult DEP, IFAS, and DACS to review the use of agricultural chemicals to ensure that recommended application rates are protective of water

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quality in areas where ground water is particularly vulnerable.

**OBJECTIVE NAT 3.3: SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL WITHIN SPRINGSHEDS**

Lake County shall regulate sewage systems and the disposal of waste within springsheds.

**Policy NAT 3.3-1: Enhanced Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS)**

Within the most vulnerable areas of springsheds, Lake County shall permit only alternative OSTDS technologies, which are currently capable of removing up to 75 percent of nitrogen from OSTDS effluent. Lake County shall encourage the use of more efficient nitrogen-removal technologies as they become available. This policy shall apply but not be limited to primary and secondary protection zones within the Wekiva Study Area consistent with Department of Health, Department of Environmental Protection, and St. Johns River Water Management District rules.

**Policy NAT 3.3-2: Maintenance of Septic Tank and OSTDS**

Lake County shall coordinate with the Department of Health to establish and implement an inspection, maintenance, and regular pump-out program for septic systems and OSTDS located within the most vulnerable areas of springsheds. This policy shall apply but not be limited to primary and secondary protection zones within the Wekiva Study Area consistent with Department of Health, Department of Environmental Protection, and St. Johns River Water Management District rules.

**Policy NAT 3.3-3: Central Sewer Systems**

Lake County shall require compliance with all Florida Department of Environmental Protection, St Johns River Water Management District, and Florida Department of Health regulations relating to

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the siting, operation, and maintenance of central sewer systems within springsheds.

**Policy NAT 3.3-4: Disposal of Sludge and Residual Wastewater**

Lake County shall prohibit land application of sludge or wastewater residuals in areas most vulnerable to springsheds. Land application of sludge and wastewater residuals shall be prohibited within primary and secondary protection zones of the Wekiva Study Area.

**Policy NAT 3.3-5: Rapid Infiltration Basins**

Lake County shall prohibit the construction of rapid infiltration basins within the known primary protection zones of springsheds, including but not limited to the Wekiva Study Area.