

- (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.
- (d) For purposes of applying this limitation, a property shall include all contiguous land under common ownership or control. Properties may not be disaggregated, processed in piecemeal fashion, reviewed or developed in any manner that results in lesser upland protections than would otherwise be required under this Objective.

OBJECTIVE 4.10 - STRATEGIC ECOSYSTEMS

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

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.

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.

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](#).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

5.0 HUMAN-RELATED RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE 5.1 - ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

Provide for energy efficiency in human activities, land uses, and development patterns in order to reduce overall energy requirements for the County and its residents.

Policy 5.1.1 The County shall encourage the development and use of economically feasible and environmentally safe, innovative energy sources and management techniques for housing, transportation, commerce, and government offices by providing amendments to building codes, where applicable, that facilitate the use of such sources and techniques and through promotion of applicable tax incentives.

Policy 5.1.2 The development regulations shall be revised to encourage and accommodate site design techniques which provide for passive heating and cooling in construction and landscape design.

Policy 5.1.3 A safe, practical system of walkways and/or bikeways shall be established in conjunction with County road improvement projects within and between activity centers within the Gainesville Urban Area and high density residential areas. Wide use of public