

# Nassau County 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## **Conservation Element (CS)**

### **Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### **Goal**

**Conserve, protect and enhance the natural resources that are important to the economy, health, and quality of life of County residents, ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations.**

#### **OBJECTIVE CS.01**

The County will ensure that it has adequate water supplies, of a quality sufficient for its intended use to meet existing and projected future demands.

#### **Policy CS.01.01**

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#### **Policy CS.01.02**

The County shall only permit future land development to proceed if adequate water supply capacity is available to accommodate the impacts of development.

#### **Policy CS.01.03**

The County's Land Development Code (LDC) shall include provisions, such as reduced densities and reduced impervious surfaces in areas of high aquifer recharge to protect the functions of natural drainage systems and natural groundwater aquifer recharge areas, as identified by the St. Johns River Water Management District.

#### **Policy CS.01.04**

The County shall, upon request, cooperate with and assist the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to facilitate the enforcement of water shortage emergency declaration, orders, and plans pursuant to Ch. 373.609 Florida Statutes; and Rule 40C-21, Florida Administrative Code.

#### **Policy CS.01.05**

The County shall continue to enforce the Uniform Energy Conservation Construction Code that requires water conserving plumbing fixtures and devices in new construction.

**Policy CS.01.06**

The County shall, in cooperation with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), include provisions in its Land Development Code (LDC) shall to incentivize the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as bio-retention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable pavements, to reduce the impact of built areas and promote the natural movement of water within the watershed.

## **OBJECTIVE CS.02**

**The County shall protect natural communities and ecological systems that provide important natural functions for maintenance of environmental quality and wildlife habitats.**

### **Policy CS.02.01**

The County shall maintain or expand regulations in the Land Development Code (LDC) that provide for tree protection standards on Amelia Island.

### **Policy CS.02.02**

The County shall adopt regulations in the Land Development Code (LDC) that require clustering of development in order to preserve wetlands, important native vegetative communities, and other environmentally sensitive communities, by reducing or prohibiting development in the sensitive areas of the property.

### **Policy CS.02.03**

The County will monitor construction sites for NPDES requirements including the use of temporary fabric barriers or similar means to mitigate the impacts of silt and untreated stormwater runoff.

### **Policy CS.02.04**

The Land Development Code shall include requirements to preserve/replace the natural/native vegetation along perennial streams and waterways as defined in best management practices for silviculture to maintain the ecological functions of the area, to control erosion, and to retard runoff.

### **Policy CS.02.05**

For existing development that has a direct impact on adjacent wetlands and water bodies, retrofitting for stormwater control shall be required when a building permit is issued for construction, rehabilitation or reconstruction activities, if the cost of the activity is 60% or more of the structure's value.

### **Policy CS.02.06**

Wetlands identified by the most recent SJRWMD land use and cover inventory are mapped as part of the Future Land Use Map series. All wetlands, as verified by jurisdictional field delineation at the time of project permitting, are designated as Conservation I on the Future Land Use Map and shall be protected by policies contained within this Plan.

### **Policy CS.02.07**

Wetlands shall be defined pursuant to the methodology prescribed in Chapter 373 Florida Statutes and Rule 62-343, F.A.C.

**Policy CS.02.08**

Incompatible land uses shall be directed away from wetlands by the following mechanisms:

- A) Development shall first avoid wetland impacts and then minimize impacts when they are unavoidable.
- B) Upland buffers required for development adjacent to wetlands shall be as described by Future Land Use Element Policy FL.04.01(A-J).
- C) The Land Development Code (LDC) shall require the clustering of non-agricultural land uses away from wetlands.

**Policy CS.02.09**

Where appropriate, freshwater wetlands shall be incorporated into stormwater management plans in order to ensure the continuity of natural flow ways.

**Policy CS.02.10**

Proposed development on parcels containing wetlands shall direct land uses away from wetlands by clustering the development to maintain the largest contiguous wetland area practicable and to preserve the pre-development wetland conditions. Proposed development shall first seek to avoid wetland impacts and then to minimize impacts when they are unavoidable consistent with state and/or federal permitting programs. (Note: This policy is not intended to duplicate any federal or state wetlands permitting program).

**Policy CS.02.11**

Where projects have unavoidable adverse impacts to wetlands, mitigation shall be required in order to ensure that the project does not result in a net loss of wetland functions. Mitigation requirements shall be determined using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Methodology (UMAM) adopted by DEP and binding on local governments.

**Policy CS.02.12**

The policies of the Conservation Element shall not be construed to prevent timbering operations so long as timbering operations utilize Best Management Practices specified in the most recent Silviculture Best Practices Handbook published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry to minimize the effects on the wetlands.

**Policy CS.02.13**

Stormwater management systems, including rerouting and maintenance of drainage ditches and control of development in areas of sheetflow, shall be used where appropriate, to enhance the hydrologic conditions of stressed or impacted wetlands.

**Policy CS.02.14**

All construction in floodplains and floodways shall be required to comply with FEMA, Federal Insurance Administration, and County building codes.

**Policy CS.02.15**

Silviculture activities shall be encouraged to follow the best management practices outlined in the most recent Silviculture Best Management Practices Handbook published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry.

**Policy CS.02.16**

Waterfront developments shall be designed to ensure that stormwater runoff and erosion do not affect ambient water quality of adjacent waters in accordance with Chapters 381 and 62-600, F.A.C.

### **OBJECTIVE CS.03**

**The County shall seek to preserve and expand its “green infrastructure” by creating and protecting a network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, greenways, and other natural areas which sustain clean air, water, and natural resources: provide for a sustainable economy; provide recreational opportunities and enrich the quality of life for County residents and visitors.**

#### **Policy CS.03.01**

The County should actively seek to acquire and/or manage natural lands for its green infrastructure that can provide the strategic connection of ecosystem components that are crucial for maintaining the values and services of natural systems. This may be achieved through purchase, donation, conservation easement, clustering of development rights on the least sensitive areas of a site, public/private partnerships, development agreements or development orders.

#### **Policy CS.03.02**

The County should consider the establishment of a land acquisition fund for the public acquisition of important areas of green infrastructure.

#### **Policy CS.03.03**

In order to avoid habitat fragmentation, roads crossings within areas designated Conservation (CSV I and II) on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) will be minimized and incorporate fences and other features to direct wildlife to safe crossings.

#### **Policy CS.03.04**

Incentives shall be included in the Land Development Code (LDC) for the sale, donation, or granting of conservation easements on suitable sites that will contribute to the County’s green infrastructure. These incentives shall give priority to sites that may provide strategic connections of ecosystem components, including links between nature reserves, parks, cultural and historic sites, natural wetlands, beaches and other water bodies. Non-linking sites may be considered to help preserve natural floodplains, wetlands, and native habitat or wildlife movement routes.

**OBJECTIVE CS.04**

**The County shall protect the water resources of the County from contamination by industrial wastewater disposal and sewage effluent disposal systems.**

**Policy CS.04.01**

New septic tank systems must be permitted prior to the issuance of a building permit and inspected and approved by the County Health Department prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for any structure.

**Policy CS.04.02**

The Land Development Code (LDC) shall continue to maintain a minimum 100- foot horizontal setback for septic systems from the St. Marys River.

## **OBJECTIVE CS.05**

**Throughout the planning period, water quality relating to the impacts of point and non-point pollution sources to surface waters within the County will be maintained or improved.**

### **Policy CS.05.01**

The Land Development Code (LDC) shall contain provisions to ensure adequate retention/detention of stormwater runoff to maintain surface water quality, to ensure percolation and reduce adverse impacts to drainage canals, surface water, and groundwater. *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System* (NPDES) baseline and target criteria shall be incorporated as applicable.

### **Policy CS.05.02**

The County shall monitor its closed landfills in compliance with standards established by federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines.



## **OBJECTIVE CS.06**

**The County shall conserve, appropriately use and protect fisheries, wildlife, wildlife habitat, marine habitat, and native plant communities in a healthy environment and for the enjoyment of future generations.**

### **Policy CS.06.01**

The County shall seek to acquire management agreements for flatwoods and forests of the St. Mary's River Basin that would favor the continued management of the timber resources on a sustainable, long term basis, applying Best Management Practices as described in the most recent Florida Division of Forestry publication: Silviculture Best Management Practices Handbook.

### **Policy CS.06.02**

The County shall request that the Florida Division of Forestry, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and other appropriate agencies work together with landowners to ensure proper management of endangered and threatened species of plants, fish, wildlife, and their habitat in which they are located. These agencies shall also be requested to assist in development of the County's land development regulations and future ordinances for protection of these resources. The County will participate in the implementation of land development regulations and incentives/disincentives necessary to protect endangered and threatened species and the habitat in which they are located, such as establishing a beach lighting ordinance, the use of greenways and other natural buffers, and reduced densities or intensities of uses adjacent to preserved habitat in order to conserve wildlife populations and habitat.

### **Policy CS.06.03**

The County shall include provisions in the Land Development Code that encourage the use of drought tolerant and native vegetation in landscape design for future developments.

### **Policy CS.06.04**

The County shall coordinate with appropriate agencies to prohibit or limit marinas and prohibit discharges under applicable law in legislatively designated Outstanding Florida Waters, Class II Waters, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other sensitive areas designated for protection.

### **Policy CS.06.05**

Marinas and ports proposed for siting adjacent to Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) designated manatee sanctuaries, foraging areas, or in or adjacent to freshwater or warm water discharge habitat areas must receive DEP approval prior to requesting County permits for construction.

**Policy CS.06.06**

The County's Land Development Code (LDC) shall contain provisions to require that developments proposed adjacent to, aquatic preserves, wildlife sanctuaries, wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, state or national preserves, state forests, or publicly owned parks or gardens in the County shall be environmentally compatible in order to conserve wildlife populations and habitat through the use of buffers, lower densities and intensities of use, adjacent to boundaries, etc.

**Policy CS.06.07**

The County shall cooperate and seek partnerships with its adjacent jurisdictions, Federal and State agencies, non-profit organizations and private landowners to retain the significant habitats for native wildlife and vegetation. If on-site habitat of threatened or endangered species should be disturbed by new development, similar habitat should be protected, through land bank mitigation, with an emphasis on viability by virtue of its size, configuration, and connecting habitat.

**Policy CS.06.08**

The County shall seek an active role in the management of lands owned by the State of Florida, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and other public agencies to ensure the maximum enjoyment and benefit to County residents from the use and management of these lands.

**OBJECTIVE CS.07**

**The County will ensure that air quality shall be maintained or improved throughout the County, by meeting or exceeding those minimum standards established by state and federal agencies.**

**Policy CS.07.01**

All commercial and industrial uses located in the County shall be required to meet or exceed the air quality standards established by state and federal agencies.

**Policy CS.07.02**

To minimize the impact of vehicular traffic on air quality methods should be investigated to reduce vehicle traffic by including bikeways, pedestrian ways, public transportation, and other means into the County's transportation system where applicable.

## **OBJECTIVE CS.08**

**The County shall promote water and energy conservation strategies to support the protection of the County's natural resources**

### **Policy CS.08.01**

The County shall encourage energy-efficient land use patterns within the Urban Development Area and Rural Transitioning Areas as shown on the Development and Preservation Framework found in the background data and analysis for this Plan, promoting a compact mixture of residential and non-residential uses in order to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Policy CS.08.02**

The County shall encourage energy efficiency in the design and construction of new housing, and shall consider integration of the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System or another nationally recognized green building rating system into the Land Development Code to promote sustainable site development, water savings, and energy efficiency.

### **Policy CS.08.03**

The County shall consider a requirement that buildings financed by, constructed by, or substantially renovated by the County be designed or retrofitted to meet the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, or another nationally recognized green building rating system.

### **Policy CS.08.04**

The County shall, through the Land Development Code, promote the use of renewable energy resources by allowing appropriate placement of structures for the generation of wind and solar energy to be permitted in residential areas.

### **Policy CS.08.05**

The County shall adopt provisions in the Land Development Code to promote the use of Florida Friendly Landscaping techniques and native or adapted plants in order to reduce potable water consumption for irrigation for new development.

### **Policy CS.08.06**

The County shall promote the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques approved by the St. Johns River Water Management District within new subdivisions in order to protect the water resources of the County, preserve open space, minimize land disturbance and link green infrastructure components.

**Policy CS.08.07**

The County shall promote the use of Energy Star or equivalent high-efficiency appliances and fixtures to reduce energy use in public and private buildings.

**Policy CS.08.08**

The County shall continue to promote those land uses that sequester carbon emissions, such as agriculture and timber production, therefore improving the air quality of the County.

**OBJECTIVE CS.09**

**The County will ensure that soil and water resources for agriculture and silviculture will be conserved and managed.**

**Policy CS.09.01**

The County will support and work with the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office to develop methods and educate the agricultural community about soil conservation and erosion control practices.

**Policy CS.09.02**

The County shall coordinate with the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), and the County Extension Agent to explore programs that will protect the integrity of agricultural land and strengthen the County's agricultural base.

**OBJECTIVE CS.10**

**The County shall conserve, appropriately use and protect mineral deposits of economic value.**

**Policy CS.10.01**

Impacts from mining operations within the County's wetlands shall be minimized, through avoidance of disruption of occupied endangered or threatened species habitat or through requiring restoration of similar habitat when mining is approved in forested wetland. Mining operations and restoration of mined areas must meet the standards of Rule 62C-16.0051 F.A.C. For mining in wetlands, these standards include Rule 62C-16.0051 (5), (6), (7), (9) and (10) F.A.C. Any mining approval by the County will be subject to approval from environmental permitting agencies and local government.

**Policy CS.10.02**

The County shall prohibit any mining operations which would negatively impact the quality and quantity of groundwater supplies of existing users.

**Policy CS.10.03**

Mining operations shall be permitted only in the Industrial land use category.

**OBJECTIVE CS.11**

**The County shall take appropriate measures to safeguard its residents and natural resources from dangers of hazardous materials.**

**Policy CS.11.01**

Commercial and industrial establishments which use, treat, store, generate or transport toxic or hazardous substances shall submit annual reports, as required by state and federal regulations, which identify the materials and how these materials will be handled and disposed.



**OBJECTIVE CS.12**

**The County will coordinate with the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources to protect historic and archaeological resources within the County.**

**Policy CS.12.01**

The County shall maintain an inventory of historic resources within the County based on information obtained from the Florida Master Site File maintained by the Florida Dept. of State.

**Policy CS.12.02**

The County shall protect and preserve known significant archaeological and historic resources by pursuing state funds for the purchase of specific sites in eminent danger of destruction by the encroachment of development.

**Policy CS.12.03**

The County shall provide incentives in the Land Development Code to encourage the preservation and sensitive redevelopment of historic areas.