




Interoffice Memorandum

**AGENDA ITEM**

July 22, 2021

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings  
–AND–  
County Commissioners

FROM: Jon V. Weiss, P.E., Director  
Planning, Environmental, and Development  
Services Department 

**CONTACT PERSON: David D. Jones, P.E., CEP, Manager  
Environmental Protection Division  
407-836-1406**

SUBJECT: August 10, 2021 – Work Session  
Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Presentation

Orange County has been acquiring Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) through its Green PLACE program since the mid-1990s. Since the program's inception, over 23,000 acres of ESL have been acquired. The importance of continuing to acquire additional ESL is supported by the Mayor's Transition Team Report and the Sustainable Operations & Resilience Action Plan. Acquisition of ESL will ensure that Orange County remains an ecologically, economically, and socially resilient community, and is a key element of the County's smart growth vision.

On January 26, 2021, a work session was provided to the Board which included an overview of the Green PLACE Program; currently identified corridors for additional land acquisition; the process for identifying and acquiring ESL; and potential funding strategies for acquiring additional ESL properties. During the January 26, 2021 work session, the Board requested Environmental Protection Division to provide a follow-up work session regarding the Administrative Regulation and public engagement.

At this second work session, staff will present information on proposed revisions to Administrative Regulation 11.07.01, which covers ESL acquisition (Attachment 1); the process for evaluating and scoring ESL being considered for acquisition (Attachment 2); and a proposed Resolution creating a Green PLACE Advisory Board (Attachment 3). This work session will allow the Environmental Protection Division to obtain Board direction in order to refine the documents noted above prior to coming back to the Board for approval.

This item is for informational purposes only; no action is required.

DDJ/JVW: dj

1 **11.07.01 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS ACQUISITION**

2  
3 I. POLICY

4 A. Since 1992, it has been the policy of Orange County that the acquisition of environmentally  
5 sensitive lands is an important and appropriate role for government to assume and that environmentally  
6 sensitive lands are important to the health and well-being of the citizens and the natural environment.

7 B.. The Board deems it necessary to re-evaluate, as necessary, these environmentally sensitive lands  
8 ~~pursuant to based on~~ certain ecological criteria, ~~evaluate~~ newly proposed land acquisitions, and if necessary,  
9 ~~and evaluate~~ the results of purchase negotiations, to ensure that acquisition of environmentally sensitive  
10 property complies with certain standards.

11 C.. ~~A portion of the Whether a Sales Tax or other funding source, has been dedicated towards~~  
12 ~~environmentally sensitive lands and it is necessary to ensure that proceeds from the Public Service Tax~~  
13 ~~Bond issue the expenditures of County funds are applied solely appropriately toward the acquisition of land~~  
14 and construction improvements thereto for environmental, ecological, and recreational purposes, including  
15 but not limited to, associated appraisal survey, title and due diligence investigation costs of these  
16 environmentally sensitive lands.

17 D. It is necessary to ensure that whether a Sales Tax or other funding source, from the Public  
18 ~~Service Tax Bond Issue~~ are effectively and efficiently expended for acquisition of environmentally sensitive  
19 lands such that the greatest public benefit is obtained for the least cost.

20

21 II. PROCEDURES

22 A. The County Administrator or designee shall have the following responsibilities:

23 1. Identify environmentally sensitive lands based on the criteria set forth in Section II.C<sub>2</sub>  
24 below. Purchase negotiations and due diligence investigations shall be conducted for sites so  
25 identified. For the purpose of this Regulation, due diligence shall mean but not be limited to  
26 independently conducted appraisals, surveys, title search, environmental audits and any other items  
27 deemed necessary for acquisition. All properties identified shall be treated equally for purposes of  
28 acquisition in order to create competition among sellers for scarce funds.

29 2. Based on the results of purchase negotiations and the due diligence conducted by the  
30 Orange County Real Estate Management Division, Risk Management Division, Environmental  
31 Protection Division, or other appropriate County or State agencies may comment to the Board of  
32 County Commissioners in connection with each specific property purchase to be made with County  
33 ~~funds from the Public Service Tax Bond proceeds.~~

34 3. Evaluate new lands proposed for acquisition by property owners or other entities.

35 4. Prepare an annual report for the Board of County Commissioners on the status of the  
36 environmentally sensitive lands acquisition program. The annual report shall also include an  
37 evaluation of the program.

38

39

40 B. ~~Process for new parcel evaluation-Application Process for New Properties:~~

41 ~~Persons or organizations who wish the County to consider new lands for donation or~~  
42 ~~acquisition shall submit a request to the Manager of the Orange County Environmental Protection Division~~  
43 ~~or their designee. completed application to the County Administrator or his designee. Application forms~~  
44 ~~may be obtained from the Environmental Protection Division. The County Administrator The Manager of~~  
45 ~~the Orange County Environmental Protection Division or designee shall review each request and conduct~~  
46 ~~an evaluation within 6 months of receipt. application is incomplete, the requestor applicant shall submit~~  
47 ~~the required information within thirty (30) days of request by the County. of the application shall be~~  
48 ~~considered withdrawn. Once the application is complete, The Manager of the Orange County~~  
49 ~~Environmental Protection Division or their designee the County Administrator or his designee shall~~  
50 ~~complete evaluation of the request lands within six (6) month. pursuant to Section II.C. of this regulation.~~  
51 ~~The requestor applicant shall be notify the requestor of the evaluation results in writing. decision.~~

52 C. Evaluation and Selection Criteria:

53 1. ~~The County funds provided by the sale of Public Service Tax Bonds shall only be used~~  
54 ~~to purchase environmentally sensitive lands using~~ The following evaluation criteria will be used  
55 to evaluate environmentally sensitive lands for potential purchase with County funds: that one or  
56 more of the following criteria:

57 (a) Are identified as such by Orange County Environmental Protection Division

58 (b) Have public benefits, as determined by application of one or more of the  
59 following criteria:

60 (1) Rarity in Orange County of the native ecosystems present;

61 (2) Diversity of the native ecosystems, plants and animals present;

62 (3) Presence or likelihood of non-imperiled and imperiled species or  
63 species listed as endangered, threatened, rare or of special concern by the  
64 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and U.S. Fish and  
65 Wildlife Service, respectively, Florida Department of Agricultural  
66 Service's Committee on Rare and Endangered Plants and Animals, or the  
67 Florida Natural Areas Inventory, their successors, or other commonly  
68 acknowledged conservation entities;

69 (4) Contiguity with other publicly owned lands or property interests (i.e.,  
70 conservation easement);

71 (5) Manageability (opportunities for operation/management) of the project  
72 site;

73 (6) Availability of funding from other government agencies or non-profit  
74 organizations;

75 (7) Likelihood of events which might degrade or destroy the site; ~~and~~

76 (8) Amount of protection afforded by existing County regulations or other  
77 regulation or law;

78 (9) Provides water resource protection, aquifer recharge, or floodplain  
79 storage;

80 (10) Closes gaps between other publically owned lands (or lands with  
81 conservation easements) or establishes or enhances an existing wildlife  
82 corridor;

83 (11) Ability to provide opportunities for quality nature-based recreation  
84 for residents and visitors; and

85 (12) Opportunities to enhance eco-tourism.

86 ~~2. Lands considered to be in the public interest for which not public entitiy is will to~~  
87 ~~participate; or Opportunities for acquisitions present themselves in a variety of ways:~~

88 ~~1. Fee simple acquisition of properties with or without funding partners. Considered to be in the~~  
89 ~~public interest w for which no public entity is willing to participate; or~~

90 ~~2. In cases where fee simple acquisition is not possible, but resource protection is desired, a private~~  
91 ~~landowner, who is willing to pay all or part of the related costs, can dedicate development rights or~~  
92 ~~grant a Conservation Easement to Orange County.~~

93 ~~Lands considered to be in the public interest where and for which a private partner is willing to pay~~  
94 ~~all, or a portion of the costs, and will dedicate development rights and convey a conservation~~  
95 ~~easement to Orange County all development rights and convey a permanent conservation easement~~  
96 ~~to Orange County, and the private partner is willing to pay all or a portion of the closing costs.~~

97 ~~3. A private landowner, who is willing to pay all of the related costs (i.e. title search, title insurance,~~  
98 ~~environmental assessment(s) and boundary survey) can donate a parcel to Orange County. Lands~~  
99 ~~offered for donation require a one-time per acre land management fee as part of the transfer process.~~

100 ~~4. The County may acquire environmentally sensitive lands through the escheated or tax deed sales~~  
101 ~~process.~~

102 ~~D- Acquisition Criteria and Process Considerations~~

103 1. To ensure flexibility that monies for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive  
104 lands are expended for the greatest public benefit at the least cost, the following items shall be  
105 considered during the acquisition process:

106 (a) ~~Full or P~~partial donations, conservation easements, property exchanges,  
107 and bargain sales shall be pursued to the greatest extent practicable;

108 (b) Projects facing imminent threat of development activities that will  
109 degrade, destroy, or increase the market value of the project ~~shall be brought back~~  
110 ~~to the County Administrator or designee for re-evaluation;~~

111 (c) A proposal or recommendation for purchase may be submitted to the  
112 Board wherein the purchase price of the site exceeds its average appraised value  
113 as established by appraisals paid for by the County if it is deemed that the property  
114 is of sufficient value and importance to ensure its preservation.

115 (d) Since timing is sometimes an important factor in acquiring real estate,  
116 Environmental Protection Division staff may consider the availability of land on  
117 the market and its potential for development in the near-term as part of the decision  
118 on whether or not to pursue acquisition at a given point in time along with other  
119 prioritization criteria noted above.

120 2. The acquisition process shall follow normal County procedures and regulations for  
121 the acquisition of real estate once a parcel(s) has been determined to be desirable for preservation  
122 as environmentally sensitive lands. Recommendations to the Board for approval of purchase of  
123 parcels will include a summary of the criteria in II.C.1.b that are met.

124 E. Evaluation Process

125 1. Wildlife corridors where acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands should be  
126 targeted have been identified using the 1991 Conservation Area and Recreation Land Report, the  
127 updated 2013 Florida Natural Areas Inventory Study, and citizen input, and as previously evaluated  
128 by the Green PLACE Advisory Board or Ad Hoc Committee.

129 2. The Green PLACE Advisory Board will assist the Environmental Protection  
130 Division in identifying additional parcels that may be most suitable for acquisition and preservation  
131 as environmentally sensitive lands to expand the previously identified corridors noted above.

132 3. Environmental Protection Division staff will evaluate and prioritize parcels within  
133 the wildlife corridors noted above using the criteria noted in section C.1.b with available data  
134 sources. In addition, staff will consider comparative size (to prefer larger of similar parcels) and  
135 vulnerability to destruction (to prefer most threatened of qualified parcels).

136 4. EPD will coordinate with Real Estate Management Division to send letters to the  
137 property owner(s) that are considered the highest priority for acquisition to determine if they are  
138 interested in selling their property.

139 5. Where potential willing sellers have been identified via the process noted above,  
140 Environmental Protection staff will request an opportunity to visit the property to provide a more  
141 detailed assessment of its ecological value and land management requirements. This will result in  
142 a rescoring and potential reprioritization of the site based on a more complete understanding of the  
143 property characteristics.

144

145 **11.07.02 POLICY REGARDING USE OF TM/ECON MITIGATION BANK PHASE IV**  
146 **CREDITS**

147

148 I. POLICY

149 A. Projects (including roadways) being conducted by County Departments or Divisions that require  
150 wetland mitigation and that lie within the TM/Econ Phase IV Mitigation Bank Service Area, shall use the  
151 TM/Econ Phase IV Mitigation Bank. Proceeds from purchase of mitigation credits shall be deposited in the  
152 County's Conservation Trust Fund and be available for use for acquisition and management of County-  
153 owned environmentally sensitive lands.

154 B. The price for mitigation credits from the County owned and managed TM/Econ Mitigation Bank  
155 Phase IV shall be established and updated by fees Resolution by the Board of County Commissioners.

156 However, the Manager of the Environmental Protection Division or their designee will have authority to  
157 negotiate a discounted sale prices per credit in order to achieve market competitiveness.

158

# RESOLUTION

*of the*  
**ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
*regarding*  
**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GREEN PLACE ADVISORY  
BOARD TO ADVISE THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS IN THE ADMINISTRATION  
OF THE GREEN PLACE PROGRAM.**

**Resolution No. 2021-\_\_\_\_\_**

WHEREAS, the preservation and management of Orange County's natural resources are important to the future of Orange County citizens and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the preservation and management of Orange County's natural resources provide both important ecological and societal benefits; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") established the Green PLACE program; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Green PLACE program includes the preservation and management of environmentally sensitive lands, protecting water resource lands, and maintaining quality passive recreational outdoor experiences; and

WHEREAS, on November 11, 2003, the Board created, and subsequently dissolved, the Green PLACE Ad Hoc Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2006, the Board re-established the Green PLACE Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, and subsequently dissolved it; and

WHEREAS, on June 5, 2007, the Board established, and subsequently sunsetted, the Green PLACE Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to establish the Green PLACE Advisory Board for the purpose of evaluating environmentally sensitive parcels of land for acquisition through the Green PLACE program; and

WHEREAS, Section 125.01(1)(t), Florida Statutes, provides that the governing body of a county may adopt resolutions necessary for the exercise of its powers.

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
33 COMMISSIONERS OF ORANGE COUNTY:

34 **Section 1. Creation and Purpose.** The Green PLACE Advisory Board (the  
35 "Advisory Board") is hereby created and established for the purpose of advising the  
36 Board of County Commissioners on matters related to the administration of the Green  
37 PLACE program and evaluating environmentally sensitive parcels of land for  
38 acquisition.

39 **Section 2. Membership.**

40 **A. Composition and Membership.** The Advisory Board will consist of  
41 seven members, representing all six commission districts wherever possible, and  
42 appointed consistent with the provision of Chapter 2, Article VI, Orange County Code.  
43 The membership of the Advisory Board will be as follows:

- 44 1. Verified member(s) of a recognized environmental conservation  
45 organization (no more than two members);
- 46 2. Agricultural interest representative(s) (no more than two members);
- 47 3. Academic or educational representative(s) (no more than two  
48 members);
- 49 4. At-large representative(s) (no more than two members).

50 **B. Terms of Appointment.** Except for the initial terms, appointments to the  
51 Advisory Board will be for two years and expire on December 31. To provide for  
52 staggered terms of successive membership, the terms of office for three initial members  
53 will expire on December 31, 2022 and for four initial members will expire December 31,



54 2023. A vacancy occurring during a term will be filled for the unexpired term. Each  
55 member will hold office until a qualified successor has been appointed.

56 **Section 3. Operation of the Advisory Board.**

57 **A. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Advisory Board shall have the  
58 following duties and responsibilities:

- 59 1. Evaluate parcels of land for acquisition through the Green PLACE  
60 program;
- 61 2. Establish acquisition priorities;
- 62 3. Delineate and recommend policies relating to the uses of Green  
63 PLACE properties; and
- 64 4. Recommend names for Green PLACE parcels using the procedure  
65 outlined in Administrative Regulation 2.16 (Naming of Orange County Parks and  
66 Related Facilities).

67 **B. Chair, Vice-Chair; Quorum.** At the first meeting of the Advisory Board  
68 following membership appointments, the members will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair and  
69 establish a schedule of regular meetings. The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve one-year  
70 terms. Prior to the expiration of the terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Advisory  
71 Board must hold elections for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions and no member may  
72 serve more than two consecutive terms for the same position. A majority of members of  
73 the Advisory Board constitutes a quorum necessary to hold a meeting and conduct  
74 Advisory Board business.

75 **C. Applicable Laws.** The actions of the Advisory Board must be in  
76 accordance with the Advisory Boards Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article VI, Orange County

77 Code), and all applicable laws, including but not limited to, the Code of Ethics for Public  
78 Officers and Employees (Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes), the Florida Public  
79 Records Law (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes) and the Florida "Government-in-the-  
80 Sunshine Law" (Chapter 286, Florida Statutes).

81 **Section 4. Staff Support.** The Advisory Board will be administratively  
82 supported by the Orange County Environmental Protection Division.

83 **Section 5. Effective Date; Sunset.** This Resolution will become effective on  
84 the date of its adoption.

85 ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

86 ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
87 By: Board of County Commissioners  
88

89  
90 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
91 Jerry L. Demings  
92 Orange County Mayor  
93

94 ATTEST: Phil Diamond, CPA, County Comptroller  
95 As Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners  
96

97  
98 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
99 Deputy Clerk  
100

# Companion Guide for Green PLACE Evaluation Criteria

## Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance as to how to step through the criteria in the County's Administrative Regulation 11.07.01. This document ensures that adequate guidance and descriptions are provided so that each criterion can be evaluated in a consistent manner.

This companion guide is to be used with the Green PLACE Parcel Evaluation Matrix.

## How to use this document:

The user of this document will go through each category and assess the parameter accordingly. When a score is determined, the evaluator will enter the score for each criterion in the Green PLACE Parcel Evaluation Matrix. It is possible that the matrix will be used more than one time on any given parcel.

A site inspection should only be conducted when review of the parameters indicate that the parcel falls into the maybe or proceed category which is based on the final score in the Parcel Evaluation Matrix. Furthermore, a site visit should only be made with the approval of the landowner/authorized agent and upon determination that they are a willing seller.

- Create a step by step checklist on how to get started
- Create a summary report documenting the reasoning behind the scoring
- Create GIS map
- Add layers

<u>Ranking Point Values:</u>
High: 5
Medium: 3
Low: 1
No (or) Preservation Only Property: 0

## Evaluation Criteria:

### Manageability

When assessing this criterion, the evaluator should evaluate at a minimum the below listed elements:

- The ability to conduct prescribed burns: For example, is the site located within an urban area and is there potential for user conflicts? People are sensitive to smoke, falling ash, etc. (i.e., the ability to conduct a burn and not adversely affect residential areas or smoke sensitive areas (schools, hospitals, retirement homes, etc.)
- The ability to manage invasive species: the greater the percentage of invasive species on a parcel, the more difficult it is to manage them. (This criterion will only be evaluated in the field).
- The ability to restore/enhance habitat:
  - Acreage of intact habitat vs. the acreage of degraded habitat.

Ranking	Ranking Point Values
High: Meets all 3 management criteria	5
Medium: Meets 2 of the 3 management criteria	3
Low: Meets 1 of the 3 management criteria	1

### Current regulations provide adequate protection (Threat of Development)

This criterion pertains to the amount of protection that a property has as it relates to the current regulations. Another way to state this criterion is the parcel's threat of development. For example, if a parcel is mostly uplands and not within a special basin such as the Econlockhatchee or Wekiva, the threat of development is very high. If a site is reviewed that contains wetlands, it cannot be assumed that because there are wetland regulations in place that it cannot be developed. The wetland regulations do not prohibit impacts to wetlands, they require a balance between private property rights and environmental protection. In the case where development entitlements may exist over a property (a parcel with an approved development program (i.e. Isle of Pine Preserve), this property would score with a higher threat of development.

Below are County Codes that regulate wetlands and surface waters:

- Chapter 15, Article X: Wetland Conservation Areas
- Chapter 15, Article XI; Econlockhatchee River Protection Area
- Chapter 15, Article XIII; Wekiva Protection Area
- Chapter 15, Article XVIII; Environmental Land Stewardship Area

Evaluation Resources:

- [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com)
- Land Development Management System (LDMS/AMANDA)
- Environmental Protection Division’s (EPD) Development Review Program
- EPD’s Environmental Permitting and Compliance Program
- Orange County Comprehensive Plan
- Orange County Future Land Use Map

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: No regulatory protection (greater than 71% to 100 % upland habitat excluding required upland buffers associated with Econ and Wekiva Basin areas). Also includes parcels with development entitlements	5
Medium: Moderate amount of regulatory protection (31% -70% Uplands) or (31% - 70% wetlands)	3
Low: High amount of regulatory protection (0-30% uplands)	1

Presence/likelihood of imperiled species and non-imperiled species

This category is used to assess the presence or absence of the likelihood of imperiled species and non-imperiled species. Imperiled species are defined as: A species that is listed on Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species List in accordance with Rules 68A-27.033 and 68A-27.005, F.A.C or protected by designation under the federal Endangered Species Act. Non-imperiled species are any species that do not fall into the aforementioned category.

When evaluating this criterion, first you will need to determine the habitat types (historic and current) on the site. The historic and current habitat types will provide indicators as to the presence or likelihood of imperiled species. For example, if you learn through your research that the site contains or contained scrub habitat, you can assume that there is a high likelihood that you have scrub jays, gopher tortoises, sand skinks, scrub lupine, or *bonamia* present on the parcel. If you had historic scrub on the site, a seed bank may currently exist that could lend itself to regeneration of an imperiled scrub floral species. In regard to non-imperiled species, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory and the Classification Codes for each parcel will help identify the number of species likely to live in a specific area of the parcel, which is also to be accounted for in this criterion.

Evaluation Resources:

- Florida Land Use Classification Code System (FLUCCS)
- South Florida Water Management District Land Cover Classification Codes
- St. Johns River Water Management District Land Cover Classification Code
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI)(<https://www.fnai.org>)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Survey
- <https://myfwc.com/media/2030/imperiled-species-management-plan.pdf> (PDF FWC Imperiled Species Plan)
- <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Bureaus-and-Services/Entomology-Nematology-Plant-Pathology/Botany/Florida-s-Endangered-Plants/Florida-s-Federally-Endangered-Plant-Species-Gallery>

Ranking:	Ranking Points Value
High: 7 or more imperiled and non-imperiled species	5
Medium: 4 to 6 imperiled and non-imperiled species	3
Low: 3 or less imperiled and non-imperiled species	1

Provides water resource protection, aquifer recharge, or floodplain storage

This category is used to assess the criteria of water quality and quantity benefits that may be provided by the potential acquisition of the parcel being evaluated. For example, if you are evaluating a parcel that has high aquifer recharge soils, acquisition of this parcel may be as significant as a site that contains wetlands. Lake Lucie Conservation Area and Pine Plantation were acquired due to high aquifer recharge value. Another example would be acquisition of Johns Lake Conservation Area. This parcel was acquired for its floodplain storage and water quality protection value. Consult with staff from Water Sciences and Lake Management.

Evaluation Resources:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps
- FLUCCS Map
- 62-302.700 Special Protection, Outstanding Florida Waters, Outstanding National Resource Waters
- South Florida Water Management District Land Cover Classification Codes
- St. Johns River Water Management District Land Cover Classification Code
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI)(<https://www.fnai.org>)

- USDA Soil Survey
- <https://orange.wateratlas.usf.edu/::>
- <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>
- [https://www.labins.org/survey\\_data/water/water.cfm](https://www.labins.org/survey_data/water/water.cfm)
- <https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources>
- L:\CartographicElements\Standard Maps Elements\Layer Files for Standard Map Elements
- <https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/basin-management-action-plans-bmaps>
- <https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/impaired-waters-tmdls-and-basin-management-action-plans>

Ranking	Ranking Point Values
Yes	5
No	0

### Contiguity with other publicly owned lands or property interests (i.e., conservation easement)

This category is used to assess the potential of a parcel to close gaps between existing publicly and privately-owned conservation areas and easements. Closing gaps describes a parcel under consideration that is proximate to other publicly owned lands (or lands with conservation easements). Proximate does not have to mean adjacent or contiguous. An example of an acquisition that was purchased to close a gap is Eagles Roost. This parcel is located between the Eagle Creek conservation lands, Split Oak Forest and Moss Park.

#### Evaluation Resources:

- <https://www.fnai.org/webmaps/ConLandsMap/>
- L:\LayerFiles\LandDevelopment\FutureLandUse
- <http://geodata.myfwc.com/datasets/wildlife-management-areas-florida?geometry=-83.012%2C28.112%2C-79.497%2C28.957>
- <https://www.ocpafl.org/searches/parcelsearch.aspx>
- SFWMD owned conservation land (<https://www.sfwmd.gov/science-data/gis>)
- SJRWMD owned conservation land) (<https://data-floridaswater.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/sjrwmd-owned-conservation-easement>)

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: Contiguous	5
Medium: Within 1 to 5 miles of publicly or privately preserved lands	3
Low: Greater than 6 miles from publicly or privately preserved lands	1

### Contains habitat defined as rare

This category is used to assess the criterion of the rarity of habitats that occur on the parcel under evaluation. The ranking criteria for this category were developed by NatureServe and the Natural Heritage Program Network, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory assigns two ranks for each element. The global rank is based on an element's worldwide status; the state rank is based on the status of the element in Florida. Element ranks are based on many factors; the most important ones include estimated number of Element Occurrences (EOs), estimated abundance (number of individuals for species; area for natural communities), geographic range, estimated number of adequately protected EOs, relative threat of destruction, and ecological fragility. Rare habitats are defined as those habitats with a Global or State Rank of G1, G2, G3 and S1, S2, S3.

Rare habitats have additional endemic species that are habitat specific and are under a higher threat of development. Species could include: scrub jays, gopher tortoises, sand skinks, scrub lupine, or *bonamia*.

#### Evaluation Resources:

- FLUCCS Map
- South Florida Water Management District Land Cover Classification Codes
- St. Johns River Water Management District Land Cover Classification Code
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI)( <https://www.fnai.org>)
- USDA Soil Survey
- <https://myfwc.com/media/2030/imperiled-species-management-plan.pdf> (PDF FWC Imperiled Species Plan)



- <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Bureaus-and-Services/Entomology-Nematology-Plant-Pathology/Botany/Florida-s-Endangered-Plants/Florida-s-Federally-Endangered-Plant-Species-Gallery>
- [https://www.fnai.org/PDF/FNAI-Natural-Community-Classification-Guide-2010\\_20150218.pdf](https://www.fnai.org/PDF/FNAI-Natural-Community-Classification-Guide-2010_20150218.pdf)

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values
High: Presence of habitats designated as G1 or S1	5
Medium: Presence of habitats designated as G2 or S2	3
Low: Presence of habitats designated as G3 or S3 or below	1

### Ecosystem Diversity (Flora and Fauna)

This criterion will be utilized to determine the variety of different habitats within a given area. Overall biodiversity is supported and specific floral and faunal species may be protected by acquiring a parcel that contains multiple different ecosystem types. For example, the acquisition of Savage Christmas Creek Preserve protected 14 different ecosystem types.

#### Evaluation Resources:

- <https://www.fnai.org/species.cfm>
- <https://www.fnai.org/BiodiversityMatrix/index.html>

Ranking:	Ranking Points Value:
High: Contains 10 or more ecosystems	5
Medium: Contains 4 to 9 ecosystems	3
Low: Contains 1 to 3 ecosystems	1

### Enhances an existing Wildlife Corridor

These criteria will evaluate known wildlife corridors that allow for both north-south and east-west passage of both large wildlife species such as the Florida Black Bear, Florida Panther and also smaller species including gopher tortoises and otters. In addition, these corridors allow for stopover area for migratory bird species that are using the Atlantic Flyway. The three corridors include:

1. North-South Wildlife Corridor
2. East-West Wildlife Corridor

### 3. Atlantic Flyway

#### Evaluation Resources:

- <http://floridawildlifecorridor.org/maps/>
- <https://ocean.floridamarine.org/TRGIS/> (shows location of species that may use wildlife corridor)
- <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/Reference/Profile/42276>
- <https://www.audubon.org/atlantic-flyway>

Ranking:	Ranking Points Value:
High: Provides all 3 corridor connections	5
Medium: Provides 2 out of the 3 corridor connections	3
Low: Provides 1 out of 3 corridor connections	1

#### Nature-based Recreation:

This criterion will be utilized to evaluate the number of potential nature based recreational opportunities that a parcel would provide to visitors of Green PLACE properties. All Green PLACE Properties at a minimum are approved to offer the following amenities: hiking, educational signage, wildlife observation, picnic tables, benches, observation piers, kayak/canoe launch, fishing pier, horseback riding. For example, the acquisition of the Johns Lake Conservation Area provided the opportunity for the establishment of a fishing pier, Canoe/Kayak launch, picnic areas (individual and pavilion), wildlife observation and hiking.

#### Evaluation Resources:

- <https://floridadep.gov/parks/florida-outdoor-recreation-inventory>
- <https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/online-trail-guide> (where existing trails are in Florida)
- <https://cospp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=04fbd8ae24a94db68957c89630d1eb3f> (shows existing parts of the FNST- so that parcel can be evaluated as being near the trail)
- [http://www.friendsofcrowellhilaka.org/uploads/4/3/4/1/4341799/passive\\_active\\_recreation.pdf](http://www.friendsofcrowellhilaka.org/uploads/4/3/4/1/4341799/passive_active_recreation.pdf)

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: 7 or more potential amenities	5
Medium: 4-6 potential amenities	3
Low: 3 or less potential amenities	1
Preservation Only Properties	0

### Opportunities to enhance Eco-tourism:

This criterion will be utilized to evaluate the number of potential Eco-tourism opportunities that a parcel would provide to visitors of Green PLACE properties. Opportunities include: Horseback riding, regional trail systems, blueway trails, interpretative trails, hiking trails, observation piers, access to kayak/canoe launch areas, access to fishing areas, birding support amenities and orienteering courses. For example, the acquisition of the Crosby Island Marsh Preserve provided the opportunity for the establishment of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). FNST is a federally designated trail system that extends from Big Cypress National Preserve and ends at the Gulf Islands National Seashore. Other examples of Eco-tourism opportunities include blueways, and regional trail systems. The published definition of ecotourism, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” from the International Ecotourism Society website (see link below).

Principles of ecotourism include:

- Minimize physical, social, behavioral, and psychological impacts.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry
- Deliver memorable interpretive experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries’ political, environmental, and social climates
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment

### Evaluation Resources:

- <https://ecotourism.org/>
- <https://www.fs.usda.gov/fnst>
- <https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/florida-greenways-and-trails-system-plan-and-maps>
- <https://www.distanceriding.org/>
- <http://www.floridaorienteering.org/>
- <https://www.audubon.org/birding>
- <https://data-floridaswater.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- <https://myfwc.com/research/>
- <http://geodata.myfwc.com/>
- <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: 7 or more potential opportunities	5
Medium: 4-6 potential opportunities	3
Low: 1-3 potential opportunities	1
Preservation Only Properties	0

**Appendices Contents:**

Appendix A: Parcel Evaluation Criteria Summary Report

Appendix B: Evaluation Map Template

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Appendix D: Parcel Prioritization Matrix

**The maximum number of points is 50**

31-50: High

16-30: Medium

1-15: Low

Update Frequency: Quarterly

Oftentimes, people have the perspective that the County should accept all parcels that are being offered as a donation. EPD has the sole discretion to reject any parcels that do not fit into their program’s goals and objectives. An example of this might be a stand-alone parcel being offered as a donation within the Wedgefield Subdivision or some other random small parcel that presents user conflicts, or other land management and operational challenges.

The maximum number of points that a parcel can receive is 50. The purpose of the exercise to evaluate and score the parcels is to methodically and critically think through the categories. If a parcel results in a low score that does not mean that the parcel should not be placed into the Green PLACE property inventory. It simply means that because of certain attributes, it scored lower than optimal.

Appendix A

# Evaluation Criteria Summary Report

## Appendix A

# Evaluation Criteria Summary Report

### Manageability:

When assessing this criterion, the evaluator should evaluate at a minimum the below listed elements:

- The ability to conduct prescribed burns: For example, is the site located within an urban area and is there potential for user conflicts? People are sensitive to smoke, falling ash, etc. (i.e., the ability to conduct a burn and not adversely affect residential areas or smoke sensitive areas (schools, hospitals, retirement homes, etc.)
- The ability to manage invasive species: the greater the percentage of invasive species on a parcel, the more difficult it is to manage them. (This criterion will only be evaluated in the field).
- The ability to restore/enhance habitat:
  - Acreage of intact habitat vs. the acreage of degraded habitat.

Ranking	Ranking Point Values
High: Meets all 3 management criteria	5
Medium: Meets 2 of the 3 management criteria	3
Low: Meets 1 of the 3 management criteria	1

### Notes:

### Current Regulations Provide Adequate Protection (Threat of Development):

This criterion pertains to the amount of protection that a property has as it relates to the current regulations. Another way to state this criterion is the parcel's threat of development. For example, if a parcel is mostly uplands and not within a special basin such as the Econlockhatchee or Wekiva, the threat of development is very high. If a site is reviewed that contains wetlands, it cannot be assumed that because there are wetland regulations in place that it cannot be developed. The wetland regulations do not prohibit impacts to wetlands, they require a balance between private property rights and environmental protection. In the case where development entitlements may

exist over a property (a parcel with an approved development program (i.e. Isle of Pine Preserve), this property would score with a higher threat of development.

Below are County Codes that regulate wetlands and surface waters:

- Chapter 15, Article X: Wetland Conservation Areas
- Chapter 15, Article XI; Econlockhatchee River Protection Area
- Chapter 15, Article XIII; Wekiva Protection Area
- Chapter 15, Article XVIII; Environmental Land Stewardship Area

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: No regulatory protection (greater than 71% to 100 % upland habitat excluding required upland buffers associated with Econ and Wekiva Basin areas). Also includes parcels with development entitlements	5
Medium: Moderate amount of regulatory protection (31% -70% Uplands )or ( 31% - 70% wetlands)	3
Low: High amount of regulatory protection (0-30% uplands)	1

Notes:

Presence/Likelihood of Imperiled and Non-Imperiled Species:

This category is used to assess the presence or absence of the likelihood of imperiled species and non-imperiled species. Imperiled species are defined as: A species that is listed on Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species List in accordance with Rules 68A-27.033 and 68A-27.005, F.A.C or protected by designation under the federal Endangered Species Act. Non-imperiled species are any species that do not fall into the aforementioned category.

When evaluating this criterion, first you will need to determine the habitat types (historic and current) on the site. The historic and current habitat types will provide indicators as to the presence or likelihood of imperiled species. For example, if you learn through your research that the site contains or contained scrub habitat, you can assume that there is a high likelihood that you have scrub jays, gopher tortoises, sand skinks, scrub lupine, or *bonamia* present on the parcel. If you had historic scrub on the site, a

seed bank may currently exist that could lend itself to regeneration of an imperiled scrub floral species. In regard to non-imperiled species, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory and the Classification Codes for each parcel will help identify the number of species likely to live in a specific area of the parcel, which is also to be accounted for in this criterion.

Ranking:	Ranking Points Value
High: 7 or more imperiled and non-imperiled species	5
Medium: 4 to 6 imperiled and non-imperiled species	3
Low: 3 or less imperiled and non-imperiled species	1

Notes:

[Provides Water Resource Protection, Aquifer Recharge, or Floodplain Storage:](#)

This category is used to assess the criteria of water quality and quantity benefits that may be provided by the potential acquisition of the parcel being evaluated. For example, if you are evaluating a parcel that has high aquifer recharge soils, acquisition of this parcel may be as significant as a site that contains wetlands. Lake Lucie Conservation Area and Pine Plantation were acquired due to high aquifer recharge value. Another example would be acquisition of Johns Lake Conservation Area. This parcel was acquired for its floodplain storage and water quality protection value. Consult with staff from Water Sciences and Lake Management.

Ranking	Ranking Point Values
Yes	5
No	0

Notes:



Contiguity with Other Publicly Owned Lands or Property Interests (i.e., conservation easement):

This category is used to assess the potential of a parcel to close gaps between existing publicly and privately-owned conservation areas and easements. Closing gaps describes a parcel under consideration that is proximate to other publicly owned lands (or lands with conservation easements). Proximate does not have to mean adjacent or contiguous. An example of an acquisition that was purchased to close a gap is Eagles Roost. This parcel is located between the Eagle Creek conservation lands, Split Oak Forest and Moss Park.

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: Contiguous	5
Medium: Within 1 to 5 miles of publicly or privately preserved lands	3
Low: Greater than 6 miles from publicly or privately preserved lands	1

Notes:

Contains Habitat Defined as Rare:

This category is used to assess the criterion of the rarity of habitats that occur on the parcel under evaluation. The ranking criteria for this category were developed by NatureServe and the Natural Heritage Program Network, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory assigns two ranks for each element. The global rank is based on an element's worldwide status; the state rank is based on the status of the element in Florida. Element ranks are based on many factors; the most important ones include estimated number of Element Occurrences (EOs), estimated abundance (number of individuals for species; area for natural communities), geographic range, estimated number of adequately protected EOs, relative threat of destruction, and ecological fragility. Rare habitats are defined as those habitats with a Global or State Rank of G1, G2, G3 and S1, S2, S3.

Rare habitats have additional endemic species that are habitat specific and are under a higher threat of development. Species could include: scrub jays, gopher tortoises, sand skinks, scrub lupine, or *bonamia*.

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values
High: Presence of habitats designated as G1 or S1	5
Medium: Presence of habitats designated as G2 or S2	3
Low: Presence of habitats designated as G3 or S3 or below	1

Notes:

**Ecosystem Diversity (Flora and Fauna):**

This criterion will be utilized to determine the variety of different habitats within a given area. Overall biodiversity is supported and specific floral and faunal species may be protected by acquiring a parcel that contains multiple different ecosystem types. For example, the acquisition of Savage Christmas Creek Preserve protected 14 different ecosystem types.

Ranking:	Ranking Points Value:
High: Contains 10 or more ecosystems	<u>5</u>
Medium: Contains 4 to 9 ecosystems	<u>3</u>
Low: Contains 1 to 3 ecosystems	<u>1</u>

Notes:

**Enhances an Existing Wildlife Corridor:**

These criteria will evaluate known wildlife corridors that allow for both north-south and east-west passage of both large wildlife species such as the Florida Black Bear, Florida Panther and also smaller species including gopher tortoises and otters. In addition, these corridors allow for stopover area for migratory bird species that are using the Atlantic Flyway. The three corridors include:

1. North-South Wildlife Corridor
2. East-West Wildlife Corridor
3. Atlantic Flyway

Ranking:	Ranking Points Value:
High: Provides all 3 corridor connections	5
Medium: Provides 2 out of the 3 corridor connections	3
Low: Provides 1 out of 3 corridor connections	1

Notes:

**Nature-based Recreation:**

This criterion will be utilized to evaluate the number of potential nature based recreational opportunities that a parcel would provide to visitors of Green PLACE properties. All Green PLACE Properties at a minimum are approved to offer the following amenities: hiking, educational signage, wildlife observation, picnic tables, benches, observation piers, kayak/canoe launch, fishing pier, horseback riding. For example, the acquisition of the Johns Lake Conservation Area provided the opportunity for the establishment of a fishing pier, Canoe/Kayak launch, picnic areas (individual and pavilion), wildlife observation and hiking.

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: 7 or more potential amenities	5
Medium: 4-6 potential amenities	3
Low: 3 or less potential amenities	1
Preservation Only Properties	0

Notes:

### Opportunities to Enhance Eco-Tourism:

This criterion will be utilized to evaluate the number of potential Eco-tourism opportunities that a parcel would provide to visitors of Green PLACE properties. Opportunities include: Horseback riding, regional trail systems, blueway trails, interpretative trails, hiking trails, observation piers, access to kayak/canoe launch areas, access to fishing areas, birding support amenities and orienteering courses. For example, the acquisition of the Crosby Island Marsh Preserve provided the opportunity for the establishment of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST). FNST is a federally designated trail system that extends from Big Cypress National Preserve and ends at the Gulf Islands National Seashore. Other examples of Eco-tourism opportunities include blueways, and regional trail systems. The published definition of ecotourism, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” from the International Ecotourism Society website (see link below).

Principles of ecotourism include:

- Minimize physical, social, behavioral, and psychological impacts.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry
- Deliver memorable interpretive experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries’ political, environmental, and social climates
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment

Ranking:	Ranking Point Values:
High: 7 or more potential amenities	5
Medium: 4-6 potential amenities	3
Low: 3 or less potential amenities	1
Preservation Only Properties	0

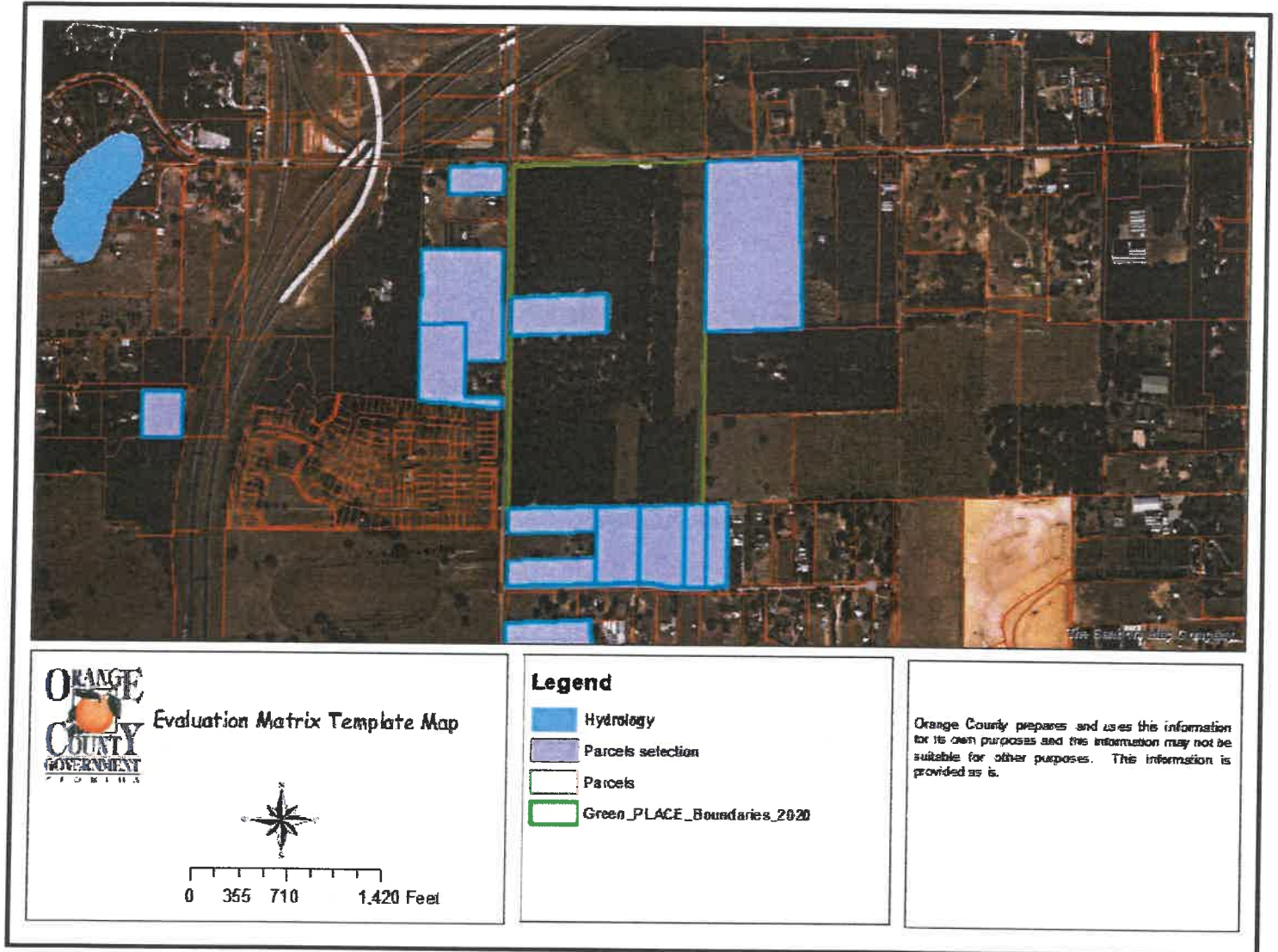
Notes:

Appendix B

# Evaluation Map Template

# Appendix B

## Evaluation Map Template



Appendix C

# Glossary of Terms

## Appendix C

# Glossary of Terms

1. **Active Recreation** - Activities that require infrastructure, intensive management, development, and facilities in order to engage in them. Examples include any outdoor sport, theater, or playground development and use thereof.
2. **Aquifer Recharge** - Areas that provide for the movement of water from the surface into a saturated zone via percolation or infiltration due to the presence of certain soils, geological features, ecosystem types, or surface water. These areas are pervious enough to provide a specific source of fresh water to the rock layer or sediment body that holds groundwater. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/aquifer-recharge>)
3. **Biodiversity** – Variety and variation of living organisms on Earth. Also refers to all species in a given ecosystem or region. (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/biodiversity/>)
4. **Birding Amenities** – A desirable feature or facility that aids in the birding experience. Examples of birding amenities include: bird blind, boardwalks, bird-towers, etc. (<https://www.audubon.org/birding>)
5. **Commensal Species** - Commensalism is a relationship between two organisms in which one organism benefits, and one is unaffected. This can be contrasted with other types of symbiosis, such as mutualism and parasitism. The supposed difference between commensalism and other types of symbiosis is that in commensalism, the second party or host remains unaffected. (Biologydictionary.net Editors. "Commensalism." *Biology Dictionary*, Biologydictionary.net, 04 Dec. 2016, <https://biologydictionary.net/commensalism/>.)
6. **Contiguous** – Properties that share a common border or are touching in any manner, along a boundary or at a point. (<https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/contiguous-property#:~:text=Contiguous%20property%20means%20two%20or%20more%20parcels%20of%20equipment%20shall%20be%20considered%20to%20be%20contiguous%20property.>)



7. **Ecological Fragility** - fragility of an ecosystem relates to degree of change in species abundance and composition, following disturbance. High rates of species turnover or population fluctuations characterize fragile ecosystems. The only observable fragility is that displayed as a result of disturbances, natural as well as human-caused, operating in the ecosystem. (Christer Nilsson and Gunnell Grelsson *Journal of Applied Ecology*. Vol. 32, No. 4 (Nov., 1995), pp. 677-692)
8. **Ecosystem** - An ecosystem or biome describes a single environment and every living (biotic) organism and non-living (abiotic) factor that is contained within it or characterizes it. An ecosystem embodies every aspect of a single habitat, including all interactions between its different elements. (<https://biologydictionary.net/ecosystem/>)
9. **Ecosystem Diversity** – Variations in ecosystems within a given geographical location. Diversity in the habitat types is a type of biodiversity, but does not specifically refer to species, but rather the abundance of numerous biomes that support different ecological processes and specific species niches.
10. **Ecotone** – Transitional area where two different ecosystems meet. These zones contains habitat, flora, and fauna of both biomes. (<https://www.pmfias.com/ecological-niche-ecotone-edge-effect/>)
11. **Eco-tourism** – Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education. (<https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/>)
12. **Element Occurrences** – A tool used to assess the viability of a given species by providing the likelihood that, given the persistence of present conditions in a habitat, a species will persist as they are for a certain period of time. ([https://www.natureserve.org/sites/default/files/eo\\_rank\\_specifications-generic\\_guidelines\\_and\\_decision\\_key\\_may2020.pdf](https://www.natureserve.org/sites/default/files/eo_rank_specifications-generic_guidelines_and_decision_key_may2020.pdf))
13. **Endemic species** - native to a particular area or region or an exclusive characteristic of a thing, place, or concept. The word is used to describe a species, for instance, that thrives in a particular place and not usually found in other places. (<https://www.biologyonline.com/dictionary/endemic>)
14. **Enhancement** - The modification of specific structural features of an existing ecosystem to increase one or more functions based on management objectives, typically done by modifying site natural communities to gain an improvement of the ecosystem.

15. **Established** - Naturalized exotic—an exotic that sustains itself outside cultivation (it is still exotic; it has not “become” native). (<https://www.fleppc.org/>)
16. **Estimated Abundance** – The calculated number of individuals per species within a given geographic range (species abundance). This differs from relative abundance, as the latter term refers to how evenly a species is distributed in a given community. Two communities can be rich in species, but differ in abundance, so this term is important to consider. (<https://www.britannica.com/science/species-abundance>)
17. **Floodplain Storage** – A floodplain is the area adjacent to a water body that may experience periods of high saturation/flooding during periods when the water levels are high. A flood storage area is a part of this designated floodplain that identifies what the natural flood storage capacity of the area is. Flood storage areas act as basins to hold excess water during these periods and reduce the amount of flooding in more downstream floodplains. Wetlands are good examples of flood storage areas. ([https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/conservation\\_planning\\_and\\_zoning/page/1448/flood\\_storage\\_area\\_q\\_a\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/conservation_planning_and_zoning/page/1448/flood_storage_area_q_a_sheet.pdf))
18. **Global Ranking 1** - Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences less than 1000 individuals) or because of extreme vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor. (<https://www.fnai.org/ranks.cfm>)
19. **Global Ranking 2** - Imperiled globally because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or less than 3000 individuals) or because of vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor. (<https://www.fnai.org/ranks.cfm>)
20. **Global Ranking 3** - Either very rare or local throughout its range (21-100 occurrences or less than 10,000 individuals) or found locally in a restricted range or vulnerable to extinction from other factors. (<https://www.fnai.org/ranks.cfm>)
21. **Imperiled Species**
  - a. **State Definition** - A species that is listed on Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species List in accordance with Rules 68A-27.003 and 68A-27.005, F.A.C., or protected by designation under the federal Endangered Species Act. ([MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com))
  - b. **Federal Definition** - Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA )requires species to be listed as endangered or threatened solely on the basis of their biological status and threats to their existence. When evaluating a species for listing, the FWS considers five factors: 1) damage to, or destruction of, a species’ habitat; 2) overutilization of the species for commercial, recreational, scientific,

or educational purposes; 3) disease or predation; 4) inadequacy of existing protection; and 5) other natural or manmade factors that affect the continued existence of the species. When one or more of these factors imperils the survival of a species, the FWS takes action to protect it. The Fish and Wildlife Service is required to base its listing decisions on the best scientific information available. (<https://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/>)

22. **Intact Habitat** – Conserved areas of land that have not been developed, damaged, or fragmented via anthropogenic processes. Intact habitat supports natural ecological processes and overall biodiversity within the landscape.
23. **Interpretive Trail** – a trail that is used to tell an educational story. Visitors may learn about natural processes in the ecosystem, plants and animals, historical facts about the area, etc. (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/trails/types-of-trails.htm>)
24. **Introduced** – A species that has been brought to an area, either intentionally or unintentionally, specifically by humans  
(<https://www.ioe.org/ioe/2020june/a3.php#:~:text=%20Invasive%20Species%20Terminology%3A%20Standardizing%20for%20Stakeholder%20Education,address%2C%20and%20their%20suggested%20uses%2C%20were...%20More%20>)
25. **Invasive** - An invasive species is a non-native species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human, animal, or plant health.  
<https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.opengov.ibmcloud.com/files/uploads/ISAC%20Definititio ns%20White%20Paper%20%20-%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf>
26. **Keystone Species** - a plant or animal that increases or decreases the diversity of an ecosystem, depending on its abundance or rarity. The gopher tortoise is a keystone species in upland habitats in Florida. Source: FWC Gopher Tortoise Management Plan.
27. **Native** - A plant or animal that is a part of the balance of nature that has developed over hundreds or thousands of years in a particular region or ecosystem. Note: The word native should always be used with a geographic qualifier (that is, native to New England [for example]). Only plants and animals found in this country before European settlement are considered to be native to the United States. (<https://www.fleppc.org/>)
28. **Nature –Based Recreation (or Passive Recreation)**: Activities generally occurring in an environmentally sensitive area that require minimal development, and have no negative impact on the ecosystem they occur in. Passive park use requires little to no management and focuses on preservation of wildlife and habitat first.

[http://www.friendsofcrowellhilaka.org/uploads/4/3/4/1/4341799/passive\\_active\\_recreation.pdf](http://www.friendsofcrowellhilaka.org/uploads/4/3/4/1/4341799/passive_active_recreation.pdf))

29. **Nonnative** - A plant or animal introduced with human help (intentionally or accidentally) to a new place or new type of habitat where it was not previously found. Note: Not all non-native plants are invasive. In fact, when many non-native plants are introduced to new places, they cannot reproduce or spread readily without continued human help (for example, many ornamental plants). (<https://www.fleppc.org/>)
30. **Nuisance** - A single or group of organisms, native or nonnative, that cause disruption or disturbance to regional biota or ecology, present management issues, or cause widespread property damage.  
(<https://www.joe.org/joe/2020june/a3.php#:~:text=%20Invasive%20Species%20Terminology%3A%20Standardizing%20for%20Stakeholder%20Education,address%2C%20and%20their%20suggested%20uses%2C%20were...%20More%20>)
31. **Orienteering** – A recreational activity in which participants navigate between various checkpoints throughout a designated area with the aid of a map and compass.  
(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/orienteering>)
32. **Proximate** – Refers to something very close or near in physical location, as well as immediately preceding (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proximate>).
33. **Restoration** - Ecological restoration aims to recreate, initiate, or accelerate the recovery of an ecosystem that has been disturbed. Disturbances are environmental changes that alter ecosystem structure and function. Common disturbances include logging, damming rivers, intense grazing, hurricanes, floods, and fires. Restoration activities may be designed to replicate a pre-disturbance ecosystem or to create a new ecosystem where it had not previously occurred. Restoration ecology is the scientific study of repairing disturbed ecosystems through human intervention.  
(Vaughn, K. J., Porensky, L. M., Wilkerson, M. L., Balachowski, J., Pepper, E., Riginos, C. & Young, T. P. (2010) Restoration Ecology. *Nature Education Knowledge* 3(10):66)
34. **Smoke Sensitive Area** - Areas designated by the Florid Forest Service(FFS) within which, for reasons of visibility, health or human welfare, smoke could adversely impact public safety e.g., interstates/highways, urban areas, airports, schools and hospitals  
([www.fdacs.gov](http://www.fdacs.gov))

35. **State Ranking 1** - Critically imperiled in Florida because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or less than 1000 individuals) or because of extreme vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor. (<https://www.fnai.org/ranks.cfm>)
36. **State Ranking 2** - Imperiled in Florida because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or less than 3000 individuals) or because of vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor. (<https://www.fnai.org/ranks.cfm>)
37. **State Ranking 3** - Either very rare or local throughout its range (21-100 occurrences or less than 10,000 individuals) or found locally in a restricted range or vulnerable to extinction from other factors. (<https://www.fnai.org/ranks.cfm>)
38. **Umbrella Species** – An umbrella species is defined as a species whose conservation is expected to confer protection to a large number of naturally co-occurring species. (<https://www.scribd.com/document/73688921/Roberge-Angelstam-2004-UsefulnessOfUmbrellaSpConc>)
39. **Wildlife Corridor** – An area of land that connects natural lands in order to provide safe passage for wildlife in areas where there is human development. Corridors aid the migration, genetic diversity, quality of life, and overall survival of biota living in areas of urban interface.

Appendix D

# Parcel Prioritization Matrix



