




Interoffice Memorandum

December 9, 2022

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

FROM: Tim Boldig, Interim Director 
Planning, Environmental, and Development
Services Department

CONTACT PERSON: **David D. Jones, P.E., CEP, Manager
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SUBJECT: January 24, 2023 – Work Session
State of the Wetlands Study

Staff are currently reviewing standards and processes to update Chapter 15, Article X – Wetland Conservation Areas Ordinance (Ordinance). This effort includes two studies that will be covered over a span of two work sessions, with a third work session to discuss recommendations for updates to the Ordinance to follow. The goals of the Ordinance revision, which the studies will support include:

- identify and protect wetlands and surface waters that are most important or valuable,
- balance protections for wetlands with property rights,
- make processes and outcomes more streamlined, predictable and consistent, and
- make the Ordinance less complicated and easier to understand.

On December 13, 2022, the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) presented the Regulatory Framework Study work session. The work session provided an overview of the study; a summary of findings; feedback received from interviews with regulatory staff of six county governments that do wetlands permitting, environmental consultants, and local environmental advocacy organizations; and key takeaways regarding how wetlands are regulated in other jurisdictions.

On January 24, 2023, staff will present a second work session regarding the State of the Wetlands Study. The scope of the study includes:

- comparison of the historic inventory and condition of the County's wetland resources with present day conditions,

- estimation of cumulative wetland impacts and assessment of ecosystem services associated with loss of wetland function,
- evaluation and spatial assessment of wetlands over time, including ~1989 (coinciding with adoption of wetland ordinance) and approximately every 10 years thereafter, and
- estimation of the secondary effects of wetland loss through modeling of conceptual development scenarios; analysis of conventional development versus Low Impact Development/green infrastructure approaches to assess differences (or similarities) in impacts to threatened and endangered species, aquifer recharge, flood control, and water quality.

Finally, on April 11, 2023, EPD will present a work session on recommendations for the Ordinance update. At this work session, staff will present an overview of the two prior work sessions as well as potential future policies and processes that could be considered to help strengthen environmental protections and improve the Ordinance.

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

DDJ/TB/jk/js