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Submitted 10/15/01

October 15, 2001

Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

As a member of the City's Water Management Advisory Committee, and a founding board member of Women for Wise Growth, I have been involved in wetlands issues for many years.

Your Water Management Committee worked for nearly a year on the wetlands policy--debating, disagreeing, compromising, and finally producing a policy that we believe will protect wetlands.

Although I have great respect for the environmental credentials of Ms. Francine Robinson, I must disagree with some of her statements in the Gainesville Sun on wetlands preservation.

According to "Florida Water," Spring 1997, "Recharge of the aquifer occurs when water SEEPS through the soil down into the aquifer's limestone layer...." There is no mention of wetlands being connected underground, since the aquifer is primarily made of limestone, which acts like a sponge to hold water.

Although a group of citizens appears quite concerned over the proposed wetlands policy, it seems that the concern is fairly recent. Are you aware that in 1999 the proposed DRI, Greenways of Gainesville, would have impacted 17 acres? Did you know that 40 percent of this 930-acre site is jurisdictional wetlands? That the developers of Greenways proposed to use wetlands for stormwater treatment?

Where was this group when the Water Management Committee vigorously opposed the Greenways development - when Women for Wise Growth repeatedly spoke against degradation of wetlands - when both groups endorsed the Alachua County DEP policy of sequencing, which focuses on ensuring that all practicable alternatives to eliminate or reduce the impacts have been explored.

Rather than wasting valuable hours of government time repeating spurious arguments, I suggest:

1. That the City map all wetlands within city limits.
2. That the group of citizens join their concerns to efforts by Women for Wise Growth and the Water Management Committee to monitor the LDR's that will direct wetlands protection.
3. That the group help to identify areas of aquifer recharge, and nominate this land for purchase by the Legacy Lands initiative.

Gladys Lane  
Water Management Advisory Committee