

Conservation, Open Space and Groundwater Recharge Element GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

THE GOAL

To preserve, enhance and restore the City's natural resources to ensure long-term environmental quality. Conservation of natural resources is vital to the future well-being, health and welfare of the City and ensures that the needs of future generations can be met.

A. Surface Water Objectives and Policies

Objective 1. Major water systems in Gainesville include streams, natural wetlands, creeks and lakes, which comprise the surface waters. In order to protect the quality and quantity of water within these systems, the City shall regulate development activities to protect natural water-cleansing features and prevent discharges of contaminants from urban, agricultural and silvicultural land uses. It is the City's objective to preserve the functional integrity of our natural resources in order to protect these environmental services and values for the future and to maintain natural resources that are free from pollution and degradation in order to provide a safe and healthy environment for the residents of Gainesville.

a. Creeks The natural functions of creeks shall be protected so that flood carrying and flood storage capacity is maintained and the health and safety of the public is protected.

Policy 1-1:

The City shall improve implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the creek ordinance.

Policy 1-2:

Natural vegetation that occurs along creeks shall be maintained including enhanced setback sufficient to prevent damage to the creek and to preserve water quality. Harvesting, cutting and clearing activities shall be restricted except to remove exotic weeds. Development regulations shall provide specific standards for these activities.

b. Wetlands:

Natural wetlands of the City of Gainesville shall be preserved, protected and restored such that the natural structure and function of these valuable resources are maintained and enhanced. Undisturbed buffers sufficient to insure this shall be required.

Policy 2-1:

Natural wetlands have been identified and mapped as part of Environmentally Significant Land and Resources within the Future Land Use Map Series. Delineation of natural wetlands shall use methods consistent with those used by Alachua County EPD and FDEP. Only public works projects may qualify for mitigation if the City Commission determines they are necessary for the public health and welfare.

Policy 2-2:

The City shall prohibit dredge and fill of natural wetlands. Structural and hydrologic alterations shall be prohibited. The intent of this policy is to maintain and preserve water quality and quantity and to protect wildlife habitat.

Policy 2-3:

The natural hydrologic character of surface waters shall be maintained. Sheet flows such as those found in floodways and those which connect wetlands with other wetlands and surface waters shall be protected and enhanced.