

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Conservation Planning: Development, Implementation and Accountability



Three Lakes WMA

Introduction: FWC Conservation Planning

- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) planning process and framework for conservation planning has been developed over the past 25 years.
- Guidance and policy derives from FWC's mission as well as Legislative and Executive authorities.



Introduction: FWC Conservation Planning

- FWC currently develops ten-year Conceptual Management Plans (CMPs) for thirty-two Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEA) across Florida.
- FWC's planning philosophy includes emphasizing consensus-building among stakeholders, input from user groups and the general public at the beginning of the planning process, transparency throughout the process, manager "ownership" of the CMP, accountability, and a "living" document concept.



Introduction: FWC Conservation Planning

- Importantly, by emphasizing “buy-in” and “ownership” of the CMP by the WMA/WEA biologists and managers, this philosophy facilitates the development of meaningful management intent language, goals, objectives, and the identification of challenges and solution strategies for each CMP.



FWC-managed areas requiring Conceptual Management Plans*

- Andrews WMA
- Apalachicola River WEA
- Aucilla WMA
- Babcock-Webb WMA
- Big Bend WMA
- Brevard Coastal Scrub Ecosystem / Salt Lake WMA
- Box-R WMA
- Caravelle Ranch WMA
- Chassahowitzka WMA
- Chinsegut WEA
- Dinner Island Ranch WMA
- Escribano Point / Yellow River WMA
- Everglades/Francis Taylor WMA
- Fisheating Creek WMA
- Florida Keys WEA
- Guana River WMA
- Half Moon WMA
- Hilochee WMA
- Holey Land WMA
- Hungryland WEA
- Joe Budd WMA
- J.W.Corbett WMA
- Lake Wales Ridge WMA
- Little Gator Creek WMA
- Okaloacoochee Slough WMA
- Rotenberger WMA
- Spirit of the Wild WMA
- Suwannee Ridge WEA
- Three Lakes WMA
- Triple N Ranch WMA
- Watermelon Pond WEA



~ 1.48 million acres

* Partial list

Functions of Conceptual Management Plans

- To guide managed area personnel in management activities.
- To provide an enduring guiding document for the managers of FWC-managed conservation lands regardless of staff promotion or turnover.
- To establish internal communication.



Functions of Conceptual Management Plans

- To establish communication among agencies, stakeholders, the general public, FWC constituencies, and ARC/DEP–DSL, etc.
- To establish Legislative and Executive oversight (i.e., compliance with Preservation 2000 & Florida Forever purposes for acquisition, and Florida Statutes).



Resource & Issues Scoping Document

FWC Local, District & Regional Staff Draft the CMP

FWC:

Divisions, Offices, Sections,
Office of Recreational Services

Management Advisory Group Consensus-building Meeting

Public Hearings

Conceptual Management Plan

Other:

Cooperating agencies, Local Government, Water Management Districts, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, FNAI, Department of State DHR

Legislative:

Sect. 253 & 259 FS,
Ch. 18-2 FAC

ARC/Trustees

DEP - Division of State Lands:

CARL staff, Management Review Team



Development: CMP drafting process

Acquisition & Restoration Council/Board of Trustees approval



FWC Division of Habitat & Species Conservation Director's approval



FWC Divisions & Offices review



FWC Terrestrial Habitat Conservation & Restoration Section review



Public hearing



Biologists & planners develop draft CMP



Management Advisory Group (stakeholder) consensus meeting



Resources and Issues Scoping Document



Management Advisory Group Meeting Everglades Complex of WMAs Facilitated by FWC Planners



Development: Stakeholder consensus-building

- Develop and utilize consensus of best-informed and most-interested minds available.
- Engage stakeholders (Management Advisory Group) at the beginning of the planning process.
- Stakeholders include FWC biologists and law enforcement, cooperating agencies (e.g., Division of Forestry, Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management District, Division of Historical Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.), adjacent landowners, NGO conservation organizations, County elected officials and planners, Soil and Water Conservation District representative, user groups, and others as appropriate.



Development: FWC Manager & Biologist “buy-in” and “ownership” of CMP.

- Management intent language, goals, objectives, challenges, and strategies are drafted by area personnel.
- Managers and biologists become vested in the components of the CMP.
- Managers and biologists accept responsibility for completion of CMP components.





Conceptual Management Plan
Caravelle Ranch
Wildlife Management Area
Putnam County, Florida
2008-2013

Presented by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Public Hearing hosted by the
Caravelle Ranch WMA Management Advisory Group
Facilitated by FWC Planners
Presented by FWC Area Biologist

Implementation & Accountability

To the extent possible, CMP Objectives have the following characteristics:

- Measurable (e.g., acres to be restored, number of species inventories to be conducted, miles of trails to be developed, etc.)
- Timeframe (i.e., target dates for completion of objectives)
- Assignment of responsibility (e.g., FWC staff, cooperating agency, contracted services, volunteers, etc.)



Implementation & Accountability

- Assurance of CMP implementation & accountability is further achieved through integrated Land Management Reviews of both the managed area and the CMP every five years.
- These audits are conducted by a review team comprised of land management professionals assembled by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands.



Implementation & Accountability

- In addition, FWC conducts annual CMP reviews and accomplishment reporting for Management Intent, Goals, Objectives, Challenges and Strategies.
- As new data and information become available, CMPs are internally appended (e.g., FNAI current and historic natural community mapping, OBVM development, new parcel acquisitions, etc.) enhancing the “living “ document concept.
- As CMPs are formally updated every ten years an accomplishment report is included in the newly-updated CMP thus linking the documents through time.



Summary

- Engage stakeholders and the general public at the beginning of the CMP development process.
- Achieve manager “buy-in” and “ownership” of the CMP.
- Create a “living” document with meaningful and measurable Management Intent, Goals, Objectives, and Challenges and Strategies.
- Conduct periodic reviews of the CMP and the managed area, and report accomplishments.



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Conservation Acquisition and Planning



In these ways FWC works to ensure that CMPs are useful, enduring, “living” documents that directly contribute to the responsible and professional management of the conservation lands managed by FWC.

