

## THE RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

### A NEW APPROACH TO LAND PROTECTION

Based on a successful state program (*chapter 163.3177(11)(d), Florida Statutes*) that has just been expanded from a pilot to a specifically “encouraged” land use designation as a result of passage of SB 2188 by the Florida Legislature on April 30, 2004.



Here's the opportunity ...

#### The Rural Lands Stewardship Program (RLSP):

- Accommodates development, yet prevents sprawl;
- Directs development into discreet, clustered settlement patterns surrounded by extensive areas of farms and open space;
- Allows for preservation without interfering with or undermining local property tax revenues and economic growth;
- Uses development to pay for natural resource and farm and ranch land protection;
- Creates new sources of revenue to maintain viability of agricultural operations;
- Promotes best management practices, agriculture economic development and smart growth;

- Resolves conflict between development and preservation, so development and preservation are not pitted against one another;
- Extends protection over entire regions, rather than protecting land on a piecemeal, parcel-by-parcel basis; and
- *Leverages public investment in preservation at ratio of up to 1:350 (for every \$1 spent/\$350 value);*

The Rural Lands Stewardship Program also creates settlement patterns that result in a positive fiscal balance for local governments, providing a *surplus* after the cost of necessary community services such as police, fire and schools are deducted from revenues derived through local property taxes and fees, instead of creating the *deficits* that result from traditional development patterns which, in turn, often lead to ever higher taxes.

**For more information:** see project website, <http://privatelands.org/rural/index.htm>

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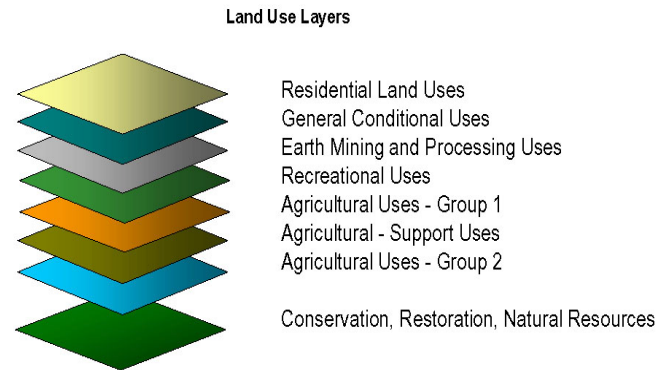
## A NEW APPROACH TO LAND PROTECTION

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

Instead of using public dollars to purchase development rights, the RLSP uses market forces to fund conservation and total infrastructure development in tandem, while creating efficient settlement patterns.

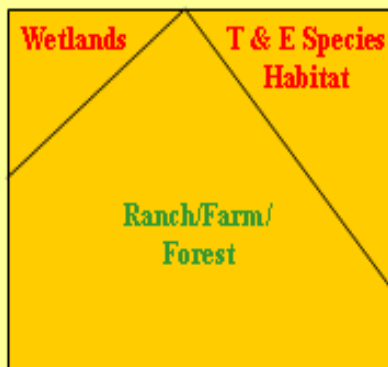
### Transferable Land Use Credits: Market Forces, Natural Resources & the Multiplier Effect

- The Rural Land Stewardship Program starts by grouping land uses into multiple layers - residential, commercial, mineral, recreational, agriculture, etc. .
- Each land use layer is given a base credit value; these values are added together for a total of 1 full credit, equal to current market value of the property.
- Natural resources are factored in as *multiplier* values.
- While a conservation easement program gives value for a single layer - residential land use -
- RLSP provides landowners with values for multiple land uses, *each of which increases in value* if natural resources or other public values are present.



### Here's How it Works:

#### Example:



- 200 acres
- \$2,000,000 offer from developer (\$10,000 ac)
- RSLP approach with public value credits results in overall **1.5X conservation multiplier** for parcel = \$3,000,000
- Owner keeps land, and can transfer credits for development elsewhere

### The Opposite of Sprawl is Cluster

What sets this program apart from other land conservation programs is its holistic scope - conservation and development are planned together and with the input of private landowners so that small towns, with all necessary infrastructure and services, are developed within the context of a rural landscape of private agricultural lands.

This is accomplished by requiring developers to have a minimum number of credits in order to break ground. Since credits only can be purchased from surrounding landowners, the landowners automatically become partners in the development process. A developer interested in building houses must have a package of credits before the development is approved - in addition to houses, the development must include all necessary infrastructure and services.

This is done to create a small town surrounded by farms and open space. The aim of this strategy is to prevent the kind of development that is all too common - an uncontrolled, sprawling series of strip malls unconnected to existing infrastructure, raising property taxes and resulting in traffic, congestion, and an overall decreased quality of life for the area.