



(formerly Florida Stewardship Foundation)

## **Rural Lands Stewardship Program**

### **Questions & Answers**

#### **Is the Rural Lands Stewardship Program similar to a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program?**

First, let me suggest that you NOT call the Rural Lands Stewardship Program (RLSP) a TDR program. While the RLSP does transfer credits, it transfers considerably more equity and value than a TDR program, which only transfers development rights. Also, the way in which transfers are done is different. So if someone who is familiar with TDRs (and their failures) starts thinking of the RLSP as a TDR program, they are likely to begin making some assumptions, and reaching some conclusions, which are not valid for the RLSP program and which may only cause confusion.

The main thing to stress is that the RLSP provides a means of transferring land value from one parcel to another within a 200,000 acre area so that EVERY LANDOWNER benefits from the increase in land values and revenues that are generated by new development, even though no development may occur on their land.

The second thing to stress is that a landowner with natural resource values on their land will have the opportunity to MAKE MORE MONEY by providing permanent protection for those values than could be gained by removing those values and developing in environmentally sensitive areas.

#### **Who initiated the RSLA concept?**

The RSLA concept has its origins in 3 places.

First, many initial concepts were developed as part of a landowner initiated project started in 1993 to develop incentives for landowners to maintain habitats for endangered species. Focus started out on the Florida Panther (hence, the project was called "Panthers & Private Lands," which eventually evolved into the "Rural Lands Stewardship Program" and "Farmland Stewardship Program (FSP)." Many of the landowners who were part of the group involved in developing the "landowner incentive conceptual plan" that resulted from the Panthers and Private Lands Project also were key players in developing the RLSP concept for Collier County. The predecessor organization to Stewardship America obtained funding for and guided this project through its various phases from 1993 to 2001.

Second, as a result of a legal challenge to Collier County's comprehensive plan, the Administration Commission issued a Final Order to create a plan for Collier County's rural lands that identifies and proposes measures to protect prime agricultural areas, to direct incompatible uses away from wetlands and upland habitat, and to assess the area's growth potential through conversion of rural lands to other uses.

Third, against this backdrop, and with input from rural landowners and conservation groups, the Rural Lands subcommittee of the Governor's Growth Management Study Commission (2000-2001), issued several recommendations that were incorporated into legislation that was passed by the Florida Legislature and signed by Gov. Bush in June 2001, creating the Rural Lands Stewardship Program (RLSP) and Rural & Family Lands Protection Act (R&FLPA).



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