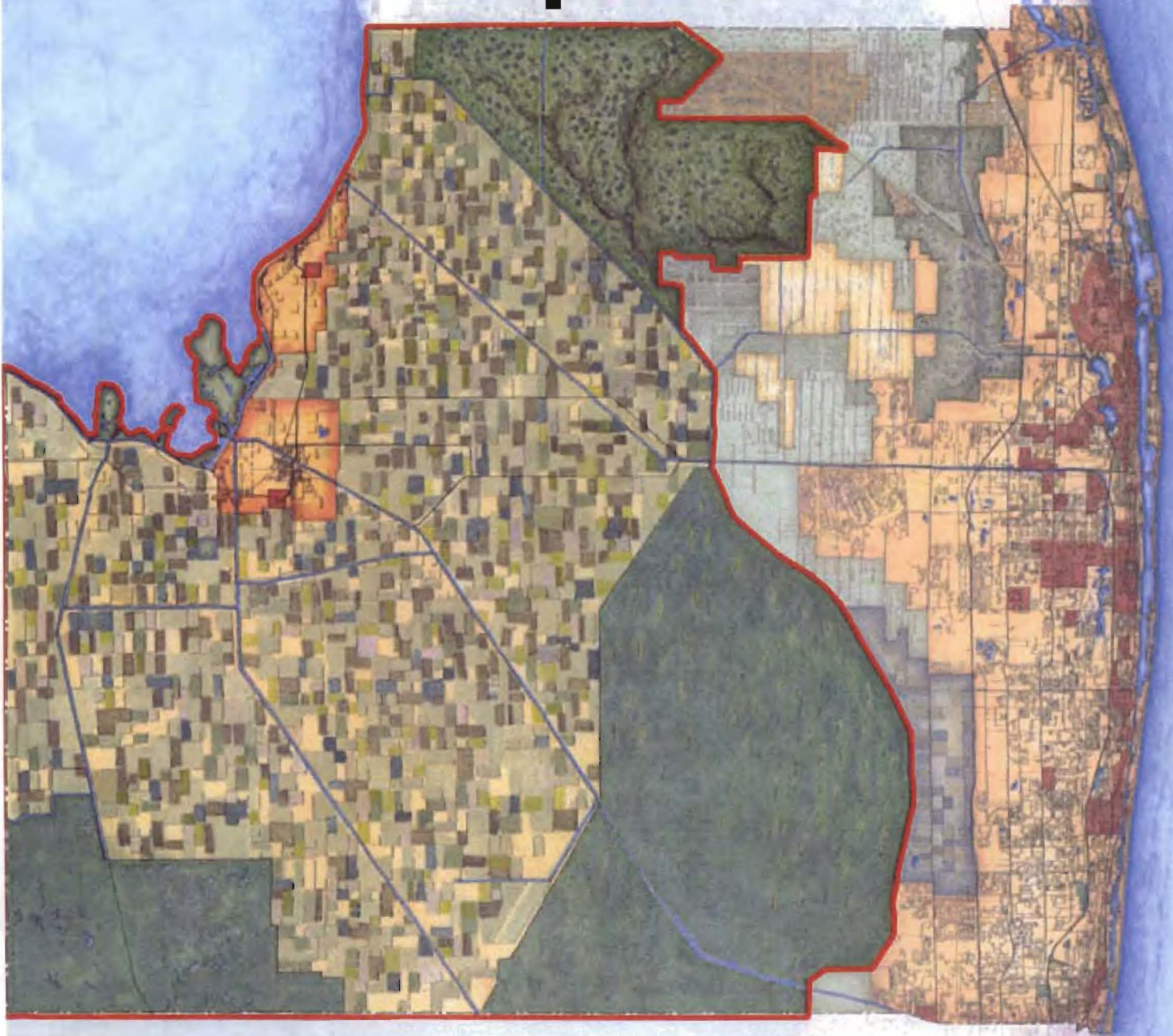


# *2001* **Glades Assessment Report**



*Prepared by*  
**Planning Division  
Planning, Zoning, Building  
Department**  
*October 2001*

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**GLADES ASSESSMENT REPORT**



Prepared by:

Palm Beach County  
Planning Division

October 2001

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## **County Administration**

Robert Weisman, County Administrator  
Verdenia Baker, Deputy County Administrator

## **Planning, Zoning and Building**

Barbara Alterman, Esq., Executive Director  
Frank M. Duke, AICP, Planning Director  
Ruth Moguillansky, Principal Planner/CCRT Coordinator

## **Project Manager:**

Vicki E. Silver, AICP, Senior Planner/Glades Coordinator

## **Staff Support:**

Aimee Craig-Carlson, AICP, Senior Planner  
David Goodman, Senior Planner  
Linda Hoppes, Senior Planner  
Isaac Hoyos, Senior Planner  
Lisa Lowe, Senior Planner  
Michael Howe, Planner II  
John Rupertus, AICP, Planner II  
Ron Wong, Planner II  
Mark Connor, Planner I  
Sandra Gilles, Planner I  
Sharon Kubber, CADD Tech  
Joyce Harrell, CCRT Secretary  
Tom Pancoast, Planning Intern

## **City of Belle Glade**

Barbara Bell Spence, Assistant to the City Manager

## **City of Pahokee**

Ken Schenck, City Manager

## **City of South Bay**

Michael Jackson, City Manager

## **Business Loan Fund of the Palm Beaches, Inc.**

John Brown, Executive Director

## **Community Services Department**

Doris Price McCormick, Administrative Assistant

## **Convention & Visitors Bureau**

W.E. "Mac" McLaughlin, President/C.E.O.  
Don Brown, Community Relations Specialist

## **Cooperative Extension Service**

Audrey Norman, Extension Agent

**County Library**

Jerry Brownlee, Director

**Economic Development Office**

Robert Turk, Economic Development Coordinator  
Pamela Nolan, Economic Development Specialist  
Claudia Lopez, Economic Development Assistant

**Engineering Department**

George Webb, County Engineer  
Haney Frakes, Assistant County Engineer

**Enterprise Development for Glades Entrepreneurs (EDGE)**

Carl Seibert, Executive Director

**Environmental Resources Management Department**

Janet Phipps, Environmental Analyst

**Fire Rescue Department**

Kathy Owens, Special Projects Coordinator

**Glades Community Development Corporation**

Sandy Mercer, Heritage Coordinator

**Housing & Community Development**

Elena Escovar, Principal Planner  
Michael Sklar, Planner I

**Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Angela Morlok, Principal Planner

**Palm Tran**

Jeannie Taylor, Transit Planner II

**Parks and Recreation Department**

Tim Granowitz, Principal Planner

**Tourist Development Council**

J. Charles Lehmann, Executive Director

**Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**

Greg Vaday, Economic Development Coordinator

**Water Utilities Department**

Gary Dernlan, Executive Director  
Fred Rapach, Policy and Program Coordinator  
Chris Dudek, Supervisor, Construction Services

**Workforce Development Board of the Palm Beaches**

Ken Montgomery, Executive Director  
Cathy Noel, Planning & Development Manager  
Leslie Rigg, Planning & Evaluation Specialist

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**SUMMARY:** This report presents an assessment of various issues affecting the Glades communities' revitalization, in response to Intergovernmental Coordination Policy 2.2-a of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this report is threefold: first, to convey to the BCC and Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC) background information necessary for compliance with Future Land Use Policy 1.6-d, which requires the Planning Division to initiate development of more detailed policies governing the Glades Tier by 2002; second, to recommend actions for BCC consideration on issues affecting the Glades communities' revitalization; and third, to serve as a basis of information for continuing and future efforts to revitalize the Glades communities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Based on the assessment presented within this report, Planning staff recommends the following:

- The County should continue its emphasis on promoting tourism in the Glades as a key component of economic diversification strategies. This should include continued collaboration with FDOT, other local governments, and other agencies on development of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST). The County should also assist in promoting the Big Water Heritage Trail through the development and placement of appropriate signage along designated roads.
- The County should endorse the expansion of the Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern designation to include the unincorporated area of the County in the Glades.
- The County should continue to collaborate with the entities involved in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP) and the LOST.
- The County should not provide technical support for future studies seeking Empowerment Zone designation. Technical support should be focused on other Glades-related initiatives that have had a greater rate of success.
- The County should continue to use the Development Regions Grant program. Consideration should be given to expanding the program in the Glades to fund higher costs associated with site preparation and infrastructure extension.
- The CDBG Economic Set-Aside program should be continued as a means of encouraging job creation and business expansion.
- The County should continue supporting the Business Loan Fund as a means of starting and expanding small businesses.
- The County should continue supporting the EDGE (Enterprise Development for Glades Entrepreneurs) Center as a means of starting and expanding small businesses.
- The County should continue collaborating with the Workforce Development Board to prepare Glades residents for job and business expansion opportunities resulting from CERP and LOST.



- The County should continue to support rehab, demolition, and new construction of rental housing in order to meet anticipated demand in the Glades area.
- The County should explore alternative ways to help Glades communities procure financing to reduce site preparation costs so the area can attract developers of market rate housing.
- In developing the area-wide business development plan being funded by a Rural Business Opportunity Grant, the County should evaluate opportunities for collaboration among non-traditional education providers, such as housing authorities, and more traditional stakeholders.
- The County, through the Cooperative Extension Service, should continue to seek and utilize funds from the University of Florida, US Department of Agriculture, and the Florida Department of Labor to continue to provide food and nutrition education services in the Glades.
- The provisions of the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) governing the Glades Area Economic Overlay (GA-O) should be revised to better reflect that the GA-O is an area within which the County seeks to expedite the approval process for projects that provide jobs. The requirement that the BCC make all determinations regarding the criteria for use of the GA-O should be modified to permit these decisions to be made at a point other than the BCC.
- The boundaries of the GA-O should be re-examined as part of the development of the Glades Tier. Specifically, the boundaries should be evaluated to assess the viability of including some small parcels located between the western edge of the Overlay and Lake Okeechobee. As part of this evaluation, the ability to extend urban levels of service throughout the overlay should be considered.
- The County should continue to monitor the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay to ensure its effectiveness once it has been fully incorporated into the ULDC.
- The provisions of the LOST Overlay should be revised to permit the extension of utilities or the development of package plants to facilitate the use of this overlay by tourist-related businesses that cannot utilize individual well and septic systems.
- Future Land Use Policy 1.6-c should be revised to allow the Planning Director to waive minimum density requirements consistent with the provisions of the Urban/Suburban Tier in Future Land Use Policy 1.2-b.
- The Planning Division should initiate a concerted review of the Future Land Use Atlas sheets governing the Glades to correct errors made during the original preparation of the plan.
- As additional resources are provided for Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) efforts, the CCRT should initiate work in the Fremd Village/Padgett Island community. The CCRT should also re-evaluate its ranking of other Glades communities in light of more current data anticipated to come from the 2000 Census.

- The ULDC should be revised to incorporate a modified version of the Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan for use in the Glades Tier, explicitly authorizing use of off-site landscape donations to Palm Beach County in lieu of on-site landscaping in the Glades if the project borders agricultural lands.
- Consideration should be given to the incorporation of ULDC provisions which require monitoring of donations and creation of a fund for beautification projects with the monies' use restricted to plant installation and maintenance along identified thoroughfares.
- The County should continue to pursue preservation grants to protect historic resources in the Glades. Particular emphasis should be placed on resources in the unincorporated area, with the County's Historic Resources Review Board encouraged to continue to examine the historical significance of sites within the Glades.
- The County should also look for opportunities to link historic preservation and tourism development, especially in areas located within or adjacent to the LOST-O, such as Canal Point, where older buildings may be adapted for reuse as tourist-related facilities.
- The County should continue to pursue opportunities for the acquisition of the conservation lands included in the 1999 bond issue for the western County.
- The County should continue to dedicate fixed roadway dollars for use in the Glades.
- The County should continue to monitor the impact of changes to Palm Tran service on the Glades.
- The County should take a more proactive stance in regard to the operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater systems in the Glades area to ensure compliance with Federal and State requirements.
- The County should continue to utilize the Areas of Hope Program to facilitate extension of infrastructure in the Glades. If other funding sources cannot be identified and accessed, the County may need to reconsider its prohibition on package plants in the Glades Tier.
- The County should continue to coordinate with the drainage districts as it works to develop the Glades Tier.
- The County, in partnership with local organizations such as the EDGE Center, should evaluate the suitability of County parks to offer concessions serving the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. Examples of the types of concessions that may be viable include equipment rental (canoes, kayaks, bicycles).
- Consideration should be given to further regionalization of fire-rescue services in the Glades to provide a more efficient service to the citizens of the area.
- The County should continue to implement school concurrency with the School Board and the Glades municipalities to ensure that overcrowded schools do not become an issue in the area.

- Information on health and human services programs and economic/business development incentives should be distributed by the Libraries Department through user-friendly publications and public workshops as a public education and training resource for other County agencies and non-profit providers.
- The County should continue its participation in the Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC), using this group as a forum for the further refinement of the Glades Tier.
- The County should continue to provide technical assistance to the Glades and look for additional ways to provide assistance in a cost-effective manner.

# I. INTRODUCTION

The ***Glades Assessment Report*** implements Intergovernmental Coordination Policy 2.2-a of the Comprehensive Plan, which requires the Planning Division to prepare a “report to the Board of County Commissioners and the Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC) members on health and human services, housing and human development, land use, economic development, governmental structure, and infrastructure finance issues to develop consensus recommendations on issues affecting the [Glades] communities’ revitalization.” In addition to complying with this policy from the Intergovernmental Coordination Element, this report provides the necessary background information to initiate development of more detailed policies.

**Purpose:** This report was prepared for the following purposes:

- To convey to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and GTAC background information necessary for compliance with Future Land Use Policy 1.6-d, which requires the Planning Division to initiate development of more detailed policies governing the Glades Tier by 2002;
- To provide recommendations on issues affecting the Glades communities’ revitalization; and
- To serve as a basis of information for continuing and future efforts to revitalize the Glades communities.

**Parameters of the Report:** Inherent to this type of document are certain limitations. The following outlines the parameters of this report:

## Assessment of Existing Programs

- Assessment of some of the programs established by the County is difficult at this time. Much of the data required for such an assessment is not yet available, as it is dependent upon the release of more detailed information from the 2000 Census. This information will not be available until late 2002. In addition to these data limitations, other programs are currently subjects of detailed assessments by the agencies responsible for their implementation. This report acknowledges those assessments, but does not attempt to provide an independent assessment of the programs.

## Demographic Information

- The demographic analysis in Section V was based on best available information. Most of the data was extracted from the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. More current demographic information will not be available until 2002.

***Organization of the Report:*** The report is organized into eight sections:

- Section I • provides a brief introduction, background and parameters of the report
- Section II • provides an overview of the Glades area.
- Section III • presents a summary and assessment of the County’s efforts to encourage economic development.

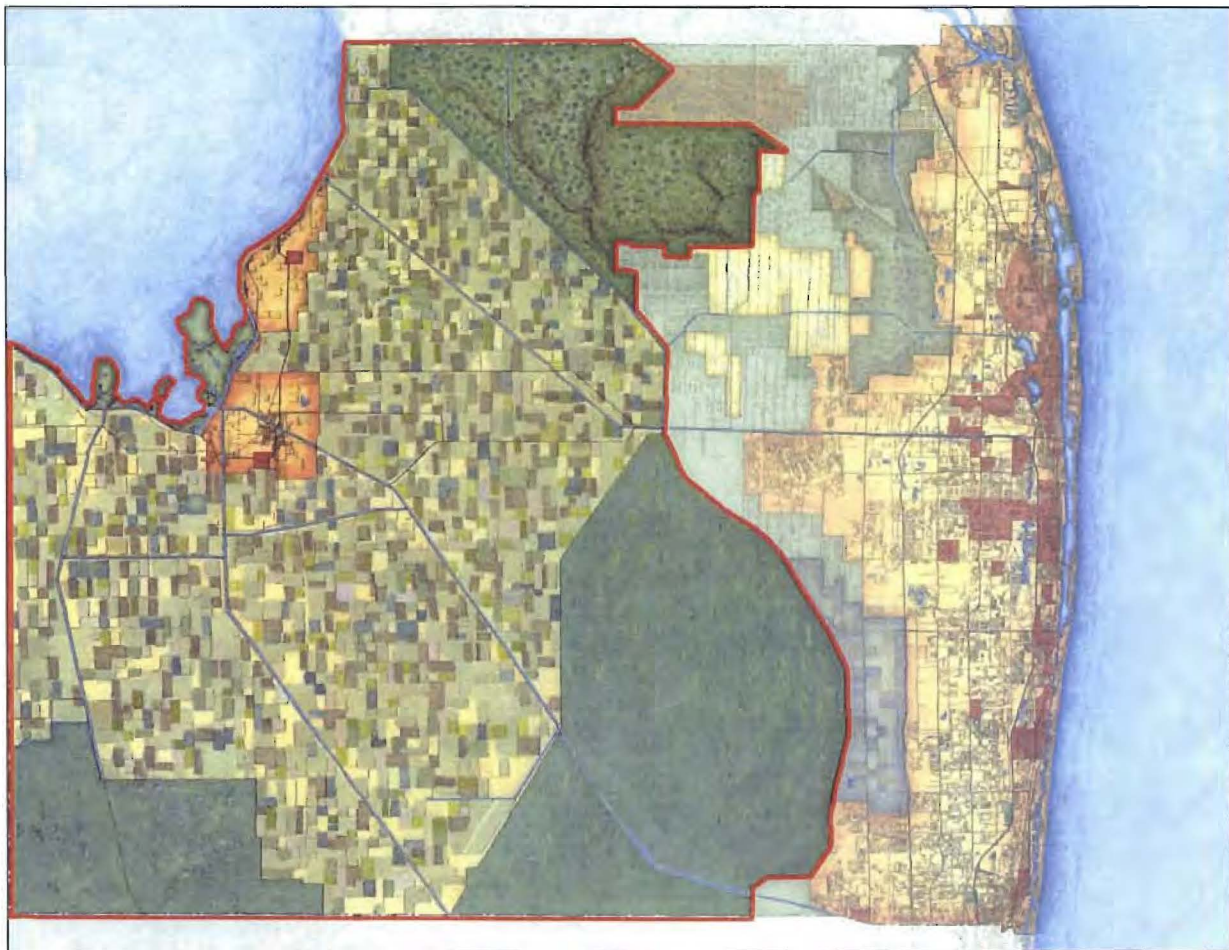
- Section IV • presents a summary and assessment of the efforts to provide affordable and market rate housing.
- Section V • presents a summary and assessment of Glades area health and human services as contractual services to the County.
- Section VI • presents a summary and assessment of the Glades area's land use pattern, County land development regulations and environmental programs applicable to the Glades area.
- Section VII • presents a summary and assessment of the Glades area's infrastructure needs and funding sources.
- Section VIII • presents a summary and assessment of the County's efforts to coordinate with governmental entities whose programs serve the Glades area.
- Appendix A • contains Comprehensive Plan provisions pertaining to the Glades area.

Each of the eight sections also contains recommendations which can be incorporated into more detailed Comprehensive Plan provisions for the Glades Tier or for the modification of County programs.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE GLADES COMMUNITIES

The Comprehensive Plan generally defines the Glades Tier as all lands in the County west of the Water Conservation Areas, Twenty Mile Bend, and the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area (Future Land Use Objective 1.1). While the Plan describes the natural areas of the Water Conservation Areas and J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area as being outside of the Glades Tier, for purposes of this report they are included in the tier, reflecting their hydrologic and environmental connection to this tier, as opposed to other geographic areas of the County. This area is shown on Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**The Glades Tier**



## GEOGRAPHY

Geographically, this is the largest of the County's five tiers, encompassing 830,459 acres, with 99.3% of that acreage in the unincorporated area, and the remaining 0.7% of the acreage in municipalities. The vast majority of this acreage is employed in large-scale agricultural production, primarily sugar cane, with conservation uses the second largest in areal extent. Table 1 identifies the extent of the various land uses in the unincorporated portion of the Glades Tier. Their distribution is shown on Figure 2, which shows land use throughout the Glades, and Figure 3, which illustrates the uses only in the more urbanized area immediately adjacent to Lake Okeechobee.

**Table 1**

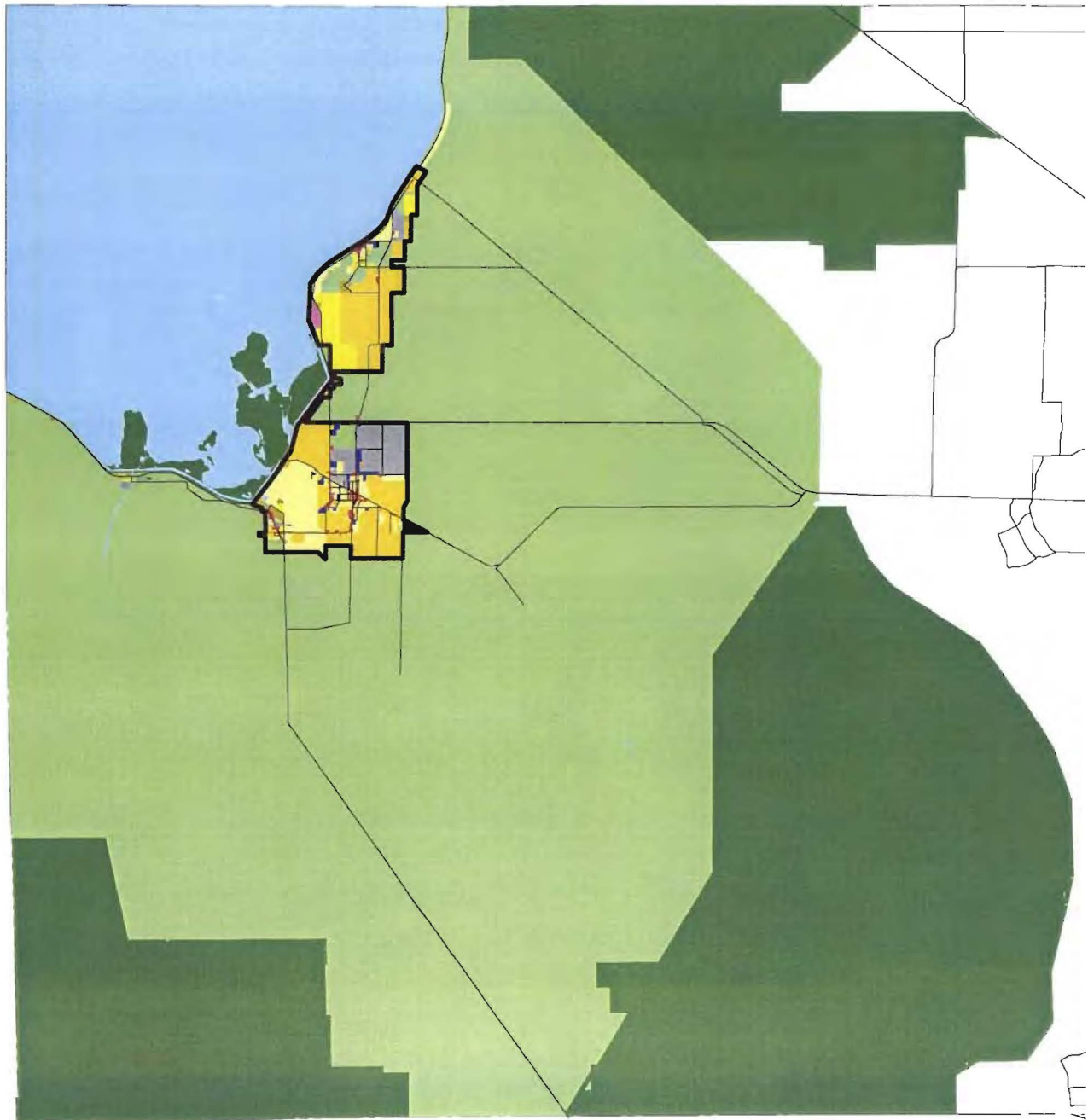
<b>Land Use Distribution Glades Tier, 2000</b>			
Land Use Designation	Acreage Designated		% of Total
	Unincorporated	Unincorporated and Municipalities	
Agriculture	472,981	474,579	57.15%
Conservation	333,017	333,017	40.10%
Urban Residential	15,004	17,347	2.09%
Rural Residential	75	75	0.01%
Industrial	2,867	3,392	0.41%
Commercial	69	527	0.06%
Institutional & Public Facilities	86	715	0.09%
Parks and Recreation	105	594	0.06%
Transportation & Utilities	213	213	0.03%
Totals	824,417	830,459	















While most of the unincorporated portion of the Glades Tier is considered rural in character, there are areas of more urban development in the areas immediately adjacent to the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay; these areas constitute 27,660 acres, or 3% of the total area of the Glades. Within these areas, shown on Figure 3, the land use designations are consistent with those of the County's Urban/Suburban Tier and the policies governing that tier apply. The vast majority of the programs described in this report have application only in these areas of the Glades Tier, where most of the tier's population is concentrated.

In addition, there are two unincorporated rural communities within the Glades Tier, Canal Point and Lake Harbor, which are recognized as having urban land uses.

Figure 2

# Glades Future Land Uses



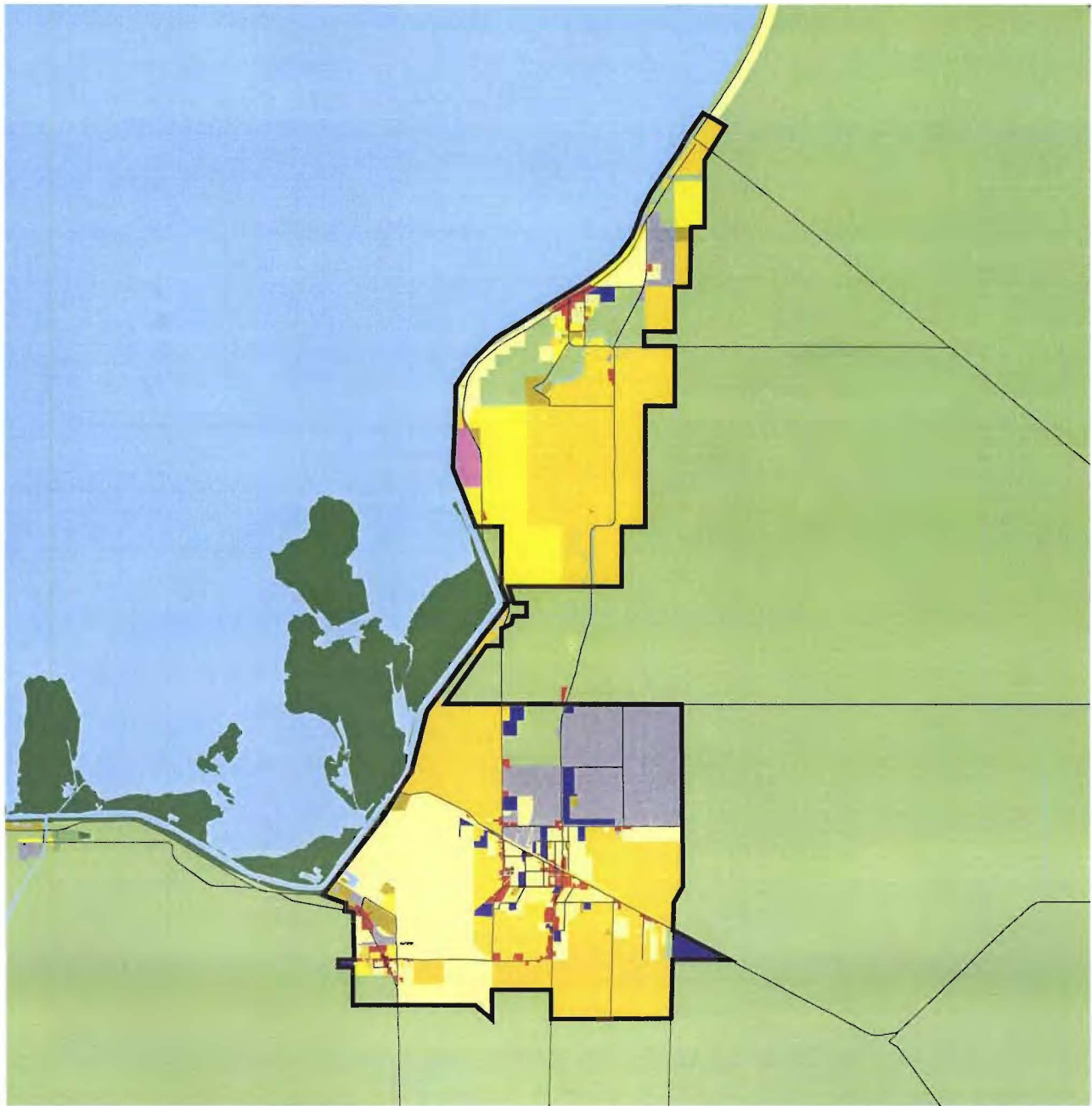
-  RURAL RESIDENTIAL
  -  RESIDENTIAL LOW
  -  RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM
  -  RESIDENTIAL HIGH
  -  COMMERCIAL
  -  INDUSTRIAL
  -  INSTITUTIONAL
  -  UTILITIES
  -  CONSERVATION
  -  PARKS/RECREATION
  -  AP
-  Urban Service Area Boundary  
 Major Roads  
 Water

Source: Palm Beach County Planning Division, Data Section  
Glades Assessment Report, 2001



Figure 3

# Glades Urban Area Future Land Uses



- RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- RESIDENTIAL LOW
- RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM
- RESIDENTIAL HIGH
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- UTILITIES
- CONSERVATION
- PARKS/RECREATION
- AP
- Urban Service Area Boundary
- Major Roads
- Water



Source: Palm Beach County Planning Division, Data Section  
Glades Assessment Report, 2001

## DEMOGRAPHY

While the largest tier geographically, the Glades is one of the smaller tiers in terms of population. The 2000 Census reported that this area accounted for only 3% of the County's total population - or 35,064 people out of a total of 1,131,184. Most of those people (32,913, or 94%) live in the areas of the Glades Tier within which the policies of the Urban/Suburban Tier are applied.

This small portion of Palm Beach County's population differs from that of the remainder of the County in a number of significant ways, many of which manifest themselves in some of the social and economic issues confronting this portion of the County.

The population of the Glades Tier is significantly younger than the population of either the County or the State. Children (under the age of 20) constitute a far higher percentage of the population of the Glades than is true of either the County or the State, while seniors (aged 65 and over) are a far smaller percentage of the Glades population than is true of the County or the State. Table 2 presents a comparison of the population composition by age cohort for each of these geographic areas.

Table 2

<b>Age Composition Glades, Palm Beach County, and Florida, 2000</b>			
	Children (Under 20)	Adults (20-64)	Seniors (65+)
Glades	37.7%	54.8%	7.5%
Palm Beach County	22.4%	53.6%	24.0%
Florida	24.6%	56.7%	18.7%

In addition to being significantly younger than the population of the County as a whole, the population of the Glades differs from the remainder of the County in other significant ways. The 2000 Community Assessment Survey of the County undertaken by the United Way of Palm Beach County reported that the Glades population was more diverse ethnically than other areas of the County, reflecting the number of immigrants living in the western communities. This assessment reported significant populations of Mexicans, Cubans, Guatemalans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Middle Easterners, Asians, and Filipinos in the Glades in addition to African Americans and Caucasians. Addressing Glades issues is complicated by this diversity, which results in a number of Glades residents who do not speak or read English.

The adult population of the Glades Tier also differs dramatically from the rest of the County in terms of levels of educational attainment levels. Within Palm Beach County as a whole, the average person over the age of 25 has, at least, the equivalent of a high school education and nearly one in four County residents holds a college degree. Within the Glades, however, over half of those aged 25 or over lack a high school education and fewer than one in ten hold a college degree. Table 3 presents a comparison of the levels of educational attainment in the Glades Tier as compared to the remainder of the County and the State as a whole.

**Table 3**

<b>Educational Attainment Glades, Palm Beach County, and Florida, 1990</b>					
	Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
Glades	59.7%	20.0%	12.6%	4.9%	2.9%
Palm Beach County	21.3%	30.1%	26.6%	14.5%	7.6%
Florida	25.6%	30.1%	26.0%	12.0%	6.3%

A lack of ready access to transportation is yet another way that the Glades differs from the remainder of the County. While in most of Palm Beach County, less than one in every ten households lacks access to a private car, reflecting the automobile orientation of the land use pattern, in the Glades more than one out of every four households do not own cars, creating a greater dependence upon mass transit than is the case in the remainder of the County. Table 4 compares the rate of automobile ownership in the Glades with the remainder of the County.

**Table 4**

<b>Automobile Ownership Rates Glades and Palm Beach County</b>	
	% of Households without Car, 1990
Glades	27.3%
Palm Beach County	8.2%

The combination of a very diverse, young population, many of whom may not speak English and have limited levels of educational attainment is reflected in the relatively high unemployment rates in the Glades. The most recent employment data for the Glades suggest an unemployment rate more than three times that of the County as a whole. Table 5 presents the latest unemployment numbers for the Glades compared to the County.

**Table 5**

<b>Unemployment Rates Glades, Palm Beach County, and Florida</b>		
	Unemployment, 1990	Unemployment, 2000
Glades	15.6%	11.3%
Palm Beach County	5.2%	3.8%

These factors all contribute to a significantly lower per capita income within the Glades than is true of Palm Beach County as a whole. While income levels in the Glades have risen over the past ten years, they continue to lag behind income levels in the County as a whole, suggesting that the percent of Glades households subsisting below poverty levels will continue to be much higher than that of the remainder of the County. Table 6 presents these statistics.

**Table 6**

<b>Per Capita Income and Percent of Poverty, Glades Tier and Palm Beach County, 1990 and 2000</b>						
	Per Capita Income, 1990	Glades as % of County	Per Capita Income, 2000	Glades as % of County	Percent Change	% of Population Below Poverty Level, 1990
Glades	\$8,625	43.3%	\$14,557	45.4%	68.9%	29.0%
Palm Beach County	\$19,937		\$32,090		60.9%	9.3%

**CONCLUSIONS**

As the statistics illustrate, the Glades Tier differs dramatically from the remainder of the County; both in geography and demographics. Perhaps not unexpectedly given the significant ways in which the Glades differs from the remainder of the County, the United Way's 2000 Assessment of the County found that issues of concern in the Glades differed dramatically from the issues of concern in the remainder of the County. While growth was the number one concern identified on a countywide basis, it was not identified as a significant issue in the Glades. In the Glades, major concerns included economic development (jobs and wages), housing, and health and human services (children's activities, education, recreation, immigration assistance, substance abuse programs, nutrition education, and healthcare); growth was seen as a concern only as it related to environmental issues.

Since 1989, the Comprehensive Plan has emphasized the need for a number of programs unique to the Glades to address the issues within this portion of the County; Appendix A lists the various policies from the Comprehensive Plan that specifically address Glades' issues.

The following pages represent an assessment of the effectiveness of these programs in each of the following areas:

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Health and Human Services
- Growth, Land Use, and the Environment
- Infrastructure
- Governmental Structure

The discussion of each of the topics focuses on those programs specific to the Glades. General programs with a countywide application, which offer no special provisions for the Glades, are not described; such programs are described only in the context of the provisions that relate to the Glades. The discussion of each topic includes a brief description of each program, including the costs associated with it, if known, an assessment of the effectiveness of the program, and recommendations for modifications or further action.

### III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As indicated in Section II, Overview of the Glades Communities, the Glades area is characterized by wages markedly lower than in the remainder of the County as well as high unemployment rates. These factors, no doubt, contribute to the fact that, in their survey of issues facing Glades area residents, the United Way of Palm Beach County found that economic development related issues were the most commonly raised concern. These issues were identified as the most significant priority in the Glades. Economic development issues include workforce development issues associated with jobs and job security, wages, and job training, as well as more traditional economic development activities.

The Glades communities are designated as one of the County's "Development Regions," areas of the County which are characterized by concentrations of low and moderate level incomes. The importance of economic development issues in the Glades is also reflected in the County's Comprehensive Plan. Economic Policy 1.1-c specifically acknowledges the Glades communities as an area in which the County will focus its economic development efforts.

The following pages provide a summary and assessment of the County's efforts to encourage economic development activities over the past five years. Recommendations are provided where appropriate.

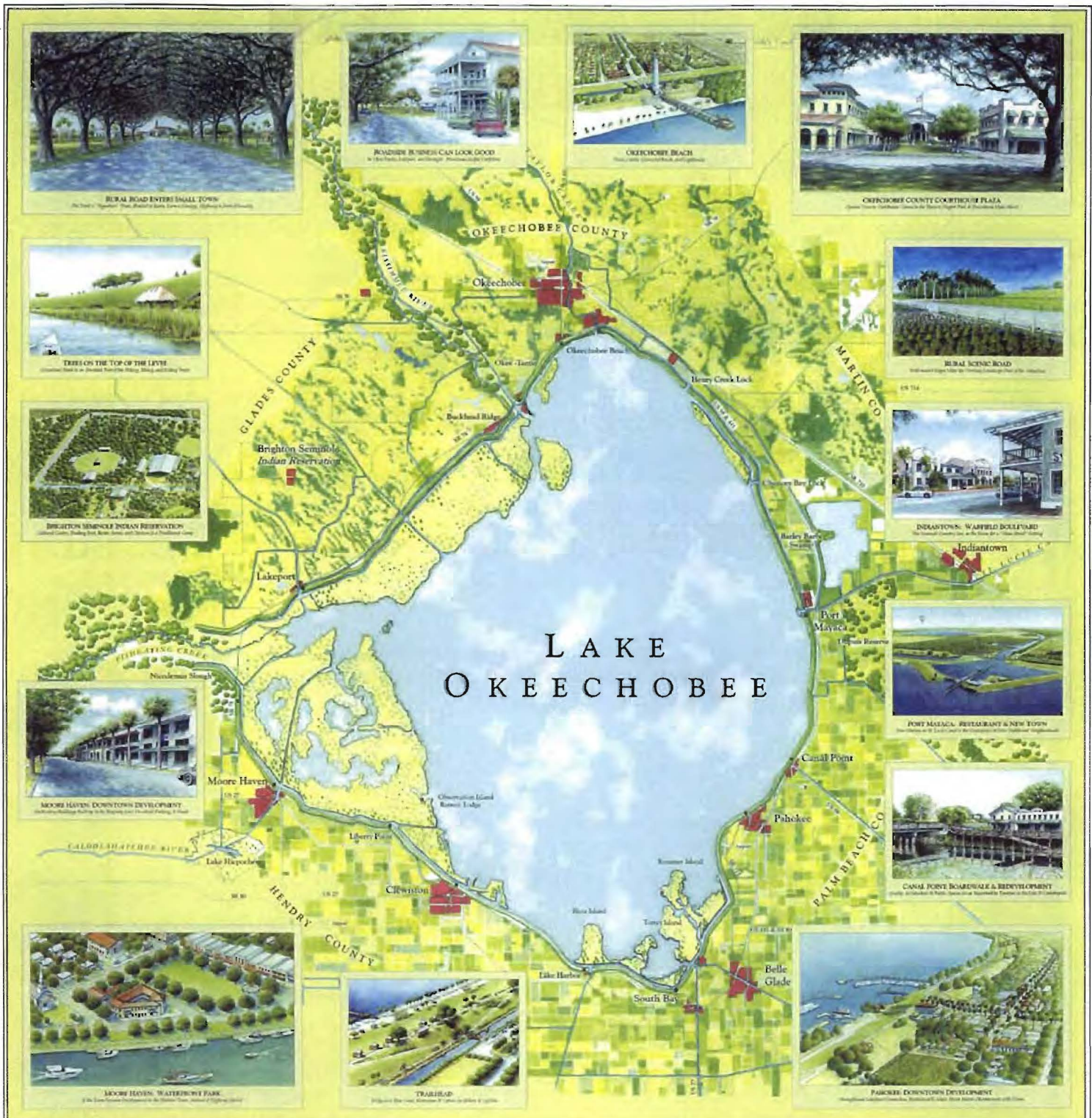
Given the importance of economic development issues in the Glades, implementation of any of the recommendations in other sections of this report should require consideration of the impact of an action on the economic development of the region.

#### ***TOURISM DEVELOPMENT***

**Description.** One of the primary approaches to promote economic development in the Glades over the past five years has been to increase awareness of the area's rich heritage and natural resources and to encourage tourism. Grants for this purpose have been obtained from the Florida Division of Historic Preservation, the Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, and the Florida Endowment for the Humanities (now the Florida Humanities Council).

From 1994 to 1998, Palm Beach County and the Glades municipalities participated in an informal coalition with representatives of six rural counties north and west of Lake Okeechobee and the Southwest Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils; the coalition was known as the Greater Lake Okeechobee Tourism Alliance (GLOTA). In 1997 and 1998, GLOTA was responsible for convening a series of public workshops to increase awareness and determine support for nature-based and heritage tourism as a means of diversifying the economy in a sustainable manner. The workshops resulted in a report and inventory of potential tourism facilities around the lake. Figure 4, the Greater Lake Okeechobee Regional Plan for Tourism, is a representation of the graphic of tourism potential created as a result of these workshops. GLOTA stopped meeting after this report was completed.

Figure 4



# GREATER LAKE OKEECHOBEE

## REGIONAL PLAN for TOURISM in Towns, Countryside, & Fresh Water Frontiers

Prepared for the  
**GREATER LAKE OKEECHOBEE TOURISM ALLIANCE**  
 DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS

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**Map Notes:**  
 The map of the region is a conceptual system designed to be a conceptual and illustrative plan. It is not a detailed site plan or a construction plan. The purpose of the map is to show the general location and character of the various development projects and to show the general location and character of the various development projects.

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From 1996 to 1999, the Western Communities Tourism Alliance, a non-profit coalition representing attractions and municipalities west of US 441 in Palm Beach County, was responsible for promotion of the Glades area as a tourist destination. During this period, the Tourist Development Council and the Economic Development Office funded staff support for Glades tourism, with marketing funding provided by Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) grants. In 2000, the program was relocated to the CVB, permitting a greater focus on promoting the Glades area as a tourist destination, and eliminating the need for staff to solicit membership fees and compete for CVB marketing grants.

Perhaps the most significant work on tourism development has been the effort to develop the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST). Work on this portion of the Florida National Scenic Trail began in 1991, with the development of *the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) Action Plan*. This plan became the basis for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)'s Master Plan for design and construction of the 112-mile trail atop the Herbert Hoover Dike. The action plan not only identified impediments to access by hikers and bicyclists trying to cross navigational locks and flood control structures, it also recommended types of tourist-related businesses needed to support the Trail.

In 1996 and 1997, master plans were prepared for the west and east sides of the LOST based on data contained in the above-described *Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) Action Plan*. Figure 5, the Palm Beach County Portion of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Master Plan, describes the trailhead improvements recommended for arks bordering the Herbert Hoover Dike to provide access to the LOST. Cost estimates in the two plans were revisited by FDOT and increased to include items such as water and sewer and design costs.

Beginning in 2000, some of the same local representatives who participated in GLOTA began working with the National Park Service to develop the Big Water Heritage Trail, a driving tour of the communities with signs directing visitors to natural and historic points of interest. GLOTA's lake-wide inventory has proven valuable to the advisory group in identifying points of interest. Upon completion of this sign system (expected by 2003), FDOT and other agencies developing the LOST have agreed to "recycle" the Heritage Trail advisory group as an oversight committee for Scenic Trail completion.

In 2001, FDOT was awaiting execution of a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit construction of the LOST. The environmental impact statement required by federal law is expected to be complete within one year of this agreement. The next phase of the LOST will be final design, in years Two-Four, which will overlap with construction in years Three-Five.

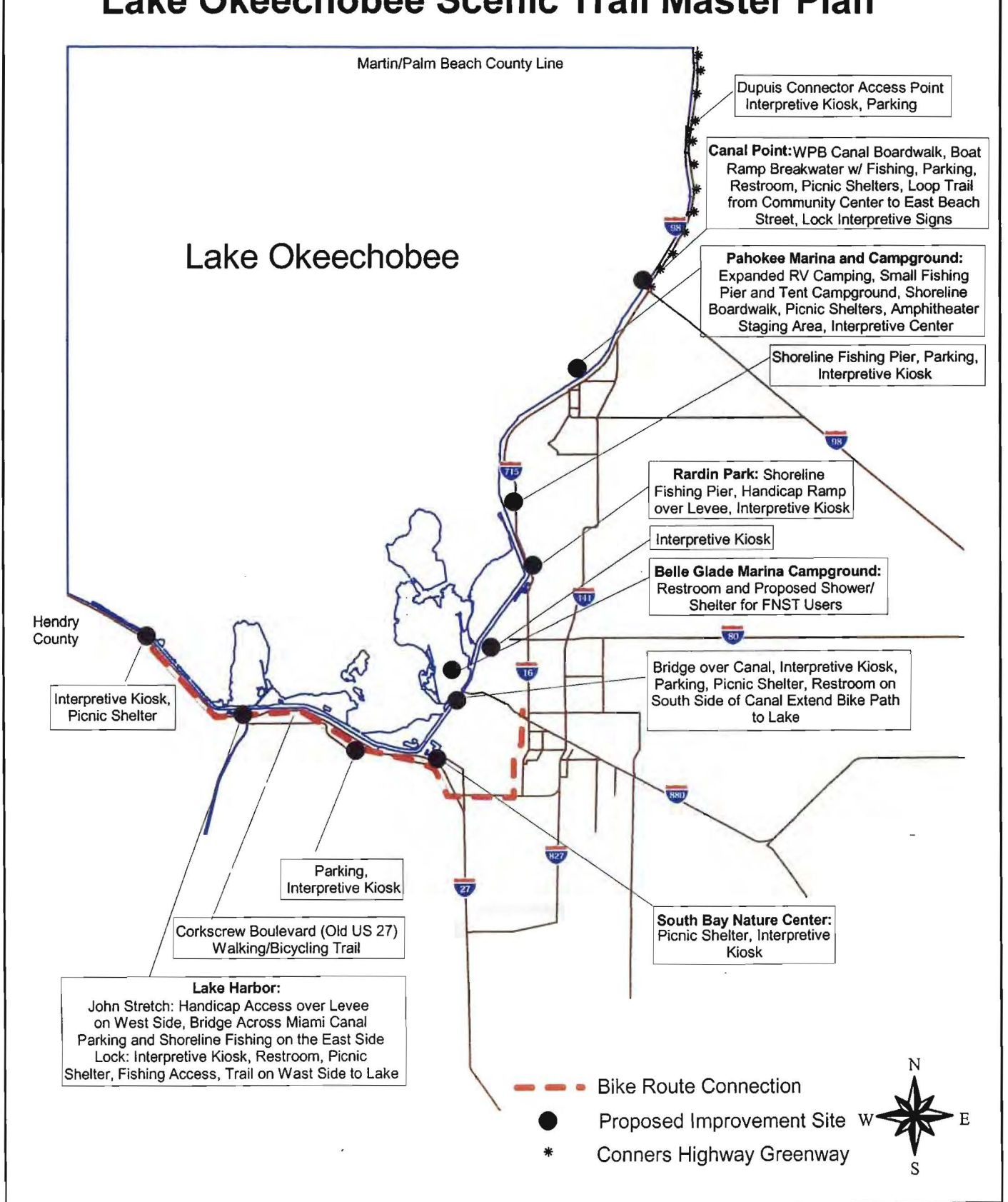
Although FDOT has procured \$12.5 million for construction, they estimate a balance of \$21 million will be required to complete construction. Funding the balance for construction of the LOST has been one of Palm Beach County's top legislative priorities.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$637,000; including \$500,000 in federal transportation enhancement money (TEA21), and \$137,000 in Convention and Visitors Bureau promotions and salaries.

**Assessment.** In 2000, the National Association of Counties recognized Palm Beach County's focus on the LOST as the Best Economic and Community Development Project in the nation.

Figure 5

# Palm Beach County Portion of Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Master Plan





**Recommendations.** The County should continue its emphasis on promoting tourism in the Glades as a key component of economic diversification strategies. This should include continued collaboration with FDOT, other local governments, and other agencies on the development of the LOST. Additional funding is likely to be required for completion of many of the ongoing trailhead projects associated with the LOST. The County should also assist in promoting the Big Water Heritage Trail through the development and placement of appropriate signage along designated roads.

### **CRAFTS GUILD**

**Description.** As part of the County's emphasis on development of tourism, in 1999, the EDGE Center procured a \$16,000 State preservation grant to identify Glades residents who engage in traditional arts or crafts, explore their interest in marketing their crafts, and, if interest was demonstrated, provide for specialized training in marketing folk arts and other small business skills. A folk life survey identified about 30 artisans with marketable skills, many of whom reportedly preferred production to marketing. A cooperative or other collaborative approach to collectivizing the productivity of the identified artisans was recommended; however, due to limited staff resources, the EDGE Center's mission to acquire land and build a 30,000 square foot building took priority over implementing the recommendations.

The Glades Community Development Corporation has used the survey in their efforts to form a Crafts Guild. It has been incorporated as a non-profit corporation. Potential locations to house the Guild are being investigated.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$0

**Assessment.** Although the Crafts Guild is too new to be assessed, the program affords opportunities to economic development in the Glades which should not be overlooked. Other projects in the Glades, including redevelopment, historic preservation, and tourism efforts, should be viewed as providing potential sites for marketing the products of the Crafts Guild.

### **RURAL AREA OF CRITICAL ECONOMIC CONCERN**

**Description.** In January 2001, Governor Jeb Bush signed Executive Order 01-26, designating the area of south central Florida around Lake Okeechobee, including the three Glades municipalities in Palm Beach County, as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern. Other communities included in the designation are Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties, and the area around Immokalee in Collier County. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council has recommended that the boundaries of this new Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern be expanded to include the unincorporated areas of the Glades to the borders of Broward, Hendry, and Martin counties.

The Governor's order makes the Glades municipalities eligible for state economic development incentives (including infrastructure grants and tax credits) previously unavailable to them. Specifically, the municipalities, after executing memoranda of agreement with the State Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development, may pursue resources previously limited to counties with populations less than 75,000. The memoranda are still being developed by the State for execution by local governments around the Lake.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0

**Assessment.** Including the three municipalities with small, rural counties around the Lake may enable these communities to seek additional funding sources for some of their infrastructure needs. Due to its recent execution, the full effects of this designation cannot be assessed.

**Recommendation.** The County should endorse the expansion of the Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern designation to include the unincorporated area of the County in the Glades.

### **CHAMPION COMMUNITY – USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Description.** The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated the area a Champion Community, which qualifies the communities for funding through various USDA programs. Retaining the area's eligibility for such funding required execution of an agreement between Palm Beach County and the USDA Rural Development Office, and required County staff to create and maintain an online data base known as "benchmarks" with strategies, including identification of responsible parties, deadlines, and funding sources. These strategies deal with the following eight goals:

- Entrepreneurial Development
- Access to Capital
- Infrastructure Development
- Tourism Development
- Workforce Preparation and Placement
- Administration and Marketing
- Transportation
- Housing

Two Rural Development grants that seek to achieve a more proactive, comprehensive approach to revitalization and development than has been taken in the past have recently been awarded. The funded projects seek to achieve a more proactive, comprehensive approach to revitalization and development. A \$50,000 Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG), accepted by the County in April 2001, will fund preparation and initial implementation of a Glades area-wide business development plan in partnership with various public and private stakeholders. This plan will identify business opportunities associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP) and the LOST, as well as unforeseen opportunities to be identified during plan preparation. The consultant will also help identify funding and provide other assistance to implement partially completed development projects, which range from a retail/museum tourism complex in South Bay to the redevelopment of downtown Pahokee and development of Belle Glade Business Park.

A Rural Business Enterprise Grant for \$114,000 received from USDA in May will complement the RBOG by funding the EDGE Center to train entrepreneurs and the Workforce Development Board to train additional businesses and employees to meet the needs of CERP and LOST. Examples of opportunities include suppliers of needed equipment and positions ranging from engineer, scientist, and accountant to water quality technicians, bricklayers, restaurateurs, trail outfitters, and tour operators.

In early spring 2001, the County's legislative delegation formed the Everglades Restoration Consortium, with representatives of the County as well as the agencies administering CERP and educational/training institutions including the Workforce Development Board.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$10,000, in Economic Development staff time.

**Assessment.** The area-wide strategic business plan and training programs are in the beginning stages and cannot be assessed at this time. Together, the above grant-funded projects should position the Glades area to benefit economically from these large pending public works projects through training and technical assistance, reducing the likelihood of non-residents filling most of the jobs and providing most goods and services. A trained work force can help lead to revitalization of the downtown areas and a more successful tourism industry.

**Recommendations.** The County should continue to monitor Glades economic activities through the USDA's benchmark program. The County should continue to collaborate with the entities involved in CERP and the LOST through the Consortium and these federal grants, as well as through the Glades Technical Advisory Committee and the Big Water Heritage Trail project.

### ***EMPOWERMENT ZONE***

**Description.** In 1996 and 1998, the County worked closely with the municipalities to prepare strategic plans in accordance with the requirements of the federal Empowerment Zone program. At least five public meetings were held with community groups in the Glades during each year of this process, and information on service needs and available resources was compiled in reports prepared by consultants and submitted to the USDA. In neither instance was the Glades area designated as an Empowerment Zone.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$33,000

**Assessment.** The County was not successful in obtaining Empowerment Zone designation for the area. The processes and resulting studies helped identify community priorities and local service gaps. This information was useful in obtaining the Champion Community designation by the USDA previously described.

**Recommendation.** The County should not provide technical support for future studies seeking Empowerment Zone designation. Technical support should be focused on other Glades-related initiatives that have had a greater rate of success.

### ***DEVELOPMENT REGIONS GRANT PROGRAM***

**Description.** The Development Regions Grant Program provides capital for small business expansion within the County's identified "Development Regions." Now in its fourth year, the program awards two kinds of grants:

- (1) Core grants, for projects located in any of six areas of the County characterized by high rates of poverty, low per capita income, and high unemployment. The Glades is one of the targeted areas; and,
- (2) Competitive grants, available competitively throughout the County.

Table 7

Glades Area Development Region Grants, 1997-2000						
	Total County Award	County Funds Spent	Private Funds Spent	Actual Jobs Created	Existing Jobs Preserved	
<b>Belle Glade</b>						
1997	Business Park	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 0	0	
2000	Alabama & Georgia Grocery	21,666	12,069	10,863	0	
<b>Canal Point</b>						
1998	Lyn-Dale's Fruit & Gifts	25,000	25,000	63,403	0	
1999	Sam's Investment Corp.	40,000	40,000	165,699	9	
	Lyn-Dale's Fruit & Gifts	25,000	0	0	1	
<b>Glades Community Development Corp.</b>						
1997	Cottage Industry	25,000	25,000	28,139	17.5	
	Pahokee Façade Program	25,000	25,000	25,000	14	
	South Bay Nature Park	25,000	24,975	50,000	3	
	Belle Glade Façade Program	25,000	23,900	31,837	9	
<b>Pahokee</b>						
1998	Façade Program	3,587	0	N/A	0	
	Badcock Furniture	2,046	2,046	2,046	0	
	Glades Drugs	2,367	2,367	2,367	0	
	Mid Lake-Navigation (dba City Marina)	12,000	12,000	500,000	2	
	Pahokee Liquors	1,950	1,950	1,950	0	
1999	Façade Program	1,036	0	0	0	
	Pahokee Liquors	788	788	788	10	
	Pahokee Meats	1,389	1,389	1,389	2	
	JP Auto Repair	5,000	5,000	6,489	0	
	Dr. Hamilton Office	3,454	3,454	3,534	0	
	Everglades Inn	10,000	10,000	50,000	0	
2000	Everglades Inn	21,667	0	0	0	
	Uniglades Enterprises, LLC	21,667	0	0	0	
<b>South Bay</b>						
1997	Royal Energy	50,000	50,000	1,600,000	17	
	1998 Crossroads Lake Depot Market	25,000	25,000	0	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$423,617</b>	<b>\$339,938</b>	<b>\$2,543,504</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>133.5</b>

Applications for a Development Regions Grant are accepted once per year. Businesses located in one of the Glades municipalities have their applications submitted by the appropriate municipality and/or a community redevelopment-oriented nonprofit organization, while businesses located in the unincorporated area work directly with the County's Office of Economic Development. Table 7 provides a summary of the activity in the Glades using this program since 1997.

Use of this program for new construction is limited by land development costs that are significantly higher in the Glades than in the rest of the County. This situation results from the need to remove and fill poorly drained muck soils ("demucking") and the limited availability of infrastructure such as sanitary sewer facilities.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$339,938

**Assessment.** This program has leveraged \$2,543,504 in private funds - or \$7.48 for every County dollar spent. It has created 84.5 new full-time equivalent jobs and assisted in retaining 133.5 jobs. The total cost per job created or retained is about \$13,227, with \$1,559 of that amount coming from the County.

On a countywide basis, the Development Regions Grant Program has spent \$1,985,629 and leveraged \$25,675,009 in private funding – or \$13.77 for every County dollar spent. A total of 1164 jobs have been created or retained through the program, or one job for every \$25,202.

Comparing the Glades to the countywide numbers indicates that the private dollars leveraged in the Glades through this program lag well behind those generated in the County as a whole. However, the number of jobs created in the Glades per dollar spent is nearly twice that of the remainder of the County.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to use the Development Regions Grant program. Consideration should be given to expanding the program in the Glades to fund higher costs associated with site preparation and infrastructure extension.

### ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SET-ASIDE PROGRAM***

**Description.** Under the County's federally funded Community Development Block Grant Program, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) began administering this program in 1998 to expand employment opportunities, primarily for low- and moderate-income persons in Palm Beach County. Prior to this program (in FY 96), HCD awarded the City of Belle Glade \$500,000 to provide infrastructure to support its top priority economic development project, the Belle Glade Business Park. In FY 01, at least \$1,120,000 was available for economic development activities limited to acquisition of real property and equipment; excluding vehicles, improvements to structures, infrastructure improvements and new construction.

Grant funds must be utilized for job creation or retention as defined under federal regulations; eligible recipients are businesses registered to do business in Florida, municipalities, and community redevelopment agencies. All projects must be located in, or adjacent to, the Development Regions, and HCD will give preference to projects located in the "core areas" of these regions. Applicants must leverage the amount requested with cash, equity or real property, with extra consideration for applications with higher levels of leveraging. A minimum of one job must be retained or created per \$15,000 granted. Jobs created through this process must be maintained for three years.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$204,000 in CDBG funds, including: \$150,000 for South Bay Depot and \$54,000 for Pat's Restaurant in Belle Glade.

**Assessment.** The City of South Bay is using this funding to develop a 3,000-square foot retail arcade with shops adjacent to the County RV Park, creating an estimated 15 jobs as part of a tourism complex including a Lake Okeechobee Welcome Center and Museum. Pat's Restaurant used this funding for purchase of equipment and business expansion, creating 3.5 jobs. This amounts to an expenditure of \$11,027 per job created.

In FY 01, two public meetings—one in West Palm Beach and one in Belle Glade—were held to increase public awareness of this grant program. Six of the thirteen grant requests received (46%) were from Glades applicants.

**Recommendation.** This program should be continued as a means of encouraging job creation and business expansion.

### ***BUSINESS LOAN FUND OF THE PALM BEACHES***

**Description.** The Business Loan Fund is a non-profit financial institution incorporated for the purpose of making capital accessible to small businesses and redevelopment projects, primarily in areas of the County with greater than a 20% poverty rate. In the first five years of operation, lines of credit have been made available countywide from banks, corporations, foundations, and other institutions totaling about \$3.6 million, and more than \$2 million has been procured from other sources including the USDA's Intermediary Relending Program, the Small Business Administration, the US Treasury Department, and the US Economic Development Administration. The goal of the Business Loan Fund is to assist more than 150 clients per year and to average more than 40 loans per year for the next five years.

In May 2001, the BCC approved a contract with the Business Loan Fund to provide a loan officer who will directly serve the Glades area from an office to be co-located with the EDGE Center or the Glades Community Development Corporation.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$227,000.

**Assessment.** The Glades area has enabled the Business Loan Fund to access \$500,000 from USDA's Rural Intermediary Re-lending Program. Since 1998, an estimated \$386,519 has been loaned to 16 existing and start-up businesses in the Glades, and another \$301,000 in loans is pending. These businesses have created or retained a total of 43 jobs, and another 10 jobs are projected as a result of the pending loans described above. The total cost per job created or retained is \$8989. Two of these loans have accessed the Rural Intermediary Re-lending Program.

**Recommendations.** The County should continue supporting the Business Loan Fund as a means of starting and expanding small businesses.

### ***ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FOR GLADES ENTREPRENEURS (EDGE CENTER, INC.)***

**Description.** The Private Industry Council and the Glades Community Development Corporation (GCDC) created EDGE Center as an area-wide not-for-profit small business incubator in 1997. The EDGE Center was created in response to a needs assessment and survey of businesses completed in 1995.

In an effort to order to become financially self-sufficient, the EDGE Center is seeking non-County financing to construct a 30,000 square foot building that will house and provide support services for new businesses.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$310,000.

**Assessment.** The EDGE Center has assisted 24 businesses since its inception, leading to the creation of 49 new jobs, with another 33 jobs pending. During this same period, the EDGE Center has assisted businesses in obtaining approximately \$970,000 in private financing from various banks and lending institutions; another \$1.5 million in private sector financing is anticipated.

**Recommendations.** The County should continue supporting the EDGE Center as a means of starting and expanding small businesses.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Description.** The non-profit Workforce Development Board (WDB) has had a workforce development center serving the Glades since the 1980s. The WDB provides job training and support services for targeted client groups, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the Work and Gain Economic Self Sufficiency (WAGES) program, which assists people in making the transition from welfare to work. Although Palm Beach County annually executes an interagency agreement with the WDB, this entity receives all of its funding from the federal government.

The annual budget for the Belle Glade office is \$1,146,019, including \$413,000 for job training, \$588,307 for salaries/benefits, \$96,372 for administrative costs, and \$48,000 for support services such as child care and transportation. In 2001, the WDB approved a 5-year lease to replace its previous location in Belle Glade with a location near Glades General Hospital on two Palm Tran routes, accessible to all Glades residents. As noted in the **Champion Community** subsection, the County has a grant for WDB and EDGE Center to train Glades residents for economic opportunities from Everglades restoration and the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$0

**Assessment.** Table 8 reflects the results of the WDB work from 1999 to 2001. In the Glades, 50% of WAGES participants were placed in jobs (compared to 22% countywide). Also, 28% of the adults served in the Glades received job training compared to 33% countywide, with 85% placed in jobs (72% countywide). Of dislocated workers, 67% in the Glades received training (30% countywide), and 100% (2 workers) were placed in jobs compared to 79% countywide. Among youth, 53% (30% countywide) received training and 65% (17% countywide) were placed in jobs.

**Table 8**

<b>Comparison of Glades Residents to all County Residents Served by the Workforce Development Board, 1999-2001</b>									
	# Served		# Trained		# Termed		# Placed		Comments
	Glades	PBC	Glades	PBC	Glades	PBC	Glades	PBC	
<b>7/1/99 - 6/30/00</b>									
Adults	45	773	20	355	26	455	13	223	Low income persons 21 years old or older
Dislocated Workers	2	482	1	175	2	290	2	189	Persons 18 years old or older receiving unemployment
Younger Youth	35	97	32	84	19	53	12	26	Low income persons aged 14 to 18
Older Youth	15	140	13	109	7	96	3	48	Low income persons aged 19 to 21
<b>WAGES</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>1528</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>2998</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>679</b>	Persons receiving TANF
<b>7/1/00-2/28/01</b>									
Adults	302	2107	51	582	81	637	78	564	
Dislocated Workers	1	999	1	268	0	323	0	299	
Younger Youth	35	771	18	68	19	729	10	30	
Older Youth	95	320	33	134	20	136	17	70	
<b>WAGES</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>2156</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>463</b>	

"Termed" includes multiple terminations per client; # served also includes job seekers not in training and those procuring technical assistance such as use of computers and resume preparation.

**Recommendations.** The County should continue collaborating with WDB to prepare Glades residents for job and business expansion opportunities resulting from CERP and LOST.



## IV. HOUSING

In 2000, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) completed the *Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Study*. This study included assessments of the types of housing available in the Glades. The results are indicated in Table 9.

**Table 9**

<b>Housing Stock in the Glades by Type</b>						
	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Single Family Housing	2,882	67.0%	1,522	23.6%	4,404	41.0%
Duplex to Quadruplex	94	2.2%	2,297	35.6%	2,391	22.2%
Multiple Units	7	0.2%	2,113	32.7%	2,120	19.7%
Mobile Homes	1,247	29.0%	464	7.2%	1,711	15.9%
Other	68	1.6%	60	0.9%	128	1.2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,298</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>6,456</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>10,754</b>	

Two factors stand out from this inventory– the greater number of rental units than owner-occupied units in the Glades and the concentration of mobile homes. This inventory, in combination with the demographic and economic profile of the Glades, suggests the housing strategies that have been pursued and continue to be pursued in the area.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Description.** The main providers of low and moderate income housing in the Glades area are the County’s Housing and Community Development Department and Neighbors Organized for Adequate Housing (NOAH). Various smaller non-profit housing providers include Centro Campesino, the Belle Glade Housing Authority, and the Pahokee Housing Authority.

Centro Campesino owns Villa Lago, a farm worker housing project in South Bay that was built with 192 duplex units. The goal is to renovate the units into 96 single-family homes; to date, seven have been renovated and three more are expected to close soon. An agreement between Centro Campesino, South Bay, and Palm Beach County has been approved to authorize use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies for sewer facilities for Villa Lago.

The Belle Glade Housing Authority provides funding assistance to 177 tenants through the USDA Rural Development Rental Assistance Program. They make 16 units available to retired low-income farm workers. They are also constructing an additional 27 new housing units. The City of Belle Glade is coordinating with the County to procure 28 tax delinquent properties for development of infill housing.

The Pahokee Housing Authority operates 114 units within Pahokee and 400 units outside of the City. They are also planning to develop an additional 50 single-family units. The City of Pahokee is coordinating with the County to procure 14 tax delinquent properties for sale to a private developer for infill housing.

In addition to housing construction, renovation, and related activities, demolition of derelict buildings is a top priority in the Glades area. The 2000 Consolidated Plan categorized the housing stock in the Belle Glade Target Area as 53% major deterioration, 30% with minor deterioration and 17% sound; South Bay's Target Area housing had only 30% with major deterioration, 37% with minor deterioration, and 33% was sound. Canal Point had 36% with major deterioration, 27% minor deterioration, and 37% were judged sound.

The 5-year Consolidated Plan reports that the Pahokee Housing Authority properties suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Irene, so much of the Comprehensive Grant monies they received for 1998 renovations were spent on emergency repairs, and therefore more is still needed. The Plan also mentioned that Belle Glade Housing Authority demolished 19 housing units deteriorated beyond rehabilitation, and is also replacing roofs on at least 45 of the 714 units in its ownership. It has repainted more than half its buildings during the last two years and will continue until both developments are repainted.

The Director of the County's Housing Finance Authority estimates that a very small percentage of its assistance to first-time homebuyers goes to the Glades area due to limited land availability.

**Direct Costs to County.** \$2,626,817, in CDBG funds, including:

- \$ 390,161 for Belle Glade Code Enforcement;
- \$ 92,223 for South Bay Code Enforcement;
- \$ 41,000 for housing counseling assistance;
- \$1,737,631 for renovations and handicapped access improvements;
- \$ 155,802 for Section 8 Rental Assistance; and
- \$ 210,000 for Housing Assistance for Persons with AIDS.

**Assessment.** The 2000 *Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Study* indicates that, while the number of rental units exceeds owner-occupied units, the existing supply of owner-occupied affordable housing in the Glades exceeds the demand for such housing and is projected to continue to do so, at least for the next five years. There continues to be a need for additional rental units of affordable housing. The Study called for an additional 591 units of affordable rental units in the Glades over the next five years.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to support rehab, demolition, and new construction of rental housing in order to meet anticipated demand in the Glades area.

## **MARKET RATE HOUSING**

**Description.** During a planning charrette sponsored by the City of Pahokee in 1995, area residents expressed support for encouraging golf course and retirement-type housing development on large land-holdings now used for agriculture. In 1998, a non-profit organization attempted to address this issue, trying to build a middle class subdivision ("Pelicans Landing") on vacant land south of downtown. Unfortunately, the costs of site preparation deterred financial institutions from investing in the project.

In the spring of 2001, the City of Belle Glade appointed two task forces to devise approaches to increase the level of available housing in order to attract new residents and support commercial development, and to implement needed rehabilitation and demolition.

The City of South Bay is trying to develop 100 single family units on a 23-acre parcel north of US 27 near a pending nature park. The units will be sold for \$92,000 to \$120,000 and the City has also proposed in its redevelopment plan to rehabilitate 50 substandard homes that represent 5% of its existing housing stock. The City estimates that removing the muck from the site, which averages three feet, but runs as deep as 15 feet, and adding up to the seven feet of fill that may be required, can add an average of \$30,000 per housing unit. This development, part of the 173-acre tract known as Renaissance Village being developed by the City for various commercial and civic uses, would increase home ownership in South Bay by 15%.

The City has worked with the non-profit community to prepare residents for home ownership through education and counseling. In response to the area median income of \$19,000, various sources of financing have been arranged to ensure affordability; partners include the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Fannie Mae, Redevco, and Pulte Homes. The site development costs for just the residential property are estimated at \$2 million, and the infrastructure needs (roads, sewer, sidewalks, utilities) add another \$1.3 million to the site development costs.

**Direct Cost to the County. \$0**

**Assessment.** Additional market rate housing is needed in the Glades if the area is to be successful in expanding its economic development activities and attracting middle management to the area. The County has helped facilitate housing development and related support services such as home ownership counseling through the CDBG program and by deeding tax delinquent parcels to Belle Glade and Pahokee for housing development, but the significantly higher costs of site preparation/infrastructure in the Glades area than the rest of the county are a significant deterrent; the City of South Bay estimates these costs add \$30,000 to the cost of each unit.

**Recommendations.** The most significant issue to be addressed with regard to providing market rate housing in the Glades is the high cost of site preparation. The County should explore alternative ways to help Glades communities procure financing to reduce site preparation costs so the area can attract developers of market rate housing.

## V. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### **GLADES INITIATIVE – NEEDS ANALYSIS**

In 2000, the Community Services Department began work on the Glades Initiative, an effort to develop an effective local system for health and human services delivery so the quality of services provided in the Glades is equivalent to that in other parts of the County. The Glades Initiative requires development of:

- an understanding of health and human service needs gained from previous needs assessments and validation of these needs by local stakeholders;
- a status report on how identified needs are being met; and
- a detailed implementation plan specifying actions, resources, and parties responsible for responding to needs.

A first step in this effort is an analysis of health and human services activities in the Glades over the past five years, including an inventory of existing resources and funding streams, a qualitative assessment of community needs using stakeholder and consumer input, an evaluation of community organization capacity to fulfill identified needs based on staff, training, and funding, and recommendations regarding implementation.

Given the ongoing separate work on the Glades Initiative, this report does not attempt to assess the various programs being examined in that effort, which has a report due in October 2001.

### **EDUCATION – OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

**Description.** Several of the housing providers in the Glades, realizing the strong links between education/training programs and housing needs, partner with or directly support daycare and after-school programs.

The Belle Glade Housing Authority offers day care for low-income children, an after school arts program for children, and parent training at the Okeechobee Center. It also offers after-school care and continuing education at other sites in the Glades.

The Pahokee Housing Authority offers childcare services, an after school arts program, and adult education programs to assist its clients in obtaining a GED or prepare for college entrance exams.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$19,000 CDBG funds used by the Belle Glade Housing Authority for these programs.

**Assessment.** While the housing authorities appear to be leveraging a variety of resources to meet residents' education and training needs, the United Way has expressed concern about the lack of communication and collaboration among the various providers of these services. This could lead to duplication of efforts.

**Recommendation.** In developing the area-wide business development plan being funded by a Rural Business Opportunity Grant, the County should evaluate opportunities for collaboration among non-traditional education providers, such as housing authorities, and more traditional stakeholders.

### ***COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES***

**Description.** The Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service, Family and Consumer Sciences provides educational programs to families and professionals in the Glades. Two program assistants are currently located in our Belle Glade office and a third will be added after October 1, 2001. Agents and program assistants located in other offices also provide education to families and agencies that serve families in the Glades.

Welfare to Work clients have participated in entrepreneurial, in-depth series entitled **Job Start** and **Elder Companion**. Fifteen have graduated from the Job Start series and eight are currently engaged in a 40-hour field observation as part of the Elder Companion Series most recently held in South Bay. A half-time agent position is provided through the University of Florida by way of a grant from the Department of Labor.

The **Family Nutrition Program** provides a series of at least 6 sessions to Food Stamp recipients and Food Stamp eligible families. Over 9,400 contacts in the Glades have been instructed at the Health Department, schools, libraries, Head Start Centers, Eagle Academy, New Hope Charities and other locations. This position is funded by the University of Florida through an in-kind matching grant by USDA. A second position will be available after October 1, 2001.

The **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program** provides a series of at least 12 sessions to low income families with children. A full time position is provided by the University of Florida as a result of a grant from USDA. It requires no matching funds or in-kind matching funds. This is a newly acquired position since July 2001. Teaching is currently ongoing at the Belle Glade Congregate Meal Site, Lighthouse Café and several other locations as scheduled.

Resource Management and Family Economics programs have been provided to both professionals and the general public in the Glades.

**Direct Cost To The County.** Approximately \$74,000 annually, including salaries, program supplies and travel has been granted to the county through the University of Florida by USDA and the Florida Department of Labor. A portion of other County-paid salaries, office space, equipment, telecommunications, utilities, etc. committed to these programs cannot be readily identified.

**Assessment.** In FY 2000, 227 programs were presented to 10,417 adults, children and professionals. As a result, 4 Welfare to Work clients have found employment; professionals have received continuing education and/or needed certification for their employment; and children and families are managing food resources more effectively, handling food using basic principles of food safety, consuming a greater percentage of fruits and vegetables and eating breakfast more frequently.

It is a struggle to employ program assistant positions in the Glades that must be matched with in kind salaries from agency front line personnel. The hourly rate for agency personnel is often less than what Cooperative Extension Service program assistants earn, therefore, in order to keep this program solvent, we have to concentrate a greater amount of teaching on the east coast to generate enough support for the positions in the Glades, even though the need is so great in the Glades. The Family Nutrition Program could not exist without the in-kind support of the many agencies and organizations in the Glades with whom this collaboration exists.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to seek and utilize funds from the University of Florida, USDA, and the Florida Department of Labor to provide these important services in the Glades.

## VI. GROWTH, LAND USE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

On a countywide basis, the number one concern expressed by County residents in 2000 was growth, according to the United Way of Palm Beach County. This reflects the growth of Florida as a whole, as well as the rapid growth of the County. Indeed, a review of growth over the past twenty years indicates that Palm Beach County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the country.

Within the Glades Tier, however, growth is not a major concern. Unlike other areas of the County, a lack of growth is the issue here. The policies and programs described in this section generally focus on strategies designed to encourage growth, particularly if that growth can be related to other significant concerns in the Glades, such as economic development or community revitalization.

One growth-related area that Glades area residents acknowledge as a major concern is the environment. Doubtless this concern is largely a reflection of the emphasis placed on Everglades restoration activities in recent years and a fear that these efforts may have a detrimental effect on the economy of the Glades communities. While this assessment does not attempt to address the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which is a Federal and State program, the opportunities created for the Glades as a result of the implementation of CERP should be explored by the County.

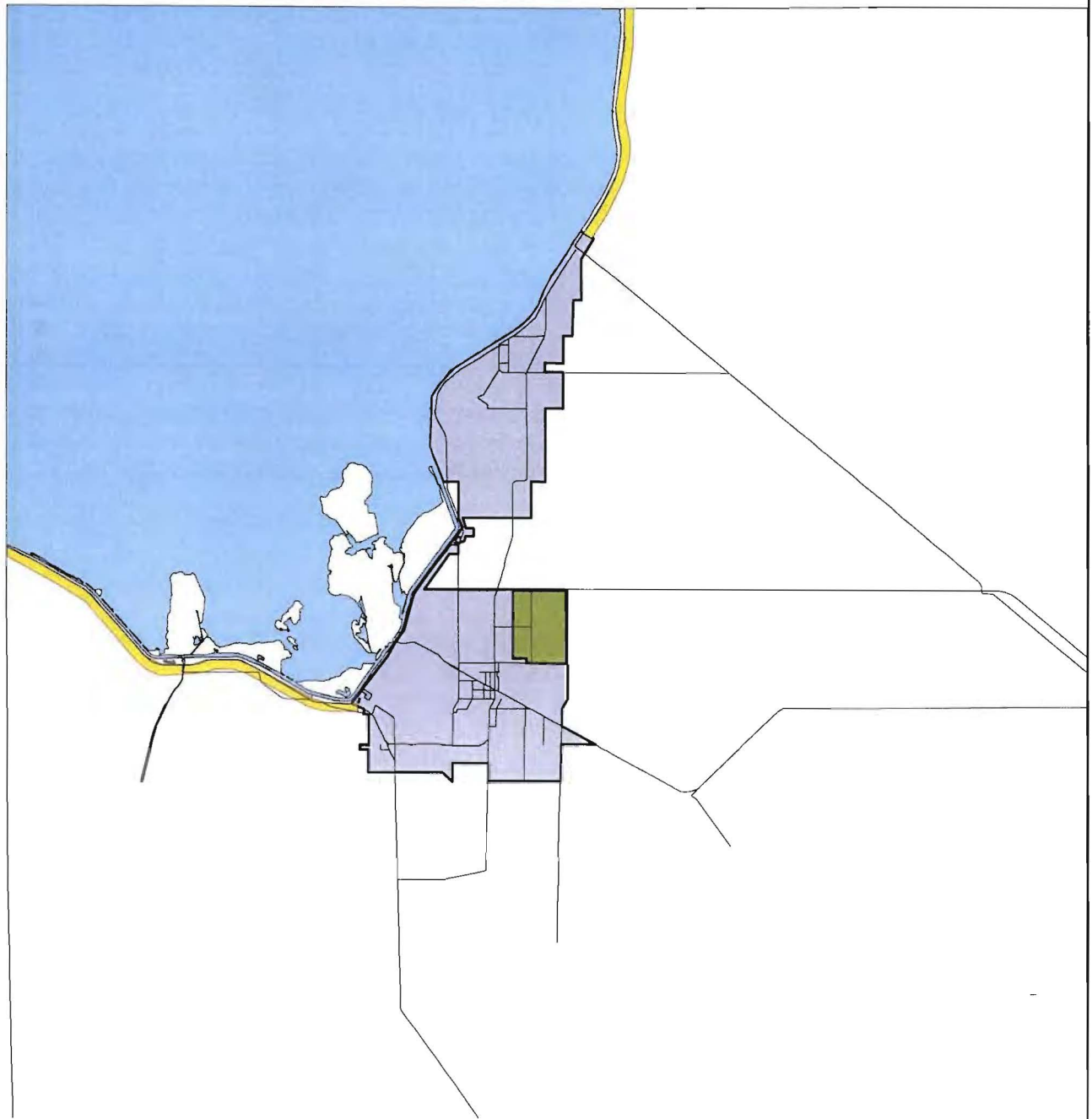
### ***GLADES AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY (GA-O)***

**Description.** The Glades Area Economic Development Overlay (GA-O) was developed in 1992 as part of Section 6.7 of the ULDC. As described in the ULDC, the GA-O is intended “to provide flexibility in the range of uses” for projects which create jobs by allowing uses not typically allowed in a zoning district to be treated as conditional uses without requiring a rezoning so long as the use increases the number of jobs in the Glades, helps to encourage Glades economic development, and “does not adversely affect adjacent land uses.”

The GA-O was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan in 1997 as part of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element. In 1999, the provisions were moved to the Future Land Use Element as Future Land Use Sub-Objective 1.6.1, reflecting that the County’s application of the provisions of this overlay was limited to unincorporated Palm Beach County.

This overlay designates the area within the Urban Service Area in the Glades, including the State-designated enterprise zones encompassing Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, shown in Figure 6, as an area within which the County would employ flexibility in the application of uses and development regulations in an effort to stimulate economic development. Specifically, uses that would result in increased job opportunities were exempted from having to comply with the land use amendment process so long as they comply with environmental regulations.

Figure 6  
**Glades Overlays**



-  Glades Area Economic Development Overlay
-  Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Overlay
-  Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Overlay

-  Major Roads
-  Water



Source: Palm Beach County Planning Division, Data Section  
Glades Assessment Report, 2001



In addition to these provisions, the ULDC permits a waiver from the minimum density provisions of the Comprehensive Plan (reflecting Future Land Use Policy 1.6-c) for projects within the GA-O. Both the density waiver and the determination that the project satisfies the criteria for use of the conditional approval process require the approval of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0

**Assessment.** There has been limited utilization of the provisions of the GA-O since it was developed. Only four projects have attempted to utilize the overlay, with the most recent being "Skydive America" near the Pahokee Airport. The remaining three projects were affordable housing projects utilizing the density waiver provisions of the ULDC for the GA-O.

While this overlay offers some flexibility in terms of uses allowed, some obstacles still exist in using it. Conditional uses within the GA-O must still comply with all conditional use requirements of the ULDC. In addition, the BCC must determine that the criteria described in the ULDC have been met prior to approving these uses. Another issue that has complicated utilization of the GA-O is the lack of specificity regarding determination of whether a project "adversely affect[s] adjacent land uses." Typically, zoning decisions regarding whether a use adversely affects adjacent uses are based upon techniques such as landscaping and buffering. Such approaches may be difficult to employ in the GA-O, especially if the proposed uses are significantly higher or more intense than the adjoining uses. Finally, shown on Figure 6, some small parcels between Lake Okeechobee and the GA-O are not included in the GA-O. This omission could affect the development potential of these parcels.

**Recommendations.** The provisions of the ULDC governing the GA-O should be revised to better reflect that the GA-O is an area within which the County seeks to expedite the approval process for projects that provide jobs. The requirement that the BCC make all determinations regarding the criteria for use of the GA-O should be modified to permit these decisions to be made at a point other than the BCC.

The boundaries of the GA-O should be re-examined as part of the development of the Glades Tier. Specifically, the boundaries should be evaluated to assess the viability of including some small parcels located between the western edge of the Overlay and Lake Okeechobee. As part of this evaluation, the ability to extend urban levels of service throughout the overlay should be considered.

### ***SUGAR CANE GROWERS COOPERATIVE OF FLORIDA PROTECTION AREA OVERLAY***

**Description.** The Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay was incorporated into the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan in 1997 as Future Land Use Sub-Objective 1.6.2.

This overlay designated the area immediately west of the Urban Service Area in the Glades east of State Road 15 and north of State Road 80 as an area limited to industrial uses compatible with or complementary to the operations of the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative that allow for the continued development of the sugarcane industry. The area impacted by this overlay is shown on Figure 6.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0

**Assessment.** The Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay is in the process of being incorporated into the ULDC. To date, it has served only to prevent land use changes to uses that may not be consistent with the purposes of the overlay.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to monitor the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay to ensure its effectiveness once it has been fully incorporated into the ULDC.

### ***LAKE OKEECHOBEE SCENIC TRAIL OVERLAY (LOST – O)***

**Description.** The Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Overlay (LOST-O) represents the land use component of the multi-jurisdictional efforts to establish a trail along the Herbert Hoover Dike impounding Lake Okeechobee as part of the Florida National Scenic Trail. These efforts represent the culmination of efforts by Palm Beach County since 1991 to emphasize tourism as an economic development tool in the Glades. A detailed description of the County's efforts to establish the trail is provided in Section III, Economic Development (see Page 12).

The LOST-O was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan as Future Land Use Sub-Objective 1.6.3 in 2000. This overlay designates the area outside of the GA-O between the Herbert Hoover Dike and 250 feet south of U.S. 27 or east of Conners Highway as an area within which tourist-related uses will be allowed without requiring a land use amendment.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0

**Assessment.** The LOST-O was created in 2000. It was incorporated into the ULDC on July 24, 2001, so its effectiveness cannot be evaluated at this time. One issue that has been identified, however, is that some of the tourist-related businesses that the LOST-O seeks to encourage may require the extension of central utilities, which is not currently allowed.

**Recommendations.** The provisions of the LOST-O should be revised to permit the extension of utilities or the development of package plants to facilitate the use of this overlay by tourist-related businesses that cannot utilize individual well and septic systems.

### ***MINIMUM DENSITY WAIVERS***

**Description.** Future Land Use Policy 1.6-c allows the BCC to waive minimum density requirements in the Glades for any development that is consistent with a Joint Planning Agreement with any of the Glades municipalities. In addition, the policy requires an analysis of the effect of the density reduction on service delivery, affordable housing, and compatibility with adjoining uses. The Plan requires this analysis to be provided to the County by the municipality party to the Joint Planning Agreement.

This provision was incorporated into the Plan in 1989. It was adopted, presumably, to offer an incentive for the development of housing other than mobile homes, given the designation of large swathes of land within the Glades with the High Residential, 8 units per acre (HR-8) land use designation and the proliferation of mobile home parks in the area.

It was incorporated into the ULDC provisions for the GA-O. These provisions allow the BCC to approve a minimum density waiver for residential projects in the GA-O.

**Direct Cost to the County. \$0**

**Assessment.** To date, this policy has only been applied to facilitate the development of three affordable housing projects within the GA-O. The limitation that, in the Glades, this waiver can only be granted by the BCC is more restrictive than similar provisions of the Comprehensive Plan dealing with minimum density waivers in the Urban/Suburban Tier (Future Land Use Policy 1.2-b). Within the Urban/Suburban Tier, the Planning Director can approve the minimum density waiver as an administrative action without obtaining BCC approval.

The additional requirements imposed in the Glades Tier may be hampering efforts to attract greater housing diversity in the Glades.

**Recommendation.** Future Land Use Policy 1.6-c should be revised to allow the Planning Director to waive minimum density requirements consistent with the provisions of the Urban/Suburban Tier in Future Land Use Policy 1.2-b.

***FUTURE LAND USE ATLAS REVISIONS***

**Description.** In 1997, the Planning Division recognized that during the development of the Comprehensive Plan in 1989, no Future Land Use Atlas sheets had been prepared for several areas of the Glades. This had not been an issue in much of the Glades, where the only land use was Agricultural Production (AP); however, in the area of Lake Harbor, which was recognized in the Plan as “a rural town with both rural and urban land uses,” the lack of atlas sheets was an issue. The policy language established a mix of uses within this area, but no atlas sheets depicted the distribution of land uses, making it impossible to advise property owners regarding their land use designation. In 2000, similar problems were identified in the vicinity of Canal Point. Accordingly, atlas sheets were prepared for this area of the County based on the existing land use pattern of the areas and were adopted by the BCC.

Two additional County-initiated site-specific land use amendments in the Glades have been processed since 1997. The first one recognized an error made in 1989, when 17.04 acres of the existing Lake Breeze Mobile Home Park were designated AP while the remainder of the park was designated HR-8. These 17.04 acres were given the same HR-8 designation as the remainder of the Park. The second corrective amendment changed the designation of a 40.00-acre parcel from Industrial to Institutional, reflecting that the property was the site of the Sheriff’s Eagle Academy. Both of these amendments reflected errors made in the preparation of the Future Land Use Atlas in 1989.

In addition to these County-initiated amendments, one privately initiated amendment was approved in 1999. This was the Hooker Highway amendment, changing the designation of a 16.37-acre parcel at the intersection of State Road 715 and Hooker Highway from AP to a combination of Commercial High and HR-8.

**Direct Cost to the County. \$0**

**Assessment.** The County committed errors in 1989 when the Future Land Use Atlas was developed. While some of these errors have been identified over time, others are likely to be found in the future.

**Recommendation.** The Planning Division should initiate a concerted review of the Future Land Use Atlas sheets governing the Glades to correct errors made during the original preparation of the plan.

### **COUNTYWIDE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TEAM**

**Description.** The Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) was created by the BCC in 1996 to focus County resources on deteriorated neighborhoods in a comprehensive and coordinated approach that crosses agency lines. Through such a coordinated effort by all agencies, maximum impact can be realized to stabilize and improve neighborhoods and enable area residents to maintain and continue revitalization efforts.

In 1997, the CCRT completed an analysis of unincorporated Palm Beach County and identified 29 communities that met the criteria for consideration as CCRT Target Areas (lacking infrastructure, having law enforcement or code enforcement problems, high social service and economic development needs, and a concentration of very low and low income residents). Within the Glades, three communities, Okeechobee Center, Fremd Village/Padgett Island, and Canal Point, were identified as CCRT Target Areas. Their location is shown on Figure 7.

While each of the identified Target Areas is in need of assistance, the BCC directed that the CCRT prioritize its efforts on those communities most in need. Accordingly, in 1997, the CCRT presented the BCC with a priority listing of the ten Target Areas most in need of assistance. Only one of the three Glades communities, Fremd Village/Padgett Island, made this list, ranked seventh.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0

**Assessment.** The CCRT has generally been successful in those communities on which it has focused its resources. Limited resources have prevented the CCRT from moving beyond the top few priorities on the list. To date, the CCRT has not moved down the list to begin addressing needs in Fremd Village/Padgett Island.

**Recommendation.** As additional resources are provided for CCRT efforts, the CCRT should initiate work in the Fremd Village/Padgett Island community. The CCRT should also re-evaluate its ranking of other Glades communities in light of more current data anticipated to come from the 2000 Census.

### **GLADES THOROUGHFARE BEAUTIFICATION MASTER PLAN**

**Description.** The Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan was an effort by the County in partnership with FDOT to identify specific roadway corridors within the Glades on which landscaping monies should be concentrated. This plan was prepared in 1996 in response to a pending donation of \$96,000 by the Flo-Sun Corporation to each of the three Glades municipalities, to cover the cost of roadway landscaping in lieu of planting trees adjacent to agricultural lands in the unincorporated area. This plan identified eleven specific corridors, listed in Table 10, which should be the focus of beautification efforts.

Figure 7  
**Glades CCRT Areas**

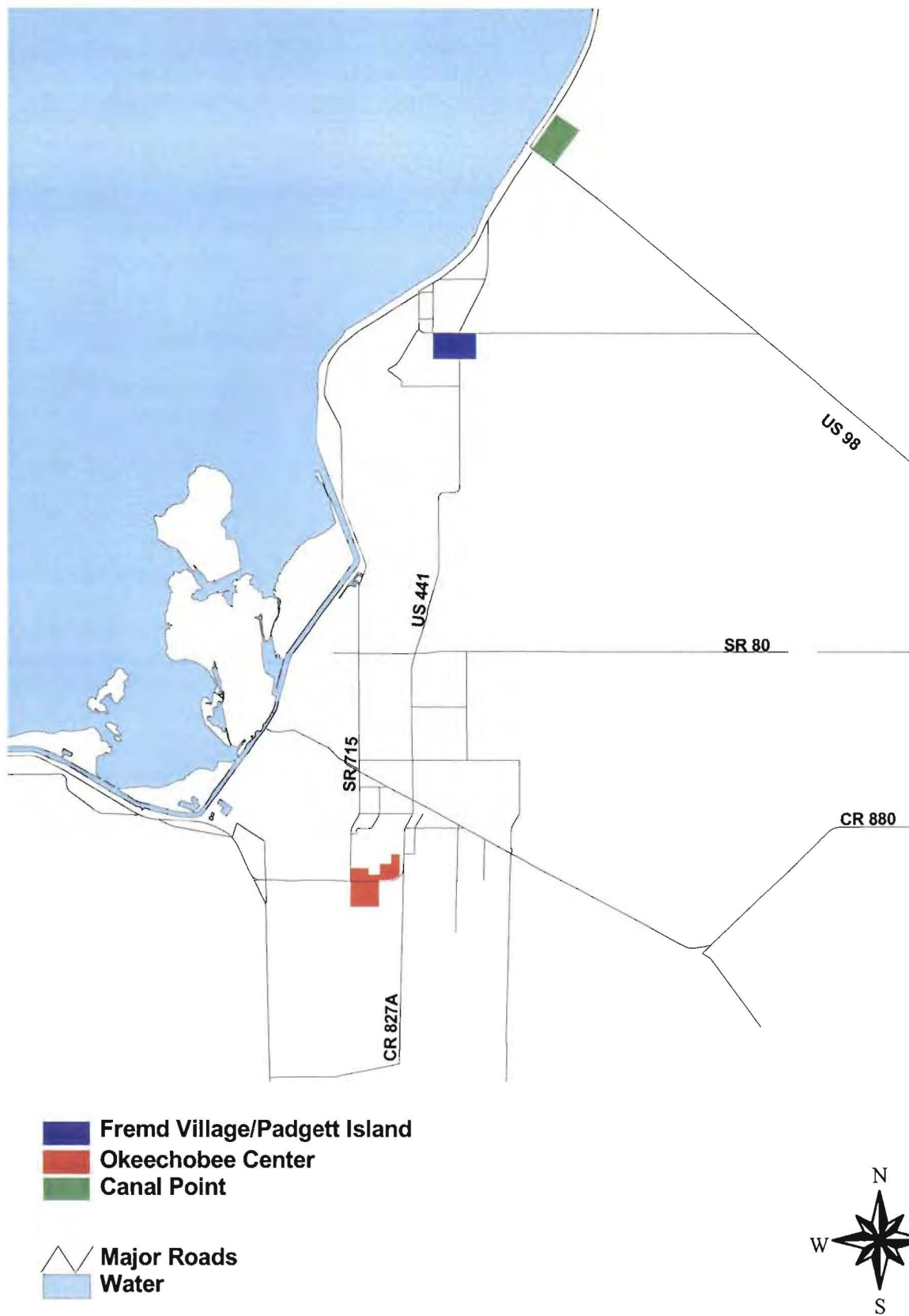


Table 10

Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan Recommended Segment Improvements		
Segment	Jurisdiction	Nature of Improvement
SR 715 in front of County Airport	Palm Beach County	Completed – 1997
SR 80/US 441	Palm Beach County	Completed – 1997
Lions Club Park	Palm Beach County	Completed – 1999
SR 98/Old Conners Highway Intersection	Palm Beach County	Application for funding denied by FDOT
SR 80/SR 715	Palm Beach County	Not funded
US 441/SR 729 Intersection	Pahokee	Not programmed
SR 715 in front of Glades Pioneer Park	Belle Glade	Not programmed
SR 80/SR 827A Intersection	Belle Glade	Not programmed
SR 80/US 27	South Bay	Completed – 1997
US 27 from State Prison to County Library	South Bay	Scheduled for 2001
US 27 in front of South Bay RV Park	South Bay	On hold, pending development/design of adjacent properties in 2001

The funds provided by Flo-Sun were matched by the State to enable production of urban forestry plans by each city. To identify thoroughfares that should be beautified, the County agreed to join with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in funding preparation of the Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan.

**Direct County Cost.** \$10,000.

**Assessment.** City records indicate that most of the original Flo-Sun funds are still available, although some monies have assisted in providing landscaping. The cities have implemented some portions of the Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan (as it relates to the cities' respective Urban Forestry Master Plans) using a variety of funding sources, including funds from FDOT and Keep Palm Beach County Beautiful as well as the original Flo-Sun monies. Based upon the Flo-Sun precedent, the County has authorized other projects in the Glades to provide funding for off-site landscaping in lieu of actual on-site landscaping.

Unfortunately, the cities have no documentation of landscape donations by developers of projects approved by the County since 1996, and the County only tracks site-specific improvements. There is no record that the conditions imposed on developments for landscape donations to municipalities since 1996 have been met.

The County has sought grants from FDOT's Highway Beautification Grant program for funding of several of the gateway plantings identified in the Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan. Three areas were funded in 1997 (near the County courthouse in Belle Glade, the Pahokee Airport, and in South Bay). Funding for two additional plantings is being pursued through coordination with FDOT, South Bay, and private property owners. Off-site landscape donations represent a potential source of funding for installation and maintenance of beautification corridors.

**Recommendation.** The ULDC should be revised to incorporate a modified version of the Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan for use in the Glades Tier, explicitly authorizing use of off-site landscape donations to Palm Beach County in lieu of on-site landscaping in the Glades if the project borders agricultural lands.

Consideration should be given to the incorporation of ULDC provisions which call for monitoring donations and creating a fund for beautification projects with the monies' use restricted to plant installation and maintenance along identified thoroughfares.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Description.** As adopted in 1989, the Historic Preservation Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan called for the County to evaluate the historic preservation potential of a number of resources within the Glades. Based on that direction, the Planning Division, working with Glades residents and other groups, has engaged in a variety of activities designed to encourage historic preservation in the Glades. Activities within different communities over the past five years are outlined below.

South Bay. In 1998, the Planning Division participated in a community visioning workshop sponsored by the City of South Bay. The purpose of the workshop, which was funded by the Florida Humanities Council, was to explore strategies for enhancing the community by focusing on the heritage of the local population. Among the recommendations of this workshop was the development of a heritage-tourism complex, the Crossroads Lake Depot and Marketplace. This complex is being developed on land leased to the city by the County for a period of 33 years at an annual rate of \$1. Central to the complex is a 1920s era wood frame Railroad Workers Cottage being renovated as an Everglades Heritage Museum through a State Historic Preservation Grant in the amount of \$115,000. An additional \$75,000 is scheduled in 2003 from FDOT's enhancement program to fund museums in historic transportation facilities.

Pahokee. In 1996, the Planning Division helped procure the first of two State Historic Preservation Grants for renovation of the old Pahokee High School, which has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. A second grant was obtained in 2000. These two grants total \$360,000; \$48,000 of which were designated by the BCC as matching funds. A portion of the County funds was used to assess the potential for restoring Pahokee City Hall, a condition of the grants from the State. An additional \$500,000 is estimated to be required to complete restoration of the school for use as City offices.

Canal Point. The Planning Division has identified many of Canal Point's older buildings along the Conners Highway corridor as suitable for tourist uses in accordance with the LOST-O. Many of these buildings were originally identified in a County-funded historic survey.

**Direct County Cost.** \$48,000.

**Assessment.** Although no properties within the Glades have been designated as historic sites by the County's Historic Resources Review Board, the research and planning efforts undertaken to date document the historic value of many of the structures within the Glades.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to pursue preservation grants to protect historic resources in the Glades. Particular emphasis should be placed on resources in the unincorporated area, with the County's Historic Resources Review Board encouraged to continue to examine the historical significance of sites within the Glades. The County should also look for opportunities to link historic preservation and tourism development, especially in areas located within or adjacent to the LOST-O, such as Canal Point, where older buildings may be adapted for reuse as tourist-related facilities.

## **PAHOKEE MARINA REVITALIZATION**

**Description.** In 1999, the County undertook the development of a design plan for the revitalization of the Pahokee City Hall and Marina, shown in Figure 8. This plan, which was completed in 2000, focused on the potential of using the Marina and City Hall as focal points for tourism-oriented development in conjunction with the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. The plan calls for a major redesign of the Marina, including the re-creation of barrier islands in Lake Okeechobee as work is done on restoring the Lake's habitat, as well as the development of a hotel/convention center in Pahokee with a variety of smaller uses throughout the community. The plan also incorporates components of the city's Urban Forestry Master Plan and the Glades Thoroughfare Beautification Master Plan. The plan was presented to the City in late 2000 for use as a guide in future revitalization efforts. The City distributed the plan to prospective marina developers as part of a Request for Proposal for the Marina's redevelopment, and a sublease to a private development team was executed by the City in August of 2001.

**Direct County Cost.** \$25,000.

**Assessment.** This plan is too new for its effectiveness to be assessed.

## **GREENWAYS**

**Description.** The County's Greenways and Linked Open Space Program identified three potential greenway connectors in the Glades. Figure 9 depicts the Conners Highway Ridge paralleling the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail from Canal Point north to the Martin County line, the Lake Okeechobee/Dupuis Connector linking the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail and the Dupuis Reserve along the Martin County line, and the Corbett/Loxahatchee Refuge Connector, paralleling the L-8 Canal at the eastern edge of the Glades.

The Conners Highway Ridge Greenway could be extended into Martin and Okeechobee Counties and offer links to other coastal trails, creating the potential for multi-day trail experiences for residents and visitors, consistent with the regional vision of ecotourism development. The State Office of Greenways and Trails has been identifying staff members from Martin and Okeechobee Counties to discuss creation of this tri-county trail system with Palm Beach County staff. An opportunity may exist within the Palm Beach County portion to adapt some of the older buildings along US 441 for use as tourist infrastructure in accordance with the recently approved LOST-O, which encourages such uses as inns, cabins, stables, shops, and restaurants.

The Lake Okeechobee/DuPuis Connector is approximately ½ mile long and 2 miles wide, covering nearly 600 acres. It offers a connection between the 77,875-acre DuPuis Reserve/J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area complex and the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. Other potential acquisitions in the County could eventually allow this greenway to extend more than 35 miles to Jonathan Dickinson State Park, approximately 28 miles to the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area and the Loxahatchee Slough, or 24 miles to the Loxahatchee Refuge. This recreational greenway would provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to travel in both directions from the eastern coastal area to the western Lake Okeechobee segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail.





The Corbett-Loxahatchee Refuge Connector, located along the western side of the L-8 Canal, south of the J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area, is approximately 1000 feet wide and 2 ½ miles long, covering 300 acres. This connector would provide a missing link between two of the major conservation areas, the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area.

Each of these greenway sites was also identified as potential acquisition areas in the County's 1999 conservation lands bond referendum.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0, to date. Costs will be incurred if acquisitions occur.

**Assessment.** The County's land acquisition program is a voluntary seller program. To date, none of the properties has been acquired due to a lack of willing sellers.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to pursue opportunities for the acquisition of these properties.

### ***SHORELINE RESTORATION***

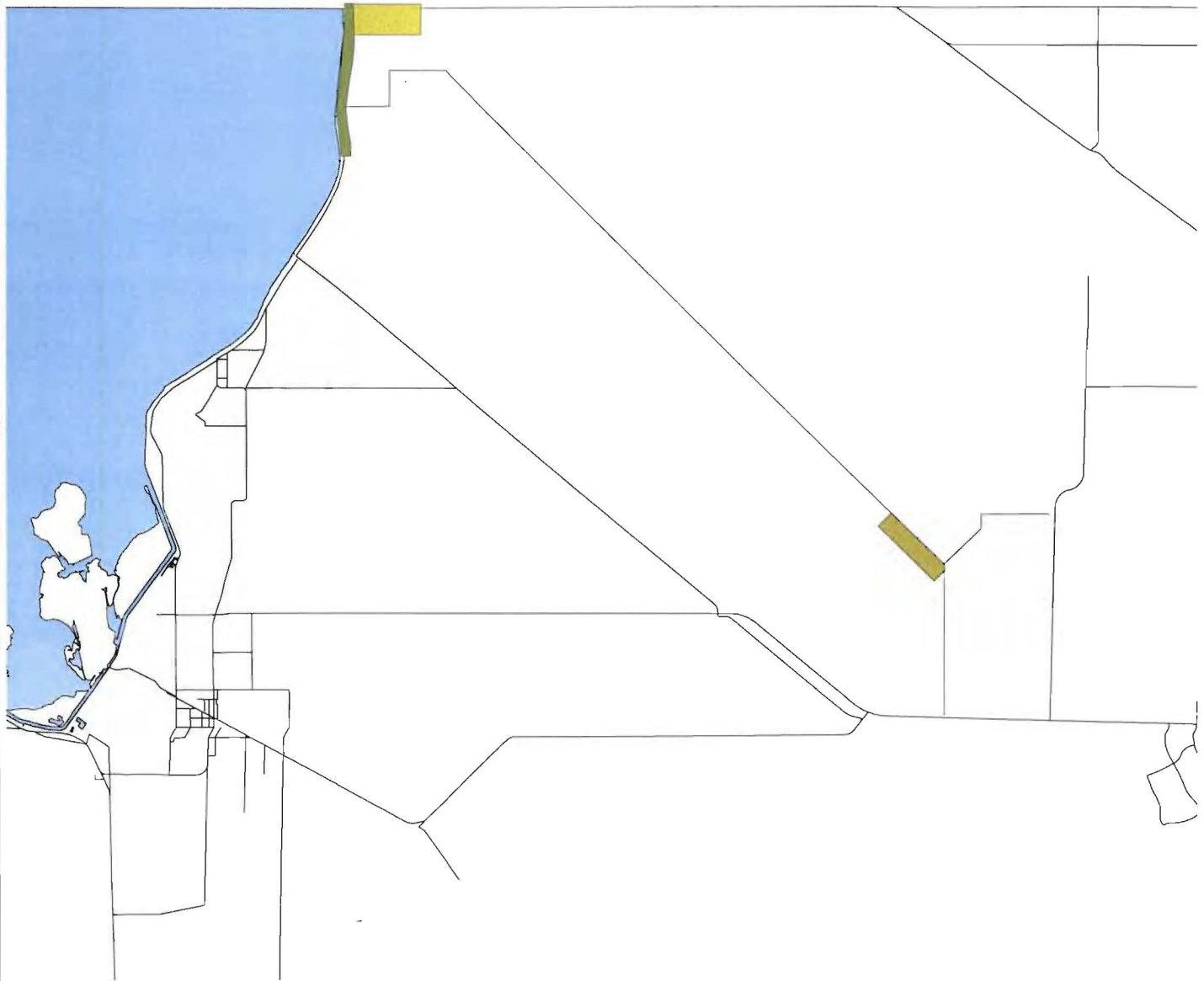
**Description.** The Department of Environmental Resources Management has been pioneering an environmental restoration approach in partnership with the City of South Bay. As part of expansion of a waterfront park, South Bay executed an interlocal agreement with Palm Beach County in 1998 allowing ERM to participate in restoring littoral zone vegetation on the Lake rim. Park plans have been conceptually approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They include upland plantings as well as recreational improvements and the environmental restoration as a matching contribution. Construction of these improvements, funded by Florida Inland Navigation District, is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2002. The success of this shoreline planting, given lake level fluctuations in recent years, will determine future environmental restoration involvement in the Glades.






**Direct Cost to the County.** \$7,000 in ERM staff time.

**Assessment.** Assessment of this project cannot be undertaken until the project is complete and can be monitored.

Figure 9

# Conservation Lands Proposed for Acquisition



-  **Lake Okeechobee Connector**
-  **Conners Highway Ridge**
-  **Corbett/Loxahatchee Refuge Connector**
-  **Major Roads**
-  **Water**



Source: Palm Beach County Planning Division, Data Section  
Glades Assessment Report, 2001

## VII. INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure issues are generally viewed in Florida as a means of ensuring the ability to sustain growth. The relative lack of growth and development in the Glades over the past twenty years has not generated a demand for significant new infrastructure investments in the area.

Infrastructure in this area of the County is most critical for its impact on economic diversification and development. The lack of some infrastructure (notably water and sewer) inhibits the ability of the region to attract new industry, including some industries that have been targeted for the area by the County. With regard to other types of infrastructure, such as mass transit, the demographics of the Glades result in a greater reliance being placed upon the service than is the case in other areas of the County.

The following pages present an assessment of the various types of infrastructure for which a level of service has been established in Palm Beach County's Comprehensive Plan. The assessment does not necessarily address the level of service issue, but rather the general issues associated with provision of infrastructure.

### **ROADS**

**Description.** The County's Thoroughfare Identification Map includes several roadways in the Glades, including US 441, US 98, US 27, and CR 717, as shown on Figure 10. In addition, a number of roads primarily located within the municipalities are included as part of the County's roadway network, as shown on Figure 11.

Each of the roadways in the Glades is currently operating at or better than the adopted level of service. All of these roadway segments are expected to continue to operate within the level of service guidelines throughout the County's long term planning horizon (through 2025).

To a certain extent, the ability of the road network to meet level of service reflects the County's commitment to provide special funding for roads in the Glades. Throughout the period of this assessment, the County has been providing annual funding in the amount of \$800,000 for the repair and reconstruction of Glades roads.

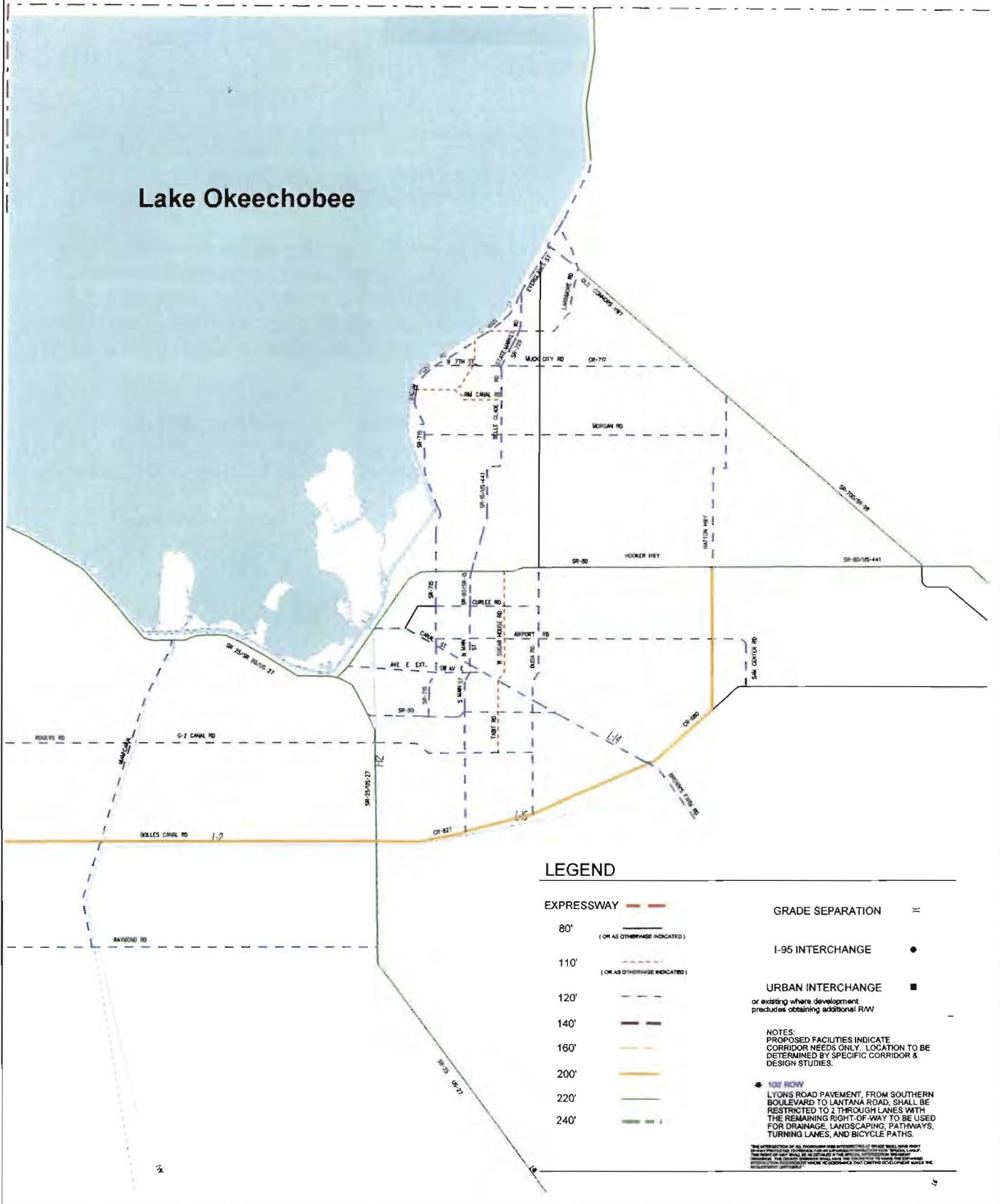
**Direct Cost to the County.** \$4,000,000

**Assessment.** The County's roadway expenditures in the Glades have enabled the system in this area to continue to meet level of service. Equally critically, given the importance of road shipment of agricultural products from the Glades to other areas, these expenditures have ensured that the condition of the roads does not inhibit the economy of the Glades.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to dedicate fixed roadway dollars for use in the Glades.

Figure 10

MARTIN COUNTY



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NOTE: MAP IS NOT OFFICIAL. FOR PRESENTATION PURPOSES ONLY

# GLADES THOROUGHFARE RIGHT OF WAY IDENTIFICATION MAP

Scale: 1" = 1/4" ASL

Revision Date: 07/12/01  
 Filename: glades.dwg  
 Project: FZB-GES

**Planning  
Zoning  
&  
Building**

100 Australian Avenue  
 West Palm Beach, FL 33406  
 Phone: (561) 253-3000



## **MASS TRANSIT**

**Description.** Given the lack of access to automobiles by many Glades households (27.3% lack an automobile according to the 1990 Census), Glades residents place a greater reliance on mass transit than is true of other areas of the County. The United Way reports that 43% of Palm Tran ridership comes from the Glades.

Palm Tran currently operates three routes serving the Glades. Routes 47 and 48 operate within the Glades communities, and Route 40 runs between the Glades to and from downtown West Palm Beach. Figure 12 depicts the existing Palm Tran routes within the area and from the Glades communities to West Palm Beach.

Palm Tran has recommended adjustments of Glades bus service to provide access from the Glades communities to the Wellington Mall, scheduled to open in fall 2001. The proposed changes include making Route 40 an express route, only stopping at Palms West Hospital and the Crestwood Publix, and limiting stops between Wellington Mall and downtown West Palm Beach to the intersection of Southern Boulevard and Military Trail, PBIA, and the downtown Tri-Rail station. Palm Tran has projected that these changes will result in cost savings beginning in 2002.

In recognition of the importance of mass transit in the Glades, the Workforce Development Board has been looking at ways to maintain and enhance bus service in the area. A subcommittee with representatives of both the public and private sector has been created to study how Palm Tran service can be used to expand access to employment opportunities for Glades residents. This subcommittee recently obtained State funding to extend bus service from the Glades communities to employers in Clewiston and to provide public information kiosks on using the bus to access childcare facilities.

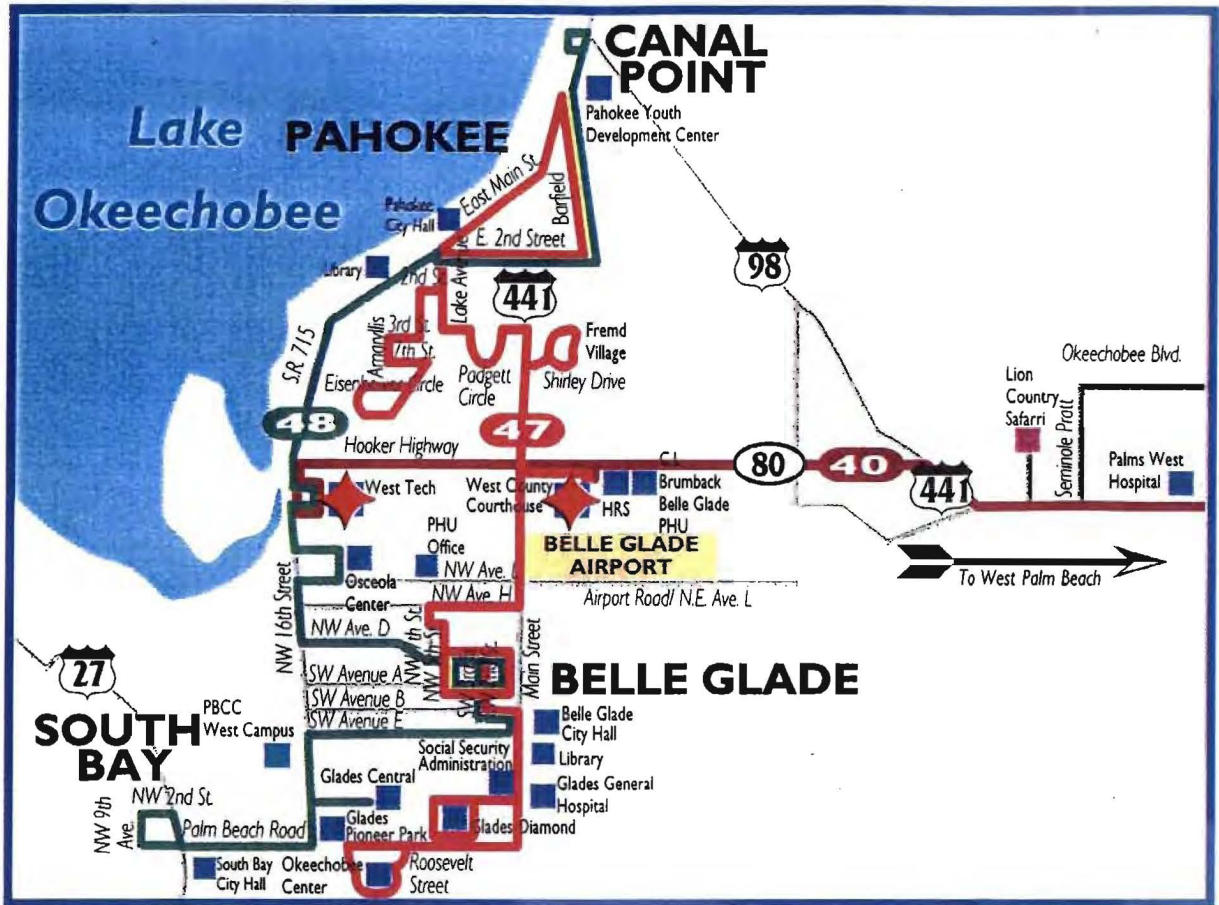
**Direct Cost to County.** \$76,309 in matching funds for grants and \$1,944,850 annually in service costs, based upon a cost per hour for bus service of \$50; 125 hours of weekday service, 98 hours of Saturday service, and 36 hours of Sunday service; and service on 257 weekdays, 50 Saturdays, and 52 Sundays.

**Assessment.** In response to the low level of automobile ownership in the Glades, the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Palm Tran have been working closely to expand available transit services in terms of hours and routes by leveraging limited County dollars. Palm Tran has received \$468,755 in State grants for improved transit service in the Glades, leveraging more than \$6 for every matching County dollar for mass transit grants.

The new routes should improve Glades residents' access to jobs at the Wellington Green Mall.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to monitor the impact of changes to Palm Tran service on the Glades.

Figure 12  
Glades Palm Tran Routes



### WATER AND WASTEWATER

**Description:** Water and wastewater service in the Glades Urban Service Area, which coincides with the Glades Area Economic Development Overlay, or GA-O (see Figure 6 on Page 32) is provided by each of the three municipalities. To some extent, the municipalities have relied on funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), through CDBG funds, for the expansion of their utility services. Belle Glade has used \$500,000 to extend utility lines to the Belle Glade Business Park, an economic development project for which a groundbreaking ceremony was held in 2000. South Bay has used \$595,212 for neighborhood sewer rehabilitation, and Pahokee has received \$530,000 to complete an upgrade to the water system in Canal Point which began in 1994 with \$900,000 of County funding. In 2001, the Water Utilities Department spent \$469,931 from Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) "E" funds to complete Phase II water system improvements in Canal Point.

The South Florida Water Management District spent \$500,000 to assist the three cities in improving their water intake structures due to low lake levels as a result of the drought conditions in 2001.

Beginning in 2001, HCD is creating a special \$400,000 allocation for each of the municipalities in the Glades under the Areas of Hope Program, formerly known as Pocket of Poverty Allocation Program. South Bay has indicated that it intends to use these funds to upgrade its water system.



Utility extension is critical to the efforts to encourage economic development in the Glades. Several projects that have considered a Glades location, including, most recently, a catfish processing facility in 2000, were unable to move forward due to the lack of water and/or sewer lines and their inability to meet the criteria for use of CDBG funds.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$1,625, 212 in CDBG funds; \$469,931 in MSTU “E” funds

**Assessment.** The lack of access to funding for the expansion of water and sewer facilities has been a disincentive to new businesses looking to locate in areas of the Glades. Frequently, the difficulty in obtaining funding has been attributed to the location outside the GA-O – even when the project unable to obtain service is completely within the GA-O. This was most recently the case with SkyDive America, which went so far as to obtain a Tourist Development Council resolution seeking expansion of the GA-O to cover its site even though the property was entirely within the boundaries of the GA-O.

This situation is likely to complicate efforts to develop tourist-related facilities in the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Overlay, particularly in Canal Point. Some of these facilities will require access to water and/or sewer systems under health Department regulations. The allocation of CDBG funds to the Glades municipalities through the Areas of Hope Program may help, somewhat, in providing a funding source for the expansion of needed water and sewer infrastructure.

**Recommendations.** The County should take a more proactive stance in regard to the operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater systems in the Glades area to ensure compliance with Federal and State requirements. The County should continue to utilize the Areas of Hope Program to facilitate extension of infrastructure in the Glades. If other funding sources cannot be identified and accessed, the County may need to reconsider its prohibition on package plants in the Glades Tier.

## ***DRAINAGE***

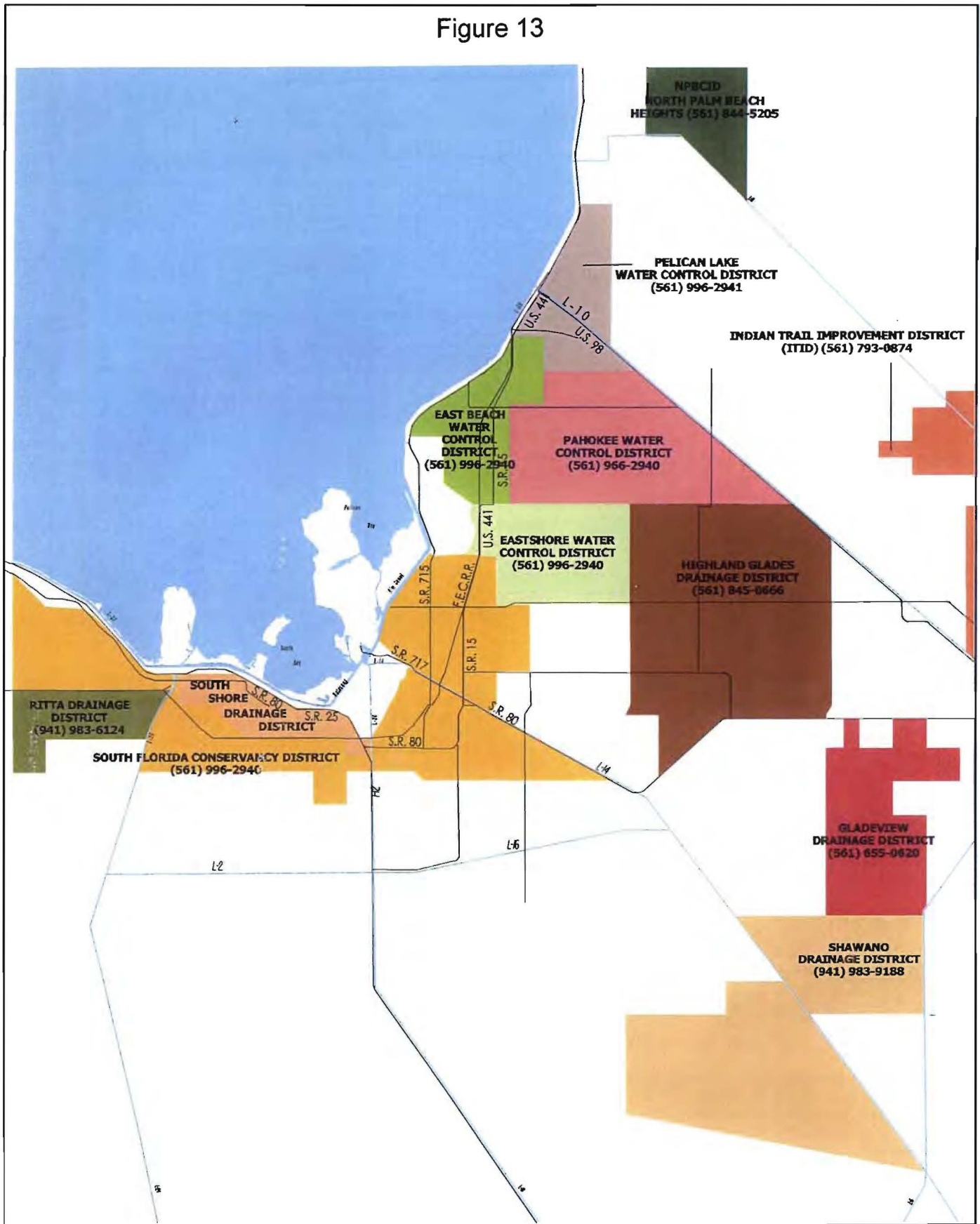
**Description.** Drainage is provided in the Glades by twelve independent drainage districts and the South Florida Water Management District. Figure 13 shows the location of each of the independent drainage districts identified in Table 11. The Indian Trail and Northern Palm Beach County Improvement Districts also serve areas of the County outside of the Glades.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0

**Assessment.** This system of independent drainage districts is common throughout Palm Beach County, with most of the districts obtaining their authority from Chapter 298, Florida Statutes. The districts are required to coordinate with the County, providing copies of their plans for review for consistency with the County’s Comprehensive Plan. The County recognizes the authority of the drainage districts, deferring to them on issues related to stormwater levels of service.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to coordinate its efforts with the drainage districts as it works to develop the Glades Tier.

Figure 13




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NOTE: MAP IS NOT OFFICIAL, FOR PRESENTATION PURPOSES ONLY

## GLADES DRAINAGE DISTRICTS

Scale: 1" = 1/4" MILE

Revision Date: 07/12/01  
 filename: dist.dgn  
 contact: slubber



**Planning  
Zoning  
&  
Building**

100 Australia Avenue  
 West Palm Beach, FL 33406  
 Phone: (561) 233-5000

**Table 11**

Independent Drainage Districts Serving the Glades	
District	Powers
East Beach Water Control District	Water Control
East Shore Water Control District	Water Control
Gladeview Drainage District	Water Control
Highland Glades Drainage District	Water Control
Indian Trail Improvement District	Stormwater Management, Potable Water, Wastewater, Roads, Bridges, Parks
Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District	Stormwater Management, Potable Water and Wastewater Construction
Pahokee Water Control District	Water Control
Pelican Lake Water Control District	Water Control
Ritta Drainage District	Water Control
Shawano Drainage District	Water Control
South Florida Conservancy	Water Control
South Shore Drainage District	Water Control

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

**Description:** The Glades area contains seven County parks, distributed broadly from Canal Point to Lake Harbor as shown in Figure 14. The facilities at each of the parks are generally described in Table 12.

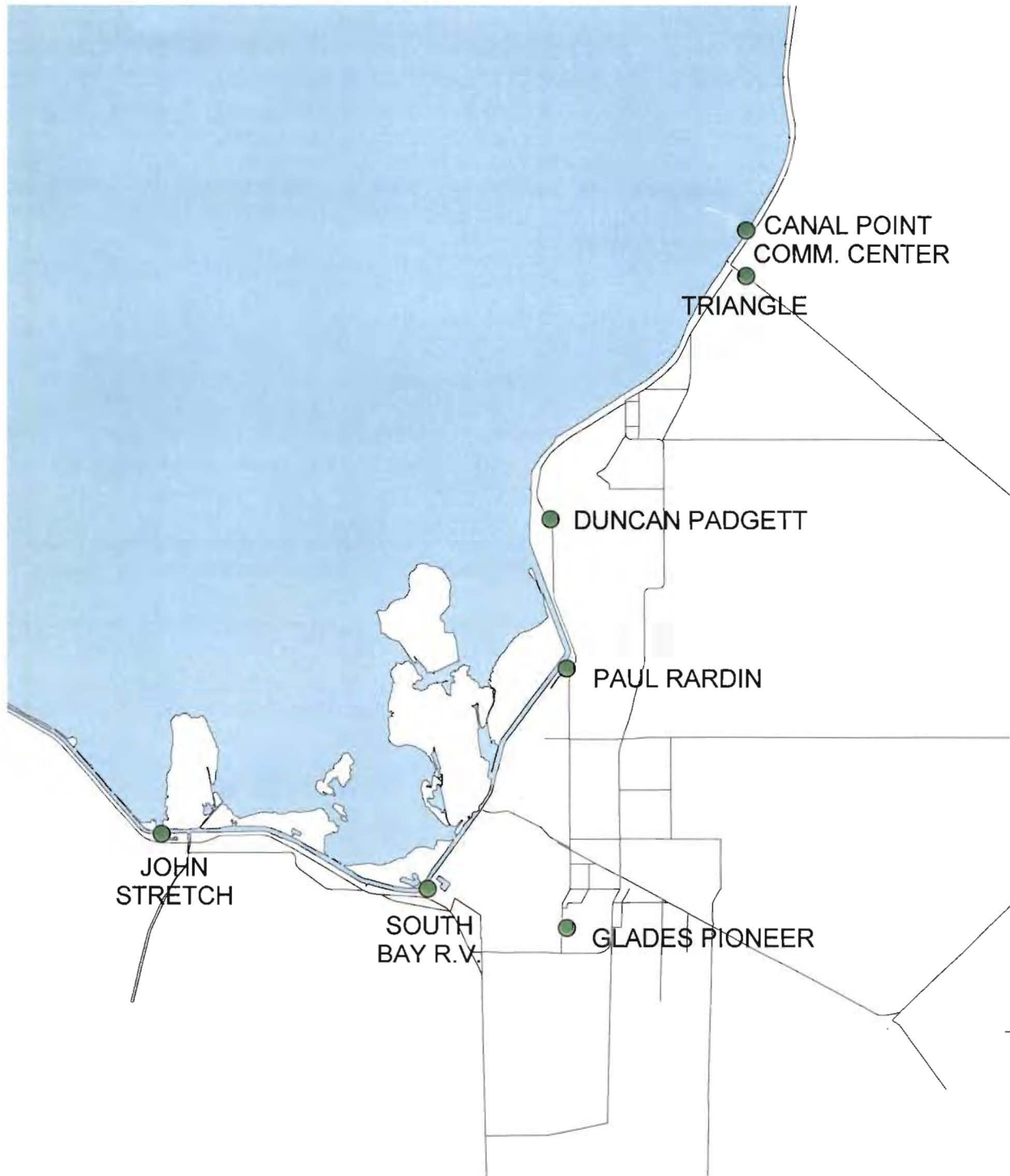
**Table 12**

Palm Beach County Parks in the Glades			
Park	Park Type	Size	Facilities
Canal Point Community Park	Community Park	4.4 acs	Multi-purpose court, tennis courts, volleyball area, play areas, community center, picnic area, restrooms, access to boat ramp
Canal Point Triangle Park	Community Park	3.6 acs	Picnic area, restrooms
Duncan Padgett Park	Community Park	15.5 acs	Baseball/softball fields, racquetball courts, snack bar, restrooms
Glades Pioneer Park	District Park	64.2 acs	Baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, football/soccer fields, play areas, basketball courts, walking/cycling path, snack bar, restrooms
Paul Rardin Park	Community Park	6.6 acs	Play area, picnic area, boat ramp, restrooms
John Stretch Park	District Park	56.2 acs	Fishing area, baseball field, multi-purpose field, basketball court, play area, picnic area, volleyball area, boat ramp, historic display, restrooms
South Bay RV Park	Special Facility	35.0 acs	Fishing area, campsites, comfort stations, play area, horseshoe pits, recreation hall, laundry facilities, access to boat ramp

Several of these parks provide opportunities for access to Lake Okeechobee. Paul Rardin Park provides a much-needed shady oasis for recreational users traversing the treeless Dike. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers statistics indicate thousands of recreational visitors use the picnic pavilions and boat ramps in those parks on or within the Herbert Hoover Dike. The Master Plan for the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail proposes enhancement of several of these lakeside recreation areas via improvements such as fishing piers and educational signs.

Figure 14

# County Parks in the Glades



● County Parks

▬ Major Roads  
■ Water



Source: Palm Beach County Planning Division, Data Section  
Glades Assessment Report, 2001

**Direct Cost to County.** The cost of these facilities is not broken out separately from those of County facilities in other areas.

**Assessment.** The Glades area is well served with a variety of County-provided recreation areas, including some that are well sited to provide tourist-related facilities for the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.

**Recommendation.** The County, in partnership with local organizations such as the EDGE Center, should evaluate the suitability of County parks to offer concessions serving the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. Examples of the types of concessions that may be viable include equipment rental (canoes, kayaks, bicycles).

### ***FIRE RESCUE***

**Description.** Fire suppression and first response services are delivered to the area west of Twenty Mile Bend primarily through contracts with the Cities of Belle Glade and Pahokee. A Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) has been created for the unincorporated area west of Twenty Mile Bend, which pursuant to interlocal agreements provides revenue to each of the two cities to provide services beyond their municipal borders.

The City of South Bay has a Public Safety Department that provides fire suppression services to areas within municipal borders. Public safety officers are cross-trained police and firefighters.

Emergency medical (Advanced Life Support) treatment and transport services are provided by AMR, a private ambulance company.

In 2000, there were 638 calls for service in the unincorporated area of the Glades. There were 2,596 calls in Belle Glade, 458 in Pahokee, and 63 in South Bay.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$670,846 annually from the MSTU, with Belle Glade receiving \$300,000 and Pahokee the other \$370,846.

**Assessment.** The provision of fire-rescue services to the Glades communities provides a unique challenge, due to the geography and demographics of the area.

**Recommendation.** Consideration should be given to further regionalization of fire-rescue services in the Glades to provide a more efficient service to the citizens of the area.

### ***PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES***

**Description.** The high percentage of Glades residents who lack a high school education is perceived as a major problem in attracting employers to the Glades. Efforts to improve the Glades economy are also hampered by the number of Glades residents who do not speak or read English, reflecting the diversity of Glades residents. These issues suggest the importance of education, including job training, literacy, and English as a second language in the Glades.

The Glades is addressed in Palm Beach County's public school concurrency program, comprising Concurrency Service Areas 22 and 23. Table 13 on the following page identifies the various public schools operated by the Palm Beach County School District in the Glades. As indicated in the Table, only one school in the Glades, Pahokee Elementary, is currently operating over capacity. That school is currently programmed for modernization to address the capacity issue by the beginning of the 2001 school year.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$0. No County funding is used for school construction.

**Assessment.** The majority of Glades area public schools have utilization rates within their capacity. They meet concurrency requirements and should continue to do so given the low rate of population and housing growth in the area.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to implement school concurrency with the School Board and the Glades municipalities to ensure that overcrowded schools do not become an issue in the area.

**Table 13**

<b>Palm Beach County Public Schools in the Glades</b>			
School	Enrollment	Capacity	Utilization
Belle Glade Elementary	761	1020	75%
Glade View Elementary	501	663	76%
Gove Elementary	765	807	95%
K.E. Cunningham Canal Point Elementary	617	767	80%
Pahokee Elementary	682	250	273%
Pioneer Park Elementary	661	1045	63%
Rosenwald Elementary	424	708	60%
Lake Shore Middle	1237	1500	82%
Pahokee Middle/Senior	1079	1308	88%
Glades Central High	1410	1596	88%
West Tech	163	416	39%
West Area School of Choice	96	250	38%

**LIBRARIES**

**Description.** The County provides library services to the Glades communities through operating branches in Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay. Additionally, the mobile library (Bookmobile) travels to the Glades on a regular biweekly basis. Table 14 describes each of these branch libraries.

**Table 14**

<b>Palm Beach County Library Facilities in the Glades</b>			
Branch	Year Opened	Size of Facility	Size of Collection
Belle Glade	1967	9,100 sq. ft.	48,452
Pahokee	1967	4,500 sq. ft.	21,995
South Bay	1992	4,000 sq. ft.	20,363

The three Glades branches were the first in the Library system to receive a Florinet grant in 1998 to provide graphical access to the Internet. The Belle Glade Branch has a unique feature; part of its 9,100 square feet includes the Lawrence E. Will Museum which houses local history displays, a sound and light diorama, artifacts, volumes of bound newspapers and photographs of the early days in the Glades.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded the Belle Glade Branch four computers for a Children's Learning Center in 1999. Both the South Bay and the Pahokee Branches received three computers each in 2000 from the Gates Foundation for the purposes of increased Internet access for the public, literacy tutoring workstations, and word processing.

Each of the locations provides adult literacy tutor training through a literacy specialist who coordinates the program, trains tutors, and matches up adult students needing literacy training with a fully trained tutor.

Tours of the Library to adults, groups, and children are regularly scheduled. Outreach services to daycare include story times for children, training for agency caregivers, and book deposit collections. Services to a migrant family center in Pahokee provide materials and programs for school children and their parents.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$779,084 annually, including salaries and materials. Library programs that are not tracked by branch, including telecommunications costs, supplies, utilities, travel, adult programming, children's programming, and bookmobile costs, cannot be readily identified.

**Assessment.** In FY 2000, a total of 74,137 books and audio visual materials were circulated; books in the deposit collections were checked out 296,611 times; 70,714 total reference and research questions were answered; 3,000 mothers received Babies Love Books packets; and 22,471 Glades children attended 1,023 children's programs.

**Recommendations.** Information on health and human services programs and economic/business development incentives should be distributed by the Libraries Department through user-friendly publications and public workshops. The programs provided by the Glades branch libraries provide an opportunity for these facilities to be utilized by other County agencies and non-profit providers as a public education and training resource.

## VIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Intergovernmental coordination has been a critical component of the County's work in the Glades over the past five years. The significance of intergovernmental coordination is attested by the fact that, until 1999, virtually all of the policies in the County's Comprehensive Plan addressing the Glades were located in the Intergovernmental Coordination Element. Only with the development of the Managed Growth Tier System in 1999 did the County begin to add numerous policies related to comprehensive planning issues in the Glades to other plan elements.

Many of the programs described in prior sections of this report have required significant coordination among the County and the various municipalities. These programs are not re-addressed in this section, which focuses only on the committee developed to deal with intergovernmental coordination in the Glades and on the technical assistance provided by the Planning Division to the Glades communities.

### ***GLADES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

**Description.** In 1995, in response to the economic conditions in the Glades, the Planning Division was directed by the BCC to initiate organization of an intergovernmental committee to coordinate community and economic development-related activities in the Glades. The result was the creation of the Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC).

GTAC represents a broad range of government and non-profit agencies, which meet to exchange information in ways that stretch limited resources by minimizing duplication, while resolving problems. Members report on their latest efforts such as providing workforce training, expanding transit service, promoting or developing tourism, and facilitating business development. Meetings are typically scheduled on a monthly basis, though special meetings have been called to provide additional input on some items of particular significance that cannot wait for the regular meeting.

Since its inception, GTAC's membership has been fairly stable, focusing on business development efforts by the EDGE Center, job training by the Workforce Development Board, economic and tourism development activities by Palm Beach County, and a variety of nonprofit groups engaged in community development programs such as after school programming and citizen empowerment.

The County formalized its role in GTAC in 1999, with the adoption of Intergovernmental Coordination Policy 2.2-c. This policy commits the County to provide staff support for GTAC as well as participate as a member.

Amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan in the Glades are presented to GTAC for opportunities to review and comment on the proposed change.

**Direct Cost to the County.** \$0



**Assessment:** GTAC has provided an opportunity for information exchange among or between community-based organizations as well as more traditional economic agencies. Attempts to expand this role to more proactive efforts have been unsuccessful. GTAC remains a forum for exchanging ways to “work smarter” by sharing resources.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue its participation in GTAC, using this group as a forum for the further refinement of the Glades Tier.

### ***PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE***

**Description.** Since 1990, the Planning Division has assigned at least one senior planner to work with Glades communities on a full time basis. At times, this assigned staff has been supplemented with other professional staff as well as interns in an effort to provide additional technical planning assistance to the Glades. The Planning Division staff coordinates with Glades municipalities, County agencies (including the Economic Development Office, the Engineering Department, the Environmental Resources Management Department, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Facilities Development and Operations Department), and other public and private sector groups and organizations on a variety of Glades-related issues.

One major area of involvement has been the development of grants for numerous programs/projects within the Glades, many of which have been described in prior sections. Since 1997, Glades projects have been awarded \$2,304,800 in grants as a result of the technical assistance provided by the Planning Division. Table 15 below generally describes the various grants that have been obtained as a result of this technical assistance.

**Direct Cost to County.** \$550,000 in staff time. This includes staff support for GTAC. Other direct costs associated with individual projects are shown in the appropriate section of this report.

**Assessment.** The technical assistance provided by the Planning Division has successfully led to a number of grants being awarded to the Glades. This assistance has also afforded an opportunity to ensure that the Planning Division is aware of issues in the Glades before they become critical.

**Recommendation.** The County should continue to provide technical assistance to the Glades and look for additional ways to provide assistance in a cost-effective manner.

**Table 15**

<b>Grants Obtained through Planning Division Technical Assistance, 1997-2001</b>			
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Grant Agency</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount of Award</b>
Belle Glade Charette	Florida Division of Forestry	1997	\$ 10,000
Belle Glade Marina Enhancement	Florida Division of Recreation and Parks	1997	\$ 100,000
Lake Okeechobee Trail Master Plan – East Side	Florida Department of Transportation	1997	\$ 200,000
Pahokee Main Street Designation	Florida Department of State	1997	\$ 10,000
Pelican River Greenway Design	Dupont Corporation and Community Foundation	1997	\$ 9,800
South Bay RV Park Landscaping	Beautiful, Palm Beaches	1997	\$ 12,000
South Bay Welcome Center	PBC Development Regions	1997	\$ 50,000
DuPuis Connector	Florida Office of Greenways and Trails	1998	\$1,000,000
South Bay Depot	PBC Housing & Community Development	1998	\$ 150,000
South Bay Heritage Workshop	Florida Humanities Council	1998	\$ 19,000
South Bay Nature Park	Florida Division of Recreation and Parks	1998	\$ 100,000
South Bay Waterfront Park	Florida Inland Navigation District	1998-2001	\$ 203,000
Pahokee Revitalization Plan	Community Foundation	1999	\$ 19,000
South Bay Welcome Center	Florida Department of State	1999	\$ 115,000
EDGE Center Artisan Survey	Florida Department of State	2000	\$ 16,000
South Bay Transportation Museum	Federal Highway Administration	2000	\$ 75,000
South Bay Transportation Museum	Florida Humanities Council	2000	\$ 25,000
Areawide Strategic Business Plan Training	US Department of Agriculture	2001	\$ 164,000
South Bay US 27 Median Planting	Florida Department of Transportation	2001	\$ 27,000
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>			<b>\$2,304,800</b>

## **Appendix A**

### **Comprehensive Plan Provisions Affecting the Glades Tier**

The Comprehensive Plan provides specific provisions addressing issues in the Glades Tier in a number of elements. Of the 15 elements contained in Palm Beach County's Plan, only one (Fire-Rescue Services) explicitly acknowledges that it does not consider the Glades area of the County. The following pages provide the language from each of the nine elements of the Comprehensive Plan that explicitly address the Glades.

#### **INTRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION ELEMENT**

##### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DEFINITIONS**

**GLADES AREA** - generally described as the area west of range line 40 and includes the Everglades Agricultural Area, the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay and the unincorporated communities adjacent to Lake Okeechobee within Palm Beach County.

#### **FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

The protection of the quality of life for present and future citizens is undermined by piecemeal development. To ensure resources are maximized and used in the most cost effective manner, a framework is needed to provide the basis for land use decisions in order to create and maintain sustainable communities. The updated 1989 Land Use Element addresses actions to correct unforeseen problems and opportunities of development, ensures consistency with State and regional plans and implements the direction provided by the Board of County Commissioners to:

1. maintain lifestyle choices;
2. create new land use designations to more closely reflect development patterns in the rural residential areas;
3. strengthen and facilitate revitalization and redevelopment and Infill development programs;
4. protect agricultural land and equestrian based industries;
5. balance growth throughout the County;
6. increase the integration between land use planning, natural resource protection, water resource management, transportation planning, and economic planning;
7. provide incentives for mixed-use and new town developments and urban design;
8. establish a timing and phasing program to provide for orderly growth;
9. address the needs of developed urban areas that lack basic services;
10. coordinate growth with the provision of infrastructure;
11. define how growth/services will be managed in rural residential areas;
12. define service areas and the type of services to be provided within each service area; and,
13. provide criteria for expanding the Urban/Suburban Tier.

To respond to these Board directives, the Future Land Use Element has been amended to apply specific strategies to distinct geographical areas. This is necessary to provide the flexibility to permit the articulation of different, and even contrasting, strategies while maintaining a comprehensive approach to planning. . . . distinct areas have been defined and are summarized below:

[Omitted for brevity]

**Glades Tier.** The Glades Tier is generally located west of the Conservation Areas and Twenty Mile Bend, and includes the Glades Communities. This area is designated primarily for specialized agricultural operations.

Communities within the Glades Tier are engaged in their own efforts with regard to planning and development. This effort is mainly in the form of economic development programming. The geographical distance and the nature of the issues faced by the Glades communities differ from the challenges faced by the coastal communities to manage growth. These factors warrant a separate initiative to further develop the Glades Tier, in conjunction with the Glades municipalities, business community and area residents.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

### **OBJECTIVE 1.1 Tier Designation and Tier Re-designation**

Palm Beach County recognizes five (5) geographic regions (Tiers), each of which exhibits distinctive physical development patterns with different needs for services to ensure a diversity of lifestyle choices. The five (5) Tiers are:

[Omitted for brevity]

5. **Glades Tier:** The Glades Tier shall include all lands west of the Water Conservation Areas, Twenty Mile Bend, and the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. The area predominantly supports large scale agricultural operations, which shall be afforded rural levels of service.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.6 Glades Tier**

Palm Beach County shall work with the communities in the western areas to preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Glades and protect the economically viable agricultural base in this area.

**Policy 1.6-a:** The following general future land use designations shall be allowed in the Glades Tier:

1. Rural Residential, limited to Rural Residential 20 and Rural Residential 10;
2. Agricultural, limited to the Agricultural Production (AP) category;
3. Conservation categories;
4. Parks and Recreation;
5. Commercial Recreation;

6. Transportation and Utilities; and, within the general areas of Lake Harbor and Canal Point, which are rural towns with both rural and urban land uses, the additional future land use designations of:
7. Residential categories ranging from Rural Residential 2.5 (RR 2.5) to Medium Residential 5 (MR 5);
8. Commercial, limited to the Commercial Low (CL) categories,
9. Industrial, limited to the Industrial (IND) category;
10. Institutional and Public Facilities; and, within the Glades Urban Service Area, the future land use designations of the Urban/Suburban Tier shall apply.

**Policy 1.6-b:** Within the Urban Service Area boundary within the Glades Tier the provisions of the Urban/ Suburban Tier shall apply.

**Policy 1.6-c: Glades Tier.** The Board of County Commissioners may consider the waiver of the minimum density requirement for proposed development in the Glades Tier when:

1. The proposed development is consistent with the provisions of any "Joint Planning Area" agreement (Policy 1.4-d, Intergovernmental Coordination Element); and,
2. An analysis is completed that addresses:
  - a. the impact of a reduced density development on the overall infrastructure system; and,
  - b. the compatibility of the proposed development with adjacent land uses; and,
  - c. the effect of the reduced density development on the ability of the County to meet its Goals, Objectives and Policies related to affordable housing.

If the development is located in a municipal annexation area, the analysis must be performed by the annexing municipality.

**Policy 1.6-d:** By January 2002, the County's Planning Division shall initiate coordination of policy development for the Glades Tier, in cooperation with the cities of Belle Glade, South Bay and Pahokee, and other local and regional organizations. The purpose shall be to provide an overall plan for promoting the revitalization of the Glades area. The County shall work with the existing communities to jointly plan for timely and managed growth in order to prevent urban sprawl, protect native vegetation and address the unique character and challenges of the unincorporated Glades area. The Glades Tier development shall also consider revision of the Glades Economic Overlay.

#### **SUB-OBJECTIVE 1.6.1      Glades Area Economic Development Overlay**

Palm Beach County shall use existing mechanisms or develop new strategies to assist Glades communities, residents and organizations to promote economic diversification, cultural preservation, greenways planning, local revitalization and redevelopment, area beautification and coordinated future land use planning while complying with all applicable environmental regulations and constraints by applying the provisions of the Glades Area Economic Development Overlay.

**Policy 1.6.1-a:** The Glades Area Economic Development Overlay (GA-O) shall apply to all land within the Urban Service Area in the Glades, including the State-designated enterprise zone for the municipalities of Belle Glade, South Bay and Pahokee.

**Policy 1.6.1-b:** Within the GA-O, the County shall provide flexibility in the range of uses and land development regulations allowed to accommodate uses which, if deemed appropriate, will increase job opportunities and improve the economic vitality of the area.

**Policy 1.6.1-c:** By January 2002, the County shall review and revise the Glades Economic Overlay Zone to increase opportunities for establishing home-based businesses and other mixed future land uses.

#### **SUB-OBJECTIVE 1.6.2      Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay**

The purpose of the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay (Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative Overlay) area is to provide for the protection of the sugar industry, a significant agricultural industry from encroachment of incompatible uses and activities.

**Policy 1.6.2-a:** The Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative Overlay shall be depicted on the Future Land Use Atlas, and is generally described as the area east of State Road 15, east and north of Belle Glade's city limits south of State Road 80, and west of the adopted Urban Service Area for the Glades.

**Policy 1.6.2-b:** All lands within the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative Overlay shall be designated as Industrial on the Future Land Use Atlas. The permitted uses within the Overlay shall be limited to those uses that support and contribute to, or are compatible with, the operations of the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida, including agriculture.

**Policy 1.6.2-c:** Uses permitted within and adjacent to the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative Overlay shall be compatible with or complement the operations of the purpose of the Overlay, and allow the continuation and future development of the sugarcane industry.

#### **SUB-OBJECTIVE 1.6.3      Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Overlay**

The purpose of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Overlay is to increase job opportunities and improve the economic vitality of the area by supporting the development of tourist-related facilities in conjunction with the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, a segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail atop of the Herbert Hoover Dike.

**Policy 1.6.3-a:** The Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail Overlay (LOST-O) includes the area shown on the Future Land Use Atlas outside the Urban/Suburban Tier located between the Herbert Hoover Dike and 250 feet South of U.S. 27, or between the Herbert Hoover Dike and 250 feet East of Conners Highway.

**Policy 1.6.3-b:** The LOST-O shall accommodate uses such as inns, cabins, restaurants, and trail outfitters (e.g. bicycle and boat rentals) which support outdoor recreational activities. Within the Overlay, such tourist-related uses shall be allowed in all Future Land Use designations.

**Policy 1.6.3-c:** Only properties which represent a lot of record as of December 31, 2000, at least 50% of which lies within the LOST-O, may utilize the provisions of the LOST-O.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

This section identifies the categories, uses, design criteria and any special requirements associated with the future land use designations contained in Goals 1 and 2 of the Element.

#### **RESIDENTIAL**

##### **Land Use Designation Categories**

**Glades.** The Glades area, surrounding Lake Okeechobee, has rural and urban residential categories. With the exception of Lake Harbor in the Glades Tier, which is a rural town with urban densities, all of the residentially designated land in the Glades Area is shown on the FLUA as Urban Residential.

**Minimum Density Exemptions.** Densities less than the Minimum Density . . . may be granted as follows:

1. Parcels may be granted a density exemption pursuant to FLUE Policy 1.2-b;
2. Parcels within the Glades Tier may be granted a density exemption pursuant to FLUE Policy 1.6-c.

#### **OVERLAYS**

##### **SUGAR CANE GROWERS COOPERATIVE OF FLORIDA PROTECTION OVERLAY**

The purpose of the Sugar Cane Growers Overlay area is to provide for the protection of a significant agricultural industry from encroachment by incompatible uses and activities; as well as to provide opportunities for the location of accessory, auxiliary, and supporting industrial uses in close proximity to the existing SCGCF mill and related facilities.

The Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay is generally described as the area east of State Road 15, east and north of Belle Glade's city limits south of State Road 80, and west of the adopted Urban Service Area for the Glades. The overlay includes all of Sections 21, and 28, the eastern half of sections 20 and 29, Township 43 Range 37, excluding completely the western half of Section 29 which has been selected by the City of Belle Glade to build a Business Park and as a potential future annexation area. The specific boundaries of the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida Protection Area Overlay are depicted on Future Land Use Atlas pages 130 and 134.

Should production and processing at the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida be discontinued, this Overlay and Sub-objective 1.6.2 of the Future Land Use Element will be revisited, and will also be reviewed as part of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process for the Comprehensive Plan.

## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

**Airport Facilities** - Airport Master Plans exist for the County operated Palm Beach International Airport, Palm Beach County Park Airport, Palm Beach County Glades Airport, and North Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport. Future expansions of these airports are to be performed relative to the Master Plans and include an analysis of the compatibility of future land uses around airports. Impacts of the non-County operated airports of Belle Glade State and Boca Raton airports on the County operated airports are also to be monitored.

### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

#### OBJECTIVE 1.2 Level of Service Exceptions

**Policy 1.2-h:** Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Comprehensive Plan, a local government may issue a development order or permit provided that:

[Omitted for brevity]

- 4) The development is located within one of the following geographic areas:
  - a) the residential exception area per Transportation Element Policy 1.2-a;
  - b) the Glades communities, delineated as the areas in the Urban/Suburban Tier immediately east of Lake Okeechobee, and the areas with urban densities in the rural towns of Lake Harbor and Canal Point;
  - c) the County's Redevelopment and Revitalization Overlay; or

[Omitted for brevity]

#### OBJECTIVE 1.7 Airport Facilities

By January 2001, Palm Beach County shall prepare revised airport master plans for all county operated airports in which demand for aviation and related facilities shall be evaluated and analyzed in order to provide for future county aviation needs. Current dates for completed airport master plans pertaining to each of these facilities are shown below:

Palm Beach International Airport - 1990  
Palm Beach County Glades Airport - 1992  
Palm Beach County Park Airport - 1992  
North Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport - 1996



**Policy 1.7-a:** The County shall monitor the expansion and safety needs at the four County-operated airports, Palm Beach County Park Airport, Palm Beach County Glades Airport, North Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport and Palm Beach International Airport (PBIA). These needs will be monitored both at five-year intervals, using guidelines set forth in the airport master plans (which must meet all Federal, State and local requirements), and on a continuing basis through implementation of the Continuing Florida Aviation System Planning Process, administered by the Florida Department of Transportation and coordinated through the County's Department of Airports.

**OBJECTIVE 1.9      Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Linked Open Space Facilities**

**Policy 1.9-n:** The County shall incorporate the principle of linking open space into ongoing planning efforts such as the Bicycle/Pedestrian plan efforts of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The use of publicly owned road right-of-way and abandoned publicly owned road rights-of-way shall be annually examined during the Bicycle/Pedestrian planning process to determine which rights-of-way can be safely used to achieve the following: increasing alternative access to beach parks; facilitating bicycle/pedestrian connections between County and municipal parks as well as parks and conservation areas; facilitating connections between residential areas, parks and conservation areas; supporting connections to the bikeway/hiking/equestrian path around Lake Okeechobee; and facilitating bicycle, hiking and equestrian access to County parks.

**UTILITY ELEMENT**

**POTABLE WATER & WASTEWATER SUB-ELEMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

**3.      Potable Water Issues**

The residents of unincorporated areas of the County receive potable water services from one of the following sources:

[Omitted for brevity]

- b.**      Glades Area (Western Palm Beach County): City of Belle Glade; City of Pahokee; City of South Bay; and small private water supply systems.
- c.**      While most Eastern Palm Beach County drinking water providers rely upon groundwater as the source of raw water, the Glades Area municipalities draw water from Lake Okeechobee.

**4.      Wastewater Issues**

[Omitted for brevity]

A majority of the urban unincorporated areas in the Glades are served by the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay. Significant portions of unincorporated rural residential Palm Beach County including antiquated and unrecorded subdivisions, some of which are growing at a faster rate than other areas in the County rely on septic tanks.

Package treatment plants serving labor camps and sugar industry camps are also present in unincorporated Palm Beach County areas in the Glades. Palm Beach County is considering through the Managed Growth Program the prohibition of package treatment plants in the urban and limited urban service areas, while allowing restricted use of package plants in the Everglades Agricultural Area and in other areas dedicated to agricultural production, in order to provide wastewater service to bona fide agricultural uses and essential public facilities.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

### **OBJECTIVE 1.8 Package Treatment Plants**

**Policy 1.8-c:** In the Everglades Agricultural Area, and other land dedicated to agricultural production in unincorporated Palm Beach County, the use of package plants shall be limited to serve essential public facilities and bona fide agricultural uses.

## **RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fortunately, Palm Beach County encompasses many significant natural resources such as eastern Lake Okeechobee, vast federal and state conservation and/or wildlife areas, the Loxahatchee River and Slough, the Intracoastal Waterway, and some of the finest Atlantic Ocean beaches in the State of Florida, all within an hours drive of the County's population. These resources, along with the County's 7,000 acres of parks and tens of thousands of acres of environmentally sensitive lands, other municipal park systems, and County School District facilities, provide public access opportunities to wide array of natural, cultural and recreational facilities. In addition, privately owned or operated facilities such as golf courses, clubhouses, pools, marinas, and campgrounds are available throughout the County, albeit in some cases on a more limited basis than public facilities. Together these resources comprise a broad based and functional Countywide recreation and open space system that contributes to the health and welfare of the population, links vital natural resources, and supports a high quality of life for Palm Beach County residents.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

### **OBJECTIVE 1.4 Open Space**

**Policy 1.4-a:** The County shall develop planning strategies for a linked open space network that include but are not limited to consideration of the following components:

- Conservation Areas and Preserves
- Environmentally Sensitive Lands
- Parks and recreational facilities
- Commercial recreation areas

- Lakes and canal systems
- Bikeways and trails
- Wildlife corridors
- The Florida National Scenic Trail - Lake Okeechobee Segment

## **CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Linked Open Space Program**

A network of potential wildlife corridors has been identified which connects every major public conservation area in Palm Beach and Martin counties with the Everglades. In addition to the support these corridors will provide for the preservation of wildlife and native habitat, these corridors will provide educational and scientific research opportunities, as well as recreational opportunities from the Atlantic Ocean west to Lake Okeechobee, and south into the Everglades. This network will give hikers, nature photographers, bird watchers and explorers, among others, the opportunity to pass through every type of ecosystem in Palm Beach County.

#### **Lakes**

Lake Okeechobee has been called the "liquid heart" of South Florida, serving a variety of sometimes conflicting functions - water supply, sport and commercial fishing, navigation, flood control and wildlife habitat. The Lake is a key component of South Florida's vast Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades surface water hydrologic system. Runoff from agricultural activity surrounding the Lake has contributed to high levels of nutrients collecting in the Lake negatively impacting the Lake's water quality.

The severity of Lake Okeechobee's water quality problem was recognized by the State legislature in 1987 when the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Act was adopted. The South Florida Water Management District is the lead agency responsible for developing plans for Lake Okeechobee.

### **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

#### **OBJECTIVE 3.1      Quality and Quantity of Water Resources**

**Policy 3.1-m:** The County shall not take any land use actions which are inconsistent with the State and the South Florida Water Management District efforts related to maintaining and/or improving water quality in Lake Okeechobee; particularly those included in an adopted surface water improvement and management plan.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

#### Glades Coordination/Community Revitalization

The area shown as Agricultural Production on the Land Use Plan Map in the Land Use Element, along with the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay and adjacent unincorporated areas designated for residential and non-residential development, are referred to as the "Glades Area". As a result of dealing with the growth management problems in the eastern coastal areas and the great distance between the Glades and coastal communities, it often seems like the Glades communities are isolated from the decisions and benefits of eastern Palm Beach County.

The special needs of the Glades Area are addressed in this plan through the creation of additional forums, Land Development Regulations and increased representation on County boards, agencies and committees. Representation of the Glades Area on County boards, committees currently comprise 4% of the total eligible positions. This is consistent with the Glades share of countywide population.

The County has established the Glades Technical Advisory Committee to coordinate the County's efforts with Glades communities and organizations. The advisory committee identifies Glades resources, promotes information sharing and establishes implementation priorities. The County has also increased economic development efforts in Glades and in coordination with Glades municipalities has secured a state enterprise zone designation for portions of Belle Glade, South Bay and Pahokee. The County has established the Glades Area Economic Development Overlay District to provide flexibility in the range of land uses and property development regulations allowed in the underlying districts in the Glades area. The Overlay also accommodates uses which, if deemed appropriate, will increase job opportunities and improve the economic vitality of the area and to recognize the character of the area. However, the overlay zone has not been used and does not appear to significantly assist or benefit potential users.

The County participates in an interlocal agreement with Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay to provide 64 hours of technical assistance monthly to address the land use, historic preservation and economic issues of the area.

### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

#### OBJECTIVE 1.5      **Linked Open Space Program**

**Policy 1.5-e:** The projects contained within the Linked Open Space Program of the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan are to be prioritized as follows: Immediate priority shall be assigned to projects contained within the Loxahatchee Greenways Program and to Trail projects for which funding arrangements, interlocal agreements, or maintenance agreements exist or are underway. These projects include: the Pal-Mar greenway (which is included in the Loxahatchee Greenways Project), the multi-purpose Lake Trails project in the Glades Area, the Juno Beach Bicycle Route and the C-18

multi-purpose equestrian/hiking trail. Secondary priority shall include multi-purpose urban bicycle/pedestrian open space links identified on the Linked Open Space Overlay map of the County Comprehensive Plan, linkages between environmentally sensitive lands which will be acquired through the County Bond Program or other funding source, and environmentally desirable linkages of upland areas set aside pursuant to Conservation Element Policy 2.1-c.

## **GOAL 2      GLADES REVITALIZATION**

It is the **GOAL** of Palm Beach County to revitalize the Glades area through cooperative efforts with the Glades Communities, residents and organizations in a manner consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.1      Glades Enhancement and Economic Diversification**

Palm Beach County shall use existing mechanisms or develop new strategies to assist Glades communities, residents and organizations to promote economic diversification, cultural preservation, greenways planning, local redevelopment, area beautification and coordinated land use planning.

**Policy 2.1-a:** The County shall continue to coordinate with community organizations and local governments to promote opportunities to expand the types of business and jobs available to Glades residents, including business expansion and development, tourism development and agricultural enhancement.

**Policy 2.1-b:** Palm Beach County Office of Economic Development shall assist business formation or expansion in the Glades area using, but not limited to, the following strategies:

- Provide financial and technical assistance for small business development
- Encourage use of the Glades Economic Overlay Zone
- Promote benefits of the Enterprise Zones
- Coordinate with private and non-profit business development entities
- Procure business development grants

**Policy 2.1-c:** The County shall continue to provide technical assistance pursuant to the joint planning agreement with the cities of Belle Glade, South Bay, Pahokee and the Glades Community Development Corporation to promote community revitalization, cultural preservation, and comprehensive planning.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.2      Communication with Glades Communities**

Palm Beach County shall increase communication and participation with Glades Communities, organizations and residents on Glades and Countywide matters through formal agreements, appointed committees, County programs and other informal efforts.

**Policy 2.2-a:** The Planning Division shall provide an annual report to the BCC and Glades Technical Assistance Committee (GTAC) members on health and human services, housing and human development, land use, economic development, governmental structure and infrastructure finance issues to develop consensus recommendations on issues affecting the communities' revitalization.

**Policy 2.2-b:** The County shall maintain or increase the number of Glades representatives on County boards, agencies and committees.

**Policy 2.2-c:** The County shall continue to organize and staff a regular meeting for overall Glades coordination. County staff shall work with agencies, organizations, and individuals to promote Glades revitalization efforts through information-sharing and program coordination. The purpose of the overall Glades coordination meeting will be to:

- Share information concerning programs and opportunities with organizations involved in Glades revitalization efforts.
- Identify additional Glades Technical Assistance Resources for coordination on Glades revitalization
- Determine the extent to which the goal, objectives and policies of the element are being achieved and identifying areas requiring additional attention
- Keep GTAC network updated regarding ongoing activities
- Regularly update the Board of County Commissioners on GTAC activities and areas needing County attention.

## **ECONOMIC ELEMENT**

### **GOALS, OBJECTIVE, AND POLICIES**

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.1      Balanced Economic Growth Implementation**

**Policy 1.1-c:** The County shall improve economic conditions in the Development Regions, characterized by low and moderate income levels, including redevelopment of the coastal regions and Glades area.

## **FIRE-RESCUE SERVICES ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Glades Regional MSTU, which covers the area west of 20-Mile Bend, is not addressed by this element of the Comprehensive Plan. The ability to adequately provide these and other essential services in an efficient and cost-effective manner will become a major challenge facing the County as it moves into the 1990s and 21st Century. From this perspective, the ability to adequately plan and provide these necessary services is of paramount importance.