PART III

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES IMPACTS

QUESTION 12 - VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

See State Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 187, F.S.)
GOAL(9); POLICY (7) GOAL (10); POLICIES (1),(3),(4),(6) GOAL (16); POLICY (2)

A. Identify the dominant species and other unusual or unique features of the plant communities on Map F. Identify and describe the amount of all plant communities that will be preserved in a natural state following development as shown on Map H.

The Main Street @ Coconut Creek DRI site is a 157 acre site comprised of an existing agricultural operation. The subject site is an active agricultural operation, with active crop rows and soil tilling. The site includes numerous agricultural drainage ditches aligned north-south throughout the various parcels, connecting to larger ditches running east-west along the property boundaries. The northwest corner of the property contains two (2) smaller out-parcels separated from the remainder of the site by Banks Road and an existing canal running east-west along the northern boundary of the remainder of the property. The northernmost parcel is bordered by canals on the north, south and west, along with an existing high school to the east. Based on the Florida Land Use and Cover Classification System (FLUCCS), the project site consists of three (3) distinct vegetative communities: row crops, disturbed and filled upland area and cypress-mixed hardwood wetlands, FLUCCS codes 2140, 7400 and 6215, respectively. The majority of the subject site consists of row-crops surrounded by disturbed upland buffers and existing drainage ditches. The cypress wetland vegetative community is limited to the one large cypress head along the northern property limits.

Vegetation of the agricultural operation currently consists of tomato row crops, along with sparse upland herbaceous species and turf grasses, including Spanish needles (*Bidens* sp.), whitehead broom (*Spermacoce* sp.), knot-root foxtail (*Setaria* sp.), common ragweed (*Ambrosia* sp.) and caesar weed (*Urena lobata).* The existing berms contain mostly nuisance-exotic upland vegetation including Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), lead tree (*Leucaena leucocephala*) and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). The existing drainage ditches contain musk grass (*Chara* sp.), fanwort (*Cabomba* sp.) and sago pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), with dogfennel (*Eupatorium* sp.), creeping oxeye daisy (*Wedelia trilobata*) and torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) along the edges of the ditches.

The contiguous portion of the property contains one (1) large wetland area along the northern property boundary, adjacent to the existing canal. The wetland area consists of a historic cypress dome wetland, and is separated from the remainder of the site by an existing ditch. The wetland displays evidence of long-term fringe effects, with an

outer canopy of nuisance exotic species such as Brazilian pepper, umbrella tree (*Schefflera actinophylla*) and java bishopwood (*Bischopfia javanica*). The remaining canopy consists mainly of bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), and strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), with a scattered wetland understory consisting of leather fern (*Achrostichum danaefolium*), cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*), green myrsine (*Myrsine guianensis*) and swamp fern (*Blechnum* sp.).

See Map F: Vegetation Associations.

B. Discuss what survey methods were used to determine the absence or presence of state or federally listed wildlife and plants.(Sampling methodology should be agreed to by the regional planning council and other reviewing agencies at pre-application conference stage.)State actual sampling times and dates, and discuss any factors that may have influenced the results of the sampling effort. Show on Map G the location of all transects, trap grids, or other sampling stations used to determine the on-site status of state or federally listed wildlife and plant resources.

The Main Street @ Coconut Creek DRI site was assessed by qualified biologists during the late morning and early afternoon hours (10:00am-1:00pm) on July 11, 2008, and in the late morning hours (10:00am-12:00pm) on March 10, 2009. Survey methods used to determine the presence or absence of state or federally listed floral and faunal species consisted of a combination of meandering transects and point-counts. Meandering transects were conducted throughout the project site. These transects included the observation of each distinct vegetative community. Given the relative lack of vegetative diversity present within the project site, meandering transects provide sufficient coverage of the vegetative communities within subject site(s). In order to ensure complete coverage of the subject site(s) for the presence or absence of listed faunal species, point count samples were taken at numerous locations throughout the DRI, specifically within the existing wetland and along the vegetated buffers. Point counts were taken for 10 minute intervals for areas with a radius of ±75 feet. See Map G: Wildlife and Plant Resources for the locations of the point counts.

C. List all state or federally listed wildlife and plant resources that were observed on the site and show location on Map G. Given the plant communities on-site, list any additional state or federally listed wildlife and plant resources expected to occur on the site and show the location of suitable habitat on Map G. Additionally, address any unique wildlife and plant resources, such as colonial bird nesting sites and migrating bird concentration areas. For species that are either observed or expected to utilize the site, discuss the known or expected location and population size on-site, existence (and extent, if known)of adjacent, contiguous habitat off-site, and any special habitat requirements of the species.

State or federally listed wildlife species observed within the subject site were limited to tri-colored heron (*Egretta tricolor*), great egret (*Ardea alba) and* American Kestrel

(*Falco sparverius*), with each species being listed as a Species of Special Concern (SSC). Given the vegetative communities present within the DRI project site, any use of the site(s) would likely be transient in nature, and would be limited to wading birds foraging within the existing ditches and wetland. Species likely to utilize the wetland areas on-site would include those observed, along with snowy egret (*Egretta thula*), great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) and little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*). The lack of significant buffer habitat limits the possibility of any roosting, colonial or otherwise, on-site by listed species.

D. Indicate what impact development of the site will pose to affected state or federally listed wildlife and plant resources.

The proposed development of the site should have no impact to state and/or federally listed floral and faunal resources. Due to the lack of suitable roosting habitat and the likely transient nature of utilization of the site by listed species, along with the proposed preservation of the existing wetland area, the development would not impact existing floral and faunal species, nor would it impact seasonal roosting or migratory patterns.

E. Discuss what measures are proposed to be taken to mitigate impacts to state and federally listed wildlife and plant resources. If protection is proposed to occur on-site, describe what legal instrument will be used to protect the site, and what management actions will be taken to maintain habitat value. If protection is proposed to occur off-site, identify the proposed amount and type of lands to be mitigated as well as whether mitigation would be through a regional mitigation land bank, by acquisition of lands that adjoin existing public holdings, or by other means.

Based upon the observed and anticipated lack of listed floral and faunal species within the DRI, along with the maintenance of the existing cypress wetland in its natural state, mitigation to offset impacts to listed species is not proposed.