

# ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

~~8/7/6/06~~

Page 4

## ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY

### Introduction

The Rural Land Stewardship Area (RLSA) program is an incentive-based system that encourages the voluntary preservation and private stewardship of natural resources, retention of rural uses and agriculture and accommodates economic growth and diversification in a sustainable rural environment. The program involves a comprehensive analysis of existing natural resources, land use and land cover and other data. The information is then entered into a GIS database and layers are customized to RLSA requirements. An analysis of the data is then performed to create the stewardship program, overlay map (RLSA Figure 1) and credit system.

The Index Map (RLSA Figure 3) illustrates the relative natural resource values of the property in green and brown colors, with the darkest green tones representing the most valuable resource areas, and the lightest brown representing the least valuable resource areas. The Index Map (RLSA Figure 3) is used, along with other data, to determine specific resource classifications. The St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1) illustrates three resource classifications: Hydrologic Stewardship Areas (HYSAs); Habitat Stewardship Areas (HSAs) and Water Retention Areas (WRAs). Protection and conservation of these areas are implemented through the designation of Stewardship Sending Areas. Property owners are provided incentives to protect the most valuable areas through the stewardship credit system.

Stewardship Credits are the currency of the RLSA program. Credits are generated based on the value of resources on the land multiplied by the development rights that are removed from designated Stewardship Sending Areas (SSAs). To simply state the system, the more environmentally valuable the land, and the more uses eliminated, the greater the number of Credits generated. Through the generation of Stewardship Credits, natural resources, agriculture and cultural heritage are protected in perpetuity. Credits are used to plan for and accommodate future population in new self-sustaining communities.

In the Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay (RLSA Figure 1), the new communities are referred to as Stewardship Receiving Areas (SRAs). There are four types of rural communities under this program: Towns, Villages, Hamlets or Compact Rural Developments (CRDs). Suitability criteria are established as performance standards. Desirable characteristics of sustainable development are part of the plan for these new communities. They are to be mixed-use, pedestrian oriented and fiscally neutral or positive to St. Lucie County.

Within the RLSA Overlay, the creation of Stewardship Sending Areas and Stewardship Receiving Areas results in a conservation and development pattern for the RLSA Overlay, when considered as a whole, that protects natural resources and cultural heritage, promotes the continuation of agriculture in SSAs, and accommodates growth in a sustainable fashion in SRAs.

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-2

**Goal**

St. Lucie County's goal in creating a Rural Land Stewardship Area, pursuant to Chapter 163.3177(11)(d), F.S, is to protect and conserve agricultural lands and to promote agricultural viability within SSAs, to direct incompatible uses away from wetlands and upland habitat, to discourage urban sprawl through the RLSA program, and to ensure development within the RLSA that includes a functional mix of land uses and promotes economic diversification.

**Objective ~~4~~ 1. Establish the general purpose and structure to implement the St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay.**

**Policy 1.1**

To promote a dynamic balance of land uses in the St. Lucie County RLSA that collectively contribute to a viable agricultural industry, protection and conservation of natural resources, sustainable mixed-use development, and enhancement of economic prosperity and diversification, St. Lucie County hereby establishes the RLSA Overlay. The County shall adopt specific Land Development Regulations for the RLSA Overlay (RLSA LDRs) to implement the goals, objectives and policies of the RLSA Overlay.

**Policy 1.2**

The intent of the RLSA Overlay is to protect and conserve natural resources and retain and promote viable agriculture by promoting sustainable mixed-use development as an alternative to low-density single use development, and provide a system of compensation to private property owners for the voluntary elimination of certain land uses in order to protect and conserve natural resources, open space and viable agriculture in exchange for transferable Credits that can be used to entitle such sustainable development. The strategies herein are based on the principles of Florida's Rural Land Stewardship Act, found in Section 163.3177(11)(d) F.S. The RLSA Overlay shall include innovative and incentive based tools, techniques and strategies that are not dependent on a regulatory approach, but will complement existing local, regional, state and federal regulatory programs.

**Policy 1.3**

Within the RLSA Overlay, the creation of Stewardship Sending Areas (SSAs) and Stewardship Receiving Areas (SRAs) results in a conservation and development pattern for the RLSA Overlay, when considered as a whole, that protects the environment, promotes the continuation of agriculture, and accommodates growth in a sustainable fashion. Together, SSAs and SRAs result in a sustainable form of development, whereby large areas of environmentally and agriculturally valuable lands are restricted from development through SSAs and sustainable, mixed-use development is accommodated through SRAs. The combination of SSAs and SRAs facilitate the implementation of innovative planning and flexible development strategies described in § 163.3177 (11)(d), F.S. and Rule 9J-5.006(5)(l), F.A.C.

**Policy 1.4**

This RLSA Overlay to the Future Land Use Map is depicted on the Rural Land Stewardship Overlay Map (Overlay Map) (RLSA Figure 1), adopted herein as RLSA Figure 1. The Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1) is an adopted overlay to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**8/7/6/06**

Page-3

Any ~~expansion~~additional lands proposed to increase the overall acres of the RLSA Overlay boundary as shown on RLSA Figure 1 shall require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. Pursuant to 163.3177(11)(d) F.S., designations of SSAs and SRAs within the RLSA Overlay Area shall be by Ordinance and do not require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. For informational purposes and as a ministerial act, the County shall illustrate each approved SSA and SRA on the FLUM~~and~~ Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), and official Zoning Map at such time as any other updates are made to the FLUM~~or~~ Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1) and official Zoning Map.

**Policy 1.5**

Stewardship Credits (Credits) are created from any lands within the RLSA that are to be kept in permanent agriculture, open space or conservation uses. These lands will be identified as Stewardship Sending Areas (SSAs). All privately owned lands within the RLSA are eligible for designation as an SSA.

**Policy 1.6**

The range of Stewardship Credit Values is hereby established using the specific methodology set forth on the Stewardship Credit Worksheet (Worksheet), adopted herein as RLSA Figure 2. The RLSA LDRs shall include the methodology as shown on the Worksheet (RLSA Figure 2) and related procedures for SSA designation. Such procedures shall include but shall not be limited to the following:

- (1) The applicant shall provide the following information with the SSA Application for the County's review and consideration: the legal description of the lands proposed to be designated as an SSA, the number of SSA credits to be generated by those lands, the proposed SSA Credit Agreement and Stewardship Easement Agreement applicable to such lands, on the application form as prescribed by the RLSA LDRs~~;~~
- (2) After approval by the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) of the SSA Application, the final SSA Credit Agreement with the legal description of the lands designated as an SSA, the number of SSA credits granted, and the Stewardship Easement Agreement applicable to such lands, shall be provided by County staff to the St. Lucie County Property Appraiser and the SSA applicant. The Stewardship Easement Agreement for that SSA shall be recorded within one-hundred (120) days by the SSA applicant in the public records of St. Lucie County~~;~~
- (3) A perpetual Stewardship Easement Agreement shall be recorded for each SSA, in accordance with the approved SSA Credit Agreement, shall run with the land and shall be in favor of St. Lucie County and one of the following additional grantees: Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, South Florida Water Management District, or a recognized statewide land trust~~;~~ In the event that any lands in an SSA are encumbered by a mortgage, the owner of such lands shall be required to obtain from the holder of the mortgage a consent and joinder agreeing to the imposition of the Stewardship Easement Agreement on the lands encumbered by the mortgage, and the subordination of its mortgage, lien or encumbrance to the Stewardship Easement Agreement.
- (4) An approved SSA Application creates the Stewardship Credits, which shall become effective once the corresponding Stewardship Easement Agreement is recorded in the public records of St. Lucie County~~;~~and

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-4

- (5) For each SSA, the SSA Credit Agreement will identify the specific land management measures that will be undertaken and the party responsible for such measures, including performance standards and annual compliance requirements.

**Policy 1.7**

The natural resource value of land within the RLSA is measured by the Stewardship Factors Index (Index) set forth on the Worksheet (RLSA Figure 2). The Index establishes the relative natural resource value by objectively measuring characteristics of land and assigning an index based on each characteristic. The sum of these factors is the index value for the land. Both the characteristics used and the factors assigned thereto were established after review and analysis of detailed information about the natural resource attributes of land within the RLSA so that development could be directed away from important natural resources. In addition, an Agriculture Factor is established to incentivize the conservation of agriculture lands. The characteristics of the Index Factors (as shown in RLSA Figure 2) measured are: Stewardship Overlay Designation, Listed Species Habitat, Soils/Surface Water, Land Use/Land Cover and existing agriculture activities.

**Policy 1.8**

A Natural Resource Index Map (adopted herein as RLSA Figure 3) indicates the Natural Resource Stewardship Index value for all land within the RLSA Overlay, based on data and analysis assimilated into GIS database at the time of the Overlay preparation. The data factors and associated values are derived from those on the Credit Worksheet (RLSA Figure 2). Credits from any lands designated as SSAs will be based in part upon the Natural Resource Index (NRI) values in effect at the time of designation. Any change in the characteristics of land due to alteration of the land prior to the establishment of an SSA that either increases or decreases any Index Factor will result in an adjustment of the factor values and a corresponding adjustment in the Credit value. St. Lucie County shall, through the RLSA LDRs, adopt procedures to be used by applicants to demonstrate NRI values at the time of SSA application.

**Policy 1.9**

The number of Credits generated through designation as an SSA is established in a calculation as follows:

**Stewardship Index Factor Values X Acreage X Base Value = # of Stewardship Credits**

The methodology for the calculation of Stewardship Credits is based upon: 1) the Index Factor Value of the land being designated as an SSA; and 2) the number of Sending Area Land Use Layers eliminated from that land.

**Policy 1.10**

The St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area (RLSA) Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix, adopted herein as RLSA Figure 4, lists uses and activities allowed within Stewardship Sending Areas (SSAs) within the Overlay. Similar uses are grouped together in one of six separate layers in the Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix (RLSA Figure 4). Each layer is discrete and may be removed as part of the SSA approval process, sequentially and cumulatively, in the order presented in the Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix (RLSA Figure 4), starting with the residential layer (Layer One) and ending with the restoration and natural resource layer (Layer Six). If a layer is removed, all uses and

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**8/7/6/06**

**Page 5**

activities listed in that layer are eliminated and are no longer available for that portion of the SSA. Each layer is assigned a percentage of a base credit in the Worksheet (RLSA Figure 2). The assigned percentage for each layer to be removed is added together and then multiplied by the Index value on a per acre basis to arrive at a total Stewardship Credit Value of the land being designated as an SSA.

**Policy 1.11**

Credits can be transferred only to lands within the RLSA that meet the suitability criteria set forth in Objective 4 Policies and designated as “Open” on RLSA Figure 1. The development of such lands as Towns, Villages, Hamlets and Compact Rural Developments shall be through approved Stewardship Receiving Areas (SRAs).

**Policy 1.12**

The RLSA Overlay in the Comprehensive Plan enables the creation, transfer and use of Credits and the designation of SSAs and SRAs. St. Lucie County shall, through the RLSA LDRs, also adopt procedures for applications and approvals.

**Policy 1.13**

Stewardship Credits will be exchanged for mixed-use development entitlements to be used in an SRA on a per acre basis, as described in Policy 4.17, for the creation of sustainable communities in accordance with RLSA Figure 5, through the SRA Application process asset forth in the RLSA LDRs.. The creation, transfer or use of Stewardship Credits shall not require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

**Policy 1.14**

Land becomes designated as an SRA upon the effective date of an ordinance adopted by the BOCC, pursuant to Section 163.3177(11)(d), F.S., approving an SRA Application by the property owner. The permitted land use on a parcel of land located within an SRA shall be specified in the ordinance reflecting the total number of Stewardship Credits assigned to the parcel of land, in accordance with the Receiving Area Characteristics Chart set forth in Policy 4.6 and in RLSA Figure 5.

**Policy 1.15**

Stewardship Credits may be transferred from any approved SSA to an entity or individual, to an eligible receiving area, or applied to an SRA, subject to compliance with all applicable provisions of these policies.

**Policy 1.16**

Pursuant to ~~Chapter~~[Section](#) 163.3177(11)(d)6., F.S., the RLSA enables St. Lucie County to realize the long-term vision and goals for the 25-year or greater projected population of the RLSA, which are to protect and conserve large areas of environmental, cultural, historical and agricultural land, and to accommodate population in concentrated areas of mixed-use and sustainable communities.

**Policy 1.17**

Pursuant to ~~Chapter~~[Section](#) 163.3177(11)(d)6., F.S., the adoption of this RLSA Overlay, by ordinance, establishes the methodology for the creation, conveyance, and use of Stewardship Credits. The RLSA LDRs shall establish the approval process for implementation.

# ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

~~8/7/6/06~~

Page 6

## **Policy 1.18**

The first area within the St. Lucie Rural Lands Stewardship Area Overlay consists of 22,384 acres, commonly known as the Adams Ranch and Cloud Grove properties, as shown on the Future Land Use Map and RLSA Figure 1 (The Adams Ranch Stewardship). The Adams Ranch Stewardship is a “pilot program” for St. Lucie County. The Adams Ranch is of cultural significance in St. Lucie County, and is highly valued for its natural resources and agriculture operations. The total SRA development potential allowed for the 22,384 acre Adams Ranch Stewardship shall be limited to a maximum of 13,428 residential units and the non-residential uses required to support mixed-use communities as defined by RLSA Figure 5.

## **Policy 1.19**

The St. Lucie Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay was designed to implement the multiple visions of both St. Lucie County and the Committee for Sustainable Treasure Coast (2005), specifically as a tool to protect agriculture and natural resources, and provide for a sustainable pattern of growth in the rural area. A comprehensive review of the Overlay shall be prepared for and reviewed by St. Lucie County and the Department of Community Affairs no later than the five-year anniversary of the adoption of the Overlay. The purpose of the review shall be to assess the participation in and the effectiveness of the Overlay implementation in meeting the Goal, Objective and Policies set forth herein. The specific measure of review shall be as follows:

1. The amount and location of land designated as SSAs
2. The amount and location of land designated as SRAs
3. The number of Stewardship Credits generated, assigned or held for future use
4. A comparison of the amount, location and type of agriculture that existed at the time of the Overlay adoption and time of review
5. The amount, location and type of restoration through participation in the Stewardship Credit system since its adoption
6. Working with the agricultural community and professional associations, additional incentives to support and promote the continuation of the agricultural industry in St. Lucie County.

## **Policy 1.20**

Prior to the review identified in Policy 1.19, the St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship program shall be limited to no more than 3 SRA applications of any type (whether Town, Village, Hamlet or CRD), including as any expansion of the RLSA area which shall include additional potential SSA or SRA lands.

## **Policy 1.21**

If future expansion of the St Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship program beyond the 22,384 acre “pilot program” Adams Ranch Stewardship area is proposed, the proposed application shall include a larger planning analysis and additional visioning. This analysis and visioning shall include opportunities for landowner, stakeholder and other citizen involvement, with respect to how the proposed expansion area relates to the Adams Ranch Stewardship area and long-term planning for applicable rural lands outside the urban services boundary. Any such larger planning analysis and additional visioning that may take place shall not affect the Adams Ranch Stewardship area, including but not limited to,

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**8/7/6/06**

**Page 7**

[consideration and final action on applications for Stewardship Sending Areas, Stewardship Receiving Areas, infrastructure, development orders and development agreements.](#)

**Objective 2–2. Establish incentive-based policies to protect and conserve agricultural lands and open space, continue the viability of agricultural production and preserve cultural heritage in St. Lucie County.**

**Policy 2.1**

Agriculture is an important aspect of St. Lucie County’s quality of life and economic well-being. Agricultural activities shall be protected from duplicative regulation ~~as provided by~~ [and in accordance with](#) the Florida Right- to- Farm Act.

**Policy 2.2**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Policies 3.5 and 3.6, nothing herein or in the implementing RLSA LDRs shall restrict lawful agricultural activities and conditional uses, as set forth in RLSA Figure 4, on lands within the RLSA Overlay that have not been approved as SSAs pursuant to Policies 1.5 and 1.6.

**Policy 2.3**

Agricultural lands will be protected and conserved by creating incentives that encourage a property owner to voluntarily eliminate the right to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses in exchange for Stewardship Credits.

**Policy 2.4**

Agriculture lands protected and conserved through the creation and transfer of Stewardship Credits shall be designated as Stewardship Sending Areas (SSAs).

**Policy 2.5**

Agriculture is a benefit to St. Lucie County as it provides open space, recharges groundwater, provides employment and conserves and protects floodplains. If agriculture activities are protected and conserved by designating agriculture lands as an SSA through the removal of land use layers more intensive than agriculture as set forth on RLSA Figure 4, Stewardship Credits shall be granted as specified in these goals, objectives and policies.

**Policy 2.6**

Preservation and conservation of lands with cultural heritage significance within the RLSA shall be encouraged. Designation as cultural heritage shall apply to lands that have been recognized as being culturally significant to St. Lucie County for fifty years or more, historically significant structures, facilities and locations as identified by the Florida Department of State, State Historic Preservation Officer, the National Register of Historic Places, or the St. Lucie County Commission. St. Lucie County shall, through the RLSA LDRs, require any SSA application that includes supporting data and analysis, and requests Cultural Heritage Credits, be reviewed by the St. Lucie County Historical Commission for recommendation to the BOCC. All significant structures, facilities and locations shall be mapped and tabulated in acres. An applicant shall provide research, data and analysis to support an SSA Application that includes Cultural Heritage Stewardship Credits. Cultural heritage designation approved by the BOCC in an SSA shall be granted .5 Credits per acre, which can only be granted once for any particular SSA.

# ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

8/7/6/06

Page 8

**Objective ~~3~~–3. Establish policies to protect and conserve water quality and quantity, as well as listed animal and plant species and their habitats by directing incompatible uses away from wetlands and upland habitat through the establishment of Hydrologic Stewardship Areas, Habitat Stewardship Areas, and Water Retention Areas, where lands are voluntarily included in the Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay.**

## **Policy 3.1**

Protection and conservation of water quality and quantity shall occur through the classification of Hydrologic Stewardship Areas (HYSAs), to be implemented by the designation of SSAs within the RLSA Overlay. HYSAs are delineated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), ~~RLSA Figure 4~~. These lands form the primary wetland hydrologic systems in the RLSA. The Overlay provides an incentive to permanently protect and conserve HYSAs by the creation and transfer of Credits, elimination of permitted land uses (as described in RLSA Figure 2), and establishment of protection and conservation measures described in Objective 1 Policies. Not all lands within the delineated HYSAs are comparable in terms of their natural resource value; therefore the Index shall be used to differentiate higher value from lower value lands for the purpose of the RLSA Overlay.

## **Policy 3.2**

Listed animal and plant species and their habitats shall be protected and conserved through the classification of Habitat Stewardship Areas (HSAs), to be implemented by the designation of SSAs within the RLSA Overlay. HSAs are delineated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), ~~RLSA Figure 4~~. HSAs are privately owned agricultural and/or natural areas, which include areas with characteristics that make them suitable habitat for listed species. The Overlay provides an incentive to permanently protect and conserve HSAs by the creation and transfer of Credits, resulting in the elimination of permitted land uses (as described in RLSA Figure 2) and the establishment of protection and conservation measures described in Objective 1 Policies. Not all lands within the delineated HSAs are comparable in terms of their habitat value; therefore the Index shall be used to differentiate higher value from lower value lands for the purpose of the RLSA Overlay.

## **Policy 3.3**

Further protection and conservation for surface water quality and quantity shall be through the classification of Water Retention Areas (WRAs), to be implemented by the designation of SSAs within the RLSA Overlay. WRAs are delineated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1). WRAs are privately owned lands that function as agricultural water retention and conveyance areas, man-made water bodies or other water storage areas. In some instances, these WRAs may contain native wetland or upland vegetation; in other cases they may contain above ground water bodies and/or exotic vegetation. WRA's may continue to be used for agricultural, surface water retention, detention, treatment and/or conveyance, habitat and passive recreational uses. When located adjacent to or included within an SRA, acreage within that WRA may be counted as Open Space so long as the same acreage is not relied upon to generate Stewardship Credits for development within the SRA. The Overlay provides an incentive to permanently protect and conserve WRAs by the creation and transfer of Credits, elimination of incompatible uses, and establishment of protection, appropriate recreational uses and conservation measures described in Objective 1 Policies. Not all lands within the delineated WRAs are comparable in terms of their natural resource value; therefore the Index shall be used to differentiate higher value from lower value lands for the purpose of the RLSA Overlay.

## ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

~~8/7/6/06~~

Page 9

### Policy 3.4

Uses as listed in the Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix (RLSA Figure 4), may be voluntarily eliminated in HYSAs, HSAs and WRAs in exchange for Stewardship Credits to the property owner through the removal of one or more land use layers as described in Policy 1.10.

### Policy 3.5

Compensation to the property owner may occur through one or more of the following mechanisms: creation and transfer of Stewardship Credits, payment for the purchase of conservation easements, payment for the purchase of a less than fee interest in the land, or through other acquisition of land or interest in land through a willing seller program.

### Policy 3.6

Unless such layers are voluntarily eliminated pursuant to Policy 3.4, agriculture and all other allowed uses would continue to be an allowed use within HYSAs and HSAs, pursuant to the Agriculture Group classifications described in the Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix (RLSA Figure 4). In existing Ag 1 areas within HYSAs and HSAs, all such activities are permitted to continue, and may convert from one type of Agriculture to another and expand to the limits allowed by applicable permits.

### Policy 3.7

Ag 2 includes permitted land uses as defined in the Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix (RLSA Figure 4). In existing Ag 2 areas within HYSAs, WRAs and HSAs, such activities are permitted to continue, and may convert from one type of Agriculture to another and expand to the limits allowed by applicable permits. Once the Stewardship Credit System is utilized and an owner receives Stewardship Credits by the establishment of an SSA that removes Ag 1 uses, no conversion of Ag 2 to Ag 1 will be allowed.

### Policy 3.8

In certain locations (having an NRI value of 1.4 or below) there may be the opportunity for natural resource creation, restoration and enhancement. Examples include, but are not limited to, conversion of citrus grove to pasture having habitat value, creation of upland/wetland habitat, increased hydro period or water storage, enhanced wildlife corridors or habitat function, or as part of a designated Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program project. If the SSA applicant agrees to complete restoration improvements and the eligibility criteria are satisfied, and the restoration plans and specifications are approved by the BOCC through the SSA Application process, three (3) additional Credits per acre shall be authorized at the time of SSA approval, to be awarded when the restoration work has been completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications (and other applicable permits, if any). The specific process for restoration incentive credits shall be included in the SSA Application section of the RLSA LDRs. This policy does not preclude other forms of compensation for restoration, which may be addressed through public-private partnership agreement such as a developer contribution agreement or SSA Credit Agreement.

### Policy 3.9

Water Retention Areas (WRAs), as generally depicted on the RLSA Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), are areas that have been, and may continue to function for, agricultural, surface water retention, detention, treatment and/or conveyance, habitat and passive recreational

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 40

uses. WRAs can also be permitted to provide such functions for new uses of land allowed within the Overlay. WRAs may be incorporated into an SRA master plan to provide water management functions for properties within such SRA, in accordance with SFWMD permitting requirements, and may also be used for habitat and passive recreational activities, but are not required to be designated as an SRA in such instances. When located adjacent to or included within an SRA, acreage within that WRA may be counted as Open Space so long as the same acreage is not relied upon to generate Stewardship Credits for development within the SRA. WRA boundaries are understood to be approximate and are subject to refinement in accordance with SFWMD permitting.

**Policy 3.10**

During permitting to serve new uses, additions and modifications to WRAs may be required or desired, including but not limited to changes to control elevations, discharge rates, storm water pre-treatment, grading, excavation or fill, to be used for water management, habitat and passive recreation. Such additions and modifications shall be allowed subject to review and approval by the SFWMD in accordance with SFWMD permitting requirements. Such additions and modifications to WRAs shall be designed to ensure that there is no net loss of habitat function within the WRAs unless there is compensating mitigation or restoration in other areas of the Overlay that will provide comparable habitat function.

**Policy 3.11**

To the extent any new landfills, utility transmission lines, and/or public roads, ~~and/or other public projects~~ are sought to be constructed on HYSAs, HSAs, WRAs and other lands that are voluntarily included in SSAs, through the use of the exercise of the power of eminent domain, any condemning authority shall, before the exercise of such eminent domain power, consider the following factors as required by Florida law in determining which route or land to condemn: 1) availability of alternative routes; 2) costs; 3) environmental factors; 4) long-range area planning; and 5) safety considerations. The protection of natural resources is the constitutionally declared public policy of the State of Florida, and the promotion of such policy may be considered in any condemnation action affecting designated SSAs in a manner not inconsistent with the factors enumerated in this section. Electric transmission lines sited pursuant to the Transmission Line Siting Act shall follow the applicable provisions of Chapter 403.501 – 403.536, F.S.

**Policy 3.12**

The inclusion of lands in designated SSAs provides a public benefit, and the private stewardship and management of these lands and resources are deemed to promote the public policy of St. Lucie County and the State of Florida. Accordingly, the ~~following factors~~ protection of the environmental, agricultural and cultural resources of designated SSA lands shall be considered before any ~~condemnation, electric transmission line siting process, public ownership, or public management of such SSA~~ lands is formally instituted: ~~1) availability of alternative routes; 2) costs; 3) environmental factors; 4) long-range area planning; and 5) safety considerations. No, The County hereby establishes a presumption that~~ lands within a designated SSA shall not be condemned by the County or any County agency, ~~as any~~ except as necessary for the expansion of County or state transportation facilities, as any other involuntary acquisition would be contrary to the purposes and intent of the rural land stewardship program ~~as set forth in and~~ Chapter 163.3177(11)(d), F.S. Further, to the extent that the County or a County agency does condemn any lands within a

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**8/7/6/06**

**Page 14**

designated SSA, the valuation of such lands shall not be diminished by the SSA Stewardship Easement Agreement.

**Objective ~~4~~<sup>4</sup>. Establish policies to accommodate future population growth through sustainable development patterns, while discouraging urban sprawl, providing for the utilization of innovative land use planning techniques and promoting economic diversification through the establishment of Stewardship Sending Areas and corresponding Stewardship Receiving Areas.**

**Policy 4.1**

Innovative land use planning techniques which facilitate a sustainable form of development shall be implemented by the establishment of SRAs and corresponding SSAs within the RLSA Overlay. Within the RLSA Overlay, considered as a whole, the establishment of SSAs will result in large areas of land for permanent environmental, cultural and agricultural uses, and the development within SRAs will result in a functional mix of uses, interconnectivity and multi-modes of transportation, and be in the form of Towns, Villages, Hamlets or Compact Rural Developments (CRD), in accordance with policies 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.3 and 4.6.4. St. Lucie County shall facilitate uses that enable diversification of the economic base of the RLSA. The County shall, through the RLSA LDRs, adopt additional incentives to encourage and support the diversification and vitality of the rural economy including but not limited to, development regulations that allow a variety of development types, expedited permitting review, and targeted capital improvements.

**Policy 4.2**

The County shall promote the agricultural economy by creating incentives that encourage a property owner to voluntarily eliminate the right to convert agricultural land to other uses as shown in the Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix, RLSA Figure 4 (through the removal of layers 1, 2 and 3), in exchange for Stewardship Credits, through the establishment of SSAs.

**Policy 4.3**

The St. Lucie County Business Incentives Overview, October, 2004, outlines the County's incentives and inducements for economic development within the County. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Research Coast Economic Development Plan, January 2006, may be used to provide guidance in promoting economic activity within SRAs, in addition to other resources. The strategies set forth in the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan are also to be utilized in promoting economic activity within SRAs.

**Policy 4.4**

All privately owned lands within the RLSA which meet the criteria set forth herein and are designated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), as "Open" are eligible for designation as an SRA, except land delineated as a HYSAs or HSA, or land that has been designated as a Stewardship Sending Area (SSA). Land proposed for SRA designation shall meet suitability criteria and other standards described in these Objective 4 Policies.

**Policy 4.5**

Land becomes designated as an SRA upon application by the property owner to St. Lucie County seeking such designation and the adoption of the ordinance by the BOCC granting the designation. The basis for approval shall be a finding by the BOCC of consistency with

# ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

~~8/7/6/06~~

~~Page 12~~

the policies of the RLSA Overlay, compliance with the RLSA LDRS, and confirmation in the manner as prescribed by the RLSA LDRs that the applicant has acquired or will acquire sufficient Stewardship Credits to create the type of SRA (whether Town, Village, Hamlet or CRD) for the amount of acres requested in the SRA application. Prior to the designation of an SRA by the BOCC, the County shall provide the Florida Department of Community Affairs a period of 30 days to review the proposed receiving area for consistency with the RLSA Overlay and to provide comments to the County.

## **Policy 4.6**

There are four specific forms of development allowed within SRAs, all of which require a functional and integrated mix of uses in accordance with Policies 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.3, and 4.6.4. These are Town, Village, Hamlet and CRD. The required characteristics of a Town, Village, Hamlet and CRD are set forth in the Stewardship Receiving Area Characteristics Chart, adopted within this Overlay as RLSA Figure 5. The County shall, through the RLSA LDRs, adopt specific regulations, guidelines and standards for SRAs in accordance with these policies. Each development form shall be in accordance with the requirements set forth in RLSA Figure 5. The SRA residential density is calculated by dividing the total number of residential units in an SRA by the overall area inside the SRA boundary. The SRA residential density does not restrict net residential density of parcels within an SRA. The size and specific density (between the minimum and maximum set forth in RLSA Figure 5) for each SRA will be determined during the SRA designation review and approval process. Upon the last to occur of the following: (1) recordation of a Stewardship Easement Agreement in the public records of St. Lucie County pursuant to Policy 1.6 for the SSA or SSAs required for that SRA; (2) if the owner of the SRA is other than the owner of the SSA, written acceptance of the conveyance of Stewardship Credits by the owner of the SRA; and (3) approval of the BOCC of the SRA pursuant to Policies 1.14 and 4.5 and the expiration of any applicable appeal or challenge periods, the underlying density of the SRA property shall cease to exist.

### **Policy 4.6.1**

Towns are the largest and most diverse form of SRA. Towns shall be not less than 1,000 acres or more than 5,000 acres and shall be designed to provide for a broad range of residential and nonresidential uses in accordance with the required Stewardship Receiving Area Characteristics Chart (RLSA Figure 5). ~~The~~ master plan is required for a Town as a component of the SRA application and shall:

- Include clearly defined neighborhoods with each having its own identity and character and providing focal points, such as neighborhood-scale retail, office, civic uses, schools, parks and other public places.
- Foster an urban, pedestrian-oriented environment in a mixed-use town center by co-locating residential, retail/office, civic and other uses in the town center; creating functional and aesthetically pleasing spatial relationships between streets, sidewalks and building facades; providing for shared and alternative parking in the town center; and locating higher-density residential areas proximate to the town center.
- Promote internal capture of shopping and business trips by facilitating walk-to shopping and employment, maximizing bicycle and pedestrian mobility; providing a connected pathway, bikeway and multi-use trail system; and reserving adequate

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

~~8/7/6/06~~

~~Page 13~~

sites for transit stops and shelters for construction when transit service becomes available to the Town.

- Achieve connectivity through an interconnected network of roads and streets and block designs, as established in the RLSA LDRs, to provide multiple pathways allowing for trip dispersion and reduced trip lengths.
- Include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for non-residential uses in the Town.
- Provide for a range of housing types and price levels to accommodate diverse ages and incomes, including adequate housing for the Town's very low-, low- and moderate-income households, reasonably accessible to the Town's places of employment.
- Integrate open space in neighborhoods throughout the Town through features such as but not limited to greens and squares, greenways, multi-use trails, community parks, neighborhood parks and tot lots.
- Include in each phase of development for the Town a reasonable balance of residential and non-residential uses, reflecting market trends and projections for absorption, in order to ensure a land use balance at build-out that is consistent with RLSA Figure 5.

The RLSA LDC shall set forth the specific information that shall be included on any Town master plan.

Towns shall have at least one community park with a minimum size of 200 square feet per dwelling unit in the Town. Towns shall also have parks or public green spaces within all neighborhoods.

Town plans shall be coordinated with the St. Lucie County School Board to provide for the appropriate range of schools. To the extent possible, schools and parks shall be located adjacent to each other and be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them. In coordination with the St. Lucie County School District, the Town's master plan shall identify a "Safe Route to Schools and Parks" through a system of sidewalks, pathways and trails.

**Policy 4.6.2**

Villages shall provide for a diversity of housing types and mix of uses appropriate to the scale and character of the particular Village. Villages shall be not less than 100 acres or more than 1,000 acres and shall comply with the required Stewardship Receiving Area Characteristics Chart (RLSA Figure 5). ~~The~~<sup>A</sup> master plan for a Village is required as a component of the SRA application and shall:

- Include clearly defined neighborhoods with each having its own identity and character and providing focal points, such as neighborhood-scale retail, office, civic uses, schools, parks and other public places.
- Foster an urban, pedestrian-oriented environment by co-locating residential, retail/office, civic and other uses in a village center; creating functional and aesthetically pleasing spatial relationships between streets, sidewalks and building facades; providing for shared and alternative parking in the village center; and locating higher-density residential areas proximate to the village center.

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 14

- Promote internal capture of shopping and business trips by facilitating walk-to shopping and employment, maximizing bicycle and pedestrian mobility; providing a connected pathway, bikeway and multi-use trail system; and reserving adequate sites for transit stops and shelters for construction when transit service becomes available to the Village.
- Achieve connectivity through an interconnected network of roads and streets and block designs, as established in the RLSA LDRs, to provide multiple pathways allowing for trip dispersion and reduced trip lengths.
- Include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for non-residential uses in the Village.
- Provide for a range of housing types and price levels to accommodate diverse ages and incomes, including adequate housing for the Village's very low-, low- and moderate-income households, reasonably accessible to the Village's places of employment.
- Integrate open space in neighborhoods throughout the Village through features such as but not limited to greens and squares, greenways, multi-use trails, community parks, neighborhood parks and tot lots.
- Include in each phase of development for the Village a reasonable balance of residential and non-residential uses, reflecting market trends and projections for absorption, in order to ensure a land use balance at build-out that is consistent with RLSA Figure 5.

The RLSA LDC shall set forth the specific information that shall be included on any Village master plan.

Villages shall have parks or public green spaces within all neighborhoods.

Village plans shall be coordinated with the St. Lucie County School Board to provide for the appropriate range of schools, as applicable, in accordance with the size of the Village. To the extent possible, schools and parks shall be located adjacent to each other and be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them. In coordination with the St. Lucie County School District, the Village's master plan shall identify a "Safe Route to Schools and Parks" through a system of sidewalks, pathways and trails.

**Policy 4.6.3**

Hamlets are small rural residential areas with primarily single-family housing and limited range of convenience-oriented services. Hamlets shall be not less than 40 or more than 100 acres and shall comply with the Stewardship Receiving Area Characteristics Chart (RLSA Figure 5). Hamlets shall include convenience retail and other uses, in a ratio as provided in RLSA Figure 5. Design criteria for Hamlets shall be created and adopted within the RLSA LDRS. To maintain a proportion of Hamlets to Villages and Towns, ~~not more than 3 Hamlets, in combination with CRDs of 100 acres or less, may be approved as SRAs prior to the approval of a Village or Town, and thereafter~~ must be approved prior to not more than 3 additional Hamlets, in combination with CRDs of 100 acres or less, ~~may be approved for each subsequent Village or Town~~

The RLSA LDC shall set forth the specific information that shall be included on any Hamlet master plan.

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**8/7/6/06**

**Page 15**

**Policy 4.6.4**

Compact Rural Development (CRD) is a form of SRA that shall support and further St. Lucie County's valued attributes and characteristics as defined in the preamble to the Comprehensive Plan. CRDs provide flexibility with respect to the mix of uses and design standards, but shall otherwise comply with the standards of a Hamlet or Village, depending on the size. A CRD may include, but is not required to have permanent residential housing and the services and facilities that support permanent residents. An example of a CRD is an eco-tourism village or research facility that would have a unique set of uses and support services different from a traditional residential village. It could contain transient lodging facilities and services appropriate to eco-tourists or researchers, but may not provide for the range of services that necessary to support permanent residents. Except as described above, a CRD shall conform to the characteristics of a Village or Hamlet as set forth in RLSA Figure 5 based on the size of the CRD. As residential units are not a required use, those goods and services that support residents such as retail, office, civic, governmental and institutional uses shall also not be required, however for any CRD that does include permanent residential housing, the proportionate support services shall be provided in accordance with RLSA Figure 5. To maintain a proportion of CRDs of 100 acres or less to Villages and Towns, ~~not more than 3 CRDs of 100 acres or less, in combination with Hamlets, may be approved as SRAs prior to the approval of a Village or Town, and thereafter must be approved prior to~~ not more than 3 ~~additional~~ CRDs of 100 acres or less, ~~in combination with Hamlets, may be approved for each subsequent Village or Town.~~

[The RLSA LDC shall set forth the specific information that shall be included on any CRD master plan.](#)

**Policy 4.7**

An SRA may be contiguous to an HYSA or HSA designated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), but shall not encroach into such areas, and shall buffer such areas as described in Policy 4.9. An SRA may be contiguous to and served by a WRA, for water management, passive recreation or habitat functions, without requiring special buffering and without requiring the WRA to be designated as an SRA in accordance with Policy 3.9.

**Policy 4.8**

An SRA must contain sufficient suitable land to accommodate the planned development in an environmentally acceptable manner. The primary means of directing development away from wetlands and critical habitat is the prohibition of locating SRAs in HYSAs and HSAs. To further direct development away from wetlands and critical habitat, lands having a Natural Resource Index (NRI) value of greater than 1.4 shall be conserved. NRI values are illustrated on the Natural Resource Index Map (RLSA Figure 3). NRI values above 1.4 are shown in green and NRI values of 1.4 or below are shown in brown. The NRI value does not include the Agricultural Index value of 1.0. SRAs may only be located in areas designated as "Open" and shown in pink on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), and having an NRI value of 1.4 or below.

**Policy 4.9**

Where an SRA adjoins a HYSA or HSA designated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), or lands designated on the County's Future Land Use Map as Conservation, open space within that SRA shall be used to provide a buffer between that SRA and that designated HYSA, HSA or Conservation lands. This buffer shall be designed to protect adjacent natural

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 46

resources, based upon specific site conditions, the resources to be protected, and the location and type of proximate uses in the SRA. The following uses are prohibited in buffers to designated HYSAs, HSAs and Conservation lands: residential and non-residential development; active recreation areas; roads and multi-modal transportation corridors except for limited crossings for purposes of access when designed to protect natural resources; and buildings other than structures accessory to compatible agricultural or passive recreational uses. Allowable uses within HYSAs, HSA and Conservation buffers may include: compatible agricultural uses; limited crossings for roads or multi-modal transportation facilities for purposes of access when designed to protect natural resources; connections to present and future regional trail systems, if any; lakes; passive recreational uses; hiking trails; greenways; habitat restoration; birdwatching; and similar uses. Best management and planning practices, as adopted by the applicable government agencies, shall be required to minimize adverse impacts to such buffers. Use of any fertilizer or pesticide shall be consistent with the practices in the adjacent HYSAs, HSA or designated Conservation lands and there shall be no planting of any exotic nuisance species.

**Policy 4.10**

Where an SRA adjoins a WRA designated on the Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), best management and planning practices, as adopted by the applicable government agencies, shall be utilized to prevent ground water table draw down or diversion from adversely affecting the adjacent WRA. Detention and control elevations shall be established to protect and conserve any such natural areas and be consistent with surrounding land and project control elevations and water tables.

**Policy 4.11**

Each SRA must include an edge area to provide a transition from the SRA to adjacent land uses. The edge area shall be designed to be compatible with the character of the adjoining property, based upon specific site conditions. The edge area of an SRA may include: open space; landscape buffers; forested or reforested areas; compatible agricultural uses; roads or multi-modal transportation facilities; connections to present and future regional trail systems, if any; active or passive recreational areas; greenways; habitat restoration; stormwater lakes or ponds; flowways; and similar uses unless otherwise prohibited by Policy 4.9.

**Policy 4.12**

Each SRA must have either direct access to a County collector or arterial road or indirect access via a road provided by the developer that has adequate capacity to accommodate the proposed development in accordance with accepted transportation planning standards. Connections between SRAs and other portions of the RLSA Overlay shall use rural design and rural road corridors, including opportunities for present and future multi-modal facilities, and connections to present or future regional trail systems and greenways. No SRA shall be approved unless the capacity of County collector or arterial road(s) serving the SRA is demonstrated to be adequate in accordance with the level of service standards established in the St. Lucie County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element in effect at the time of SRA designation. A transportation impact assessment shall adhere to the requirements specified in the SRA section of the RLSA LDRs. The RLSA LDRs shall require that an SRA transportation impact assessment shall be prepared and submitted with the application for SRA approval. The implementation of an approved multi-use Development of Regional Impact development order in an SRA that meets the requirements of section 163.3180(12),

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 17

F.S., may satisfy transportation concurrency by paying its proportionate fair-share contribution, provided there are sufficient funds to pay for one or more improvements that will benefit a regionally significant roadway. The proportionate fair share shall be calculated in accordance with section 163.3180(12), F.S. For all other development within an SRA, transportation concurrency requirements may also be satisfied through the proportionate fair-share provisions of St. Lucie County's adopted proportionate share ordinance, pursuant to section 163.3180(16)(a), F.S.

**Policy 4.13**

An SRA shall have adequate infrastructure available to serve its proposed development, or its infrastructure must be provided by the developer concurrently with the demand in accordance with ~~Chapter~~Section 163.3180 F.S. and the St. Lucie County Concurrency Management System regulations. The level of infrastructure provided will depend on the type of development, accepted civil engineering practices, and RLSA LDR requirements. Infrastructure to be analyzed and addressed in the SRA application process includes:

- a) Transportation
- b) Potable water
- c) Wastewater
- d) Irrigation water
- e) ~~e)~~ Stormwater management
- f) Solid waste
- g) Schools
- h) Parks and recreation

Centralized or decentralized community water and wastewater utilities are required in Towns, Villages, and those CRDs exceeding 100 acres in size. Centralized or decentralized community water and wastewater utilities shall be constructed, owned, operated and maintained by a private utility service, the developer, a Community Development District, Independent Special District, Ft. Pierce Utilities Authority, Port St. Lucie Utility Systems Department, St. Lucie County Utilities, or another governmental entity, ~~or a combination of the above~~. Innovative or alternative water and wastewater treatment systems such as decentralized community treatment systems shall not be prohibited by this policy provided that they meet all applicable regulatory criteria. Individual potable water supply wells and septic systems, limited to a maximum of 100 acres of any Hamlet or CRD of 100 acres are permitted on an interim basis until services from a centralized/decentralized community system are available. Individual potable water supply wells and septic systems may be permitted in Hamlets and CRDs of 100 acres or less in size. Any potable water systems shall meet Department of Environmental Protection standards. Any septic systems shall meet Department of Health standards.

**Policy 4.14**

If the infrastructure analysis required as part of the SRA Application, as set forth in Policy 4.13, identifies a need for public facilities beyond that which is included in the County's Future Transportation Map, Capital Improvements Element or Capital improvements Plan, then such amendments to the Comprehensive Plan shall be processed concurrently with the SRA Application and any related Development of Regional Impact application for any SRA that exceeds the applicable DRI threshold.

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 18

**Policy 4.15**

Central water and wastewater services shall not be provided outside the RLSA Overlay. The combination of SSAs and SRAs within the RLSA Overlay results in a sustainable form of development with corresponding large areas of contiguous environmental, agricultural and cultural resource lands. To further guard against urban sprawl outside of the RLSA Overlay boundary, the following policies shall be applied:

**Policy 4.15.1**

Although water, sewer, and other utilities to serve the RLSA Overlay may run through areas outside the RLSA Overlay, or as part of a regional system, no connection of such services outside the RLSA Overlay is allowed unless those properties are also included in the RLSA Overlay or as otherwise allowed by future Comprehensive Plan amendment.

**Policy 4.15.2**

Although no restrictions shall be placed on adjacent lands not within the RLSA Overlay, the County shall, within two years of the adoption of the RLSA Overlay, establish additional incentives for property outside any SRA boundary, to provide buffers, greenways and other separations to any approved SRA.

**Policy 4.15.3**

Although no restrictions shall be placed on adjacent lands not within the RLSA Overlay, the County shall restrict any transportation connections to SRA development from outside the RLSA Overlay to only regional transportation corridors. For example, transportation connections from lands not within the RLSA to an SRA that are not part of a regional corridor are prohibited. If such adjacent property is included in the RLSA Overlay in the future, this prohibition would not apply.

**Policy 4.16**

In addition to meeting the Concurrency Management System requirements at the time of final local development orders, approved development within each SRA must demonstrate that, as a whole, it will be fiscally neutral or positive to St. Lucie County, at the end of the first ten years of development, and every five (5) years thereafter, and at the horizon year (build-out). This demonstration will be made for each independent unit of government responsible for the services listed below, using one of the following methodologies:

- a. St. Lucie County Fiscal Impact Model. The fiscal impact model officially adopted and maintained by St. Lucie County.
- b. Alternative Fiscal Impact Model. If St. Lucie County has not adopted a fiscal impact model as indicated above, the applicant may develop an alternative fiscal impact model using a methodology approved by St. Lucie County. The model methodology will be consistent with the Fiscal Impact Analysis Model ("FIAM") developed by the State of Florida. The BOCC may grant exceptions to this policy of fiscal neutrality to accommodate very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing.

St. Lucie County shall, through the RLSA LDRs, provide for: 1) the demonstration of fiscal neutrality at the time of development approval within each SRA; 2) the monitoring of fiscal

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 19

neutrality at the end of each phase and at build-out; 3) modification of the project or other remedial measures in the event a negative fiscal impact is identified; and 4) the authorization of techniques that support fiscal self-sufficiency such as Community Development Districts, Independent Special Districts, private partnership agreements, and public-private developer or interlocal agreements. At a minimum, the fiscal analysis shall consider the following public facilities and services: transportation, potable water, wastewater, irrigation water, stormwater management, solid waste, parks, law enforcement, and schools. Development phasing and funding mechanisms under a final development order shall address any adverse impacts to adopted minimum levels of service standards adopted in the St. Lucie County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. An enforceable developer agreement shall be required to ensure that public facilities provided by the developer are completed in accordance with Florida law. Such a developer agreement may authorize the developer to assign any obligation for construction, operation or maintenance of a public facility to a Community Development District, Independent Special District or other unit of local government.

**Policy 4.17**

Within the RLSA Overlay, agriculture and open space, which by definition shall include public and private conservation lands, designated SSAs, water retention and management areas and recreation uses, will continue to be the dominant land use. Within SRAs, Open Space shall be provided to serve the forecasted population and uses within the SRA. To ensure that SRA residents have Open Space proximate to their homes, Open Space shall comprise a minimum of thirty-five percent of the gross acreage of an individual SRA Town or Village, or those CRDs exceeding 100 acres.

**Policy 4.18**

Seven (7) Credits shall be required to entitle each acre of land included in an SRA, except for open space in excess of the required thirty-five percent or for land that is designated for a public benefit use described in Policy 4.18. In order to promote sustainable, mixed use development and provide the necessary support facilities and services to residents of rural areas, the SRA approval shall entitle a full range of uses supportive of the residential population of an SRA, with densities and intensities of use as provided for in RLSA Figure 5. Such uses, densities and intensities shall be identified, located and quantified in the SRA plan.

**Policy 4.19**

The acreage of an approved public benefit use shall not count toward the gross acreage limits described in RLSA Figure 5 nor shall it require the consumption of Stewardship Credits. For the purpose of this Section, public benefit uses include public and private schools (preK-12), public or private post secondary institutions and ancillary uses, very-low, low and moderate income housing, future transportation corridors including transit, community parks exceeding the minimum requirements of RLSA Figure 5, regional parks, agricultural, environmental or natural resource research centers, and governmental facilities.

**Policy 4.20**

If an HYSAs, HSA or WRA designated in the RLSA Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), is contiguous to an SRA and is available to the public for passive recreation purposes, its acreage shall may count toward the thirty-five percent open space requirement outlined in

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**8/7/6/06**

**Page-20**

Policy 4.16, so long as the same acreage is not relied upon to generate Stewardship Credits for development within the SRA.

**Policy 4.21**

Pursuant to Section 163.3177(11)(d)4.c, F.S., any SRA that includes residential housing shall also provide for adequate affordable or workforce housing, including very-low, low and moderate income housing, for the development anticipated in the SRA. Adequate affordable or workforce housing shall be determined on the basis of an analysis applying the standards under Rule 9J-2.048, F.A.C., regardless of whether the development within the SRA is required to undergo DRI review pursuant to section 380.06, Florida Statutes.

**Policy 4.22**

In order to provide opportunities for the inclusion of very-low, low and moderate income housing in each SRA having residential housing, the County shall, among other possibilities not specifically listed herein, consider opportunities to partner with Habitat for Humanity for adequate affordable housing in each SRA; consider opportunities to partner with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation; consider the possibility of creating a Community Land Trust (allowing for separate ownership of house and land; creation of a non-profit organization that will own the land for future adequate affordable housing development; and consideration of opportunities to offer long term leases to individuals, community groups or businesses); consider accepting the donation of home sites from a developer within an SRA for another entity to build work force housing on the donated site; consider opportunities for tax abatement (waive property tax) on work force housing home sites; and the use of available state and federal assistance and funding programs. This is not an exhaustive list and shall not be a limitation upon the types of strategies that may be utilized to provide adequate affordable housing.

**Policy 4.23**

Intergovernmental coordination with local governments adjacent to SRAs shall be encouraged to allow those local governments to comment on development regulations, guidelines and standards for SRAs for those impacts caused by the development to those local governments and their facilities.

**Policy 4.24**

SRAs shall be required to utilize a water reuse system to meet all the irrigation needs of the proposed SRA, to the extent reuse water is available. The water utility infrastructure for each SRA will be designed to include both potable and reuse water so that landscaped areas, open space and other potential users can be served by either water system. There shall be no cross connection between the potable and reuse water. Potable water supply may only be used for irrigation when a sufficient volume of reuse water is unavailable.

**Definitions**

The terms set forth below shall have the following meanings ~~as applied to~~ only within the RLSA Overlay; and as relates to the associated RLSA LDRs.

**ADEQUATE AFFORDABLE OR WORKFORCE HOUSING.** Adequate affordable or workforce housing within a Town or Village shall be demonstrated through an

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-24

analysis applying the standards under Rule 9J-2.048, F.A.C., even if the Town or Village is not a Development of Regional Impact.

**AGRICULTURE INDEX.** A measurement system that establishes a value for existing agriculture activities where all land use layers above agriculture are removed through approval of an SSA by the BOCC and recordation of a Stewardship Easement Agreement.

**BOCC.** The Board of County Commissioners of St. Lucie County.

**CENTRALIZED WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM:** A wastewater collection and treatment system that consists of collection sewers and a centralized treatment facility. Centralized systems are used to collect and treat wastewater from entire communities.

**CENTRALIZED WATER SYSTEM:** A potable water system consisting of a water supply, a water treatment facility and distribution piping to multiple users. Centralized systems are used to provide water to either a portion of a community or an entire community.

**CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL USES.** Uses or structures for and/or used by established organizations or foundations dedicated to public service or cultural activities including the arts, education, government and religion.

**CLASSIFICATION.** The systematic grouping of shared characteristics based on the analyses of Natural Resource Index factors resulting in classified areas of Habitat Stewardship Areas (HSA), Hydrologic Stewardship Areas (HUSA) and Water Retention Areas (WRA) as depicted on the St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1).

**COMPACT RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CRD).** A form of SRA development that provides flexibility with respect to the mix of uses and design standards. A CRD may include, but is not required to have permanent residential housing and the services and facilities that support permanent residents. An example of a CRD without permanent residential housing is an ecotourism CRD that would have a unique set of uses and support services different from a traditional residential village. It may contain transient lodging facilities and services appropriate to eco-tourists, but may not provide for the range of services necessary to support permanent residents.

**CONSERVE.** To use carefully or sparingly, avoiding waste.

**CULTURAL HERITAGE.** Designation as cultural heritage shall apply to lands that have been recognized as being culturally significant to St. Lucie County for fifty years or more, historically significant structures, facilities and locations as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, the National Register of Historic Places, or the BOCC.

**DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER SYSTEM:** Onsite and/or cluster wastewater systems used to treat and disperse or discharge small volumes of wastewater,

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page 22

generally from dwellings and businesses that are located relatively close together. Decentralized systems in a particular management area or jurisdiction are managed by a common management entity.

**DECENTRALIZED WATER SYSTEM:** Onsite and/or cluster potable water system consisting of a water supply, a water treatment facility and distribution of small volumes through piping to users that are located relatively close together. Decentralized systems in a particular management area or jurisdiction are managed by a common management entity.

**DESIGNATION.** A specific area defined as a Stewardship Sending Area or Stewardship Receiving Area, as approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

**ECO-TOURISM.** The practice of touring natural habitats and support facilities thereof in a manner meant to minimize ecological impact.

**EXISTING AGRICULTURE ACTIVITY INDEX.** The index comprising the Agriculture Index Factor. The index value is based on the intent of conserving agriculture in St. Lucie County.

**HSA - HABITAT STEWARDSHIP AREA.** Privately owned lands delineated on the RLSA Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), which consist of areas with natural characteristics that make them preferred habitat for listed species.

**HAMLET.** A form of SRA development that are small rural residential areas with primarily single-family housing and a limited range of convenience-oriented services. Hamlets serve as a more sustainable alternative to traditional five (5) acre lot rural subdivisions currently allowed by the underlying zoning.

**HYSA - HYDROLOGIC STEWARDSHIP AREA.** Privately owned lands delineated on the RLSA Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), which primarily include privately owned wetlands. HYSAs form the primary wetland Hydrologic systems in the RLSA Overlay Zone.

**LAND USE/LAND COVER INDICES.** One of the indices comprising the Natural Resource Index Value of land, with values assigned. For purposes of assigning values, land use and land cover codes are grouped according to native, hydric, special habitat designation, and moderate to high species value.

**LISTED SPECIES HABITAT INDICES.** One of the indices comprising the Natural Resource Index Value, with values assigned based upon the habitat value of the land for listed species. Index values are based on documentation of occupied habitat as established by the intersect of documented and verifiable observations of listed species with land cover identified as preferred or tolerated habitat for that species. Listed species include all federal and state listed species, federal wading bird rookeries, and state wading bird foraging.

**NATURAL RESOURCE INDEX (NRI or INDEX).** A measurement system that establishes the relative natural resource value of each area of land by objectively

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-23

measuring characteristics of land and assigning an index factor based on each characteristic. The sum of these factors is the Index value for the land. The characteristics measured are: Land Use/Land Cover, Soils/Surface Water, Listed Species, and RLSA Overlay designation.

**NATURAL RESOURCE INDEX MAP (INDEX MAP).** The Rural Land Stewardship Area Natural Resource Index Map (RLSA Figure 3) graphically illustrates the Index as existent at time of adoption of the Comprehensive Plan amendment which established the RLSA Overlay Zone.

**NATURAL RESOURCE INDEX VALUE (INDEX VALUE).** The sum of the values assigned to each area, derived through the calculation of the values assigned to each of the characteristics included in the Index.

**OPEN.** Privately owned lands delineated on the Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), the majority of which have a Natural Resource Index Value of 1.4 or less, and are typically suitable for development.

**OPEN SPACE.** Any parcel or area of land or water that is set aside, open and unobstructed to the sky, and designated or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment. Open space includes active and passive recreational areas such as parks, playgrounds, ball fields, golf courses, lakes, waterways, lagoons, reservoirs, flood plains, nature trails, buffers, native vegetation preserves, landscape areas, public and private conservation lands, agricultural areas (not including structures), easements for underground utilities, and water retention and management areas. Buildings shall not be counted as part of any open space calculation. Vehicular use surface areas of streets, alleys, driveways, and off- street parking and loading areas shall not be counted as part of any open space calculation.

**PATHWAY.** A defined corridor for the primary use of non-motorized travel.

**PUBLIC BENEFIT.** The acreage within an SRA devoted to a public benefit use shall not consume Stewardship Credits and shall not count toward the maximum acreage limits of an SRA. For the purpose of this Section, public benefit uses include public and private schools (pre-K-12); public or private post-secondary institutions; Post Secondary Institution Ancillary Uses; Adequate Affordable or Workforce Housing; cultural facilities; future transportation corridors including transit; community parks exceeding the minimum requirement of two hundred (200) square feet per dwelling unit; regional parks; agricultural, environmental or natural resource research centers; and governmental facilities or similar community service uses as determined by the BOCC in its approval of an SRA application.

**RLSA OVERLAY MAP.** The map entitled "St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Map," which identifies those areas classified as HYSAs, HSAs, WRAs, and Open (RLSA Figure 1).

**RLSA OVERLAY ZONE.** St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Zone. The area generally depicted on the Future Land Use Map and specifically

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-24

depicted on the Official Zoning Atlas Map as the Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay.

**SENDING AREA LAND USE LAYER (LAYER).** Permitted and conditional land uses within the underlying zoning that are of a similar type or intensity and that are grouped together in the same column on the St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Sending Area Land Use Layer Matrix (RLSA Figure 4).

**SENDING AREA LAND USE LAYER MATRIX (MATRIX).** The tabulation of the permitted and conditional land uses within the underlying zoning set forth in Section 4.05.07.B.6 with each Sending Area Land Use Layer displayed as a single column (RLSA Figure 4).

**SOILS/SURFACE WATER INDICES.** One of the indices comprising the Natural Resource Index Value of land, with values assigned based upon soil types classified using the Natural Soils Landscape Positions (NSLP) categories.

**SRA - STEWARDSHIP RECEIVING AREA.** A designated area within the RLSA Overlay Zone that has been approved by the BOCC for the development of a Town, Village, Hamlet or CRD and that requires the consumption of Stewardship Credits.

**SRA APPLICATION.** An application prescribed by the RLSA LDRs and submitted to the County, reviewed by staff and subject to approval of the BOCC, to establish a Stewardship Receiving Area.

**SRA CHARACTERISTICS CHART.** The chart entitled "St. Lucie County Rural Land Stewardship Area Characteristics Chart," which identifies the standards and required characteristics for Towns, Villages and Compact Rural Developments herein as RLSA Figure 5.

**SSA - STEWARDSHIP SENDING AREA.** A designated area within the RLSA Overlay Zone that has been approved for the generation of Stewardship Credits in exchange for the elimination of one (1) or more Sending Area Land Use Layers.

**SSA APPLICATION.** An application submitted to the County, reviewed by staff and subject to approval by the BOCC, to designate a Stewardship Sending Area.

**SSA CREDIT AGREEMENT.** An agreement required by the County between the County and any landowner petitioning to have all or a portion of land owned within the RLSA Overlay Zone designated as an SSA and who is to obtain SSA Credits for the land so designated. SSA Credit Agreements entered into by and between a landowner and the County that include restoration credits shall reference the plans and specifications for the restoration activity upon which the restoration credits are based.

**STEWARDSHIP CREDIT (CREDIT).** A transferable unit of measure generated by an SSA and consumed by an SRA. Seven (7) Credits are required in exchange for the development of one (1) acre of land in an SRA as provided in Section 4.05.07.B.

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-25

**STEWARDSHIP CREDIT SYSTEM.** A system that creates incentives to protect and preserve natural resources, cultural and historical areas, and agricultural areas in exchange for the use of Stewardship Credits to entitle development. The greater the natural resource, agricultural, historical or cultural value of the area being preserved, the greater the number of Stewardship Credits can be generated. Credits are generated through the designation of SSAs and consumed through the designation of SRAs. Credits may also be created and held for future transfer.

**STEWARDSHIP CREDIT WORKSHEET.** An analytical tool that describes the Stewardship Credit calculation process including the Natural Resource Index, Agriculture Index and Sending Area Land Use Layer components (RLSA Figure 2).

**STEWARDSHIP EASEMENT AGREEMENT.** An agreement that is required to be prepared and submitted by an applicant for an SSA. Such an agreement is required for all SSA Applications. The agreement shall impose a restrictive covenant or grant a perpetual restrictive easement that shall be recorded for each SSA, shall run with the land and shall be in favor of St. Lucie County and one (1) or more of the following: Florida DEP, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, SFWMD, or a recognized land trust. The Stewardship Easement Agreement shall identify the specific land management measures that will be undertaken and the party responsible for such measures, including performance standards and annual monitoring requirements.

**STEWARDSHIP OVERLAY CLASSIFICATION.** One (1) of the indices comprising the Natural Resource Index Value of land, with values assigned based upon the classification of the land on the RLSA Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1) as Hydrologic Stewardship Area (HYSA), Habitat Stewardship Area (HSA), or Water Retention Area (WRA).

**TARGETED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS (TCI):** Targeted Capital Improvements (TCI) can be defined as investments in capital facilities including, but not necessarily limited to, roads, stormwater management, utilities, public safety facilities, libraries, and schools located in SRAs. Such investments are sized to meet the needs of the SRA communities.

**TOWN.** Towns are a form of SRA and are the largest and most diverse form of SRA, with a full range of housing types and mix of uses. Towns have high level services and infrastructure which support development that is sustainable, mixed use, walkable, and provides a balance of land uses to reduce automobile trips and increase livability. Towns are comprised of several neighborhoods that have individual identity and character.

**UNDERLYING ZONING.** The allowable uses, density, intensity and other land development regulations assigned to land within the RLSA Overlay Zone by the St. Lucie County Land Development Code in effect prior to the adoption of the RLSA Overlay Zone and prior to SSA and/or SRA approval.

**VILLAGE.** Villages are a form of SRA and are primarily residential communities with a diversity of housing types and mix of uses appropriate to the scale and character of

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA OVERLAY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

8/7/6/06

Page-26

the particular village. Villages are comprised of residential neighborhoods and shall include a mixed-use village center to serve as the focal point for the community's support services and facilities.

**WRA - WATER RETENTION AREA.** Privately owned lands delineated on the RLSA Overlay Map (RLSA Figure 1), that serve to function as water retention and conveyance areas or other water storage areas and that provide surface water quality and other natural resource value. WRA's may continue to function for agricultural uses; surface water retention, detention, treatment and/or conveyance; habitat and passive recreational uses.