

Comments

Name	Comment	Contact Info	Date
General Comments			
Brock Nicholas, Baseline Property Group	“... I believe the DAB is interested in hearing ... opinion on assuming delegated authority for FDEP permitting so there’s less duplication of work....And although I’m sure this doesn’t feel like a compliment given today’s workload, the DAB was clear about this recommendation only being possible due to the strong competence and consistent professionalism we see from EPD at OC.”		10/20/21
Don Kendzior, Noah’s Notes, Inc.	<p>I’ve encountered the following issues several times and believe they should be included in the wetlands conservation ordinance review.</p> <p>First, there appears to be no clear statements or guidelines for HOA’s or homeowners regarding landscape maintenance on properties adjoining conservation wetlands. I’ve been asked multiple times by various HOA’s where it is permissible to conduct mowing/clearing along the conservation line. This has been especially apparent in the case of the berms surrounding stormwater retention ponds adjoining conservation wetlands. When we researched this we received vague and differing statements from staff. Some said to the top of the berm, others the bottom of the backside of the berm, and others not within 10 feet of the wetlands line, etc.</p> <p>Second, what enforcement exists for property owners or HOA’s who encroach on conservation wetlands areas? I personally have seen several instances where homeowners or HOA’s have extended property lines into designated conservation wetland areas.</p>		01/25/23
Chuck O’Neal	On behalf of Speak Up Wekiva, Inc., Section 704.1 of the Orange County Charter sets the policy for wetlands and other water bodies within the jurisdiction of Orange County. In short, that policy in regards to wetlands is "no wetlands destruction." Any deviation from that policy is a violation of the Orange County Charter. Florida has lost over a third of its wetlands to development. With the population of Orange County increasing, we need more wetlands rather than less.		2/23/23
Lori Bradford	I've been reviewing the wetland ordinance presentations and noticed there are areas of special protection noted yet nothing specific regarding the wetlands that protect the Butler Chain, an OFW. Years ago we were given a map of vulnerable wetland areas. I noticed on google earth that a few were already negatively impacted with connections to the Chain. This is concerning because we have areas where reclaimed water has been a huge problem and these wetlands are necessary to help filter these high nutrient levels before entering the lakes as well as other significant functions. Will there be an opportunity for MSTU boards like the BCLAB to make recommendations for protection regarding these special areas that need protection?		4/26/23
Special Meeting Comments			
BCC Work Session – Regulatory Framework – 12/13/22			
John Miklos, Bio-Tech Consulting, Inc.	I watched the wetland ordinance presentation last week. I was unable to attend in person as I just had a surgical procedure, but I will be at any and all upcoming events, and speaking when I believe appropriate. I would like to request a meeting or call after the holidays, ... this is an extremely important issue to me. I have taken a position, and maintain it, that staff has implemented the existing rule inappropriately and inconsistently for years. I went as far as to obtain a detailed legal opinion from one of the top environmental/regulatory attorneys in the state on the		12/21/22

	<p>topic, at my cost. Neither my constant rhetoric nor the legal opinion really got me anywhere, but I do realize that the noise I have made is, in part, why the review of the ordinance is occurring. I think it is appropriate and overdue, but I have concerns with the framing of the topic thus far. First, the county comparisons. Leon and Alachua are different worlds compared to Orange County, not only from a wetland and geography perspective, but from development demand and growth. I struggle with the basis used to select these counties and think more appropriate ones exist, or even cities. That ship has likely sailed, but I believe it is something to consider. Second, the wetland tour. I may be wrong be it sounds like you went to TM Econ Mitigation Bank and that's it. By no means does that give you the whole picture. It is paramount to see wetlands that are in the line of development and to see what happens to small wetlands that staff forces applicants to leave in the middle of developments. The notion that all wetlands are inherently valuable is simply wrong. A few years ago I took Commissioner Bonilla on a tour of wetlands that were associated with proposed developments and wetlands that had been required to remain in existing developments. It changed her outlook on things, to a degree at least, and since then she has been amenable to permitting some impacts on projects. What you saw at TM should be the goal... large, intact, mosaics of uplands and wetlands preserved and managed, not one acre marshes in the middle of a subdivision. Another point that is in the mix here is what an overreaching wetland program does for the county. The simple answer is, not much. I can show you several significant projects where the County was unwilling to work with the applicants on impacts that lead to the projects being annexed into the adjacent municipality, which lead to the same project or in one case, a more impactful project occurring. The net result is lost tax revenue, and less overall wetland protection within the County. In any event, I am asking for a discussion with one or both of you. I am not really interested in meeting with staff, as I will be doing that in the future. My goal is to just get some things on your radar that will not be presented to you in the course of this process. Thank you.</p>		
<b>Special Meeting Comments</b>			
<b>BCC Work Session – State of the Wetlands – 1/24/23</b>			
Maria Bolton-Joubert	<p>Good day, Mayor Demings and Orange County Commissioners,</p> <p>Was planning to attend this morning (Tues) to speak during public comment, but my child is sick and I can't be present since he won't be in school and I need to stay with him.</p> <p>My comments are pertaining to wetlands protections. We need to do more. Protecting and preserving all types of wetlands allows for flood mitigation, as well as, for aquifer recharge. We need all forms of wetlands. All classes.</p> <p>What we do here in Orange County impacts the St Johns River, and even our threatened Manatee populations that live in that River. There's an expression, "People Protect What They Love", by Jacques Cousteau. We need to get to know nature more and protect all aspects of it.</p> <p>There's a few groups on Facebook with wildlife photographers -- amateurs and professionals -- who frequent and love the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive and the Orlando Wetlands Park (just to name a few) for the wildlife and wild spaces/scenery.</p> <p>They post some beautiful pictures. Was just msging in the Orlando Wetlands Park group with a woman from</p>		

	<p>Michigan tonight. Tourists are coming here for wildlife. For photo opps. Spending their money here because of nature. We need to remind some folks that we are so much more than the theme park corridor. Some already know!</p> <p>Let's focus on highlighting Wild Florida more. More elevated ADA boardwalks and accessible wildlife drives in all your Districts that can help bring folks in and remind them where we live and what we need to protect. (And this can help mitigate any future flooding events like what we had this Fall.)</p> <p>Looking forward to the info with the study in the afternoon tomorrow.</p> <p>Thank you for caring and for your time today.</p>		
<b>Technical Study Comments</b>			
<b>Regulatory Framework Study</b>			
	<p>Friends of Lake Apopka (FOLA) applauds the Orange County Environmental Protection Department for their work updating the Wetland Conservation Areas Ordinance. Last year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service estimated that Florida has lost over 9 million acres of wetlands (over half) since 1845. These wetlands are not only vital by creating water filtering and recharge, but they also provide valuable habitat for our wildlife. FOLA hopes that more attention and protection can be applied to protect our remaining wetland conservation areas. Many of our concerns have been incorporated into the NGO summary of the “Wetland Regulatory Framework” Study.</p> <p>Our positions and comments to some of the ordinance topics are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase wetland buffer to a minimum of 50 ft. and at least 100 ft. for sensitive or rare Communities</li><li>• We would like improved identification and education on the location of wetland boundaries and ensure that local agencies know who is responsible for protecting those boundaries</li><li>• We would like improved enforcement and follow-up of wetland violations</li><li>• Don’t eliminate floodplain analyses if it allows permitting staff to estimate impacts to wetlands</li><li>• Don’t allow for urban in-fill, those smaller wetlands provide valuable wildlife habitat and help beautify our communities</li><li>• Only eliminate the wetlands classification system if it improves protection of wetlands</li><li>• Please work with proper agencies to improve upland buffers</li><li>• All landscape firms and employees should abide by the principles found in Florida’s GIBMP manual</li></ul>		3/22/23