

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT [NRC]

The county's natural environment serves many functions contributing to the quality-of-life for residents and visitors. The protection of natural resources, which comprise the County's ecological system, serve to preserve critical plant and animal habitats. It contributes to the community's air and water quality; helps minimize flooding; offers unique character to a highly urbanized area; and provides parks, preserves and aquatic resources. The natural resource characteristics of Pinellas County are part of its general branding and significantly contribute to tourism and the local economy. Responsible land planning decisions are essential to protect the County's natural resources and promote resiliency from natural disasters and human-made impacts. The Natural

Resource Conservation and Management chapter establishes policies help to preserve and enhance these valuable resources.

Everyday Actions

- » Reduce, reuse and recycle. Prevent pollution, save energy and help sustain natural resources for future generations.
- » Throw it in the tackle box! Discarded fishing line can be a serious threat to birds and aquatic life like sea turtles and manatees.
- » Skip the straw! Avoid single-use plastics when you can, reuse and properly dispose of or recycle them when you can't.
- » Give nesting, feeding, and resting birds much needed space! Coastal waterbirds nest, rest, and feed on our beaches and need us to share the shore.
- » Help reduce the carbon footprint by biking to work.
- » Getting into the aluminum recycling habit is one of the best things you can do for the environment. There's no limit to how many times they can be recycled. Used aluminum cans are recycled, filled and put back on the shelf in just six weeks.

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Strategies

NRC GOAL 1: BE A LEADER IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.

NRC OBJECTIVE 1.1: Exemplify, promote and apply environmentally sustainable principles, programs and practices that support a more resilient community.

NRC POLICY 1.1.1: Promote (re)development that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability and resiliency.

NRC STRATEGY 1.1.1.1: Utilize the Land Development Code to promote sustainability, including:

- » Advance the net reduction of impervious surfaces;
- » Maximize and restore natural floodplain functions;
- » Apply innovative stormwater management techniques through the implementation of the Pinellas County stormwater manual;
- » Restrict and mitigate any adverse impacts to wetlands;
- » Encourage and incentivize energy efficiency;
- » Encourage and incentivize adaptive reuse of existing structures;

NRC GOAL 3: CONSERVE, PROTECT, RESTORE AND MANAGE NATURAL SYSTEMS AND LIVING RESOURCES TO ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.

NRC OBJECTIVE 3.1: Protect and conserve natural ecosystems, vegetative communities and species of conservation concern.

NRC POLICY 3.1.1: Protect, conserve, restore and manage natural ecosystems, native vegetative communities and native wildlife species.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.1: Identify and delineate natural ecosystems, native vegetative communities and native wildlife habitats.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.2: Designate natural areas for preservation uses.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.3: Implement recovery programs for natural ecosystems, native vegetative communities and native wildlife habitats.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.4: Coordinate with municipalities and adjoining counties regarding the extension of ecological corridors and greenway systems and the extra-jurisdictional impact of land development on existing corridors.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.5: Share information with other local governments and agencies regarding the protection, conservation, restoration and management of natural ecosystems and native wildlife.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.6: Implement post-disaster recovery plans for natural ecosystems and native wildlife.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.1.7: Pursue best management practices to protect native plants and pollinators through:

- » The incorporation of pest management policies and practices as they relate to vegetation management and pollinator conservation.**
- » The identification of appropriate locations for pollinator-friendly plantings to address methods of improvement in pest management.**

NRC POLICY 3.1.2: Ensure that County projects are sensitive to the protection, conservation, restoration and management of natural ecosystems, native plant communities and native wildlife habitats.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.2.1: Require County projects to:

- » Protect and enhance native species and intact habitat;**
- » Ensure that native species constitute no less than 80 percent of a site's landscaping; and**
- » Meet Florida Friendly Landscaping™ standards.**

NRC POLICY 3.1.3: Reduce ecologically undesirable non-native vegetation.

NRC STRATEGY 3.1.3.1: Require the removal of ecologically undesirable non-native vegetation from (re)development sites, and in conjunction with County projects.

NRC POLICY 3.1.4: Ensure that (re)development is sensitive to the protection, conservation, restoration and management of natural ecosystems, native plant communities and native wildlife habitats.

NRC STRATEGY 3.2.3.3: Support the protection of manatees by:

- » Implementing sea grass protection areas;
- » Providing manatee signage;
- » Coordinating with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Sheriff's Marine Unit regarding the monitoring and enforcement of no-wake zones and speed restrictions;
- » Targeting boater education efforts toward areas of high interaction between boaters and manatees;
- » Collecting information required to identify critical use areas;
- » Reviewing County regulations to determine if manatee protection is adequately supported; and
- » Coordinating with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Manatee Awareness Coalition and other agencies to determine appropriate measures for protecting manatees.

NRC STRATEGY 3.2.3.4: Support sea turtle protection and monitoring by:

- » Providing funding;
- » Partnering with volunteer groups, research organizations and enforcement agencies;
- » Support public education to improve survivability; and
- » Partnering with coastal municipalities to implement and enforce lighting ordinances.

NRC STRATEGY 3.2.3.5: Support and preserve shorebirds and their habitat through active partnership with, where applicable, federal, state, and local governments and non-profits to protect and preserve critical shorebird and seabird habitats.

NRC OBJECTIVE 3.3: Preserve, protect, restore and manage the natural resources of floodplains to maintain and enhance water quality, plant and animal diversity and aquatic productivity.

NRC POLICY 3.3.1: Maintain the ecological value and function of natural systems and living resources within the floodplains of the County.

NRC STRATEGY 3.3.1.1: Restrict (re)development in floodplains to maintain ecological character and natural function.

NRC GOAL 4: IMPROVE AIR QUALITY TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

NRC OBJECTIVE 4.1: Maintain compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and reduce emissions of criteria pollutants.

NRC POLICY 4.1.1: Implement an air pollution control program.

NRC STRATEGY 4.1.1.1: Implement measures to reduce ozone precursor and primary/secondary fine particulate emissions.

NRC STRATEGY 4.1.1.2: Maintain detailed stationary and area source emission inventories for criteria pollutants to assess air quality impacts.

NRC STRATEGY 4.1.1.3: Annually assess the effectiveness of the air pollution control program and recommend amendments as needed.

NRC STRATEGY 4.1.1.4: Maintain an air monitoring network and upgrade air monitoring stations as needed.