

August 27, 2007

Hon. Bob Janes  
Chairman, Lee County Commission  
P.O. Box 398  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33902-0398

Dear Commissioner Janes:

We observed the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of County Commissioners and were pleased with the high priority that all the Commissioners expressed regarding the need to move ahead expeditiously with a comprehensive plan review for the DRGR and rural lands within Lee County.

As you know Bill Spikowski and Kevin Erwin have worked with County staff to identify DR/GR and rural Lee County information gaps. It is essential that these gaps are filled, so that comprehensive and sound science is used as a foundation for planning in the DR/GR and rural lands. In the short term, County staff could prioritize their activities toward filling the gaps that do not require outsourcing. This will facilitate an early completion of some objectives.

Simultaneously Bill Spikowski will be using the Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Grant funds that we recently received to analyze the rural land use planning efforts of other major Florida counties. His report will provide the Board and County staff with detailed information on conceptual alternatives for conducting rural planning in Lee County and will be completed in December 2007.

Their recommendations to you, the other Commissioners and County staff are as follows:

- Prepare an accurate existing land use map and cover map using the Florida Land Use and Cover Classification System (FLUCFCS) at no less than Level III for both current and historical conditions. Tabulate all results by watershed and include hydric soils mapping.
- Expand a ground and surface water monitoring network within each watershed that focuses on a variety of land use types including native uplands and wetlands, commercial and residential development, and mining.
- Prepare a water budget and estimate minimum flows, current and historical (pre-development) water levels for select streams and wetlands within each watershed.
- Conduct an evaluation of commonly accepted scientific hydrological modeling systems currently used to assess a variety of land use activities. Determine if these modeling systems represent the best available science for

understanding the impacts of activities, including but not limited to residential development, agriculture and mining.

We urge you to encourage the Board to authorize staff to implement this program when you next meet to discuss updated planning for the DRGR. Thank you for all your help.

Our organizations:

Audubon of Florida  
Brooks Concerned Citizens  
Collier County Audubon Society  
Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Council of Civic Associations  
Estero Civic Association  
Estero Council of Community Leaders  
Florida Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Federation  
Responsible Growth Management Coalition

C.c. Hon. Brian Bigelow  
Hon. Tammy Hall  
Hon. Ray Judah  
Hon. Frank Mann  
Mary Gibbs  
Paul O'Connor  
Wayne Daltry