

Board of County Commissioners

Workshop Item

Date of Meeting: January 14, 2010

Date Submitted: February 6, 2010

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Commissioner Howard Kessler, Chairman

Subject: Workshop to Discuss Land Quality and Land Designations

Statement of Issue:

This workshop is being held to explore where future development should occur in our County based on land quality as well as land designations already included in our Comprehensive Plan.

Background:

At the October 20, 2009 Board Meeting, the Board directed staff to schedule a Workshop to explore where future development should occur in Wakulla County based on land quality as well as land designations already included in the Comprehensive Plan.

There is an established Comprehensive Plan and land development codes that direct land uses in the County. Wakulla County is composed of different lands, some much fragile and sensitive than others.

Analysis:

The eastern portion of the County contains many wetlands and karst features as well as vast underground water tunnel systems, many of which connect to Wakulla Springs and our coastal areas.

We have all seen the disastrous unintended consequences of not taking the quality of the land below our feet into account when planning for development. We don't have to look any further than our own backyard; the City of Tallahassee's sprayfield and its adverse consequences to Wakulla Springs. When the City's sewer system and sprayfield were planned and built, it was considered a world class example of how to do things the right way. Not knowing that the sprayfield was built over tunnels and recharge areas feeding Wakulla Springs brought increased nitrogen levels and severe adverse impacts to the environment. Now we have much more knowledge and much better data about the soils and what is happening below our feet and where underground water flows go. Wakulla County has granted the development of subdivisions on septic tanks over major underground tunnels that we know can backflow to Wakulla Springs.

This workshop is intended for discussion to determine if the Board wants to move forward with determining a map of what lies underground in order to develop in the future in the least sensitive areas when possible.