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**DRAFT INCORPORATING COMMENTS  
FROM STAFF AND THE COUNTY ATTORNEY & DEP**

**WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**WETLANDS PROTECTION ORDINANCE**

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**Date of Draft: May 17, 2010**

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ORDINANCE NO. 2010-\_\_

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION OF WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA; RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF WETLANDS AND OTHER SURFACE WATERS IN THE COUNTY; REPEALING WAKULLA COUNTY ORDINANCE 2006-27 IN ITS ENTIRETY; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; PROVIDING A PROCESS FOR APPROVAL OF DEVELOPMENT; PROVIDING FOR USE OF WETLANDS; PROVIDING DESIGN STANDARDS; PROVIDING FOR MITIGATION AND RESTORATION OF DEGRADED WETLANDS; PROVIDING PROCEDURE FOR ENFORCEMENT; PROVIDING PENALTIES; PROVIDING THAT PROCEDURES IN ORDINANCE ARE SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA:

**ARTICLE I. REPEAL OF WAKULLA COUNTY ORDINANCE 2006-27**

The Board of County Commissioners hereby repeals and replaces Wakulla County Ordinance 2006-27, concerning Wetlands, in its entirety.

**ARTICLE II. ADOPTION OF WETLANDS PROTECTION ORDINANCE.**

**Section 1. Definitions.** As used in this Ordinance, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly otherwise requires:

**“Adverse Impact”** means a human-induced disturbance that reduces the functions of a Wetland or other Surface Water. Adverse Impacts may include but are not limited to activities that Degrade: the hydroperiod (for example, the water frequency, depth, and duration) of the wetland; the community structure of the wetland; the movement or topography of the substrate (soil, hydrosol, lime rock); the biochemical cycling; or the native habitat availability.

**“Agricultural”** means the production of crops, animals or animal products, or farm commodities, including, but not limited to, vegetables, citrus and other fruits, grain, forage, sod, livestock, poultry, and foliage plants.

**“Aquifer”** means a geological formation, group of formations, or part of a formation that contains sufficient saturated, permeable material to yield significant quantities of water to wells and springs.

**“Armoring”** means a manmade structure designed to either prevent erosion of the upland property or protect eligible structures from the effects of coastal wave and current action.

**“Artificially Created Waterbody”** means a water body that has been totally dredged or excavated and which does not overlap natural Wetlands or other Surface Waters.

**“Best Management Practices”** means those practices designed to reduce and manage pollution, the Adverse Impacts of changes in the natural ecosystem, and in some cases, to protect wildlife and habitat. These practices are generally outlined in the latest updated version of the following Best Management Practices manuals available from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which are incorporated herein by reference: Silviculture Best Management Practices; Trees, Shrubs and Flowers for Florida Landscaping Native and Exotic; Aquaculture Best Management Practices; Best Management Practices for Agrichemical Handling and Farm Equipment Maintenance; Water Quality/Quantity Best Management Practices for Florida Vegetable and Agronomic Crops; Water Quality Best Management Practices for Florida Cow/Calf

Operations; Water Quality/Quantity Best Management Practices for Florida Sod; Florida Agricultural Water Conservation Best Management Practices; Best Management Practices for Blended Fertilizer Plants in Florida; and the Florida Erosion and Sedimentation Control Manual.

**“Board”** means the Board of County Commissioners of Wakulla County, Florida.

**“Boardwalk”** means a walkway which extends through a Wetland or other Surface Water or Buffer and which is used primarily for the purpose of walking through and accessing the Wetland or other Surface Water or Buffer.

**“Boat Ramp”** means a facility used for launching and retrieving small boats on trailers.

**“Bona Fide Agricultural Use”** means the use of land for bona fide purposes of growing crops, Silviculture, or raising animal stock, fish, or poultry. In determining whether the claimed Agricultural or Silviculture use is bona fide the Planning Department shall consider the following factors:

- (1) The length of time the land has been so utilized;
- (2) Whether the use has been continuous;
- (3) The purchase price paid;
- (4) The size of the land as it relates to the specific Agricultural use;
- (5) Whether an indicated effort has been made to care sufficiently and adequately for the land in accordance with accepted Best Management Practices addressing fertilizing, liming, tilling, mowing, reforestation, or other generally accepted Agricultural practices;

(6) Whether such land is under Agricultural lease, and if so, the effective length, terms, and conditions of the lease; and

(7) The current, and pending changes in, land use and zoning.

**“Bona Fide Land Preservation Entity”** means a charitable or non-profit entity whose purposes include protecting natural, scenic, or open space values of real property, assuring its availability for forest, recreational, or open space use.

**“Buffer”** means, as required by Policy 2.3 of the Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, the area consisting of Buffer Zone One and Buffer Zone Two, beginning at the landward extent of and surrounding a Wetland or other Surface Water that helps maintain the Wetland’s or other Surface Water’s functional integrity and furnishes protection against the Adverse Impacts of activities in adjacent upland areas.

**“Buffer Zone One”** means a Buffer of thirty-five (35) feet wide beginning at the landward extent of and surrounding a Wetland or other Surface Water, that shall be left in its Natural Topographic and Vegetative State, except as otherwise provided in this Ordinance.

**“Buffer Zone Two”** means a Buffer of forty (40) feet wide beginning at the outer edge of and surrounding Buffer Zone One, within which certain Development may occur, only as provided in this Ordinance.

**“Clearing”** means the partial or total removal of vegetation other than gardening and maintenance to an existing Yard.

**“Comprehensive Plan”** means the Wakulla County Comprehensive Land Use Plan adopted pursuant to Chapter 163, Florida Statutes.

**“Construction”** means the building of or substantial improvement to any structure or the Clearing, filling, or excavation of any land. It shall also mean any alteration in the size or use of any existing structure or the appearance of any land. When appropriate to the context, the term “Construction” refers to the act of Construction or the result of Construction.

**“Corrective Action Plan”** means a plan required by the Wakulla County Code Enforcement Board subsequent to a violation of this Ordinance which specifies the actions necessary to resolve such violation, including, but not limited to, obtaining any necessary permits for unauthorized activities conducted in a Wetland or other Surface Water or Buffer, and the performance of Restoration and/or Mitigation.

**“County”** means Wakulla County, Florida, a political subdivision of the State of Florida.

**“Degrades” or “Degradation”** means any modifications, alterations, or effects on Wetlands or other Surface Waters which are or may potentially be harmful or injurious to human health, welfare, safety or property, to biological productivity, species diversity, or ecosystem stability which interferes with the functions and values of natural resources, including outdoor recreation.

**“Delineation”** means an evaluation of the landward extent or boundary of Wetlands or other Surface Waters conducted in accordance with Chapter 62-340, Florida Administrative Code.

**“Developer”** means any person who seeks to conduct Development of any type, including, but not limited to, land alteration, Clearing, filling, or Construction on a lot or

parcel of land, and includes the Owner of the parcel or any person authorized to act on behalf of the Owner.

**“Development”** has the same meaning as provided in section 2-4(51) of the Wakulla County Land Development Code.

**“Development Order”** means any official action of Wakulla County having the effect of permitting the Development of land, including, but not limited to, site plan approvals, preliminary plat approvals, building permits, final plat approvals, variances, and conditional use permits.

**“Dock”** means a fixed or floating structure, including moorings, used for the purpose of berthing buoyant vessels either temporarily or indefinitely.

**“Exotic Invasive Plants”** means those plant species listed in the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's Invasive Plant List Species for Category I and II Invasives (2009), which is incorporated by reference herein.

**“Landscaping”** means the alteration or beautification of outdoor terrain which is mainly engaged in exterior work and gardening, including, but not limited to, the initial establishment of a Yard; planting trees, flowers, shrubs, and grasses; the installation of water fountains, construction of curbs, walkways, pavement, and drainage; and site stabilization.

**“Minimal Impact”** means a human-induced disturbance which does not reduce the functions of a Wetland or other Surface Water.

**“Mitigation”** means actions taken to compensate for Adverse Impacts to a Wetland or other Surface Water pursuant to a County-approved Mitigation plan.

**“Natural Topographic and Vegetative State”** means a condition produced by nature which supports the established ecosystem and is undisturbed by Clearing or Development.

**“Observation Deck”** means an elevated platform located in, on, or over a Wetland or other Surface Water, often as a part of a Boardwalk or attached to a fixed structure, which is used primarily for viewing such Wetland or other Surface Water and is not designed or used for mooring or accessing vehicles.

**“Outstanding Florida Waters”** means a Surface Water classified as such pursuant to Rule 62-302.700, Florida Administrative Code.

**“Owner”** means the person or entity reflected as the record owner of the property.

**“Parks and Recreation Uses”** means County-approved uses consistent with Chapter 23 of the Wakulla County Code of Ordinances, or its successor.

**“Pier”** means a fixed or floating structure used primarily for fishing or swimming and not designed or used for mooring or accessing vehicles.

**“Planning Department”** means the Wakulla County Department of Planning and Community Development, or a successor department.

**“Restoration”** means the reestablishment of the natural functions of a Wetland or other Surface Water or Buffer where such natural functions have been Degraded due to Adverse Impacts of Development or other activities.

**“Seawall”** means a vertical structure built along a portion of a coast, retaining earth against its landward face and designed to prevent erosion and other damage by wave action.

**“Silviculture”** means a process, following Best Management Practices, whereby the trees constituting forests are tended, harvested, and reproduced.

**“Surface Waters”** means, as described in Rule 62-340.600, Florida Administrative Code, waters on the surface of the Earth, contained in bounds created naturally or artificially, including the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, bays, bayous, sounds, estuaries, lagoons, lakes, ponds, impoundments, rivers, streams, springs, creeks, branches, sloughs, tributaries, and other watercourses. The landward extent of a surface water in the County for the purposes of implementing this Ordinance, shall be the more landward of the following: (1) Wetlands, as defined in this Section; (2) the mean high water line elevation for tidal water bodies; (3) the ordinary high water line for non-tidal natural water bodies; (4) the top of the bank for artificial lakes and other artificial water bodies with side slopes of one foot vertical to four feet horizontal or steeper, excluding spoil banks; or (5) the seasonal high water line for artificial lakes and other artificial water bodies with side slopes flatter than one foot vertical to four feet horizontal, along with any artificial water body created by diking or impoundment above the ground.

**“Terminal Platform”** means that part of a Dock or Pier that is connected to the access walkway and is located at the terminus of the structure.

**“Vegetation Maintenance and Tree Pruning or Trimming”** means the mowing of vegetation within a utility right-of-way or easement, removal of trees or brush within the right-of-way or easement, and selective removal of tree branches that extend within the right-of-way or easement. Vegetation Maintenance and Tree Pruning or Trimming does not include the removal of trees outside the right-of-way or easement.

**“Water Dependent Activity”** means an activity which can only be conducted on, in, over, or adjacent to, water areas because the activity requires direct access to the water body or submerged land for transportation, recreation, energy production or transmission, or source of water and where the use of the water or submerged land is an integral part of the activity.

**“Wetlands”** means, as defined in subsection 62-340.200(19), Florida Administrative Code, those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and a duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils. Soils present in Wetlands generally are classified as hydric or alluvial, or possess characteristics that are associated with reducing soil conditions, as defined in the Florida Administrative Code. Florida Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bayheads, bogs, cypress domes and strands, sloughs, wet prairies, riverine swamps and marshes, hydric seepage slopes, tidal marshes, mangrove swamps and other similar areas. Florida Wetlands generally do not include longleaf or slash pine flatwoods with an understory dominated by saw palmetto. Wetlands, for the purposes of this Ordinance should be delineated in accordance with Chapter 62-340, Florida Administrative Code.

**“Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter”** means a letter obtained from the Planning Department pursuant to Section 6 of this Ordinance, setting forth whether a particular parcel of property or lot is likely to contain Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers.

“**Yard**” means, for the purposes of this Ordinance, an area immediately adjacent to a residential dwelling or place of business used by the occupant or Owner for outdoor enjoyment, outdoor activities, or storage of non-hazardous materials or machinery.

“**Yard Maintenance**” means activities conducted within a Yard, that once commenced are continued to maintain the use.

**Section 2. Interpretation.** Unless the context indicates otherwise, words importing the singular number include the plural number, and vice versa; the terms "hereof," "hereby," "herein," "hereto," "hereunder" and similar terms refer to this Ordinance; and the term "hereafter" means after, and the term "heretofore" means before, the effective date of this Ordinance. Words of any gender include the correlative words of the other genders, unless the sense indicates otherwise.

**Section 3. General Findings.**

It is hereby ascertained, determined and declared that:

(A) Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 1(g) of the Florida Constitution, the Board has all powers of local self-government to perform County functions and to render services in a manner not inconsistent with general law and such power may be exercised by the enactment of County ordinances.

(B) The Board of County Commissioners of Wakulla County has adopted a Comprehensive Land Use Plan pursuant to Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, which provides for conservation of Wetlands and other Surface Waters and other natural resources found within Wakulla County.

(C) It is the purpose of this Ordinance to preserve, protect, and improve the public health, safety, welfare, and quality of life of the citizens of Wakulla County, by

protecting and sustaining Wetlands and other Surface Waters, minimizing activities that Degrade, destroy or otherwise negatively impact the values and functions of Wetlands and other Surface Waters, and where appropriate, reestablishing and restoring productive Wetlands and other Surface Waters.

(D) Further, it is the purpose and intent of this Ordinance to promote ecological stability, to improve water quality, to protect drinking water Aquifers, to prevent flooding, and to protect property and environmental resources.

(E) Wetlands serve many important economical, hydrological, and ecological values and functions in Wakulla County, including but not limited to, the following:

(1) Economical. Wetlands function as cost-effective barriers to storm surges in coastal and low lying areas. Wetlands serve as breeding and nursery areas for Wakulla County's vital fisheries. Wetlands and other Surface Waters provide healthy bottomland floodplain habitats necessary to sustain Wakulla County's historic Tupelo honey industry. Wetlands and other Surface Waters serve as nursery areas and food sources for many of the County's bird species, thus supporting ecotourism. Wetlands and other Surface Waters protect Wakulla County's recreational water ways that attract day users and tourists.

(2) Hydrological. Wetlands and other Surface Waters reduce the impact of flooding by acting as natural retention and water storage areas. Wetlands and other Surface Waters act as groundwater recharge and/or discharge areas for the surficial Aquifer, and protect water supplies for environmental, urban and Agricultural use. Wetlands and other Surface Waters protect groundwater table levels and help minimize damage from fires. Wetlands

and other Surface Waters provide in-flows of clean water to the rivers and estuaries through surface and groundwater connections and minimize urban runoff by filtering water.

(3) Ecological. Wetlands and other Surface Waters provide green space and biological diversity, and serve to moderate the local climate. Wetlands and other Surface Waters act as productive biological systems providing habitat, foraging and denning areas for fauna and habitat for flora. Wetlands and other Surface Waters are important to our community values and aesthetic appearance.

(F) This Ordinance is intended to supplement federal and state laws regulating Wetlands and other Surface Waters in order to ensure that Wetlands and other Surface Waters continue to serve the important functions described herein.

(G) It is intended that the implementation of this Ordinance will accomplish the following objectives:

(1) Establish Buffers between Wetlands and other Surface Waters and Development on adjacent lands and determine which allowable and conditional uses of property are compatible with the Wetlands and other Surface Waters and appropriate within the Buffers in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

(2) Establish design standards and a process for review of applications for Development Permits for properties in which Wetlands and other Surface Waters exist.

(3) Ensure that owners of property containing Wetlands and other Surface Waters shall not be unconstitutionally deprived of substantially all beneficial use of their property by the application of these regulations.

(4) Prevent pollution of surface water and groundwater, provide protection from increased flooding, promote conservation corridors along all major rivers, streams and drainage ways, preserve natural drainage characteristics and fish and wildlife resources of the county, limit sediment discharges, provide for erosion control, and reduce detrimental impacts to drinking water.

(5) Prevent unnecessary or excessive expenditures of County funds to provide for essential services and utilities, which may be required as a result of misuse or abuse of Wetlands and other Surface Waters.

(6) Provide for appropriate Mitigation in the event of a loss of Wetlands and other Surface Waters.

**Section 4. Application.** This Ordinance applies to all Development, as defined in this Ordinance, that may occur within Wakulla County.

**Section 5. Development in Wetlands and Other Surface Waters and Buffers.**

(A) No Development shall be allowed within Wetlands and Other Surface Waters or Buffers, except for the Allowable Uses set forth in this Ordinance, or unless a conditional use permit or variance is obtained.

(B) Pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan, a Buffer of seventy-five (75) feet shall exist around the perimeter of any Wetland or other Surface Water, and shall be divided into Buffer Zone One and Buffer Zone Two, as defined in this Ordinance.

**Section 6. Preliminary Wetlands Determination.**

(A) A Developer must comply with the provisions of this Section prior to commencement of any proposed Development, including the Clearing of any lot or parcel of land, but excluding Development activities involving an existing structure which do not increase the exterior square footage of the structure. Provided, however, a Developer may submit a "Formal Determination of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters" from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection or a Delineation, including and addressing geographically isolated Wetlands, not more than five years old, in lieu of an application for a Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter for a particular lot or parcel.

(B)(1) Prior to the Development of any land within Wakulla County, a Developer shall apply to the Planning Department for a Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter to determine the probable existence of Wetlands and other Surface Waters and Buffers within the subject property. During the preparation of the Preliminary Letter, the Planning Department shall consider National Wetlands Inventory maps, FDEP Wetland Inventory maps, the county soil survey, aerial photographs, topographic surveys, site visits, or any other applicable source of information, to determine whether Wetlands and other Surface Waters or Buffers may be present on the property. Any additional information necessary for review must be provided at the expense of the applicant.

(2) All applications for a Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter shall include the application fee established by resolution by the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners.

(3) In the event the Planning Department determines that no Wetlands and/or other Surface Waters or Buffers are likely to exist on the property, the Developer shall not be required to submit a Delineation as required in paragraph (C) herein, so long as such Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter is submitted with the application for Development.

(4) In the event that the Planning Department issues a Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter which includes an incorrect determination, the County shall not be bound by this determination if additional information received subsequent to the date of the Letter reveals that Wetlands or other Surface Waters are likely to exist.

(C) If the Planning Department determines that Wetlands and/or other Surface Waters are likely to exist on the property, or within 75 feet of the property, the Developer shall submit a Delineation of the Wetlands and other Surface Waters which includes geographically isolated Wetlands, and which is not more than five years old, to the Planning Department, as follows:

(1) If the Developer is submitting a proposed site plan for Development required pursuant to Section 5-10 of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, the Developer shall submit a Delineation of the Wetlands and other Surface Waters identifying all Wetlands and other Surface Waters located within the area which will be

impacted by the Development, including construction activities, and 75 feet beyond that area on all sides.

(2) If the Developer is submitting a subdivision plan and/or preliminary plat required for a subdivision pursuant to Section 7-14 of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, the Developer shall submit a Delineation of the Wetlands and other Surface Waters identifying all Wetlands and other Surface Waters located on the entire parcel or lot and within 75 feet of such parcel or lot.

(3) If the Planning Department issues a Wetlands and Other Surface Waters Preliminary Letter determining that Wetlands and other Surface Waters are likely to exist on a particular lot or parcel, and such lot or parcel has been included in a “Formal Determination of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters” from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection or a Delineation previously submitted to and accepted by the Planning Department, which includes geographically isolated Wetlands, and is no more than five years old, a Developer shall not be required to submit a new Delineation for such lot or parcel.

(D) In the event the Planning Department disputes the accuracy, completeness, or validity of a Delineation submitted by a Developer, the Developer shall, at the Developer’s expense, obtain a “Formal Determination of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters” from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection which includes and addresses geographically isolated Wetlands, and which shall be the final authority regarding the extent of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters on the subject parcel or within 75 feet of the subject parcel if access is granted by the Owner or Owners of the adjacent parcels.

(E) Development for which no Development Order is required is subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, and Developers of such property shall submit a plan for review and approval by the Planning Department before commencement of any Development activity, unless otherwise exempted by law.

**Section 7. Allowable Uses.**

(A) The following uses shall be permitted in Wetlands and other Surface Waters and Buffers, provided they do not have an Adverse Impact on the Wetland or other Surface Water.

(1) Construction, repair, replacement or maintenance of Docks, Piers, Boardwalks, Observation Decks, and other elevated walkways, used for Water Dependent Activities, provided such structure meets the design standards contained in Section 10 of this Ordinance, and so long as all applicable state and federal permits have been obtained and provided to the Planning Department at the time of application for a local Development Order.

(2) The Construction of private Seawalls within an Artificially Created Waterbody where such Construction adjoins two existing Seawalls not more than one hundred fifty (150) feet apart.

(3) Parks and Recreation Uses consistent with the purpose and intent of this Ordinance.

(4) Conservation and preservation areas and nature trails.

(5) Hunting, trapping, and fishing, environmental education, and scientific research where not otherwise prohibited by law, and consistent with the purpose and intent of this Ordinance.

(6) Installation of boundary fences that do not alter the hydrology of the Wetland or other Surface Water and which meet the design standards contained in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

(7) Removal of Exotic Invasive Plants in a manner consistent with the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

(8) Development activity for which the Developer has received a valid Development Order from Wakulla County prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, so long as such Development Order has not expired or been revoked.

(9) The renewal, improvement or alteration of fifty percent (50%) or less of any structure, so long as such renewal, improvement, or alteration remains within the same footprint as the original structure.

(10) The repair or replacement of legally constructed structures damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster or fire, so long as such repair or replacement remains within the same footprint as the original structure.

(B) In addition to those uses provided in paragraph (A) above, the following uses shall be permitted provided they do not have an Adverse Impact on the Wetland or Other Surface Water or the Buffer.

(1) Buffer Zone One and Buffer Zone Two:

(a) Access for utilities in order to serve upland areas as necessary and with only a Minimal Impact to the Buffer.

(b) Continuous uses of property in existence prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, so long as such uses are consistent with existing law.

(2) Buffer Zone Two:

(a) Landscaping and Yard Maintenance activities within an area not to exceed twenty-five feet in the front, fifteen feet in the back, and eight feet on either side of the principal building located on such property and in a manner consistent with the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

#### **Section 8. Conditional Uses.**

(A) The Wakulla County Planning and Zoning Commission may grant a conditional use permit within Wetlands and other Surface Waters or Buffers, unless otherwise provided herein, for:

(1) Wetlands Restoration and habitat management.

(2) Stormwater management facilities within Buffer Zone Two.

(3) Docks, Piers, Boardwalks, Observation Decks, and other elevated walkways, and access to marinas for Water Dependent Activities which do not meet the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

(4) Boundary fences which do not meet the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

(5) Construction of Boat Ramps in a manner consistent with the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance. These design standards

shall be considered minimum standards, and additional conditions may be placed on Development approved pursuant to this subparagraph.

(6) Removal of Exotic Invasive Species in a manner that does not meet the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

(7) Shoreline Armoring, including but not limited to Seawalls, not otherwise allowed in this Ordinance, along the shoreline of Surface Waters other than geographically isolated Wetlands, in a manner designed to minimize Adverse Impacts to the shoreline.

(8) Driveways constructed where no upland alternative access exists, and utilities located within or immediately adjacent to the driveway, in a manner consistent with the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance. These design standards shall be considered minimum standards, and additional conditions may be placed on Development approved pursuant to this subparagraph.

(B) Applications for a conditional use permit shall be filed with the Planning Department and processed in the manner provided in Section 3-21, of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, along with a proposed plan demonstrating that impacts to Wetlands or other Surface Waters have been minimized to the maximum extent possible.

(C) Once the Developer has demonstrated adequate minimization of unavoidable Adverse Impacts as determined by the Planning Department, the Developer shall develop a Mitigation plan in cooperation with the Planning Department which complies with the requirements of Section 12 of this Ordinance.

(D) The Planning Department shall submit the application and Mitigation plan to the Wakulla County Technical Review Committee, at which time the application shall be reviewed for comments and for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code. The comments of the Technical Review Committee shall be forwarded with the application for the conditional use permit to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

(E) The Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the application and the Mitigation plan submitted by the Developer, and the comments from the Technical Review Committee, prior to approving, approving with conditions, or denying an application for a conditional use, as provided in Section 3-21 of the Land Development Code.

(F) In the event approval of an application for a conditional use will have Adverse Impacts on a Wetland or other Surface Water, as determined by the Planning Department and the Technical Review Committee, such conditional use shall require Mitigation.

#### **Section 9. Variances.**

(A) The Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners may grant a variance for the following:

(1) The Development of residential and non-residential properties within Buffer Zone Two if a failure to allow such Development will deprive the Developer of substantially all economic and beneficial use of the property, and so long as such Development is consistent with other provisions of the Wakulla

County Code of Ordinances, the Land Development Code, and the Comprehensive Plan.

(2) New roads or utilities not otherwise authorized as an allowable or a conditional use located within Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers.

(3) Boat Ramps which do not meet the design standards set forth in Section 10 of this Ordinance.

(4) A reduction or modification of the minimum buildable area requirement provided in Section 10(A).

(B) Applications for a variance shall be filed with the Planning Department and processed in the manner provided in Section 3-22, of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, along with a proposed plan demonstrating that impacts to Wetlands or other Surface Waters have been minimized to the maximum extent possible.

(C) Once the Developer has demonstrated adequate minimization of unavoidable Adverse Impacts as determined by the Planning Department, the Developer shall develop a Mitigation plan in cooperation with the Planning Department which complies with the requirements of Section 12 of this Ordinance.

(D) The Planning Department shall submit the application and Mitigation plan to the Wakulla County Technical Review Committee, at which time the application and Mitigation plan shall be reviewed for comments and for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code. It shall then be forwarded by the Planning Department to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

(E) The Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the application and Mitigation plan for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and shall make a

recommendation to the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners for approval or denial of the variance and the Mitigation plan.

(F) The Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners shall consider both the comments from the Technical Review Committee and the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission prior to approving, approving with conditions, or denying an application for a variance and Mitigation plan.

(G) In the event approval of an application for a variance will have Adverse Impacts on a Wetland or other Surface Water as determined by the Planning Department and the Technical Review Committee, such variance shall require Mitigation.

**Section 10. Design Standards.**

(A) Developers of lots containing Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers platted subsequent to the effective date of this Ordinance shall demonstrate that such lots possess a minimum of two thousand eight hundred (2,800) square feet of buildable area. Buildable area shall be that area outside of all required building setbacks, Buffers, and Wetlands or other Surface Waters.

(B) Wetlands within subdivisions approved after the effective date of this Ordinance may be placed in a conservation easement in favor of Wakulla County, the State of Florida, the United States, a Bona Fide Land Preservation Entity, or the property owner's association for the subdivision, if such entity is willing to accept the easement, as approved by the Board of County Commissioners in the proposed development plan. Conservation easements must comply with the requirements of

Chapter 706, Florida Statutes, and must be recorded in the public records of Wakulla County.

(C) Docks, Piers, Boardwalks, Observation Decks, and other elevated walkways constructed within Wetlands and other Surface Waters shall be limited in number to one structure per lot or parcel and shall satisfy the following design standards in addition to all other requirements of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, unless the Developer obtains a conditional use permit providing alternative standards:

(1) Docks.

(a) The Dock shall be located on the property at the point of least distance between the uplands and the open water body to minimize the intrusion into the Wetland or other Surface Water.

(b) A Dock shall only extend far enough to reach a maximum water depth of four feet below mean low water, so long as it does not extend beyond twenty percent of the width of the water body and have more than five hundred square feet of over-water surface area in Outstanding Florida Waters or one thousand square feet of surface area in waters not designated as Outstanding Florida Waters.

(c) If there is a vertical seawall along the shoreline and the water depth at the point at which the Dock is constructed is already four feet below the mean low water line, the Dock shall not extend more than twenty-five feet beyond the vertical seawall.

(d) The access walkway of a Dock shall be no more than four feet wide.

(e) The Terminal Platform of a Dock shall be no larger than one hundred sixty (160) square feet.

(f) Boards or other opaque materials, if used to construct the surface of the Dock, shall be no more than eight inches wide and be spaced at least one-half inch apart.

(g) Any part of the Dock located over submerged or emergent aquatic vegetation shall be elevated a minimum of five (5) feet above the mean or ordinary high water line.

(2) Piers.

(a) The Pier shall be located on the property at the point of least distance between the uplands and the open water body to minimize the intrusion into the Wetland or other Surface Water.

(b) A Pier shall not extend beyond twenty percent of the width of the water body and shall not have more than five hundred square feet of over-water surface area in Outstanding Florida Waters or one thousand square feet of surface area in waters not designated as Outstanding Florida Waters.

(c) If there is a vertical seawall along the shoreline, the Pier shall not extend more than twenty-five feet beyond the vertical seawall.

(d) The access walkway of a Pier shall be no more than four feet wide.

(e) The Terminal Platform of a Pier shall be no larger than one hundred sixty (160) square feet.

(f) Boards or other opaque materials, if used to construct the surface of the Pier, shall be no more than eight inches wide and be spaced at least one-half inch apart.

(g) Any part of the Pier located over submerged or emergent aquatic vegetation shall be elevated a minimum of five (5) feet above the mean or ordinary high water line.

(3) Boardwalks or other elevated walkways and Observation Decks,

(a) The Boardwalk or other elevated walkway shall be no more than four feet wide.

(b) An Observation Deck whether constructed as part of a Boardwalk or other elevated walkway, or separately, shall be no larger than one hundred sixty (160) square feet.

(c) The total surface area of the Boardwalk or other elevated walkway shall not exceed twenty percent of the surface area of the Wetland or other Surface Water located on the subject parcel or lot, or one thousand (1,000) square feet, whichever is less.

(d) Boards or other opaque materials, if used to construct the surface of the Boardwalk or other elevated walkway or Observation Deck, shall be no more than eight (8) inches wide and shall be spaced at least one-half (1/2) inch apart.

(e) Any part of the Boardwalk or other elevated walkway or Observation Deck located above Wetland vegetation shall be designed in such a manner as to minimize the Adverse Impacts to the Wetland.

(D) Boundary fences that do not alter the hydrology of a Wetland or other Surface Water shall satisfy the following design standards in addition to all other requirements of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, unless the Developer obtains a conditional use permit providing alternative standards:

(1) The structure shall not block navigation, create a navigational hazard, impede the natural flow of water by itself or through the accumulation of debris;

(2) No fence shall be installed into open waters (areas of water bodies not supporting emergent vegetation) of any navigable river, stream, canal, or tributary thereof, a distance more than twenty-five feet or more than twenty percent of the width of the open water, whichever is less, and no fence shall extend more than fifteen feet waterward of the landward extent of any lake, including contiguous Wetlands;

(3) The fence shall be constructed of wire attached to posts which project at least two feet above the mean annual flood or ordinary high water elevation of the waterway;

(4) In navigable waters and all lakes, the structure shall be adequately marked with reflectors visible from both directions paralleling the shoreline; and

(5) Dredging or filling performed shall be limited to that necessary to install individual fence posts.

(E) Driveways constructed within Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers where no upland alternative exists and utilities located within or adjacent to such driveways, shall satisfy the following design standards:

(1) The driveway and utility access-way shall not exceed twenty feet in width including stabilized side slopes.

(2) The driveway or utility access way shall be designed so as not to impede or divert the hydrological flow of the Wetland or other Surface Water, and shall further be designed in a manner consistent with Best Management Practices for erosion control.

(F) Best Management Practices for erosion control, including, but not limited to silt fences, shall be used in conjunction with all Development in or adjacent to Wetlands or other Surface Waters and Buffers and shall be maintained before, during, and after Construction, until final site stabilization is obtained, to protect Wetlands or other Surface Waters from intrusion and siltation.

(G) Removal of Exotic Invasive Plants from Wetlands and other Surface Waters and Buffers shall satisfy the following design standards in addition to all other requirements of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, permits issued by the State of Florida, and Best Management Practices:

(1) The plant removal method which causes the least impact to the Wetland or other Surface Water shall be used.

(2) Removal shall only be conducted using hand tools and chain saws. No other mechanical equipment may be used within the Wetland or other Surface Water or Buffer for the removal of Exotic Invasive Plants. If other equipment is necessary, the Developer shall obtain a conditional use permit.

(3) Herbicides shall only be used within a Wetland or other Surface Water pursuant to an Aquatic Plant Control Permit issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

(4) Removal may only be conducted during time periods when the plant species is not seeding so as to prevent the wider distribution of the plant.

(H) Landscaping and Yard Maintenance activities allowed in Buffer Zone Two shall satisfy the following design standards in addition to all other requirements of the Wakulla County Land Development Code, and permits issued by the State of Florida:

(1) Activities shall not alter the natural topography of the Buffer Zones.

(2) Any plantings that occur after the effective date of this ordinance shall not involve any Exotic Invasive Plants.

(3) Developers shall take steps to prevent Exotic Invasive Plants from extending into the remaining Buffer or the Wetland or other Surface Water.

(4) Debris shall not be deposited into the remaining, unaltered Buffer area.

(I) Boat Ramps shall satisfy the following criteria, unless the Developer obtains a variance providing alternative standards:

(1) Only one Boat Ramp may be located on any lot or parcel.

(2) No Boat Ramp shall be constructed unless navigational access exists to the Boat Ramp which provides a minimum depth of two feet below the mean low water level in tidal waters or two feet below the mean annual low water level in non-tidal waters. However, in no event shall a boat ramp exceed a maximum of 35 feet in length.

(3) There shall be no filling of Wetlands or other Surface Waters, other than the actual Boat Ramp surface or incidental filling associated with recontouring the land under the Boat Ramp to create a smooth grade.

(4) Boat Ramps shall not exceed a width of 20 feet, including stabilized side slopes. State agencies, counties, municipalities and water management districts are authorized to construct or alter a Boat Ramp or to widen an existing Boat Ramp which does not exceed 50 feet in width.

(5) The construction or use of the Boat Ramp shall not significantly impede navigability in the water body.

(6) The above-water portion of the Boat Ramp shall be landward of the mean high water line (for tidal waters) or the ordinary high water line (for non-tidal waters).

(7) Dredging shall be limited to that amount of material necessary to construct the Boat Ramp surface, and the amount of dredged material shall be less than 100 cubic yards.

(8) All spoil material that results from construction of a Boat Ramp shall be deposited in an upland spoil site which shall be designed and located to prevent the escape of spoil material into Wetlands or other Surface Waters such that state water quality standards are not violated.

(9) There shall be no dredging or filling of submerged grassbeds or coral communities.

(10) Boat ramps shall be stabilized to avoid erosion.

## **Section 11. Exemptions.**

(A) The following activities are exempt from application of this Ordinance:

(1) Development activities conducted in the following, so long as they were not constructed in Wetlands or other Surface Waters and do not intercept an Aquifer: Artificially Constructed Waterbodies, including canals, lakes, and ditches that are not hydrologically connected to Wetlands or other Surface Waters or are not a part of a government-approved Mitigation plan; swales; stormwater facilities; gravel pits; stone quarries; or wastewater treatment lagoons.

(2) Dredging and filling activities conducted within Wetlands or other Surface Waters for which State and/or federal permits were issued for such purposes prior to the effective date of this Ordinance and which are still valid.

(3) Bona Fide Agricultural Uses and Silviculture activities, as well as any activity of a bona fide farm operation on land classified as Agricultural land pursuant to section 193.461, Florida Statutes, if such activity is regulated through implemented Best Management Practices, interim measures, or regulations developed by the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, or a water management district and adopted under chapter 120, Florida Statutes, as part of a statewide or regional program.

(4) Vegetation Maintenance and Tree Pruning or Trimming of utility easements and rights-of-way by a utility company, so long as such activity conforms to all requirements of law.

(5) Development within a Wetland or other Surface Water which is smaller than 500 square feet in size or Development within a Buffer adjacent to a Wetland or other Surface Water which is smaller than 500 square feet in size.

(B) The requirements of this Ordinance shall not be applicable to Development occurring adjacent to springs, karst features, or sinkholes, which shall instead be governed by Policies 13.1 through 13.12 of the Future Land Use Element of the Wakulla County Comprehensive Plan.

**Section 12. Mitigation.**

(A) Mitigation of Adverse Impacts shall compensate for natural resource losses, whether on- or off-site, through one or more of the following options as determined by the County: (1) the creation of Wetlands or other Surface Waters; (2) the enhancement and/or Restoration of the hydrology of Wetlands or other Surface Waters which have been altered or drained; (3) the preservation of Wetlands or other Surface Waters; or (4) the purchase of Mitigation banking credits, subject to paragraph (D) of this Section. The Mitigation shall provide the same Wetland type and function and be located, if possible, within the same hydrologic basin within Wakulla County as the Wetland that is destroyed or Degraded.

(B) A Mitigation plan shall provide details of the Developer's intended Mitigation activities, as provided in paragraph (A) above, to compensate for the Adverse Impacts to Wetlands or other Surface Waters. The Mitigation plan shall include provisions for the replacement of the functional values of the Adversely Impacted Wetland or other Surface Water. The amount of Mitigation shall be assessed using the

Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method in F.S. 373.414(18), and Fla. Admin. Code, ch. 62-345.

(C) A Mitigation plan shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The Mitigation plan will specify the Mitigation activities to be conducted, criteria by which success will be measured, maintenance requirements, a monitoring plan covering an appropriate period of time based on the type of Mitigation required, and bonding requirements, to assure and document these success criteria.

(D) While not preferred, Adverse Impacts of Development can be offset through the utilization of Mitigation credits from a permitted Mitigation bank with a Mitigation service area that includes Wakulla County, in accordance with Chapter 373, Part IV, Florida Statutes, when the Planning Department determines that other forms of Mitigation would be impractical or unfeasible, or would have a low likelihood of success. In determining whether Mitigation shall be allowed, the following criteria shall be considered:

(1) Whether Mitigation banking will result in the replacement of the functional values of Wetlands or other Surface Waters within Wakulla County.

(2) Whether other forms of Mitigation are not expected to have comparable long-term viability due to such factors as unsuitable hydrologic conditions or ecologically incompatible existing adjacent land uses or future land uses identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

(3) Whether Mitigation banking would provide greater improvement in ecological value than other forms of mitigation.

(4) Whether other forms of Mitigation will be able to employ the same vegetation and produce the same Wetland type as the Wetland which will be Adversely Impacted.

(E) A Mitigation plan shall be approved by the Planning Department prior to submission of an application for a conditional use or variance to the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Board of County Commissioners. All bonding requirements shall be satisfied before issuance of a building permit or other Development Order.

(F) To satisfy the bonding requirements imposed by this Section, a Developer subject to a Mitigation plan shall secure a certificate of bond from the Wakulla County Clerk of Court stating that a bond is available to the County and has been posted in an amount equal to at least 125% of the amount required to complete the required Mitigation plan, provided at the Developer's expense. The amount required to complete the Mitigation plan shall be calculated utilizing quotes obtained by the Developer from vendors who will provide the necessary materials and services to complete the required Mitigation plan.

(G) The County shall be authorized to conduct periodic investigations to determine compliance with a Mitigation plan and to monitor the progress of the plan. If at any time, the Planning Department determines that an approved Mitigation plan is or will be unsuccessful, the Developer shall be required to modify and/or extend the plan to ensure that success is achieved.

(H) At the end of the monitoring period in a Mitigation plan, or, if the plan includes distinct phases, at the end of a phase, the Developer shall apply to the Planning Department for a determination of success, at which time, the Planning

Department shall review the Mitigation plan and conduct an inspection to determine whether the Mitigation meets the success criteria. If the Developer has met the success criteria for a Mitigation plan, or, if the plan includes distinct phases, any phase of the plan, the Planning Department shall release the bond or the portion of the bond associated with the successful phase.

(I) If a Developer subject to an approved Mitigation plan fails to comply with the requirements of the plan, such failure shall constitute a violation of this Ordinance.

**Section 13. Administration and Enforcement.**

(A) Administration of this Ordinance shall be the responsibility of the County Administrator and the Planning Department.

(B) If Wetlands or other Surface Waters determined to be jurisdictional to the State of Florida or United States government have been altered or impacted without proper authorization from the State or the United States government, the County shall report the potential violation to the appropriate state or federal agency.

(C) Enforcement and prosecution of this Ordinance shall be the responsibility of the Wakulla County Code Enforcement Board and the Wakulla County Code Enforcement Officer pursuant to Chapter 162, Florida Statutes and Chapter 2, Wakulla County Code of Ordinances. For the purposes of this Section, Planning Department staff may be designated as code inspectors by the Director of the Planning Department and may assist, as needed, in the investigation of complaints, and the enforcement and prosecution of this Ordinance.

(D) In addition to enforcing this Ordinance through the use of the Code Enforcement Board, the County may also enforce this Section by injunctive relief, or by any other means provided by law.

(E) The County of Wakulla, as a governmental body, shall not be exempt from this Ordinance.

**Section 14. Penalties.**

(A) The Wakulla County Code Enforcement Board shall levy fines and require Restoration, and Mitigation if appropriate, of the Adversely Impacted Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers, pursuant to a Corrective Action Plan, when it determines that such Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers contained within Wakulla County have been Adversely Impacted by any activity in violation of this Ordinance subsequent to the effective date.

(B) A violation of this Ordinance shall be any unauthorized alteration of or Adverse Impact to Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers in any manner defined by this Ordinance, as measured in 5,000 square foot increments. The unauthorized alteration of or Adverse Impact to each additional 1 square foot up to 5,000 square feet above the first 5,000 square feet of Wetlands or other Surface Waters or Buffers shall constitute a separate violation of this Ordinance.

(C) If the Code Enforcement Board determines that a violation of this Ordinance has occurred, the Owner shall develop and enter into a Corrective Action Plan approved by the County, by the compliance date in the Board's order. Further, the Code Enforcement Board shall impose fines in an amount up to two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) per day per violation for a first violation and five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per

day per violation for a repeat violation in the event the Owner fails to enter into a Restoration plan by the compliance date.

(D) All violations occurring on the same day or considered in the same case by the Code Enforcement Board shall be treated as “first violations”.

(E) In addition to any fines, the Code Enforcement Board may require Owners found in violation of this Ordinance to pay the costs incurred by the County in prosecuting the case before the Code Enforcement Board, including any costs incurred in the hiring of experts.

(F) The Corrective Action Plan will specify actions required to remedy the violations of this ordinance, including, but not limited to, Restoration of Adversely Impact Wetlands and other Surface Waters to the condition they were in prior to the unauthorized activity; Mitigation, if appropriate, in accordance with Section 12 of this Ordinance; and/or obtaining any necessary Development Orders, including variances or conditional use permits for unauthorized activity with Mitigation.

(G) The Corrective Action Plan plan will specify the activities that must be conducted and criteria by which success will be measured, as well as maintenance requirements, a monitoring plan covering an appropriate period of time based on the type of activities required, and bonding requirements for Restoration and Mitigation, if appropriate, to assure and document these success criteria. A Corrective Action Plan shall be approved by the Planning Department and all bonding requirements shall be satisfied prior to implementation of the plan and entry of a Code Enforcement Board order acknowledging compliance.

(H) To satisfy the bonding requirements imposed by this Section for Restoration and Mitigation, if appropriate, an Owner subject to a Corrective Action Plan shall secure a certificate of bond from the Wakulla County Clerk of Court stating that a bond is available to the County and has been posted in an amount equal to at least 125% of the amount required to complete the required Corrective Action Plan, provided at the Owner's expense. The amount required to complete the Corrective Action Plan shall be calculated utilizing quotes obtained by the Owner from vendors who will provide the necessary materials and services to complete the required Corrective Action Plan.

(I) The County shall be authorized to conduct periodic investigations to determine compliance with a Corrective Action Plan and to monitor the progress of the plan. If at any time, the Planning Department determines that an approved Corrective Action Plan is or will be unsuccessful, the Owner shall be required to modify and/or extend the plan to ensure that success is achieved.

(J) At the end of the monitoring period of a Corrective Action Plan, or, if the plan includes distinct phases, at the end of a phase, the Owner shall apply to the Planning Department for a determination of success, at which time, the Planning Department shall review the Corrective Action Plan and conduct an inspection to determine whether the Corrective Action meets the success criteria. If the Owner has met the success criteria for a Corrective Action Plan, or, if the plan includes distinct phases, any phase of the plan, the Planning Department shall release the bond or the portion of the bond associated with the successful phase.

(K) If an Owner subject to an approved Corrective Action Plan fails to comply with the requirements of the plan, such failure shall constitute a violation of this Ordinance.

**Section 15. Alternative Method.** This Ordinance shall be deemed to provide an additional and alternative method for the doing of the things authorized hereby and shall be regarded as supplemental and additional to powers conferred by other laws, and shall not be regarded as in derogation of any powers now existing or which may hereafter come into existence. This Ordinance, being necessary for the welfare of the inhabitants of the County, shall be liberally construed to effect the purposes hereof.

**ARTICLE III. SEVERABILITY.** The provisions of this Ordinance are severable; and if any section, subsection, sentence, clause or provision is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby.

**ARTICLE IV. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after its passage and adoption.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
HOWARD KESSLER, Chair

ATTEST:

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BRENT X. THURMOND, Ex Officio  
Clerk to the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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Heather Encinosa, Esq.  
County Attorney

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