



Habitat Conservation Plan

Community Services Department
Parks and Natural Resources Division



Overview

- Density Model Timeline
- Density Model Status Update
- Overall HCP Implementation
- Options



Density Model Timeline

- February 2016: Natural Resources Staff submittal of density modification
- August 2016: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provides initial comments and requests additional information (RAI)
- September 2016: Natural Resources Staff response to RAI
- February 2017: Natural Resources Staff meets with USFWS for first scheduled HCP implementation review; side discussion regarding the density proposal which has not been reviewed by the first supervisory level at this time; USFWS provides county with amendment application form
- February 2017: Natural Resources Staff submits completed form
- August 2017: USFWS informed the County that the amendment will need to be published in the Federal Register
- October 2017: Local Vero Beach office submits density modification to the Atlanta regional office for review, Solicitor's review and Headquarters' review



Density Model Update

- March 2018: Commissioners and County staff meet with USFWS Headquarters
- May 2018: County requests a determination from USFWS of the alternative parcel as a suitable Reserve Design alternative
- July 2018: USFWS staff informs the County that the density amendment will need to be processed as a major amendment and not a minor amendment and requested additional information regarding our amendment
- August 2018: USFWS Headquarters staff provided their comments and feedback to County staff
- September 2018: County re-requests a determination from USFWS of the alternative parcel as a suitable Reserve Design alternative
- September 2018: USFWS responds to the County's alternative parcel determination request with a request for additional information



ITP and HCP

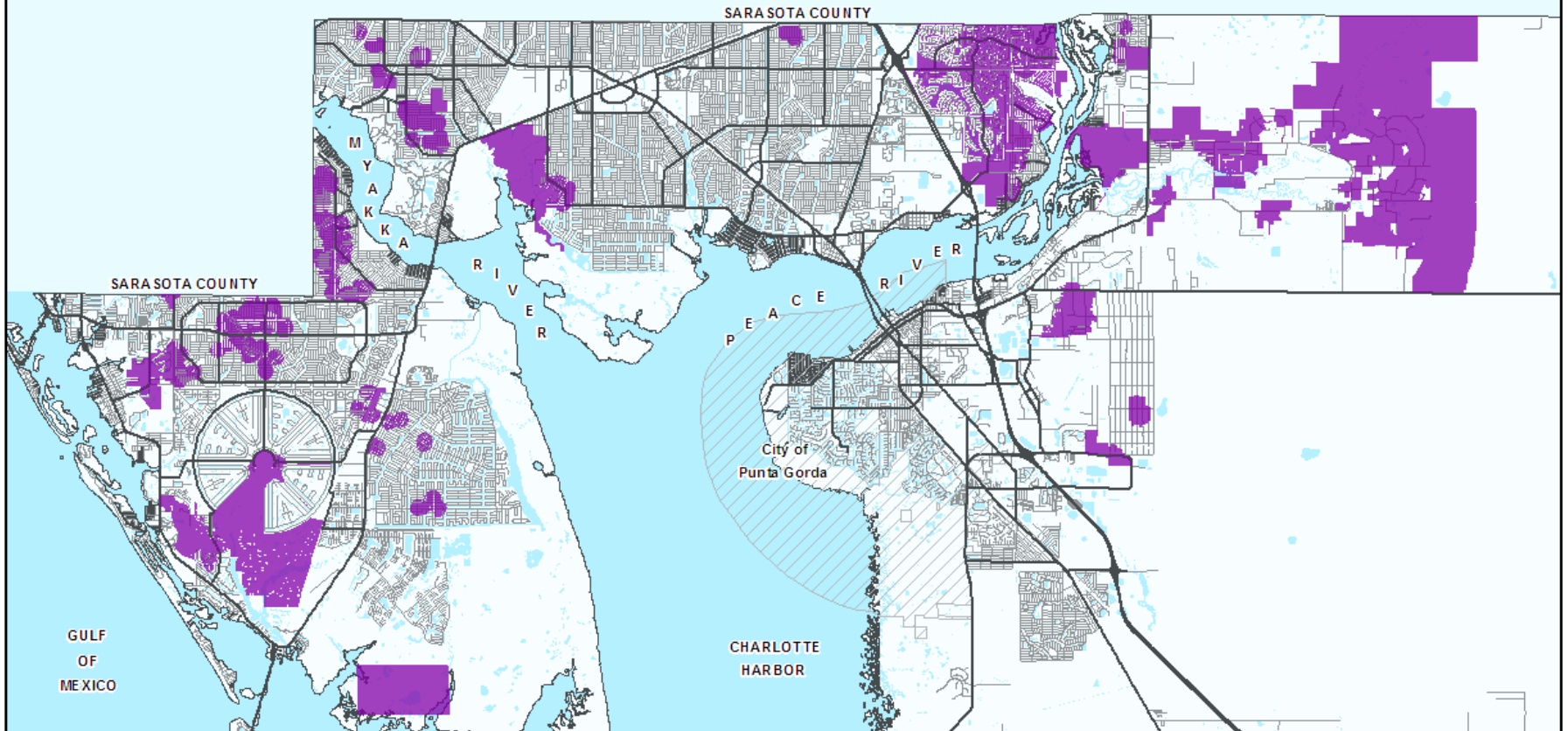
In December of 2015 the County was issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and associated Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

- The ITP provides authorization for impacts and take of the Florida scrub-jay in **Plan Area**
 - Areas of the County where scrub-jay habitat is present and birds had been document
- The HCP provides for the County's conservation and compensation to the impacts to the scrub-jay, including acquisition of the **Reserve**
 - Area identified for acquisition and management




CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Scrub-jay Permit Plan Area



Stateplane Projection
Datum: NAD83
Units: Feet

 **SCRUB-JAY PERMIT BOUNDARY**

Source: Community Development

Metadata available upon request

(Not To Scale)

This map is a representation of compiled public information. It is believed to be an accurate and true depiction for the stated purpose, but Charlotte County and its employees make no guarantees, implied or otherwise, to the accuracy, or completeness. We therefore do not accept any responsibilities as to its use. This is not a survey or a title to be used for design. Reflected Dimensions are for informational purposes only and may have been rounded to the nearest tenth. For precise dimensions, please refer to recorded plats and related documents.



Overall HCP Implementation

The implementation of the County's HCP has multiple facets to be implemented over the 30-year permit term and include:

- 8 biological goals and objectives
- Active land management and restoration
- Monitoring
- Reporting



HCP Target Objectives

Objective 1: Maintain and manage existing County-owned scrub

Scrub lands will be restored and managed in the long-term to ensure the optimum scrub habitat structure for scrub-jays is achieved and maintained.

Status: Land management activities are ongoing on County-owned scrub

Challenges: Optimal scrub habitat management utilizes prescribed fire as the primary management technique; ongoing challenges implementing the prescribed fire program include increasing urban interface and limited weather windows

Recommendations: None

Objective 2: Acquire a minimum of 1300 acres as identified in the Reserve

The scrub habitats that have been identified in the Reserve were arrived at based on a spatial configuration that optimizes population viability within the County.

Status: Staff has worked with Real Estate Services to acquire approximately 40 acres of Reserve lands in the Washington Loop area

Challenges: Include the willing seller nature of the program and limitations on the County ability to acquire Reserve Design properties in HOA/POAs

Recommendations: Approve a new HCP acquisition resolution that allows the Staff to acquire lands and pay any required association fees if applicable within the entire Reserve



HCP Target Objectives

Objective 3: Coordinate with other public lands

Implement a plan for working with other public conservation entities (Florida Forestry Service [FFS], Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission [FFWCC], Southwest Florida Water Management District [SWFWMD], Florida Department of Environmental Protection [FDEP], etc.) to ensure proper management, monitoring, and communications will occur to assist in maintaining optimum scrub structure to sustain or increase scrub-jay populations.

Status: County staff is a member and participant in the Southwest Florida Scrub Working Group, an interagency group focused on the management of scrub and scrub species; additionally staff coordinates with FDEP staff regarding management of state lands adjacent to County lands

Challenges: Due to changes in staff and administratively within SWFWMD, coordination of the management of the SWFWMD-owned Reserve lands has waned

Recommendations: Explore a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allowing County staff to assist in land management activities on SWFWMD-owned Reserve lands



HCP Target Objectives

Objective 4: Increase the baseline population of scrub-jays within the Reserve

The target will be to maintain at least 30 scrub-jay groups within the Reserve 15 years after permit approval (2029), and maintain 60 scrub-jay groups by 30 years after the approval of the HCP (2044).

Status: There are currently 10 family groups within the Reserve

Challenges: Scrub-jays require between 15-25 acres of scrubby habitat per group for ongoing viability; restoration and management of acquired habitat can take approximately 5 years to be viable for scrub-jays

Recommendations: Pursue additional acquisitions within the entire Reserve



HCP Target Objectives

Objective 5: Conduct scrub-jay translocations as appropriate

When and where sufficient acreage of unoccupied scrub-jay habitat in optimal condition is available within the Reserve, translocation to these areas will take place, following USFWS Florida Scrub-Jay Translocation Guidelines.

Status: No translocations have been scheduled at this time

Challenges: None, initial restoration of newly acquired parcels will begin in 2019; habitat may be suitable for translocation within 5 years

Recommendations: None

Objective 6: Conduct scrub-jay population monitoring

USFWS-approved scrub-jay survey guidelines will be used to conduct annual scrub-jay censuses on the parcels identified within the Reserve.

Status: Annual scrub-jays surveys as outlined in the HCP are being conducted on Reserve parcels annually

Challenges: Staff resources as additional lands are acquired

Recommendations: Evaluate the need for additional staff as outlined and provided for in the HCP



HCP Target Objectives

Objective 7: Implement vegetation monitoring program

A program to monitor the structure and composition of vegetation within the Reserve will be developed and implemented.

Status: The vegetation monitoring program has been established and implementation has begun on Reserve parcels annually

Challenges: Staff resources as additional lands are acquired

Recommendations: Evaluate the need for additional staff as outlined and provided for in the HCP

Objective 8: Implement Long-Term Management Plan

The long-term management plan, described in Section 4.5, will be implemented for all lands existing and acquired within the Reserve to ensure vegetation structure and composition is maintained in perpetuity such that optimal conditions for scrub-jay persistence is achieved.

Status: Land management activities are ongoing on County-owned scrub and restoration of lands acquired in the Reserve is anticipated to begin in 2019

Challenges: Staff resources as additional lands are acquired

Recommendations: Evaluate the need for additional staff as outlined and provided for in the HCP



Monitoring and Reporting

- The County is required to provide an annual HCP Report to the USFWS to address the status of acquisition of Reserve parcels, as well as biological and compliance monitoring as follows:
 - Habitat monitoring
 - Scrub-jay monitoring
 - Parcel acquisition (total acreage of acquired sites)
 - Building permit tracking (total number of acres where permits have been issued)
- At years 2, 4, 6 and every five years thereafter the County and USFWS staff will meet to evaluate the status of the acquisition of Reserve parcels to determine whether acquisition, development, and fee collection are on track
- To ensure that acquisition of the Reserve is occurring at an equivalent pace to development, the issuing of permits in the Plan Area will be suspended if acquisition in the Reserve has not kept pace with development within 1 year of reaching 25%, 50% and 75% development of the acreage in the Plan Area



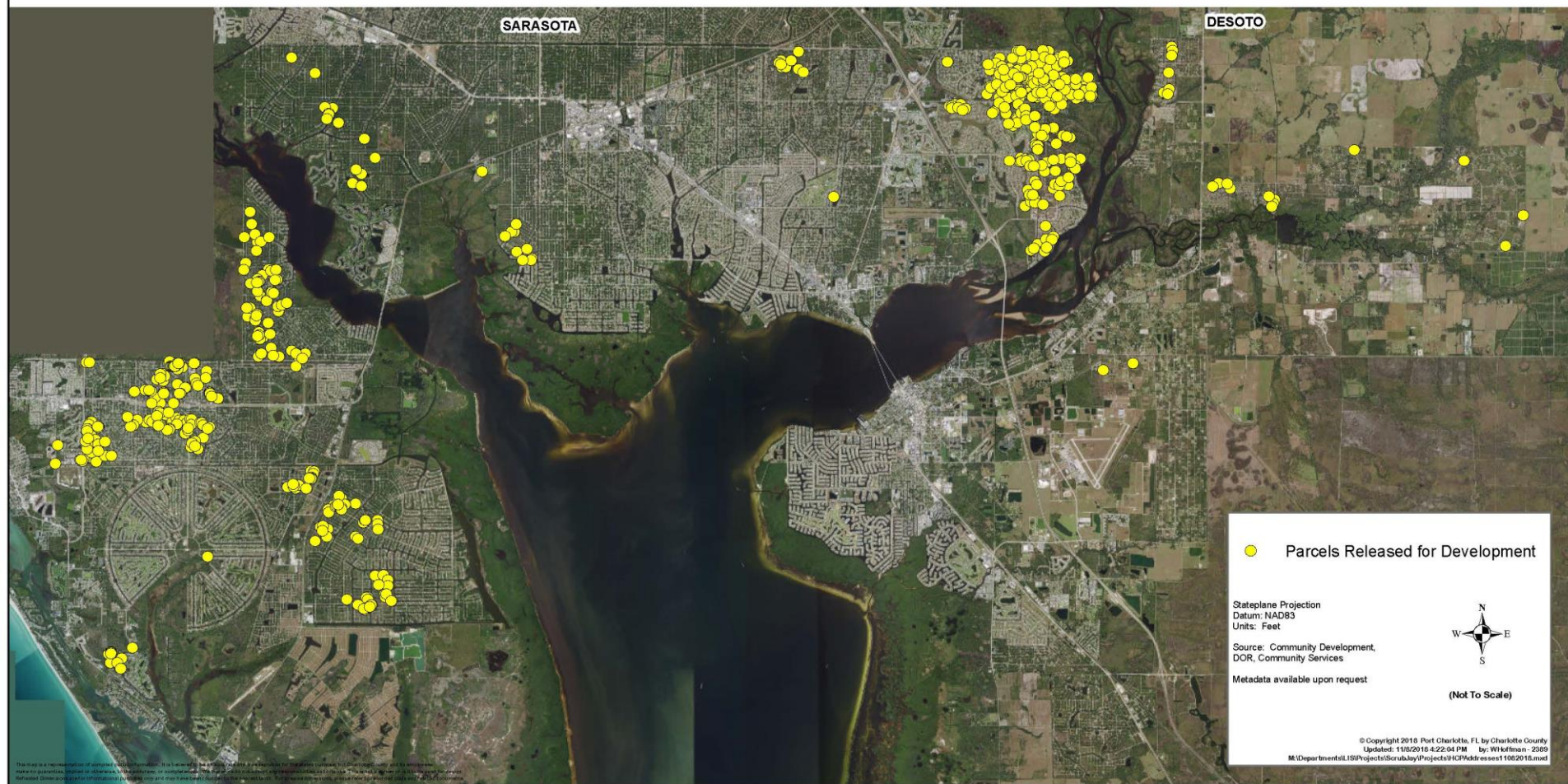
Current Status of Acquisition and Permitting

- February 2015 to February 2017 (year 2) meeting with USFWS
 - Parcel Acquisition: 12.57 acres
 - 12.57 acres acquired / 1,336 acres needed = .94%
 - Building Permit Tracking: 187 permits
 - 187 permits issued / 18,000 total lots = 1.04%
 - Total fees collected: \$398,830
- February 2015 to November 5th 2018
 - Parcel Acquisition: 42.368 acres
 - 41.55 acres acquired / 1,336 acres needed = 3.1%
 - Building Permit Tracking: 608 permits
 - 608 permits issued / 18,000 total lots = 3.4%
 - Total fees collected: \$1,416,730



Community Development

Scrub Jay Parcels Released for Development Since HCP





Summary

- Permitting and land acquisition ratios based in the current land acquisition strategy will start deviating moving forward
- Target Objectives 2, 4, 5 and 8 are directly dependent on the acquisition and management of the Reserve
 - Target Objective 4 has a timebound requirement at year 15 (2029) that requires lead time for management and potentially translocation to meet the conditions of this objective
- Implementation recommendations:
 - Bring forward a new land acquisition resolution allows the County staff to acquire lands and pay any required association fees if applicable within the entire Reserve
 - Explore a MOU with SWFWMD
 - Evaluate the need for additional staff as outlined and provided for in the HCP



Options

Discussion:

1. Continue to pursue the density model amendment without alternative parcel option
2. Continue to pursue the density model amendment with alternative parcel option
3. New land acquisition resolution authorizing the purchase land in POA/HOA through either negotiation of POA/HOA fees or County paying ongoing POA/HOA
4. Discontinue density model amendment efforts