



January 22, 2007

Secretary Thomas Pelham  
Florida Department of Community Affairs  
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

SUBJECT: Proposed *Latt Maxcy* Rural Land Stewardship Area

Dear Secretary Pelham,

The purpose of this letter is to provide formal notice to the Department of Community Affairs regarding the County's intention to designate a Rural Land Stewardship Area ("RLSA"), pursuant to the requirements of §163.3177(11)(d), Florida Statutes.

Osceola County has sustained a very high rate of population growth over a long period of time and that trend is expected to continue. In 2006 the County had an estimated population of 252,285 and according to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research we should anticipate 525,100 residents by the year 2025. In response, over the past two years the County has aggressively pushed ahead in the areas of comprehensive planning and infrastructure funding. In the area of planning, we have worked very hard to produce an updated comprehensive plan and are optimistic that with your assistance we will soon have a plan that will serve community needs and fit within state parameters. In the area of infrastructure we have adopted major increases in impact fees despite some strong objections. Our EAR-based amendments incorporate an Urban Growth Boundary designed to achieve a compact urbanized area capable of accommodating the County's urban population – including the populations of the cities of Kissimmee and St. Cloud – up to the year 2025.

We recognize that successfully planning the County's future also requires a longer-term vision, so, as a complementary strategy to the UGB, the EAR-based amendments include urban growth policies for accommodating populations beyond that projected for 2025. These include the provision for RLSAs. RLSAs allow a structured approach toward designing new urban areas through comprehensively planned mixed-use developments that can function successfully within the larger background of preserved natural systems and sustainable agricultural operations.

The area considered for a RLSA consists of approximately 55,082 acres in southeastern Osceola County. The RLSA will address lands owned by members of the Hayman family (approximately 10,019 acres) and Latt Maxcy, Inc. (approximately 45,003 acres). Given its location in proximity of major transportation corridors, the distance from established urban centers, the presence of agricultural lands, and the outstanding natural resource values in the area, we believe it to be an appropriate candidate for a RLSA.

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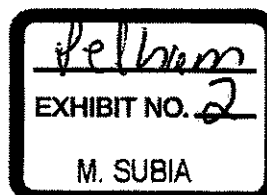
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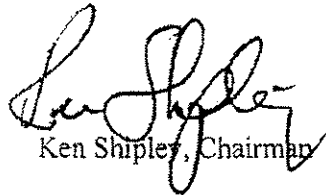
## Maintains Rural Character and Economic Viability of Agriculture

The Stewardship Program would maintain rural character and support the agricultural base much more effectively than the alternative development pattern currently required by the future land use map. The Stewardship Program also allows for more effective buffers to ensure retained agricultural functions are compatible with future residential areas. Similarly, the road network can be limited in a manner to avoid conflicts between agricultural functions and residential trip making; whereas the current land use categories would not provide an effective means to separate such traffic. The Stewardship Program also allows for other complementary uses that would be consistent with the rural character and agriculture needs, including eco-agri tourism, local farmer markets and the like.

We have met with stakeholders regarding this designation and are engaging consultant services to assist us in crafting a RLSA program. This will include establishing a methodology for the creation, conveyance and use of transferable rural land use credits, as well as undertaking the requisite long-range planning in order to prepare the comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulations. While including the property previously described, our program will also encompass other properties in the southeastern Osceola County that may be RLSA candidates.

Therefore by this letter please accept our notification of Osceola County's intent to pursue a Rural Land Stewardship Area under §163.3177(11)(d), Florida Statutes. We very much look forward to working with you on the Rural Land Stewardship Area.

Sincerely,



Ken Shipley, Chairman

CC Phil Laurien, Executive Director, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council