Mitigation Alternatives

Problem: Some basins (watersheds) have no available alternatives to traditional on-site mitigation.

Goal: Promote establishment of ecologically meaningful mitigation alternatives where none presently exist.
Section 373.4135, Florida Statutes

...the Department and the water management districts are directed to participate in and encourage the establishment of public and private mitigation banks and offsite regional mitigation.
Mitigation Alternatives Using District-Owned Lands

- District Mitigation Bank
- Public/Private Mitigation Bank
- Regional Offsite Mitigation Area(s) (ROMA)
- Individual Mitigation Projects
Mitigation Alternatives

(Summary of previous Governing Board discussions)

- Providing ecologically meaningful mitigation alternatives to permit applicants would be beneficial to the economy and the environment.

- Statutory impediments exist which impair an agency’s ability to collect money as mitigation to fund future land acquisition or restoration projects.

- Public agency involvement in providing mitigation alternatives should not undercut or provide market disincentives to private sector involvement.
Mitigation Alternatives

(Summary of previous Governing Board discussions)

• Private dollars spent for the environmental restoration of public lands are dollars diverted from the environmental restoration of private lands.

• Based on two examples in the South Florida Water Management District, it can take 5-8 years before a private-public mitigation bank is conducting restoration activities or selling mitigation credits.

• A recent SWFWMD study found that restoration of wetlands and aquatic habitats on current District-owned lands could be completed by 2011 without relying on mitigation funds to achieve the restoration goal.
Mitigation Alternatives

**Question:** Are there ways to provide alternative mitigation options to permit applicants in a way that:

- provides more ecological benefit than traditional mitigation options?
- doesn’t undercut existing private sector mitigation providers or provide market disincentives for future private sector involvement?
- encourages preservation and restoration of privately-owned lands with private mitigation dollars?
Mitigation Alternatives

Two reasons cited by private mitigation bankers for not locating banks in northern Tampa Bay area:

• high land costs
• hydrologic uncertainties

Two additional reasons:

• time to obtain permits
• permitting uncertainties
Mitigation Alternatives

One option:
Collaborate with local governments and private sector interests to promote preservation of wildlife corridors linking public-owned lands as mitigation.
Mitigation Alternatives

Staff Proposal: Authorize a pilot project to encourage preservation of wildlife corridors linking public-owned lands in Pasco County using private sector mitigation dollars.

(Unanimously Approved)
% Population Growth 1960-2003

- United States: 62%
- Florida: 244%
- Pasco County: 957%
% Population Growth 2000-2003

United States: 3%
Florida: 6%
Pasco County: 12%
Figure 7
Pasco County, Florida
Critical Linkages (Corridors) of Wildlife Habitat Between Existing Public Lands
Mitigation Alternatives

“Kickoff” meeting July 29:

• SWFWMD
• ACOE
• Pasco County
• Private Sector representatives
• Citizen activist representative
Kickoff meeting July 29:

- Looking at 7 corridors
- Estimate mitigation credits up-front
- Federal agency involvement critical to success
- Interest from mitigation bankers
- Interest from large mitigation users
- Pasco County exploring additional incentives
- Complements “Penny for Pasco” tax
Benefits of Pasco Corridors Pilot Project:

- identifies best bank locations
- doesn’t compete with private sector
- uses private dollars to preserve private lands
- less affected by hydrologic uncertainties
- shortens permitting timeframes
- reduces permitting uncertainties
  (appropriateness, # of credits, service area, use of credits)