



FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Affiliated With National Wildlife Federation

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American Planning Association
2004 Awards Program
1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

Re: The Collier County (Florida) Rural Lands Stewardship Overlay

Dear Sir/Madam:

Florida Wildlife Federation strongly encourages the American Planning Association to award the "Outstanding Planning Award for a Plan" to The Collier County Rural Lands Stewardship Area Overlay (RLSA).

The RLSA achieves long-sought conservation goals protecting the western Everglades, respects property rights, rewards nature-based land management on private lands, and fosters compact, mixed-use development rather than sprawling, gated subdivisions.

Unlike other conservation efforts that focus on regulation and outright acquisition, the RLSA rewards private landowners who manage and enhance their lands' natural values. Nurturing wildlife is now an asset, not a liability.

The RLSA planning effort also achieved something many thought impossible. It created an ongoing working relationship among environmentalists, landowners, community advocates, and county representatives. This is a monumental feat for a planning effort initiated during one of the most divisive and litigious times in Collier County history.

The RLSA, a model that can be adopted by other communities in Florida and across the United States, is worthy to receive the American Planning Association's "Outstanding Planning Award for a Plan."

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Anne Payton
Southwest Florida Field Representative