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PROPOSED STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Your comments, suggestions and edits are welcome.
June 25, 2003

THE PURPOSE OF THE RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL is to:

- Act as a convener and coordinating council;
- Bring together diverse groups with a stake in the future of Florida's rural lands – including private landowners and agriculture and forestry interests; state agencies, water management districts and regional planning councils; growth management organizations; land use planners; conservation and environmental organizations; and county associations and coalitions;
- Encourage communication and cooperation among all council members;
- Provide a “neutral, non-judgmental” forum for discussing issues affecting Florida's rural lands;
- Act as a central clearing house for information on rural land use issues;
- Serve as an advocate for techniques, approaches, planning tools, educational programs and policies that gain consensus support of the council;
- Communicate information about the Rural Lands Stewardship Program to rural landowners, policy makers and other stakeholders in Florida counties;
- Use the Rural Lands Stewardship Program as an example of what can be done in a rural area to:
 - ✓ Promote rural economic development
 - ✓ Maintain the viability of agriculture
 - ✓ Enhance regional environmental protection
 - ✓ Incorporate agriculture, forestry, hunting plantations and other rural uses into the landscape
 - ✓ Preserve open space for agriculture and natural environment
 - ✓ Promote land use patterns appropriate to rural areas
 - ✓ Separate urban and rural land uses
 - ✓ Control urban and “rural” sprawl
 - ✓ Protect the character of rural areas, while accommodating reasonable and sustainable growth, by promoting future development in patterns appropriate to maintaining “rural character”
 - ✓ Allow ALL landowners to economically benefit from development
 - ✓ Allow landowners to choose options that offer FUTURE APPRECIATION ...
even when protecting natural resources
- Organize workshops and symposiums; and
- Promote the establishment of local planning efforts in a neutral, non-judgmental atmosphere that involve all stakeholders – beginning with rural landowners who will ultimately decide how they wish to use their lands – to explore options, consider alternatives and use existing tools to develop approaches that will address unique local conditions and needs.