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# CONSERVATION ELEMENT

## Goals, Objectives, and Policies

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## PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The purpose of the Conservation Element is to ensure the protection of the Town of Sewall's Point's natural resources. The conservation and appropriate use of these resources is critical to maintaining a high quality of life for Town residents and ensuring sustainable economic growth. The goals, objectives, and policies of this element are intended to guide the management of air, water, soil, mineral, vegetative, wildlife, and other natural resources in the fulfillment of this purpose without duplication of federal and state requirements.

The Conservation Element identifies the natural resources unique to the Town of Sewall's Point along with any known vulnerabilities. It also outlines potential opportunities for conservation methods that result in sustainability and environmental resiliency. It is intended that each of the Comprehensive Plan elements support the Town's major objective to conserve its natural resources for future generations. These natural resources perform many valuable functions for humans at no cost. They buffer storm winds and flood tides, stabilize the shoreline, purify water, and maintain a freshwater system that supports a rich wildlife, population, and lush vegetation. These functions ultimately support the health, safety, and welfare of every Sewall's Point resident and therefore must be preserved.

## CONSERVATION ELEMENT – GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

### GOAL CON 1 PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES

**Goal CON 1** – The Town of Sewall's Point is a unique peninsula with a high quality of life and an abundance of natural resources. ~~Policies in the Comprehensive Plan are aimed to~~ The Town will protect all of ~~these assets- its natural resources for the enjoyment of so that~~ current and future generations ~~can continue to enjoy them.~~

#### OBJECTIVE CON 1.1 MAINTAIN GOOD AIR QUALITY

**Objective CON 1.1** – The Town of Sewall's Point has and will continue to enjoy excellent air quality.

**Policy CON 1.1.1** – The Town of Sewall's Point's air quality is satisfactory. However, if the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) ever notifies the Town that minimum established air quality levels are being exceeded within the Town, within one year of notification, the Town shall implement a program, approved by the DEP, to bring air quality into compliance within the established standards.

**Policy CON 1.1.2** – The Town of Sewall's Point will develop policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan in efforts to reduce the following:

- a) Carbon Monoxide
- b) Lead
- c) Nitrogen Dioxide
- d) Ozone
- e) Particle Pollution
- f) Sulfur Dioxide

**Policy CON 1.1.3** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall enforce the prohibition of open burning of trash and debris.

**Policy CON 1.1.4** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall promote and facilitate alternative modes of transportation to gasoline-powered vehicles in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Policy CON 1.1.5** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall coordinate with Martin County Public Transit and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in efforts to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use and encourage the use of transit, carpooling, and park and ride as more efficient modes of travel.

**Policy CON 1.1.6** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall coordinate with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and its solid waste provider to ensure:

- a) Proper Removal and Disposal of Asbestos
- b) Proper Disposal of Volatile Organic Compounds

**Policy CON 1.1.7** – The Town of Sewall's Point's Land Development Regulations shall include standards for construction and/or land clearing activities that prevent wind-related erosion of soils, prevent air quality issues, and protect the Town from wind driven dust particles.

## OBJECTIVE CON 1.2 WATER CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY

**Objective CON 1.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall protect and conserve water resources and prevent impairment of the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources.

**Policy CON 1.2.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall continue to require that all developments comply with all laws or regulations of agencies of the county, the state, or utility owners having overriding or supplemental jurisdiction over any phase, element or aspect of any proposed subdivision, plat or development as required in Chapter 78 Subdivisions, Sec. 78-4 of its Code of Ordinances.~~collaborate with and support Martin County, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to seek, to the fullest extent possible, clean surface water and good quality groundwater.~~

**Policy CON 1.2.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall ensure adequate filtration of stormwater prior to its entry into surrounding water bodies by providing performance standards in the Land Development Regulations.

**Policy CON 1.2.3.** – The Town of Sewall’s Point will continue to collaborate with Martin County and its Connect to Protect Program to eliminate virtually all septic systems on the peninsula.

**Policy CON 1.2.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall discourage the creation of new septic tanks and drain fields for new development through the enforcement of standards for availability and mandatory connection to available sewer systems no less strict than those set forth in Sections 381.0065 and 381.00655, Florida Statutes.

**Policy CON 1.2.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall remain vigilant and proactive in its assertion that the regulation, design, and operation of water releases from Lake Okeechobee will not further degrade the quality of coastal waters and the estuaries of Southeast Florida. It is the Town’s intent to ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to change policies so that the waters surrounding Sewall’s Point are no longer threatened.

**Policy CON 1.2.6** – The Town of Sewall’s Point recognizes that wetlands serve many important hydrological and ecological values and functions such as:

- a) Recharging and filtering groundwater in the shallow aquifer
- b) Reducing the impact of flooding by acting as storage basins and temper the effect of climate extremes
- c) Acting as uniquely productive biological systems, providing home and food for the majority of Florida's threatened and endangered species

Therefore, the Town shall protect and conserve wetlands by including provisions in the Land Development Regulations that prevent destruction and adverse impacts to wetlands. These regulations may include but not be limited to:

- a) Wetland buffers
- b) Setbacks for Construction
- c) Performance Standards
- d) Replanting

- e) Waste Disposal
- f) Management of Water in and Around Wetlands

**Policy CON 1.2.7** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall require that all development applications include an identification/inventory of all wetland areas on-site.

**Policy CON 1.2.8** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall require that all development applications provide proof of compliance with all state and federal regulations related to wetland protection.

**Policy CON 1.2.9** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall notify and coordinate with adjacent municipalities if development applications include wetlands that cross jurisdictional lines.

**Policy CON 1.2.10** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall require the installation of temporary stormwater drainage systems at construction sites to capture direct surface water run-off and prevent sand, silt, and other debris from polluting surface waters.

**Policy CON 1.2.11** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall continue to enforce the regulations in Chapter 22 Environment, Article IV Water Conservation, Sec. 22-143 of its Code of Ordinances related to water conservation which prohibit all wasteful and unnecessary water use. ~~adopt standards for water conservation within its Land Development Regulations.~~

**Policy CON 1.2.12** – ~~The Town of Sewall’s Point shall facilitate public education programs that promote water use efficiency, the importance of clean drinking water, and the detrimental effects of water contamination to the water ecosystem.~~

~~collaborate with local and state agencies to provide the public with water conservation strategies.~~

**Policy CON 1.2.13** – The Town shall conserve, appropriately use, and protect the quality and quantity of floodplains, drainage, all current and projected water sources, and waters by continuing to enforce its Land Development Regulations which include standards that protect upland buffers, protect wetland vegetation, and require that each development provides adequate drainage to reduce the risk of flooding and water pollution.

**Policy CON 1.2.14** – The Town of Sewall’s Point will minimize flooding problems within the Town through implementation of context sensitive drainage and stormwater solutions in its public projects, when possible. These may include but not be limited to:

- a) Rain Gardens
- b) Littoral Zone Plantings
- c) Bio– Retention Swales
- d) Vegetative Filter Strips
- e) Rock Soaking Areas
- f) Floating Vegetated Mats
- g) Inlet Screens, Baffles and Sumps
- h) Baffle Boxes
- i) Stormwater Filters
- j) Sand Filters
- k) Tree Box Filters

**Policy CON 1.2.15** – ~~The Town of Sewall's Point shall continue enforce the regulations in Chapter 22 Environment, Article VII Fertilizer, Sec. 22-210 of its Code of Ordinances which requires the use of management measures in the Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices to minimize the negative environmental effects associated with the misuse of fertilizers.~~

~~**Policy CON 1.2.16** 's Landscape Ordinance within the Land Development Regulations shall enc- The Town of Sewall's Point will continue to encourage the use of drought tolerant plant material as required in Chapter 70, Article VII Landscaping Requirements for Commercial Parking Lots, Sec. 70-135 of its Code of Ordinances. native vegetation and the application of Florida friendly landscape techniques and concepts as identified by the South Florida Water Management District and the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agriculture Science's (IFAS) published guidelines.~~

**Policy CON 1.2.176** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall collaborate with Martin County Utilities, the municipal utility provider, to encourage the extension of water re-use lines for irrigation, when available.

**Policy CON 1.2.187** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall include policies in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan that require that roadway projects to be constructed in a manner that protects waterbodies, wetlands, and flood plains. Corridor alignments shall be designed to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.

#### OBJECTIVE CON 1.3 NATIVE VEGETATION

**Objective CON 1.3** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall conserve, protect, and use appropriately the minerals, soils, and native vegetative communities within the Town.

**Policy CON 1.3.1** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall encourage the preservation of environmentally sensitive land.

**Policy CON 1.3.2** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall require that environmentally sensitive lands owned or acquired by the Town will be set aside for preservation and will receive a Future Land Use designation of Public (Conservation).

**Policy CON 1.3.3** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall require a permit to remove any environmentally sensitive vegetation prior to any land development activity. Environmentally sensitive vegetation refers to those species listed by the Florida Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

**Policy CON 1.3.4** –The Town of Sewall's Point Land Development Regulations shall address land management practices that provide for wildfire protection, enhance wildlife habitats, and protect environmentally sensitive land and vegetation.

**Policy CON 1.3.5** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall seek to protect native upland habitat that enables the long-term survival of plant species that are rare, endangered, threatened or of special concern.

**Policy CON 1.3.6** – The Town of Sewall's Point's Land Development Regulations shall include environmental performance standards and best management practices that limit the clearing of native vegetation, including the understory and groundcover.

**Policy CON 1.3.7** – The Town of Sewall's Point's Land Development Regulations shall protect native vegetation by requiring a permit for vegetation removal.

**Policy CON 1.3.8** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall prohibit the planting or seeding of invasive exotic plants. Invasive exotic plants are defined according to the Category I plants in the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council’s most recent list. (Reference [www.floridainvasivespecies.org](http://www.floridainvasivespecies.org))

**Policy CON 1.3.9** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall require, in conjunction with the development of any site, removal of all prohibited species of vegetation (Reference Policy CON 1.3.8) from the site and require the implementation of best practices that prevent these species from re-establishing on the site.

**Policy CON 1.3.10** – The Town of Sewall’s Point’s Land Development Regulations will require all development applications provides a landscape plan that has native plants and maintains the site to be free of exotic vegetation.

**Policy CON 1.3.11** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall continue to remove invasive exotic vegetation from Town-owned property.

**Policy CON 1.3.12** – The Town of Sewall’s Point’s Land Development Regulations shall include standards for construction to avoid soil erosion into its surface waters by requiring:

- a) Soils are retained on-site for all developments, to the greatest extent possible.
- b) The clearing of trees and vegetation (other than invasive exotics) shall require approval by the Town of Sewall’s Point to protect native vegetation, trees, and littoral zones.
- c) A soil erosion and sedimentation control plan, as part of a development application, whenever it involves any clearing, grading, transporting or other form of land disturbance by the movement of earth, including the mining of minerals, sand, and gravel.

**Policy CON 1.3.13** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall require that all development complies with state and federal regulations regarding environmentally sensitive land (as defined by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) through land use planning, site plan review, and establishment and enforcement of corresponding Land Development Regulations.

#### OBJECTIVE CON 1.4 WILDLIFE AND MARINE HABITATS

**Objective CON 1.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall protect wildlife and marine habitats to sustain natural processes and minimize the likelihood of species becoming extinct.

**Policy 1.4.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point will evaluate all local plans and programs for conservation and natural resource protection to ensure that they are consistent and compatible with one another and that they are unified in their efforts to conserve wildlife and marine habitats.

**Policy CON 1.4.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall protect the natural diversity and abundance of wildlife. It shall protect the structure, function, and integrity of marine and terrestrial ecosystems to enable long-term survival of rare, endangered, threatened or of special concern wildlife, marine, and terrestrial species.

**Policy CON 1.4.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall establish protection standards in the Land Development Regulations that aid the public and developers to identify sensitive habitats and provide methods to protect biodiversity where endangered species or their habitats have been identified.

**Policy CON 1.4.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point recognizes that Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is the expert in protecting marine and wildlife habitats; to that end the Town of Sewall’s Point shall reference their resources and include standards, as appropriate, in the Land Development Regulations which support the State Wildlife Action Plan.

**Policy CON 1.4.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point’s Land Development Regulations shall include the provision that all site plans include an assessment of and identification of identify the following components:

- a) Endangered and Threatened Terrestrial
- b) Endangered and Threatened Marine
- c) Endangered and Threatened Plant

**Policy CON 1.4.6** – When one or more of a threatened or endangered species are found on a development site, development activities which may cause the species direct or indirect harm, shall not be allowed until a management plan is developed. The management plan prepared by the developer and approved by the Town shall demonstrate how to minimize the project’s adverse effects on the species.

**OBJECTIVE CON 1.5 NON-NATIVE WILDLIFE**

**Objective CON 1.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point recognizes that non-native wildlife species can become invasive and negatively impact native wildlife.

**Policy CON 1.5.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall cooperate with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) to minimize the adverse impacts of non-native species in Florida by reporting any siting of non-native wildlife so that FWC can prevent, detect, respond, and control these species.

**Policy CON 1.5.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall collaborate with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to provide education to residents about the threat of non-native wildlife to the environment through educational handouts, public workshops, and other Town special events.

**GOAL CON 2 SUSTAINABLE TOWN**

**Goal CON 2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall strive to create a sustainable community by properly managing material consumption.

**OBJECTIVE CON 2.1 REDUCE MATERIAL CONSUMPTION**

**Objective CON 2.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall encourage recycling, waste reduction, and reuse to reduce solid waste and pollution.

**Policy CON 2.1.1** – The Town shall continue to collaborate with the solid waste provider to facilitate a successful recycling program for the community which encourages private businesses and citizens to increase recycling and decrease material consumption.

**Policy CON 2.1.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall seek partnerships and coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to provide funding and educational resources that promote waste reduction, recycling options, and the elimination of littering.



**Policy CON 2.1.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall provide educational material on proper recycling techniques and the importance of recycling for the future generations.

**Policy CON 2.1.4** – The Town shall educate, engage, and support the construction of environmentally friendly green buildings and reduced resource consumption during the building process.

## ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Entisols** – Soil of an order comprising mineral soils that have not yet differentiated into distinct horizons

**Environmentally Sensitive Lands** – Land which has unique ecological characteristics and functions, rare or limited combinations of geological formations, or features of rare or limited nature constituting habitat suitable for fish, plants or wildlife

**Hazardous Materials** – Materials which are identified by the federal and state agencies as posing a substantial health or safety threat

**Histosols** – Soil of an order comprising peaty soils, with a deep surface layer of purely organic material

**Hydroperiods** – The period of time when a wetland is covered by water

**Inceptisols** – Soil of an order comprising freely draining soils in which the formation of distinct horizons is not far advanced, such as brown earth

**Integrated Conservation Strategy** – Conservation strategies designed to meet the needs of multiple species and their habitats, with supporting actions intended to improve the conservation status of Florida's imperiled species

**Invasive Exotic Plants** – Category I plants listed in Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's most recent list (Reference [www.floridainvasivespecies.org](http://www.floridainvasivespecies.org))

**Load Allocations** – Pollutant loads attributable to existing and future nonpoint sources and natural background

**Man-Made Structures** – Structures created by people, which may or may not be intended for use by wildlife. Structures include (but are not limited to) buildings, bridges, utility poles, signs, equipment, heavy machinery, pipes, loading docks, and bat and bird houses

**Nonpoint Source Pollution** – Pollution caused by precipitation that falls to and moves over and through the ground. As the precipitation moves, it accumulates pollutants and ultimately deposits them into surrounding streams, canals, lakes, wetlands and ground waters

**Point Source Pollution** – Pollution that originates from a single source. An example would be a factory smokestack

**Prohibited Plant Species** – Category I plants listed in Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's most recent list (Reference [www.floridainvasivespecies.org](http://www.floridainvasivespecies.org))

**Species Focal Area** – Areas containing features (such as unique population units or habitat types) important to the long-term conservation of a species, as identified in Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines

**Species of Greatest Conservation Need** – In Florida this includes animals that are at risk or are declining as identified in Chapter 3 of Florida’s State Wildlife Action Plan. It includes federally listed and state-listed species as well as many other species whose populations are of concern

**Species of Special Concern** – A temporary category of protection for species determined to be data deficient during the Biological Status Review, and afforded the protection that no person shall take, possess, transport, or sell any species of special concern or parts, their nests or eggs except as authorized by permit

**Spodosols** – Soil of an order rich in aluminum oxide and organic matter, typically characterized by low fertility, and including most podzols

**State-Listed Species** – Those species listed on Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species List as state-designated Threatened or state Species of Special Concern

**Threatened Species**– Any species of fish and wildlife naturally occurring in Florida which may not be in immediate danger of extinction, but which exists in such small populations as to become endangered if it is subjected to increased stress as a result of further modification of its environment - F.S. 379.2291(3)(c)

**Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)** – The amount of each pollutant a water body can receive without violating standards. Pollution sources include runoff from farms, forests, urban areas, and natural sources, such as decaying organic matter and nutrients in soil

**Volatile Organic Compound** – Compounds that have a high vapor pressure and low water solubility (i.e., often found in components of petroleum fuels, hydraulic fluids, paint thinners and dry– cleaning agents)