

2008 APA Florida Conference

*Keeping Florida Green: Using Green Payments to
Prevent the Last Crop*

W. Ray Scott

**Conservation & Water Policy Federal Programs Coordinator
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

The Context

➤ Population Growth

- 1900 – 500,000
- 1950 – 2.8 million
- **1960 – 5 million**
- 1970 – 6.8 million
- 1980 – 9.7 million
- 1990 – 12.9 million
- **2000 – 16 million**
- 2007 – 18.6 million
- 2030 – 28.7 million (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2060 - 36 million (1000 Friends)

Loss of Agricultural Lands

- Between 1964 and 1997, almost 5 million acres of agricultural lands were lost to development, mostly ranch and forestlands.
- In 1999, it was estimated that an additional 1.3 million acres would be lost to development in a 10-yr period.
- FDACS estimates the loss of agricultural lands to development and conservation to be as much as 5 million acres by 2020.

Loss of Agricultural Lands

➤ Citrus

- Acreage peaked in 1970 at 940,000 acres, declined for nearly a decade and then peaked again at 860,000 acres in 1994
- Current acreage is 620,000, though productive acreage is around 550,000
- In addition to development pressure, citrus has been subject to freezes, disease, hurricanes, and international trade challenges, often in combination.
- Industry may be near the “tipping point”

Loss of Agricultural Lands

➤ Forestlands

- In 2003, forestlands covered 42% of the state's 34.6 million acres, down from 60% in 1949 and 52% in 1970.
- 2003 projection predicted that if population doubled by 2030, an additional 5 to 7 million acres of forestlands would be lost
- Privately-held forestlands account for 80% of the state's forested acreage
- Continuing losses are estimated to be 80,000 acres per year

Maintaining Agriculture in the Rural Landscape

- Maintaining Agricultural Lands

- VS

- Maintaining Agriculture on the Land

Programs for Maintaining Agricultural Lands

- Rural and Family Lands Protection Program
 - Farmland Protection Program
 - Forest Legacy Program
 - Wetland Reserve Program
- 

Maintaining Agriculture on the Land

- Traditional easement programs do not provide sufficient *economic* incentives
- Economic incentives can be provided through new products (fuels and energy) as well as services, primarily *environmental services*

Maintaining Agriculture on the Land

- The challenge in regard to “green payments” is to create markets that allow private landowners to make rational economic decisions to continue practices that provide environmental benefits.
- Initial objective is the development of a system for accurately measuring and accounting for services provided.

Agricultural Ecosystem Services

- Clean water
- Clean air
- Habitat and food sources for biodiversity
- Soil conservation
- Carbon sequestration
- Disease and invasive species suppression
- Open space
- Climate regulation
- Recreational opportunities (hunting, wildlife viewing, agrotourism)
- Water storage
- Wildlife conservation
- Biological pest control
- Pollinator management

Market-Based Environmental Services Programs

- Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Project
- Habitat Conservation Banks
- Carbon Sequestration and Trading

Carbon Sequestration and Credit Trading

- Governor's Climate Action Team - Agriculture, Forestry, and Waste Management Technical Work Group
 - Forest Retention, Restoration, and Management for carbon sequestration
 - Farming practices that achieve GHG benefits (soil carbon mgt, permanent cover, nutrient mgt, improved harvesting methods)
 - Manure Digesters

Carbon Sequestration and Credit Trading

- Governor's Climate Action Team - Agriculture, Forestry, and Waste Management Technical Work Group
 - Use of Biomass (waste and “energy crops”)
 - Electricity, heat, and steam production
 - Liquid/gaseous biofuel production
 - Reduce conversion to development to preserve open space and agricultural lands

Carbon Sequestration and Credit Trading

- Florida Forestry Association Carbon Sequestration Pilot Project
 - Florida forests currently sequester an estimated 5.8 million tons of carbon each year.
 - In partnership with Environmental Defense, developing an “offer sheet” template for sale of carbon credits
 - Assessing management options for 16,000 acres of private forestland to provide estimates of various levels of carbon sequestration that can be accomplished.

Carbon Sequestration and Credit Trading

➤ Florida Forestry Association Carbon Sequestration Pilot Project

- School of Forest Resources and Conservation, University of Florida, has developed the management options for carbon sequestration
- Environmental Defense consultants will calculate the estimated carbon sequestration achieved by each management option
- “Offer sheets” will be developed that landowners can use to market carbon credits to potential buyers

Questions?

