

Administrator's Update for 2/11/15
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

At the Board of County Commissioners' regular meeting yesterday the board adopted an ordinance that was the last step in a process that began in 2007. The ordinance puts into place the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP), approved and issued in December 2014 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The HCP and 30-year county-wide permit provide an option for development to property owners of scrub-jay identified land. In the past, in order to develop their land, property owners had no choice but to put together an HCP and submit it to the state for approval, a lengthy and expensive process. Now landowners have the option of using the county-wide ITP, through obtaining a permit from the county faster and at a much lower cost.

The HCP is a conservation plan that specifies how we minimize and mitigate impacts to listed species by protecting, restoring, and managing enough habitat to ensure the long-term persistence of jays in Charlotte County. Much of the needed lands were purchased through Conservation Charlotte. The HCP was required to obtain the 30-year ITP, which allows local permits to be issued instead of the property owner going to the state level.

Did I mention this is the first county-wide HCP to be approved in Florida? Many thanks to our staff for their hard work in this long process. Once again Charlotte County is at the forefront of providing services to residents and business owners.

Coastal flood zone remapping study

Charlotte County community development staff as well as staff from the City of Punta Gorda recently participated in a technical update meeting hosted by FEMA regarding the ongoing coastal flood zone remapping study for Southwest Florida. This study began in 2013 and will take approximately four to five years to complete, utilizing advanced technology, mapping and data modeling data to accurately map the impact of coastal flooding during a tropical storm or hurricane.

This is the first time such a meeting has been held by FEMA during this project and is a direct result of Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda's unique approach to be proactive in advocating for our citizens. The county and the city have jointly hired a team of experts to assist them with the highly technical and specialized data produced by FEMA as part of this project, add to this data where they can and highlight potential issues as they arise rather than waiting for the official release of the maps. More information about this project can be found on the County's website www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov — on the community development department page the link "Charlotte County Floodzone Remapping (Risk MAP)" is on the right.