

COASTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

of the

PINELLAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Prepared By:

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as staff to the

LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY

for

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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Introduction

Pinellas County's ties to the water are extensive. Because of its small geographic size and unique peninsular location separating the Gulf of Mexico from Tampa Bay, no areas within its boundaries are more than just a few miles from the shore. Pinellas County's shoreline, including its long stretches of sandy barrier island beaches, provides an abundance of natural and economic resources. It also provides an important source of recreation for residents and visitors, and contributes greatly to the County's character and overall quality of life. It represents the very feature that attracts residents and visitors to the area.

For the purposes of this Coastal Management Element, with the exception of the Natural Disaster Section, the Coastal Planning Area of Pinellas County is defined as encompassing the entire County, consistent with the criteria listed in Subsection 9J-5.003(18), F.A.C. The entire County is considered the coastal planning area because of its unique geography and the importance of its coastal resources toward its economic well-being and the overall quality of life for its residents. For the same reasons, sound coastal management practices are a priority. Public safety is paramount, requiring vigilance and periodic refinements in long range planning activities and land use practices within the Coastal High Hazard Area. The protection of life, property and infrastructure investments are of primary importance, and maintaining the economic vitality that coastal resources provide will help ensure future prosperity. The protection and preservation of the coast's natural resources will further these goals and continue to enhance quality of life and livability.

Coastal management is relevant and vital to the welfare of Pinellas County as a whole. The Coastal Management Element must consider the vulnerability of the County's coastline and inland areas, along with the reality of existing human and physical influences, and attempt to plan comprehensively in a manner that achieves the most compatibility between what may sometimes appear to be conflicting needs. Because coastal resources are so inextricably linked to all areas of Pinellas County, many of the Coastal Management Element requirements outlined in Chapter 9J-5.012, F.A.C. are thoroughly covered by other Comprehensive Plan Elements and thus, to avoid unnecessary repetition, not addressed herein. Those instances are as follows:

<u>F.A.C. Citation</u>	<u>Topic of Concern</u>	<u>Element where Covered</u>
9J-5.012(2)(b)	Coastal Area Natural Resources	Natural Resource Management and Conservation
9J-5.012(2)(c)	Coastal Area Historic Resources	Recreation, Open Space and Culture
9J-5.012(2)(d)	Estuaries	Surface Water Management
9J-5.012(2)(g)	Beach and Shoreline Public Access	Recreation, Open Space and Culture

Topics covered within this Element therefore are fourfold, and include (1) natural disaster planning [9J-5.012(2)(e)], (2) beaches and dunes [9J-5.012(2)(f)], (3) public facilities and infrastructure [9J-5.012(2)(h)], and (4) coastal land uses [9J-5.012(2)(a)].