



# Heartland Regional Resiliency Action Plan



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# Interconnected & Interdependent

Polk  
Hardee  
Highlands  
Okeechobee  
Desoto  
Glades  
Hendry



- 7 counties
- 28 cities
- Tribal Communities
- 2 water management districts
- Peace River Basin
- Kissimmee River Basin
- Lake Okeechobee
- Headwaters of the Everglades
- Military Installation



Polk Transportation  
Planning Organization



Southwest Florida  
*Water Management District*



# Resilience is...

- “... the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.” - *Webster’s Dictionary*
- **“...the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions.”** *Presidential Policy Directive-21 & Executive Order 13653*



# Hurricane Ian Top 20 Counties with Insurance Claims Data as of January 20, 2023

County	Number of Claims Reported	Number of Open Claims with Payment	Number of Open Claims without Payment	Number of Claims Closed with Payment	Number of Claims Closed without Payment	Percent of Claims Closed
7. Polk	26,409	1,996	3,703	12,631	8,079	78.4%
12. Highlands	6,538	465	879	3,584	1,610	79.4%
13. DeSoto	6,404	763	830	3,897	914	75.1%
20. Hardee	2,757	298	468	1,485	506	72.2%
All Other top 20 Insurance Claims Counties	38,395	3,445	5,509	18,381	11,060	76.7%
TOTALS	683,456	78,557	87,810	347,734	169,355	75.7%

Source: Florida Office of Insurance Regulations, <https://www.floir.com/home/ian>, January 2023



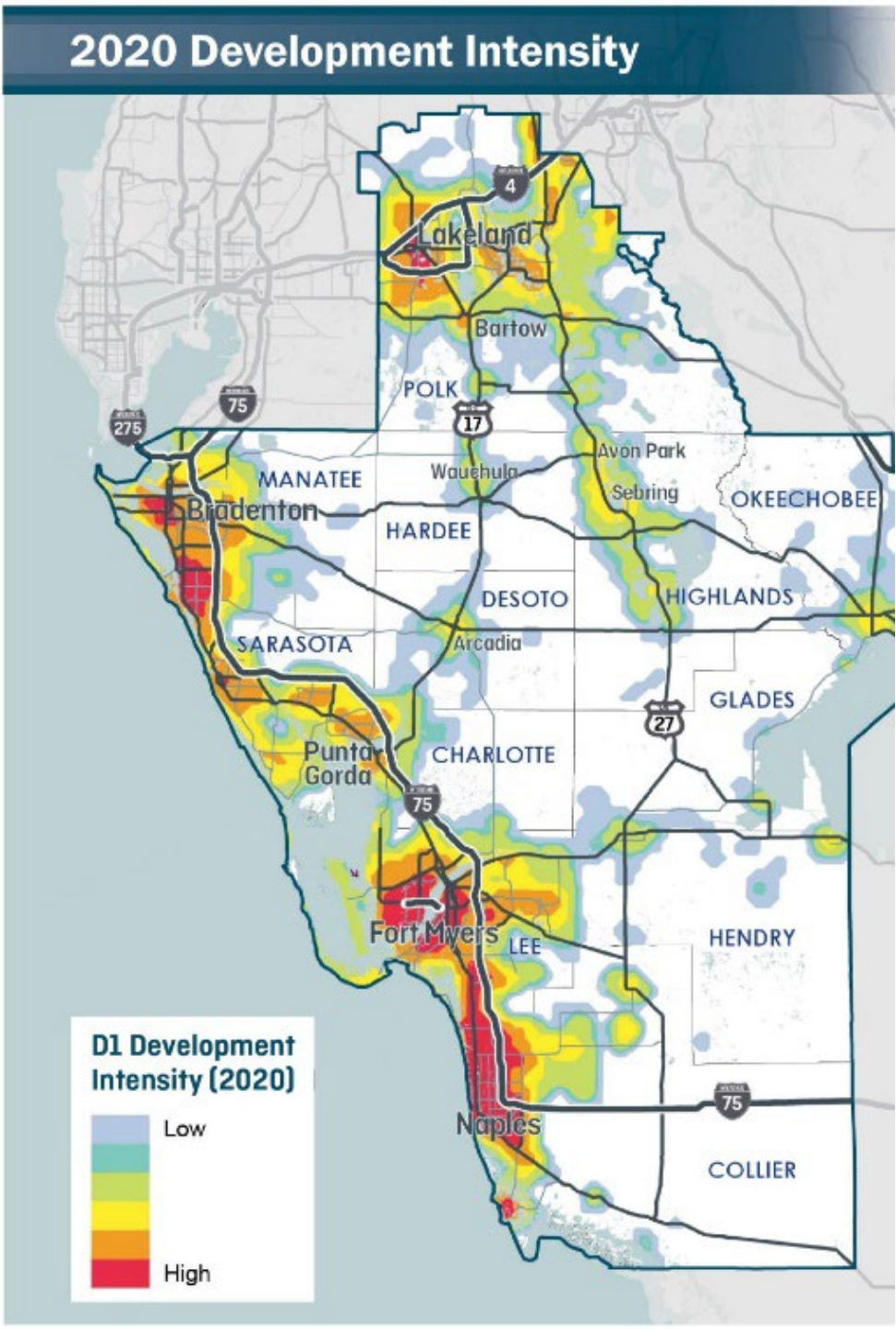
# Regional Florida Growth Patterns

Development continues along I-4 and I-75

82% of population/84% of traded industry jobs within 10 miles of interstates/expressways

Development patterns have created three distinct regions

Coastal Tourism Region	Polk Central Distribution Region	Inland Rural and Agricultural Region
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# RESILIENCY RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message for the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, observed on 13 October 2019: ... ***making infrastructure more climate-resilient can have a benefit-cost ratio of about 6 to 1.***

***FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED, SIX DOLLARS CAN BE SAVED.***

*This means that investing in climate resilience **creates jobs and saves money.***

*And it is the right thing to do - it can ease and prevent **human misery.***



[For Every Dollar Invested in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure Six Dollars Are Saved, Secretary-General Says in Message for Disaster Risk Reduction Day | UN Press](#)

# Heartland Regional Resiliency Coalition

## Benefits

Unified Voice to Address  
Challenging Issues and Policies

Advanced Planning

Leverage Resources

Build Capacity

Expand Expertise

Broadened Partnerships

Increase Innovation



SERVING THE COUNTIES OF • DESOTO • HARDEE • HIGHLANDS • OKEECHOBEE • POLK

## RESOLUTION 2021-9B

### A RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO PROCEED WITH THE FORMATION OF THE HEARTLAND REGIONAL RESILIENCY COALITION

**WHEREAS**, the Heartland Region including the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Okeechobee and Polk is home to more than 1,015,841 residents as of 2020, approximately 4.7% of the 2020 population of the State of Florida, and includes recreational spaces, state parks, wildlife preserves, protected natural areas, significant agricultural lands, a military installation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Heartland Region of Florida consists of seven inland counties, six of which are largely rural, and the economy is driven by natural resource-based industries including forestry, fishing, and agriculture; key industries such as aviation, manufacturing, logistics; state colleges and other academic institutions; and



# Heartland Regional Resiliency Action Plan





## WORK GROUP CONSIDERATIONS

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**Risks and future conditions**

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**Community vulnerability**

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**Land use and housing**

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**Ecosystems and infrastructure**

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**Transportation**

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**Clean energy**

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**Governance, growth management and infrastructure**

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**Economic, and**

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**Environmental Justice**

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**Any other resiliency related topics.**

Transportation & Land Use Resiliency	Wednesday, April 5 <sup>th</sup>
Natural Resources & Agriculture Resiliency	Thursday, April 6 <sup>th</sup>
Economic Resiliency	Friday, April 7 <sup>th</sup>

# WHY ARE WE HERE? WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

**Resiliency Defined – What does it mean to you?**

**Concerns/Local and Regional Issues/Challenges**

**Current and Planned Activities**

**Assistance Needs**





# Takeaways – TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

- **Changing Conditions**

- Plan based on anticipated conditions/trends rather than historical patterns

- **Water Management is Top Priority**

- Water storage, capacity, movement
- Watershed planning, jurisdictional boundaries, Natural System Approach
- Ag & Natural lands critical for water management, flood control, groundwater recharge

# Takeaways – TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

- **Land Development**

- Balance with natural systems
- Fragmentation negatively impacts ag operations, natural resources, wildlife movement, human connectivity

- **Infrastructure**

- Concurrent Activities – cost-effective to lay broadband conduit, utility pipes, etc. during road construction/repairs
- Aging & New Infrastructure - requires high funding amounts
- Connectivity – limits mobility for jobs, education, food access, and evacuation

# Takeaways – AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

## ○ **Water and Development Impacts are Primary Issues**

- Wetland protection and restoration, especially riverine and lacustrine related, is critical
- Landscape-scale Planning needed
- Economic Valuation needed

## ○ **Ecosystem Services Programs**

- Need to be created and funded
- Agriculture/natural lands provide community functions that warrant compensation (water storage, recharge, flood)

# Takeaways – AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

## ○ **Developments Impacts**

- Fragmentation affects diversity of biological, social, economic systems
- Threaten agricultural operations (expose farms to exotic plants invasion, fragment farms, decrease farm service industry economics in communities)
- Increased demand on water/natural resources, reduced biodiversity and movement

## ○ **Conditions Anticipated:**

- Heat - agriculture crops and native plants/animals changes expected
- New diseases, pests, invasives anticipated



# Takeaways – ECONOMY

## ○ **Water Resources are Critical**

- Natural resources help drive economy (ex, Winter Haven - City of Lakes)
- One Water project provides economic value to developers while preserving community water supplies
- Preservation of agriculture and natural lands is critical

## ○ **Infrastructure**

- Upgrades necessary to attract businesses
- New development – coordination to install connections for new technologies (fiber optics, electric vehicle charging, solar ready) Coordination of infrastructure projects (roads, water, sewer, stormwater, power, fiber, etc.) for cost benefits
- Energy grid – public/private partnerships needed to expand grid network for future growth



# Takeaways – ECONOMY

- **Education and local workforce training/retention is critical, especially regarding new technologies**
  - Employment challenges remain due to hurricane impacts to housing and transportation
- **Private Sector & Technology** Drive economic advances - Support betterment of communities

**RESILIENCY  
WORK GROUP  
SESSIONS**



**10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each day**

<b>Review Draft Concepts &amp; Goals</b>	<b>Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Review Draft Concepts &amp; Goals</b>	<b>Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup></b>

# Timeline of Resiliency Actions





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**Save the Date!**

# **Heartland Resiliency Summit**

**Thursday, June 15, 2023**

**Bert J. Harris Agricultural Center, Sebring**

