

CHAPTER 2 – BIOLOGICAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The FBHCP provides a framework for the protection of both state and federally listed species potentially affected by activities permitted by the FDEP under its CCCL program. Key to the development of an effective conservation strategy for those species is the establishment of biological goals and objectives. The Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook (USFWS and NMFS 1996) defines biological goals as “broad guiding principles for the operating conservation program of the HCP.” Explicit objectives establish actions needed to achieve the stated goals. The USFWS will evaluate the effectiveness of the FBHCP by the extent to which the FDEP is able to achieve its stated biological goals and objectives.

The biological goals and objectives presented below were the basis for:

- Minimization and mitigation measures presented in subsequent chapters of the FBHCP.
- Development of an effective monitoring program to assess the effectiveness of proposed conservation measures.
- An adaptive management strategy to deal with changed circumstances and/or ineffective conservation measures over the term of the ITP, as applicable.
- USFWS framing of ITP terms and conditions.

Biological Goal

The single overarching biological goal of the FBHCP is to implement a statewide conservation strategy that sustains the basic life histories and ecology of all covered species within the Plan Area and supports the conservation goals of Federal recovery plans and state management plans for those species.

It should be noted that although the biological goal of the FBHCP is to support Federal recovery efforts, the FDEP alone cannot affect recovery. For many species, particularly sea turtles and shorebirds, principal threats lie outside of the Plan Area (see Chapter 6) and/or result from activities over which the FDEP has little or no regulatory or management authority. For example, the BBCS will implement appropriate measures to protect sea turtle nesting habitat from impacts related to CCCL activities, yet principal threats to recovery for most sea turtle species are related to offshore fisheries interactions, over which the FDEP has no control. Thus, the intent of the FBHCP is to affect a net conservation benefit for each covered species within the Plan Area through the implementation of effective minimization and mitigation measures. These measures will address applicable recovery objectives set forth in the recovery plans for each of the covered species, and over time they should assist with Federal recovery efforts.

Biological Objectives

The following objectives were established to ensure the FBHCP's biological goal can be achieved:

1. Maintain and, where possible, improve the quality, quantity, and function of habitat for all covered species within the Plan Area.
2. Minimize impacts resulting from CCCL permitted activities.
3. Adequately mitigate for unavoidable impacts resulting from CCCL permitted activities to ensure a net conservation benefit for all covered species.
4. Implement effective monitoring programs to assess the effectiveness of minimization and mitigation measures and document take resulting from ITP authorized activities.
5. Establish clearly defined actions and benchmarks for initiating adaptive management strategies in response to changed circumstances and/or ineffective conservation measures.
6. Ensure the long-term persistence of covered species within the Plan Area in consideration of large-scale environmental changes, such as those associated with climate change (e.g., sea level rise).

The tasks that will be undertaken to achieve these objectives are described in the minimization, mitigation, monitoring, and adaptive management chapters of the FBHCP.

References

USFWS and NMFS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service). 1996. Endangered Species Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook. United States Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.