

## **LDC 22-1406 Gopher Tortoise Habitat**

This Proposed Amendment requires applicants for development of land that includes gopher tortoise habitat to provide a borrow survey prepared by a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (“FFWCC”) authorized agent. The borrow survey must be submitted along with an application for a Natural Resources Permit before the applicant may make alterations to land that has evidence of gopher tortoise presence. It also requires the applicant to report to the State of Florida any previous violations of any regulations relating to gopher tortoises.

The Proposed Amendment further creates the Significant Wildlife Habitat Protection and Preservation Fund (“Fund”). The Fund will collect money from landowners who engage in unpermitted land alteration to significant wildlife habitat, and the proceeds will be used for restoration or acquisition of similar land. If a landowner engages in the unpermitted alteration of such land, there is mandatory restoration; if restoration is infeasible, then the responsible party must pay \$7,000 per affected acre to the Fund.

The Proposed Amendment further allows smaller lot size requirements for developments that preserve on-site wildlife habitat beyond the minimum required by the LDC. If a development exceeds the preservation requirements, it may reduce the minimum lot sizes up to 10% below the required minimums.