



# *Regional Cultivation*

## REGIONAL CULTIVATION TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

This chapter is a beginning. Previous Strategic Regional Policy Plans failed to recognize that agriculture, fishing and silviculture support the region's health, safety, economy and natural environment in a way that merits a free-standing element of the Plan. While there are strong forces in support of cultivation and related innovation in the region, it is important to recognize that the need for support and innovation in this sector rises to the level of other topics covered in the plan. As this is a beginning, it is not yet possible for this element to embody a vision for cultivation. Rather, it will recognize the importance of cultivation in Northeast Florida and be updated over time to reflect what approaches are appropriate here.

As noted in the analysis "Economic Contributions of Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida in 2016" dated July 31, 2018 and produced by the University of Florida/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program, Florida has approximately 4,300 square miles of croplands, orchards, and grasslands used for agricultural production, and 19,000 square miles of forests that together account for about 54% of the state's land area. That same source provides the following data regarding the employment share and value added by agriculture, natural resources and food industries in 2016.

County	Total County Jobs	Total County Value Added (M\$)	Ag-Food Industry Employment Contribution (Jobs)	Share of County Employment	Ag-Food Industry Value Added Contribution (M\$)	Share of County Value Added
Baker	9,933	537	1,660	16.7%	64	11.9%
Clay	74,260	4,838	17,075	23.0%	712	14.7%
Duval	642,065	60,407	116,057	18.1%	8,529	14.1%
Flagler	38,414	2,112	10,069	26.2%	447	21.1%
Nassau	31,162	2,139	9,848	31.6%	660	30.9%
Putnam	24,068	1,901	7,792	32.4%	740	38.9%
St. Johns	112,120	7,492	25,504	22.7%	1,428	19.1%

That publication identifies the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Food industries as the sector providing the largest percent (14.6%) of total employment in the State of Florida in 2016, and finds that sector to be tied with Health Care and Social Services at 8.8% of Value Added, exceeded only by the Real Estate and Rental industries at 14.8%. This data was included in the Northeast Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy adopted in 2019. In considering ocean jobs, a metric compiled by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management that includes the gathering of living resources and recreation, which include recreational and commercial fishing, in 2015 ocean jobs accounted for from 1 and 1.1% of all jobs in Clay and Putnam Counties, respectively, 4% in Duval County, 13.5% in St. Johns County, 13.7% in Flagler County and 18.2% in Nassau County. The estimated number and value of these jobs is listed below.

County (there are no Ocean Jobs estimates for Baker County)	Estimated Ocean Jobs in County	Estimated Wages Attributable to Ocean Jobs
Clay	463	\$30,000,000
Duval	19,020	\$644,000,000
Flagler	2,910	\$72,000,000
Nassau	3,649	\$99,000,000
Putnam	174	\$6,000,000
St. Johns	9,005	\$202,000,000

## ***REGIONAL CULTIVATION BASIC PRINCIPLES***

The Northeast Florida Regional Council held meetings to gather public input and distributed a worksheet specific to cultivation. The following basic principles emerged as key to the success of cultivation in Northeast Florida:

1. **Cultivation is Economic Development.** This relationship has previously been frequently missed. Cultivation must be included in economic development planning, implementation and measures of success.
2. **Food systems are Critical Infrastructure.** Their resiliency must be considered in all aspects of planning for the region.
3. Market forces can make it difficult to keep land or assets in cultivation. **We can create new or utilize existing programs to make it easier to continue to cultivate.**
4. **Market forces can be used to make it easier to cultivate.**

A question posed while gathering community input was whether silviculture is a part of cultivation or should be addressed in the context of natural resources. As it shares with agriculture and fishing three of the listed basic principles, it was decided to include it in cultivation. It then inspired an additional basic principle:

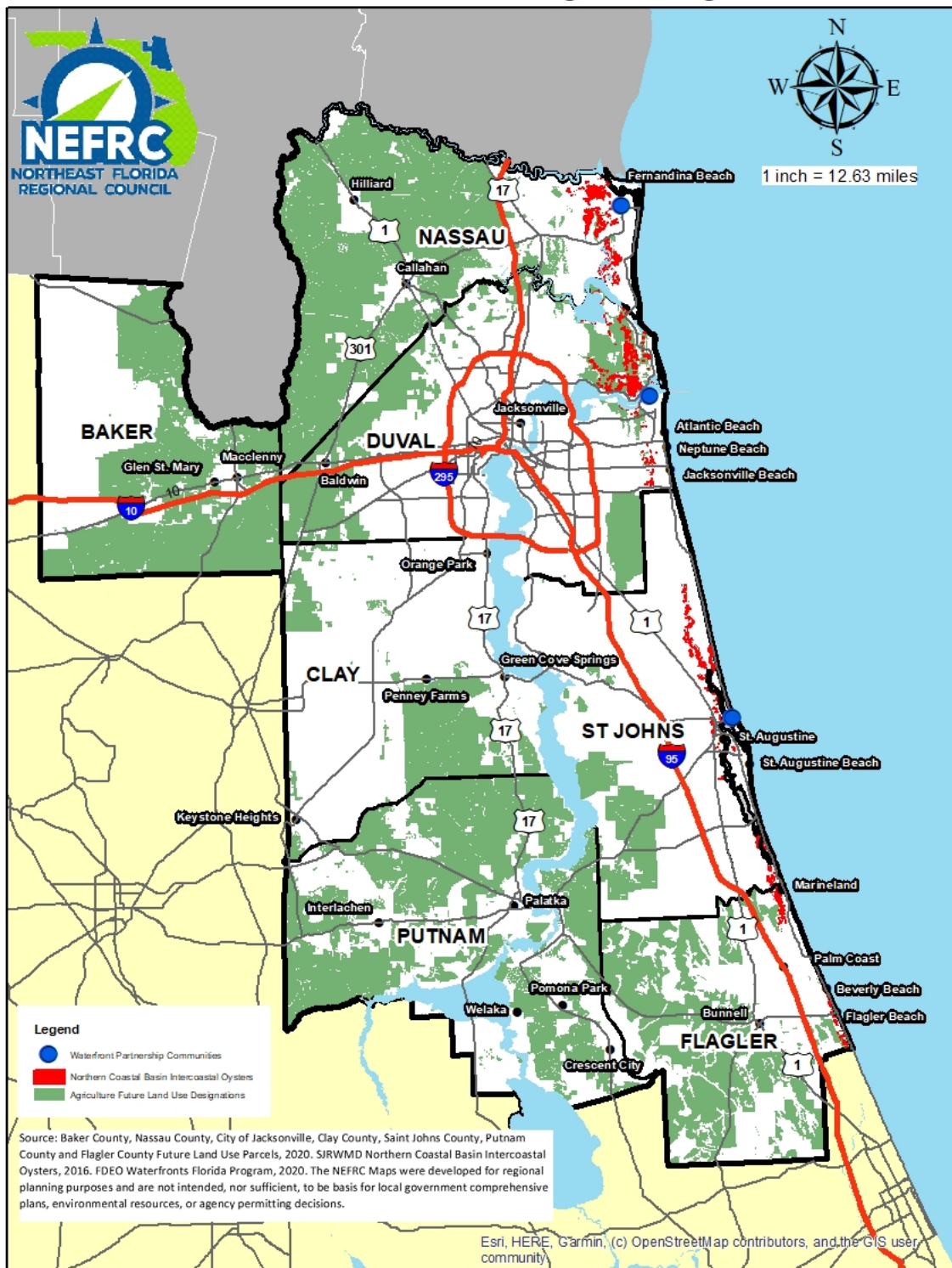
1. **Cultivation provides ecosystem services.** Silviculture uses store carbon, reducing the impact of climate change. Well-considered agriculture and fishing practices have the potential to reduce the impact of climate change while providing food.

## ***REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES***

While cultivation may occur in any Future Land Use category, lands designated with an Agriculture Future Land Use category have intentionally be identified for such use in the long term. Waterfront Florida Partnership Program communities as designated by the Department of Economic Opportunity are similarly identified as appropriate for water-related development and redevelopment. In addition, the uplands adjacent to shellfish beds have to potential to impact the regional resources that are the shellfish beds. Each of these are categories of resources are of regional significance and should be considered in the context of their impact on cultivation. The map is just an illustration and may not include all such resources or facilities.

*Resources of Regional Significance: Cultivation Facilities*

**Cultivation Facilities of Regional Significance**



## ***GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES***

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**Goal:** Recognize the importance of cultivation in Northeast Florida and be part of the conversation on what approaches are appropriate here and how to successfully implement them.

**Pillar Alignment: Innovation and Economic Development**

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***OBJECTIVE: CULTIVATION IS INCLUDED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND RECOGNIZED AS A KEY COMPONENT OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA'S ECONOMIC BASE.***

### ***Policies***

**Policy 1:** Cultivation will be included in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, including approaches, projects and measures.

**Pillar: Innovation and Economic Development, SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S**

**Policy 2:** Support the existing base level of facilities and jobs, and look for opportunities to increase these sectors and expand existing businesses and services.

**Pillar: Innovation and Economic Development, SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.**

**Policy 3:** Support our partners in maintaining data for the region, and measure our success using this best-available data.

**Pillar: Innovation and Economic Development, SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.**

**Policy 4:** Maintain a robust cultivation research and development sector.

**Pillar: Innovation and Economic Development, SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S**

**Policy 5:** Train and retain a workforce of cultivation professionals.

**Pillar: Innovation and Economic Development, SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.**

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***STRATEGIC ISSUE: FOOD SYSTEMS ARE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE***

***OBJECTIVE: CULTIVATION, ESPECIALLY FOOD SYSTEMS, IS CONSIDERED IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, ADAPTATION, MITIGATION AND RECOVERY PLANNING.***

**Policy 6:** NEFRC, in its planning role, shall include food systems as critical infrastructure and the resiliency of such systems as crucial to pre-and post-disaster planning and planning for the impacts of climate change.

**Pillar: Infrastructure and Growth Leadership, SCP: 187.201(5)(b)(1)F.S.**

**Policy 7:** NEFRC gathers best practices and connects communities with strategies and practitioners that can help address their issues within the context of the aspirational goals of First Coast Vision. Convening to share experiences and discuss solutions is an important part of this approach.

**Pillar: Quality of Life and Quality Places, SCP: 187.201(4)(a)F.S.**

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***STRATEGIC ISSUE: WE CAN CREATE NEW OR UTILIZE EXISTING PROGRAMS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE***

***OBJECTIVE: CONSIDER WHAT CULTIVATION-RELATED INCENTIVES ARE APPROPRIATE IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA.***

**Policy 8:** Explore transfer of development rights, incentivizing of easements supporting existing cultivation uses, payment for eco-system services and local tax abatement as ways to support on-going cultivation.

**Pillar: Innovation and Economic Development, SCP; 187.201(11)(a)(1)F.S.**

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***OBJECTIVE: CONSIDER WHAT CULTIVATION-RELATED REGULATIONS ARE APPROPRIATE IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA.***

**Policy 9:** Explore the inclusion of growth boundaries in Comprehensive Plans.

**Pillar: Quality of Life and Quality Places, SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.**

**Policy 10:** Explore local policies that discourage changes to agricultural land use.

**Pillar: Quality of Life and Quality Places, SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.**

**Policy 11:** Explore innovative land uses that encourage cultivation in the long term, such as agrihoods (neighborhoods designed around a related farm use.)

**Pillar: Quality of Life and Quality Places, SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.**



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***STRATEGIC ISSUE: MARKET FORCES CAN BE USED TO MAKE IT EASIER TO CULTIVATE******OBJECTIVE: GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS THAT MAKE CULTIVATION MORE VIABLE.***

**Policy 12:** The Region recognizes Cultivation as a regional priority. It also recognizes the Tri-County Agricultural Area as a special place. This includes referencing both in Comprehensive Plans, supporting related activities by allowing the use of government facilities and assets, adding related messages to marketing efforts and providing funding where appropriate.

**Pillar: Quality of Life and Quality Places, SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.**

**Policy 13:** The Region supports “Buy Local” policies and encourages government, institutions and the Military to adopt such policies.

**Pillar: Business Climate and Competitiveness, SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.**

**Policy 14:** Support the efforts of banks and other financial institutions that provide access to capital for cultivation businesses.

**Pillar: Business Climate and Competitiveness, SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.**

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***STRATEGIC ISSUE: CULTIVATION PROVIDES ECOSYSTEM SERVICES******OBJECTIVE: ESTABLISHED MEASURES THAT ALLOW THE VALUE OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN A CHANGE FROM A CULTIVATION USE IS CONSIDERED.***

**Policy 15:** Develop metrics to address the value of ecosystem services to allow the comprehensive cost of a change in use from cultivation to another use to be considered.

**Pillar: Quality of Life and Quality Places, SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.**

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***GENERAL OBJECTIVE: CONSISTENCY WITH THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN.***

**Policy 16:** NEFRC considers impacts to resources of regional significance and extra jurisdictional impacts as it reviews consistency with the SRPP. Local governments and proposers of projects should include best available data gathered using professionally acceptable methodology in support of their proposals, sufficient to determine impacts.

Where mitigation is proposed, using strategies outlined in local government policies or plans, the SRPP or a combination is encouraged.

**Pillar: Infrastructure and Growth Leadership, SCP: 187.201(15)(a)**

**REGIONAL CULTIVATION MEASURES**

**Share of Regional Employment**

Agricultural/Food Industry Share of Regional Employment	20.17%
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Source: Economic Contributions of Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida in 2016, University of Florida/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program, Florida, 2018

**Ocean Jobs**

Ocean Jobs Total Wages in 2015 (does not include Baker County)	\$1,053,000,000
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Source: NOAA Office for Coastal Management