

RECOMMENDED RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Presented by the Florida Chapter
of The Wildlife Society to

The Florida Institute of Phosphate Research

1. To assess the impact of current and proposed reclamation regulations on the quality of fish and wildlife habitats. Several of the current reclamation regulations apparently do not favor enhancement of fish and wildlife resources. The relatively steep (4:1) slope requirement for littoral zones of reclaimed lakes is one such example. Restrictions against islands (for nesting and loafing birds) and shallow areas (for spawning of fish) in reclaimed lakes and the mowing requirements for dikes provide additional examples. Also, provisions in the regulations which allow similar and concurrent reclamation plans on large (eg. 600 acre) adjacent terrestrial areas generally lead to reduction in wildlife habitat diversity, while fostering a reduction of wildland acreage in the state. An obvious need exists for research relating reclamation regulations to the quality of resultant fish and wildlife habitats.
2. To determine plant species diversity and successional changes on a variety of phosphate settling ("slime") areas and to determine the value of these areas for wildlife. This research need applies to both active settling areas under normal company operations and to inactive settling areas subjected to various forms (eg. water level manipulation, burning, spraying, etc.) of vegetation manipulation.
3. To investigate possible contamination of waterfowl in settling areas by flourides and/or heavy metals. This seems to be an area of concern for

some hunters consuming these birds and a common unanswered question raised by many others. This subject could be rather easily and thoroughly researched by collecting waterfowl in settling areas in Florida and from out-of-state and subjecting these specimens to the appropriate chemical analyses.