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DR/GR sensitive land fate near

Management proposals for area crucial to Lee's water supply due out Tuesday

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Three proposals created to determine the fate of 130 square miles crucial for drinking water supply will be unveiled this week, and let mining and development interests know if they can expand in this southeast Lee County region.

Dover, Kohl & Partners, the Coral Gables consultant commissioners hired for \$1.4 million, are scheduled to have its proposals posted on the Lee County Web site Tuesday, and a county committee could discuss it at a Wednesday meeting. Several committee meetings would follow throughout July before commissioners debate it on Aug. 1, when they return from their July break.

A final vote on how to manage this sensitive southeast section of the county could be the biggest land use decision commissioners make for the area in nearly two decades, when they created this area known as the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area and stricter growth standards began.

Commissioner Ray Judah said there's no question this is the most important decision on this area since the board in 1989 created growth restrictions here.

"It's because of the competing permissible uses, such as farming and mining, while we are protecting our water supply," Judah said.

ADVERTISEMENT Jason King, a planner with Dover Kohl, declined to be specific about the proposals. He wanted to follow the schedule of unveiling their findings Tuesday.



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Database: Bonita Springs properties that fall within the DRGR designation

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ails phase,” he said, but he admitted the planning of this project was unique.

“Resource extraction was a new feature of this plan given its importance to the state and the region,” he said of the rock mined for roads in the area, one of only six regions in the state with the rock. “If Florida continues to grow, which we expect it will, getting those resources to the market are very, very important.”

Crafting a plan has been challenging because of all the interests involved.

Farming and mining are allowable uses, but parcels not zoned for those uses still need county approval. So the question becomes how much can occur without hurting drinking water supply, as Judah said.

Same with development. The commission’s decision in 1989 limited building to one home for every 10 acres in this area.

“I’m real proud of the fact by 3-2 vote that we created (a land-use plan here) to save our water supply and prevent urban sprawl,” Judah said.

He does not know what to expect in the proposals.

“I’m very anxious,” he said.

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