



State of Florida Wekiva Parkway Related Activities

Wekiva Basin Area Task Force (2002-03)

The [Wekiva Basin Area Task Force](#), created by Governor Bush in 2002, was charged with making recommendations for the most appropriate location for an expressway connecting State Road 429 to Interstate 4. Commissioner Daryl McLain represented Seminole County on the Committee Task Force. The Task Force submitted its [final report](#) to Governor Bush in January 2003. The following excerpts from the report are relevant:

- **Recommendations**

- **Recommendation 2:** The Task Force recommends that the appropriate transportation agency(ies) use the corridor that is depicted on Figure 3, "Recommended Corridor for the Wekiva Parkway" to undertake the environmental and engineering studies to determine the precise alignment. In addition to the studies, the appropriate transportation agency(ies) shall also apply the "Guiding Principles for Corridor Location" listed herein in selecting the final roadway alignment. The final alignment within Seminole County shall be subject to the approval of the Seminole County Expressway Authority. The Wekiva Parkway must be planned in its entirety, rather than in phases.

From east of the Wekiva River in Seminole County, the corridor should connect to I-4 no farther north than the St. Johns River bridge on I-4 and no farther south than the I-4 and SR 417 interchange. This broad area within which to identify the actual alignment of the Wekiva Parkway provides the implementing transportation agency with the most flexibility to avoid impacts on public conservation lands, existing residential communities, and established commercial areas in Seminole County, while still achieving the connection of SR 429 to I-4 directed by the Governor's Executive Order.

On December 10, 2002, the Seminole County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution opposing a new toll road or expressway crossing the Wekiva River into Seminole County. At the December 16, 2002, meeting of the Task Force, Seminole County Commissioner and Seminole County Expressway Authority Chairman, Randall Morris, urged the Task Force to reconsider its recommendation to locate the beltway connector through the county and instead recommend that SR 46 be upgraded as a four-lane, controlled access facility from near the Wekiva River to I-4. The Task Force noted the strong local preference to use the SR 46 corridor to the maximum extent feasible and observed that its recommendation for location of the corridor within Seminole County both accommodated the County's request and provided maximum flexibility to the transportation agency(ies) in selecting the most appropriate alignment.

- **Recommendation 3:** The Task Force recommends that the appropriate transportation agency(ies) use the following “Guiding Principles for the Wekiva Parkway Design Features and Construction.” The guiding principles should also be applied to the construction of new expressways and the expansion of existing expressways, as applicable. When the design of any new expressway facility is completed it should:
 - Promote a “Parkway” look with appropriate natural buffers between the roadways and the adjacent areas.
- **Recommendation 7:** The Task Force recommends that the number of interchanges located along the Wekiva Parkway not exceed five, and be located as follows:
 - e. *Interstate 4* – An interchange would be located where the Wekiva Parkway reaches I-4 in Seminole County no farther north than the St. John’s River Bridge and no farther south than the I-4, SR 417 interchange.
- **Wekiva Parkway Design Features and Construction**
 - A key issue discussed by the Task Force was that of the ultimate design and construction of the Wekiva Parkway. As part of its vision to create an expressway corridor that would be similar to well known scenic highways, the Task Force sought to recommend standards for the Wekiva Parkway that would also result in a model for future expressways in Florida. Noting that its work in preparing the recommendations included in this report marked only the preliminary work to create the Wekiva Parkway, the Task Force adopted broad guiding principles for consideration as the project development and environmental studies, engineering and design, and, ultimately, construction proceeded.

Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee (2003-04)

The [Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee](#) was appointed by the Governor on July 1 2003, by Executive Order 2003-112, to build upon the recommendations of the Wekiva Basin Area Task Force through a cooperative effort by local governments, state and regional agencies, and affected interests charged to protect the Wekiva. The Committee presented its [final report](#) to the Governor and the Department of Community Affairs in early 2004. Commissioner Daryl McLain represented Seminole County on the Committee. The following excerpts from the report are relevant:

- **INTRODUCTION**

- The Wekiva Basin Area Task Force, created by Governor Bush in 2002 by Executive Order 2002-259, was charged with considering, evaluating and making recommendations for the most appropriate location for an expressway that connects State Road 429 to Interstate 4 *in Seminole County*, and which causes the least disruption and provides the greatest protection to the Wekiva Basin ecosystem.

COMMENT: *The above statement is false, in that the Executive Order DID NOT state the expressway should be in Seminole County.* When the Committee proceeded from this false premise, they did so with prejudice, which biased the findings in the final report.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Recommendation 1:** The Committee supports development of the Wekiva Parkway and endorses the following recommendations of the Wekiva Basin Area Task Force: (See Task Force recommendations, above).

The Weviva Parway and Protection Act (2004)

The Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act. Former Governor Jeb Bush signed the Act into law on June 29, 2004. The law authorizes building the Wekiva Parkway and provides protection to the Wekiva River system. The following excerpts from the Act are relevant:

- The Act provides a legal description of the Wekiva Study Area; defines the Wekiva Parkway; provides guiding principles for the Wekiva Parkway Design Features and Construction; limits the number of interchanges along the Wekiva Parkway; grants the Department of Transportation certain eminent domain authority for the Wekiva Parkway construction; requires that certain entities locate the precise corridor and interchanges for the Wekiva Parkway in Seminole County consistent with this act.
- Intent: (3) It is the intent of the Legislature that the recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee as stated in its final report dated March 16, 2004, be taken and implemented as a whole
- 316.317 Wekiva Parkway.--
 - The "Wekiva Parkway" means any limited access highway or expressway constructed between State Road 429 and Interstate 4 specifically incorporating the corridor alignment recommended by Recommendation 2 of the Wekiva River Basin Area Task Force final report dated January 15, 2003, and the recommendations of the SR 429 Working Group that were adopted January 16, 2004.
 - The Wekiva Parkway and related transportation facilities shall follow the design criteria contained in the recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Area Task Force adopted by reference by the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee in its final report of March 16, 2004 and the recommendations of the Wekiva Coordinating Committee contained in its final report of March 16, 2004, subject to reasonable environmental, economic and engineering considerations.
 - With the exception of the road commonly referred to as the Apopka Bypass, the construction of any other limited-access highway or expressway that is identified by the Final Recommendations of the State Road 429 Working Group adopted January 16, 2004 within the Wekiva Study Area shall adhere to transportation and conservation principles identified within the Final Report of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee dated March 16, 2004.
- In Seminole County, the Seminole County Expressway Authority, the Department of Transportation, and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise shall locate the precise corridor and interchanges for the Wekiva Parkway consistent with the legislative intent expressed in this act and other provisions of this act.

The Wekiva River Basin Commission (2004 -)

The [Wekiva River Basin Commission](#), Governor Bush appointed the [19-member Wekiva River Basin Commission](#) on September 23, 2004. It is charged to monitor and ensure implementation of the legislation. The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council is providing staff support. Activities of the Wekiva River Basin Commission are posted on the [East Central Florida Regional Planning Council's website](#). The Commission was established pursuant to a recommendation from the Coordinating Committee, and monitors and ensures implementation of state, regional and local efforts consistent with the Coordinating Committee's recommendations. The Commission reports annually to the Governor, the Florida Legislature and the Department of Community Affairs. The Commission members are appointed by the Governor to staggered terms. The Commission is chaired by Senator Lee Constantine, Chair – Senator, Florida Senate District 22.

It is comprised of the following voting members: one member of each of the Boards of County Commissioners for Lake, Orange, and Seminole Counties; one municipal elected official to serve as a representative of the municipalities located within the Wekiva Study Area of Lake County; one municipal elected official to serve as a representative of the municipalities located within the Wekiva Study Area of Orange County; one municipal elected official to serve as a representative of the municipalities located within the Wekiva Study Area of Seminole County; one citizen representing an environmental or conservation organization; one citizen representing a local property owner, a land developer, or an agricultural entity; and one at-large citizen who shall serve as chairman of the council.

The ad hoc nonvoting members include one representative from each of the following entities: St. Johns River Management District; Department of Community Affairs; Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Health; Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Department of Transportation; MetroPlan Orlando; Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority; and the Seminole County Expressway Authority.

Commissioner Brenda Carey represents Seminole County on the Commission. The Commission's last meeting was in February 2008, and the next meeting is scheduled for the June – July 2008 timeframe.