

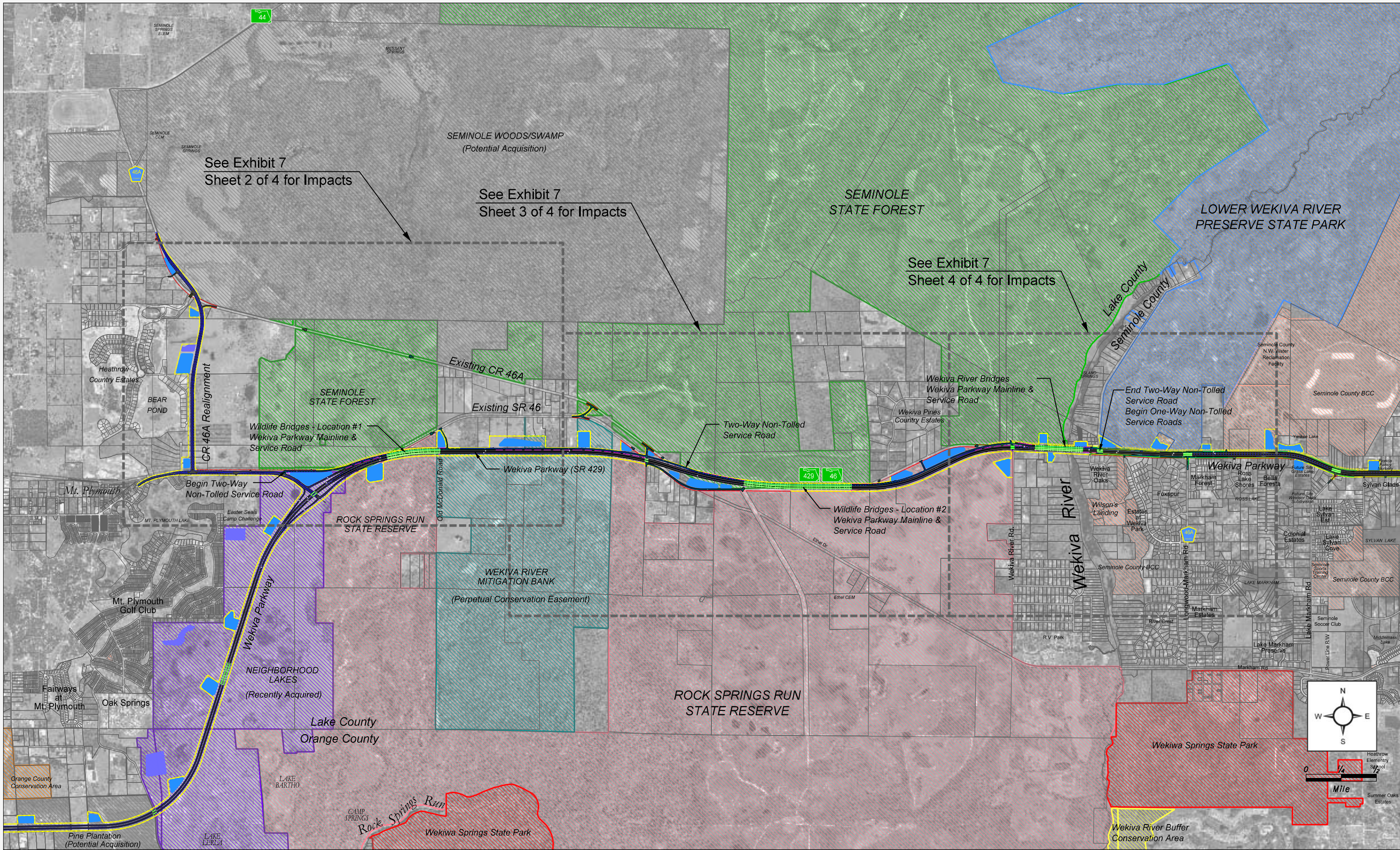
# Seminole State Forest

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## 5.1 Impacts and Findings

The Seminole State Forest is a designated state forest and offers many benefits to Florida's citizens and visitors. As outlined in this section, minimal impacts to Seminole State Forest are anticipated with the proposed alternative; however, no adverse affects are expected. This *Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation* applies to this project because it proposes the use of minor amounts of the Seminole State Forest and meets the FHWA's criteria for applicability and the FDOT's *PD&E Manual* Section 13-2.4.2 criteria as follows:

- 1. Operational Characteristics:** The proposed project is designed to improve the operational characteristics, safety, and physical condition of the existing highway facility (SR 46) on essentially the same alignment through the area where the Seminole State Forest is located (west of the Wekiva River and north of existing SR 46).
- 2. Abutment to Public Lands:** Seminole State Forest is a public recreational facility and conservation area; the southern boundary is located adjacent to existing SR 46.
- 3. Impairment to Section 4(f) Resource:** The amount and location of the land used for the proposed alternative does not impair the use of the remaining Section 4(f) land, in whole or in part, for its intended purpose. Approximately 58 acres of Seminole State Forest will incur direct use impacts due to right-of-way requirements for roadway and stormwater ponds. The 58 acres is about 0.21 percent of the existing 27,063 acres in Seminole State Forest. A section of existing CR 46A from the northern limits of the CR 46A realignment to just northwest of the properties in the vicinity of the "hump" in SR 46 will be removed as a part of the proposed project. As a result, approximately 13 acres of the existing CR 46A right-of-way will be added to Seminole State Forest due to the proposed improvements. The net impact on Seminole State Forest of approximately 45 acres represents 0.17 percent of the existing 27,063 acres. Approximately 5.5 acres will be required temporarily for the relocation of an existing 50-foot Florida Gas Transmission easement adjacent to the existing north right-of-way line of SR 46. Temporary impacts will occur within the 50-foot easement as a result of relocating the gas pipeline. The impacted areas of Seminole State Forest are shown in **Exhibit 7**.
- 4. Proximity Impacts:** Proximity impacts, such as water runoff, visual intrusion, access and vibration, are not expected as a result of the proposed alternative. In accordance with the FHWA Memorandum dated November 12, 1985, regarding Section 4(f) Constructive Use, it is unlikely that the proposed improvements will substantially impair the function, integrity, use, access, value or setting of this resource. Noise impacts are not expected to impact the existing primitive camping facilities due to the distance between the facilities and the proposed roadway. Stormwater treatment ponds are planned throughout the proposed corridor to provide treatment and to prevent the degradation of water quality due to the project. At the request of state land managers, flow easements as an alternative to ponds will be addressed with FDEP during the drainage design/permitting phase.



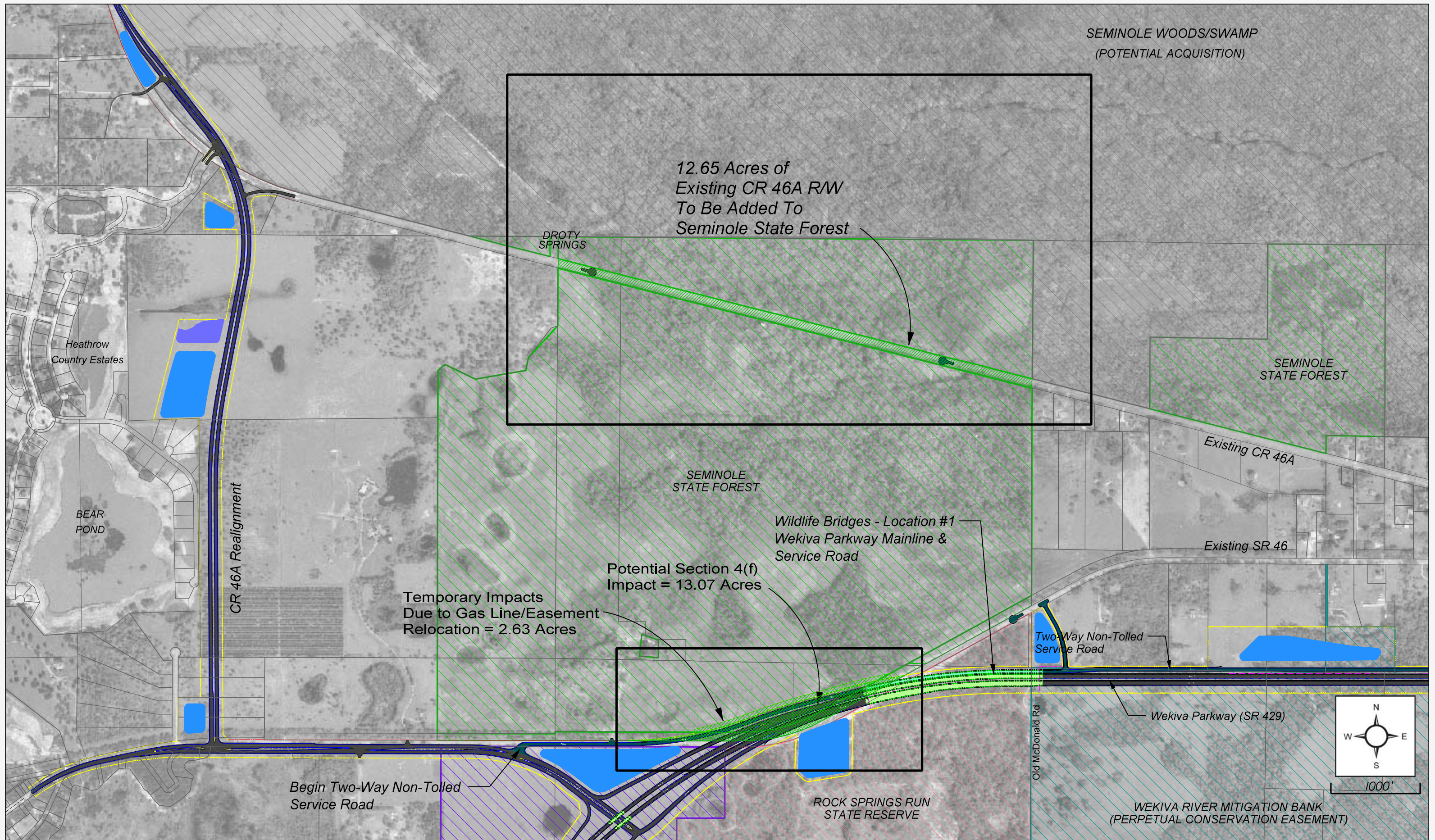
See Exhibit 7  
Sheet 2 of 4 for Impacts

See Exhibit 7  
Sheet 3 of 4 for Impacts

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Sheet 4 of 4 for Impacts

**Exhibit 7**  
**Section 4(f) Impacts To Seminole State Forest**  
Sheet 1 of 4

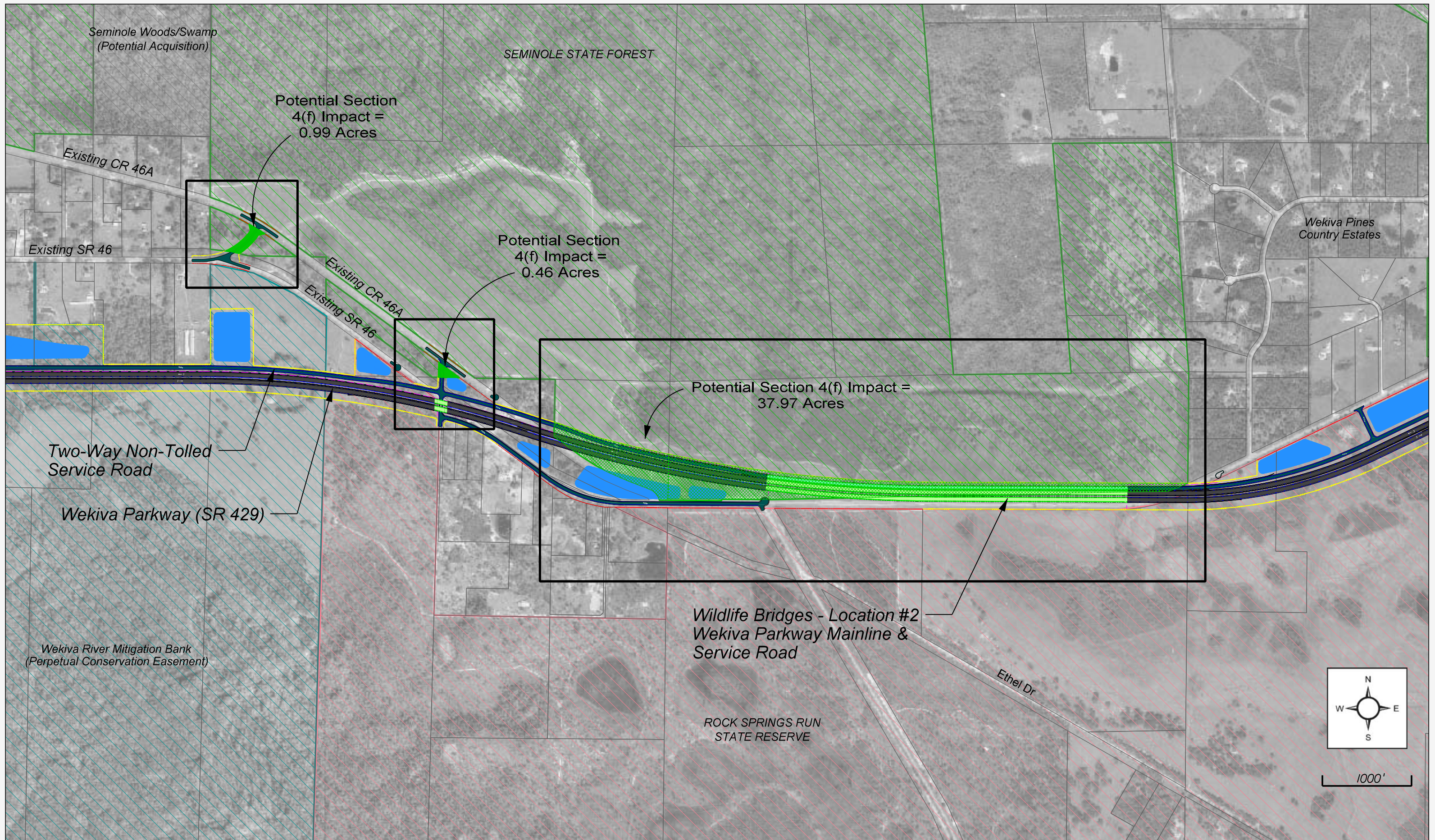
- LEGEND**
- Stormwater Ponds
  - Seminole State Forest
  - Rock Springs Run State Reserve
  - Proposed Alternative R/W
  - Floodplain Compensation Ponds
  - Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park
  - Neighborhood Lakes
  - Existing R/W



**LEGEND**

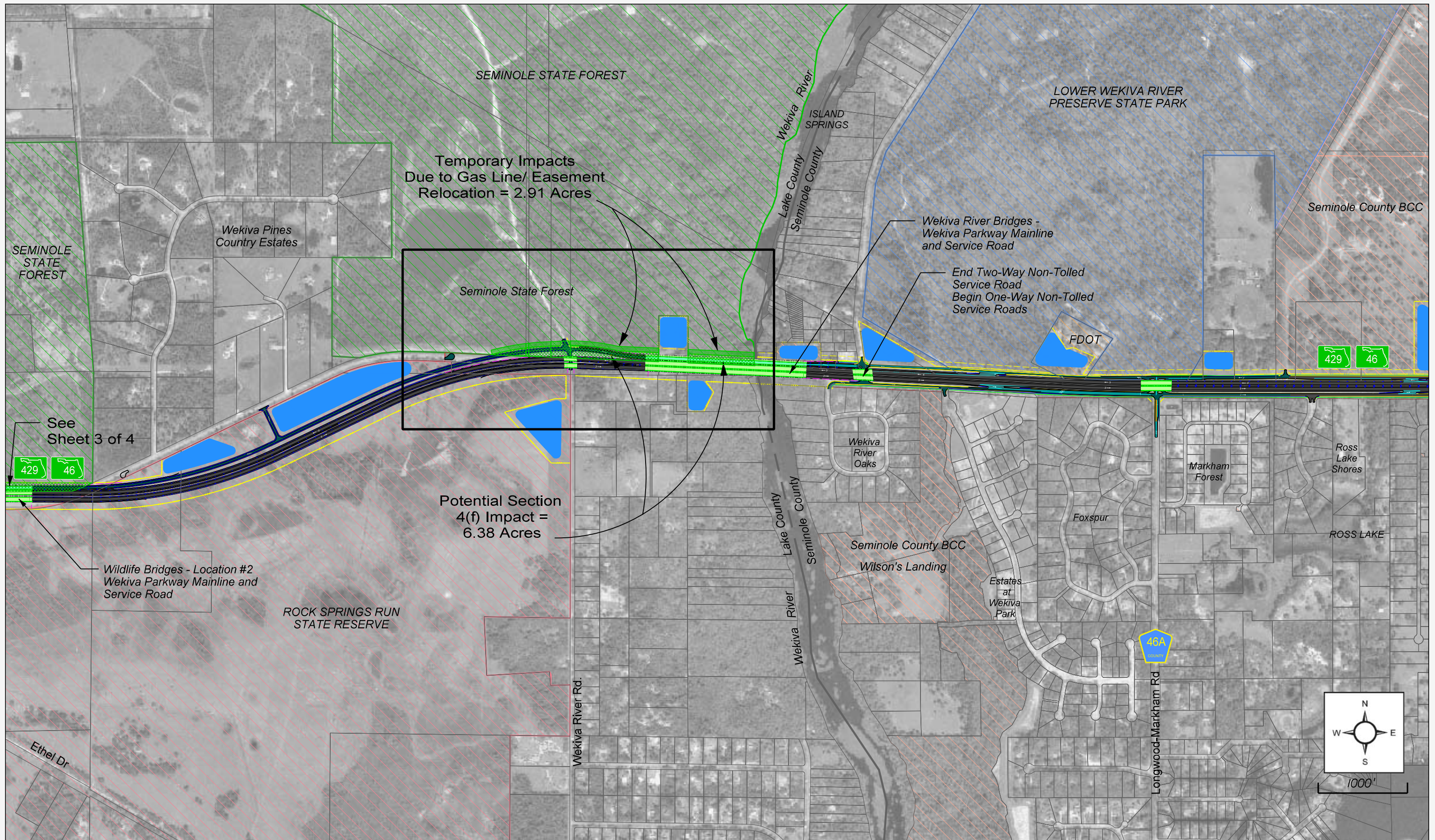
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5. **Assessment of Impacts Concurrence:** FDOT sent a written request on October 29, 2007 to the FDACS, Division of Forestry land managers of the Seminole State Forest to provide their opinion on the minimization of project impacts and proposed mitigation measures. The response letter from the Division of Forestry dated May 30, 2008 states “We appreciate your efforts to reduce the adverse effects of the project on the Seminole State Forest (SSF), and your willingness to work with our staff and address our issues during this process”. On April 21, 2009, FDOT sent a written request for a concurrence letter to the Division of Forestry. The Division of Forestry responded with a letter on May 27, 2009 that provided partial concurrence, with full concurrence pending resolution of concerns about fire and smoke management issues. FDOT sent a reply letter to the Division of Forestry on May 29, 2009 which addressed those concerns and committed to design phase coordination. However, later in 2009 the service road concept replaced the previous alternative and there was subsequent coordination with the Division of Forestry. Information on the reduced impacts of the service road on Seminole State Forest was provided to the Division of Forestry on February 8, 2010. On March 25, 2010, FDOT and the Expressway Authority provided a letter of commitment on mitigation measures to the Director of the Division of Forestry. After additional discussions and coordination, **the Director of the Division of Forestry sent a letter to FDOT on April 9, 2010 which provides full Section 4(f) concurrence.** Copies of each of the letters referenced above are included in **Appendix C.**
6. **Federal Interest:** The property was purchased using Preservation 2000, Florida Forever and Save Our River program funding sources. No Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) were used to purchase and/or make improvements to the Preserve.

## 5.2 Measures to Minimize Harm

Minimization of impacts to state park, forest and conservation lands has been a primary focus throughout the development and selection of alignment alternatives. The proposed alternative is consistent with the *Use of Natural Lands by Linear Facilities Policy as Approved by Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund*, January 23, 1996. The policy states that “owners and operators of linear facilities must avoid location on natural resource lands unless no other practical and prudent alternative is available and all steps to minimize impacts...are implemented. The test of practicality and prudence will compare the social, economic, and environmental effects of the alternatives.”

The following measures are proposed to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) resources identified in this document. Furthermore, FDOT has committed to work with the resource land managers to identify other measures to minimize impacts.

### *Incorporation of Design Features*

- To minimize potential impacts, the proposed limited-access facility closely follows the existing SR 46 alignment within this section of the project study area.
- FDOT has committed to examine options to further minimize impacts as a part of the PD&E Study, as well as during final design.

- No stormwater treatment ponds currently exist along SR 46 within the study area. The proposed project includes elements intended to enhance the existing conditions in the environmentally sensitive Wekiva River Protection Area, including stormwater treatment ponds to filter pollutants from runoff which eventually drains to the Wekiva River. At the request of state land managers, use of flowage easements as an alternative to ponds will be addressed with FDEP in the drainage design/permitting phase.
- The proposed alternative includes replacing two existing SR 46 wildlife structures ( a 52-foot bridge west of Old McDonald Road and a 26-foot culvert east of the existing SR 46/CR46A intersection) with 1,960-foot and 4,000-foot bridges, respectively. The existing 561-foot Wekiva River Bridge will be replaced with a 1,750-foot bridge. These long bridges will enhance wildlife habitat connectivity between Seminole State Forest and Rock Springs Run State Reserve and reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle conflicts. The service road parallel to the expressway will also be bridged over the wildlife corridors and over the Wekiva River with bridge lengths equivalent to the mainline. The locations and approximate lengths of the proposed wildlife structures are shown in the previously referenced **Exhibit 6** on page 3-7.
- Commitments have been made to coordinate with the Division of Forestry in the final design phase on issues related to prescribed burns and smoke management; related commitments on overhead signing for motorist smoke advisories and remote weather stations to monitor field conditions have also been made (see the previously referenced letter of March 25, 2010 from FDOT and the Expressway Authority to the Division of Forestry in Appendix C).

### *Replacement of Lands*

- A section of existing CR 46A from the northern limits of the CR 46A realignment to just northwest of the private properties in the vicinity of the “hump” in SR 46 will be removed as a part of the proposed project. As a result, approximately 13 acres of the existing CR 46A right-of-way will be added to Seminole State Forest land due to the proposed improvements. The net impact of approximately 45 acres represents about 0.17 percent of the existing 27,063 acres in the Seminole State Forest.