

# Conclusion

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Rock Springs Run State Reserve, Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park, and Seminole State Forest are significant resources in meeting the conservation and recreational goals of the State of Florida. Extensive coordination with local and state agencies, including the land managers for the state conservation lands, and other stakeholders has played a key role in determining the alignment of the proposed facility. Minimization of social, environmental, and economic impacts has been the primary goal. The proposed project 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 proposed project is being submitted as a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation based on the FHWA criteria for applicability 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 Section 4(f) properties are located (from the Neighborhood Lakes area to east of the Wekiva River).
- 2. Abutment to Public Lands:** The Section 4(f) lands are publicly owned public parks, recreation lands, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges located adjacent to the existing highway.
- 3. Impairment to Section 4(f) Resource:** The amount and location of the land to be used does not impair the use of the remaining Section 4(f) land, in whole or in part, for its intended purpose. The total acreage to be impacted by the proposed project is less than 1 percent of the total acreage for each of the Section 4(f) properties.
- 4. Proximity Impacts:** The proximity impacts of the project on the remaining Section 4(f) land will not impair the use of such land for its intended purpose. The proposed project includes elements intended to enhance the existing conditions in the environmentally sensitive Wekiva River Protection Area, including long bridges to provide enhanced wildlife habitat connectivity, additional conservation lands, and stormwater treatment ponds or flowage easements to filter pollutants from runoff which eventually drains to the Wekiva River (no stormwater treatment ponds currently exist along SR 46).
- 5. Assessment of Impacts Concurrence:** After extensive coordination, communication and cooperation with public land managers which began in 2006, FDOT and the Expressway Authority received full Section 4(f) concurrence for the proposed Wekiva Parkway project from FDEP and the Division of Forestry in 2010. Copies of the concurrence letters from the FDEP Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation dated March 30, 2010 and the Director of the Division of Forestry dated April 9, 2010 are included in **Appendix C**.
- 6. Federal Interest:** No Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) were used to purchase and/or make improvements to the Section 4(f) properties addressed within this document.

7. **Class of Action:** An *Environmental Assessment* was prepared for the Wekiva Parkway (SR 429)/SR 46 Realignment PD&E Study based on the Class of Action Determination for the project.

### *Other Elements*

Elements such as developing a landscape plan to accentuate the natural environment, non-intrusive and minimal roadway and bridge lighting in the Wekiva River Protection Area, flowage easements as an alternative to stormwater ponds, and safety features to promote the continuation of prescribed burning in the Wekiva River Basin, particularly in Seminole State Forest, will be addressed in the final design and construction phases. Also, access management will be further addressed during the final design phase and coordinated with the public land managers for the adjacent park, forest and conservation lands.