

7.0 Conclusion

There is no prudent and feasible alternative to the proposed construction over the Section 4(f) recreational segment of the Wekiva Wild and Scenic River. Utilizing the existing river crossing location at the narrowest point in the river would cause the least harm to the Wekiva River and the surrounding environment. Any other alternative alignment would necessitate filling and/or new bridges across a wider wetland reach which would have far greater impacts. In addition, any shift in the alignment in the area of the Wekiva River would incur additional impacts to Section 4(f) public conservation and park lands, the spring-shed and ground water recharge areas, and would cause far greater impacts to existing neighborhoods and residential communities. The proposed project includes all practical measures to minimize harm to the river and adjacent lands, such as a lengthened and heightened channel span over the river, spanning the adjacent wetlands and floodplain, and removal of the filled land supporting the existing bridge abutment which will restore the wildlife corridor adjacent to the river. In addition, improvements to water quality through treatment of pollutant runoff, and improvements to channel flow and recreational values due to the wider channel span, will serve to enhance the existing characteristics of the Wekiva Wild and Scenic River.