HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 849

Wekiva River Basin Act

SPONSOR(S): Brummer TIED BILLS:

: IDEN./SIM. BILLS: SB 1214

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	
1) Local Government & Veterans' Affairs		Grayson	Cutchins	
2) Natural Resources				
3) Appropriations				
4)		_		
5)				

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

This bill as filed creates the Wekiva River Basin Parkway and Protection Act. The bill merely contains a statement of Legislative intent and concludes with the intent that the Legislature review the findings and recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee, created by Executive Order No. 03-112, and to implement those findings and recommendations compatible with good government and property rights.

The bill as filed does not appear to impact the state budget.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

1.	Reduce government?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[X]
2.	Lower taxes?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[X]
3.	Expand individual freedom?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[X]
4.	Increase personal responsibility?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[X]
5.	Empower families?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[X]

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Effect of HB 849

This bill as filed creates s. 163.3247, F.S., which is the Wekiva River Basin Parkway and Protection

The bill states Legislative intent describing:

- the background and importance of the Wekiva River and its tributaries, including the designation as an Outstanding Florida Water, a National Wild and Scenic River, a Florida Wild and Scenic River. and a Florida Aquatic Preserve;
- previous legislation creating the Wekiva Protection Act, codified in part II of ch. 369, F.S., which delineates an area comprised of portions of Lake, Orange and Seminole Counties as the Wekiva River Protection Area:
- the direct influence on the health of a spring system by activities and land uses within the spring recharge basin:
- that the Wekiva Basin is located in a Priority Water Resource Caution Area indicating that water supply problems are projected to become critical by 2010, and projected water use may result in unacceptable impacts to natural systems and groundwater quality:
- that no special protection currently exists for the majority of the groundwater recharge basin of the Wekiva River which is located outside of the protection area delineated in Part II, ch. 369, F.S., and that the Wekiva River Springs Protection Area shall consist of all of Lake, Orange, and Seminole Counties; and finally,
- that it is the intent of the Legislature to review the findings and recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee, created by Executive Order No. 03-112, and to implement those findings and recommendations compatible with good government and property rights.

Background

The Wekiva Basin, consisting of the Wekiva River, the St. Johns River and their tributaries along with associated lands in central Florida, is part of a vast wildlife corridor that connects northwest Orange County with the Ocala National Forest. In recent years, the state has acquired more than 60,000 acres of conservation lands at a cost of \$139 million. These conservation lands provide habitat for the Florida black bear, burrowing owl, sandhill crane, Florida scrub-jay, gopher tortoise, and the limpkin.

The Wekiva River and its tributaries have been designated an Outstanding Florida Water, a National and Scenic River, a Florida Wild and Scenic River, and a Florida Aquatic Preserve. The river is a spring-fed system associated with 19 springs that are connected to the Florida Aguifer. Eleven of these

STORAGE NAME: PAGE: 2 h0849.lgv.doc February 23, 2004

springs are second and third magnitude springs, meaning those springs discharge 10 to 100 cubic feet per second or 1 to 10 cubic feet per second, respectively.

The central Florida region has experienced tremendous growth in the last twenty years resulting in increasing transportation demands and development pressure on lands within the Wekiva Basin. During the period between 1980 and 1990, the growth rate in Lake, Seminole, and Orange Counties exceeded 30 percent. The growth rate for this three-county area is expected to exceed 20 percent through the year 2010. While projected growth for the state between 2010 and 2020 is 13 percent, the growth rate for central Florida is expected to be 17 percent.

The desire to balance the transportation needs associated with this projected growth and protection of the Wekiva Basin prompted Governor Bush to create the "Wekiva Basin Area Task Force" on September 26, 2002. The task force was charged with evaluating and making recommendations on the most appropriate location for a highway route connecting State Road 429 to Interstate 4 while providing the greatest protection to the Wekiva Basin. Also, the task force was asked to evaluate and recommend a transportation plan that considers the potential expansion of roads and corridors within the Wekiva Basin to address, among other issues, land acquisition, springshed protection, innovative road design, protection of rural character, protection of habitat, utilization of financial resources, and the adequacy of local governments relating to transportation corridors.

The task force submitted its recommendations for planning and locating the Wekiva Parkway in its final report to the Governor on January 15, 2003.

During the 2003 Legislative Session, HB 1333 was acted upon favorably with CS by the Committee on Local Government & Veterans' Affairs on April 27, 2003. A companion bill, SB 1956, died in Messages.

To further the efforts of the Wekiva Basin Area Task Force, Governor Bush signed Executive Order 2003-112 on July 1, 2003, establishing the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee (coordinating committee).

The coordinating committee's recommendations, as contained in its draft final report¹, may be summarized as follows:

Recommendation 1: The Committee supports development of the Wekiva Parkway and endorses the following recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Area Task Force:

- Task Force Recommendation 2: Recommended Corridor for the Wekiva Parkway, Figure 3, incorporating the corridor alignment recommended by the SR 429 Working Group, Figure 4;
- Task Force Recommendations 3 & 4: Guiding Principles for the Wekiva Parkway Design Features and Construction;
- Task Force Recommendation 7: Interchanges Along the Wekiva Parkway;
- Task Force Recommendation 9: Local Government Review of Long-Range Transportation Plans; and
- Task Force Recommendation 10: Application of Guiding Principles to State Road 44.

These specific Task Force Recommendations as further recommended by the coordinating committee are further described below.

 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

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¹ Draft, Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee Final Report, preemptively dated March 16, 2004, http://www.wekivacommittee.org/wekivacc/February%2004/finalreportdraft.pdf (3/10/04).

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.

- 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:
 - a. Provide that all new expressways be fully limited access, with interchanges;
 - b. Promote a "Parkway" look with appropriate natural buffers between the roadways and the adjacent areas;
 - o c. Include the maximum provision for bridging through strategically important wetlands;
 - d. Elevate (bridge) identified functionally significant wildlife corridors, and provide appropriate wildlife bridges with barriers to direct wildlife to safe crossing points;
 - e. Design storm water treatment facilities to minimize habitat loss and promote restoration of impacted sites and assure capture and treatment of runoff from bridges over Outstanding Florida Waters to Outstanding Florida Waters standards;
 - f. Offer opportunities to view, understand, and access the environmental uniqueness of the Wekiva River ecosystem;
 - o g. Provide non-intrusive and minimal roadway and bridge lighting in the Wekiva River Protection Area to support the conservation of dark skies in the basin; and
 - h. Incorporate safety and access design features to promote the continuation of prescribed burning in the basin.
- Recommendation 4: The Task Force further recommends that when the design and construction of the Wekiva Parkway is completed it should:
 - a. Reduce hazards to wildlife by relocating CR 46-A to tie into SR 46 at the proposed SR 46 interchange;
 - b. Close the portions of CR 46-A that parallel and duplicate SR 46 (east of the recommended relocation) and serve only the traffic necessary to provide access to local property;
 - c. Elevate the Wekiva Parkway through the Wekiva River Protection Area to the maximum extent feasible, and have bridges and adequate barriers as often as practical to provide for adequate wildlife passages;
 - d. Bridge Wekiva River wetlands and floodplains on publicly owned lands that are adjacent to the Wekiva Parkway where known wildlife crossings exist;
 - e. Close existing SR 46 at an appropriate location west of the Lake-Seminole County line so that the remaining sections of SR 46 continue to be open only to provide local access to private properties and recreational and conservation lands, and prevent through traffic;
 - f. Where the at-grade portions of the existing SR 46 remain in place to provide local access, there will be no need to provide wildlife passages on this low-volume, low-speed service road.
- Recommendation 7: The Task Force recommends that the number of interchanges located along the Wekiva Parkway not exceed five, and be located as follows:
 - a.SR 429, south of US 441. The most southerly interchange would occur south of US 441 and serve as a junction with the current SR 429 to allow a continuation of the route to the northwest and then north and also to serve as a future connection to the proposed extension to Maitland Boulevard (the Apopka Bypass).
 - b. US 441 An interchange would be located where SR 429 reaches US 441.
 - o c. Between US 441 and SR 46 A single interchange, at an appropriate location, between US 441 and SR 46 and a potential system connection to the proposed US 441 bypass to be determined by the appropriate transportation agencies, in cooperation with

STORAGE NAME: DATE:

- local governments, consistent with the guiding principles for corridor location, as applicable. The ultimate location of the interchange will be reflected in the transportation component of the sector plan developed pursuant to Recommendation 11.
- d. SR 46 An interchange would be located where the area where CR 46-A should be relocated.
- e. Interstate 4 An interchange would be located where the Wekiya Parkway reaches I-4 in Seminole County no farther north than the St. John's River Bridge and no farther south than the SR 417 interchange on I-4.
- Recommendation 9: The Task Force recommends that all affected local governments review their long-range transportation improvement plans in light of the Task Force's recommendations. Transportation agencies and local governments in the Wekiva Basin area have plans to increase the number of travel lanes on certain roadways located within the Wekiva River Protection Area and within the recharge area for the Wekiva River springshed. The Task Force anticipates that the Wekiva Parkway and the US 441 Bypass should replace the need to widen many of the existing two-lane rural roads in this area, including the proposed expansion of SR 44 from two to four lanes. Widening these existing rural roads will add to the development pressures, and make it more difficult to maintain the rural character of the area and protect the springs recharge areas.
- Recommendation 10: The Task Force recommends that if any improvements are considered to SR 44 through the Wekiva River Protection Area, that the appropriate "Guiding Principles for Designing and Construction" be applied.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Creates s. 163.3247, F.S., the Wekiva River Basin Parkway and Protection Act.

Section 2. Creates an effective date of July 1, 2004.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

Indeterminate. The bill does not state which of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee findings and recommendations would be implemented.

2. Expenditures:

Indeterminate. The bill does not state which of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee findings and recommendations would be implemented.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

Indeterminate. The bill does not state which of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee findings and recommendations would be implemented.

2. Expenditures:

Indeterminate. The bill does not state which of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee findings and recommendations would be implemented.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

Indeterminate. The bill does not state which of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee findings and recommendations would be implemented.

STORAGE NAME: h0849.lav.doc PAGE: 5 February 23, 2004

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Indeterminate. The bill does not state which of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee findings and recommendations would be implemented. It appears possible that the implementation of specific findings and recommendations may in the aggregate constitute a mandate.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

The Sponsor intends to offer a strike all amendment with title amendment. The amendment would accomplish the following particulars.

Section 1. The amendment creates the Wekiva Study Area and Wekiva Parkway Act, part III, ch. 369, F.S., consisting of ss. 369.314, 369.315, 369.316, 369.317, 369.318, 369.319, 369.320, 369.321, 369.322, 369.323, and 369.324, F.S., as further described below.

Section 369.314, F.S. – Provides for the act's popular name, the "Wekiva Study Area and Wekiva Parkway Act."

Section 369.315, F.S. – Provides Legislative findings and intent. Specifically, the amendment makes, in summary, the following findings:

- Florida springs, wherever found, are threatened by actual and potential flow reductions and declining water quality: that changes in climate and population over the last 30 years have resulted in Florida's springs exhibiting signs of distress, including increased nutrient lading and lowered water flow; and that the groundwater that feeds springs is recharged by seepage from the surface and through direct conduits such as sinkholes.
- Once damaged, springs can be restored through good stewardship; prudent land use planning can protect and improve spring quality and quantity, and the upland resources of springsheds; and an important goal is to minimize impacts by managing land use types, density and intensity of development coupled with specific site planning.
- The recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating Committee (coordinating committee) contained in its March 16, 2004 Final Report be implemented to improve and ensure protection of surface water and groundwater resources; and that coordination of local comprehensive plans and the regional water supply plan is important for the protection of water resources to promote effective planning and development.

Section 369.316, F.S. - Delineates by legal description the boundaries of the Wekiva Study Area to include portions of Lake, Orange and Seminole Counties.

STORAGE NAME: h0849.lav.doc PAGE: 6 February 23, 2004

DATE:

Section 369.317, F.S.

- Defines the "Wekiva Parkway" as a limited access highway or expressway constructed between SR 429 and I-4 or SR 417, specifically incorporating the corridor alignment recommendation of the coordinating committee.
- Requires certain guiding principles to be used for the Wekiva Parkway design.
- Limits the number of interchanges to 5 and specifies locational parameters.
- Provides that the Wekiva Parkway construction shall not commence until after the acquisition of the right-of-way from SR 46 in Lake County to I-4 or SR 417 in Seminole County.
- Requires that in Seminole County the precise corridor and interchanges for the Wekiva Parkway will by located by the Seminole County Expressway Authority, the Department of Transportation (COT), and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise, consistent with the act's legislative intent.
- Provides DOT with specific authority to acquire and exercise eminent domain to condemn necessary property and interests in certain lands as set forth in paragraph 10.a., Executive Order No. 03-112 and Task Force Recommendation 16 of the Wekiva River Basin Task Force.² Further provides that the DOT will be the lead agency for acquisition purposes with the participation and coordination of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD), the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority, and other land acquisition entities. Finally provides various specifics and goals for such acquisition efforts, including that all title to acquired land shall vest in the state and that title to all lands acquired which are not needed for the Wekiva Parkway shall be transferred to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund for management as conservation lands.
- Provides that the previously named land acquisition entities shall cooperate and establish funding responsibilities and partnerships by agreement to the extent funds are available to these entities. However, expressly, DOT is not required or assumed to fund acquisition beyond the agreement and funding provided by those land-acquisition entities.
- Provides the following specific appropriations for FY 2004-2005:
 - \$7.75 million from GR to DCA to fund the cost of impacted of comprehensive land use plan amendments to impacted cities.
 - \$4 million to DEP for the implementation of wastewater collection facilities for the residential communities in Seminole County on Wekiva River Drive and in the Wekiva River Oaks subdivision, and in Lake County in the residential community known as Wekiya Falls east of and on Wekiya River Road.

Section 369.318, F.S. – Provides for various required studies and rulemaking activities as further outlined below.

- DEP
 - Study The efficacy and applicability of water quality and wastewater treatment standards needed to achieve nitrogen reductions protective of water quality within the Wekiya Study Area and to report to the Governor and DCA by December 1, 2004.
 - Rulemaking By March 1, 2005, and based upon the report initiate rulemaking to achieve nitrogen reductions or recommend legislation that grants any needed statutory authority to implement the report recommendations.
- Department of Health
 - Study The efficacy and applicability of onsite disposal system standards needed to achieve protective nitrogen reductions within the Wekiva Study Area and to report to the Governor and DCA by December 1, 2004.
 - Rulemaking - By March 1, 2005, and based upon the report initiate rulemaking to achieve nitrogen reductions or recommend legislation that grants any needed statutory authority to implement the report recommendations. The provision also includes specific issues for consideration in the report.

² State of Florida, Office of the Governor, Executive Order No. 2002-259.

SJRWMD

- Study In conjunction with DEP, the recharge volume conditions in the Wekiva Study Area and make recommendations to implement new standards to provide that postdevelopment recharge volume conditions approximate predevelopement recharge volume conditions.
- Rulemaking By March 1, 2005, to implement new standards to provide that postdevelopment recharge volume conditions approximate predevelopement recharge volume conditions.
- By December 1, 2007, update the minimum flows and levels for Rock Springs and Wekiva Springs; and to revise the consumptive use permit thresholds in the Wekiva Study Area to address, with specific conditions, proposed water withdrawals above 50.000 gallons per day.
- By December 1, 2005, establish pollution load reduction goals for the Wekiva Study Area to assist DEP in adopting total maximum daily loads for the Area by December 1, 2006.
- Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Is required to be the lead agency in coordinating the reduction of agricultural nonpoint sources of pollution.
 - Study New or revised best management practices for improving and protecting water bodies, including specific basins with impaired water bodies.
 - Rulemaking New or revised best management practices for improving and protecting water bodies, including specific basins with impaired water bodies.

Section 369.319, F.S. - Provides for master stormwater management plans in each local government within the Wekiva Study Area that:

- assess existing community problems and deficiencies;
- identifies projects to meet long-range needs; 0
- establishes priorities to address existing deficiencies; 0
- establishes measures to address redevelopment:
- establishes a schedule to complete needed improvements;
- evaluates the feasibility of stormwater reuse;
- includes requirements for inspection and maintenance of facilities; and
- identifies a funding source to fund implementation of the plan and maintenance program.
- Additionally, each local government is required to establish a water reuse and irrigation program that allows for reuse of stormwater to minimize pumpage of groundwater for nonpotable usage.

Section 369.320, F.S.

- Requires local governments to develop a wastewater facility plan in joint planning areas and utility service areas where central wastewater systems are not readily available.
- The plan is required to include
 - the delineation of areas within the utility service area that are to be served by central facilities within 5 years:
 - o a financially feasible schedule of improvements;
 - an infrastructure work plan to build the facilities needed to implement the facility plan. including those needed to meet enhanced treatment standards adopted by DEP;
 - a phase-out of existing onsite septic tank systems where central facilities are available;
 - a long-range component that addresses service of the joint planning area or utility service area.
- Requires local governments to establish a water reuse program that allows for reuse of reclaimed water to minimize pumpage of groundwater for nonpotable usage.
- Requires local governments to update their wastewater facility plans for those basins in which the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Loads Program requires reductions in point source pollutants or as otherwise required by legislation for enhanced treatment standards.

STORAGE NAME: PAGE: 8 h0849.lgv.doc February 23, 2004

Section 369.321, F.S.

- Requires each local government within the Wekiva Study Area to amend its comprehensive plan, including its capital improvement element, to include the following:
 - o an interchange land use plan, with required features, for those local governments within the boundaries of which an interchange is planned to be located;
 - implementation of the master stormwater management plan;
 - o implementation of the wastewater facility plan; and
 - land use strategies, meeting certain criteria.
- Requires that land use strategies should encourage the use of planned development initiatives and encourage economically sustainable growth.
- Requires the review of comprehensive plans and amendments implementing this section to be reviewed by DCA pursuant to s. 163.3184, F.S., and exempts them from s. 163.3187(1), F.S. (the twice a year limitation on plan amendments).
- By January 1, 2007, each of the local governments located within the Wekiva Study Area shall adopt land development regulations to implement the required comprehensive plan amendments.
- Requires that prior to adoption of the required comprehensive plan amendments, plan
 amendments adopted by counties and cities within the Wekiva Study Area shall protect surface
 water and groundwater resources and be reviewed by DCA according to Rule 9J-5, F.A.C.

Section 369.322, F.S.

- Requires that comprehensive plan amendments for property located within the Wekiva Study
 Area be reviewed by DCA and SJRWMD to ensure amendment that increase development
 potential demonstrate that availability of adequate potable water consumptive use permit
 capacity.
- Requires local governments located within the Wekiva Study Area coordinate with SJRWMD and other public and private utilities, on a county-wide or multi-countywide basis, to implement cooperative solutions for development of alternative water sources necessary to supplement groundwater supplies consistent with the SJRWMD Regional Water Supply Plan.

<u>Section 369.323, F.S.</u> Requires the review by DCA of comprehensive plan and plan amendments for compliance.

Section 369.324, F.S.

- Creates the Wekiva River Basin Commission to monitor and ensure the implementation of state, regional and local efforts regarding the recommendations of the coordinating committee within the Wekiva Study Area.
- Requires the East Central Regional Planning Council to provide staff support to the commission.
- Requires the DCA to provide funding assistance to the commission.
- Provides that the commission will consist of 19 members appointed by the Governor as follows:
 - o 9 voting members including:
 - 3 members, 1 each from the Boards of County Commissioners for Lake, Orange and Seminole Counties;
 - 3 municipal elected officials, one to serve as a representative of the municipalities located in each of the affected counties: Lake, Orange and Seminole Counties;
 - 1 citizen representing an environmental organization, a conservation organization, or an agricultural entity, and
 - 1 at-large citizen who shall serve as chair of the council.
 - o 10 voting members including one representative from each of the following entities:
 - SJRWMD
 - DCA
 - DEP
 - Department of Health

- Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- DOT
- MetroPlan Orlando
- Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority
- Seminole County Expressway Authority.
- Voting member shall serve 3-year staggered terms and serve without compensation, but shall serve at the expense of the entity they represent.
- Meetings shall be held at the call of the Chair in one of the three affected counties, but at least twice annually.
- Requires the East Central Regional Planning Council, in coordination with the applicable regional and state agencies, to serve as a clearinghouse of baseline or specialized studies through modeling and simulation, including the collection and disseminating of demographic, economic, and environmental data regarding the Wekiva Study Area. This data shall include the changing conditions of the Wekiva River surface water and groundwater basin and associated influence on the Wekiva River and Wekiva Springs.
- Requires the commission to report annually, by December 31, to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the DCA on the progress of the implementation of the coordinating committee recommendations.

Section 2. Amends s. 163.3184(1)(b), F.S., to add consistency with part III, ch. 369, F.S., into the definition of "in compliance" as it relates to comprehensive planning.

Section 3. Provides for repeal of the act July 1, 2009, unless the purchase of the right-of-way has been completed for the Wekiva Parkway.

Section 4. Provides an effective date of upon becoming law.

STORAGE NAME: **PAGE: 10** h0849.lgv.doc February 23, 2004