

By Representative Mackey

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Suwannee River Heritage  
3           Region; directing the Suwannee River Water  
4           Management District to pursue national  
5           designation for the Suwannee River Heritage  
6           Region; providing for a boundary for the  
7           region; providing for legislative findings;  
8           providing for limitations on the designation;  
9           directing the district to provide reports;  
10          providing an effective date.

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12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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14           Section 1. Short title.--This act may be cited as the  
15 "Suwannee River Heritage Region Act."

16           Section 2. Boundary.--The "Suwannee River Heritage  
17 Region" encompasses all of the counties of Alachua, Bradford,  
18 Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette,  
19 Levy, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, and Union.

20           Section 3. Legislative findings.--

21           (1) The region is blessed with a rich natural,  
22 historical, and cultural heritage reflected in the rural  
23 quality of life of the region.

24           (2) Protection and preservation of the water, air,  
25 fish, wildlife, and historical, cultural, and scenic resources  
26 of the region, together with the maintenance of a strong rural  
27 economy, are keys to the preservation of the quality of life  
28 of the region.

29           (3) An opportunity exists to maintain and enhance the  
30 economy of the region by encouraging appropriate nature-based,  
31 history-based, and culture-based tourism in the region while

1 at the same time preserving and protecting the water, air,  
2 fish and wildlife, and other natural and scenic resources of  
3 the region.

4 (4) The Suwannee River Water Management District has  
5 proposed seeking national designation of the region as the  
6 Suwannee River Heritage Region by the Congress of the United  
7 States to:

8 (a) Develop a framework of cooperation that will  
9 assist the district and other local and regional government  
10 and state agencies to implement their authority and  
11 responsibilities in a manner that encourages sustainable  
12 development and adheres to the principals of ecosystem  
13 management;

14 (b) Recognize the value of the natural, historical,  
15 and cultural resources within the region;

16 (c) Establish a voluntary framework for participation  
17 and cooperation in the planning and implementation of  
18 appropriate nature-based, history-based, and culture-based  
19 tourism activities by all governmental entities, private  
20 property owners, and citizens;

21 (d) Market and promote economic growth opportunities  
22 that will not compromise the value of private property or the  
23 natural, historical, and cultural resources within the region;  
24 and

25 (e) Assure coordination among local and regional  
26 government, state agencies, and agencies of the federal  
27 government in the planning, funding, and implementation of  
28 programs affecting the region.

29 (5) The proposal of the district and national  
30 designation requires the development of a management plan to  
31 specify the vision for the region and the strategies and

1 action steps necessary to implement the vision which rely  
2 exclusively on the existing authority of all levels of  
3 government and do not require or solicit any additional  
4 environmental regulations, land use or zoning programs, or any  
5 other rules, regulations, or ordinances by any subdivision of  
6 local, regional, or state government.

7 (6) The proposal of the district must not propose or  
8 require any land acquisition by other than voluntary sale by  
9 willing sellers.

10 (7) The proposal of the district requires the  
11 cooperation and active participation of the citizens of each  
12 county and municipal government within the region in the  
13 preparation of the management plan.

14 (8) The proposal of the district and the terms of any  
15 such designation by the Congress of the United States must  
16 rely only upon voluntary participation by local governments,  
17 private property owners, and the public.

18 Section 4. Limitations on designation.--The  
19 designation is limited as follows:

20 (1) The designation must adhere to the principles of  
21 ecosystem management and sustainable development and assure  
22 the protection and preservation of the water, air, fish and  
23 wildlife, and other natural, historical, cultural, and scenic  
24 resources of the region.

25 (2) The designation must assure the citizens of the  
26 region the right to maintain a strong rural economy essential  
27 to the quality of life of the citizens in the region.

28 (3) The designation must establish a framework for  
29 only voluntary participation by the citizens, individual  
30 private property owners, and each unit of local government in  
31 the region.

1       (4) The designation must establish a framework that  
2 assures interested citizens and each local government within  
3 the region of having a meaningful opportunity to participate  
4 in the development of the management plan for the Suwannee  
5 River Heritage Region, and each county and municipality must  
6 have an opportunity to endorse the management plan prior to  
7 the district moving forward to seek national designation by  
8 the Congress of the United States. If a county or municipality  
9 within the region chooses not to endorse the management plan,  
10 then it may not be included in any designation. Any meetings  
11 necessary for the development of the management plan which  
12 list an item for action or decision on the agenda must be held  
13 within the region.

14       (5) The designation or the management plan may not  
15 require or solicit any unit of local, regional government, or  
16 any state agency to impose additional or more restrictive  
17 environmental, land use, or zoning regulations.

18       (6) The designation or the management plan may not be  
19 construed or cited as specific authority to adopt any  
20 environmental regulation, zoning, or land use ordinance or any  
21 other rule, regulation, or ordinance by any subdivision of  
22 local, regional, or state government.

23       (7) The designation or the management plan may not be  
24 cited as grounds for the issuance, denial, or conditioning of  
25 any order, license or permit, development order, or other form  
26 of authorization by any subdivision of local, regional, or  
27 state government, nor may the designation be cause for any  
28 objection or appeal in an administrative proceeding under  
29 chapter 120, Florida Statutes.

30       (8) The designation or implementation of the  
31 management plan, including any strategies, action steps, or

1 projects, may not prohibit or otherwise restrict the rights of  
2 owners of private property within the region, specifically  
3 including rights of access to private property.

4 Section 5. Direction to the Suwannee River Water  
5 Management District.--

6 (1) The Legislature supports and endorses the proposal  
7 of the Suwannee River Water Management District to pursue  
8 national designation of the Suwannee River Heritage Region by  
9 the Congress of the United States pursuant to the provisions  
10 of this act and other applicable state and federal law.

11 (2) The district shall pursue national designation,  
12 and the district, or any entity to which the leadership role  
13 for implementation of the management plan is transferred,  
14 shall file a progress report with the Governor, the President  
15 of the Florida Senate, and the Speaker of the Florida House of  
16 Representatives annually, on or before December 1 of each year  
17 until designation by the Congress of the United States, and at  
18 least once every 3 years thereafter.

19 Section 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
20 law.

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23 SENATE SUMMARY

24 Directs the Suwannee River Water Management District to  
25 pursue national designation for the Suwannee River  
26 Heritage Region. Provides a boundary for the region,  
27 legislative findings, and limitations on designation of  
28 the region. Requires the district to provide progress  
29 reports about the designation.  
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