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2 An act relating to water management; creating  
3 the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration  
4 Council; providing for membership, powers, and  
5 duties; providing for separate county task  
6 forces; providing for a report to the  
7 Legislature; providing for an advisory group to  
8 the council; requiring the Southwest Florida  
9 Water Management District to act as lead entity  
10 for the purpose of providing staff and  
11 administrative support for the council;  
12 providing for a Citrus/Hernando Waterways  
13 restoration program; providing an effective  
14 date.

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16 WHEREAS, the waterways of Citrus and Hernando Counties  
17 are of historic, hydrological, and ecological significance,  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, most of these Citrus/Hernando waterways are  
20 Outstanding Florida Waterways or in the application process,  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, the Citrus/Hernando waterways are plagued by  
23 fluctuating water levels and sedimentation increasing nitrate  
24 levels and sand movement causing blockage of natural springs  
25 and excessive growth of aquatic plants, which are degrading  
26 their water quality and recreational value, and

27 WHEREAS, despite their current problems, the  
28 Citrus/Hernando waterways continue to provide wildlife habitat  
29 for fish, birds, and game and offer recreational opportunities  
30 for the residents of Citrus and Hernando Counties and visitors  
31 to the area, and

1 WHEREAS, the renewable economic potential of the  
2 Citrus/Hernando waterways is significant, and

3 WHEREAS, the Southwest Florida Water Management  
4 District and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,  
5 along with other state, regional, and local entities, have  
6 developed proposals to restore portions of the Citrus/Hernando  
7 waterways, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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11 Section 1. (1) The Citrus/Hernando Waterways  
12 Restoration Council.--There is created within the  
13 Withlacoochee and Coastal Rivers Basin Boards of the Southwest  
14 Florida Water Management District a council to be known as the  
15 Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council. The council  
16 shall be coordinated by representatives of the following  
17 agencies: the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
18 Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection, and  
19 the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The council  
20 is subject to the provisions of chapters 119 and 120, Florida  
21 Statutes.

22 (2) Members of the council shall consist of twelve  
23 voting members with six appointed by the President of the  
24 Senate and six appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
25 Representatives. The council shall consist of representatives  
26 as follows:

- 27 a. Waterfront property owners from each county,  
28 b. An attorney from each county,  
29 c. A member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber  
30 of Commerce from each county,  
31 d. An environmental engineer from each county,

1           e. An engineer from each county, and

2           f. A person from each county with training in biology  
3 or another scientific discipline.

4           (3) The council members from each county are to form  
5 two separate county task forces from the council to review and  
6 make recommendations on specific waterways. The Hernando  
7 County Task Force shall develop plans for the restoration of  
8 the Weeki Wachee River and Springs. The Citrus County Task  
9 Force shall develop plans for the restoration of the  
10 Tsala-Apopka Chain of Lakes.

11           (4) There shall be a technical advisory group to the  
12 council and the two county task forces which shall consist of  
13 one representative each from the Southwest Florida Water  
14 Management District, the Department of Environmental  
15 Protection, the Department of Transportation, the Fish and  
16 Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Coastal Rivers Basin  
17 Board, the Withlacoochee River Basin Board, and the United  
18 States Army Corps of Engineers, each of whom shall be  
19 appointed by his or her respective agency, and each of whom,  
20 with the exception of the representatives from the  
21 Withlacoochee River Basin Board and Coastal Rivers Basin  
22 Board, shall have had training in biology or another  
23 scientific discipline.

24           (5) Immediately after appointment, the council shall  
25 meet and organize by electing a chair, a vice chair, and a  
26 secretary, whose terms shall be for 2 years each. Council  
27 officers shall not serve consecutive terms. Each council  
28 member shall be a voting member. Additionally, the two county  
29 task forces shall elect a chair and a secretary whose terms  
30 shall be for 2 years each.

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1           (6) The council or the county task forces shall meet  
2 at the call of its chair, at the request of six of its  
3 members, or at the request of the chair of the governing board  
4 of the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

5           (7) The council shall have the powers and duties to:

6           (a) Review audits and all data specifically related to  
7 lake and river restoration techniques and sport fish  
8 population recovery strategies, including data and strategies  
9 for shoreline restoration, sand and other sediment control and  
10 removal, exotic species management, floating tussock  
11 management or removal, navigation, water quality, and fish and  
12 wildlife habitat improvement, particularly as they may apply  
13 to the Citrus/Hernando waterways.

14           (b) Evaluate whether additional studies are needed.

15           (c) Explore all possible sources of funding to conduct  
16 the restoration activities.

17           (d) Report to the Speaker of the House of  
18 Representatives and the President of the Senate before  
19 November 25 of each year on the progress of the  
20 Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration program and any  
21 recommendations for the next fiscal year.

22           (8) The Southwest Florida Water Management District  
23 shall act as lead entity for the purpose of providing staff  
24 and administrative support to assist the council in carrying  
25 out the provisions of this act.

26           (9) Members of the council shall receive no  
27 compensation for their services, but are entitled to be  
28 reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses incurred during  
29 execution of their official duties, as provided in s. 112.061,  
30 Florida Statutes. State and federal agencies shall be  
31 responsible for the per diem and travel expenses of their

1 respective appointees to the council, and the Southwest  
2 Florida Water Management District shall be responsible for per  
3 diem and travel expenses of other appointees to the council.

4 Section 2. The Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration  
5 program.--

6 (1) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and  
7 the Southwest Florida Water Management District, in  
8 conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection,  
9 pertinent local governments, and the Citrus/Hernando Waterways  
10 Restoration Council, shall review existing restoration  
11 proposals to determine which ones are the most environmentally  
12 sound and economically feasible methods of improving the fish  
13 and wildlife habitat and natural systems of the  
14 Citrus/Hernando waterways.

15 (2) To initiate the Citrus/Hernando Waterways  
16 restoration program recommended by the Citrus/Hernando  
17 Waterways Restoration Council, the Fish and Wildlife  
18 Conservation Commission, with assistance from the Southwest  
19 Florida Water Management District and in consultation and by  
20 agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection and  
21 pertinent local governments, shall develop tasks to be  
22 considered by those entities for the enhancement of fish and  
23 wildlife habitat. These tasks shall include the following:

24 (a) An evaluation of different methodologies for  
25 removing the extensive tussocks and buildup of organic matter  
26 along the shoreline and of the aquatic vegetation in the lake.

27 (b) The conduct of any additional studies as required  
28 by the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council.

29 (3) Contingent on the Legislature's appropriating  
30 funds for the Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration program  
31 and in conjunction with financial participation by federal,

1 other state, and local governments, the appropriate agencies  
2 shall, through competitive bid, award contracts to implement  
3 the activities of the Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration  
4 program.

5           Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
6 law.

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