

By the Council for Ready Infrastructure and Representative Argenziano

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
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 a report to the  
6           Legislature; providing for two task forces to  
7           review and make recommendations related to  
8           specific waterways; providing for a technical  
9           advisory group to the council and the two  
10          county task forces; providing for membership;  
11          requiring the Southwest Florida Water  
12          Management District to provide staff and  
13          administrative support to assist the council;  
14          providing for a Citrus/Hernando Waterways  
15          restoration program; providing for award of  
16          contracts subject to an appropriation of funds;  
17          providing for a demonstration restoration  
18          project; providing an effective date.

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20           WHEREAS, the waterways of Citrus and Hernando Counties  
21          are of historic, hydrological, and ecological significance,  
22          and

23           WHEREAS, most of these Citrus/Hernando waterways are  
24          Outstanding Florida Waterways, and

25           WHEREAS, the Citrus/Hernando waterways are plagued by  
26          fluctuating water levels and sedimentation and excessive  
27          growth of aquatic plants, which are degrading their water  
28          quality and recreational value, and

29           WHEREAS, despite their current problems, the  
30          Citrus/Hernando waterways continue to provide wildlife habitat  
31          for fish, birds, and game and offer recreational opportunities

1 for the residents of Citrus and Hernando Counties and visitors  
2 to the area, and

3 WHEREAS, the renewable economic potential of the  
4 Citrus/Hernando waterways is significant, and

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

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

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

23 (2) The council shall consist of 12 voting members  
24 with 6 appointed by the President of the Senate and 6  
25 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The  
26 council shall consist of representatives as follows:

27 (a) A waterfront property owner 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.  
2           (f) A person from each county with training in biology  
3 or another scientific discipline.  
4           (3) The council members from each county shall 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.  
31

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

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

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

15       (b) Evaluate whether additional studies are needed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (b) Conducting any additional studies required.

29 (3) Contingent upon 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. The Southwest Florida Water Management  
6 District is authorized to conduct a demonstration restoration  
7 project on the Weeki Wachee River, with proper permits, to  
8 improve the water flow by a sand containment and erosion  
9 control project, including other restoration activities  
10 related to this problem.

11           Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
12 law.

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