

HB 0849

2004

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the Wekiva River Basin; creating s.
 3 163.3247, F.S.; providing a popular name; providing
 4 legislative intent with respect to protecting the Wekiva
 5 River Basin and implementing certain findings and
 6 recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin Coordinating
 7 Committee; providing an effective date.

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

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 11 Section 1. Section 163.3247, Florida Statutes, is created
 12 to read:

13 163.3247 Wekiva River Basin Parkway and Protection Act.--

14 (1) POPULAR NAME.--This section shall be known by the
 15 popular name the "Wekiva River Basin Parkway and Protection
 16 Act."

17 (2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--

18 (a) The Legislature recognizes the Wekiva River and its
 19 tributaries, along with the St. Johns River and associated lands
 20 in central Florida, as one of the most valuable natural assets
 21 of the state. The Wekiva River and its tributaries have been
 22 designated an Outstanding Florida Water, a National Wild and
 23 Scenic River, a Florida Wild and Scenic River, and a Florida
 24 Aquatic Preserve.

25 (b) In 1988, the Legislature enacted the Wekiva River
 26 Protection Act, codified in part II of chapter 369, to protect
 27 the resources of the Wekiva River Basin. The Wekiva River
 28 Protection Act delineates an area comprising portions of Lake,

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29 Orange, and Seminole Counties as the Wekiva River Protection
30 Area.

31 (c) The Wekiva River is a spring-fed system associated
32 with 19 second-magnitude and third-magnitude springs and
33 numerous smaller springs. The Legislature recognizes that a
34 spring is only as healthy as its groundwater recharge basin. The
35 groundwater that feeds springs is recharged by seepage from the
36 surface and through direct conduits, such as sinkholes. Because
37 of this, the health of the spring system is directly influenced
38 by activities and land uses within the spring recharge basin.

39 (d) Protection of groundwater that recharges the springs
40 connected to the Wekiva River is important to the long-term
41 viability of the Wekiva River ecosystem and the region's water
42 supply. The Water Needs and Sources Assessment indicates that
43 the Wekiva Basin is located in a Priority Water Resource Caution
44 Area, indicating that water supply problems are projected to
45 become critical by 2010 and projected water use may result in
46 unacceptable impacts to natural systems and groundwater quality.

47 (e) Because the majority of the groundwater recharge basin
48 of the Wekiva River is located outside the Wekiva River
49 Protection Area as delineated in part II of chapter 369, no
50 special protection currently exists for critical groundwater
51 recharge lands. The Wekiva River Springs Protection Area shall
52 consist of Lake, Orange, and Seminole Counties.

53 (f) It is the intent of the Legislature to review the
54 findings and recommendations of the Wekiva River Basin
55 Coordinating Committee, created by Executive Order No. 03-112,
56 and implement those findings and recommendations that are
57 compatible with good government and property rights.

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Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.