

By Senator Brodeur

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30 recreation plan; requiring the department to implement
31 the plan by a specified date; requiring the department
32 to complete projects on state-owned lands in the
33 outdoor recreation plan by a specified date, subject
34 to certain funding; requiring the department to
35 develop a grant program for a specified purpose;
36 requiring that the grant program be compatible with
37 certain plans; requiring the department to implement
38 the grant program by a specified date; requiring the
39 Department of Commerce to develop guidelines and
40 processes for and implement an economic development
41 program for Marion and Putnam Counties for a specified
42 purpose by a specified date; requiring that the
43 economic development plan be compatible with certain
44 plans and programs; requiring the Department of
45 Commerce to implement the economic development program
46 by a specified date; providing an effective date.

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

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50 Section 1. This act may cited as the "Northeast Florida
51 Rivers, Springs, and Community Investment Act."

52 Section 2. Section 373.464, Florida Statutes, is created to
53 read:

54 373.464 Ocklawaha River restoration, recreation, and
55 economic development.—

56 (1) PROJECT LEAD.—The department shall, no later than
57 August 31, 2026, hire a full-time equivalent contractor or
58 employee, whose position title will be project lead, to oversee

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59 the implementation of this act. The project lead must have
60 subject matter expertise in conservation and recreation
61 planning.

62 (2) PROJECT PLAN.—

63 (a) By July 1, 2027, the department shall develop a project
64 plan for the restoration of the Ocklawaha River. The project
65 plan must provide for restoration and increased resiliency and
66 recreation benefits of the Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers and
67 Silver Springs. The project plan must be consistent with the
68 partial restoration plan described in the 2001 Final
69 Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the United States
70 Department of Agriculture Forest Service for the department's
71 Ocklawaha River Restoration Project, as described in the
72 department's Joint Application for Environmental Resource Permit
73 and Federal Dredge and Fill Permit, dated November 24, 1997. The
74 project plan must include engineering and design updates,
75 including topographic and bathymetric surveys, and precise
76 estimates of material to be dredged or excavated. In addition,
77 the project plan must provide recommendations for road and
78 bridge construction that is compatible with the partial
79 restoration plan and ensures continued access for the
80 communities west of the project. The project plan must include
81 estimates by fiscal year of the cost of implementing the project
82 plan and potential sources of funding for such costs.

83 (b) Notwithstanding any law or rule, the project plan for
84 the restoration of the Ocklawaha River is an environmental
85 restoration or enhancement project subject to a general permit
86 from the department and water management districts for
87 environmental restoration or enhancement pursuant to rule 62-

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88 330.405, F.A.C., and rule 62-330.485, F.A.C.89 (c) Subject to the provision of state, federal, or other
90 funds, the department shall complete the restoration project by
91 December 31, 2032.92 (3) NORTHEAST FLORIDA RIVER AND SPRINGS RECREATION AND
93 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL.—94 (a) Establishment of the council.—
95 1. The Northeast Florida River and Springs Recreation and
96 Economic Development Advisory Council, an advisory council as
97 defined in s. 20.03(7), is established and assigned to the
98 department. The council shall be administratively housed within
99 the department. The project lead shall serve as the council
100 chair, and the members shall meet at the call of the project
101 lead. Members shall serve without compensation but are entitled
102 to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s.
103 112.061. Council members shall serve 4-year terms, except that
104 the initial terms shall be staggered.105 2. The council shall be composed of the following 15
106 members:107 a. Nine members of the council shall be appointed by and
108 serve at the pleasure of the Governor and shall include:109 (I) Two representatives of river recreation-related
110 businesses local to Marion or Putnam Counties.111 (II) Two representatives of outdoor recreation user groups,
112 one of whom represents fishing interests local to Marion or
113 Putnam Counties.114 (III) One representative of the department's Office of
115 Greenways and Trails.116 (IV) One representative of the Florida Fish and Wildlife

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117 Conservation Commission's Division of Freshwater Fisheries
118 Management.
119 (V) One representative of the Florida Fish and Wildlife
120 Conservation Commission's Imperiled Species Management Section.
121 (VI) One representative of the Department of Commerce.
122 (VII) One representative of an environmental community
123 support organization who has subject matter expertise on springs
124 or rivers.
125 b. Six members of the council shall be appointed by the
126 boards of county commissioners for the following counties:
127 (I) Putnam County shall appoint two members, one of whom
128 must oversee parks and recreation for the county.
129 (II) Marion County shall appoint two members, one of whom
130 must oversee parks and recreation for the county.
131 (III) Clay County shall appoint one member.
132 (IV) St. Johns County shall appoint one member.
133 (b) Report.—The council shall submit an advisory report to
134 the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
135 House of Representatives, and the department by February 1,
136 2027. The report must include all of the following:
137 1. Recommendations for projects to be included in the
138 outdoor recreation plan created in subsection (4), including
139 priorities for state-funded land projects.
140 2. Recommendations to the department for the creation of
141 guidelines to govern the grant program created in subsection
142 (5).
143 3. Recommendations to the Department of Commerce for the
144 creation of guidelines to administer the economic development
145 program created in subsection (6).

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146 4. Recommendations for measures to minimize the impact of
147 the restoration plan on property owners or businesses directly
148 affected by the restoration project.

149 (c) Repeal.—In accordance with s. 20.052(8), this
150 subsection is repealed October 2, 2029, unless reviewed and
151 saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

152 (4) OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN.—

153 (a) The department, in collaboration with the Fish and
154 Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Northeast Florida River
155 and Springs Recreation and Economic Development Advisory
156 Council, and the local governments of river communities in Clay,
157 Marion, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties, shall develop an outdoor
158 recreation plan.

159 (b) The outdoor recreation plan must identify and implement
160 projects for enhanced and expanded river and springs access for
161 recreational activities, such as fishing, hunting, swimming,
162 wildlife viewing, paddling, and hiking. Such projects must be
163 compatible with the project plan and applicable statutes. The
164 outdoor recreation plan must be made available for public
165 comment before its implementation.

166 (c) The department shall implement the outdoor recreation
167 plan by January 1, 2028.

168 (d) Subject to the provision of state, federal, or other
169 funds, the department shall complete projects on state-owned
170 lands identified in the outdoor recreation plan by December 31,
171 2035.

172 (5) GRANT PROGRAM.—

173 (a) By January 1, 2028, the department shall develop a
174 grant program for river communities in Clay, Marion, Putnam, and

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175 St. Johns Counties to implement the outdoor recreation plan.

176 (b) The grant program must be compatible with the project
177 plan and outdoor recreation plan.

178 (c) The department shall implement the grant program by
179 January 1, 2028.

180 (6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.—

181 (a) The Department of Commerce shall develop guidelines and
182 processes for an economic development program for Marion and
183 Putnam Counties. The economic development program must support
184 projects that encourage job creation, capital investment, and
185 strengthening and diversification of each county's economy.

186 (b) The economic development program must be compatible
187 with the project plan, the outdoor recreation plan, and the
188 grant program.

189 (c) The Department of Commerce shall implement the economic
190 development program by January 1, 2028.

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