

# Suwannee River Basin

## Outdoor Recreation Compact

WHEREAS, Florida is underlain with a Platform bedrock, originally part of the African tectonic plate prior to the breakup of Pangea, and is unique in North America with more than two hundred fifty million years of limestone deposits including up to 20,000 feet of buildup; and

WHEREAS, Florida's limestone formations have been and remain highly sensitive to natural phenomena and man-made influences resulting in a vast network of billions of miles of small and large underground solution tubes, conduits, caves and caverns receiving, transporting, storing, and expelling water throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the Suwannee River is the most widely known and recognized river system in the world, and served as the host for Florida's original tourist destination; and

WHEREAS, the Suwannee River Basin represents fifteen (i.e., 15%) percent of the State's landmass but is home to nearly seventy-five (i.e., 75%) percent of Florida's unique geologic features; and

WHEREAS, the Suwannee River Basin and adjacent regions encompass more than three hundred (i.e., 300) siphons and swallets, thousands (i.e., 1,000's) of miles of underground rivers and underwater caves, hundreds of Karst windows, over one thousand (i.e., 1,000) springs including North America's largest single spring (the Alapaha Rise), the world's largest spring system (i.e., Spring Creek Springs), and more first and second magnitude springs than anywhere in the world, as well as thousands (i.e., 1,000's) of miles of hiking, biking, and horseback riding greenways and trails, and paddling rivers, lakes and waterways with an abundance of colorful flora and vibrant fish and fauna; and

WHEREAS, the Suwannee River Basin and adjacent regions have over 500 outdoor recreation businesses and member organizations which attract more than two million out of region outdoor recreation tourists and account for over one billion dollars of revenue annually, and with access and infrastructure

improvements would more than quadruple annual visitors, increase annual revenues by five to ten billion dollars and create 10 to 50 thousand new jobs region-wide within five to eight years; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities and counties of the Suwannee River Basin represent the State's most economically depressed region with some of the State's highest unemployment rates, the lowest per capita incomes, the highest incidence of health issues and the lowest quality of available healthcare; and

WHEREAS, identifying and improving Municipal, County, and State greenway and trail assets and infrastructures throughout the region and supplementing awareness of, access to, and use of Florida's world renown natural resources for recreation and tourism related activities would create vast economic opportunities across the region, increase per capita incomes and dramatically improve healthcare outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact have independently taken steps to enhance and improve greenway and trail properties and related infrastructure including awareness of, access to, and use of Florida's renown natural assets for recreation and tourism related activities, all parties recognize that coordinated and collective action on this, the defining issue for the Suwannee River Basin in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will best serve the region and its citizens.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SIGNATORIES OF THE SUWANNEE RIVER BASIN OUTDOOR RECREATION COMPACT:**

**SECTION 1:**

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to develop a joint policy position defining the unique and sensitive nature of the Suwannee River Basin and its natural assets, the need to protect the Suwannee River Basin from negative manmade influences while continuing to enhance and supplement awareness of, access to, and use of its natural assets, and to upgrade and improve the regional greenways and trails infrastructure.

**SECTION 2:**

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to develop a Strategic Plan which recognizes all existing outdoor recreation greenways and trails whether for hiking, biking, horseback riding, paddling, touring, or other purposes, highlights all gaps between existing trails, natural assets and area attractions, identifies needed hardcopy and digital literature of local and regional greenways and trails, classifies missing signage, parking, and related infrastructure, and facilitates access to area dining, lodging, product and fuel businesses as well as emergency services.

### SECTION 3:

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to develop an Action Plan based on the Strategic Plan, understanding that no Signatory will work at cross-purposes with the other Signatories. The Action Plan could, at a minimum, include the following components:

- a. Identify and prioritize all greenway and trail missing links and connectors including schedule and budget estimates for each item as well as the responsible private or government jurisdiction;
- b. Identify and prioritize all missing and needed signage, parking, trailhead and access point infrastructure including schedule and budget estimates for each item as well as the responsible private or government jurisdiction;
- c. Develop a Suwannee River Basin, region-wide, integrated information infrastructure including schedule and budget estimates for each item as well as the responsible private or government jurisdiction;
- d. Work with appropriate State Agencies to develop and implement a Suwannee River Basin region-wide recreation and tourism promotion and marketing program.

### SECTION 4:

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to develop Legislative and budgetary recommendations for local Governments throughout the Suwannee River Basin.

SECTION 5:

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to develop Legislative and budgetary recommendations for greenways and trails infrastructure expansion and maintenance as well as the preservation and restoration of the waters and aquifer of the Suwannee River Basin to the State of Florida.

SECTION 6:

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to develop Legislative and budgetary recommendations for greenways and trails infrastructure expansion and preservation as well as the restoration and preservation of water quantity and quality within the Suwannee River Basin and adjacent regions to the United States Government.

SECTION 7:

That each Signatory shall work in close collaboration with the aforementioned Signatories of the Suwannee River Basin Outdoor Recreation Compact to host on an annual basis in October an Outdoor Recreation Summit which focuses on enhancing and preserving the natural assets of the region while facilitating region-wide modernization, economic growth and job creation.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
on the \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk