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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate . House

. . . . .

The Committee on Appropriations (Brodeur) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment

Delete lines 69 - 186

and insert:

Ocklawaha River's natural flow, hydrology, and floodplain function to the approximate conditions that existed before the construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal project and its associated project works by implementing measures that include breaching the Kirkpatrick Dam and decommissioning the Buckman Lock. The project plan must incorporate the best available

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science and include engineering and design updates, including topographic and bathymetric surveys, and precise estimates of material to be dredged or excavated. In addition, the project plan must provide recommendations for road and bridge construction which are compatible with the partial restoration plan and ensure continued access for the communities west of the project. The project plan must include estimates by fiscal year of the cost of implementing the project plan and potential sources of funding for such costs.

(b) Notwithstanding any law or rule, the project plan for the restoration of the Ocklawaha River is an environmental restoration or enhancement project subject to a general permit from the department and water management districts for environmental restoration or enhancement pursuant to rule 62-330.405, Florida Administrative Code, and rule 62-330.485, Florida Administrative Code.

(c) Subject to the provision of state, federal, or other funds, the department shall complete the restoration project plan by December 31, 2032.

(3) NORTHEAST FLORIDA RIVER AND SPRINGS RECREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

(a) *Establishment of the council.*—

1. By October 31, 2026, the Northeast Florida River and Springs Recreation and Economic Development Advisory Council, an advisory council as defined in s. 20.03(7), shall be established and assigned to the department. The council shall be administratively housed within the department. The project lead shall serve as the council chair, and the members shall meet at the call of the project lead. Members shall serve without

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compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061. Council members shall serve 4-year terms, except that the initial terms shall be staggered.

2. The council shall be composed of the following 16 members:

a. Nine members of the council shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor and shall include:

(I) Two representatives of river recreation-related businesses local to Marion or Putnam County.

(II) Two representatives of outdoor recreation user groups, one of whom represents fishing interests local to Marion or Putnam County.

(III) One representative of the department's Office of Greenways and Trails.

(IV) One representative of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management.

(V) One representative of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Imperiled Species Management Section.

(VI) One representative of the Department of Commerce.

(VII) One representative of an environmental community support organization who has subject matter expertise in springs or rivers.

b. Six members of the council shall be appointed by the boards of county commissioners for the following counties:

(I) Putnam County shall appoint two members, one of whom oversees parks and recreation for the county.

(II) Marion County shall appoint two members, one of whom

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oversees parks and recreation for the county.

(III) Clay County shall appoint one member.

(IV) St. Johns County shall appoint one member.

c. One member shall be the commanding officer of Naval Air Station Jacksonville or his or her designee.

(b) *Report*.—The council shall submit an advisory report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the department by February 1, 2027. The report must include all of the following:

1. Recommendations for projects to be included in the outdoor recreation plan created in subsection (4), including priorities for state-funded land projects.

2. Recommendations to the department for the creation of guidelines to govern the grant program created in subsection (5).

3. Recommendations to the Department of Commerce for the creation of guidelines to administer the economic development program created in subsection (6).

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

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

(4) OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN.—

(a) The department, in collaboration with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Northeast Florida River and Springs Recreation and Economic Development Advisory Council, and the local governments of river communities in Clay,

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Marion, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties, shall develop an outdoor recreation plan.

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

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

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

(5) GRANT PROGRAM.—

(a) By January 1, 2028, the department shall develop a grant program for river communities in Clay, Marion, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties to implement the outdoor recreation plan.

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

(c) The department shall implement the grant program by February 1, 2028.