

FRIENDS
OF THE
WEKIVA
RIVER

P.O. Box 6196
Longwood, Florida 32791-6196



Lake County Board of County Commissioners
315 West Main Street
P.O. Box 7800
Tavares, Florida 32778

May 25, 2010

Dear Chairman Cadwell and members of the Lake County Board of County Commissioners,

The Friends of the Wekiva River (FOWR) is a Florida nonprofit organization whose purpose is to protect, preserve, and restore the natural functions and beauty of the Wekiva River System. This includes maintaining the ecological integrity of the Wekiva River Basin as an integral part of the greater Wekiva-Ocala corridor. As part of its mission, our organization strives to ensure that growth considers the long-term future of the basin, its resources, and the quality of life for future generations. For over twenty-five years, FOWR has supported efforts to protect natural resources and has been interested in local government land use decisions.

FOWR has reviewed the proposed Lake County Comprehensive Plan advertised for adoption on May 25th and the response prepared by your staff to comments from the Florida Department of Community Affairs. We commend Lake County for the thoroughness of its proposed plan, which in our view offers important protection of native vegetation, wildlife, habitat, karst features, and aquifer recharge. With respect to the open space, we encourage the County to reduce the numerical threshold for subdivisions requiring protected open space and clustered design to either three or five lots within the Wekiva Study Area (FLUE policy I-3.4.2) and the Wekiva-Ocala corridor (FLUE policy I-5.2.2). We agree with DCA that a ten lot threshold, which differs from policy adopted by the County pursuant to the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act last year, will not adequately guard against the fragmentation of habitat caused by conventional design.

Particularly relevant to this subject is the unique mosaic of lands that comprise the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway. Over the past several decades, the state of Florida has invested millions of dollars to purchase property for conservation between the Wekiva basin and Ocala National Forest, a critical pathway necessary to maintaining biodiversity and the viability of wildlife populations. In order to protect this investment, it is vitally important that growth management policies affecting this area ensure that ecological corridors linking these lands are maintained.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nancy Prine". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Nancy Prine
Technical Committee Chair
Friends of the Wekiva River