

- Example of **collaboration and cooperation** between public and non-governmental organizations such as the City of Valdosta, Lowndes County, the Valdosta-Lowndes Parks & Recreation Authority and WWALS Watershed Coalition, Suwannee Riverkeeper, Lowndes County Historical Society, Keep Lowndes Beautiful, Valdosta State University, and others.
- **Educational value** of historic site and “outdoor classrooms” for all age levels and all disciplines, from science to environment, art, history and culture.
- **Aesthetic value** of increasingly rare publicly accessible natural rivers and woods.
- **Health benefits** of more choices for physical activity.
- **Community pride** for preserving historic and natural heritage.
- **Economic impact** of eco-tourism, with local businesses capitalizing on of fishing, paddling, camping activities, and the increasing number of outdoor enthusiasts seeking new adventures.

This land between the rivers has always been a gathering place. Native Americans were first, a fact reflected in the Withlacoochee’s name. One hundred eighty-five years ago European settlers chose the confluence of the Little and Withlacoochee rivers to establish a community they called Troupville. But the town was relocated to Valdosta when the rail line bypassed Troupville, and most of the land has been in quiet private ownership since. Today the pressures of urbanization put its future at risk. I hope that its future will be one of public stewardship and enjoyment.

Grant applicants have a vision for a unique way to celebrate nature, history and outdoor fun. 74 acres of greenspace can be available for public Fishing, Water Trail Paddling, Camping, Hiking, Birding, Nature Journaling, Art, Historical Site Interpretation, Heritage Education, Ecological Studies, Watershed Protection, and more. I hope you will support that vision. For the first time in a century this land is available. Once sold for private use or subdivided, the opportunities for public use will be lost forever. Future generations deserve to know the beauty of this place.

I will be happy to host a tour of the property for anyone reviewing this application. In the meantime, and as a preview, I encourage you to look at [www.landbetweentherivers.com](http://www.landbetweentherivers.com).

Sincerely,



Helen Preston Tapp, AICP  
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Cc: City of Valdosta  
Lowndes County  
Valdosta-Lowndes Parks & Recreation Authority  
Lowndes County Historical Society  
South Georgia Regional Commission

Suwannee Riverkeeper  
WWALS Watershed Coalition  
Keep Lowndes Beautiful  
Valdosta State University  
The Conservation Fund