

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT

THE ALAPAHA RIVER WATER TRAIL (ARWT)

FOR THE CITY OF VALDOSTA, GEORGIA DRAFT of February 17, 2018

WHEREAS, the Alapaha River watershed runs north to south east of Valdosta and forms part of the eastern boundary of Lowndes County; and

WHEREAS, the Alapaha River is described in various guidebooks as “Jungle-like.” “luxurious,” with “A+” scenery of “exotic vegetation” and “dark reddish-brown waters.” with abundant wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Valdosta value the natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities afforded by the Alapaha River and its watershed such as fishing, swimming, boating, and birding; and

WHEREAS, the citizens value the Alapaha River for water quality and habitat protection; and

WHEREAS, half of the City of Valdosta is in the Alapaha River Watershed, with City Hall being located on the divide between the Alapaha and Withlacoochee River watersheds; and

WHEREAS, Valdosta’s Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is on Knights Creek, which drains into Mud Swamp Creek, then into the Alapahoochee River, and into the Alapaha River; and

WHEREAS, the Valdosta Solar Array at the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is a Point of Interest on the ARWT Map; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the County will greatly benefit from the recreational and natural experiences provided by the water trail; and

WHEREAS, the Alapaha River watershed also includes many lakes and ponds such as Grand Bay that can be included in maps, brochures, and guides for the Alapaha River Water Trail; and

WHEREAS, existing hiking and biking trails can be linked to the Water Trail to encourage more multi-purpose participation; and

WHEREAS, potentially linking the Azalea City Trail from One Mile Branch to Knights Creek near East Park Avenue between the VLPR Senior Center, J.L. Newbern Middle School, and the new Valdosta High School could provide educational as well as recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, many parks in Valdosta are in the Alapaha River watershed, including Eastwind Park and Jaycee Shack Park at the top of Knights Creek, Chitty Park next to Mud Swamp Creek, Lovett Park, Greer Park, Payton Park, Scott Park, and Harrington Park in the Mud Swamp Creek watershed, including Olympic Park, Smith Park, and Fellowship Park only a few blocks from City Hall; and

WHEREAS, this water trail is consistent with the [comprehensive land use plan of Valdosta and Lowndes County](#) regarding:

- II. Issues and Opportunities, 3. Community Wellness, Opportunities:
 - “Greater promotion of environmental clean-up, through organizations and programs such as Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB), WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS), Adopt-a-Highway, Adopt-a-Stream, Rivers Alive, and the school systems, will address litter and pollution challenges.”
- V. Community Policies, 3. Wellness:
 - “3.4.3. An active, healthy lifestyle should be promoted through livable community urban design and development patterns, including hiking, running, and biking trails connecting urban and rural areas with parks and with water trails along our creeks and rivers.”
 - In 6. Natural Resources, Opportunities: “Promote education and awareness of water resources, importance of quality and quantity of water, historical resources, blueways, and boat landing locations (e.g. on the Withlacoochee, Little, and Alapaha Rivers).”
- V. Community Policies, 5. Land Use:
 - “5.3.4. Development patterns should be promoted that encourage walkability and integrate green spaces as well as both passive and active recreational areas, including hiking, running, and biking trails connected to parks and to water trails along the creeks and rivers.”
- As well as other passages; and

WHEREAS, WWALS holds frequent outings on the rivers, creeks, and lakes, and every outing is a cleanup; and

WHEREAS, the economy of the City will benefit from visitors to the Water Trail, and a Water Trail is a feature of quality of life that is attractive to businesses and employees and so may contribute to the economic development of the county; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Valdosta and visitors from throughout the State of Georgia and the United States have for more than twenty (20) years regularly and openly enjoyed and exercised a right of passage by boat on the Alapaha River as it travels through Lowndes County and along its boundaries, thereby establishing a public easement of passage on the river; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Atkinson, Berrien, Lanier, Lowndes, Echols, and Hamilton Counties all share in this valuable resource and have provided for access to the Alapaha River and to lakes and other streams in its watershed; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Valdosta have indicated their support for the water trail at Valdosta City Council meetings and outings at Grand Bay and on the Alapaha River; and

WHEREAS, the County has repeatedly supported parks and recreation with SPLOST and other funding; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of Valdosta, Georgia:

Section 1: The concept of the Alapaha River Water Trail as outlined by the website <http://wwals.net/maps/alapaha-water-trail/> is approved and hereby incorporated by reference; and

Section 2: That the public easement of passage established by more than twenty (20) years of regular and open travel by boat on the Alapaha River in and along the boundaries of Lowndes County is hereby recognized and accepted by the Mayor and Council on behalf of the citizens of Valdosta, and visitors from throughout the State of Georgia and the United States; and

Section 3: That this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption; and

Section 4: That we hereby direct each department in the City to work individually, together, and with other governments and organizations to support and implement the water trail.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDOSTA, GEORGIA, this ____ day of _____ 2018.

By: _____

Attest: _____