

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT
THE ALAPAHA RIVER WATER TRAIL
FOR THE COUNTY OF ATKINSON, GEORGIA **Draft of November 22, 2017**

WHEREAS, the Willacoochee River and below its confluence the Alapaha River form the western boundary of Atkinson 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 Atkinson County 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, 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, ponds, and Carolina bays that can be included in maps, brochures, and guides for the Alapaha River Water Trail; and

WHEREAS, this water trail is consistent with the comprehensive land use plan of Atkinson County especially in its goals for conservation and recreation for the enjoyment of the resident community and visitors; and

WHEREAS, Atkinson County has fishing and boating access to the Alapaha River only two miles south of the city of Willacoochee on GA 135 at the border with Berrien County, and the comprehensive plan notes previous discussions of building a boat ramp there; and

WHEREAS, the economy of the County 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 Atkinson County 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 Atkinson County and along its boundaries, thereby establishing a public easement of passage on the river; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Atkinson, Berrien, Lowndes, Lanier, 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 Atkinson County have indicated their support for the water trail at Atkinson County Commission meetings; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Atkinson County, 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 Atkinson County is hereby recognized and accepted by the Commission on behalf of the citizens of Atkinson County, and visitors from throughout the State of Georgia and the United States; and

Section 3: The public access to the Alapaha River at GA 135 south of the city of Willacoochee is hereby named Willacoochee Landing; and

Section 4: That this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption; and

Section 5: That we hereby direct each department in the County to work individually, together, and with other governments and organizations to support and implement the water trail.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF ATKINSON COUNTY, GEORGIA, this ____ day of _____ 2017.

By: _____

Attest: _____