

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT
THE WITHLACOOCHEE AND LITTLE RIVER WATER TRAIL (WLRWT)
FOR THE CITY OF VALDOSTA, GA DRAFT of February 17, 2018

WHEREAS, the Withlacoochee River forms much of the northwestern boundary of the City of Valdosta; and

WHEREAS, Valdosta has convenient boating and fishing access at four Withlacoochee River landings in or near the city limits at Staten Road, North Valdosta Road (US 41), Langdale Park Boat Ramp, and Sugar Creek Landing off of Gornto Road, as well as access to the Little River at Troupville Landing (GA 133); and

WHEREAS, the Little River and the Withlacoochee River are described in various guidebooks as “Intimate, shaded in its northern reaches) mysterious in its beauty”, with abundant wildlife, limestone shoals, and sandbars; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Valdosta value the natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities afforded by the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers and their watersheds such as fishing, swimming, boating, and birding; and

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

WHEREAS, Valdosta’s Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant is uphill from the Withlacoochee River; and

WHEREAS, the Solar Arrays at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant and at the old closed WWTP, as well as at the old closed landfill across the Withlacoochee River are Points of Interest on the WLRWT map; and

WHEREAS, On the Withlacoochee River, Shadrick Sink sends river water under Valdosta’s Water Treatment Plant on Cherry Creek; both that Sink and that Plant are on the WLRWT map; and

WHEREAS, the citizens value the Withlacoochee and Little Rivers for water quality and habitat protection; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the City will greatly benefit from the recreational and natural experiences provided by a water trail or blueway; and

WHEREAS, the Little and Withlacoochee River watersheds also include creeks, lakes, ponds, swamps, and wetlands that can be included in maps, brochures, and guides for the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail, many of them within the City of Valdosta, including Cherry Creek, Three Mile Branch, Stillhouse Creek, Two Mile Branch, One Mile Branch, Sugar Creek, and Hightower Creek; and

WHEREAS, the [Valdosta Utilities Director recently assisted with a WWALS cleanup on One Mile Branch at VSU and spoke there on video](#) about what the City is doing about sanitary sewer improvements; and

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

WHEREAS, many parks in or right next to Valdosta are in the Withlacoochee River watershed, including Langdale Park on the Withlacoochee River, Freedom Park on Cherry Creek, McKey Park on Two Mile Branch, Drexel Park, Vallotton Youth Complex, and the Senior Center on One Mile Branch, Bland Park on Sugar Creek, and John W. Saunders Memorial Park with historic Barber Spring near Browns Canal, as well as Troupville Landing at GA 133 on the Little River; 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, 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 Little and Withlacoochee Rivers as they travel past Valdosta, thereby establishing a public easement of passage on the river; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Colquitt, Brooks, Cook, Berrien, and Lowndes Counties, Georgia, as well as Madison and Hamilton Counties, Florida, all share in this valuable resource and most have provided for access to one or both of the Withlacoochee or Little Rivers and to other streams or waterbodies in its watershed; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Valdosta have indicated their support for the water trail at outings on One Mile Branch, the Withlacoochee River, and the Little River, as well as at Valdosta City Council meetings; and

WHEREAS, the City has repeatedly supported parks and recreation with funding;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Valdosta, Georgia;

Section 1: The concept of the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail as outlined by the website <http://www.wwals.net/maps/withlacoochee-river-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 Little and Withlacoochee Rivers past Valdosta is hereby recognized and accepted by the 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 VALDOSTA, GEORGIA, this ____ day of _____ 2018.

By: _____

Attest: _____