

WEKIVA PARKWAY

Completing Central Florida's Beltway



Public Information Annual Report

2013



Prepared For:
Florida Department of Transportation - District Five
Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority

Prepared By:



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I. Introduction

This report is intended to provide the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA) and other interested parties with a summary of 2013 Wekiva Parkway community awareness activities. Consultant Public Involvement Coordinator Mary Brooks of Quest Corporation of America (QCA) plans and implements the community awareness initiatives for both agencies; she has been part of the public involvement activities for the parkway since 2004. She was supported in 2013 by QCA associates Brian Hutchings, Peggy Gies, Irina Lallemand, Ramin Khalili and Megan Olivera.

The activities follow the strategies of the Wekiva Parkway Corridor-wide Community Awareness Plan (CAP). The goal is to foster early, meaningful and continuous public involvement in – and support for – the design and construction phases of the project.

Community members are being engaged in the need and benefits of the project through a host of activities and reliable, easily accessible information resources. Communications strategies have included elected and agency officials' coordination, media relations and special events, public meetings, community and homeowner association presentations, participation in community events, website and social media updates. The PIC also responded to hundreds of queries via the project hotline and email address; all public interactions were documented in the project database.



These strategies have not only educated the community about the project, but have allowed the public to provide valuable input, resolve concerns and issues early and minimize negative impacts.

b. Project Description

The Wekiva Parkway (State Road 429) is a cooperative effort between the Florida Department of Transportation, the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority and the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. The parkway will connect to SR 417, completing the beltway around northwest Central Florida. This estimated \$1.6 billion project includes \$500 million of non-toll road improvements including;

- Widening seven miles of SR 46 in Lake and Seminole Counties
- Rebuilding the US 441/SR 46 interchange in Mount Dora
- Moving CR 46A out of the state forest so wildlife can move safely between habitats

- Building parallel, non-tolled service roads for local trips in east Lake and Seminole counties

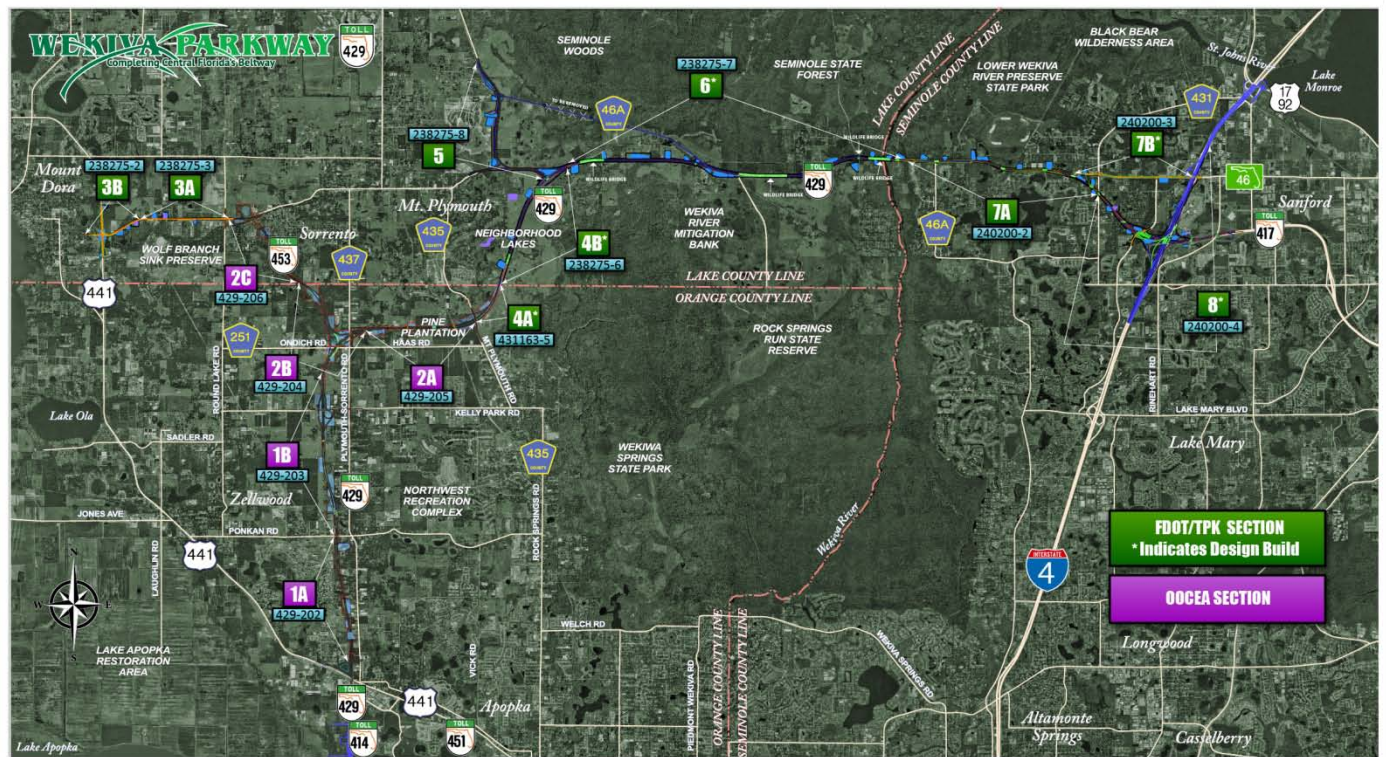
The 25-mile expressway will relieve US 441, SR 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion and make it easier to travel between Lake, Orange and Seminole counties. The parkway will feature all electronic tolling for motorists' convenience and to keep traffic flowing freely.

Authorized in 2004 by the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act (Chapter 369, Part III, F.S.), this expressway has been heralded as an example of transportation planning through an environmentally sensitive area. Development of the Wekiva Parkway has included setting aside 3,400 acres of land for conservation. The parkway also will include several wildlife bridges, and will be largely elevated to reduce conflicts between vehicles and wildlife.



As a result of extensive coordination with local government partners, the parkway also will feature a six-mile, multi-use trail. The parkway trail will connect to planned trails in Lake and Seminole Counties.

In 2013, all of the traditional design sections were underway, and construction started in February on FDOT design-build Sections 4A & 4B. OOCEA Sections 1A & 1B were at 90 percent plans; construction was set for early 2015. All project sections are to be open to traffic in 2021.



II. Joint Agency Public Involvement Coordination

Both the Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority recognized early on that the public sees the Wekiva Parkway as “one project” (despite 14 project sections being developed by two agencies). The need for consistent project messaging to the public throughout the 25-mile corridor led to the establishment of monthly Joint Agency Public Involvement Coordination meetings.



The meetings organized by QCA are attended by engineering directors, communications and project management staff for both agencies, as well as the corridor consultant, CH2M HILL. During the meetings, agency staff members share information about progress on their



respective sections, reach consensus on key messaging, jointly plan media and special events, and discuss all facets of community outreach and other coordination for the parkway.

The joint meetings are also used to discuss the development and updating of project resources such as the www.wekivaparkway.com website, collaterals including the project fact sheet, FAQ’s and talking points. The meetings facilitate further development and strengthening of the corridor-wide branding for the parkway. This uniform branding throughout the corridor makes the project – and related information resources – easily recognizable to the public.

Key project participants in the joint agency meetings have included:

Glenn Pressimone, OOCEA Director of Engineering
Alan Hyman, FDOT Director of Transportation Operations
Michelle Maikisch, OOCEA Director of Public Affairs & Communications
Steve Olson, FDOT District Five Public Information Manager
Jeff Marshall, OOCEA Senior Communications Coordinator
Jessica Keane, FDOT Public Information Specialist
Ashraf Elmaghraby, FDOT Senior Project Manager
Kevin Moss, FDOT Design Project Manager
Matt Hassan, FDOT Design Project Manager
Scott Bear, Corridor Consultant, CH2M HILL
Mary Brooks, Consultant Public Involvement Coordinator, QCA

Summaries of the joint agency meetings are provided to participants and also broadly distributed to additional staff at both agencies.

III. Elected & Agency Officials' Coordination

The OOCEA and FDOT for years have engaged federal, state and local elected and agency officials in contributing input toward developing the parkway in a manner that meets the region's transportation needs, while also seeking to minimize public and environmental impacts. The result has been reaching widespread official consensus and support for the project.

The agencies in 2013 continued to proactively communicate and involve area officials in the design process. The goal was to not only keep the officials informed of the design and other progress made on the various sections, but to also make them aware of community outreach and concerns in their jurisdictions.



Elected and agency officials' coordination was accomplished through strategies including: Commissioners' Briefing Reports, one-on-one meetings, and presentations to city and county councils. In addition

to extensive emails and calls, following is a sampling of the officials' outreach that occurred in the past year.

2013 Local Board Presentations

City of Mount Dora Council – March 5

City of Apopka Council – March 6

Orange County Board of County Commissioners – March 26

Lake County Board of County Commissioners – May 21

Officials' Briefings

Orange County Commissioner Fred Brummer – Feb. 4 & April 4

Lake County Chairman Leslie Campione (Jim Stivender & Fred Schneider)
(Section 5) – March 15

Executive Director TJ Fish, Lake-Sumter MPO (Section 5) – April 4

Seminole County Chairman Bob Dallari (Aesthetics) – April 16

Individual Seminole County Commissioners (Aesthetics) – April 22

Individual Lake County Commissioners (CR 46A Re-alignment & Aesthetics) –
April 22 & 25

Commissioners' Briefing Report – Orange County Commissioner Fred Brummer,
Lake County Chairman Leslie Campione, Mount Dora Mayor Robert Thielhelm &
Mount Dora Councilman Bob Maraio – Aug. 16

Seminole County Chairman Bob Dallari & Commissioner Brenda Carey – Aug. 19

Commissioners' Briefing Report – Seminole County Commissioner Brenda Carey
– Oct. 29

Seminole County Chairman Bob Dallari (Landscaping) – Nov. 14

Committee Presentations

East Lake – Northwest Orange County Elected Officials Committee – March 22 & Sept. 6

Wekiva River Basin Commission – Oct. 29

IV. Media Relations

Integrating the media in community awareness strategies helps to foster trust and maximize the agencies' ability to inform and engage a broad audience. The Wekiva Parkway communications team strives to maximize earned media, a cost-effective method of communicating with the public.

Through the agencies' proactive media strategies, transparent operations and positive, constructive relationships with media members, the project has largely received positive coverage in the past year including accurate key messaging to the public.



In addition to various news releases, media events conducted in 2013 to positively engage reporters included the January Section 4A & 4B gopher tortoise relocation and the July Wekiva Parkway Kick-off Event featuring Gov. Scott. Other media events were in the planning stages in late 2013 to continue to drive positive coverage of the project.

Following is a sampling of stories pertaining to the Wekiva Parkway in 2013:

- FDOT Sections 4A & 4B Gopher Tortoise Relocation – Multiple Outlets
- OOCEA SR 429 NW Extension (Gateway to Wekiva Parkway) Grand Opening – Multiple Outlets
- FDOT Section 4A & 4B Gopher Tortoise Relocation Update – WFTV Ch. 9
- FDOT Section 4A & 4B Clearing & Grubbing Start – WFTV Ch. 9
- Lake-Sumter State College Campus Considered near Parkway – *Orlando Sentinel*
- OOCEA 60% Design Community Open House – WFTV & *The Apopka Chief*
- Lake County Denies Special Exemption for Borrow Pit near Parkway – *Orlando Sentinel*
- FDOT Section 8 Impacts to Current I-4/SR 46 Work & Public Meeting Advance – WFTV Ch. 9
- FDOT Secretary Asks OOCEA to Build Entire Wekiva Parkway – *Orlando Sentinel*
- Lake County Commission Approves CR 46A Alignment – *Orlando Sentinel* & WFTV Ch. 9
- Civil War Soldier Headstone Near Neighborhood Lakes & Surplus Property – *Orlando Sentinel*
- State Surplus Land Sale near Wekiva River – *Orlando Sentinel*
- Section 8 Impacts to Seminole Towne Center Theatre – *Orlando Sentinel* & WESH Ch. 2

Wekiva Parkway Kick-off Event Featuring Gov. Rick Scott – Multiple Outlets
FDOT Section 6 Bridge Charrette – *Orlando Sentinel*
General Project Update – CFN13 TV

A sampling of media releases and coverage is in the Appendix on page 22.

V. Public Meetings

Continued public participation during the design process is crucial to ensuring the parkway will meet the community's needs, and to bring issues and concerns to light – and address them – before further construction. In 2013, the agencies made progress toward the goal of holding two public meetings for each section during design.

All told, five public meetings for nine project sections in Lake, Orange and Seminole counties were held in 2013, drawing nearly 1,000 attendees. All state and other requirements were met with regard to noticing the meetings, including the various Florida Administrative Register (FAR) and legal advertisements, notices mailed to property owners, officials' notifications, media releases and the like. Meeting notification fliers were also distributed to businesses and others near the meetings.

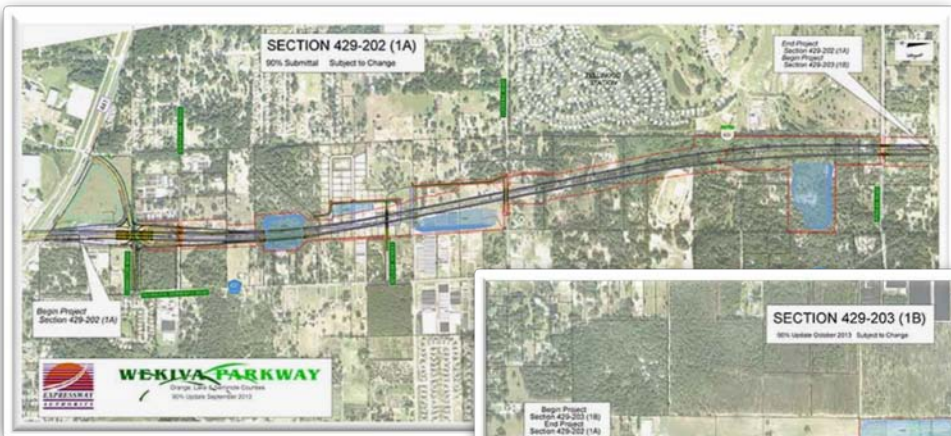
Meetings were attended by state and local officials, property owners, environmentalists, realtors, developers, attorneys and other interested parties. Following are brief summaries of each of the 2013 public meetings.

1) OOCEA Sections 1A & 1B Design Update Community Open House – March 21, 2013

Nearly 200 people attended the Expressway Authority's community open-house held on its first section of the Wekiva Parkway, from north of US 441 near Plymouth Sorrento Road to just north of Kelly Park Road.

Meeting attendees at Apopka High School were able to review maps, drawings and other pertinent information about the 60% complete design plans for this project, as well as ask questions of agency and project staff.





2) FDOT Section 8 Public Meeting – June 11, 2013

More than 180 people attended a Florida Department of Transportation public meeting to review preliminary plans for Wekiva Parkway Section 8. Those attending the meeting at The Rock Church in Sanford were able to view exhibits, plans, a PowerPoint presentation and to ask questions of FDOT and other project team staff. Nearly 20 people submitted comments as a result of the meeting. The meeting was held to allow the public to review and comment on the Section 8 15% Line and Grade Design. The Section 8 design-build project includes the parkway interchange with I-4 and SR 417. The preliminary design includes some changes from the Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study. Project team staff has responded to all comments.



3) FDOT Sections 3A & 3B Preliminary Design Public Meeting – July 11, 2013

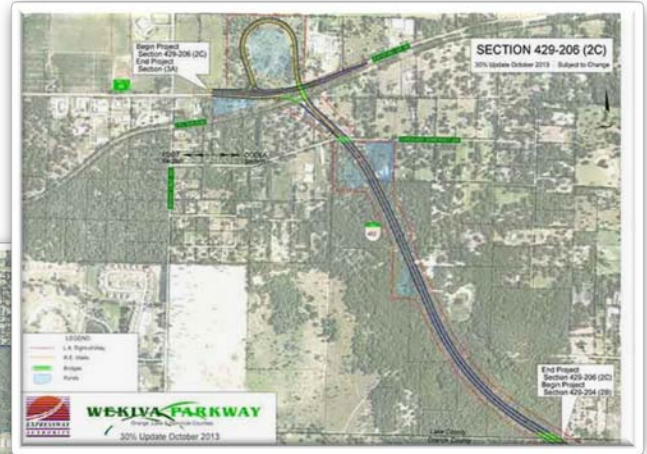
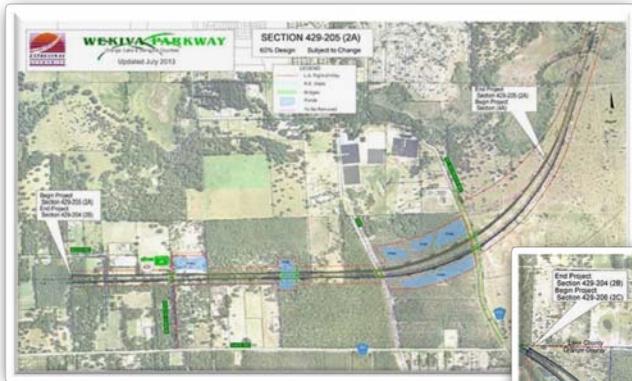
More than 150 people attended the FDOT public information meeting about the Wekiva Parkway Sections 3A and 3B at the Mount Dora Community Center. Citizens and officials attending the informal open house were able to review the latest preliminary design plans, watch an audiovisual presentation, ask questions of project staff and submit comments. Some 20 people submitted comment forms at the meeting. Responses were provided to all comments.



The two project sections, which will not be tolled, will be built together and are funded for construction in 2017. The Section 3A project limits are on State Road (SR) 46 from east of Vista View Lane to east of Round Lake Road. The project consists of widening and other non-tolled improvements to 1.4 miles of SR 46 and Round Lake Road. The Section 3B project consists of building a US 441 flyover interchange at SR 46, as well as road widening and other non-tolled improvements along SR 46 from west of US 441 to east of Vista View Lane in Mount Dora.



4) OCEA Sections 2A, 2B & 2C Design Update Community Open House – November 7, 2013



More than 170 people attended a community open-house for the Expressway Authority's second section of the Wekiva Parkway, to be located north of Kelly Park Road between Round Lake Road and Mt. Plymouth Road (County Road 435). Among those in attendance were Jonathan Till, District Secretary to State Representative Bryan Nelson, Lake County Engineer Fred Schneider, Brian Sanders of Orange County Transportation Planning, Jay Davoll, City of Apopka Engineer and Community Development Director and Town of Eatonville Councilman Alvin Moore.

At the meeting at the Northwest Orange County Improvement Association (NOCIA) building in Apopka, attendees were able to view maps and other pertinent project information, ask questions of the project team and submit comments.



The three projects, totaling 5 miles, will feature a multi-level, systems interchange northwest of Haas Road-Ondich Road and Plymouth Sorrento Road. Construction on these projects, estimated at a total of \$150 million, is scheduled to begin in 2017 and finish in 2019.

5) FDOT Section 7A Preliminary Design Public Meeting – November 12, 2013



More than 200 people attended the FDOT public information meeting about the Wekiva Parkway Section 7A in Seminole County. The informal open house was held at The Rock Church in Sanford to review the latest preliminary design plans, including proposed intersection safety enhancements, to allow citizens to ask questions of project staff and to submit comments.



Section 7A is funded for construction in 2017. The project limits are on State Road (SR) 46 from east of Wekiva River Road to Orange Boulevard. The project consists of designing 3.53 miles of limited access toll road along the SR 46 corridor and parallel, non-tolled, frontage roads for local travel.



VI. Environmental Coordination

Environmental coordination is critical for the Wekiva Parkway, which will pass through the Wekiva River Basin – one of Florida’s most valuable natural resources. The Wekiva River and its tributaries have been designated an Outstanding Florida Water, a National Wild and Scenic River and a Florida Aquatic Preserve.

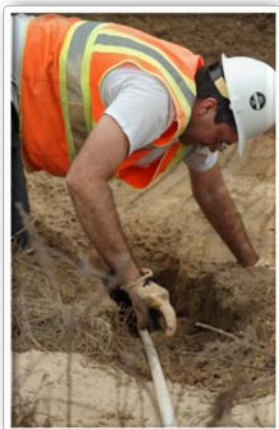


Extensive state holdings along the Wekiva River include the Seminole State Forest, Rock Springs Run State Reserve, and Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park. The Wekiwa Spring State Park also abuts conservation land that has been purchased as directed by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act.

The corridor provides habitat for many rare species, including the Florida Black Bear, and includes more than 25 known springs with direct connection to the Floridan Aquifer. Vast areas of floodplains and wetlands, including the Wekiva and Seminole Swamps (south and north of SR 46, respectively) are located west of the river. The natural environment includes the Wekiva River Basin ecosystem, springshed, and an expansive wildlife habitat area that connects to the Ocala National Forest.



FDOT and OOCEA have continued the intensive environmental coordination accomplished by the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) during the PD&E Study by maintaining open and active communications with federal, state and local environmental agencies and advocates. The agencies also adhered to all requirements regarding coordination with environmental permitting agencies.



Sections 4A & 4B - Gopher Tortoise Relocation

In early January, FDOT invited the media to witness efforts to relocate gopher tortoises on Sections 4A and 4B to a state-certified recipient site in south Florida. Gopher tortoises are a keystone species, as many other animals depend on the burrows they dig for shelter. The FDOT



finished this operation in February, relocating more than 100 of the protected gopher tortoises. The activity was positively and widely covered by area media.

Agency and project team personnel have also coordinated with state parks and wildlife officials on controlled burns needed to eliminate debris on Sections 4A and 4B, as well as on the care for other protected species found within the construction limits.

Section 6 Bridge Design – Stakeholder Engagement

During design, FDOT continued the extensive coordination with the Wekiva River System Advisory Committee, made up of environmental agency and advocacy groups and area officials. This included engaging them in the design of the Section 6 bridge over the Wekiva River during a stakeholder workshop on June 18, 2013, and Bridge Charrette No. 1 on Dec. 11, 2013.

Participants gave input on the shapes, colors and textures of the new Wekiva River Bridge planned as part of the Wekiva Parkway. They also discussed concerns about surrounding trees and wildlife, the health and use of the river and other potential project impacts.



Media coverage of the Dec. 11 charrette was largely positive. The charrette presentation was posted on the project website www.wekivaparkway.com for all to view.

Another bridge charrette was scheduled for January 28, 2014. The group's ideas will help refine the Section 6 bridge design - to be shown at an April 2014 public meeting.

Additional 2013 Environmental Coordination:

- Charles Lee, Audubon Society; Nancy Prine, Friends of the Wekiva River & Joe Bishop, Seminole State Forest (CR 46A Alternatives) – May 3
- Wekiva River System Advisory Committee Meetings – Multiple
- Wekiva River Basin Commission presentation – Oct. 29

VII. Community Presentations

Some of the most interactive and impactful project discussions can occur when project staff meet with small groups on their “own turf” – where community members live, work or otherwise congregate. The consultant public involvement coordinator and other project staff in 2013 presented project updates to more than **50** homeowners associations, business groups, cultural, civic and fraternal organizations and others throughout the year, directly educating and engaging more than **1,000** members of the community.

The presentations also serve as an excellent opportunity to reinforce the availability of project information resources including the website, where a number of the presentations have been posted. The communications team continues to proactively schedule presentations with community groups. Following is a sampling of the meetings we participated in for 2013:

Neighborhoods, HOA's & Businesses

Plymouth Community Improvements Inc. – Feb. 5
Sunset Pond HOA – Feb. 25
Red Tail HOA – Jan. 17 & April 22
Mt. Plymouth Land Owners League – May 9
Ballantrae Apartments – May 13
Easter Seals Camp Challenge – May 15
Ramlee Property Holdings – June 4
Wiggins Brothers Well Drilling – July 25
Podfam Property Holdings – July 30
Seminole Towne Center – Aug. 12 & Aug. 29
Southernaire Mobile Home Park – Aug. 14
Rock Springs Ridge HOA – Aug. 21
Summerbrooke of Mount Dora – Sept. 4
Sunset Hill Grove – Sept. 5
OC Environmental Commercial Landfill – Sept. 10
Capri Cove HOA – Sept. 11
Estates of Wekiva Park HOA – Oct. 8
Sylvan Lake Reserve HOA – Oct. 15
Bella Foresta HOA – Oct. 24



Community Group Presentations

East Lake Chamber of Commerce Board – Jan. 7 & April 2
Rotary Clubs of Lake Co. Golden Circle – Feb. 12
Mount Dora Chamber of Commerce – Feb. 13
Maitland Rotary Club – Feb. 26
NW Orange – East Lake Elected Officials' Committee – March 22
Rotary Club of Apopka – March 28
N. Lake Business and Professional Women's Club – April 8
Sanford Rotary Club – April 15 & Dec. 18
Sanford Chamber of Commerce – April 15

Community Group Presentations (continued)

- Florida Surety Association – May 14
- Golden Triangle Kiwanis Club – June 5
- Mount Dora Lions Club – Sept. 24
- Central Florida Real Estate Forum – Sept. 25
- East Lake County Transportation Network Assessment Open House – Sept. 11
- Florida Engineering Society – Oct. 16
- UCF College of Engineering Alumni – Oct. 22
- TEAMFL – Oct. 25
- Association of Eminent Domain Professionals – Nov. 8
- Sanford Rotary Club – Dec. 18

VIII. Special Events

Special events – whether established by community organizations or organized specifically for the project – provide opportunities to raise awareness of the Wekiva Parkway and build positive relationships with the public. As a cost-effective measure, several existing community events along the corridor were selected to help distribute information and collect comments regarding the project. Following are the special events that project personnel either participated in, or organized, in 2013:

Speak Up Wekiva - February 16, 2013

The Speak Up Wekiva Event was sponsored by the Florida Conservation Coalition, in partnership with the League of Women Voters, Friends of the Wekiva River and St. Johns Riverkeeper. The event was billed as “a call to action to protect and restore the impaired Wekiva River, the troubled springs that feed it, and all of Florida’s treasured waterways.”

Among the other exhibitors were: Seminole County Water Resources, Seminole County Environmental Studies Center, the Central Florida Zoo and the Silver Springs Alliance. Event organizers said park officials estimated **event attendance** at **1,200**. Approximately 100 project fact sheets were provided to exhibit visitors, and the PIC spoke with another 20-30 people who declined the fact sheet.



Seminole County Centennial (100 Years) Festival, April 20, 2013

Seminole County celebrated its 100th anniversary with a community-wide festival on April 20, 2013 at the County's Five Points Complex in Sanford. The festival featured live entertainment, exhibits, food trucks, a kids' fun spot, gardening expo and much more. Turnout was lighter than expected due to the threatening weather. Staff distributed about 50 fact sheets.



Wekiva Parkway Kick-off Event with Governor Rick Scott – July 10, 2013

With nearly a year in the planning, and close coordination with the Executive Office of the Governor, FDOT Central Office, OOCEA Board, state and county parks officials and hundreds of elected and appointed officials and the media, the Wekiva Parkway Kick-off Event on July 10 served myriad purposes.

The event aimed to notify elected and appointed officials, the media and the public that all of the design sections were underway, and that construction had started on the first design-build segments. The event also highlighted the intense environmental care with which the parkway has been planned through the Wekiva River Basin. To this end, the event included a tree planting ceremony by the Governor and other dignitaries.



The event also served to publicize the 33,000-plus jobs estimated to be created during design and construction of the 25-mile toll road through Lake, Orange and Seminole Counties. It also re-affirmed the Expressway Authority's and Department's commitments to following through with, and allocating funds to, this high-profile, long-planned regional transportation solution. Governor Rick Scott and U.S. Congressman Daniel Webster joined FDOT and other state and local officials for the event held at Wilson's Landing Park, along the Wekiva River, in Seminole

County. FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad, FDOT District Five Secretary Noranne Downs and OOCEA Board Chairman Walter Ketcham served as the masters of ceremony for the event, which was heavily covered by area media.



Mount Dora Arts & Crafts Festival - Oct. 26 & 27, 2013

The streets of Mount Dora come alive for the Mount Dora Arts & Crafts Fall Festival. More than 400 crafters, artists and vendors attracted more than 200,000 visitors to this two-day event. Project staff members shared information and answered questions from dozens of people.



IX. Project Materials

Providing accurate, up-to-date and easily accessible project information – in a variety of formats – is essential to helping the community to understand and support major transportation initiatives such as the Wekiva Parkway. The public involvement coordinator routinely updated project fact sheets, FAQ's and talking points to highlight design progress and project milestones. Project materials were distributed at public meetings, community presentations, and special events, as well as were posted on the project website.

PROJECT STATUS
The Wekiva Parkway will be designed and built in sections. Design projects are scheduled to take approximately 18-24 months, followed by right-of-way acquisition and permitting.

Both the Expressway Authority and the FDOT will continue to communicate with – and solicit input from – the public during the design process. The public can also make comments and view project updates on the project website at www.wekivaparkway.com. Full construction of the beltway is expected to take at least seven (7) years.

PUBLIC MEETINGS
A public meeting open house to review the preliminary design plans for Section 7A is scheduled for Nov. 12, 2013 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at The Rock Church of Central Florida, 6641 W. State Road 46, Sanford, FL 32771. For more information log onto www.wekivaparkway.com.

Responsible Agency	Map Section Number	Project Limits	Status*
OOCEA	1A	From North of US 441 to North of Portman Road	Final design reached 90% Aug. 2013
OOCEA	1B	From North of Portman Road to North of a New Kelly Park Road	Final design to reach 90% Oct. 2013
OOCEA	2A	From North of Kelly Park Road and East to CR 429/58, Plymouth Road	Final design reached 90% Aug. 2013
OOCEA	2B	Systems interchange West of Plymouth Seminoles Road and Ocala Road/Pass Road	Final design reached 60% Sept. 2013
OOCEA	2C	From East of Round Lake Road to Lake Co.-Orange Co. Line	Final design to reach 30% Feb. 2013
FDOT	3A	SR 46 From East of Pineal Road to East of Round Lake Road	Final design to reach 30% Dec. 2013
FDOT	3B	SR 46 From West of US 441 to West of Veda View Lane	Final design to reach 60% Nov. 2013
FDOT	4A	From CR 429/58, Plymouth Road to Orange Co.-Lake Co. Line	Construction to begin late 2014
FDOT	4B	From Orange Co.-Lake Co. Line to West of Old McDonald Road	Construction to begin late 2014
FDOT	5	CR 45A Realignment from North of Avondale Way to SR 46	Final design to reach 30% Oct. 2013
FDOT	6	From West of Old McDonald Road to East of Wekiva River	Final design to reach 30% Jan./Feb. 2014
FDOT	7A	From East of Wekiva River Road to Orange Boulevard	Final design began June 2013
FDOT	7B	From West of Center Road to Interstate 4	Advertised for bids 2016
FDOT	8	From Orange Boulevard to East of Round Road including the SR 417/44 Interchange	Advertised for bids 2017

*Please be advised that schedules are subject to change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, contact:

Mary Brooks, Public Information Officer
407-694-5505
mary.brooks@wekivaparkway.com
www.wekivaparkway.com

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SECTIONS 2A, 2B & 2C PROJECT OVERVIEW
(429-205, 429-204 & 429-206)

Section Overview: The three sections of the Wekiva Parkway (State Road 429) will be located from just north of the Kelly Park Road Interchange between Round Lake Road and Mount Plymouth Road (County Road 435).

Total Project Length: 5 miles Estimated Construction Cost: \$150 million

Section 2A (429-205): This 2-mile limited access roadway will connect with 429-204 (Interchange 2B) to the west and FDOT Sections 6A & 4B to the east. Work will include new bridge over Mount Access Road, a Florida Gap Transportation easement and Mount Plymouth Road (CR 435).

Section 2B (429-204): This 1.5-mile project includes the multi-level, systems interchange and will extend the limited access roadway westward to the Lake County line. On the east side of the systems interchange the roadway will extend to just east of Plymouth Seminoles Road.

Section 2C (429-206): This project involves building 1.6 miles of limited access roadway from 2.1 mile east of Round Lake Road to the Lake County Orange County line.

Special Features: All electronic tolling will provide the greatest customer convenience and maximize traffic flow. The parkway also will include aesthetic features, which are currently being designed.

For more information, contact: Mary Brooks, Public Information Officer
407-694-5505, mary.brooks@wekivaparkway.com
www.wekivaparkway.com

SAVE THE DATE

The Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority respectfully request that you Save the Date of July 10, 2013 to attend an official kick-off ceremony for the landmark Wekiva Parkway. The outdoor event will feature noted speakers, project and wildlife displays, and a tree planting to symbolize how the 25-mile toll road will complete the beltway around Central Florida while also helping to protect the precious resources of the Wekiva River Basin.

What: Wekiva Parkway Kick-off Event
When: Wednesday, July 10, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.
Where: Wilson's Landing Park, 387 Malekian Trail, just south of SR 46 off Osprey Hammock Trail
Attire: Polo shirt, khaki slacks & sturdy shoes

For More Information Contact:
 Mary Brooks, Public Information Officer
 C: 407-694-5505
 E: info@wekivaparkway.com

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

WEKIVA PARKWAY – FDOT FINANCIAL PROJECT ID: 24020-2

SECTION 7A DESIGN PROJECT IN SEMINOLE COUNTY
SR 46 FROM EAST OF WEKIVA RIVER ROAD TO ORANGE BOULEVARD

WHAT: The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is holding a public information meeting about the Wekiva Parkway Section 7A preliminary design in Seminole County. The informal open house is being held to review the latest preliminary design including proposed intersection safety enhancements and changes to the State Road 46 typical section.

WHERE: Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2013 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

WHERE: The Rock Church of Central Florida, 6641 W. State Road 46, Sanford, FL 32771.

Project Details:

The project consists of designing 3.53 miles of limited access toll road along the SR 46 corridor. The project also includes parallel, non-tolled, interchange roads for local travel. Safety enhancements are being proposed for the intersections under the parkway.

A small section of multi-use trail is also planned from east of Wekiva River Road to Longwood/Mountaineer Road. The trail is expected to be set up a future trail extension by Seminole County.

Construction Cost: \$179 million
 Construction Start: 2017
 Project Duration: 30 months

Public participation is invited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family status. For additional information, please contact Mary Brooks, FDOT Project Manager at (850) 943-5235 or email to mary.brooks@fdot.com or log onto www.wekivaparkway.com

Mrs. Mary Brooks
 Public Information Officer
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 Phone: (850) 943-5305
mary.brooks@fdot.com

NOTICE: Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Ms. Mary Brooks, Public Information Officer (see information to the right) at least seven days prior to the meeting.



X. Website

The Wekiva Parkway website www.wekivaparkway.com has become an invaluable information resource for community members interested in the details, benefits and progress of the project. The PIC diligently updates and posts new content on the site from public meetings, community presentations, section maps, documents and graphics, as well as other project information. The interactive project map on the home page allows visitors to quickly get to the project section of interest.

Since launching on June 15, 2012, the site has received **34,762** visits from **26,119** visitors (through Dec. 31, 2013). A customer satisfaction survey was being planned for the site for early 2014.

WELCOME

On behalf of the Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority, thank you for your interest in the Wekiva Parkway design and construction projects. The Wekiva Parkway (State Road 429) is a cooperative effort between these agencies and the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise.

The Wekiva Parkway (SR 429) would connect to SR 417, completing the beltway around northwest metropolitan Orlando. This estimated \$1.5 billion project includes \$500 million of non-toll road improvements including:

- Building seven (7) miles of four-and six-laning of SR 46 in Lake and Seminole Counties
- Realigning the US 441/SR 46 interchange in Mount Dora
- Relocating the CR 48A connection to SR 46 to provide improved wildlife connectivity and additional local road system benefits

[Click here](#) to view the overall project schedule. Please understand schedules are subject to change due to a host of variables.

WEKIVA PARKWAY PROJECT SECTION MAP

Click on a Section Number for Project Details.

WEKIVA PARKWAY PROJECT SECTION MAP

Click here to view larger map

The 25-mile tolled expressway will provide travel alternatives and relieve US 441, SR 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion resulting from growth and travel between Orange, Lake and Seminole Counties.

Authorized in 2004 by the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act (Chapter 369, Part III, F.S.), this expressway has been heralded as a shining example for transportation planning through an environmentally sensitive area. Development of the Wekiva Parkway has included setting aside more than 3,400 acres of

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- July 2013
150 Attend Section 3A & 3B Public Meeting Open House - July 11, 2013
- June 2013
Nearly 200 Attend FDOT Section 8 Public Meeting - June 11, 2013
- May 2013
Lake Co. Commissioners Adopt Recommended CR 48A Alignment

PUBLIC MEETING - Sections 5A & 5B
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CONTACT US

Mary Brooks
Public Information Officer
mary.brooks@fdot.com
407-694-5505

APPENDIX



January 4, 2013

Steve Olson; 386-943-5479
steve.olson@dot.state.fl.us

***GOPHER TORTOISES RELOCATED
IN PREPARATION FOR BUILDING WEKIVA PARKWAY***

APOPKA, FL - Crews are relocating gopher tortoises from the first section of the Wekiva Parkway scheduled to begin construction by early February.

Wekiva Parkway Sections 4A & 4B will extend 3.14 miles from County Road (CR) 435/Mt. Plymouth Road in Orange County, across the Orange County-Lake County Line, to SR 46 west of Old McDonald Road. Construction is starting on this stretch since right-of-way acquisition and permitting are completed.

Since December 12 (including breaks for the holidays and low temperatures) crews have excavated 120 gopher tortoise burrows. Some 45 gopher tortoises have been recovered, as of January 3. There are at least 260 burrows that have to be cleared on the site before construction can begin. Not all of the burrows are active.

Gopher tortoises dig deep burrows for shelter in upland habitat throughout Florida. They share the burrows with more than 350 other species, and are therefore considered a keystone species. Both the tortoise and its burrow are protected under state law.

The gopher tortoises, a threatened species in Florida, are being relocated per state permit to the 643-acre Russakis Ranch, an approved recipient site in Okeechobee County in South Florida. Temperatures at recipient site must be forecast to be above 50 degrees for three (3) days in a row before they can receive the tortoises.

The \$1.7 billion Wekiva Parkway will complete the beltway around Central Florida. The planned 25-mile toll road is a collaboration between the Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority. The parkway will provide an alternative to Interstate 4, and relieve US 441, SR 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion.

Environmentalists refer to the Wekiva Parkway as a good example of transportation planning through environmentally sensitive areas. Authorized by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway & Protection Act, parkway development has included conserving more than 3,400 acres of land. The parkway will include wildlife bridges, and will be largely elevated to reduce accidents between vehicles and wildlife.

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February 8, 2013

***CREWS FINISH RELOCATING GOPHER TORTOISES
IN PREPARATION FOR BUILDING WEKIVA PARKWAY***

APOPKA, FL - Crews have relocated 107 gopher tortoises from the first section of the Wekiva Parkway scheduled to begin construction on February 18.

Crews on Thursday, Feb. 8 finished the reptile relocations on the Wekiva Parkway Sections 4A & 4B. Those sections will extend 3.14 miles from County Road (CR) 435/Mt. Plymouth Road in Orange County, across the Orange County-Lake County Line, to SR 46 west of Old McDonald Road. Work continues to put up signs for the crews to be alert for other area wildlife, and to make sure fence is secure so no more get into the work zone.

Construction, beginning with clearing and grubbing, is starting on this stretch since right-of-way acquisition and permitting are completed.

Beginning December 12 (including breaks for the holidays and low temperatures) crews excavated 285 gopher tortoise burrows. Not all of the burrows were active.

Gopher tortoises dig deep burrows for shelter in upland habitat throughout Florida. They share the burrows with more than 350 other species, and are therefore considered a keystone species. Both the tortoise and its burrow are protected under state law.

The gopher tortoises, a threatened species in Florida, are being relocated per state permit to the 643-acre Russakis Ranch, an approved recipient site in Okeechobee County in South Florida. Temperatures at recipient site had to be forecast to be above 50 degrees for three (3) days in a row before they could receive the tortoises.

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APOPKA I WEKIVA PARKWAY GOPHER AND TORTOISE REMOVAL



XXXXXX



MARY BROOKS

CREWS TO BURN DEBRIS AS PART OF BUILDING FIRST SECTION OF WEKIVA PARKWAY

R.0nrcq/#/whyh#^VwhyhIR.0nrcqC.gzrwtdwhlidcv*#

Sent: Z.hgqtwgd|/P.duik#6./#6346#B-63#EP.#



March 13, 2013

Steve Olson; 386-943-5479
steve.olson@dot.state.fl.us

CREWS TO BURN DEBRIS AS PART OF BUILDING FIRST SECTION OF WEKIVA PARKWAY

APOPKA, FL – Construction has been underway for nearly a month, and community members are advised that crews building the first section of the Wekiva Parkway are set to begin periodically burning debris during the next several weeks. The confined, on-site burns are being conducted in coordination with the Florida Forest Service. Construction teams working for the Florida Department of Transportation have been clearing the parkway corridor from County Road (CR) 435 (Mt. Plymouth Road), north of Haas Road, to State Road (SR) 46 near Old McDonald Road.

Construction began February 18 on the 3.14-mile stretch of toll road, near the Rock Springs Run State Reserve and the Wekiwa Springs State Park, and is underway because right-of-way acquisition and permitting are completed. The area is known as Section 4A & 4B of the project. Maps and other project information can be found at www.wekivaparkway.com.

More Project Information:

The \$1.7 billion Wekiva Parkway will complete the beltway around Central Florida. The Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority are working jointly to build the planned 25-mile toll road. The parkway will provide an alternative to Interstate 4, and relieve US 441, SR 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion.

Environmentalists refer to the Wekiva Parkway as a good example of transportation planning through environmentally sensitive areas. Authorized by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway & Protection Act, parkway development has included conserving more than 3,400 acres of land. The parkway will include wildlife bridges, and will be largely elevated to reduce accidents between vehicles and wildlife.

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KWAY



Governor Scott Kicks Off Wekiva Parkway Project

-Project will create 35,000 Jobs for Florida Families-

SEMINOLE COUNTY, FL – Governor Rick Scott today joined state and local officials for the Wekiva Parkway kick-off event, marking the partnership to complete the beltway around Central Florida, while protecting Florida’s environment. The project will create an estimated 35,000 jobs.

The \$1.5 billion Wekiva Parkway is a collaborative effort between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA). The 25-mile toll road will make travel easier and more convenient through Lake, Orange and Seminole counties, and will help relieve congestion on US Highway 441 and State Road (SR) 46.

Governor Scott said, “The Wekiva Parkway will create jobs for Florida families while also protecting our natural resources for future generations. Transportation projects like the Wekiva increase mobility and enhance the quality of life for the residents of this region.”

The completion of the beltway will improve travel to the area’s world-renown tourist destinations and other major employment centers. Currently Central Florida’s beltway consists of approximately 87 miles of SR 429 (Daniel Webster Western Beltway), SR 414 (John Land Apopka Expressway) and SR 417 (Central Florida GreeneWay).

FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad said, “The Wekiva Parkway will be a true game-changer for the entire Central Florida region. By working together, we are able to make the long-sought vision of completing the beltway around metropolitan Orlando a reality.”

Based on years of input from thousands of citizens, business owners, environmentalists and agency officials, the parkway is specifically designed help to protect the Wekiva River Basin, home to an Outstanding Florida Water. Authorized by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway & Protection Act, parkway development has included conserving more than 3,400 acres of land.

The parkway will include several wildlife bridges, and will be largely elevated to allow animals to move more easily and safely between habitats in the Wekiwa (correct spelling) Springs State Park, Rock Springs Run Reserve, Seminole State Forest and Lower Wekiva River Preserve.

The parkway is also expected to greatly benefit the region’s economy. More than 35,000 Floridians could get jobs related to the parkway’s design and construction over the next eight years. (That estimate uses formulas from the *Federal Highway Administration Employment Impacts of Highway Infrastructure Investment* - Updated March 2010.)

(more)

Expressway Authority Chairman Walter Ketcham said, “It is truly exciting to be moving forward on the Wekiva Parkway, after decades of painstaking planning and support for this critical transportation project. This landmark project will bring the community a much-needed economic boost, and help address the travel needs of Central Florida and the state as a whole.”

The Wekiva Parkway is being developed in sections, with the entire roadway expected to be open to traffic in 2021. FDOT is developing the parkway in Lake and Seminole counties. The department is also making non-tolled improvements to SR 46 and relocating part of County Road 46A out of the Seminole State Forest to improve habitat connectivity. The Expressway Authority is designing and building the portions in Orange County, as well as a small section in Lake County.

The Wekiva Parkway will be the first expressway built in Central Florida featuring all-electronic tolling for the greatest customer convenience and to keep traffic moving. Motorists will need a SUNPass or E-PASS transponder to use the parkway.

For more information on the Wekiva Parkway, please visit the project website at:
<http://wekivaparkway.com/>

orlandosentinel.com/news/local/lake/os-lk-eustis-borrow-pit-approved-20130831,0,7073334.story

OrlandoSentinel.com

Foes lose on borrow pit

By Eloísa Ruano González, Staff Writer

9:59 PM EDT, August 31, 2013

TAVARES — It was like déjà vu when neighbors of a construction-and-demolition landfill near Eustis returned to the County Commission chambers dressed in red shirts to show their anger over proposed changes to the facility. advertisement

Residents, who have long viewed the landfill as a nuisance, also wore red shirts three years ago to fight an expansion of operations by Professional Dirt Services. At the time, owner Dan Cordle was seeking permission to allow other businesses to dump materials at the 14-acre site, but he eventually withdrew his application.

This time, residents were upset over his plans to dig a borrow pit on the site off County Road 439. About 20 people attended the county meeting last week to demonstrate their opposition. But unlike in 2010, Cordle won permission for the borrow pit on a 3-1 vote.

"The fact we're back here again is an outrage," said Ken LaRoe, chairman and CEO of First Green Bank in Mount Dora who lives about a half-mile from the landfill. "They said they were going to close the dump a long time ago."

Jimmy Crawford, an attorney representing the landfill, said the owner wants to dig the pit to supply dirt for the construction of the \$1.66 billion Wekiva Parkway, a 25-mile toll road that will connect State Road 429 in Apopka to Interstate 4 and State Road 417 in Sanford.

"We don't have a contract in hand, yet, because it's a chicken and an egg problem," he said. "To get the contract, you have to show approval or some approval to take the dirt out. ... We are confident we'll get the contract. We are the closest to a significant portion of the Wekiva Parkway."

Cordle, who made a request for a mining permit last year but later withdrew it, said the pit would be filled with construction debris, speeding up the landfill's closure. Commissioner Welton Cadwell said to him: "Seems to me both sides want to the same thing. They want you to fill it up and go. And you want to fill it up and go."

Cadwell said he does, too, and was joined by Tim Sullivan and Sean Parks in approving the pit. Jimmy Conner opposed it and Chairwoman Leslie Campione abstained, citing a conflict of interest.

A borrow pit was first dug up on the site about a half-century ago, said Brian Sheahan, the county's planning manager. In 2002, the landfill was required to stop digging until permits could be obtained.

Attorney Derek Schroth, representing several homeowners who opposed the permit, said residents were concerned over noise and traffic from trucks hauling dirt.

"This is in an environmentally sensitive area," he said, adding they have an "obligation" to protect the area. Cordle agreed to pay a fee to cover the cost of the county hiring an outside firm to monitor the site. Still, residents such as Phil Landers worry about the pit's impact on the environment and water supply.

"The county has given him carte blanche," Landers said.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/lake/os-lk-eustis-borrow-pit-approved-20130831,0,1093503,print.story>[9/3/2013 9:02:23 AM]



Sept. 16, 2013

Steve Olson: 386-943-5479
steve.olson@dot.state.fl.us

BRIDGE PILE DRIVING TO BEGIN AS PART OF BUILDING FIRST SECTION OF WEKIVA PARKWAY

APOPKA, FL – Area residents are advised that crews are scheduled to begin driving pile for bridges in September as part of building the first section of the Wekiva Parkway. The crews working for the Florida Department of Transportation are scheduled to take about three months to drive approximately 100 piles.

Construction began February 18 on the 3.14-mile stretch of toll road from County Road (CR) 435 (Mt. Plymouth Road), north of Haas Road, to State Road (SR) 46 near Old McDonald Road. The area is known as Section 4A & 4B of the project and is near the Rock Springs Run State Reserve and the Wekiwa Springs State Park.

Maps and other project information can be found at www.wekivaparkway.com.

More Project Information:

The \$1.5 billion Wekiva Parkway will complete the beltway around Central Florida. The planned 25-mile toll road is being built in collaboration between the Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority. The parkway will provide a transportation alternative and relieve US 441, SR 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion.

Environmentalists refer to the Wekiva Parkway as a good example of transportation planning through environmentally sensitive areas. Authorized by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway & Protection Act, parkway development has included conserving more than 3,400 acres of land. The parkway will include wildlife bridges, and will be largely elevated to reduce accidents between vehicles and wildlife.

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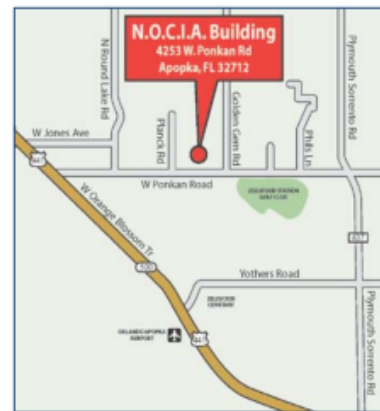
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Mary Brooks, Public Information Officer
407-694-5505
info@wekivaparkway.com



COMMUNITY OPEN-HOUSE SCHEDULED

(ORLANDO, FL) – The [Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority](#) will hold a community open-house meeting for the second section of the [Wekiva Parkway \(State Road 429\)](#), to be located north of Kelly Park Road between Round Lake Road and Mt. Plymouth Road (County Road 435). The three projects (map sections 2A, 2B and 2C below), totaling 5 miles, will feature all electronic tolling and a multi-level, systems interchange northwest of Haas Road-Ondich Road and Plymouth Sorrento Road. Construction on these projects, estimated at a total of \$150 million, is scheduled to begin in 2017 and finish in 2019.



The meeting will be held in an open-house format on **Thursday, November 7 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Northwest Orange County Improvement Association (N.O.C.I.A.) Building at 4253 W. Ponkan Road, Apopka, FL 32712.** The public may review maps, drawings and other pertinent information about the latest design plans for these projects. Members of the project teams will be available to answer questions.

For more information, please contact Public Information Officer Mary Brooks at 407-694-5505, via email at info@wekivaparkway.com or log onto www.wekivaparkway.com.

The Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority, established in 1963 by the state legislature, is responsible for the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the 109-mile limited-access expressway system to serve the metropolitan Orlando area. The Expressway Authority's system includes SR 408 (Spessard L. Holland East-West Expressway), SR 528 (Martin Andersen Beachline Expressway), SR 417 (Central Florida GreeneWay), SR 429 (Daniel Webster Western Expressway), SR 414 (John Land Apopka Expressway) and State Road 451. The Expressway Authority was the first to bring Electronic Toll Collection to Florida with the inception of E-PASS in 1994. Today, more than 500,000 Central Florida residents have E-PASS.

-30-



November 4, 2013

Steve Olson, (386) 943-5479
Steve.Olson@dot.state.fl.us

Public Information Meeting for Section 7A of the Wekiva Parkway

Seminole County – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is holding a public information meeting about the Wekiva Parkway Section 7A in Seminole County. The public meeting is being held to review the latest preliminary design plans, including proposed intersection safety enhancements.

The project is funded for construction in 2017. The Section 7A project limits are on State Road (SR) 46 from east of Wekiva River Road to Orange Boulevard. The project consists of designing 3.53 miles of limited access toll road along the SR 46 corridor and parallel, non-tolled, frontage roads for local travel.

The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2013, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at The Rock Church, 6641 W. SR 46, Sanford, FL 32771. The meeting is an informal open house where plans are available for review and project staff is available to address questions.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services, free of charge, should contact: Ms. Mary Brooks, Quest Corporation of America, by writing to her at 1800 Pembroke Drive, Suite 374, Orlando, FL 32810, or by calling (407) 694-5505 or via e-mail at info@wekivaparkway.com.

Media questions may be directed to the FDOT public information office: Steve Olson at 386-943-5479 / steve.olson@dot.state.fl.us. You may also view project information at www.wekivaparkway.com or www.cflroads.com.

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November 29, 2013

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Mount Dora Mount Dora looks to blaze new trails to success

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Brett Le Blanc

County seeking state funding for wekiva Trail

Cyclists riding the Seminole Wekiva trail take a tunnel under International Parkway in Clermont, on Saturday, Nov 23, 2013. (Brett Le Blanc / Daily Commercial)

Posted: Monday, November 25, 2013 6:00 am | Updated: 8:19 am, Mon Nov 25, 2013.

Livi Stanford | Staff Writer
livi.stanford@dailycommercial.com | 0 comments

Numerous efforts are under way to revitalize the city of Mount Dora in the next five to six years.

Those efforts include the completion of a 25-mile state toll road running through Mount Dora, providing easy access to Orlando. The Wekiva Parkway project is coordinated in conjunction with the construction of the Wekiva Trail, a 15-mile multi-use trail connecting Lake, Seminole and Orange counties.

City officials in collaboration with the county have already begun planning for a Mount Dora regional commercial district, which would be located at Round Lake Road and State Road 46.

The Wekiva Trail "will bring visitors from Seminole and Orange County to downtown, where they will hopefully spend money, and it will enhance the value of residential areas near the vicinity of the trail," Lake County Commissioner Leslie Campione said.

Community leaders and trail advocates have focused on getting the trail built in conjunction with the parkway, she said.

"Otherwise, it would be out of reach financially for Lake County to take on a project of this magnitude," according to Campione.

Even so, county officials said the biggest challenge is finding funding sources for the Wekiva Trail project. At the same time, city officials said they aspire to bring Orange County residents to east Lake County for work opportunities, but said they must overcome the notion that the area is just a big bedroom community.

Wekiva Parkway

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Thirty years ago, the Florida Department of Transportation, the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise determined the beltway needed to be completed, said Mary Brooks, public involvement coordinator for Wekiva Parkway.

The \$1.7 billion project funded in partnership with the FDOT, the expressway authority and the enterprise would "complete the beltway around metropolitan Orlando," according to information from the project.

Once the project is completed by 2019, "it is going to make it much easier to get to the parkway and to travel between Seminole, Lake and Orange counties," Brooks said.

The toll road will begin at "State Road 429/Daniel Webster Western Beltway at the new Connector Road, just north of U.S. Highway 441 in Apoka," according to details of the project. From there, "it will head north to a systems interchange just south of the Orange County-Lake County line."

The parkway will include an interchange at State Road 46 near Round Lake Road in Mount Dora. It will then head east and north along the SR 46 corridor in both Lake and Seminole County before turning south to connect with State Road 417.

As a result of the project, there will be more than 3,400 acres of land set aside for conservation.

Part of the work will involve the reconstruction of the U.S. Highway 441/SR 46 interchange in Mount Dora, and the relocation of County Road 46A. Transportation officials said the Parkway would reduce traffic congestion on U.S. 441 and SR 46.

Brooks said it also would reduce vehicle crashes on SR 46.

"Wekiva Parkway will alleviate the traffic on local and state roads and make it much easier and quicker to get to a destination," she said, emphasizing it will provide connectivity to SR 417 and the I-4 corridors.

It is also expected to create 36,000 jobs, Brooks said.

Project details also specify there will be a "non-tolled option for local trips from the County Road 46A realignment in Lake County to Orange Boulevard in Seminole County."

Wekiva Trail

Providing hikers, nature enthusiasts and cyclists a connection between Lake, Seminole and Orange counties, the 15-mile trail will "provide a gateway to the shops, restaurants and cultural destinations of the city of Mount Dora," according to project specifications.

Beginning at Tremain Street, the trail will connect with the Seminole Wekiva Trail near the Wekiva River, according to the Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization's Project Development and Environmental Study.

There are also plans to evaluate a "north/south connection through the Neighborhood Lakes property to the West Orange Trail near Kelly Park."

Mike Woods, transportation planner with the Lake-Sumter MPO, said a final report on the study phase of the project would be completed at the end of the month.

"We would like the whole thing built within five years," he said.

The challenge is funding right of way and construction costs, Woods explained.

A large portion of the trail will sit on rights-of-way owned by CSX and the Central Florida Railroad.

"There is an agreement in place with Mount Dora and Lake County with the Central Florida Railroad to purchase the lease from them, and once they purchase the lease, to negotiate with CSX to purchase the land," Woods said.

In 2011, the Balmoral Group conducted an economic impact study on the proposed trail, citing numerous positive economic development outcomes.

Once the trail is constructed, the group predicted it would bring in between "\$3 million and 12.7 million in benefits for businesses and workers along the downtown trail segment" while also creating more than 75 jobs.

Also, along the downtown trail segment, there will be an increase of at least \$4.6 million in property values, the study stated.

The group also found that about 57,140 people are expected to use the trail at least one time each year.

"The downtown trail, with its connectivity to existing trails and addition of increased bicyclist traffic, will represent a significant enhancement to the existing Lake County Trail System," the study found.

Campione said "the economic activity associated with trails of this nature is a proven phenomenon in other places that have similar characteristics as Mount Dora, such as Winter Garden."

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- Keep it as is. It is a good law that will vastly improve our health care system.
- The administration should fix the web site to allow the law to take effect.
- The president should delay certain requirements of the act.
- Obamacare should be repealed. It's a slow-motion train wreck.

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Indeed, Balmoral Group highlighted Winter Garden as a blighted area before its trail was constructed.

Now, the area is "nearly 100 percent storefront occupied," the study stated.

Even though the trail has received community support, Campione said the challenge is finding funding sources for the project, expected to cost more than \$11 million.

"We simply cannot justify spending money on building a trail when we have roads and sidewalks that need to be maintained competing for the same dollars," she said. "That is why it is so critical that we look for funding opportunities that are outside the box."

Those opportunities include partnering with agencies, the state, nonprofit organizations and the private sector, Campione said.

Mount Dora Mayor-elect Cathy Hoechst said bicycling has increased in popularity in the city, highlighting the importance of the trail.

"You are seeing more and more people looking at the focus for health and wellness," she said.

Mount Dora regional commercial district

Currently, there are cow pastures at Round Lake Road and SR 46.

City officials want to change that, bringing in industrial, manufacturing, research and development, institutional and educational facilities and retail to the area, after the Wekiva Parkway is built. Some 900 acres is eyed for an economic zone.

"The concept is that we will create an environment where people will locate businesses that have higher paying jobs," said Mark Reggentin, planning and development director for Mount Dora. "We don't want it to be a regional mall. We are shooting for higher, commercial, industrial and office uses."

Currently an ideal place for families to live, Campione said an employment hub similar to Lake Mary, Maitland and Heathrow, is needed where county residents can find high wage jobs similar to those available in the metro-Orlando region.

Reggentin said an economist has been hired to study the industries that would fit in that area.

"One of the biggest challenges is we have been treated as a bedroom community to the Orlando metro area," he said. "We are just the place where people come in and sleep at night. We want people coming in from Orange County to jobs in east Lake County. We have a lot to offer in terms of quality of life in Mount Dora."

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Posted in News on Monday, November 25, 2013 6:00 am. Updated: 8:19 am.

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Longwood woman chased by bear while walking dog

'It's one of the scariest things that's ever happened,' woman says

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LONGWOOD, Fla. -

A Longwood woman says she was chased by a bear Tuesday night while walking her dog on Ledbury Drive.

Stefani McCoy said she noticed the bear in her neighbor's yard around 8:15 p.m., then spotted two cubs near a tree.

McCoy said she and her dog, Bella, immediately turned around and started running away from the bears, but the female bear charged after her.

McCoy said she started screaming while her dog was barking. At one point, McCoy told Local 6, the bear came within 8 feet. She said she and her dog ran for about 30 yards before the bear finally stopped chasing them and went back to its cubs.

"It's one of the scariest things that's ever happened to me," said McCoy. "I'm not normally... charged by animals."

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The encounter comes one week after a woman was mauled by a bear in the Longwood area. On Tuesday, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission removed bear traps that they had set up, hoping to catch the bear.

On Monday, FWC trapped a female bear and her two cubs, which were taken to a rehab facility.

Since the attack, the FWC also trapped two adult bears, a male and a female. FWC officials said those bears "matched the description" of the bear that attacked the woman and were both euthanized.

The bears are now being tested, but FWC officials said they strongly believe the female bear was the animal responsible for the attack.

In the past three years, wildlife officers have been setting more bear traps in northeast region of the state.

In 2010, 19 bears were captured, 25 in 2011, and that number doubled in 2012, with 50 bears captured.

So far this year, 43 bears have been captured- that number includes the two bears that were put down after a woman was attacked last week.

FWC says construction on the Wekiva Parkway Project could be disrupting the bears, but the animals have such large home ranges that they would generally just avoid the noisy areas.

"I don't know if there's any way to get them all, and take them somewhere other than right here where they're going in peoples garages and chasing people, I mean that's insane," said Becky Longfellow, who lives a few doors down from the woman who was chased by the bear on Tuesday.



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Cumulative Estimated Audience: **13,532**
Cumulative Estimated Publicity Value: **USD \$1,024**



Entry #1
Wekiva Parkway
Your Evening News at 8
News

Dec 18, 2013 8:37:00:37 PM EST (UTC -0500)
Local broadcast time: 8:37 PM EST (UTC -0500)

Estimated Local Audience: **13,532**
Estimated Local Publicity Value: **USD \$1024**

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...We have new information a major road expansion project that will provide another quick route -- to get from Seminole County to the Disney and attractions area. When it's finished -- you'll be able to avoid I-4. In tonight's Extra On Getting there, On Getting there, Real Time Traffic Expert Ryan Harper shows us the progress -- on the Wekiva Parkway Project, official name, but it's really the 429 toll road extension project. This huge undertaking was authorized in 2004 by the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act and finally approved in 2012. MAP 8:38 PM The new roadway is highlighted in red on this map. It begins where the 429 currently ends at 441 in the Apopka area. From there, it will head north until Sorrento where you can then travel northwest towards Mt Dora or travel NE to end up at I4 near the 417 interchange. The planned expressway will be twenty five miles long. This is a 1.7 billion dollar project. The purpose is to provide a safe alternative to I-4 and relieve US 441, State road 46 and other area roads from congestion as the area grows. And this wasn't a short planning process. It took years of talks to run this massive roadway through the forest. SOT "Some of the elements of the Wekiva Parkway being built in such an environmentally sensitive area is that we wanted to reduce the conflicts or accidents between vehicles and wildlife." CONTVO In fact, 3,400 acres of nearby forest have been set aside for conservation to protect black bear, the burrowing owl and the sandhill crane. MAP SHOWING PHASES This project is so big it's being done in fourteen sections. The first two are expected to be done by 2014, done by 2014, those are the sections highlighted in red. RYAN H-PLASMA Project planners hope to have the entire project done by 2021. For Extra On Getting There, I'm Ryan...