

Consistent with Recommendation 16 of the Wekiva Basin Area Task Force, the Committee recommends initiation of legislative action and the appropriation of funds to expedite acquisition of Neighborhood Lakes, Seminole Woods/Swamp, New Garden Coal, and Pine Plantation. Cooperative efforts should be initiated by the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and other land acquisition entities to purchase conservation land surrounding or adjacent to Wekiva Parkway as the alignment has been modified by the SR 429 Working Group with special emphasis on high quality wetland and upland habitat in Orange and Lake County as shown in Figure 6.

*Implementation Strategy:* The Committee recommends initiation of legislative action that specifies the Department of Transportation as the lead agency and provides a special appropriation of non-recurring dollars to initiate the acquisition process. Consistent with Task Force Recommendation 5, the Committee recommends coordination of a funding plan and multi-agency partnership including local governments to acquire these properties. In addition to road right-of-way and mitigation purposes, the Committee further recommends that lands owned by the State and other public entities shall be limited to traditional conservation uses appropriate for lands acquired under the Florida Forever Program.

The Committee also recommends the Board of Trustees amend the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway Florida Forever project boundary to include the Pine Plantation parcel as shown on Figure 5 and wetland and upland (including Scrub Oak) parcels as shown on Figure 6.

Legislation should define: the need to acquire the four parcels, including right-of-way acquisition and mitigation of environmental impacts; the Department of Transportation as the acquiring agency; and, the funding partnerships between agencies, including the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and other land acquisition entities to expeditiously complete the acquisitions.

The Department of Transportation should initiate the acquisition process, including appraisals. Land acquired by the Department of Transportation that is not required for highway use should be transferred to the Department of Environmental Protection for management under the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway project.