

CHAPTER 83-358, Laws of Florida

Committee Substitute for Senate bill No. 459

An act relating to the Loxahatchee River; creating the Loxahatchee River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act; providing legislative declarations and intent; providing definitions; designating a portion of the river as a wild and scenic river; providing for development of a management plan; providing for a coordinating council; authorizing the Governor to apply for inclusion of the designated portion of the river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; providing for preservation of existing governmental authority; providing for rules; specifying regulatory and permitting authority; providing for enforcement; providing for injunctions; specifying violations and penalties; providing for repeal; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida.

Section 1. Short title.--Sections 1 through 12 of this act may be cited as the "Loxahatchee River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act."

Section 2. Legislative declaration.--The Legislature finds and declares that a certain segment of the Loxahatchee River in Palm Beach and Martin Counties possesses outstandingly remarkable ecological, fish and wildlife, and recreational values which are unique in the United States. These values give national significance to the river as one which should be permanently preserved and enhanced, not only for the citizens of the State of Florida, but for the citizens of the United States, of present and future generations. The permanent management and administration of the river, however, involves a complex interaction of national, state, regional, and local interests which require balancing, coordination of purpose and continuing participation by and access to the public, through its elected representatives. It is the intention of the Legislature to provide for the permanent preservation of the designated segment of the Loxahatchee River by way of development of a plan for permanent administration by agencies of the state and local government which will ensure the degree of protection necessary for inclusion of that segment of the river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System but retaining that degree of flexibility, responsiveness, and expertise which will accommodate all of the diverse interests involved in a manner best calculated to be in the public interest.

Section 3. Definitions.--As used in this act:

(1) "Activity" means the doing of any act or the failing to do any act, whether by a natural person or a corporation.

(2) "Board" means the governing board of the South Florida Water Management District.

(3) "Coordination Council" means the council created by s.5(3)(o).

(4) "Department" means the Division of Recreation and Parks of the Department of Natural Resources.

(5) "Division" means the Division of Recreation and Parks of the Department of Natural Resources.

(6) "Executive Board" means the Governor and Cabinet sitting as the head of the Department of Natural Resources.

(7) "Resource value" means any one or more of the specific scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or ecological features identified by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, in its Draft Wild and Scenic Rivers Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement as being outstandingly remarkable or worthy of note.

(8) "River area" means that portion of the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River from river mile 6 to river mile 13.5, together with such abutting uplands as determined in the permanent management plan to form the corridor having visual impact on the river user, and which may be necessary to maintain the natural and scenic appeal of the river.

Section 4. Designation of wild and scenic river.--The Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River between river mile 6 and river mile 13.5 is hereby designated as a wild and scenic river for the purposes of this act and subject to all of the provisions of this act. Such designated portion is more particularly described as that portion of the Northwest Fork downstream of the southern boundary of Riverbend County Park located in Palm Beach County and upstream of an east-west line passing through a point where the southern boundary of Jonathan Dickinson State Park intersects the eastern shoreline of the river.

Section 5. Development of management plan.--

(1) The department and the South Florida Water Management District shall jointly develop a proposed management plan for the designated segment of the Loxahatchee River, which management plan, subject to and consistent with the provisions of this act, will be designed to qualify the designated segment of the river for inclusion in the national Wild and Scenic rivers System.

(2) The development of the proposed management plan shall include participation by the National Park Service, by all appropriate state agencies, by all appropriate or interested local governments, including but not limited to Palm Beach County, Martin County, the Jupiter Inlet District, the Town of Jupiter, the Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District, the South Indian River Water Control District, and the Northern Palm Beach County Water Control District, the Palm Beach County Farm Bureau, and by any others deemed advisable by the department or board. To the extent not inconsistent with the provisions of this act, the plan shall include such conditions as the United State Secretary of the Interior may require.

(3) The proposed management plan shall include provision for:

(a) Permanent protection and enhancement of the ecological, fish and wildlife, and recreational values identified by the National Park Service in its draft study of the river and for which the river was chosen for inclusion in the system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of those values; primary emphasis being given to protecting esthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features;

(b) Continuation of land uses and developments on private lands within the river area which are in existence on the effective date of this act which are not incompatible with the purposes of designation;

(c) Periodic studies to determine the quantity and mixture of recreation and other public uses which can be permitted without adverse impact on the resource values of the river area;

(d) Regulation and distribution of public access where necessary to protect and enhance the resource values of the river area;

(e) Basic facilities to absorb user impact on the river area, including necessary toilet refuse containers, but located in order to minimize their intrusive impact;

(f) Location of major facilities such as developed campgrounds, visitor centers, and administrative headquarters outside the river area;

(g) Restriction of motorized travel by land vehicle or boat where necessary to protect the resource values in the river area;

(h) Agricultural and forestry practices similar in nature and intensity or less intensive than those present in the river area on the effective date of this act;

(i) Limitation of resource management practices to those necessary for protection, conservation, rehabilitation, or enhancement of river area resource values;

(j) Maintenance of existing water quality;

(k) Whenever alternative routes are unavailable, location and construction of new public utility or road, rights-of-way in a way which minimizes adverse effects on scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, and other resource values in the river area;

(l) Continuance of existing drainage and water management practices, unless such existing practices will degrade or diminish existing water quality or existing practices will degrade or diminish existing water quality or existing resource values in the river area, and allowances of new water resource management practices which will not have a substantial adverse impact on resource values in the river area;

(m) Review and regulation of all activities conducted or proposed to be conducted which will or may have a substantial adverse impact on any of the resource values in the river area as provided in this act;

(n) Continuation of activities or developments below or above the designated segment which will not invade the river area or substantially diminish the scenic, recreational, and fish and wildlife resource values present in the river area on the effective date of this act; and

(o) A permanent management coordinating council composed of one representative from each of the participants provided for in subsection (2). The coordinating council shall review and make recommendations, in the first instance, on all applications for permits required by this act, as well as all proposals for amendments or modifications to the permanent management plan, and render its nonbinding advisory opinion to the board and the department. Each participant shall appoint one member to the coordinating council. The coordinating council shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary to serve for a term of one year. The coordinating council shall adopt bylaws to provide for such other officers as it may deem necessary, election of officers, removal of officers for just cause, meetings, quorum, procedures for the conduct of its business, and such other matters as the membership may deem advisable in the conduct of its business. Such professional staff as the coordinating council may require shall be provided by the South Florida Water Management District.

(4) To the extent not inconsistent with this act, the proposed management plan may also include any other provisions deemed by the department and the board to be necessary or advisable for the permanent protection of the river as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Section 6. Authority for application for inclusion in National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.-- Upon completion of the development of a proposed management plan, the executive director of the department shall forward the proposed management plan to the executive board. After the executive board has received, reviewed and accepted a proposed management plan, the Governor may apply to the United States Secretary of the Interior for inclusion of the designated segment of the Loxahatchee River into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Section 7. Preservation of existing governmental authority.--

(1) Nothing contained in this act shall operate to divest any agency, water management district, municipality, county, or special district of any authority or jurisdiction in existence on the effective date of this act.

(2) Construction and maintenance of improvements at the Jupiter Inlet and in the Loxahatchee River downstream from the designator segment for purposes of navigation, waterway flushing, or upland drainage, including creation or preservation of channels, maintenance dredging, jetty improvements, riprapping, construction of groins and similar improvements, and removal of sand or dead oyster shall be undertaken when deemed to have a potential for substantial adverse impact on the resource values of the river area shall be undertaken using techniques which minimize adverse effects on scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife and other values of the river area.

Section 8. Rulemaking authority.--After approval by the Secretary of the Interior of an application by the Governor under this act for inclusion of the Loxahatchee River in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the board and the department shall each have full authority under their separate jurisdictions as provided in s.9 to adopt rules deemed necessary for the discharge of the respective duties of each as provided herein, including the adoption of the proposed management plan as the permanent management plan, and including the power to adopt rules modifying or amending the management plan in accordance with the provisions of this act and rules providing for permanent management of the designated segment as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Section 9. Separation of regulatory authority.--

(1) The department shall have full and exclusive authority to adopt rules concerning and to regulate activities within the river area having a direct and substantial adverse effect on any resource value within the river area.

(2) The board shall have full and exclusive authority to adopt rules concerning and to regulate activities outside the river area having substantial adverse impact on resource values within the river area.

(3) The department and the board shall coordinate all activities related to rule adoption and enforcement in order to avoid to the maximum extent possible any conflicts or duplication arising therefrom.

Section 10. Permitting authority.--

(1) No person or entity shall conduct any activity or do anything which will or may have an adverse impact on any resource value in the river area without first having received a permit from the board or the department, as appropriate.

(2) Any applicant for a permit shall file an application for a permit with the board or the department, whichever has regulatory authority, upon such forms and in such manner as the board or the department shall by rule require. The board and the department may require, with or in addition to such applications, the furnishing of any information deemed necessary or desirable for full and complete consideration of all factors relevant to informed decisions on the applications.

(3) A permit may be granted only after a finding by the board or the department, whichever has regulatory authority, that the activity for which a permit has been requested will not have a substantial adverse impact on resource values in the river area.

(4) the board and the department may adopt an application fee schedule providing for payment of reasonable fees to defray the cost of processing applications.

(5) the provisions of Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, shall apply to the board and to the department, but not to the coordinating council, in carrying out the functions and duties prescribed for each by this act.

Section 11. Enforcement.--

(1) Officers of the division shall have full authority to enforce any rule adopted under this act with the same police powers given them by law to enforce the rules of state parks.

(2) The board shall have full power to enforce this act or any rule adopted under this act by action for injunctive relief or by any other method available for enforcement of rules adopted under Chapter 373.

Section 12. Penalties.--Violation of any rule adopted under this act constitutes a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s.775.082 or s.775.083, Florida Statutes. Continuing violation after notice constitutes a separate violation for each day so continued.

Section 13. This act is repealed on a date two years after the effective date of this act, unless the portion of the Loxahatchee River designated by this act as a wild and scenic river is included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System on or before that date.

Section 14. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 24, 1983.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 24, 1983.