

RESOLUTION

of the
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
regarding
**SUPPORTING THE LAKE TO LAKE REGIONAL MULTI-USE
TRAIL; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, the Shared Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trails Program was established within the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in 2015 by the Florida Legislature to promote and fund the connection of local trails into regional long-distance trails to improve transportation and safety; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Senate Bill (SB) 106 – passed by both chambers of the Legislature and signed by Governor DeSantis – doubled the annual funding for SUN Trails and added Florida’s vast array of conservation lands and public parks as linkages to encourage eco-tourism pathways through the Florida Wildlife Corridor; and

WHEREAS, SB 106 also promotes both trails-for-people and greenway corridors-for-wildlife to expand public awareness of Florida’s unique landscape and encourage economic development through eco-tourism in rural areas and provides a mechanism to financially support these regional trails through sponsorship agreements with FDOT and not-for-profit or private sector entities; and

WHEREAS, in 2024 the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation (FGTF) in collaboration with the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation (FWCF) undertook a research effort to identify a linked eco-tourism trail through the eastern reaches of the Florida Wildlife Corridor between Lake Okeechobee and Lake Monroe – a vast conservation and cattle ranching landscape that does not currently include trails on the SUN Trail opportunity or priority trail system; and

WHEREAS, this research identified two abandoned railroad corridors that could serve as the alignment for such a connection: the “Kissimmee Valley Extension” of Flagler’s East Coast Railroad (historically linking Deland and Kenansville) and the Peavine Railroad (begun to link Kenansville to Lake Okeechobee but never completed) via the historic railroad towns of Geneva, Chuluota, Bithlo, Wewahottee, Holopaw, and Kenansville; and

WHEREAS, the proposed alignment of the Lake to Lake Regional Trail would establish an eco-tourism trail connection through these historic communities and promote “slow travel” tourism to rural areas in four East Central Florida counties: Seminole, Orange, Osceola and Okeechobee, exposing Florida residents and visitors to the history of early 19th and 20th century settlement and the use of the land for farming, logging, cattle ranching and wildlife conservation.

WHEREAS, the proposed alignment of the Lake to Lake Regional Trail would partially incorporate segments of the East Orange and Avalon Trails as depicted in the 2012 Orange County Trails Master Plan and its 2022 Update.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ORANGE COUNTY:

Section 1. Support for Lake to Lake Multi-use Regional Trail Concept. The County supports the concept of the Lake to Lake Multi-use Regional Trail as an eco-tourism corridor for wildlife and people, and will complete the processes necessary to incorporate the proposed regional trail concept into the County's Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements Map Series and other applicable trail planning documents.

Section 2. Endorsement of addition to Statewide Opportunity Land Trail Map. The County endorses the proposal to request that the Office of Greenways and Trails in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) add this corridor and its linkages to the [Statewide Opportunity Land Trail Map](#).

Section 3. Support for State Trail Priority Ranking. The County supports the importance of developing an eco-tourism corridor along and adjacent to the Lake to Lake Regional Trail in this area of the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and encourages the Office of Greenways and Trails to rank this corridor as a State Trail Priority during the next ranking cycle.

Section 4. Endorsement of Regional Trail Alliance. The County endorses collaborative efforts with FDOT and other counties along the Lake to Lake Regional Trail corridor, as well as non-profit organizations such as the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation and the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation, private entities and corporate landowners to create a regional trail alliance to support the long-term operation and management of this unique and valuable trail and wildlife corridor as provided in SB 106.

