

RESOLUTION 2003-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE ST JOHNS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST FUND STATE OF FLORIDA EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE RAYONIER TRACT WHICH LIES WITHIN THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA BLUEWAY PHASE II (TOLOMATO AND MATANZAS RIVERS) FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT BOUNDARY.

WHEREAS, the Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II – Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers, Florida Forever Project is an extension of Duval County’s Northeast Florida Blueway Phase I Project that provides ecological, historical, archaeological, and cultural connections between the present and the past; and

WHEREAS, the Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II - Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers Florida Forever Project was ranked as a Category A Project in 2001 by the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP’s) Acquisition and Restoration Councils (ARC) and ratified by the Governor and Cabinet; and

WHEREAS, the natural and historical value of this region is reflected in the establishment of the State Parks (Guana River State Park, Anastasia Island State Park and Faver Dykes State Park), St. Johns River Water Management District (District) Acquisitions (Deep Creek, Stokes Landing and Moses Creek Conservation Area), Aquatic Preserves (Guana River Marsh and Pellicer Creek), National Monuments (Castillo de San Marcos and Ft. Matanzas), State Historic Site (Ft. Mose), Wildlife Management Area (Guana River Wildlife Management Area) as well as the Northern Coastal Basins Program and the 25th National Estuarine Research Reserve’s (NERR) program initiatives designed to protect water quality, shellfish harvesting areas, strategic habitat; as well as promote, implement and coordinate opportunities for scientific research, environmental education and public stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the Northeast Florida Blueway, Phase II – Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers will bridge the protection gap in an effort to secure the ecological character of the region, while at the same time, protecting many of the ecological, and historical resources, and ensuring recreational opportunities for the residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, acquisition of lands in the Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II Florida Forever proposal will not only protect and improve the ecological integrity of the Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers, but also will provide, additional access to existing conservation lands in the area; and

WHEREAS, the Rayonier Tract is the largest parcel within the Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II Florida Forever Project boundary and protects five miles west of the Matanzas River (SR 206 to Pellicer Creek) shoreline and creates 16,000 acres of contiguous conservation land between Faver Dykes State Park, Pellicer Creek Conservation Area and Princess Place; and

WHEREAS, the Rayonier Tract protects water quality in the last remaining large, relatively undisturbed areas that buffers the consistently open shellfish harvesting area (south of SR. 206 to Pellicer Creek) designated as Class II waters along the Matanzas River and its tributaries and Outstanding Florida Waters from Faver-Dyke State Park to Pellicer Creek; and

WHEREAS, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund State of Florida, and the St. Johns River Water Management District, are in the process of purchasing the Rayonier Tract; and

WHEREAS, the purchase of the Rayonier Tract by the Internal Improvement Trust Fund for the State of Florida, and the St. Johns River Water Management District, would provide an opportunity to preserve and protect resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the citizens, now, and for future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County Florida, Florida, that such Board supports the acquisition of the Rayonier Timberland Tract that is in the process of being purchased by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund State of Florida, and the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD);

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this ___7th___ day of ___January___, 2003.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

By: James E. Bryant
James E. Bryant, Chairman

ATTEST: Cheryl Strickland, Clerk of Court

By: Patricia De Grande
Deputy Clerk

RENDITION DATE 01-09-03

Effective Date: 01-07-03

