

RESOLUTION 2025-R-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNTY AS A “PARTY” AS DEFINED IN SECTION 120.52 (13) (d), FLORIDA STATUTES, TO REPRESENT THE SUBSTANTIAL INTERESTS OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF MARION COUNTY CITIZENS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED SILVER GLEN SPRINGS PROTECTION ZONE, RULE 68D-24.0038; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Silver Glen Springs is a first-magnitude spring which lies at the east edge of the Ocala National Forest and approximately two miles north of the Juniper Creek entrance; and

WHEREAS, it has been theorized that Late Archaic hunter-gathers who lived between 4600 and 3500 BC inhabited and made up the community surrounding Silver Glen Springs and frequently hosted large-scale gatherings that helped create a sense of community among culturally diverse groups with homelands separated by hundreds of miles;¹ and

WHEREAS, much like today, Silver Glen Springs provides the meeting grounds for Florida residents from several surrounding counties, as well as tourists from all over, who utilize Silver Glen Springs as their preferred destination for vacationing, boating, jet skiing, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, swimming, snorkeling, lounging, celebrating and all manner of outdoor recreation and water-specific recreation; and

WHEREAS, small to medium local businesses in the surrounding communities of both Lake and Marion Counties rely heavily on Silver Glen Springs visitors to sell their goods, services and accommodations, in an otherwise low-populated area; and

WHEREAS, section 327.45, Florida Statutes, was modified in 2021 to permit the Florida Fishing and Wildlife Conservation Commission (“FWCC”) authority to establish by rule spring protection zones “that prohibit the anchoring, mooring, beaching, or grounding of vessels;” and

WHEREAS, section 327.45 (3), Florida Statutes, provides that “when developing a protection zone, the [FWCC] shall do so in consultation and coordination with ... the governing bodies of the county and municipality ... in which the zone is located;” and

¹ Gilmore, Z. (2016). *Gathering at Silver Glen: Community and History in Late Archaic Florida* (Florida Museum of Natural History: Ripley P. Bullen Series).

WHEREAS, the FWCC established guidelines, criteria and Rule 68D-24.0035 for developing protection zones, effective February 7, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Marion County was informed by its residents that the USDA Forest Service requested and the FWCC will be considering the placement of a spring protection zone through Silver Glen Springs that will prohibit the anchoring, mooring, beaching or grounding of vessels in and around the spring; and

WHEREAS, the FWCC conducted a public meeting on February 20, 2025, to present information about the proposed establishment of the spring protection zone in Silver Glen Springs and the associated spring run (“Springs Protection Zone”), with a proposed date of May 21-22, 2025 for the FWCC’s consideration to accept, modify or reject the proposed Rule; and

WHEREAS, as of January 2023, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles recorded the number of all classes of registered vessels in Marion County at 21,838,² many of which traverse St. Johns River to visit Silver Glen Springs; and

WHEREAS, many businesses within Marion County cater to the Silver Glen Springs’ visitors who are looking to explore the springs and surrounding forest, inclusive of boat tours and cruises and jet ski and boat rentals, all who make Silver Glen Springs an integral part of their business strategy; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida have decided that it is in the best interests of its citizens, business owners, and visitors to Marion County to object to the imposition of the proposed Springs Protection Zone which prohibits vessels from anchoring, mooring, grounding, or beaching in Silver Glen Springs and the associated spring run.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida:

SECTION 1. The above recitals are hereby incorporated herein by this reference and are deemed a material part of this resolution.

SECTION 2. The County wishes to be recognized as a Party under section 120.52 (13) (d), Florida Statutes, so as to meaningfully participate in the FWCC rulemaking, development and potential imposition of a spring protection zone pursuant to section 327.45, Florida Statutes, for

² www.marineindustriesassociationflorida.com/uploads/1/3/8/9/13894199/vessel_owner_stats_2024.pdf

proposed Rule No. 68D-24-0038, as well as any related hearings or appeals, on behalf of its boaters, residents, affected business owners and tax payers.

SECTION 3. For purposes of any action, hearing, proceeding, or appeal under the Administrative Procedures Act relating to the proposed Springs Protection Zone affecting Silver Glen Springs and its associated spring run, designees of the County Administrator shall represent the substantial interests of a significant population of Marion County.

SECTION 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

DONE AND DULY ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA**

GREGORY C. HARRELL, CLERK

KATHY BRYANT, CHAIRMAN