

Match % Calculation

0.25

Project Narrative:

Please provide a description of the proposed project and the need for assistance. The narrative should be clear and concise.

A Troupville River Camp will attract paddling and fishing enthusiasts of all ages. The property is located at the Confluence of the Little River with the Withlacoochee River, off of I-75 and GA 133 just west of Valdosta, the biggest city in the Suwannee River Basin. Proposed amenities include air-conditioned bathrooms, hot and cold running water, five screened sleeping platforms, picnic tables and benches, outdoor fire pits, and paddle boat racks for canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards, with river access near the Confluence.

The location is historic, where Troupville was the former Lowndes County seat before Valdosta, from 1833 to 1860. The property has been privately owned since then and is now available for purchase for this purpose.

The Land Between the Rivers has white sand beaches, palmetto thickets, cypress stands, and towering oak and longleaf pine trees. Situated between two blackwater rivers that also have histories of transportation and recreation, the site offers a genuinely "wild" experience within a mile of an interstate highway. The property is large enough to hold both a secluded paddle-in-only River Camp and hiking and biking trails, and even a frisbee golf course. It is an ideal outdoor classroom for classes on art, history, and the natural environment.

The bathrooms will provide environmental benefit, preventing much unfortunate use of the woods, and keeping the rivers cleaner. The property will serve as a center for water quality testing, which could help resolve the stigma of Valdosta's chronic wastewater spills, which have affected the Little, Withlacoochee, and Suwannee Rivers all the way to the Gulf.

The private owner of these 74.14 acres of floodplain and 1.3 miles of river frontage is actively promoting selling it for this project, including on TV and in presentations to local elected and appointed boards. The property is next to the existing 49.36 acre park immediately to the north at Troupville Boat Ramp, operated by Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority (VLPRA), for 120+ acres of park destination for locals and traveling outdoors enthusiasts.

Most maintenance will be by a caretaker in exchange for RV parking space. Thus a relatively small initial capital investment will enable long-term eco-tourism with economic and environmental advantages, at little operational cost.

Our model is the five existing River Camps on the Suwannee River in Florida that have long been popular as part of the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT). This Troupville River Camp will facilitate paddle trips on our Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail (WLRWT), starting upstream from this Confluence, on either the Little or Withlacoochee Rivers, continuing down the Withlacoochee to Florida and the Suwannee River, connecting with the SRWT River Camps.

This Troupville River Camp will be a significant public relations boon, not just to Lowndes County or Valdosta, but to the entire region and the states of Georgia and Florida. We have support from the City of Valdosta and several surrounding counties in Georgia and Florida, plus cooperation from personnel at several agencies of both states.

See also: <http://wwals.net/?p=49834>