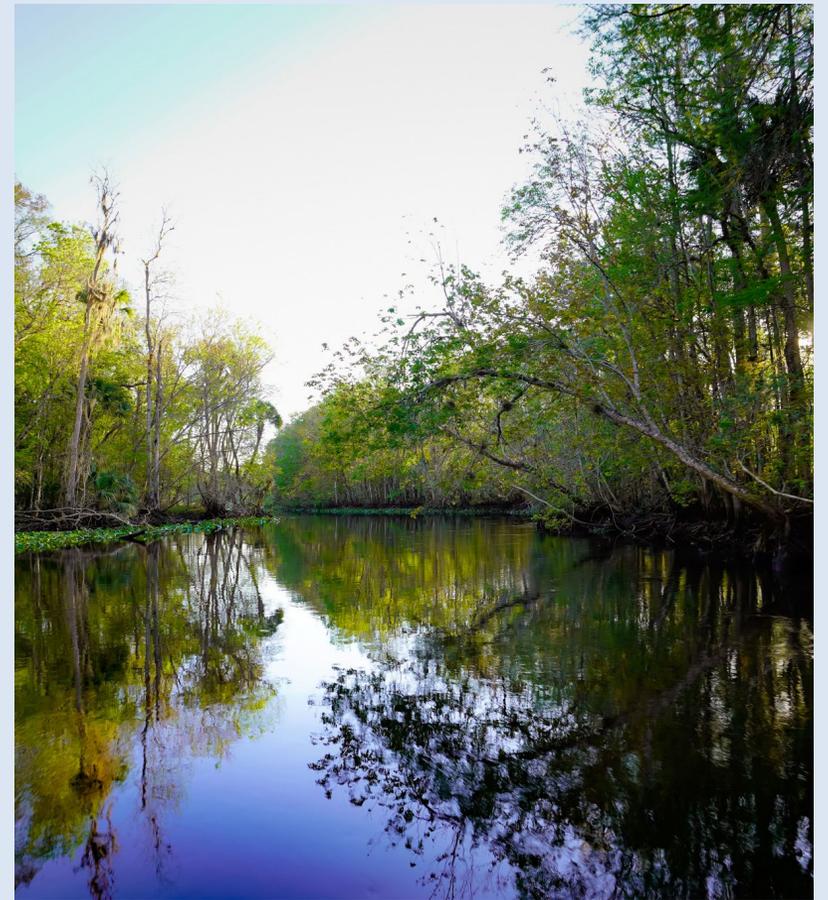


The Great Florida Riverway: How Economics, Recreation and Social Marketing Shifted Public Opinion

Margaret Hankinson Spontak, President
Great Florida Riverway Trust Inc.
GreatFloridaRiverwayTrust.com



GREAT
FLORIDA
RIVERWAY
TRUST

Three Strategies for Success



Communicating
For Change



Integrating
Recreation
Opportunities



Amplifying
Economic Benefits

Three Part Funding Strategy

**1. Funding for Ocklawaha River
Restoration – uniting 3 rivers,
50 springs**

**2. Funding for Supporting
Recreation Facilities**

**3. Funding for Economic
Development Package for
Putnam County**



Communicating for Change

- ✓ Multi-county System Focus
- ✓ Building a bigger tent
- ✓ Identifying and addressing stakeholder concerns
- ✓ Changing the way we talk to each other; listen more;
- ✓ Working with agencies and key leaders
- ✓ Making people a focus



Public awareness and support has dramatically shifted



2017 UF River & Reservoir Users

- 56% would leave the dam as is
- 15% would breach the dam
- 27% said they were very informed about the issues with the dam
- 29% were unsure or did not answer

Note: A second Putnam only poll indicated 74% support restoring the flow of the Ocklawaha River

2022 Barcelo & Company Poll Putnam & Marion Active Voters

- 77% support restoring the flow of the Ocklawaha River
- 6% were against restoring the flow of the river
- 17% had no opinion

Integrating Recreation Opportunities



University of Florida College of Design, Construction and Planning
Center for Landscape and Conservation Planning
Faculty: Tom Hocter, PhD & the late David Barth, PhD

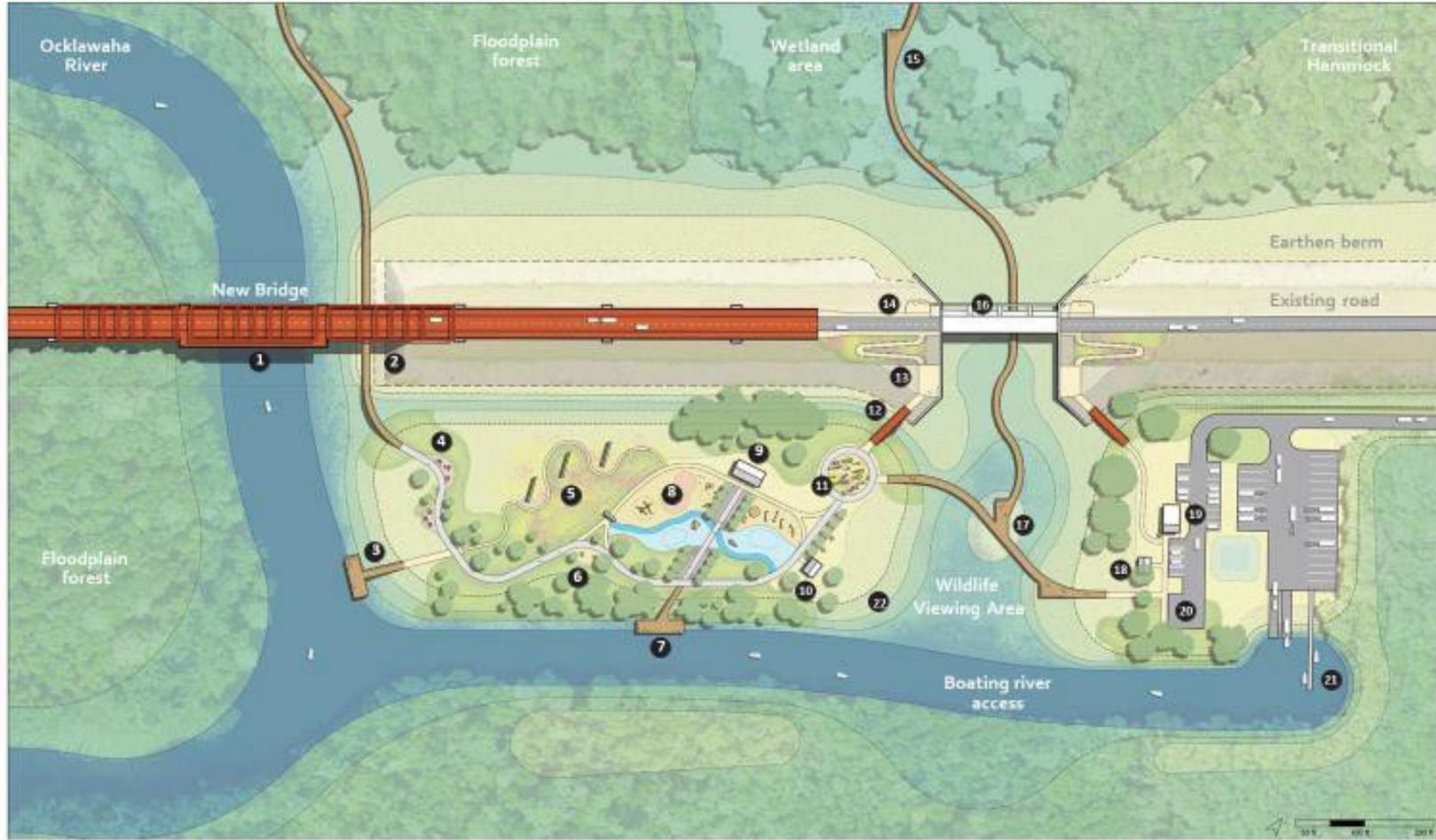


Rodman Reservoir and Kirkpatrick Dam Today

One Concept for the Rodman Recreation Area



DESIGN PROPOSAL NORTH BERM SITE DETAIL Featuring Re-purposed Dam and Spillway And Improved Park



Location

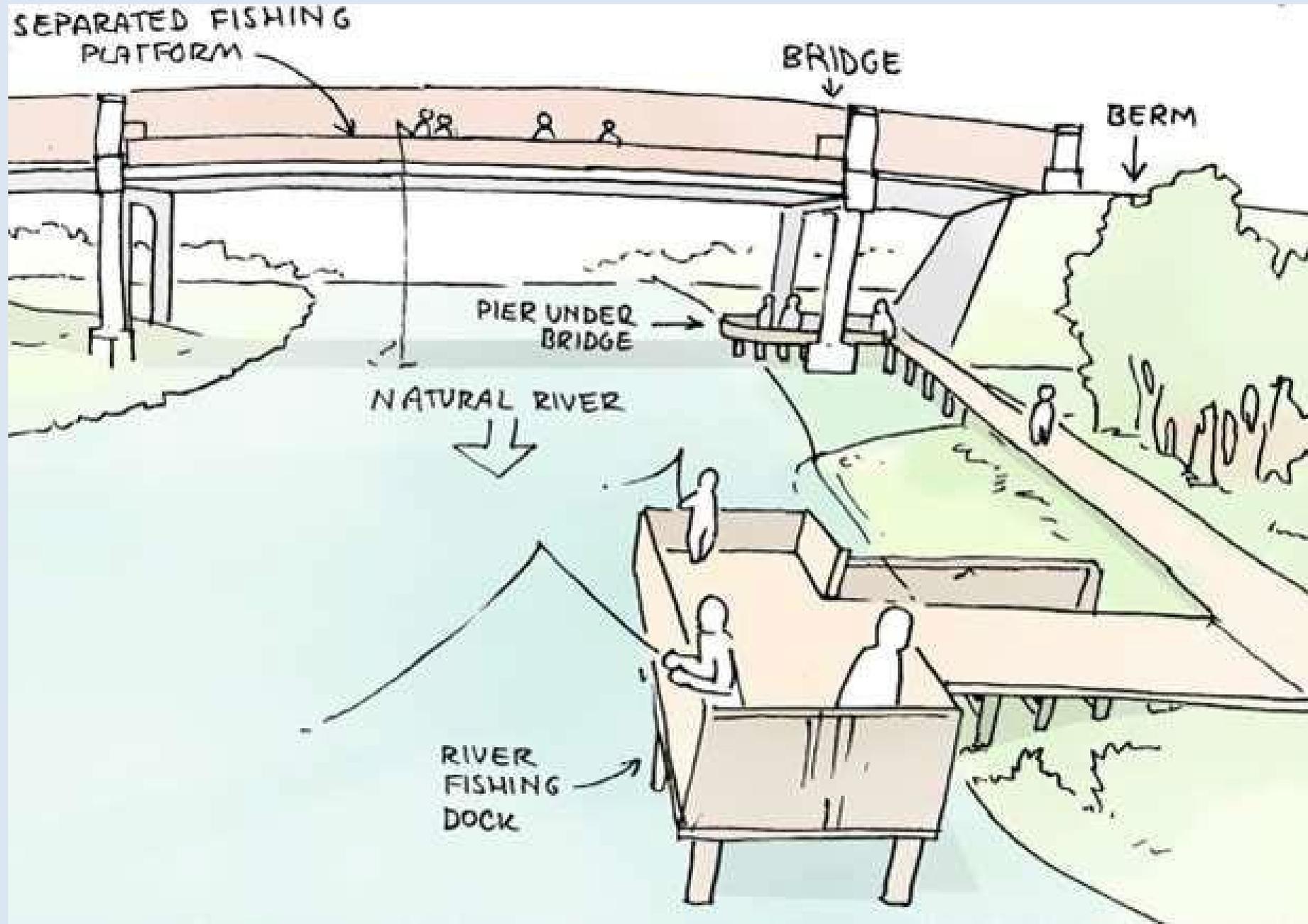


North Berm

- 1 Bridge fishing lane
- 2 Berm cut underpass
- 3 River fishing dock
- 4 Species sculptures
- 5 Gates meadow
- 6 Picnic space
- 7 Channel fishing dock
- 8 Natural play space
- 9 Pavilion & kitchen
- 10 Pavilion & open lawn
- 11 Drowned forest art
- 12 Foot bridge
- 13 Berm slope path
- 14 Panoramic view
- 15 Boardwalk signage
- 16 Spillway underpass
- 17 Wetland boardwalk
- 18 Existing pavilion
- 19 Existing restrooms
- 20 Food truck pad
- 21 Accessible floating dock
- 22 Wetland shore fishing



New Bridge and Fishing Features Over Restored Ocklawaha River



Amplifying the Economic Benefits



Dominic Calabro
President & CEO
Florida TaxWatch



Economic Briefing, February 2022

A River (No longer) Runs Through It: Ocklawaha River Restoration



"Tax Watch's analysis largely supports environmentalists' claims that breaching the dam would bring significant improvement for Florida's water, wildlife and ecotourism, and also underscores economic gains from dam removal."

Dominic Calabro, TaxWatch

Key Benefits from the 2017 UF Economic Study



Rodman Reservoir/Impounded Ocklawaha River Impact: \$6.6 million to local economy and provides income of \$4.2 million and 155 jobs.

Natural Ocklawaha River Impact: \$9.7 million to local economy and provides income of \$6.1 million and 201 jobs.

Declined use of the reservoir: Gone down by an average of more than 3000 visitor parties a year from 2010 to 2017. Recent data shows a 19.2% decrease in Rodman Reservoir use from 2017-2018 to 2022-2023.

Key Benefits from 2019 Economic Assessment

Ocklawaha River Green and Gold Report
Investing in North Florida Waters



A Stimulus-Ready Project
Three Rivers, 50+ Springs, One Solution

Report from Alan Hodges, PhD
Retired Faculty Economist Emeritus, UF IFAS

Manatee viewing economic impact from
Dr. Stephen Holland, Retired UF Tourism Faculty

Diversification of outdoor recreational offerings and improvements in the condition of the river will **increase annual regional visitation by an estimated 28%.***

Uncovering the 20 “drowned” springs of the Ocklawaha River will expand **manatee viewing** and attract additional visitors --- **annual economic impact is estimated at 30,000 visitors and \$3 million in new revenue.**

Estimated **return on investment (ROI) is projected to be 7.6% or \$1.76 return on each \$1 invested.**

Cumulative net benefit over 10 years --- \$47.2 million.

Note: ROI would increase with added recreation infrastructure. Does not factor in projected increase in revenues with Silver Springs as manatee viewing center.

* Based on FDEP partial restoration project costs in 2018 Greenway Plan.

Economic Risk from Flood Risk Assessment

Property data from FDEP.
Economic risk value assessment
by Michael Spontak. Putnam
County Property Appraiser data.
Peer reviewed by Dr. Alan
Hodges.

Restoring the natural flow of the Ocklawaha River will **eliminate more than \$57 million in economic risk to 539 properties** that would be inundated with a dam failure, misoperation or terrorism event.



Potential Economic Opportunities



Silver Springs Manatee Viewing Area

- 1. Private sector projects – Bass Pro, Others**
- 2. Redeveloped Buckman and Rodman Recreation Areas for added economic benefits**
- 3. Ramp extensions and shore fishing areas to protect fishing access**
- 4. Community projects from Green Cove to Palatka to Welaka to Silver Springs**
- 5. Economic projects like old Shands Bridge, Putnam Barge Port, and Silver Springs**

Work to be Done

- **Update restoration project costs**
- **Provide leaders accurate and updated science and economics**
- **Expand local engagement – particularly recreation users and businesses**
- **Create a shared vision for recreational priorities along the Great Florida Riverway**
- **Identify acquisition opportunities to enhance corridor and insure a successful transition for landowners**

Thank You for Your Time

