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Wildflowers to be conserved at county roadsides

Volusia leaders backed a resolution to preserve the native blooms

By Ludmilla Lelis, Orlando Sentinel

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VOLUSIA COUNTY – Native wildflowers should be preserved as they bloom along county roads, Volusia County officials recently agreed.

The County Council passed a resolution Thursday agreeing that the wildflowers are environmentally significant and that county road maintenance programs should allow the blooms to flourish and set seed before being mowed.

A change in the road management program could not only make the roads more scenic, but would also save costs with less mowing, said Lisa Roberts, executive director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation, based in Maitland.

Volusia roads are already prolific with the native blooms, especially along the 260-mile River to the Sea Loop, a driving and cycling trail established in 2008. Volusia's county seat, DeLand, also hosts the state's largest wildflower festival, which attracted an estimated 9,000 attendees in March.

"Volusia County's commitment to our natural environment continues with the adoption of this Wildflower Resolution," said councilwoman Pat Northey. "Not only are we beautifying our county, but we are saving taxpayer dollars in this difficult economy. Preserving wildflowers along our roadways just makes sense!"

Volusia is the first Central Florida county to support the resolution, which has been accepted by Leon, Wakulla and Gadsden counties in Florida's Panhandle.

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