

## **CERP Master Recreation Plan Public Outreach Plan**

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Marathon Government Center, 2798 Overseas Highway  
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### **Summary of Public Input:**

#### **Existing Recreation Conditions:**

- There is a need for maintenance on the few public boat ramps available throughout the Keys.
- There is a lack of safe areas for bank fishing. Existing bank fishing areas do not have adequate restroom, lighting, or trash disposal facilities. People are currently fishing in dangerous areas such as under bridges and the edge of roads.
- There is a lack of public boat ramps in the Lower Keys compared to those in the Upper Keys.

#### **Future Recreation Needs:**

- There is an immediate need for illumination at night fishing locations as well as improved trash disposal and increased maintenance of these facilities.
- There is a need for more public ramps and improved access to the water.
- The development of county or state run sites for RV parking and tent camping in the future is needed as in other states and cities such as Montana and San Francisco which must be managed properly.
- There is a lack of recreation areas dedicated to paddle sports. Improved access and designation for kayaking trails and improved access to the water for canoes and kayaks is needed. This is currently being addressed in Islamorada by the Parks and Recreation Committee but needs to be addressed throughout the Keys.
- There is a need for a bird sanctuary with a walkway into the bay so people/photographers can have better access to the wildlife and improved photo opportunities.
- There is a widespread need in the future for increased public restroom facilities. Local businesses constantly have to accommodate the public in this regard.
- There needs to be an increase in the number of channel markers as well as improved maintenance on existing markers. This will encourage people to stay off of the flats and boat within authorized and maintained channels.

#### **Emerging Recreation Issues:**

- A number of boat ramps have moved to a county managed system where users pay for daily use, particularly in the Ft. Myers area. This as a reasonable resolution to the issue of degrading public ramp facilities throughout the Keys.
- A lack of barriers along the roads throughout the Keys results in widespread overwash and debris built up after storms. This occurrence results in restricted access after storms and requires bulldozers to clear debris.

- Illegal swimming and camping off of the highway at Indian Key and boat traffic coupled with a lack of facilities in the area makes these activities unsafe and unsanitary.
- The roads in the area need to be fixed. The lack of a turning lane on US 1 has caused an increase in accidents and makes it more difficult to evacuate the area.

#### **Future Recreation Trends:**

- The current trend of closing or restricting access to areas while not opening or providing access to new recreation areas.
- The decreasing trend in RV and tent camping in the Keys is attributed to the increase in commercial acquisition and development of those areas traditionally used for these types of recreation activities, resulting in fewer visitors to the area.

#### **Other/General Comments:**

- Information and correspondence provided to the SFWMD and the Corps; in the past needs to be addressed.
- The memorial park is being developed in Islamorada for tourism. It was intended to be a non-invasive park with statues and fishing information in addition to native plants but there are no plans to install restroom facilities. It was noted that the plan was a positive development and could be used as a model for the rest of the Keys.
- The level and quality of tourist mapping for weekend users of the area is poor. It was noted that most people are not aware of areas that are restricted for jet skis and recreational watercraft. The no-wake zone in Islamorada is not posted and obeyed unless users happen to see the small buoys.