

CERP Master Recreation Plan Public Outreach Plan
18 September 2006
SFWMD Lower West Coast Service Center
2301 McGregor Blvd
Ft. Myers, FL 33901

Summary of Public Input:

Existing Recreation Conditions:

- There are currently no canoe/kayak portage access points between blueways for canoes and kayaks.
- C-43 is an area of great water recreational potential.
- Florida is #1 in the nation in fishing. It needs more promotion to keep it #1.
- Nature Study map shows low suitability for Fishing Creek. It should be higher. This also applies to Lake Park.
- The boat ramp at South Bay lacks security. The public would pay to use the facility if that would help the security issue.
- There is still a lot of debris from the hurricanes in the canals. This needs to be removed.
- Boat launches need to be maintained. Currently, most are in a state of disrepair.
- Due to the closure of Picayune Strand, ATVs now drive and trailers their ATVs up to Ocala National Park for a place to ride legally.
- Passive Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use involves using ORVs to facilitate activities such as; family trail riding for nature study, picnicking, camping and hunting.
- Active ORV use involves using ORVs for 'extreme' riding.

Future Recreation Needs:

- There needs to be oasis-type stops along trails. These oasis points could include shade, picnic tables, restrooms, and water. The stopping areas should be considered for both greenways and blueways.
- There needs to be good maps showing the trails and details regarding the trails such as the rest stops and distance markers. It would be nice if these maps were available online.
- There needs to be interconnectivity between blueways.
- Please re-evaluate the use of the Picayune Strand/Golden Gate Estates area. The area needs to allow ATV use. By not allowing ATVs, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other recreational activities are difficult. Lots of money has been spent fighting the restrictions. This money could be better spent developing the various user needs within that project.
- An ATV park is needed. The riders need a place to ride or they will continue to ride in areas that they aren't permitted in. Croom Motorcycle Area should

be looked at when considering the ATV parks. The area is controlled and patrolled.

- Lake Hicpochee is a disaster. It needs to be cleaned up.
- More access to the established trail areas is needed.
- Do not fill in canals.
- There should be camping sites along the trails. These sites can be primitive with access to water, picnic tables, and restrooms.
- Build areas with wildlife in mind; for example, slope shoulders on canals, weirs not backfill. Areas that have been disturbed can be some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities. Keep that in mind with the designs of those areas.
- Areas with boat ramps need to also include mooring and docking facilities. It is dangerous and not environmentally friendly to pull boats on shorelines.
- When possible, boat ramp areas need to have fueling facilities and additional amenities.
- There needs to be a bird watching trail. Texas has a good one, follow that example.
- Education concerning Florida, the Everglades, and the outdoors is needed.
- The Corps needs to contact other agencies such as local and county governments regarding their recreation plans so they complement each other.
- Bank fishing needs to be increased in areas where there is little or no boat use.
- Need designated areas for kids. This will keep them safe.
- Need more areas for older people and/or people with disabilities.
- No-wake zones should be clearly defined and marked.
- There needs to be designated waverunner/jet ski areas.
- There needs to be a bigger Fish and Wildlife presence, and laws need to be enforced.

Emerging Recreation Issues:

- A lot of money is being wasted fighting over 600 acres in regards to the Picayune Strand area and permitted uses. That area was looked at with too narrow of a view and too quickly. It is a large enough area to handle multiple uses.
- Traditional, historical, and cultural uses need to be considered when determining permitted uses within an area; for example, historical use of motorized recreation in the Picayune Strand area.
- If sheetflow is restored, wildlife will flourish.
- When considering an ATV park, noise levels and surrounding areas should be looked at. There needs to be rules established at those parks.
- There might be opportunities for an archeological park of some sort. There is a potential that many archeological sites in Florida have yet to be discovered. This type of park would offer educational and economic benefits to Florida.
- ATV/ORV use should be managed just like hunting.

Future Recreation Trends:

- The public is losing access to areas through privatization of surrounding lands.
- There needs to be reasonable access to areas for the average user.
- ATVs outsell small pickup trucks. There is a difference between active ATV riders and passive ATV riders.
- Multiuse trails should include hiking, horse, and passive ORV trails.
- Consider societal issues, there is a “softer” public. Facilities need to take this into consideration; for example, easier trails, more stops.
- Ecotourism is gaining in popularity but can get carried away.
- An ATV/ORV entrance fee to help with management costs is acceptable.