

CERP Master Recreation Plan – Public Outreach Plan Meeting

25 September 2006

Tanner Park Community Center, 105 East Palm Beach Rd.,
South Bay, Florida.

Summary of Public Input

Existing Recreation Conditions:

- There is concern over the fact that the recreation data used to produce the map reflects conditions prior to Hurricane Wilma. The storm heavily damaged a substantial portion of the recreation facilities in this area.
- There is an overall lack of recreation resources in the area.
- The opportunity for recreation in the area is not publicized well enough and does not reflect the needs of the entire community.
- There are a number of historic early twentieth century, Seminole war, and Pre-Columbian sites on the eastern shore of Lake Okeechobee which are relatively unknown and have potential to be developed into recreation areas.
- Birding, fishing, and bicycling are all very popular but need improvements and more variety.
- Camping and vacationing in RVs is also very popular.
- Many boat ramps in the South Bay area are in poor condition.
- There are three excellent locations along the eastern portion of Lake Okeechobee for fishing: Sand Cut, Canal Point, and Port Mayaca. They become very popular at certain times of the season.

Future Recreation Needs:

- Residents in this region need to have clear and concise maps developed which display the assortment of recreation activities in the area.
- The area around the lake at Canal Point should be considered highly suitable for nature study due to the unique micro-climate which exists in this region
- There is a need for improved infrastructure to be incorporated within recreation areas.
- The public would like to see efforts made to meet the needs of non-traditional recreation users who would like to see more opportunities for jet-ski use, paint balling, archery, ORV use, and firing ranges.
- The action taken by the CERP program should incorporate the Action Plans and Vision Plans already developed by the communities in this area so that linkages and partnerships can be better promoted.
- Swimming and beach-going activities need to be brought back to the eastern shore of Lake Okeechobee. Residents of the area sometimes charter buses to the Atlantic beaches. Many would rather save the expense of bus rental to be able to go to a local freshwater beach.
- CERP projects need to consider, plan for, and allocate acreage for recreation needs such as on-site parking for boat trailers and cars.
- There is a need for improved signage pertaining to recreation resources.

- There is a need for comprehensive recreation centers near urban areas.

Recreation Issues

- Improvements need to be made to the resources available for ORV and ATV activities.
- Access to Lake Okeechobee is very limited and needs to be improved. The ramps that are available to the public are in poor condition and present risks to the people currently using them.
- Population is increasing in the Palm Beach area and will soon start to stretch the ability of the current recreation resources to support the required needs in this area.
- There is a lack of accessibility for the elderly and disabled for recreation purposes in this area.
- There is already a lack of money to maintain existing facilities. The public is worried that there will be no money in the future to maintain any new facilities that are provided through the CERP program.
- There are areas along Lake Okeechobee that are composed of large rip-rap, making those areas unfavorable for fishing or beach-going.
- The LOST Trail is considered to be an excellent recreation resource in the region, but many people do not know about it.

Recreation Trends:

- The use of vehicles such as golf carts and ATVs is becoming more common.
- People are becoming more and more active on Lake Okeechobee. This increase in activity will continue as development increases.
- People in this area are becoming increasingly interested in education programs associated with recreation facilities.
- Lake Okeechobee should be celebrated and further utilized for recreation – it is the 2nd-largest freshwater lake in the nation, yet it is not as well-known as it could be from a regional and national perspective.
- Consider grouping several compatible recreational activities together in concentrated locations.
- “Non-traditional” activities such as paintball or archery should be considered for new recreation areas.

General/Other:

- The acronyms used on the maps and in the meetings need to be better explained to the public.
- There was concern over the geographic flexibility of the CERP MRP and how these recreation facilities would be incorporated into each CERP project. The public felt there was a need for more explanation of this in the presentation.
- It is felt that the SCORP needs analysis is very accurate and as a result should be more heavily weighted in the model.