

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

26 September 2006

Everglades REC Conference Center, 3200 East Palm Beach Rd.,  
Belle Glade, Florida.

### **Summary of Public Input**

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

- The only existing historic sites worth keeping for recreation purposes are a few old buildings and the historic lock structures.
- There are huge opportunities for multi-use trails on the north end of Lake Okeechobee and in the Belle Glade area which are currently being underutilized.
- There is very limited access to the lake for fishing.
- Bank fishing is best where water flows like near structures and pump stations.
- There are active and passive ORV users – active use vehicle itself for entertainment, passive use vehicle as transportation for hunting, fishing, nature study, etc.

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

- More ORV and ATV recreation activities need to be made available.
- Recreation activities for those individuals interested in primitive experiences and wilderness survival need to be increased.
- The number of isolated canal segments dedicated and managed for bank fishing opportunities needs to be increased.
- More dedicated hunting areas need to be established in the region.
- Better access for boaters and bank fisherman to Lake Okeechobee. There needs to be a greater dispersion or more equal distribution of access points around the lake.
- Don't fill in the canals, use weirs to produce sheet flow, take down levees and make tree islands out of the fill material
- Provide littoral shelves for reservoirs and STAs for fish habitat and bank fishing.

#### **Recreation Issues**

- Rip-rap areas – prevalent in places around Lake Okeechobee – are unusable for bank fishing.
- Hunting areas are currently not isolated enough from agricultural lands.
- Nature study and sightseeing are becoming extremely dependent on population centers and development.
- There is very little tourist infrastructure/facilities on the south side of Lake Okeechobee.
- Tent camping needs to be in isolated controlled areas so it does not interfere with private landowners or other recreation activities.
- There is a need for true “restoration” instead of large-scale water management. This means restoring an area back to its natural state for a more diverse variety of recreation users to enjoy.

- The master plan will influence future zoning issues. The question was raised as to how this would influence the incorporation of recreation into the projects.

### **Recreation Trends:**

- Current trends in this area indicate that nature study and sightseeing activities may not be worthwhile expenditures.
- Fishing and access to Lake Okeechobee are increasing in popularity as populations on the coast become more aware of the opportunities available in this region.
- People are getting busier, and recreation in the future may be limited to short one day excursions with amenities available

### **General/Other:**

- A representative from the Everglades Coordinating Council questioned the use of the recreation term “boat ramps.” She felt that this term did not adequately explain what type of recreation it represented and would like to see the term “Boating” used instead.
- The money spent on recreation in this area needs to be consolidated within a narrow scope of recreation types so that the greatest value can be obtained from the budget.
- It is unclear whether the CERP plan includes the acquisition of new lands or the use of existing property.
- Recreation and wildlife have been adversely affected by water management practices in the past. The Corps needs to give careful consideration to wildlife preservation and current recreation practices prior to conducting a CERP project in the area.
- Off Highway Vehicles (ORV) need their own suitability map for the CERP MRP.