

CERP Master Recreation Plan – Public Outreach Plan Meeting

27 September 2006

Wolf High Technology Center – Indian River Community College

2400 SE Salerno Rd., Stuart,

Summary of Public Input

Existing Recreation Conditions:

- Bird watching and wildlife are on a decline due to a loss of habitat and encroachment by developers.
- Freshwater fishing is popular despite the lack of opportunities due to poor water quality and lack of a large lake system.
- Some of the best mountain biking in the region is located near 10-Mile Creek, between the Florida Turnpike and I-95. It is not a large area, and is located within the urban context.

Future Recreation Needs:

- There needs to be an increase in boat ramps, parking lots, and restrooms at the new retention areas.
- More pier fishing opportunities need to be made available rather than bank fishing areas.
- There is a need for more wildlife and bird sanctuaries. There needs to be more access into these types of areas.
- New and existing recreation facilities need more trash and recycling facilities.
- There is a need for more beach-related recreation.
- There is a need for increased freshwater fishing resources. There are not many freshwater fishing opportunities in Martin County.
- Future recreation development needs to incorporate connectivity of recreation areas by use of greenways and rail-to-trail plans.
- Public survey in Martin County indicated a need for increased number of trails as well as better connectivity between wildlife corridors and public lands.
- The equestrian community needs more access to lands for recreation purposes.
- There is a need for more lands available for ATV, ORV and airboat users.
- There may be an opportunity to acquire some land between Jonathan Dickinson State Park and Pal-Mar Natural Area for linkage reasons.
- There needs to be a Lake Okeechobee to Ocean trail.
- Natural areas and passive public access to them need to be increased.
- Statewide connectivity of greenways and blueways needed.

Recreation Issues

- The public feels that RV camping is incompatible with nature preservation and any development of infrastructure should be kept away from the river and preservation areas.

- Water quality is of great importance to the communities in this region.
- Bird watchers in the area would like to see less development and a focus on water quality to improve habitat for birds. There is already enough recreation infrastructure in place and no need for future development in this area.
- There are a lot more cultural resources on CERP lands than identified in the maps. Review of historic aerial photographs will provide evidence of this.
- The CERP MRP needs to have plans in place to protect recreation from future development.

Recreation Trends:

- The public is becoming increasingly interested in education programs and involvement in the recreation lands available to them. They would like to see more of a resource stewardship approach towards development of future recreation and CERP project partnerships.
- Future trends point to a shortage of recreation lands. The population in the St. Lucie area is huge and expanding rapidly westward. It will be a challenge to keep up with the recreation needs of this expanding population. As much land as possible needs to be set aside for recreation purposes.
- Equestrian use requests are expected to increase in the future. Look into good science about horse manure concerns.

General/Other:

- Because the suitability was not determined by field reconnaissance the maps may be misleading. The agencies that created the original data did not ground truth it so there is inherent error in the system.
- The acronyms on the maps are not common knowledge and need to be explained in a legend or throughout the presentation.
- Water quality should be the number one priority in the CERP plan. Recreation should be a secondary or even tertiary issue.
- There needs to be a balance of future recreation development between passive and active users. Keep the pristine areas for the passive users and allow the active users to utilize the areas of lower natural quality. Separate motorized and non-motorized users.
- Planners need to find updated bird rookery information. Rookery locations are constantly changing.