

## CHAPTER 7 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

### 7.1. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Guidance.

Environmental factors play a primary role in determining the activities suitable for each public use area, the location for those activities and the extent of development. Recreation facilities must be designed, constructed and operated in full compliance with PL-91-190, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and with other federal statutes and guidelines for environmental protection. Implicit in this policy are four objectives:

- 1) To preserve unique and important ecological, aesthetic and cultural values of our national heritage;
- 2) To conserve and use wisely our nation’s natural resources;
- 3) To restore, maintain and enhance the human and natural environment in terms of productivity, variety, spaciousness, beauty and other measures of quality;
- 4) To create new opportunities for the public to use and enjoy their environment.

#### 7.1.1. Corps of Engineers Operational Management Plan.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineering Pamphlet 1130-2-550, 15 November 1996, provides guidance on preparing an Operational Management Plan (OMP). The EP establishes guidance for the administration and management of USACE recreation programs and facilities at civil works water resources projects. Programs and activities related to outdoor recreation have a design base of the following: a) Mission Statement;

7.1.1.1. Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Management Mission. “The Army Corps of Engineers is the steward of the lands and waters at Corps water resources projects. Its Natural Resource Management Mission is to manage and conserve those natural resources, consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of the present and future generations.

In all aspects of natural and cultural resources management, the Corps promotes awareness of environmental values and adheres to sound environmental stewardship, protection, compliance and restoration practices.

The Corps manages for long-term public access to, and use of, natural resources in cooperation with other federal, state and local agencies as well as private sector.

7.1.1.2. Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Management Program Objectives. The Corps integrates the management of diverse natural resource components such as fish, wildlife, forests, wetlands, grasslands, soil, air, and water with the provision of public

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recreation opportunities. The Corps conserves natural resources and provides public recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of American life.”

### Program Objectives:

- (a) To provide a quality outdoor recreation experience which includes an accessible, safe and healthful environment for a diverse population,
- (b) To increase the level of self sufficiency for the Corps recreation program,
- (c) To provide outdoor recreation opportunities on Corps of Engineers administered land and water on a sustainable basis, and
- (d) To optimize the use of leveraged resources to maintain and provide quality public experiences at the Corps water resources projects.

Natural resources management is based on total ecosystem approach to management of natural resources. When determining management objectives, the basic outline below should be used.

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- A. Long Term Objectives of Resource Management
  - B. Ecosystem/Ecotone Description
    - (1) Topography (slope, aspect, general soil type, etc.)
    - (2) Aquatic Resources (type, temperature, turbidity, etc.)
    - (3) Vegetation (species, size, density, etc.)
    - (4) Fish and Wildlife (species)
    - (5) Special Considerations or Problems (protected or rare/unique habitat, rare and endangered species, national emphasis programs (e.g., watchable wildlife North American Waterfowl Management Program, and Neotropical Migratory Birds, etc), pollution, forest fire control)
  - C. Management Objectives (for each ecosystem/ecotone)
  - D. Implementation Plan (for each ecosystem/ecotone)
    - (1) Management Techniques (to meet objectives)
    - (2) Five-Year Schedule (of management techniques to be applied)
    - (3) Annual Staffing and Equipment Needs
    - (4) Annual Costs
    - (5) Coordination (with other elements/agencies/the public)
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7.1.1.3. Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Management Resource Objectives. Resource objectives are developed to guide future design, development and management of the resource base, natural and manmade, to obtain the greatest possible benefit through meeting the needs of the public and protecting and enhancing environmental quality. Resource objectives shall, at a minimum, consider authorized project purposes, applicable federal laws and directives, regional needs, resource capabilities and expressed public desires.

7.1.1.4. Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Park Management. Park Management will be composed of descriptions, management objectives and implementation plans for at least the following outlined items below.

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- A. Safety (employee, contractor and visitor)
  - B. Security
  - C. Visitor Assistance
  - D. Shoreline Management
  - E. Private Exclusive (existing approved regional plan may be inserted as is)
  - F. Outgrants (availability of lands, compliance inspections, etc.)
  - G. Maintenance
  - H. Recreation Use Fee Program
  - I. Interpretation
  - J. Cultural Resources
  - K. Project Sign Management Plan
  - L. Special Programs
  - M. Cooperation (with other agencies and/or special interest groups)
  - N. Five-Year Program (for park management)
  - O. Priority List (of annual programs with staffing and funding requirements)
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7.1.1.5. Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Analysis. Project resource analysis shall provide a review of natural resource data to determine the suitability of project lands and waters for significant natural resource related management activities. Inventories for development of MPs, through land satellite images or other means, should identify broad categories of natural features. The features will be further defined in the OMP process. The inventories may include forest or vegetative covers, rangelands, water, environmentally sensitive areas or species and cultural, historic or archeological conditions. Only a summary of resource suitability for potential uses will be presented. Care should be taken not to violate public disclosure restrictions on archeological resources. The analysis shall provide sufficient detail to serve as the basis for subsequent land classification decisions and the development of resource objectives consistent with resource capabilities. The use of automated geographic information systems is encouraged to perform resource analysis and mapping tasks as a method of increasing efficiency and reducing long term costs.

7.1.1.6. Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Recreation Program Analysis. The recreation program analysis evaluation of recreation on project land should consist of both an analysis of recreation use and an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness in which recreation opportunities are or will be provided. It is important that this analysis include both consumptive and non-consumptive use of the resources. The delineation of market area and the projection of future recreation use and facility requirements shall be based on an evaluation of historic and current use at existing projects. Areas of consideration to meet this objective may include consolidating small recreation areas, carrying capacity analysis of project lands and waters, and new technologies.

7.1.2. Resource Management Component – SCORP 2000 Draft.

Park resource management planning is highly individualized, even between parks in the

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same locality. As in land use planning, the development of resource management plans involves applying system-wide policies to unique, resource-specific situations.

Resource management planning begins with a thorough and detailed inventory of the park's natural and cultural resources, and an appraisal of their quality and condition. The purpose of this step is to identify resource management problems and needs. Subsequently, specific management objectives and management measures for both natural and cultural resources are established, aimed at correcting identified deficiencies and sustaining the park's resource base in perpetuity. At this stage, important decisions are made on such issues as ecological burning, exotic plant and animal removal, mitigation of environmental intrusions, protection measures for listed plants and animals and the long-term restoration of natural conditions.

### 7.1.3. SFWMD Responsibilities, Limitations, and Constraints.

7.1.3.1. SFWMD Policy. By way of policy and statute the District is responsible for providing compatible public access to District lands. The following laws listed below provide the District the opportunity to commit resources towards public access and encourage the public to learn about and enjoy public lands. The agency encourages and promotes public use of District lands for appropriate resource-based activities. In accordance with the District's Public Recreational Access and Use Policy, it is the intention of the District to open District lands to public recreational access and use activities as is practicable and in a manner consistent with legislative directives, intended uses, legal considerations, and resources. Public recreational access and use is consistent with the District's land ownership rights and environmental laws. All access to and use of District lands is governed by rules and policies of the District and/or other units of government in partnership with the District, and the general laws of the State of Florida.

7.1.3.2. SFWMD Mission. The District's mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. These primary mission obligations and the resources of the District to meet these obligations take precedence over the secondary responsibilities of providing public use amenities and facilities. Resource protection and law enforcement of District lands and the associated public use are accomplished by coordination and contractual services through state and local law enforcement agencies.

- *Section 373.1391(1)(a), Florida Statutes*, states that lands titled to the water management districts shall be managed and maintained to the extent practicable to ensure a balance between public access, general public recreational purposes, and restoration and protection of their natural state and condition.
- *Section 373.1391(1)(b), Florida Statutes*, states whenever practicable, such lands shall be open to the general public for recreational uses. General public recreational purposes shall include, but not be limited to, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, swimming, camping, hiking, canoeing, boating, diving, birding, sailing, jogging, and other related

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outdoor activities to the maximum extent possible considering the environmental sensitivity and suitability of those lands.

These public lands shall be evaluated for their resource value for the purpose of establishing which parcels, in whole or in part, annually or seasonally, would be conducive to general public recreational purposes. Such findings shall be included in management plans which are developed for such public lands. These lands shall be made available to the public for these purposes, unless the district governing board can demonstrate that such activities would be incompatible with the purposes for which these lands were acquired.

•*Section 373.4592(4)(a), Florida Statutes.* Once the Stormwater Treatment Areas are completed, the district shall allow these areas to be used by the public for recreational purposes in the manner set forth in s. 373.1391(1), considering the suitability of these lands for such uses. These lands shall be made available for recreational use unless the district governing board can demonstrate that such uses are incompatible with the restoration goals of the Everglades Construction Project or the water quality and hydrological purposes of the Stormwater Treatment Areas or would otherwise adversely impact the implementation of the project.

•*Section 140-23 District Policies Code.* The Land Stewardship Program mission is to provide natural resource protection and management while allowing compatible multiple uses on designated public lands.

•*Section 140-25(4), District Policies Code.* Public Use and Environmental Education  
a. Public use of management areas that is consistent with other management goals shall be encouraged. Public use that may have detrimental impacts on sensitive environmental resources shall be restricted until an evaluation determines such use is compatible. A public use compatibility assessment will be included in the General Management Plan completed for each management area and will be based on the following criteria:

1. Consistency with the reason the lands were acquired.
2. Restrictions and/or prohibitions imposed by easements, leases, reservations, adjacent land ownership, conditions of the purchase agreement, and any other agreements concerning the property.
3. Infrastructure and support facility requirements, such as fences, maintenance, and other operational and budgetary impacts.
4. Opportunities for persons with disabilities.
5. Limitations resulting from endangered species, other sensitive natural resources, archaeological resources, or land management practices.
6. Public health, safety and welfare.

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### 7. Environmental education program opportunities.

- *Section 140-72 District Policies Code (Appendix A)*. This policy establishes a commitment to the responsible planning, management, and promotion of public recreational access and use on District lands. This policy shall provide guidance for the South Florida Water Management District in decisions related to public recreational access and use of District lands, including stormwater treatment areas and Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects.

#### 7.1.4. SFWMD Resource Management Plans.

Following natural area site acquisition a management plan is written to cover all pertinent areas including public use, capital improvements, resource management, threatened and endangered species, administration, and monitoring. Resource management plans also provide direction as to the types of recreation that can be allowed on a site without impacting or damaging the natural and cultural resources. The management plan is approved by the District Governing Board after it has been presented to a management review team to rate how well the property is being managed from several different perspectives. The plan is subsequently amended based on comments from team members. The recreation and public use component is rated on access, recreational opportunities, and interpretive facilities. Per the plan all public use is located to avoid sensitive areas of natural and cultural significance. Regular monitoring of public use is required to avoid intentional and unintentional impacts, and activities that may interfere with the site's primary project objectives.

#### 7.1.5. SFWMD Resource Protection and Law Enforcement.

Management of public activities on District lands requires a strong commitment to resource protection while simultaneously promoting all appropriate public uses. The District's law enforcement program emphasizes the enforcement of pertinent rules and regulations to protect natural resources, discourage vandalism of property, and also provide an enjoyable recreational opportunity. The resource protection program integrates law enforcement to protect the natural resources and District assets. As part of the District's enhanced enforcement agreement with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, law enforcement officers conduct regular patrols throughout the year, increasing their presence during hunting seasons and at other times when public use is high. As new water resource enhancement projects become developed and open to public use the need for law enforcement coordination associated with public use will increase.

7.1.5.1. SFWMD Law Enforcement. Law enforcement surveillance protects natural and cultural resources and deters illegal activity. Patrols are conducted with 4-wheel drive vehicles, airboats, swamp buggies, motorboats, all-terrain vehicles, and on foot. Law enforcement housing is permitted in certain areas to further deter illegal activities and provide an enforcement presence. The District's Land Stewardship Division law enforcement coordinator meets regularly with land managers to review reports and

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inspect District lands with officers to review structured patrols based on resource needs. In addition to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, local law enforcement agencies occasionally patrol the areas.

7.1.5.2. SFWMD Rule 40E-7. Chapter 40E-7, Part V (Appendix B) provides rules which govern public use of District lands. When lands are managed in agreement with another agency then the District's rules supplement the lead agency's rules.

•*Chapter 40E-7, Part V, Florida Administrative Code.* Chapter 40E-7, Part V, contains the District's rules governing public access and recreational use of South Florida Water Management District lands in ways that are compatible with the purpose for which the lands were acquired. The Rule establishes general rules for all District lands, as well as specific rules for those lands identified as conservation lands, rights of way, stormwater treatment areas, impoundments and vacant undesignated lands. Under the Rule, all District lands are deemed available for public use, except in instances where there is no legal public access, during emergency conditions, resource protection, certain management practices, construction, where lease restrictions prohibit public entry, or unless otherwise specified in Chapter 40E-7, Part V.

The Rule is generally reviewed and revised on a bi-annual basis; public meetings are conducted throughout the District to solicit comments and present proposed changes.

•*Section 140-25(1)(d) District Policies Code.* Public use shall not result in detrimental impacts to water resources. When a public use activity produces detrimental effects on water resources, it shall be discontinued until an evaluation determines that such use is compatible.

•*Section 140-25(3)(g) District Policies Code.* Resource protection shall be provided by professional law enforcement services through funded and unfunded contractual agreements, to safeguard the public and protect natural and cultural resources on District-managed natural areas.

•*Section 140-25 (4)(b) District Policies Code.* Public Use Regulation

1. Public use regulations are set forth in 40E-7, Part V, Florida Administrative Code, to implement Section 373.1391(1)(b), Florida Statutes.
2. Rules and regulations governing the public use of each management area shall be enforced by agencies with appropriate law enforcement jurisdiction.
3. Pursuant to Section 373.609, Florida Statutes, the District shall seek the cooperation of every state and county attorney, sheriff, police officer, and appropriate city and county official in the enforcement of the provisions set forth according to Rule 40E-7.511, Florida Administrative Code.
4. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission regulations shall govern hunting in areas opened for such use.

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### 7.1.6. SFWMD Volunteer Program.

The District supports, promotes, and facilitates the use of volunteers. As with strong partnerships, volunteer services are essential to providing a quality recreational experience on District lands. Much of the associated infrastructure of public use amenities, programmatic element requirements, and assistance needed to manage the recreational activities may depend heavily on the service contributions and dedication of individuals. The value associated with volunteer resources and donated annual work hours contribute significant cost savings to the agency. Furthermore, the volunteer program promotes public stewardship, a sense of ownership, and connection to public lands.

•*Section 373.1391(3), Florida Statutes*, encourages each District to use volunteers to provide land management and other services.

•*Section 140-25(5)(d)(1) District Policies Code*. Volunteers, interns and alternative work forces will be used when possible to supplement existing staff and services.

The administration and establishment of a quality volunteer program is greatly enhanced through partnerships. Partnerships with both the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed Trust (West Coast Region) and Florida Atlantic University Center for Environmental Studies (DuPuis and Kissimmee Region) provide volunteer coordination and training on District managed lands. Additionally, partnerships or collaboration with several non-government organizations has contributed significant volunteer services.

These organizations include the Florida Trail Association, Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association, DuPuis Horsemen's Association, Audubon, Florida Cracker Trail Association, Kissimmee River Valley Sportsman's Association, Osceola Airboat Club and other clubs and organizations. District lands which are managed by other State (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Department of Environmental Protection) and local agencies have volunteer programs which are in most cases managed by their respective Parks & Recreation Departments.

### 7.1.7. SFWMD Summary of Volunteer Plan Objectives.

- Increase the diversity of volunteers through partnership programs and grants with local schools.
- Continue to sponsor special volunteer event opportunities on District lands which provide links to the local community.
- Sustain volunteer relationships through recognition and rewards.
- Attend and present at user group organizations to build volunteer participation.
- Continue to seek agreements and collaboration with groups and clubs to provide volunteer services for recreation.
- Provide resources (training, volunteer forms required) and equipment to support the volunteer programs.