

Water Resources Advisory Commission

November 2 , 2006

Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and Kissimmee River Public Access and Recreational Uses



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ISSUES

- **Management of uses on Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and Kissimmee River**
- **Primary Request – More Airboat Access to District Lands**
- **Discussed at last 3 WRAC Recreation Issue Workshops and Kissimmee River Outreach Meetings**

Map will be provided at the meeting

Policy

Legislative Mandate

- Restore to natural state
- Manage in an environmentally sensitive way
- Maximum access and use consistent with resource

Sec. 373.1391, Florida Statute

District Policies & Procedures

- **Adopts Legislative Mandate**
- **Public access and use cannot compromise purpose of land acquisition**
- **Prevent / Reduce user conflicts**

Sections 140-23, 140-25 & 140-73

Land Management Plans

- Required by Policy
- Developed through Public Workshops
- Reviewed by Management Review Team
- KCOL
- KR Plan Pool C and D

Pool A -- 2006

Rule-making authority

Open Process – Public Workshops and Governing Board Hearings

- Initial Public Use Rule – 1994
- Eight Updates
- Most recent update – July 12, 2006

Sections 373.016(a) & (g); 373.1391(1), (2) & (6), Florida Statute

Rule Challenge

Administrative hearing on boating access to Reedy Creek; October 13 - 14, 2003

Final Order issued December 19, 2003

1. The Lease for the Kissimmee Sovereign Submerged Lands authorizes the District to manage those lands to restore and protect their natural state and condition.
2. The Lease specifically authorizes the District to establish and enforce regulations pertaining to public use of the leased area, including the use of motorized vehicles and watercraft.
3. Sec. 373.59, F.S., as amended, provides the specific statutory authority to extend District Rules to lands covered by the Lease.

Airboat Discrimination Regulations

- Applies to local ordinances
- Overridden by super majority vote
- No definition of discrimination

Sec. 327.60(1), F.S. (effective July 1, 2006)

Sign Permits

- Program administered by FWC
- Require signs more than 50 yards from shore for safety/navigation
- FWC and District discussed applicability regarding KCOL and KR shore lines
- District will apply

Signage Adjustments

- Increased Ownerships
- Restoration Project Works
- Management Needs
- Law Enforcement Recommendation
- User Request

Future Actions – Kissimmee River

- Consider additional “ports” as requested
- Open newly acquired lands
- Revise use on new restoration areas
- Apply for sign permits

HISTORY

- ✓ Initiated purchase under Save Our Rivers for Kissimmee Restoration in 1985
- ✓ Acquired lease from DEP to manage sovereign submerged lands in 1996
- ✓ Initial rules for KCOL and KR in 1994
- ✓ Recommendation 1996, District Governing Board approved KCOL Management Advisory Committee
- ✓ District authorizes FWC to establish Public Use Area in Kissimmee River in 1999
- ✓ Initiated KR Restoration project – completed in 2000

Current Airboat Restrictions

Kissimme Chain of Lakes

- No hunting or airboating Generally not allowed above 52.5' m.s.l.
- Below 52.5' no restriction

Kissimmee River

- No airboat approx. within 200 yards of tree line
- Exceptions are launches and landing “ports”

Public Lands that prohibit Airboating

- Kissimmee Lakes & Kissimmee Prairie State Parks
- Three Lakes WMA (FWC)
- Avon Park Air Force Range (DOD)

Management Area maps to be supplied
at the meeting

Summary – KCOL

- Users program needs to be re-examined
- Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium contracted to conduct/facilitate review
- Interview stakeholders – Nov/Dec
- 3-5 stakeholders meetings – Jan-May
- Recommendation to WMD & FWC -- Jun

Summary – Kissimmee River

Existing Regulations meet 5 primary objectives:

- Resource protection
- Management of incompatible recreational uses
- Aides in enforcement of game laws and boating safety
- Management of private/public boundary issues
- Consistent with site specific constraints, i.e., fluctuating water levels

Thank You !

