

**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
RECREATION ISSUES WORKSHOP
MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
SFWMD, 3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 5:00-8:00 P.M.**

MEETING SUMMARY

This is a summary of the WRAC Recreation Issues Workshop held on Monday, June 15, 2009, at the SFWMD Headquarters in West Palm Beach, FL.

Welcome/Introductions – WRAC Recreation Issues Chair David Lithgow indicated all were invited to the table, and asked workshop participants to introduce themselves.

Agenda Items:

2. Overview of Recreation Issues Workshop
3. DuPuis Management Area Land Management Update
4. Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), Master Recreation Plan
5. Recreation Issues and Future Meeting Topics

Future Presentations:

- CERP Master Recreation Plan
- Status of River Ranch Land Exchange
- SFWMD and FWCC Rules re: Airboat Access to SFWMD Levees
- Fishery Habitat Design Features for Projects

Recommendations:

- Agreed to meet quarterly with meetings rotating to sites in the SFWMD.
- 30 minutes should be provided at each meeting for Member Issues.
- Include separate “tab” for Recreation Issues Workshop on WRAC website.
- Suggested changes to draft CERP Master Recreation Plan (summarized below) – will be discussed at next meeting (August 17, SFWMD, West Palm Beach).

Item 2: Overview of Recreation Issues Workshop – Rick Smith, WRAC Facilitator, SFWMD:

Discussion:

- Included first three bullets under “Recommendations”, above
- Recreation Issues Workshop is a valuable to recreation interests and the public.
- Provides a forum that does not otherwise exist; want to see it continue.
- Need to ensure time on the agenda for participants to speak.
- Member Issues part of agenda should be for discussion, not resolution or debate.

Item 3: DuPuis Management Area Land Management Update – Bert Trammell, Div. of Land Stewardship, SFWMD:

Discussion:

- Compliments to SFWMD for excellent improvements and management at DuPuis.

- Question about budget for controlled burning – SFWMD will provide answer.
- Question about recovery of land management funding through fees – SFWMD: there are no fees for use of DuPuis facilities.

Item 4: CERP Master Recreation Plan – Jerry Krenz, SFWMD; Paul Stevenson and Shauna Allen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):

Discussion:

- Recognition of “Gladesmen’s Culture”: impact of providing recreational opportunities and access where it has been lost due to implementation of CERP projects.
- The MRP should recommend recovery of lost recreation opportunities
- Concern about loss of air boating opportunities in Big Cypress National Preserve.
- USACE: Chapters 9-10, MRP address three important issues:
 - Ethnographic Report on Gladesmen’s Culture is enriching the MRP. Section 106 consultation with Gladesmen’s Culture is required.
 - MRP identifies opportunities for recreation to be included in CERP project plans. It provides guidance to the Project Delivery Teams.
 - MRP Guidance Memorandum intended to be agency technical guidance document.
- **Chapter 1:** Master Recreation Plan is part of CERP and includes 14,000 square miles in the CERP planning boundaries. Does not include Kissimmee basin – CERP projects not planned for that basin. Identifies recreational facilities compatible with CERP projects.
 - No suggested changes.
- **Chapter 2-3:** Existing and Future Conditions (drawn from Central and Southern Florida Project (C&SF) Restudy, 1999; and State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
 - Compatibility/suitability: Hunting should be shown as “high” in designated Wildlife Management Areas.
 - Kissimmee area shown on maps but not in discussion.
 - Need to err on side of recreation and public access because of possible future downgrading and loss of opportunities.
 - Need to clearly show in document that existing conditions shown in Chapter 2 are modified in Chapter 8.
- **Chapter 4:** Restates recreation concepts from the C&SF Restudy “Yellow Book”.
 - Chair: pg. 21: In the event L-67 levees are not degraded, may go to other options.
 - Concern that “Yellow Book” did not identify all opportunities – need process to add opportunities in future.
- USACE: Developed process to modify recreation opportunities in the future. Using alternatives evaluation process and modeling to adapt different scenarios.
- SFWMD: Activities shown in Chapter 2 should be seen as “works in progress”. Will footnote as appropriate or change on final maps.

- **Chapter 5:** Overlays regions and builds in overestimation of recreation needs because more credit given to CERP regions vs. recreation need estimates in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
 - SCORP did not include anything about Gladesmen’s Culture, especially traditional uses such as swamp buggies and tracked vehicles. Question accuracy and completeness of earlier plans.
 - Study results shown emphasize other recreational opportunities but say nothing about air boating.
- SFWMD/USACE: Held 18 public meetings on this. The CERP Master Recreation Plan recognizes the Gladesmen’s Culture. Other complications arising from the SCORP (e.g. boat ramp issues) are addressed with letters to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- **Chapter 6:** Shows performance measures for each type of recreation proposed in the MRP. SFWMD has suggested more practical method. Proposed a “Recreation Report Card”. Allows evaluation of changes in recreation opportunities due to implementation of CERP projects.
 - Requires use by future Project Development Teams?
 - Report Card needs work.
 - Hunting should be shown as Big Game, Waterfowl and Small Game. Also add Frogging.
 - Need to have 4 categories for boating: Non-motorized, Motorized, Airboats and Personal Watercraft.
 - Existing Airboat trails should be added to trails section.
 - Don’t exclude types of users.
 - Camping is not shown but campgrounds are. Need Camping as category.
 - Need to add fishery habitat design features.
 - Might have double counting of trail miles if counting multiple use trails twice.
- **Chapter 7:** USACE guidance and regulations; SFWMD Public Access and Recreational Use Policy and Rule; and SFWMD Recreation Management Plan
 - No discussion or suggested changes.
- **Chapter 8:** Regional Conceptual Recreation Plans:
 - Page 3.8.9.5 does not list “fishing”.
 - Need to add “fishing” to page 3, section 8.5.
 - Need to clarify SFWMD Rule 40E-7 and FWCC Rules regarding launching vessels from levees. Define designated boat ramps in Rule 40E-7.
 - If considering and addressing need for boat ramps, also need to address fishery habitat improvements in project designs/plans.
 - North Palm Beach County CERP Plan not shown in document. Cypress Creek/Nine Gems Plans not included.

- SFWMD/USACE:
 - Fishing implied in “boating”. If fishing is to be permitted in impoundments/reservoirs, would be assumed if boat ramps are provided. But will clarify fishing in the document.
 - Northern Palm Beach County CERP is listed in Table 2 as Cypress Creek. But will check and clarify.

- **Chapter 9: USACE:** Special Programs: Ethnographic Study Report, Off-Road-Vehicle Policy Overview, CERP Guidance Memoranda. MRP is applicable to the CERP system. It therefore includes:
 - Ethnographic Study Report – intended to protect traditional uses and sites listed under the National Historic Preservation Act; requires assessment of CERP project impacts and ensures better understanding of historic sites and uses as projects are planned. Guidance to the Project Delivery Teams ensures this information will be used.
 - Off-Road and All-Terrain Vehicle policies/rules: Identifies rules and regulations, but not an exhaustive list (e.g. county ordinances, etc.).

- **Discussion:**
 - New draft due? USACE: When Jacksonville District Commander signs off – hopefully before Christmas, 2009.
 - Potential for moving forward with recreation plans if Project Implementation Reports are delayed? SFWMD: Can evaluate the lands to identify recreational opportunities and facilities.
 - STAs not listed for interim use. Florida National Scenic Trail to be located in part on the L-1 Levee. SFWMD: STAs not in CERP. Project to improve STA-5 will be completed in 2011 and pump station in 2012. Must be completed before trail can be relocated.

- **Chapter 10:** Conclusions: Need comments to Jerry Krenz, SFWMD by July 13. August 17 will respond to comments at WRAC Recreation Issues Workshop. August 21-October 5: Public Comment period.

Item 5: Recreation Issues and Future Meeting Topics:

Discussion:

- Thanked SFWMD for vehicle access to Kissimmee Public Use Area.
- Thanked SFWMD for small game hunting in C-23 and C-24 basins on interim lands (1,100 acres)
- Question about amount of use at STA-1 West and STA-1 East.
- As per SFWMD/Florida Trail Association agreement, SFWMD needs to notify FTA about trail section closures.
- Announced Allapattah equestrian trailhead dedication (May 20).
- 2-3 month delay in Request for Proposals for Lake Kissimmee Boat Ramp – need to clarify design and bid documents.

Next Meeting: Monday, August 17, 5:00-8:00 p.m., SFWMD, B-1 Auditorium