

Addendum 2—Advisory Group Members and Report

**Crystal River Preserve State Park
Advisory Group Members**

Local Government Representative

The Honorable Jim Farley, Mayor
City of Crystal River

The Honorable Ronald Kitchen, Chair
Citrus County
Board of County Commissioners

Agency Representatives

John Lakich, Park Manager
Division of Recreation and Parks
Crystal River Preserve State Park

Michael Edwards
Florida Forest Service

Chris Green
Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

Lt. Rama Shuster
Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
Law Enforcement

Joshua Goodwin, Archaeologist
Florida Department of State
Division of Historical Resources

Rick Vaughn
Southwest Florida
Water Management District

Tim Jones, Aquatic Preserve Manager
Florida Coastal Office
St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve

Joyce Kleen
United State Fish and Wildlife Service
Chassahowitzka
National Wildlife Refuge

**Environmental and Conservation
Group Representative**

Athena Philips
Florida Native Plant Society
Citrus County Chapter

Fred Hileman
Citrus County Audubon

Local Private Property Owners

David Smith
Local Resident

**Recreational User Group
Representatives**

Gary Rankel
Nature Coast Kayak Fishers

**Cultural and Historical Group
Representative**

Gary Ellis
Gulf Archaeological Research Institute

Carly Zervis
Citrus County Historical Society

Citizen Support Organization

Kathryn Askins, President
Friends of Crystal River

Crystal River Preserve State Park Advisory Group Summary Report

The advisory group meeting to review the proposed unit management plan (UMP) for Crystal River Preserve State Park was held at the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce on April 27, 2018 at 9:00 am.

Jim Farley, Ronald Kitchen, Michael Edwards, Rama Shuster, Joshua Goodwin, Fred Hileman, and Gary Rankel were not in attendance. Michael Edwards, Joshua Goodwin, and Gary Rankel provided written comments prior to the meeting, which are summarized below. All other appointed advisory group members were present, as well as Jaya Milam, Yvonne Smith, and Maxine Connor. Attending staff were Clif Maxwell, Brian Fugate, John Lakich, Rick Owen, Keith Morin, Diane Martin, and Tyler Maldonado.

Mr. Maldonado began the meeting by explaining the purpose of the advisory group and reviewing the meeting agenda. He provided a brief overview of the Division of Recreation and Parks' (DRP) planning process and summarized public comments received during the previous evening's public meeting. Mr. Maldonado then asked each member of the advisory group to express his or her comments on the plan.

During the two-week public comment period following the advisory group meeting, numerous comments were submitted to DRP from members of the public on the draft UMP for Crystal River Preserve State Park. The major themes of these comments are as follows:

- Several comments surrounded addressing the current and potential impacts of sea level rise on the park's natural and cultural resources. It was claimed that the UMP does not sufficiently outline any documented impacts to the park caused by sea level rise and does not discuss management objectives intended to mitigate future impacts. Those who provided these comments recommended improving the sea level rise section of the UMP.
- Most of the comments received referenced the proposed campground and boat ramp, and these comments were generally opposed to the concepts. Residents neighboring the park's current entrance were concerned about increased traffic along State Park Road and highlighted Mullet Hole as manatee habitat. Several members of the public stated they wished to see the park stay primitive in nature.

Summary of Advisory Group Comments

Carly Zervis (Citrus County Historical Society) stated her interest in cultural resources and recreational carrying capacity considerations. She did not provide comments on the UMP.

Gary Ellis (Gulf Archaeological Research Institute) has worked with the park on cultural resources research for over 20 years, and his work has helped DRP inventory the park's cultural sites. He stated that he plans on publishing a report on the impact of climate change and sea level rise on cultural resources. He commented that these phenomena are uncovering new cultural sites and causing changes in ecology that impact existing cultural sites. Given the park's coastal location and number of cultural sites, he concluded that this report could

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provide park staff with a set of best management practices (BMPs) for the protection of cultural resources. These BMPs could aid in the development of cultural resource protection plans and help direct funding for restoration. He stated he will continue to collaborate with DRP and will coordinate with staff to provide information on newly discovered cultural sites.

Rick Vaughn (Southwest Florida Water Management District) commented that the UMP seems to be adequate from a hydrological perspective. He noted the sheetflow restoration projects outlined in the UMP and pointed out there are not any scheduled stormwater projects, although he also recognized the difficulty with stormwater projects. As outlined in the introduction to the UMP, the DRP does not find stormwater management projects to be consistent with the management purposes of parks in the Florida State Park system. He offered assistance and collaboration with DRP on hydrological restoration projects, if needed.

Athena Philips (Florida Native Plant Society, Citrus County Chapter) recommended improving the sea level rise section of the UMP. She stated the current paragraph discussing sea level rise is inadequate and should include information on how management intends on dealing with the impact of sea level rise, given that the park is particularly vulnerable to impacts. She noticed an inconsistency between the UMP and the land management review (LMR) contained in Addendum 9. She pointed out the LMR stated the UMP should discuss non-native, invasive and problem species, "specifically prevention of animals", but there is no discussion of the prevention of invasive animal species in the UMP. She suggested including information on the current work being done to address invasive species, as well as expounding on the education and awareness-building campaigns needed to help prevent the spread of invasive species from neighboring communities. She concluded by advising DRP to include more information on its management philosophy regarding prescribed fire management and the history of prescribed burning at the park.

David Smith (Local Resident) described a situation in which the park property may be used for unauthorized primitive campsites. He stated these unauthorized campsites are contributing to trash found in the park and suggested patrolling these areas to discourage unauthorized use of the property. He asked about the park's efforts to address invasive plant species, such as Brazilian pepper, and programs to educate neighboring property owners on techniques to help prevent the spread of these species. He complimented the park and district staff on their prescribed fire efforts, stating he recognizes the increase in wildlife and benefits to natural communities.

Joyce Kleen (United States Fish and Wildlife Service) applauded the park staff on their invasive plant species work, citing the benefits to USFWS's property adjacent to the park. She inquired about no-pay hog removal contracts that were discussed in the UMP. She stated that the Department of Interior is considering opening its properties to hunting, which could potentially help control hog populations in the area. She responded to concerns voiced by Ms. Connor by stating that the airspace above the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge is considered Class I airspace, meaning any potential industrial development would have to comply with stringent

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Clean Air Act air quality standards. She shared similar concerns with Ms. Phillips, stating the sea level rise section should be improved to include any documented changes the park has experienced from sea level rise and potential future impacts to natural and cultural resources. She noted a few species found on the adjacent USFWS property that could presumably be added to the park's species list.

Chris Green (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) appreciated the opportunity to observe the meeting and seek areas of collaboration with the park, especially on efforts to address invasive plant and animal species.

Tim Jones (Florida Coastal Office) expressed his desire to maintain a close relationship between the park and the St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve. He commented on the productive seagrass beds in the Gulf and the park's contribution to a pristine ecosystem. He acknowledged the direct connection between the health of the park and the health of the aquatic preserve. He offered support with education and outreach programs.

Kathryn Askins (Friends of Crystal River) stated the citizen support organization's (CSO) function is to support the park with fundraising, programming, and volunteering. She reiterated the CSO's continued support for the park. She recognized volunteers as vital members of the park and called for an increase in volunteers. She mentioned programs, such as the boat tours, that highlight the significance of the park. She acknowledged the importance of community outreach programs and understands the need to enhance visitor services.

Summary of Public Comments

Jaya Milam (Florida Native Plant Society, Big Bend Chapter) advocated for protecting the beautiful coastline of the Nature Coast. She urged DRP to keep Florida native and consider impacts to natural communities.

Maxine Connor (League of Women Voters) expressed her concerns regarding the potential development of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility that is scheduled to be sited along Powerline Road adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the park. She cited public safety and health concerns associated with this type of facility and stated potential impacts to the park's resources and visitor experience. DRP will continue to monitor the progress of this potential facility.

Yvonne Smith (Local Resident) stated tourism and an increase in visitors to the park can be a double-edged sword when considering the potential impacts to natural communities. She expressed concern for the future of the park given the proposed changes in the UMP.

Summary of Advisory Group Written Comments

Michael Edwards (Florida Forest Service) recommended coordinating with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) when conducting prescribed burns. He referred DRP to the Waccasassa and Withlacoochee Wildlife Mitigation Specialists. He suggested conducting appropriate timber management treatments, as discussed in the UMP's timber management analysis. He advocated for keeping a GIS database of infested

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and treated invasive plant species areas and urged park staff to coordinate with local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA). He recommended having all park staff participate in Archaeological Resource Management (ARM) training, noting the management objective that states park staff will conduct annual monitoring efforts on the park's cultural resources. He encouraged the use of permeable and semi-permeable construction materials when developing new use areas and suggested converting facilities to local sewage systems to help protect water quality. He recommended obtaining a hydrological assessment for the property to help mitigate impacts of any future hydrological restoration projects.

Joshua Goodwin (Department of State, Division of Historical Resources) noted discrepancies in the number of recorded archaeological sites, with the UMP identifying 110 archaeological sites and the Florida Master Site File showing 111 archaeological sites and 3 resource groups. He recommended updating the plan to reflect recent and ongoing archaeological investigations that have been conducted by the University of South Florida. He stated certain sites that are listed as historic structures in the UMP should be classified as archaeological sites. He noted most of the sites in the Cultural Resources addendum have not been formally evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Officer and should be labeled as such. He suggested using the appropriate archaeological terminology when discussing cultural resource management objectives.

Gary Rankel (Nature Coast Kayak Fishers) commented on the prospect of the park becoming a premier paddling and kayak fishing destination. He stated that a first-class premier site would include an area where kayak anglers could gather, rest, and fish adjacent to a productive fishing area. He supported the UMP's goal of increasing recreational use at the park, but suggested that while the Mullet Hole area provides adequate kayak launching facilities, he would not consider this area to be a premier location for kayak anglers. He recommended surveying the Crystal River Preserve property for areas that could be developed or improved for kayak launching areas. He stated that informal roadside launches have been created, and these areas could potentially be improved.

Staff Recommendations

The staff recommends approval of the proposed management plans for Crystal River Preserve State Park as presented, with the following significant changes:

- The discussion of sea level rise and the impacts on park property will be improved.
- Discrepancies in the cultural resources section will be addressed and a discussion of current research will be added.
- The boat ramp proposal at the Mullet Hole will be removed from the UMP. Instead of proposing a boat ramp at the Mullet Hole area, the UMP will recommend improving the paddling launch and associated amenities in this area. Boat ramp locations in other areas of the park may be considered.

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Additional Recommendations:

- A new entrance area will be considered at the Ecowalk Trailhead to replace the State Park Road entrance in the future.
- Campground consideration at the Mullet Hole will be removed from the UMP, and potential campground locations will be explored in the area around the Ecowalk Trailhead. Campsite configuration will be up to two loops with central bathhouse facilities and an additional tent camping-only loop.

Notes on Composition of the Advisory Group

Florida Statutes Chapter 259.032 Paragraph 10(b) establishes a requirement that all state land management plans for properties greater than 160 acres will be reviewed by an advisory group:

“Individual management plans required by s. 253.034(5), for parcels over 160 acres, shall be developed with input from an advisory group. Members of this advisory group shall include, at a minimum, representatives of the lead land managing agency, co-managing entities, local private property owners, the appropriate soil and water conservation district, a local conservation organization, and a local elected official.”

Advisory groups that are composed in compliance with these requirements complete the review of State park management plans. Additional members may be appointed to the groups, such as a representative of the park’s Citizen Support Organization (if one exists), representatives of the recreational activities that exist in or are planned for the park, or representatives of any agency with an ownership interest in the property. Special issues or conditions that require a broader representation for adequate review of the management plan may require the appointment of additional members. The Division’s intent in making these appointments is to create a group that represents a balanced cross-section of the park’s stakeholders. Decisions on appointments are made on a case-by-case basis by Division of Recreation and Parks staff.