

## **Three Rivers State Park Advisory Group Meeting Report**

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The advisory group meeting to review the proposed unit management plan (UMP) for Three Rivers State Park was held at Three Rivers State Park, in the McMillan Pavilion on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 9:00 AM.

Eric Hill represented the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners. Johnny Sabo represented the Florida Forest Service. Budd Titlow represented the Apalachee Audubon Society. Angela Griffin represented the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Nathan Bunting represented Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Billy Hosey is an adjacent landowner. Christy Andreasen represented the Jackson County Tourist Development Council. B.E. Davis Jr (Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District), Melynda Howell (Sneads Elementary School), JR Moneyham (East Jackson County Economic Development Council) and Mike Wisenbaker (Division of Historic Resources) were not in attendance. All other appointed advisory group members were present. Rob Williams attended with Budd Titlow for the Apalachee Audubon Society. Connie Lea Butts, City Manager for the Town of Sneads joined as a member of the public.

Attending Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) staff members included Ronnie Hudson, Arthur Stiles, and Ashley Killough.

Miss Killough began the meeting by explaining the purpose of the advisory group and reviewing the meeting agenda. She provided a brief overview of the DRP's planning process. Miss Killough then asked each member of the advisory group to express his or her comments on the draft plan. After all comments were shared, Miss Killough described the next steps for drafting the plan and the meeting was adjourned.

### **Summary of Advisory Group Comments**

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**Budd Titlow** (Apalachee Audubon Society) had no comments regarding the plan.

**Rob Williams** (Apalachee Audubon Society) suggested adding the Broad Winged Skipper, a butterfly rarely found in Florida but has been found in the area and the park to the plant and animal species list. Overall, he found the plan to be satisfactory but had objections to the boiler plate language regarding multiple uses. He stated multiple uses are not appropriate to state parks but noted multiple uses were not proposed for this park. Mr. Williams expressed he will submit written comments regarding multiple uses. He also had some questions regarding erosion control and thought the plans regarding erosion control were good.

**Johnny Sabo** (Florida Forest Service) stated that he focused on the burn program and timber management. He expressed the burn program is great and understands why multiple uses are not appropriate for this park but would hate to see timber management completely excluded from the plan. He also noted a typo on pg. 49 which says Division of Forestry rather than Florida Forest Service.

**Eric Hill** (Jackson County Board of County Commissioners) discussed concerns regarding the optimum boundary map and how it will affect the master plan

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submitted by the county and city to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Mr. Hill found some of the language regarding the optimum boundary concerning. He expressed that the expanded boat ramp would be beneficial to locals as well as visitors because there is currently limited access to Lake Seminole. He also said many boaters have trouble docking their boats and adding a boat slough during the expansion would be helpful. Mr. Hill also asked about hydrilla on the lake and communicated that several people have complained about it being so thick it clogs motors and makes fishing difficult.

**Christy Andreasen** (Jackson County Tourist Development Council) noted concerns with the existing boat ramp and difficulties getting large groups onto the lake. She felt the expansion would be great for attracting more people to the area and to Lake Seminole. She supported the waterfront cabins, discussed they would be a big draw for visitors. Additionally, she discussed interpretive programs such as prioritizing programs regarding alligators and exotic plant control to educate visitors that may be unfamiliar with alligators or not understand how exotic species are affecting the environment.

**Angela Griffin** (U.S. Army Corp of Engineers) expressed interest in developing a 3-5 year plan for selective tree thinning which would also go through their planning department. Mrs. Griffin raised concerns regarding the cultural resources table. She expressed that although no locations are listed, some of the names provide approximate locations which may attract artifact hunters and looters. She proposed removing the names and only keeping the numbers to deter looters.

**Billy Hosey** (Landowner) stated he lives just outside the park and walks in the park every day. He noted that over the years the campground has become full more often and wondered if we would consider expanding the campground. He also inquired about development into the south area of the park.

**Nathan Bunting** (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) suggesting changing Sherman's fox squirrel to eastern fox squirrel as the Sherman's fox squirrel range typically ends at the Suwannee River. He also suggested removing the eastern chipmunk from the list because none of have been documented in Jackson County. He noted that the park and neighboring Apalachee Wildlife Management Area have the largest population of Spigelia in the state. Mr. Bunting found some of the burn plan to be too long. He said 1-3 or 2-3 year cycles would be better for the community types. He suggested thinning the upland pine and continue other restoration work. Lastly, he inquired whether the park was a FNAI reference site as the natural communities are in such good condition.

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**Summary of Written Comments**

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**Paulette McFadden** (Division of Historical Resources) commented on behalf of Mike Wisenbaker. Comments regard typos and management considerations. Full written comments are attached.

**Summary of Public Comments**

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**Connie Lea Butts** (Town of Sneads) expressed she is excited about proposals in the plan such as the cabins and expanding the boat ramp. She expressed concerns regarding the optimum boundary and if it would complicate renewing the lease with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. She also noted that the proposed master plan for the city and county would increase connectivity (a justification in the optimum boundary language).

**Staff Recommendations**

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- The DRP will review the optimum boundary and make modifications based on consultation with local governments.
- Language regarding timber management options will be adjusted in the plan.
- Adjustments to the proposed burn frequencies will be reviewed and modified.

Additional revisions were made throughout the document to address editorial corrections, consistency of spelling and notations, and other minor corrections.

**Notes on Composition of the Advisory Group**

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**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

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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.