

**Wekiva River Basin State Parks
Public Comment Forms and Emails**

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

COMMENT FORM

Rock Springs Run State Reserve

Work with FDOT/Wekiva Pkwy to consider SAFE access to and from the park from SR46. Currently,
it is sometimes very difficult to get out of the park with traffic.

Update map and on trail markers. Consider placing markers on the trail or marking map with the
cemetery, windmills, mounds, Lewis house, Harden Dairy, Ethel Town... Also, GPS coordinates at
locations may assist with locating lost/injured parties. This will also help with misinformation!

As an instance.... I have been visiting RSR for many years. I have been told the town of Ethel is in
4 different locations by different individuals :) I still have no clue as to where it actually was located.

Slight improvements to the existing equestrian campground for ease of use as it will be the hub.

West BMK parking area large enough to include horse trailers off Old McDonald Road.

Access to Neighborhood Lakes as well as working with Seminole State Forest, Wekiva Trails
and Lake County parks for additional connectivity!

Ongoing removal of hogs and invasive plants or animals. Post advanced notice of burns and hunts.

Work with historical entities and consider organized hikes/bikes/horse to showcase those sites.

Deep plowing of some trails makes it extremely difficult to traverse, consider alternatives.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

COMMENT FORM

Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park

Pavillion construction to compliment the existing campground and structures, not to remove any of the existing area.

Replace culverts to keep trails open. Bridge useable to add connectiviey to Hibiscus Trail as part is not passable at all times and so beautiful when they are in bloom.

Update map and on trail markers. Consider placing markers on trail or marking map with the windmills, camp, orange trees, hollow tree, potato patch, cypress culvert.... Also, GPS coordinates at some of the locations may assist with locating lost/injured parties.

Work with Seminole State Forest to offer the 4 miles of paddling trails on Black Water Creek on the Lake County Side of the Wekiva River.

Consider how to access to Jung Tract from Fechtel. Access to Skinner Tract for recreation with only trailhead parking, no facilities.

Ongoing removal of hogs and other invasive plants or animals.

Connectivity is a must! A way to get to and from other recreational areas for those who like to do extended travels within our natural lands.

(This section contains 12 horizontal lines for additional comments.)

**Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks**

COMMENT FORM

Wekiwa Springs State Park

Please consider the following comment addressing the timing of prescribed burns in the Wekiva River Basin State Parks Unit Management Plan with regards to bear denning and saw palmetto fruit production.

Although I understand the Basin's ecological system cannot be managed according to a single species, consideration should be given to the Florida black bear as it is the apex umbrella species of the Basin. Ideally, burn zones should reflect comprehensive corridor systems that could be alternated over a time period needed to continually support the habitat for the Florida black bear. Please address the protection of the denning areas of Florida black bears (an example of a bear denning habitat is RKS-011) during the critical months of January through May in conjunction with a burn matrix that accounts for the saw palmetto food corridors that would facilitate significant fruit production needed for bear survival. As you know, saw palmetto will provide fruit one year after a burn and then go dormant, with virtually no fruit production for the following 6 years. Care should be given to ensure saw palmetto in burn zones are given adequate time to regenerate and produce fruit. Again, please give careful consideration to the creation and maintenance of prescribed burn zones to ensure a viable and sustainable habitat suitable to protecting and providing for Florida black bear populations for years to come.

Thank you,

Don Brouillard, Sanford, FL

From: Steve Barnhart
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: congestion on Wekiva Springs Road at the park
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:14:43 PM

This is a serious and dangerous issue – a portion of the park in front should be taken to create a turning lane to prevent vehicles from backing up traffic – it is just a matter of time before there is a serious accident.

Steve Barnhart | Senior Account Representative

From: gregmann01@gmail.com
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Congestion Wekiva Springs Road
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 3:56:04 PM

Mr. Brooks,

I am writing to you to share my concern over the traffic build ups at the park entrance. On public holidays it often backs up almost to Hunt Club road and the other way past the corner by the day care.

I have had several close calls leaving my neighborhood with drivers driving on the wrong side of the road just to get past the line. I live in Hamilton place and often see cut through drivers using our street to avoid the mess caused by the now inadequate entrance.

The new flashing lights really are not doing anything. This Easter weekend will be very busy as we are expecting great weather.

I am asking you to consider options to improve this very dangerous situation, before there is a serious accident.

Best Regards
Greg Mann

From: Long, William
To: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
Subject: follow up letter on presentation of plans on Wekiva State Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 8:57:02 PM

Dear Tyler, it was a pleasure to meet you last Thursday at Wekiva and to hear about the plans. As you have heard and read, comments abound. I am attaching a copy of my letter to Larry Fooks and Robert Yero. [There appear to be two Larry's (Fooks and Foltz) and two Robert's (Yero and Brooks). I intended by letter for Fooks and Brooks but didn't have the correct name, so Robert Yero will get it. I presume our comments will be circulated, in any event.)

Anyway, here is the body of the letter I delivered to Larry Fooks' office this morning:

"Dear Larry and Robert,

I was glad to have the opportunity last Thursday to talk with you about the care and nurture of the Wekiva Springs State Park. I want to start out and end with the same words: Thank you.

But I also have some suggestions for your consideration that I talked with you both about.

[1] Alligators: I wonder if it would not be possible to cut down on the alligators getting into the swimming area by putting up some fencing down by the bridge. I think farm fencing, sturdy metal with rectangles several inches on a side, would hinder easy access to the swimming area to alligators but allow the vegetable waste and algae to pass through without accumulating and. I remember, Robert, that you were concerned about their getting in by the land route; but I think as a start we might be able to discourage their migration into the Springs by blocking their water movement.

[2] Weekends: These are the busiest days and present the issue of how to make the park available to those whom it is meant to serve and to protect it from being trodden down and beat up. This is related obviously to parking space, the potential for unwelcome behavior like petty thievery (my Crocs, another man's T-shirt all in the space of an hour one Saturday afternoon), smoking and drinking, and sometimes worse.

I'm not sure what the right balance is: keep the parking as it is vs expand it a little or a lot. My own feeling is that you are not so far off the right level as it is,

although I do agree that an access road inside park property and off the Wekiva Springs Blvd would be helpful to the regular driving public headed to Apopka.

On Thursday I learned that you already have assigned extra rangers on the weekends and that means slimmer staffing at the beginning of the week. I hope you (and the rangers themselves) feel it's worthwhile. It's also a great time for teaching from the rangers to the public, something I've found they are always ready and willing to do.

Would it be possible to hire a lifeguard for the weekends? I know that everybody is strapped for funds, but another official presence will help with some of the potential problems but also specifically watch out for those people who – despite the signs all around – run, jump and dive into the springs. Too many people, especially adolescents and kids, think “it won't happen to me”.

[3] Grounds upkeep. I'm mostly familiar with the entrance/exit lanes and swimming/parking areas, and you all do a fine job in my opinion.

The soil and sand washes down from the lawn onto the concrete apron at the head of the Springs. If cleaning involves a blower, that's easier for the rangers but worse for the swimmers when that stuff gets blown onto the water. A few months ago I came to the office to talk about this and have noticed that broom-and-shovel were mostly used afterwards. (I personally thanked that ranger and acknowledged the extra work involved.)

I notice that there has been some planking to block formation of gulleys formed during downpours. I wonder if some deep-rooted vegetation would help decrease the erosion. At the same time, I think I heard someone at the meeting talking about widening the view of the springs from that lawn, so the idea of more not less vegetation might not help with that.

Thanks again for your work and that of your colleagues. Please feel free to contact me.

William Scott Long

From: John
To: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
Subject: Lower Wekiva River preserve state park
Date: Friday, March 31, 2017 8:49:41 AM

Hi Tyler,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes in the management of this Park system. We appreciated the presentation and the opportunity to talk to Management and staff at your meeting at Sorrento Elementary.

My two comments;

Small boats (for example 12' and under) with ONLY electric motor power should be allowed to be hand launched at Katie's Landing.

Boats with both a gasoline and electric motor may NOT be launched.

Boats should be hand launched. Trailer assisted boat launching or removal should be discouraged because of possible shore erosion.

In my case age and reduced stamina precludes the use of the river with out an electric motor backup which could be interpreted as age discrimination.

It is not my intention to encourage the use of electric motors in the Wekiva River but I can envision other people in some what similar situations being deterred from using this special river resource because of the Park's current no motor launch rule.

It is my understanding that Black Water Creek from the mouth of Lake Norris to its discharge at the St. John's River is part of the Federal Wild and Scenic System and as such should not be disturbed or changed by the construction of a Paddling Trail without a proper Review by all stakeholders. In my opinion, under NO circumstances should the public or Paddling Clubs be allowed to undertake any part of this Paddling Trail project. I am certain that you know "snags," logs, brush, vegetation and the like are important in maintaining the ecology of a Wild River System. If a new paddling trail is to be undertaken a very careful balance needs to be struck between the needs of the public for access and the preservation of this special river resource and that balance can NOT be accomplished by kayakers with chainsaws however good their intentions may be. (Please excuse the hyperbole.)

Please keep me updated on any final changes to the management plan.

Regards,
John Nystrom

From: loretta laskowski
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Park congestion
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 6:14:27 PM

Hello,

We were asked by our HOA to give our experience with traffic congestion on Weikiwa Springs Rd. We live across from the park entrance off of Sweetwater Country Club Drive and many times we can't get home when we try to access from the drive way into the golf course because the cars are standing on Weikiwa Spgs trying to get into the park. We have had to resort to making a u turn on Weikiwa and going all around back through Hunt club road and many miles out of our way to reach the west entrance. We hope there can be some kind of arrangement made to avoid what we think is a dangerous situation with lots of cars making u turns and lots of inconvenience for us residents. Thank You.

Mr. & Mrs. Laskowski

From: Connie Frye
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Park traffic backup
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 2:27:52 PM

Please be advised I wish to lodge a formal complaint about recurring weekend traffic issues for motorists entering the park. It has become a dangerous issue as people wanting to get around the backup are moving into oncoming traffic lanes to pass. This has happened to me on several occasions. This issue needs to be addressed ASAP.

Thank you

Connie Frye

From: Stephen Matheny
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Cc: [Fooks, Larry](#)
Subject: Public Hearing follow Up | Reducing Admission Transaction Time | Online ticketing w/Barcode
Date: Sunday, April 09, 2017 10:08:38 PM

Robert,

Per your request, please find the following six online ticketing providers. Item number is based positioning on Google page rank. Item six (6) includes a brief tutorial on the process, so it is listed first.

If customers using an online purchasing system had expedited entry to the park during peak, I don't think they would not have a problem with paying the additional transaction cost of one of the systems below. It is possible people might use an online system for normal/non-expedited entry without an incentive, but I am sure the number of users would be lower.

Having given the idea more thought, I would use both lanes at the park entrance during the first two hours of operation using the entrance lane for cash/credit customers and the exit lane for prepaid customers. During the two hours, I would divert exit traffic through the administration gate. Based on my experience leaving the park between 9-10 AM, it appears that persons exiting during that time period are either campers or after hours pass holders.

An example of this type of "one way operation" in a National Park is the Rock Creek Parkway in D.C. See: <https://rockcreekparkwayhours.wordpress.com/2011/03/22/rockcreek-parkway-road-one-way-hours/> There is usually a law enforcement person at the inbound entrance of the parkway at the time change.

At the end of the two hour window for "express entry period", the exit gate could be closed for an hour of more. Customers that missed the "express entry period" would still be able to use the prepaid ticket for entrance.

Most of the systems below use smart phones with bar reading capability to the verify prepaid tickets. It appears that there are also higher speed scanner attachments available.

See: <http://guestmanager.com/hardware/barcode-scanners>

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5B-pv6zg0o>

Other advantages to an online ticketing system:

- 1) Collection of email addresses for outbound marketing.
- 2) Making PDFs of the handouts available on line for printing to reduce reproduction costs.
- 3) Marketing other revenue generating services or diverting customers to less frequented areas within the park.

6) Electronic Ticketing & Barcode Access Control

Electronic ticketing has brought radical changes to the entertainment and event planning businesses. With electronic ticketing and barcode access control come challenges like easy duplication of tickets and unstable Internet connectivity at crowded venues. Fortunately, with invalidation of duplicate tickets, offline authentication, manual barcode value entry and database search, codeREADr can solve all of these problems for events and venues large and small.

We have created a guide to our smartphone app and web interface that's specific to electronic ticketing. We hope this helps put into perspective some of the best ways to deploy codeREADr for barcode access control – whether using the most sophisticated features or the simplest ones.

<https://www.codereadr.com/blog/electronic-ticketing-barcode-access-control/>

1) Control access to your event by generating a barcode or QR code for each ticket and validating that tickets by scanning it at the door. Includes advanced messages.

<https://eventsmart.com/features/barcode-qr-code-ticket-scanning/>

2) Printing secure tickets or badges, which cannot be forged or copied, has never been easier and cheaper! Just use the TicketCreator Barcode edition to create and print [tickets](#) with unique barcodes or QR codes on each ticket.

https://www.ticketcreator.com/secure_tickets_with_copyprotection.htm

3) Every ticket purchased through ThunderTix can be scanned using our [barcode scanning](#) software that comes standard with every ThunderTix plan. At no charge, you can download our [free app](#) for scanning tickets using iPhones and iPads. Each staff member that scans tickets at the entrance to your event should be assigned their own username and password to login to your ThunderTix account and scan tickets to ensure each ticket is valid for that event and that is not already been scanned.

In addition, we both sell and rent [handheld scanners](#) which can be purchased from within each ThunderTix account. Handheld scanners are more rugged against dropping, do not need to be charged since they connect via USB to another WIFI/3G connected device and work even in poor lighting conditions.

<http://www.thundertix.com/features/electronic-pdf-ticket-printing/>

4) Don't take our word for it - see how our clients use Guest Manager for a wide variety of things - and not just selling tickets online or event check in.

<http://guestmanager.com/>

5) Summer concerts, festivals, and special events! SimpleTix gives you the tools to handle every type of event ticketing and registration. You can run Groupon deals, offer promotional codes, and bundle offers to increase ticket sales.

<https://www.simpletix.com/resort-ticketing-software/>

From: Stephen Matheny
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Cc: [Fooks, Larry](#)
Subject: Public Hearing Follow Up | Reducing Admission Transaction Time | Portable mPOS Devices
Date: Sunday, April 09, 2017 10:30:02 PM

There was some discussion about processing credit cards while customers are in line using portable mPOS devices.

Here is an overview of most of the apps that are available for use with smart phones.

<https://www.cardpaymentoptions.com/credit-card-processing/top-iphone-credit-card-processing-applications-2/>

I am guessing that the park has to use a credit card processing company under state contract.

Processing hardware tends to vary by provider, but Verifone is used by several companies.

See: <https://www.verifone.com/mpos>

It is also possible that the company that has the state contract for phone and or data services may have a mPOS device available.

See: <https://business.verizonwireless.com/content/b2b/en/solutions/mobility/mobile-point-of-sale.html#>

From: Debbie Salamone
To: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
Subject: Public comment on Wekiva Springs State Park unit management plan
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 5:24:41 PM

Hello Tyler,

It was really great talking to you and thank you for such a terrific public meeting on March 30. I really enjoyed the informal format, which allowed me opportunities to speak with everyone and get many questions answered. I think this was much better than the typical testimony type of public hearing. Kudos.

Here are my comments:

After reading the unit plan, it is clear that much work and thought has gone into this effort. I am impressed by many of the great and needed projects that are included. I love the new proposed trails. I am hopeful that an ambitious burn plan will hopefully help keep Wekiva's lands in good shape. I am impressed by the wish to restore many disturbed lands. And among *many* other things, I am also very pleased to see a dangerous situation addressed – the traffic backup that regularly occurs outside the park as people line up to get in. It would be nice if technology like SunPass could be used to assist in this situation.

I am concerned about what seems to be a limited budget for invasive species control. If I read this correctly, it's only about \$100,000 per year. Literally translated = 41 cents per acre. With 41,000 acres, that is simply nowhere near enough as threats are rising. I wish this budget line could be increased.

As a daily swimmer and user of the park for more than two decades, I would like to address the area that I frequent most often at Wekiva Springs State Park – main use. As the plan is written, there is a notation to increase parking spaces and also the carrying capacity by 300 people per day. I'm looking forward to some improved language regarding the parking spaces so an increase is extremely minimal. But the issue of increased carrying capacity still concerns me. I am flabbergasted this would be considered given the enormous strain that current crowds already place on the resource.

I spend only about an hour in the park each day and typically not when the crowds are at their peak. Yet just within the last two years, let me tell you what I

have seen with my own eyes: fist fights, a ranger being threatened, an uncountable number of drunk individuals, people cursing profusely in front of children and families, prolific amounts of liquor and beer bottles strewn about and stacked in trash cans that wreak of the smell of alcohol, enough trash thrown about to fill dozens of trash bags, feces on bathroom walls, graffiti marring the beautiful springhead rocks underwater, garbage in the waters, people harassing birds and turtles, several rashes of window-smashing car burglaries and once even a car flipped onto its roof after a drunken driver sped backwards through the parking lot, endangering everyone's lives.

Let me say the rangers and law enforcement are top notch in dealing with these problems but there simply aren't enough of them. Personnel is stretched so thin that the swimming area in particular can be left unattended with no official to rectify problems. Knowing how the state does not easily grant new positions, I seriously doubt you would have sufficient personnel to ever deal with another 300 people. And I believe the natural resource cannot withstand it. I see that Table 6 plans for the additional 300 individuals to be on hiking trails, biking and equestrian uses. But on a summer day at 95 degrees, I can guarantee a lot of those people are going straight for the spring, which is already at carrying capacity. Although the desire is to point them toward Sand Lake and other underutilized areas of the park, there is no way to really make that happen and what we'll have is an overcrowded spring area. The spring's carrying capacity is set for the safety and enjoyment of the public and this increase is not compatible. The reputation of this park and the state park system is at stake when people do not want to attend because of the overcrowding and unruly behavior.

Additionally, every day, people are trampling over and killing vegetation and we lose trees and plants that would one day mature and add to the backdrop of the spring. This new growth dies and nothing is able to take the place of the many trees that have fallen from age and storms or projects. Nothing has been planted in years and I cannot even recall the last planting project. On the contrary, there seems to be a campaign to clear vegetation to make way for views of the water. I completely understand that everyone's preferences for enhancing the spring view are different, but I think we can all agree that we must preserve and protect the real Florida for generations to come. With a reconfiguration of the main use area on the table and the cutting of foliage, my biggest fear is that we could create a massive

recreational complex that looks more like a commercialized community swimming pool than natural Florida.

We've had the commercial look here in the past. We have learned so much in recent years about conservation and preservation and Wekiva shines because of it. Let's not take a step backward. I understand the balance between recreation and preservation is a difficult one. But I fear that preservation around our valuable springs may be getting short shrift. That costs everyone in the end because tourists from around the world come to see the real Florida. And the more pavement, the more clearing of vegetation and trees, the more we develop into something so much less natural, the less tourists will value the experience and fewer will come.

I think we could better connect recreational activities with improved signage rather than creating visual lines of sight. I would hope that an ecologist would guide any pruning and I know some who would probably gladly volunteer. I must say that what I have seen -- people going through with weed whackers and high school students armed with machetes and clippers -- isn't proper restoration in my opinion; it's obliteration. That's fine if clear cutting an area is the goal. But that's not appropriate around the spring and true restoration means personnel actually knowing and caring about which trees and plants are valuable and which are invasive or exotic. I would request a committee be formed to come up with the best plan for main use.

Lastly, I have echoed this many times but it is WAY past due to raise the admission price. Much activity in this plan is restricted because of a lack of funds or designed to raise funds. More money could mean restoring important habitat -- something that won't be sufficiently accomplished under current funding. I understand the need for affordable access to the park system. Nearby Kelly Park, Rock Springs, which is county owned, charges \$3 to \$5. However, prices of everything -- from milk to autos -- rise over time. I visit national parks which charge vastly more money. Locally, Salt Springs charges \$5.50 per person. At Wekiwa, 8 people in a car enter for \$6. Paying mere pennies is not sufficient to cover the costs of running this park. Even a small increase would help dramatically and I know all of the swimmers I see regularly also support this. We have indicated so on our park surveys and I hope you will use this support to back up an eventual decision to

finally raise prices.

Again, thank you very much for your time and attention at the public meeting. I very much appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinions and concerns. I admire park staff and the hard work and positive attitudes they display daily in the face of many challenges. It's commendable and makes me quite proud to be a Floridian. We all want the same thing. If we work together, we can leave a legacy that reflects well on all of us and provides a great gift to future generations who can treasure the real Florida as we all do.

Kindest regards,

Debbie Salamone

From: jonmoberger@gmail.com
To: [Lori Waddick](#)
Cc: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Re: Meeting Notice
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 2:58:42 PM

Lori,

I was at this presentation. No one spoke up because everyone is well aware of the problem and a couple of solutions were included in the 10 year plan. A major fix such adding a second checkin lane would probably not be considered.

By the way it is Wekiwa Springs Road not Wekiva Springs Road. Seminole County just doesn't know how to spell.

Jon

Hello ALL Sweetwater Country Club Owners:

Your HOA board meeting is scheduled for next week on Thursday, April 20, 2017 at the office of FirstService Residential located at 385 Douglas Avenue, St. 3350, Altamonte Springs, FL. 32714 at 7 PM. If you are planning to attend, please do not be late as the door locks at 7:10 PM.

One of your fellow residents of Sweetwater Country Club is on the board of the Wekiwa Wilderness Trust, the Citizen Support Organization for the Wekiwa Riverparks; www.wwt-cso.com. He reported that at their board meeting, the parks manager, Robert Brooks, commented that at the recent annual public meeting for the park's 10 year plan, no one spoke up about the issues of congestion and safety on Wekiwa Springs Road. In recent years, traffic backups have reached epic proportions on warm weather weekends with people trying to access the park. The 2 new flashing signs are now operating from both directions when the park is full.

If you agree this is a problem, you can send an email to Mr. Brooks about the traffic issues. The deadline for input is tomorrow, Friday, April 14, so this needs to be done as soon as possible. His email is robert.brooks@dep.state.fl.us. They need as many emails as possible to show resident displeasure.

Reminder: Semi-annual maintenance payments were assessed on April 1, 2017. Owners can utilize the following methods to make payments:

Mail your payments payable to Sweetwater Country Club (Include account number listed below the date on this notice) to:

Sweetwater Country Club
c/o FirstService Residential

From: Jan Chamberlin
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: State Park Congestion
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 3:08:11 PM

Robert, I am a resident of Sweetwater Club and am writing to complain about the horrendous traffic jams every weekend along Wekiva Springs Road. The park-goers are not the problem, they are just enjoying our beauty.

However, better traffic control must be implemented. We are held hostage in our own exit during peak morning traffic. Further, visitors and residents can't enter due to the backups. It can take an elongated amount of time to break into the line of traffic or for it to creep up to our entrance.

Does someone have to get hurt for action to take place?

Sincerely,
Jan

Jan Chamberlin
President
Sweetwater Club HOA

From: Sandra Finucan
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Traffic Congestion Issues - Wekiva Springs State Park: Please Include Issue in 10 Year Plan
Date: Friday, April 14, 2017 4:21:09 PM
Importance: High

This is an appeal for action regarding the traffic congestion problem on Wekiva Springs Road near the Wekiva Springs State Park entrance. We're asking for this weekend, holiday and special event traffic congestion issue to be included in the Wekiwa Springs State Park's 10 Year Plan.

We're long-time residents of Sweetwater Country Club, and have seen a large increase in traffic congestion and long lines of traffic on weekends, holidays, and special events, due to the large numbers of visitors to Wekiva Springs State Park. We feel this traffic congestion poses a safety risk to all, whether they're visitors to the park, or residents, vendors and maintenance and delivery people using Wekiva Springs Road. As cars line up to enter the park, it creates huge backups, unsafe drivers trying to get around the backed up traffic, and a hazard to any emergency vehicles. It's also very frustrating to us as residents, and with new building and additional residents moving in to the area, we're very concerned about this issue being worse in the future.

We are hopeful that some solutions can be found and added to the 10 Year Plan.

Thank you for your help!

Regards,
Vito and Marjorie Giordano.

Please note that we're having computer and email problems today and have asked our neighbor Sandy Finucan to forward this to you; she advised us that the deadline is today and we wanted to voice our opinion.

From: hops484@aol.com
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: traffic in front of Wekiwa State Park
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 2:24:36 PM

Hello Mr Brooks,

Traffic on the weekends on Wekiva Springs Rd in front of the State Park entrance makes it very difficult for residents entering or leaving my neighborhood of Hamilton Place. It has taken me up to 30 minutes to get home from church on Sunday mornings and it is only 1 mile away. I believe you need to have police directing traffic on the summer weekends so all can enjoy traveling on Wekiva Springs Rd.

Sincerely,

Jackie and Marc Hopkins

From: Sandra Finucan
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Cc: [jack finucan](#)
Subject: Traffic Issues - Wekiva Springs Road: Please Help Us With a Solution
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:45:22 PM
Importance: High

Mr. Brooks,

Regarding Wekiva Springs State Park's 10 Year Plan and Traffic Congestion on Wekiva Springs Road:

I love the park, and commend everyone for keeping it so beautiful and safe; it's a true gem. I love living across the street from it.

But the traffic backups have reached epic proportions, especially on weekends, with people trying to access the park. Putting in the 2 flashing signs to advise the park is full was a good step. But traffic is still extremely heavy and seems to just be getting worse.

I live in ungated Sweetwater Country Club, and there are horrible backups on weekends and holidays for me to get into and out of our development because of the traffic. My neighbors complain about the traffic due to people visiting the park as well. The extreme traffic backups interfere with going to/coming home from church, shopping or anything requiring us to leave home. Anyone coming to our house (guests, vendors, deliveries) are also negatively impacted. Many delays, Very frustrating.

And it will only get worse as new residents move in and as more people discover the wonderful gem that we have in Wekiva Springs State Park.

Please, can you help us?

Thank you,
Sandy Finucan

P.S. My husband Jack Finucan uses the park FREQUENTLY and he's on the Board of the Wekiva Wilderness Trust. I wasn't able to attend the public meeting, so I appreciate you taking my feedback. Wishing you well in finding a solution to the traffic congestion.

From: Wendy
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Weekend traffic at Wekiva Springs State Park entrance...
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 3:32:13 PM

Mr. Brooks, I am both a resident and board member of Sweetwater Club. Our neighborhood is directly across from Wekiva Springs State Park and just a short distance from the Park entrance on Wekiva Springs Rd. The park entrance congestion on the weekends has gone way past the point of aggravation for all of us having to exit onto Wekiva Springs Rd on the weekends. Perhaps you can look into some traffic solutions, maybe turn lanes maybe hiring traffic police...something...anything!!! Thank you! Wendy Jennings

From: tgill
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs Park Traffic
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 5:07:09 PM

For the past 2 years there has been an increasing problem with traffic backing up on Wekiva Springs road for vehicles trying to enter the Springs Park. The traffic back up starts about 10:00 am on Saturday and Sunday and lasts until 2:00 pm. the entrance to The Club ,the golf course and Hamilton Place subdivision are completely blocked starting with Memorial day and continuing every weekend thru Labor Day. A right hand turn lane into the park is needed urgently to avoid a major accident.

tom gill

From: Joseph Schlachter
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs Park
Date: Friday, April 14, 2017 5:01:27 PM

Mr. Brooks,

I am writing to register my complaint regarding traffic build-up at/near the entrance to the State park on weekends. Indeed, there is a major problem here as visitors have nowhere to wait in line to get into the park...therefore clogging up Wekiva Springs Rd and making access for those that live nearby, to their homes, almost impossible. Sometimes, we have to turn around and make our way back through Hunt Club to get in through the back entrance. Hopefully, this issue can be addressed at your next meeting.

Sincerely,

Joe Schlachter

From: John Finucan
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Cc: [Sandra Finucan](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs Road
Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 8:36:38 PM

This is an appeal for action to be included in the Wekiwa Springs State Park's 10 year plan regarding weekend traffic congestion on Wekiva Springs Road.

Last summer saw the worst congestion I've witnessed in my 23 years of residence in the area. The huge backups are bad enough but watching people drive on the wrong side of the road and tempers flair is producing a dangerous situation. I hope some solutions can be found and added to the plan.

I've attached photos taken last year of the weekend backups. Thank you.

Jack Finucan

From: Rebecca Gilbert
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs Road Problem
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:41:53 PM

Dear Robert Brooks,

I was given your name to contact regarding the severe traffic issues I have been involved in over the last couple of years just beyond the Wekiva Springs State Park entrance.

On several Saturday and Sundays I have traveled on Wekiva Springs Road coming toward the park entrance across from Sweetwater Club.

In endeavoring to reach my house in Sweetwater Country Club development across from the Palms community, I sat stranded in my car for up to one hour in a line of cars on Wekiva Springs Road all waiting to get into Wekiva Springs State park.

These waiting cars were literally parked on a 40 mph road. The cars were not moving because they were waiting for someone to exit the park so they could go in. The cars were not pulled off to the side of the road...the cars were stopped on the small two lane road...parked...some with motors off and windows down.

One of the times this happened to me I called the Sheriff's office who directed me to the park phone number where I was unable to reach anyone.

I am a 20 year resident of Sweetwater. This traffic problem concerns me on many differing accounts.

First, there is a high probability of a serious traffic accident occurring because of this extreme traffic violation. (Violation in terms that it is illegal to stop a vehicle on any thoroughfare.)

Second, residents should not be plagued with spending extreme (45minutes-1 hour) amounts of time to go less than a quarter of a mile for the simple need to go home from shopping, church, or other important function.

Finally, it is only a matter of time before someone wishing to use Wekiva Springs Road as designed (to drive on) becomes enraged at the discourtesy of these people flagrantly disobeying traffic laws by parking on a thoroughfare. Then, we will hear of the ensuing tragedy on the 6 o'clock news.

I am notifying you of this problem in writing and will be sharing this letter with members of the local media.

Peace,
Becky Gilbert

From: Mcmillan, Kelly
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs Road safety issue
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 2:36:35 PM

Hello Mr. Brooks,

I live in the Sweetwater Country Club community. We have a very real safety issue with regards to the congestion on Wekiva Springs Road. The traffic backs up in both directions and it's a two lane road with no passing. So when the park is full people just sit there and you can't pass you are stuck just sitting there and you are trapped. That being said people get upset and try to pass anyway driving into oncoming traffic. Please help to have this corrected before someone dies on this road.

Thank you,

Kelly McMillan

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From: Tim O'Connor
To: [Brooks, Robert; J](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs Road
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:22:00 PM

Mr. Brooks,

I own a home in Sweetwater Park Village just south west of Wekiva Springs State Park. 2376 Park Village Place.

We have been having serious issues with traffic along Wekiva Springs Road during the times when the park fills up and car line up along Wekiva Springs Road. There are times when we have to turn around and take 434 to 436 just to get back into the subdivision.

This usually happens most weekends during the summer months from Memorial Day weekend to Labor day weekend.

Not only is it an inconvenience for the home owners but it is also a safety hazard. Numerous car accidents occur at the sharp bend in Wekiva Springs Road all the time. With traffic stopped at the curve that presents a dangerous situation.

I am not sure what a solution to this problem is but would like to hear if there has been complaints before and if a possible solution can be worked out.

Recently the Park has put up a sign showing when the park has reached full capacity. That has not stopped people from pulling into the middle of the road and waiting for a spot to open inside the park.

As a resident for the past 25 years I have seen changes to Wekiva Springs Road trying to relieve general traffic problems. Orange County elected to add a turn lane to Wekiva Springs Road which helps. The 3 lane road stops at the Seminole County line. Seminole residents voted to not increase the road from the county line out past Sabal Elementary school. I believe that adds to the problem as well.

With summer coming we know that there will be a problem getting into the subdivision.

Thanks for any help you can give.

Tim O'Connor

From: Tamara Preble
To: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs State Park public comment on unit management plan
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 8:31:05 PM

As an annual pass holder and weekly swimmer/walker in the State Park I have some concerns regarding your new "improvement" plans.

I am vehemently opposed to the addition of parking spaces and the admittance of MORE people to Wekiva Springs State Park.

I have observed several children who cannot swim struggle in the springs, and have personally pulled them to the edge/stairs to safety. The addition of 300 more bodies in the swim area will make it that more difficult to see a potential drowning victim. I think the addition of lifeguards would help, but I am sure that is not in the budget, plus that is no guarantee since some adults then assume the lifeguard is watching my kids, so they can "relax."

Speaking of budgets, the cost of admission is ridiculously low. A "per person" charge may not be the solution, as that would cause some people to "stowaway" in the trunk to avoid payment. I suggest just raising the price per carload to \$10.00 minimum. The cost to drive on the beach in Volusia County is \$10.00 per car. I do not think an extra \$4.00 would deter visitors! People pay obscene amounts to attend theme parks and other local attractions, such as the Central Florida Zoo entrance fee of \$13.75 children to \$19.50 adults, PER PERSON! Even bowling, a relatively inexpensive family entertainment venue costs \$5.00 PER PERSON per game (not including shoes), and that is for ONE game, not an all day adventure at the State Park!

Additional people would also put a strain on the rangers and volunteers with regards to sanitary duties. More people, more trash (trash that is NOT put in the proper receptacles). The bathrooms are also limited in size and I foresee tremendous increases in filth in these areas, and plugged toilets. (My son works at nearby Kelly Park and cleans the bathrooms there...unbelievable filth)

The clearing of the trees and undergrowth will not only create a stark commercialized vista, but also could contribute to erosion. All this talk about endangered species, and how many creatures could you be killing by destroying their habitat by clearing the natural flora and vegetation? SIGNS would be the cheapest and easiest solution to direct your visitors to the canoe/kayak/paddle board areas. Not many folks will be walking the trails in Florida's summer heat. I don't even see many there in the winter!

I do not know of a solution to the traffic jams on the road at the Park's entrance, but agree that something must be done, at least to warn drivers approaching the Park (at the Hunt Club traffic light or before) that the park is closed due to full capacity, "last chance to turn around" signs of some sort. Again, Kelly Park at Rock Springs utilizes such signage to warn cars BEFORE they bother to enter the area that the parking lot is full.

Finally, I am DISGUSTED at the plans to construct a "kiddie pool" as part of the renovations required to repair the westside of the swimming area. Aside from the fact that children in diapers will be wallowing in a shallow area in a corner of the springs that has poor water circulation, with NO chlorine to disinfect the water; children can drown in a few inches of water! A kiddie pool would provide another

excuse for some parents/guardians to leave their children unattended or with a false sense of safety. You better have DAILY water quality tests of E.coli and other elevated bacteria levels if a kiddie pool is installed.

Please consider carefully all of these and the other comments from the people who actually swim in the springs on a near daily basis. We are the ones who KNOW the consequences of the proposed actions since we are eyewitnesses to the problems that occur with the current park conditions.

Sincerely,
Tamara Preble

From: Tamara Preble
To: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs State Park Public Comment on Unit Management Plan/"Kiddie Pool"
Date: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 12:15:31 PM

Dear Mr. Maldonado,

I am writing an addendum to my comment letter concerning the plan for a "kiddie pool" being constructed in the springs.

I previously called attention to the personal safety risks and pollution threat that this area will have. I spoke to the man who is the head of this renovation project today. He says the plan includes a shallow area that will be "roped off with buoys" from the deeper water.

1. A buoyed rope will NOT prevent small children from stepping off into the deeper water area.
2. There will be significant algae growth on the rope and buoys AND the most alarming risk will be the bottom surface of the kiddie pool!

What will the bottom surface of the kiddie pool be made of? Concrete? If so, then this surface will also grow algae and become extremely slippery to both children and adults. Even if you use "textured concrete" to reduce risk of slipping, you will not be able to walk in this kiddie pool without slipping once the algae grows on it (which will take about one week). If the area is going to be a "natural" sandy bottom like the rest of the springs, then problem solved.

The ONLY reason that no one slips and falls on the stairs entering the springs is that a volunteer CLEANS/SCRAPES THE ALGAE OFF OF THE STAIRS TWICE A WEEK! The rangers do not clean the stairs. WHO will be scraping the algae off the bottom of the kiddie pool??

If you do not swim at the springs, then you have no clue how fast and prolifically the algae grows on hard surfaces. If you have never swam there, then you do not know how slippery the underwater rocks and stairs are.

I suggest that if you must install a kiddie pool, that it be placed near the bridge. A deck could be built on the edge of the springs for adults to supervise their children. The water current is stronger there, so the diaper waste would flow OUT of the springs, away from other swimmers, instead of stagnating in that westside corner that has poor water circulation.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Tamara Preble

From: Tony Rossi
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva Springs
Date: Friday, April 14, 2017 4:58:45 PM

Mr Brooks,

I am told that you are involved with the horrible traffic issue at the Park entrance. I have gotten caught in that mess several trying to get back to my home during weekends and holidays during the peak seasons. The worst is coming from Seminole County going into Orange County, because of the lack of a turning or stack back lane. I have called the Sheriff Department several times trying to get home.

Please do something to resolve this problem for those of us that live here and need this thoroughfare.

Thank you.

Tony Rossi

From: Julie Tempest
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva State Park driving hazards
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 3:04:26 PM

Robert,

I received your information from my HOA, I am a resident of the Sweetwater Country Club, Sweetwater Park Village. I understand you are looking for some input on the traffic issues that we are seeing due to the state park entrance during the warm months. I can assure you this is still a very real hazard. I have no other choice but to use Wekiva Springs Rd, due to my neighborhood location. On the weekends the line of cars backs up, and there is no traffic control. I have personally been stuck in the line of traffic for more than 35 minutes to only driver .5 mile to get to my home. The bigger issue is the cars that block the road in order to line up at the actual entrance of the park. I have almost been hit several times by people doing U-turns or trying to get out of the park, while others come into the park and break out of line. A few weeks ago the park was busy and the line of traffic was backed up to the 90 degree turn going towards Apopka. This is a huge concern, because that is a blind turn and cars miss the turn all the time and run into the state park fence. In addition, when the park is full we are getting more and more cars coming into our neighborhood to wait for the line to go down. This concerns me that we are allowing non residence to pull into the street and sit and wait for sometimes an hour in front of our homes. This is not safe for my children or the safety of our community.

I suspect that there is a better traffic control option for that area, as simple as putting an officer in the area during the peak hours. This is what we have at the Sweetwater Baptist Church on Sunday's and this helps control the traffic very effectively.

Julie Tempest

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From: Joni Keams
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva State Park Traffic Concerns
Date: Friday, April 14, 2017 11:59:56 PM

Thank you for seeking residential input regarding traffic concerns related to the Wekiva State Park entrance on Wekiva Springs Road, in Apopka, FL. We have lived in Sweetwater Park Village since 1993. The park and surrounding area creates a beautiful setting to live. Unfortunately, during the summer months, traffic can really be unbearable, especially on the weekends and holidays. Although the park opens at 8 am, the lines start building 1 to 1-1/2 hours in advance. Often, these are car loads of folks and they have their stereo's turn up to some pretty loud levels, creating a nuisance.

It is almost impossible to turn left out of our subdivision during the early hours of the day, as traffic is not moving as there are lines to waiting to get into the park. Additionally, the traffic in our development increases, due to people who either past the entrance from the 434 side, or from the 436 side, they gave up waiting and plan to return home. During these times, it is unsafe for our grandchildren or pets to be in the front yard, as our driveway is frequently used to turn around.

Additionally, once the park's FULL sign is posted, cars start pulling into the daycare next to our development, park and start walking to the entrance with lawn chairs and coolers. I can only assume that while the park is closed for additional vehicles, the park continues to take pedestrians. Unfortunately, during this time, the path to and from the daycare becomes littered with all sorts of debris.

There is no doubt this community has grown and surrounded the park. I have often wondered if there was a way to create another entrance, but away from residential developments. Another thought would be to have a couple mobile park rangers, one working the 434 side and the other working the 436 side, conducting a preliminary check-in for all visitors, and assigning a number, bracelet, or some indicator signifying that this car load is checked in. Once the Full sign is posted, anyone in line without a number should be asked to leave the area. I am also not clear if after visitors leave the park, the gates are reopened to maintain maximum capacity throughout the day. If that is the practice, it may be wise to consider once maximum capacity is reach, no further entrances should be allowed for the day.

Joni Keams

From: Dave Scherpf
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva state park traffic
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:17:50 PM

I would like to add a comment about the traffic build up on wekiva springs road prior to the entrance to the park. It gets down right crazy. When it backs up people literally drive on the grass from Sweetwater CC gated community to Sweetwater Cc entrance. People yelling etc at each other. Someone is going to get hit or hurt out there. When I golf early in the morning I have to tell friends to go a different direction. I should video tape it. Comical sometimes but the end result may not be pretty. The flashers are great but they are small and by the time people see them it's to late and they are stuck in the traffic. Also if they can't get in I have seen them pull over get there beach chairs out and sit and wait.

Thank you.
Dave Scherpf

From: Francis Mendez
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiva Wilderness Trust - 10 year plan
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 2:41:03 PM

Hello Mr. Brooks,

I am a resident of Sweetwater Country Club. I received your information that you sit on the board of the wilderness trust. I am curious if the trust will address the access issues to the Wekiva Springs State Park. As a resident for the past 11 years, I have noticed that traffic on warm summer days into the park has increased dramatically. And yet, the tapado access has not been addressed. Traffic has reached the point that I cannot access my neighborhood. Sometimes, the traffic is so bad, that it may take me 45 minutes to crawl along to the neighborhood's entrance.

While the wilderness trust may not have the ability to address road widening or longer turn in lanes, I would suggest that it address the issue in a manner that it can. Perhaps it is time to widen and install another ticket booth so that patrons can be serviced quicker. Or, perhaps the payment booth can be moved farther into the park so as to alleviate the backup congestion on Wekiva Springs Road.

While I don't know if they trust has contemplated increasing the occupancy level of the park, i do know this: two flashing lights located too closely to the state park entrance have done nothing to prevent from people queuing waiting for the occupancy levels to drop and allow entrance.

While mine is only one voice, I can tell you that I have several neighbors that share my frustration. I love the park and make use of it as we can, but sadly, I don't think the park's ability to cope with the traffic situation has been overlooked. Perhaps. Seminole and Orange County would listen to the Trust, and make plans to at least lengthen the turn in lane.

Thank you for your time and I hope this email finds your well.

Francis X. Mendez

From: Gerri Sidoti
To: [FLStateParkPlanning](#)
Subject: Wekiwa area
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2017 11:35:32 AM

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to this plan in its entirety.

I believe the natural beauty and the undeveloped nature of these places should be left as is.

The plan would take habitat from this wild area and change the reason and the way people interact with it.

Please, leave it as is for the sake of the area and the planet.

Sincerely,

Gerri Sidoti

From: Cindy M. Elkin
To: [Brooks, Robert](#)
Subject: Wekiwa State Park - Traffic
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 2:34:06 PM

Dear Mr. Brooks – I would like to express my concern regarding the Summer traffic coming in and out of the State Park. Last year there were many weekends when the backup extended beyond the entrance to Sweetwater Club going toward Hunt Club. As a resident of Sweetwater Country Club I can assure you it is very frustrating to have a car full of groceries and be stuck in that traffic for ½ an hour or more trying to get to the nearest entrance into Sweetwater CC. I have seen people drive the wrong way, weave in and out of parked cars and drive on the right of way trying to get out of the mess.

I don't think the flashing light or PARK IS FULL signs will fix the problem, as people will sit in line waiting for someone to exit.

If part of the problem is the bottle neck that the entrance creates as a single lane – then I think the park needs to renovate the entry. As a frequent camper at Wekiwa State Park in the cooler months, I often wonder how the summer campers tolerate coming and going from the park and getting stuck in that traffic.

Please let me know if there is another venue I need to address in order to make my voice heard.

If you don't live in the area – feel free to travel up and down that road as the weather gets warmer so you can experience the congestion.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read my email and for looking into these issue – Cindy McMillan Elkin