

SPRING IS IN THE AIR

WHICH MEANS CHANGES FOR OUR FLORIDA STATE PARKS

DON'T MISS OUT ON A CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED!

FFSP May newsletter

This month we want to reach out to all of you to find out what you think about Florida's fabulous state parks and what changes, if any, that you would like to see that could improve them even more. Just as important we would welcome your views on any problems or issues that you have seen and your comments or concerns about the direction you think the park system is heading.

Your views are essential as Friends of Florida state parks considers how best we can serve both our award-winning parks and you, our members in the months and years ahead. We will post a selection of your comments on the website and use them as the basis for an upcoming newsletter article which, hopefully, will lead to a continuing exchange of ideas.

It is important to know what you are thinking because it does help us formulate action plans and information sheets for when we meet legislators and officials to discuss our support for the state park system and why it is so necessary to protect and preserve them.

One of the decisions taken at our last board meeting was to develop a more effective communications strategy so that people know exactly what is going on rather than forming opinions from stories they have seen or read in the media which may or may not give the full or even the correct picture.

However, as the parks come under more pressure from increasing visitation and additional uses it falls on all of us to know what is going on and to make our views are heard when and if necessary, as part of any decision making process.

One of the best sources of information is to study the unit management plan. Every state park has a plan and each one is reviewed every 10 years. Citizens are given the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions each time. Check the DEP Calendar for a schedule of public meetings and if you have questions about the unit management plan process or the schedule, call 850-245-3051.

All the unit plans are listed on the Department of Environmental Protection's website at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/planning/plans.htm>.

Once approved, the unit management plan provides the road plan for that park's development for the next ten years.

According to the DEP, each plan "identifies the objectives, criteria and standards that guide each aspect of park administration, and sets forth the specific measures that will be implemented to meet management objectives."

Technically if a project isn't in the unit management plan it shouldn't be happening. So, it is worth studying these management plans because apart from containing a wealth of great information about the park, its habitat, flora, fauna, historical and cultural sites and so on, they set out the parks' agreed land and resource management plans.

So, download the unit management plans for the parks that you are interested and read them so that you are better informed about what is going on and what is planned.

Then let us know what you think – by emailing us at ffspinc@gmail.com.
Together we do make a difference.