



known locally as Nobles Grade. NPS operational facilities would also be in this area.

Near Copeland an acquired property would be in the developed zone. As discussed under alternative A, this property is currently being used as a fire operations center. This facility would be retained and expanded as necessary to accommodate other preserve operational needs.

Frontcountry Zone

Areas along the State Highway 29 corridor would be included in the front-country zone. There would be no ORV access from State Highway 29. Facilities and associated activities in these areas would be compatible with management of the adjacent lands within the original preserve. The northernmost access point would be at Bear Island Grade, approximately 5 miles north of I-75. A trail corridor that would follow Bear Island Grade would be included in this zone. This corridor would provide access to the preserve for bicyclists and hikers. A small parking area would be developed.

At Deep Lake (a sinkhole lake) a former homesite would be developed into a day-use area that would provide parking and restrooms. A trail/boardwalk from this location to Deep Lake would provide visitors the opportunity to walk through a mixed hardwood hammock/cypress strand to the lake.

The southeast corner of the intersection of State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 41 would also be included in this zone. This area is already developed and encumbered with leases to the Collier County Sheriff’s Office and Everglades City Chamber of Commerce through 2014. Under this alternative these leases would be allowed to expire, and the area would be used as a way-side providing visitors orientation to the preserve and the surrounding region.

Backcountry Recreation Zone

The majority of the northeast portion of the Addition would be included in this zone. ORVs would be allowed, with access from the two I-75 recreational access points discussed above. A system of sustainable, ORV-designated trails and routes would be developed.

The Florida National Scenic Trail would pass through this zone. Similar to management within the original preserve, motorized use along the Florida Trail would be prohibited, a buffer zone would be established along the trail corridor, and ORV trail crossings would be minimized.

Primitive Backcountry Zone

This management zone would comprise an area south of I-75. This area includes Mullet Slough, which is not appropriate for ORV use. This area is

predominately a dwarf cypress prairie that has had limited ORV use. The density of the trees and the cap rock near the ground surface makes travel in the area very difficult. The area is a major drainage of the Addition and is wet most of the year.

On the western end of Mullet Slough is a series of large prairies. These prairies are not capable of sustaining ORV use due to the deep marl soils being susceptible to rutting by ORVs. Designated hiking trails or routes would be limited to allow visitors to enjoy the wilderness character of the preserve.

This zone would also include the Addition Lands along State Highway 29, which would be compatible with management of the adjacent lands within the original preserve.

The primitive backcountry zone would also consist of the tidal areas in the southwest corner of the Addition. This would include the area south of U.S. Highway 41 as well as the tidally influenced portion of the canals along State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 41. Nonmotorized boating would be allowed, including the provision of new canoe trails. The area would not be open to ORVs, including airboats, which is consistent with how ORVs are managed in the adjacent lands within the original preserve boundary. The preserve would implement and enforce strict protective measures in this area consistent with the NPS policy of manatee conservation. Commercial canoe and kayak trips consistent with the area’s resource protection goals would be encouraged.

ALTERNATIVE C

CONCEPT

This alternative would provide a diversity of both backcountry and frontcountry uses and visitor experiences throughout the Addition Lands. A variety of activities such as ORV use, bicycling, boating, hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, and hiking would be accommodated. Facilities would be constructed along I-75, State Highway 29, and a frontcountry corridor that extends north into the preserve from I-75 to facilitate backcountry access and to provide for education, orientation, and other structured activities requiring developed facilities. A range of commercial services would be encouraged to facilitate visitor recreational and educational opportunities. Natural resources and processes would be protected. Recreational activities and facilities would be located and managed to minimize resource impacts. Operational facilities would be provided to support the more extensive maintenance, enforcement, and resource management activities needed to effectively manage increased visitor use and protect resources.