

Preliminary Alternative C

Addition Lands General Management Plan Big Cypress National Preserve

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
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ZONE ALLOCATIONS AND RELATED ACTIONS Developed Zone

The developed zone would include two recreational access points along I-75 within the Addition. These facilities would be designed to provide a wide variety of opportunities to a diverse mix of preserve visitors.

On the east side of the preserve, a recreational access point would be developed at mile marker 51 of I-75 at the L-28 Interceptor Canal. The developed area would include a visitor contact station, which would provide orientation to the preserve and its resources. This access point would provide for a variety of uses, including hikers, ORV users, and boaters.

Farther west the second access point would be co-located with the Florida Department of Transportation rest area at mile marker 63. This access point would have facilities on both the north and south sides of the highway. The south side facility would include a parking area and walk-in access .The north side facility would include a parking area and would provide hiking, bicycling, and motorized access.

At the intersection of I-75 and State Highway 29, a multiagency visitor center would be developed. The National Park Service would seek partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida State Parks, and other agencies to help manage this facility. This facility would provide orientation information on the federal and state lands in the region, as well as interpretation of the greater Everglades ecosystem. This facility would also include areas needed for preserve administration and operations, including office space and equipment storage.

Near Copeland an acquired property would be included in the developed zone. This property has already been converted to a fire operations center. This facility would be retained and expanded as necessary to accommodate other preserve operational needs.

The southeast corner of the intersection of State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 41 would 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. The existing uses would continue for the life of the leases. When the leases expire, this area would be used for visitor services. If determined economically feasible portions of this site could be used for commercial services. In accordance with the Addition Act, the opportunity to provide commercial services would be first offered to the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Within this site an area would be set aside for the Everglades City Chamber of Commerce and the Collier County Sheriff's Office to maintain a presence, if they desire to remain at this location.

Frontcountry Zone

Two existing roads known locally as Nobles Grade and Bundschu Grade and an east-west corridor would be included in the frontcountry zone and would be improved to allow visitors to travel in their vehicles. Within these road corridors a series of waysides and trailheads with parking areas would be developed. There would also be designated ORV access points to enable ORVs to access the backcountry. The road improvements to Nobles Grade would end at a former ranchsite. In this previously disturbed area a parking area and campground would be developed.

If determined economically feasible, portions of the road corridors could be used for commercial services. In accordance with the Addition Act, the opportunity to provide commercial services would be first offered to the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

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 northern-most access point would be at Bear Island Grade, approximately 5 miles north of I-75. A trail corridor that would follow the 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.

Farther south along the State Highway 29 corridor, a trailhead would be established at Rock Island. This former homesite would have a small parking area to allow access for visitors to walk into the preserve.

A small parking area and trailhead would be developed north of Deep Lake that would provide access to an existing tram for hikers and bicyclists to enter the preserve. A frontcountry corridor would be established on the tram.

At Deep Lake the former homesite would be developed into a day-use area, including parking, restrooms, and a shelter for picnicking or other small gatherings. A trail/boardwalk from this location to Deep Lake would provide visitors the opportunity to walk through a mixed hardwood hammock/cypress strand and observe the lake.

Backcountry Recreation Zone

Under this alternative, several areas of the Addition would be included in this zone. The first would be located in the northeast corner extending south across I-75 and the L-28 Interceptor Canal. This area would be open to ORVs. Access would be provided from the I-75 recreational access point located at the L-28 Interceptor Canal. Designated ORV trails and routes would be developed in this area.