

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

ADDITION DRAFT GMP/WS/ORV PLAN/EIS MEETING

SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

Commencing at 4:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency  
Bonaventure Conference Center  
250 Racquet Club Road  
Weston, Florida 33326

PRESENT FOR BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE:

PEDRO RAMOS, Superintendent

J.D. LEE, Deputy Superintendent

EDWARD CLARK, Chief Ranger

DAMON DOUMLELE

MARK KINZER, Wilderness Coordinator

1 (Previous proceedings were held commencing at  
2 4:00 p.m., not made a part of this transcript.)

3 (Time noted: 5:07 p.m.)

4 MR. CLARK: Good afternoon. My name is Ed  
5 Clark. I'm the chief ranger for Big Cypress.

6 The first speaker is Chaffee Scarborough.

7 Please forgive me if I make a mistake on your name.

8 MR. SCARBORGH: Thank you very much for letting  
9 me speak.

10 I've seen what the governmental agencies  
11 have done to the Indians so, as far as I'm concerned, you  
12 guys don't have a very good record.

13 At about 1:45 Pedro said he's going to be  
14 frank with us, and then he says people are too far apart on  
15 the plans. Well, when somebody talks with me for a while  
16 and says right in the middle of it that he's going to frank  
17 with me, I wonder whether he had lied to me up to that  
18 point and now he's going to make one more statement and  
19 tell me the truth, and then he's going to continue lying to

20 me again. I just am very suspect about when people do  
21 that.

22                   And then he says people are sometimes  
23 very emotional and they get too upset over things and lose  
24 respect for one another. When somebody is raping your  
25 sister or your wife like the Big Cypress and Everglades

1 have been raped by people, we tend to get upset.

2 He also mentioned that he had a man from  
3 Denver Colorado that he brought back. We need people that  
4 were born and raised here because these people understand  
5 the Big Cypress and they understand the Sawgrass. We don't  
6 need people from out of state that don't understand it.

7 I would like to say at this point that we  
8 would prefer the Fresh Water Fish and Game Commission to  
9 take care of all these plans that you have and you all just  
10 stay right where you are and leave us alone.

11 At one point I saw where you all rounded  
12 up 147,000 hogs and slaughtered them and just left them  
13 laying there so you don't have a very good record with me.

14 When the Cypress speaker began talking he  
15 said, well, the cost of Plan A is six and a half million  
16 dollars, and after that we didn't hear any more numbers.

17 I'm concerned with the cost of Plan B,  
18 the preferred alternative, and Alternative F. And, as  
19 strapped as our government is right now, why spend any more

20 money? Let the Fresh Water Fish and Game Commission manage

21 it. We don't have a problem with that.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. CLARK: Thank you, sir.

24 Howard Lubel.

25 MR. LUBEL: My name is Howard Lubel. I'm here

1 not on behalf of the organization. I'm here on behalf of  
2 myself and my wife. We've been hiking Big Cypress. I am  
3 one of the fortunate 2,000 who has an ORV permit for use in  
4 the Big Cypress, which I use. I also fish in the Tukulaskie  
5 area, and although I was not born here, I grew up here.

6 I am here to speak and to urge the  
7 Preserve to reconsider the adoption of Alternative F, and  
8 the reason that I urge the adoption of Alternative F is  
9 this animal. This is a picture of a Florida panther that  
10 was taken by my wife in the Addition Lands this year.

11 As I read your Environmental Impact  
12 Statement, and as I read the law that was included in the  
13 Environmental Impact Statement, I have to say,  
14 Mr. Superintendent, that I respectfully disagree with your  
15 interpretation. And the language in your own document  
16 clearly says that a conflict between visitor's use of a  
17 park unit and protection of resources should occur, the  
18 Act of Congress favors resource protection.

19 Now, why does the preferred alternative

20 not do that? It's pretty simple. Because also in your  
21 Environmental Impact Statement you note that there will be  
22 long-term, moderately adverse impacts on the Florida  
23 panther.  
24           You also note that there will be moderate  
25 long-term adverse impacts on other wildlife species. You



1 note long-term, moderately adverse impacts on water fowl.

2 That results in habitat degradation, habitat loss.

3           There are 84, by your own documents, of

4 these animals still in existence. Your own document says

5 that they exist in the Addition Lands. At some point -- at

6 some point we have to protect those animals.

7           I am not against ORV uses. As I said, I

8 have a permit and I simply think your plan doesn't produce

9 adequate protection for that animal.

10           I picked up this document from the

11 Florida Wildlife Commission at the Oasis Visitor's Center

12 it says the largest threat to the Florida panther is

13 habitat loss.

14           I'd like to include both of these items

15 in the record, if I can present them to the court reporter.

16           MR. CLARK: Charles Moorehead, please.

17           MR. MOOREHEAD: I'm Charles Moorehead and I'm a

18 fourth generation Miamian. I've hunted the land in and

19 around Big Cypress since 1970, and I urge you when you are

20 going through the comments, in considering them to please  
21 consider the length and period of time the person who is  
22 commenting has actually used and enjoyed the resources,  
23 because I think the longer you've been there to use it, the  
24 more germane your comments are.

25           Respectfully the alternatives that are

1 proposed are like the tallest Pygmy, they're still short.  
2 Amendment B is the most palpable but still short of the  
3 access that we were promised when we worked as Gladesmen to  
4 get these lands purchased by our government.

5           And the special designation they enjoy  
6 must pass the Rational Basis Test. As a board certified  
7 lawyer who represents outdoor groups and as a past  
8 president of the Broward County Airboat and Conservation  
9 Club we will insist that our rights are respected and  
10 utilized fully in the adoption of the plan.

11           I think that the Gladesman's culture has  
12 been ignored in the 401-page document that is proposed.  
13 It's a recognized culture. The impact to that culture must  
14 be studied before our rights can be eliminated and we ask  
15 that be done.

16           And I will hold the rest of my comments  
17 to the wilderness part of the meeting, but respectfully to  
18 have more than 77 percent of the existing acreage taken  
19 away from off-road vehicle users does not meet the purpose,

20 the spirit and the legal requirements of the Addition

21 Lands.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. CLARK: Folks, keep the applause down so

24 we can keep on track.

25 Mr. Wright, please.

1 MR. WRIGHT: Bishop Wright, Jr., president of  
2 the Florida Boater's Association.

3 I just want to say today I live in the  
4 northern Everglades in the West Palm area and I very seldom  
5 get down into south Florida into the Everglades, but I've  
6 seen what you've all done by locking out the sportsmen.  
7 Not only is the place overrun with exotic species of  
8 plants, but they've taking away the eyes and ears, which  
9 are the sportsmen.

10 But when you come down past the Palm  
11 Beach County line into the other conservation areas, what a  
12 beautiful sight of sawgrass again. There's no melaleuca  
13 trees. Virtually all of them have been taken out because  
14 sportsmen care about it. They're the eyes and ears and the  
15 ones who fight to keep the money rolling in that it takes  
16 to keep out all the exotics.

17 But yet when you get all the way down to  
18 the Big Cypress and you start getting into Everglades  
19 National Park, we have another exotic. I wonder why that

20 is. Again we've taken away the sportsmen's rights to go in  
21 there and get rid of the pythons, not to mention all of the  
22 exotic vegetation that you have too.

23               So I just want to say one thing, there is  
24 no doubt that the sportsmen care more about that land than  
25 anybody else. That's the reason we fought 40 years to

1 preserve it, to get it so we have a piece of land that was  
2 not developed by the developers, to be able to use it.

3           And for you all to talk about  
4 wilderness -- wilderness and that's the best thing for the  
5 land? -- look at what you have under wilderness now. Take  
6 a real good look at what your wilderness has done for you.  
7 It's full of exotics because you took out the eyes and ears  
8 of the people who really care and that's sportsman.  
9 Consider their rights. Look at the Gladesman's culture.  
10 Look at it. It's very important. It's history.

11           MR. CLARK: Stuart Krantz.

12           MR. KRANTZ: Stuart Krantz.

13           I have to say although we probably  
14 disagree on the alternatives, I support what that gentleman  
15 said about sportsmen caring about wildlife.

16           Anyway, I'm for Alternative F and not for  
17 the Preferred Alternative. First of all, I question  
18 whether or not the National Park Service is really the  
19 right organization to even consider an Alternative F.

20                   Here under Act 16 of the US Code, it says  
21   for the enjoyment, education, inspiration of this and  
22   future generations, so I don't think the US Park Service  
23   could ever really look at an alternative that didn't  
24   include humans.  
25                   Mr. Ramos, 35 years ago, if that's when



1 that Addition Lands Act was put together, perhaps it's time  
2 to rethink the issue because the circumstances prove that  
3 Congress must do that; and I, from my position, if we as  
4 humans continue on the track that we're going, how many  
5 millions of species will we lose?

6           Anyway, I want to talk about a guy who  
7 gave me an idea, Grizzly Man. He spoke before the National  
8 Wildlife Federation. I heard him 20 years ago. And his  
9 position was basically putting aside the land that's most  
10 beautiful for all of us. How about also putting aside the  
11 land that preserves the most species.

12           We are entering the 21st Century. We've  
13 just experienced the greatest mass extinction of wildlife  
14 in the world, and I really think that the United States,  
15 being the most powerful and still the richest country on  
16 earth, should be the leaders in doing and sending the  
17 proper example for wildlife conservation because if we keep  
18 going down this track, what wildlife are we going to have  
19 left at the end of 21st Century? The World Conservation

20 Association says it's three species an hour right now we're  
21 losing.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. CLARK: Monroe Patillo.

24 MR. PATILLO: I am Monroe Patillo representing  
25 the South Florida Amateur Astronomer's Association.

1           So far I've heard of a lot of other  
2 activities that take place in the area and what I didn't  
3 hear is astronomy. For longer than it's been the Addition  
4 Lands, back when there was a place out there called Deputy  
5 Hunt Club, astronomers used to go out into the Everglades  
6 in the evenings and take images of what they could see in  
7 the night sky.

8           South Florida has grown considerably  
9 since then. There's a lot more light, but the end result  
10 is we're still out there, we're still there in the dark  
11 taking images of things that you cannot see elsewhere in  
12 South Florida.

13           One additional indicator that I think you  
14 need to take into consideration is trail narrowing and not  
15 trail widening. If a trail is wide enough to accommodate a  
16 vehicle so that you can carry a telescope out into the  
17 wilderness and if the vehicles are allowed to come into  
18 that area, narrow the trail by running it to the point  
19 where a normal passenger vehicle can't move, then you

20 narrow the trail to the point that it can't be used for its

21 original purpose.

22 I would just indicate that you can always

23 go back and change your mind and add off-road vehicle use,

24 but once the area is no longer pristine for those purposes,

25 you can't really go back and do it over again.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. CLARK: Gene Massagee.

3 MR. MASSAGEE: Good afternoon, sirs.

4 The public should have access to the  
5 management area, no off-road vehicles, protect the animal  
6 life, no noise. You will never have enough officers to  
7 enforce all the off-road vehicle rules.

8 And another point to make is I've heard a  
9 lot of people talk about everybody watching you folks, but  
10 I've heard somebody say that you're watching their fellow  
11 man to make things better.

12 Everglades over the years since you've  
13 made some rules has been a quieter place. Even groups with  
14 off-duty officers among them can get out of control because  
15 of the distance in the areas and the different things.

16 There are people that run down animals.  
17 They're not meat eaters. They run down animals with  
18 off-road vehicles with no regard or humanity toward  
19 animals. The sustainable area that you noted will not stop

20 animals being run down for fun.

21 As far as I know, as far as rescues go, I

22 don't know if very many people are familiar with the Bright

23 Radio System that the U.S. Government has but there's a

24 lack of communication with rescue for the more people out

25 there with off-road vehicles.

1           Thank you very much.

2           MR. CLARK: Phil Busey.

3           MR. BUSEY: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name  
4 is Philip Busey. I am a conservation chair with the  
5 Sierra Group. I'm here representing my state  
6 representative, Martin Kier.

7           Martin Kier was not able to be here.  
8 He's home taking care of his infant daughter and he asked  
9 me to speak on his behalf, and what Martin Kier asked me to  
10 ask you is to support Alternative F because it is Martin  
11 Kier's belief that this is the only alternative that will  
12 minimize the damage to the soils, to the aquifer, wildlife  
13 and plants.

14           And it is his belief that recreational  
15 ORV vehicles would cause what he calls devastating  
16 ecological consequences if it's allowed to occur,  
17 particularly degradation of the plants, degradation of this  
18 area under our custody, and the conflict in terms of the  
19 resources between the conservation, preservation and other

20 uses.

21               So Representative Kier thought that the  
22 runner areas suitable and currently in use by recreational  
23 ORV folks but this area while it's in our care should not  
24 be degraded.

25               And I would just say that you brought up



1 the issue of funding, and as a property owner and a 30-plus  
2 year resident here in Broward County, I'm active in  
3 politics locally, and, if you need to know, I believe that  
4 we will have a positive guidance for you to find the  
5 resources to take care of this area in its natural  
6 condition as much as can be, but those are my remarks and  
7 not the remarks of Representative Kier's, but we work well  
8 together and we look forward to working with you to achieve  
9 Alternative F.

10 Thank you very much.

11 MR. CLARK: Judy Kuchta.

12 MS. KUCHTA: I'm Judy Kuchta, Sierra Club. I'm  
13 the Broward County's outings leader chairperson. We go out  
14 there several times a year. Hundreds of people have been  
15 hiking out there. Everybody is amazed at the beautiful  
16 wilderness we have.

17 I was born in Miami so I'm a native and I  
18 have seen how badly South Florida has been degraded, how  
19 many roads have been built, how many habitats have been

20 destroyed in the name of recreation and development. I

21 think it's time we preserve a little bit of space -- of

22 natural space.

23               We were talking about being fair. Let's

24 leave something to nature. Let's be fair here. ORVs

25 already trample through 540,000 acres. Can we not leave be

1 42,000 acres to mother nature?

2 Thank you.

3 MR. CLARK: Thank you, ma'am.

4 Frank Denninger.

5 MR. DENNINGER: Good afternoon. There's a

6 country song. I think they call it "Together Again."

7 Frank Denninger representing The Fifth

8 Board Congregation, board member of the Big Cypress Lyons.

9 We've discussed a lot of things today at

10 the meeting, and I know Pedro mentioned people are trying

11 to be more open-minded at this point. I know it's getting

12 late in the game.

13 I have to mention, as far as being

14 open-minded, I think the Glades culture community has so

15 far been really open-minded and adaptable considering that

16 in the last few years we've lost 22 and a half thousand

17 miles of access on previously used ORV trails that were

18 totally illegal. Dove hunting was banned. We have a

19 60-day closure per year which amounts to us being banned 16

20 percent of the year. We have a 10 p.m. to five a.m.

21 closure, daily ban, which is about 30 percent of the year.

22 And there's more underpass designed by

23 the agency to shut down about a mile of roadside access

24 through 10 miles -- 10 foot of fencing involved.

25 And one gentleman here just a minute ago

1 mentioned the exotic species that might be transferred from  
2 point to point by ORVs, but until you put diapers on birds  
3 and bears -- if you've ever seen the droppings of a bear  
4 when they eat holly bushes, when they're stressed and a lot  
5 of times they don't have a lot of food their droppings will  
6 fill a pot seven to eight inches deep and be 10 to 12  
7 inches in diameter. So, I mean, even if ORVs would be in  
8 the designated trails, and they would not be in every  
9 square foot of the preserve.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. CLARK: Randall Gereon.

12 MR. GEREON: My name is Randall Gereon. I'm  
13 representing Randall Gereon here. I came to this state  
14 when I was two months old, grew up here and I love this  
15 state.

16 I believe that we should have the  
17 alternative. The Back Country Recreation Zone should allow  
18 camping. The 10 a.m. to five a.m. daily closure of Big  
19 Cypress should not be included in the Addition Lands Plan.

20                   The ORV trails are necessary and the plan

21   was as long as it fills the intent of the legislation.

22                   All use in the preserve should be

23   interconnected with ORV trails to the Addition Lands Plan.

24                   ATV riders, I have been around them at

25   different events. The majority, most of the people out

1 there, do care about the environment. There's always a few  
2 bad apples but that shouldn't bear on everybody that  
3 doesn't.

4 I also support law enforcement and they  
5 should have a plan where anybody that's caught doing  
6 unauthorized things should lose their right to use the land  
7 for a lifetime.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. CLARK: Danny Bartley.

10 MR. BARTLEY: Good afternoon. My name is Danny  
11 Bartley. I'm a native, born and raised in Central Florida,  
12 and I'm here to support Alternate Plan B because it gives  
13 us the most means for access.

14 You have 104,000 acres of land here.  
15 Whoever is going to see it without some type of access?  
16 Nobody unless you have a row boat or hiker who's going to  
17 walk across the Addition Lands and that's swamp, period.

18 If you don't have at least 140 miles of  
19 access, you're not going to have any of the public out

20 there to enjoy these lands that we bought with our public

21 monies.

22 I'm the president of the Airboaters

23 Association of Central Florida. We fight for access up

24 there and that's why I drove the four hours down here to

25 fight for access for some of these guys down south. If you



1 close all these lands off, they're going to be up there in  
2 my back pocket again, which is fine, you know, because  
3 everybody ought to use the public lands.

4 But I want to support Alternate Plan B  
5 and be able to utilize this area.

6 Thank you all.

7 MR. CLARK: Franklin Adams.

8 MR. ADAMS: Good evening. I'm Franklin Adams.  
9 I'm here to speak for my grandson, my daughter and a lot of  
10 people out there. I grew up in Florida. I've lived here  
11 my whole life. I've known Big Cypress since a very young  
12 age.

13 It wasn't the hunting or fishing or the  
14 meat eaters that damaged the environment. It was rampant  
15 development, unplanned growth. The best habitat of the  
16 Florida panther is not in Big Cypress National Preserve.  
17 It's in the private preserves. We need to bring that into  
18 public ownership. And if we don't do that this will be  
19 harmful to the Florida panther.

20                   The Florida panther is living flesh and  
21 blood specious. I've photographed a female and cub in the  
22 back of my property. What's happened to the panther, most  
23 unfortunate, it's becoming a political animal rather than  
24 flesh and blood. It's been politicized.  
25                   It's the intent of congress and the

1 intent of the Department of the Interior to preserve the  
2 natural habitat but that's not what we're here for today.

3 MR. CLARK: Wayne Jenkins.

4 MR. JENKINS: Good afternoon. Wayne Jenkins.

5 I'm here representing the Florida Conservation Club as well  
6 as myself.

7 I'd like to start by referring to the  
8 letter I received from the Big Cypress Additions Land Act  
9 and in the first paragraph there's the wording that was  
10 developed from members of the public. I'm having a hard  
11 time accepting that. It leads me to pose a question to the  
12 NPS and this is for the record: How does the sportsman  
13 gain a voice in developing these alternatives? No  
14 alternative that was written is acceptable to the  
15 sportsman.

16 I participated in earlier meetings of the  
17 NPS. I'm hearing a lot of people say no wilderness will  
18 mean no trails but yet we don't have the first alternative  
19 that goes in that direction.

20 I believe that the preserve should be for  
21 everyone and supporting the community. We are not opposed  
22 to sharing all the resources with other groups but I don't  
23 think any other group should be asking for special  
24 consideration, special use just for them. It belongs to  
25 all of us.

1 I can think in past times with the hikers  
2 in the middle of the interior of the preserve, which is  
3 very, very rare, but yet we have people that break the  
4 rules all over this area. But it was very common to just  
5 see them and say hello to them. We don't need to develop  
6 all these alternative places.

7 MR. CLARK: Patrick Kerr.

8 MR. KERR: First I'd like to thank  
9 Superintendent Ramos for having this hearing here in  
10 Broward County. Thank you very much.

11 I'm here representing myself. I happen  
12 to be a member of the Sierra Club Trail Association and  
13 Audubon Society.

14 I believe that Alternative F will best  
15 serve the interest not only of myself and the people in  
16 this room but for all of us citizens in our nation.

17 The most important word here in national  
18 preserve is national. It's gives the opportunity for  
19 someone from Alaska or Maine or Hawaii who may be visiting

20 South Florida to be able to come and use it in its

21 undisturbed setting and undisturbed manner.

22               You have access to the lion's share of

23 Big Cypress. This one small area should be preserved in

24 its natural state.

25               Thank you very much.

1 MR. CLARK: John Blum.

2 MR. BLUM: Good afternoon. Thank you for  
3 holding this meeting.

4 As we know, as mentioned earlier, in 1974  
5 it was made the Big Cypress Preserve not park, which is a  
6 distinct differentiation.

7 In 1988 an additional 146,000 acres,  
8 which we're discussing today, was added to the preserve.  
9 At that time, as most of us know, Congress expressly  
10 required this addition to be managed the same way as the  
11 original land.

12 Traditional recreational value, while  
13 possibly being trumped due to environmental concerns at  
14 times, applies to the original land and applies to this  
15 addition as well.

16 In addition, when sustainable trails are  
17 created -- you have to understand that this is going to be  
18 the only way to get into the park in the future is on these  
19 hard rock trails -- I suggest street legal four by fours

20 with permits in the preserve as they are now on Bear  
21 Island. Street legal four by fours adequately repaired  
22 with permits and inspected as is now available on Bear  
23 Island should be able to transverse the entire preserve.  
24 In addition, sustainable trails in the  
25 addition should connect to the existing trails in Bear



1 Island and other trails in the addition.

2 Please note that many older folks and  
3 children will not be able to get into the preserve for a  
4 real meaningful experience.

5 The Glades culture should be preserved.

6 Concerning back country camping, I  
7 suggest more individuals stay at stand-alone sites as they  
8 are at Everglades National Park. The campsite reservation  
9 system as utilized in Everglades National Park should be  
10 considered. The goal being that one or one's family could  
11 camp out and actually not feel like they're in a  
12 campground.

13 This would also satisfy the need for  
14 traditional recreational values in the sense that most hunt  
15 camps are gone. Those of us who do not own one would sure  
16 like to know what that was like, again a sense of the  
17 traditional Glades culture.

18 The only choice available to us, and I  
19 strongly suggest, is Plan B.

20           Thank you.

21           MR. CLARK: Arthur Joseph, please.

22           MR. JOSEPH: For the record, Arthur Joseph. I

23 live in Davie, Florida. I'm not a Florida native but I'm

24 70 years old and I've been down here since 1965 so that's a

25 pretty long time.

1           Anyway, pretty much all my life I've  
2 always supported animals and nature and environmental  
3 issues. I'm a member of the Audubon Society and Sierra  
4 Club, National Wildlife Federation, etcetera, etcetera,  
5 etcetera, and I personally support Alternative F, no  
6 motorized vehicles in the Addition Lands.

7           The US Fish and Wildlife Service said  
8 that virtually every organization is pessimistic about the  
9 future of the Florida panther. I believe sincerely there's  
10 only about 80 to 100 left and I think it's our  
11 responsibility for the future generations that we protect  
12 these animals in this environment.

13           I also recall in the many years I've  
14 lived in Broward County Marjorie Stoneham Douglas, the  
15 mother of the Everglades. I'll tell you, I think she's  
16 turning over in her grave because of some of the things  
17 that have been done to the Everglades and the Big Cypress.

18           And I'll tell you what, when she walked  
19 into a meeting, whether it be the Army Corps of Engineers

20 or Park Service or anywhere, she always got respect and I  
21 really hope that you guys do the right thing for the  
22 preservation of the environment and the preservation of the  
23 Florida panther.

24 Thank you very much.

25 MR. CLARK: Lyle McCandless, please.

1           MR. McCANDLESS: I'm here to speak for myself,  
2 Lyle McCandless as an individual, and as president of Big  
3 Cypress Board and Alliance.

4           Number one, having this meeting start at  
5 four o'clock on a weekday disadvantages the public.

6           I would like to say we, my group and  
7 myself, fully supports the Water Resolution of the Fish and  
8 Wildlife Commission. We will be totally opposing --  
9 adamantly opposing any wilderness or back country  
10 designation in the addition of land.

11           Recently we had Matthew Schwartz of the  
12 Sierra Club honor us with his presence at one of our  
13 organized recent events. At that event Mr. Schwartz stated  
14 that there are rules that must be followed. He stated that  
15 you can't camp out on a golf course because there are rules  
16 against it.

17           We are not trying to camp out on the golf  
18 course where visitors are not allowed. We are only  
19 accessing the preserve in the manner that was given to us

20 by the Act of Congress in 1974. We are there legally

21 according to the rules, period.

22           The biggest problem today is the fact

23 that the National Park Service has not enforced the rules.

24 Rather they have -- rather than protect or traditional

25 rights, the National Park Service has taken every

1 opportunity to further restrict our rights, period.

2           Going into the addition land, right out  
3 of the box, the existing preserve, there's one and a half  
4 miles of ORV for 1,000 miles of the existing preserve.

5           Right out of the box, in the addition  
6 lands, talk all you want to about sustainable trails,  
7 automatically that goes down from a mile and a half of  
8 trails per 1,000 miles to one mile per 1,000 miles. When  
9 are we going to ever have something escalate.

10           The intent, this land calls for only 140  
11 miles of trails. The intent of the 1974 preserve  
12 legislation and the addition land legislation was to allow  
13 reasonable ORV access to all the preserve and addition  
14 land.

15           MR. CLARK: Thank you, sir.

16           MR. CLARK: ORV access should be all the  
17 trails, all the areas. The original intent was not to have  
18 half a dozen individual preserves not connected.

19           Thank you.

20 MR. CLARK: John Adornato.

21 MR. ADORNATO: My name is John Adornato and I am

22 with the National Parks Conservation Association

23 representing 300,000 of our members.

24 I want to say that NPCA and our

25 membership fully supports the complete wilderness



1 designation alternative that is only embodied in

2 Alternative F.

3 I will go into the details as to why

4 during the next session, but suffice it to say that the Big

5 Cypress Additions Land Act clearly states that the

6 secretary shall review the area within the addition for

7 preservation as wilderness, so you're doing everything in

8 your rights and, in fact, requirements to identify and to

9 implement wilderness designation in this area.

10 I would say that to introduce vehicles

11 into this area where there haven't been any for years or

12 decades is not the right choice.

13 Part of the reason for the success of the

14 Florida panther is the fact that they've had areas like

15 this where they haven't been impaired.

16 And I would say I completely agree with

17 Franklin, we have to find more land where the panther can

18 roam. Where they can roam from Big Cypress all the way up

19 north into Florida and Georgia, but right now this land

20 needs our protection and the preserve needs to make sure

21 that that happens.

22               Hunting will remain viable in the

23 preserve and, as with other national park units, the issue

24 of managing game retrieval is something to grapple with but

25 not something that's going to change or be eliminated in

1 the Addition Lands.

2 I would say that there are plenty of our  
3 members, members who are Florida natives, who have told us  
4 that hiking and backpacking are things that they want to  
5 see, that their view of the development in South Florida is  
6 that it's devastating to the environment and that, in fact,  
7 the preserve needs to protect these lands.

8 The last thing I would say, we will be  
9 providing you with 13,000 comments from our members.

10 MR. CLARK: Bill Clark.

11 MR. CLARK: I'm Bill Clark with the Big Cypress  
12 National Alliance representing myself and hunters and  
13 families. We don't have 300,000 behind us but we agree  
14 with the State of Florida, the FWC view about wilderness in  
15 the area, and I think the FWC probably has more people  
16 behind them that are more than 300,000.

17 I'm not here in a fancy suit and I'm not  
18 a lawyer but I'm a user of the Big Cypress. Here we are  
19 again pleading with the park service to do the right thing

20 and live up to the intent of the original preserve

21 creation.

22 Some of the creators of the preserve are

23 no longer with us anymore. One of them being Lon Chiles.

24 If he had been here with us, you can bet we would have our

25 traditional South Florida Gladesman history and reasonable

1 ORV access in all the preserves.

2           Only 400 miles of trails in the whole  
3 preserve is not reasonable or justified. For example, on  
4 the Turner River Road and Trail South in north there's  
5 approximately 12 miles of distance and four miles deep with  
6 no trail and that's not all prairie. That's not all  
7 prairie.

8           We should have trails through pine trails  
9 and old trails that are supportable and are still there.  
10 There are trails that had to be shut down going through the  
11 whole east side of Bear Island because environmentalists  
12 showed some pictures showing buggy tire tracks and some  
13 widening of the trails. That's because the trails in the  
14 beginning of the year were not marked properly. We were  
15 suppose to go back and remark them after the first trail.

16           A few years ago -- this happened a few  
17 years ago and we're still waiting. The environmentalists  
18 are going to tell you the same old thing, the ORVs spread  
19 the exotic plants and leave tire tracks. None of that is

20 fact. Let's be reasonable.

21 MR. CLARK: Thank you, sir.

22 Rick Ronsky.

23 MR. RONSKY: My name is Rick Ronsky. I'm the

24 founder and vice president of Mosaic of South Florida. I'm

25 a native Miamian. I'm an Eagle Scout. I've been using the

1 Everglades and Big Cypress since I was a baby.

2 I've never picked up a gun to shoot an  
3 animal. Target maybe. Never been hunting. I do go out  
4 there and hike and I love the land.

5 I'm a friend of Match Works from the  
6 Sierra Club and I'm a friend of Jerry Brower, considered  
7 the founder of Big Cypress. I got off the phone with him a  
8 couple of hours ago and he wanted me to thank you,  
9 Mr. Superintendent, for having this meeting as do I.

10 I think the exemplifies what we need to  
11 keep in mind in these arguments. It's not about what we  
12 want. I think it's about the intent of how the park was  
13 established -- the preserve, sorry. It always included the  
14 allowance for traditional uses.

15 So again I've never been hunting but I  
16 think the people that are here on behalf of the hunters  
17 raise the point that their traditional use of the park  
18 ought to be allowed to continue.

19 What we might have heard is allowing

20 non-traditional uses such as people that want to go out in  
21 the dark with ORVs and go mudding. I think if that's kept  
22 under control and hunting permits are granted judiciously,  
23 perhaps to families that have been using them  
24 traditionally, have been hunting and have held a hunter  
25 permit for the past 10 years.



1           If that's a criteria, we can bring folks  
2 together, which is what Joe Brower did, was to bring people  
3 together. He went out and brought people together.

4           MR. CLARK: Thank you, sir.

5           MR. RONSKY: I'm in favor of Alternative F.  
6 It's always better to err on the side of caution.

7           MR. CLARK: Bill Bang, please.

8           MR. BANG: My name is Bill Bang. I'm here as  
9 president of the Everglades Conservation Sportsman Club.  
10 We've been here 60 years. We were fighting for protecting  
11 these woods with the Fish and Wildlife -- or Fish  
12 Commission long before you guys even knew it existed.

13           Our club is adamantly against your ORV  
14 management plan. We believe that the land should be  
15 allowed unlimited access. We are against your wilderness  
16 areas. We believe more ORV use should be allowed.

17           We support hunting, fishing, hiking,  
18 camping, canoeing and access to person with disabilities.  
19 Your new plan prohibits people with disabilities, to access

20 the existing preserve year round. People who can't walk  
21 can't get around without an ORV. By closing it at night,  
22 people who have skin cancer and are sensitive to the sun  
23 are unable to get about and star gaze.  
24                   You are asking me to pick a plan. It's  
25 like asking me which finger would I like cut off. I don't

1 want any cut off but if I have to have one of you guys cut  
2 off one of my fingers, my pick would be cut off the  
3 littlest one. Give us Plan B with the most access as  
4 possible.

5 We are the remnants of what's left of the  
6 Glades culture and your policies have created cultural  
7 genocide upon us by closing us out of our land, and we  
8 highly object to your presence and your methods.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. CLARK: Please hold the applause.

11 Mark Kendall.

12 MR. KENDALL: Good afternoon. My name is Mark  
13 Kendall. I'm a native Miamian. I'm a Davie resident and I  
14 have three children. I'm also an elected treasurer of the  
15 Airboat Association of Florida, which is an organization  
16 which was founded in 1951. One of our founders and past  
17 presidents, Francis Taylor, has over 950,000 acres of  
18 state-owned land named after him for his conservation  
19 efforts as a sportsman.

20 I want to read to you that was on your  
21 web page under the new mandates Law No. 100-301, Paragraph  
22 B, and that says that you're suppose to cooperate with the  
23 State of Florida to establish recreational access points,  
24 roads, rest and recreational areas, wildlife protection,  
25 hunting, fishing, frogging and other traditional

1 recreational opportunities. Three of these access points  
2 shall be located within the preserve, including the  
3 addition land.

4           In addition, on your web page where it  
5 talks about what is an ORV, here's what it says -- and this  
6 relates to the Gladesman culture -- "Nearly impossible to  
7 reach by foot, generations have explored remote areas of  
8 the preserve by homemade airboats and swamp buggies. Today  
9 people enjoy this traditional activity along the extensive  
10 trail system by obtaining permits for a variety of allowed  
11 vehicles."

12           Don't regulate us out of the woods.  
13 The Airboat Association of Florida fully endorses the FWC  
14 where no wilderness are at all should be put forth. We  
15 believe that traditional recreation includes airboating,  
16 swamp bugging and whatever else the traditional people have  
17 done out there.

18           The Indians that were here before us all,  
19 no one had to regulate them. They respected the land.

20 Through education reasonable people, such as myself and 300

21 members of the Airboat Association and other wildlife

22 organizations, can certainly respect the land and let it be

23 there not only for animals but for generations to come, and

24 that's what I'm about, my three kids.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. CLARK: Paul Moshanko.

2 MR. MOSHANKO: My name is Paul Moshanko and I'm  
3 vice president of the Everglades Sportsman Club. Bill Bang  
4 pretty much said everything.

5 I've come to this state when I was six  
6 years old. I've been going to the Everglades since I was  
7 six years old and I've raised five boys and one girl out  
8 there.

9 And I think the park service when they  
10 come into our land made promises to myself and my dad that  
11 they did not do. We had a camp and we had to take that  
12 down because they reneged on any more leases. They ran a  
13 blocked road within 500 yards of our camp. I had no access  
14 near the river nor anywhere else.

15 We need an open road to this area and  
16 other areas including the new area. And vehicles do not  
17 damage the land if used properly. The land comes back.  
18 You can fly over the area and you can't even see any sign  
19 of ORV tracks.

20                   That's all about all I have to say.

21   Plan B is the one I think you should use.

22           MR. CLARK: David Denham.

23           MR. DEHHAM: I'm David Denham. I'm a West

24   Virginia ridge runner and I've been down here since 1967

25   and the only woods I could find was out at the Big Cypress,



1 so that's where I've been the last 40 something years.

2 I've raised my sons there and now I'm raising my grandsons  
3 there.

4 I'd like to see it preserved in its  
5 wilderness state the way it is now. I've had the unique  
6 pleasure to have that area for my personal hiking use for  
7 the last 10 years and it's really returned to its  
8 wilderness characteristic.

9 Again I agree with Franklin Adams. I  
10 think we should add some more land to have the wildlife up  
11 to the Hattahoochee River. Once we get this behind us, I  
12 think we will get the support getting more area for the  
13 wild life and connect with the Forest and the Big Cypress  
14 preserve.

15 I only have one suggestion tonight. The  
16 last time I mentioned you could probably mend your fences  
17 and fix your gates along the intercepting canals to keep  
18 the ATV illegal use out of there.

19 But while you're making your plans,

20 presuming you're going to take the preferred alternative,  
21 you have the chance to limit the vehicle type that goes in  
22 there. I would say swamp buggies only, just big buggies.  
23 Try to keep the ATVs out and get your limited permits for  
24 that. That's my suggestion.  
25 Thank you.

1 MR. CLARK: John Jones.

2 MR. JONES: I'd like to thank everybody for  
3 having the opportunity to speak to you all and to be able  
4 to join this meeting with everybody. And, everybody, thank  
5 you for coming. This is a good turnout.

6 It means a lot to see everybody here  
7 because without everybody's support, you all and us, we  
8 can't have a group effort here, and I think that's what  
9 we're trying to do is instead of butting heads, trying to  
10 get our heads together so we can get a smart plan for the  
11 future.

12 Obviously I have kids. My twin brother  
13 is in the room, he has kids. Between the two of us we have  
14 eight kids and two adopted right now. Where we go, they  
15 come with us. We live in the Everglades. When we go to  
16 town, we bring the kids with us. When we go out we bring  
17 the kids with us. It's a family thing or no thing for us.

18 Our family has been here for five  
19 generations. I'm the fourth generation. She's the oldest

20 of the fifth generation and she's the youngest of the fifth

21 generation.

22 My family came down here when Miami was

23 called Lemon City, before it was called Miami. We settled

24 in. We had a 3,200 acre farm. We now own what's called

25 Max Fish Camp. It used to be Joe's Fish Camp. Max Fish

1 Camp came along in 1953, '54 when my grandfather came back  
2 from the Korean War.

3           Our family has been here for a long time  
4 and what we want to see is we want to see traditional  
5 cultural uses accepted, not denied, and I would like for my  
6 children to grow up the same way that we did and that's  
7 having fun and learning about the environment the way that  
8 it's suppose to be and that's in its natural state, not in  
9 a classroom, not on television, not in somebody's backyard,  
10 tell them whatever you want.

11           Just some of my credentials: I work for  
12 South Florida Water Management and Ecology Environmental.  
13 They're a private firm. I do Everglades restoration. I do  
14 part of the baseline study. I'm an airboat captain. I'm a  
15 technician and I'm also a naturalist, among many other  
16 things like a father.

17           But again I just want to really thank you  
18 guys for everything that you're doing and if there's  
19 anything that we can do, you have our name and phone

20 number. We'll be happy to help you guys and thanks again.

21 MR. CLARK: Luisa Velez.

22 MS. VELEZ: I didn't think I was going to say

23 anything. My name is Luisa Velez. I was born and raised

24 in Miami. I happen to be a Hispanic American.

25 I love this state, and I can remember

1 being their age and going with the school to the Everglades  
2 to enjoy all the beautiful sights that were around and the  
3 countless numbers of apple snails that you could just grab  
4 them and are completely nonexistent now.

5 I'm a wildlife rehabilitator for Sawgrass  
6 Nature Center and I also work at Flamingo Garden. I help  
7 out at Polk Peterson and at Arthur Marshall Foundation so I  
8 see what's going on.

9 On the same token, I completely respect  
10 the Gladesman's culture and being a Hispanic American, I  
11 love my culture so I can completely understand that. But I  
12 think that past generations, if they saw the damage that we  
13 have accrued over the generations, they would agree with us  
14 and they would tell us just hold back, just learn a little  
15 moderation.

16 I think that right now we are lacking in  
17 respect and we are over-abundant in selfishness and in just  
18 emotional -- just wanting to grab on to everything that we  
19 have and I understand that but the only way that we can

20 hold on to what we have is by backing off a little bit.

21 I just had to be a limpkin down, which is

22 a beautiful bird, who was having nutritional deficiencies

23 because the snails that it's suppose to eat can't be found

24 anywhere, so it's legs were growing completely crooked.

25 I see the issues that are happening, you



1 know, so I'm seeing it from each side and I'm just begging  
2 you guys to just get a grip and realize what we're doing  
3 and that we cannot take it back. This is not erasable.  
4 This is not something that is going to go away.

5 And I understand that you want to talk  
6 about your ORV stuff but you have ORVs that leak and  
7 chemicals are going into our water supply and that water  
8 supply is going into your Gladesman families.

9 MR. CLARK: Thank you, ma'am.

10 MS. DEE: Barbara Dee. I came in late because  
11 of an accident.

12 I want to praise staff and management. I  
13 consider you my personal friends and I admire the work you  
14 do. Having said that, I'm disappointed by the tone of the  
15 GMP and the tone of the plan documents. They portray  
16 Gladesman, sportsman, traditional activity in the most  
17 negative light that at best may be harmful. It does not  
18 reflect any of the positive.

19 The Gladesman's culture recognized by

20 county and city and federal and planning documents, yet we  
21 continue to be defamed at every turn by advocates of  
22 wilderness preservation with absolutely no clarification of  
23 the facts by the NPS.

24               Our culture and the impact of various  
25 alternatives on the culture is not even referenced in the

1 draft plan. Much less catastrophic impact of the proposed  
2 alternative to the culture is the proposed alternative is  
3 the least intrusive.

4           The media and politicians have lead the  
5 public to believe that we seek to obtain unfettered access  
6 throughout the preserve laying waste and destruction in our  
7 paths. This is simply not true.

8           And the Park Service knows that we  
9 authored the NPS policy on appropriate and inappropriate  
10 uses of off road vehicles. It has come to the point that  
11 our mere presence on these lands that we were instrumental  
12 in protecting is so egregious as to ruining the outward  
13 experience for all others.

14           We cannot support the alternatives and  
15 when I say "we," I mean the Everglades Coordinating Council  
16 and Everglades Faction Society whom I represent. We cannot  
17 support any of the alternatives as written and we adamantly  
18 support FWC resolution on addition management.

19           Thank you very much.

20 MR. CLARK: Lance Vincent.

21 MR. VINCENT: My name is Lance Vincent, past

22 state president for the Florida Wild Turkey Federation.

23 I've been hunting the Everglades since '62.

24 We support the General Management Plan

25 and we do not support the wilderness designation on any of

1 the Addition Lands.

2 I think that Governor Chiles would be  
3 right there with us. He's a turkey hunter. He hunted the  
4 Glades and hunted all over, and I'd just like to go on the  
5 record and say that the National Wild Turkey Federation is  
6 in full support of the Game Commission and against the  
7 Wilderness Preservation.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. CLARK: This concludes the GMP comment  
10 period.

11 (Time noted: 6:22 p.m.)

12 (Further proceedings were had, not made a part  
13 of this transcript.)

14 (Time noted: 6:44 p.m.)

15 MR. CLARK: The first speaker is Chaffee  
16 Scarborough.

17 MR. SCARBOROUGH: Thank you very much for  
18 hearing me.

19 I just want to say that I don't want any

20 land put into the wilderness area. I want complete access

21 by any ATV, swamp buggy or airboat. The land is ours to

22 use. We bought it. The first thing you all do is take a

23 piece of land and shut us out of it.

24 When you took over the Stairsteps down at

25 Big Cypress you promised us that you wouldn't object to our

1 using our airboats down there. The first thing you did was  
2 shut us off.

3 I don't believe you. You all have lied  
4 to us and you will lie to us again. I have a pig's  
5 philosophy of life: I want everything I've got and I want  
6 everything you've got and I don't want to give you  
7 anything.

8 You give us a choice: Three plans. In  
9 other words, do you want to chop off my hand or do you want  
10 to chop off my foot or chop off my head? I don't like your  
11 choices.

12 I want you to manage what you have and do  
13 a better job. You have accepted South Florida Water  
14 Management's super nitrating the whole Everglades area.  
15 You need to address that problem and do something and try  
16 to stop it. If you don't, you're going to be covered off  
17 with Jee-Jee Beans and Jelly Beans and all kinds of exotic  
18 crap that's not native to the land.

19 That's all I have to say.

20 MR. CLARK: Pete Theis.

21 MR. THEIS: The NPS has shown extreme prejudice

22 against the sportsman in the Big Cypress and addition land.

23 For over 20 years NPS land closed for traditional

24 recreation use and used false science to try and sway

25 opinion over to the GMP.



1           When the Addition Lands Act was written  
2 traditional use activities at that time were the way the  
3 area was to be used. At that time there was no wilderness  
4 area or commercial activity so there should be none today.

5           The Addition Lands plan was intended to  
6 be managed as part of the original preserve under separate  
7 use and under separate management.

8           There should be no wilderness  
9 classification because the NPS knows that the area has been  
10 farmed and cattle raised and does not fit into the  
11 wilderness classification as of your definition of  
12 wilderness.

13           The definition of wilderness is 5,000  
14 acres of unfettered land by man. It is impossible to  
15 consider this land wilderness according to that  
16 classification and definition.

17           The attached map, which is part of the  
18 401 B map, was created before the addition bill was  
19 introduced to Congress. The attached map is for lower

20 prior to NPS acquiring this land. This map should be used

21 to reflect it is impossible for this land to be classified

22 as wilderness. This is some of your false science.

23               The NPS is required to work for the FWC

24 and they do not support wilderness in the Addition Lands or

25 in the Big Cypress National Preserve.

1           The area should be open to traditional  
2 use with the lower BS access to and from Big Cypress  
3 National Preserve as are the hiking trails.

4           If the NPS will not comply with the  
5 intent, language of the Addition Lands Act they should step  
6 down while the FWC can manage and maintain the area.

7           I do not support wilderness in the Big  
8 Cypress National Preserve for the addition land.

9           Further, all the environmental groups,  
10 including Sierra, testified to Congress that the addition  
11 land should be managed just like the original land.

12           Thank you.

13           MR. CLARK: Ralph Bellman.

14           MR. BELLMAN: My name is Ralph Bellman. I'm a  
15 homeowner at Big Cypress National Preserve. My home is  
16 there.

17           I oppose the wilderness land and I'm also  
18 supporting Alternate B.

19           And I also want to say one other thing.

20 I've listened to a lot of people here from the other side.  
21 They have a lot of good comments. I think law enforcement  
22 should explain to this gentleman we are not running over  
23 all the animals out there. Many of them are dead on the  
24 road. And this young lady who works, I also work. I'm a  
25 licensed deer rancher.

1 I own land where the Florida panther is  
2 and I can tell you where it's at and the FWC can tell you.  
3 It's on Daniels Road, State Road 80. It's all posted now  
4 all up and down the highway. It says "Panther Crossing".  
5 I just want to let you know that your panther has left Big  
6 Cypress, the panther preserve and all the area.

7 These people need to be addressed and we  
8 all need to sit with each other and talk. I heard the  
9 Sierra Club, I heard this young lady, I heard this poor  
10 guy. I wasn't going to talk. I was just going to oppose  
11 the wilderness plan, but somebody needs to work with these  
12 people.

13 These people think -- I'm also the guy on  
14 Bob Florence Broadcasting. I'm the bear guy so I also work  
15 with the bear and I work at Hattahoochee. I work in the  
16 panther preserve. We have trails in the panther preserve.  
17 We use swamp buggies. We use ATVs. And guess what? I  
18 think somebody needs to explain to them that these guys out  
19 here are not running all over the land.

20                   You showed a picture of an ATV. How  
21 narrow was that trail? It was narrow. Do you do a good  
22 job? Do you do a good job? Absolutely. I've never seen  
23 better management in my life but what we're having here is  
24 a debate on people not understanding each other.  
25                   So if I work with the Florida bear, I'm a

1 licensed deer rancher by the state of Florida -- I just  
2 operated on a deer two weeks ago. I had to cut its throat  
3 in two different directions and pull a tumor out of its  
4 neck so if I'm opposing the wilderness, ma'am, I think you  
5 should all understand why.

6           You need to get in there, you need to get  
7 in there, FWC needs to get in there. We all need to get in  
8 there. And also to enjoy and to work with that land.

9           Thank you.

10          MR. CLARK: Gene Messgee.

11          MR. MESSGEE: I guess there's a saying, that I  
12 don't have a dog in this fight. As a naturalist, some of  
13 the things that I referred to before that was brought up  
14 recently, I witnessed it as a naturalist and I didn't like  
15 what I saw and that's the reason I came to this meeting  
16 today.

17                 And I think we need more Margaret  
18 Stoneham Douglasses, Teddy Roosevelts so the River of Grass  
19 will last forever, and we need you to depend on your

20 conscience, your endeavors, your instructions, your plans

21 so that this will be a preserve forever, the River of

22 Grass. You should be looking out for the animals in the

23 River of Grass, the Everglades. It should last forever.

24 Thank you very much.

25 MR. CLARK: Kay Ferrara.



1 MS. FERRARA: Good evening. My name is Kay  
2 Ferrara. I'm here on behalf of myself tonight. At  
3 previous meetings I have spoken on behalf of the Florida  
4 Trail Association. Tonight I just want to -- first of all,  
5 I want to applaud everybody that's in this room. Even  
6 though there's two different factions here, I think we  
7 share a common interest in trying to protect the land, and  
8 to that we will come together some way or another, and I  
9 think as a group we will do it and that's the important  
10 part of this whole meeting tonight.

11 I knowledge and I respect the hunters and  
12 the ORVs. I knowledge the fact they want to access the  
13 Addition Lands. Who doesn't? It's very pristine and a  
14 beautiful environment for everyone to enjoy.

15 I'm a member of the Florida Trail  
16 Association. We maintain over 1,500 miles of hiking  
17 trails. In the Big Cypress our trails run south -- starts  
18 with roads south of Tamiami and goes north to the Seminole  
19 Indian Reservation.

20                   The part of the trail that runs through  
21 the Addition Lands are some of the most beautiful, natural  
22 hiking trails that we have in the State of Florida.

23                   To designate the Addition Lands as  
24 wilderness, that would be the only part of Big Cypress that  
25 would be wilderness and we're only asking for that small

1 part. The rest of it is open.

2 To designate the Addition Lands as  
3 wilderness also means it only would be the forth area along  
4 the whole 1,500 miles of hiking trails throughout the State  
5 of Florida that would be designated wilderness. We're  
6 losing our land and I'm asking you to protect it.

7 The National Park Service has been a  
8 partner with the Florida Trail Association for many years  
9 in protecting hiking trails throughout the State of  
10 Florida. I thank you for that, for protecting it, and I  
11 hope we continue receiving your support.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. CLARK: Phil Busey.

14 MR. BUSEY: Thank you. My name is Phil Busey  
15 and I'm here for State Representative David Kiar who has  
16 asked me to come and speak because he's home babysitting  
17 his infant daughter.

18 Representative Kiar supports the  
19 wilderness designation. He believes that there's

20 considerable hundreds of thousands of acres that are  
21 currently available for off-road recreational vehicle use  
22 and he feels that it would cause ecological disaster to put  
23 in 140 miles of ORV trails in the addition land of the Big  
24 Cypress Natural Preserve so he supports the wilderness  
25 designation.

1 MR. GEREON: Randy Gereon.

2 Even though I'm a big guy and I'm in  
3 pretty good shape for my age, I have a kidney and heart  
4 condition, I've had surgery -- major surgery. I have  
5 injuries to my foot where I crushed my foot back in the  
6 '80s. If this land is designated as wilderness, I won't be  
7 able to have access to it. The only way I would be able to  
8 would be to take an ATV or off-road vehicle.

9 People mentioned before about the ATVs  
10 leaving oil and stuff like that. There's nobody in their  
11 right mind that would go out without a well-maintained  
12 vehicle and risk getting stuck 100 miles out there because,  
13 A, the cost of life and, B, who wants to spend nights out  
14 there with nothing.

15 I don't think it's fair that because  
16 other people have the physical ability to walk and hike and  
17 do what they want that I should be shut off from it.

18 I consider myself a native of this land  
19 and using our tax dollars to buy and purchase it, it should

20 be opened to everybody with people having a conscience of

21 what they do out there. Nobody in their right mind is

22 going to go out there and run over animals and tear the

23 place up. Why would somebody destroy that beautiful area,

24 and that should be taken into consideration.

25                   And I opposed the wilderness and I thank

1 you very much for your time and thank you for listening  
2 today.

3 MR. CLARK: Bill Bang.

4 MR. BANG: My name is Bill Bang. I'm president  
5 of the Everglades Preservation Club. I'm here to represent  
6 them and what they say. I'd like to thank you for holding  
7 these hearings.

8 One of the first things I want to address  
9 is we don't believe that this land meets the criteria for  
10 wilderness. Keep in mind that it's been used for cattle  
11 operation and used for agriculture so we don't support the  
12 designation of this land for wilderness land.

13 This lady here who was speaking earlier  
14 said they only want a little piece of Big Cypress. If you  
15 take the Big Cypress and the national park, which is half a  
16 million acres, you already have half as wilderness. How  
17 much more do you need? Leave us our land. Let us have  
18 access.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. CLARK: Rick Andrews.

21 MR. ANDREWS: Rick Andrews.

22 On behalf of the 355,438 licensed hunters

23 in the State of Florida, I'm one of those who contribute

24 6.3 million dollars in licenses to the State of Florida.

25 I'm also here representing 5,138 members on the website.



1 I also agree with the FWC's resolution in  
2 the draft. I do not agree with the plan that we are forced  
3 to support. Like the gentleman said here said, it's like  
4 losing a finger. I would not like to see the plan modified  
5 as much as possible in favor of no preserve.

6 One of the things I want to comment on is  
7 Rob commented on our website, "that you outdoorsmen are the  
8 gatekeepers of the marsh. You see so much more than the  
9 casual observer will ever see."

10 Rob also states on his website that water  
11 levels historically peak in September which coincides with  
12 the beginning of the hunting season. I have a six year old  
13 son. It's not easy for him, it's not safe, it's not  
14 practical to be around that deep of water.

15 Evidence of economic destruction can be  
16 seen off Lock Road. It once flourished is it's now a ghost  
17 town. It once flourished and now it's a dusty parking lot.

18 I also want to bring up something else  
19 that you haven't talked about and that is that the National

20 Park Service has had the problem that marijuana is being  
21 cultivated in a lot of our parks. I do not want to see Big  
22 Cypress fall the way the other places throughout the  
23 country have.

24 Presently marijuana farms are in the  
25 national parks. Although significant marijuana plantation

1 farms have been eradicated, you still have to watch out for  
2 giant marijuana farms in the national parks.

3 I want to say something about the  
4 economy. Florida is not doing as well in addressing the  
5 economy. Mr. Gonzalez from NPS states that clean-up costs  
6 in the National Park Service are used to clean up mainly  
7 marijuana crops. Most states and cities face the same  
8 burden. Marijuana farmers are getting rich raising  
9 marijuana on public land. Last year, according to the  
10 Sierra Club, NPS pulled about 40,000 marijuana plants for  
11 a profit of 360 million dollars. The NPS entire budget was  
12 12 million dollars.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. CLARK: Lester Miller.

15 MR. MILLER: Good afternoon. My name is Buster  
16 Miller. I'm a resident of Naples for the last 56 years.  
17 I'm a disabled veteran and if we get wilderness in the  
18 Addition Lands that's more or less going to tell me I can't  
19 go there. I have an RV -- I have a couple of them and that

20 would be the only way I can get access to anything.

21                   There's a lot of disabled people, which

22 you don't see too many, but I have friends that would like

23 to go there too. They would like to go and see it. So

24 keep in mind there are disabled people that would like to

25 go there.

1           Now, the Addition Lands should not be  
2 Addition Lands. They were meant to be part of one unit.  
3 They should be just added right in with the Big Cypress.  
4 They shouldn't be some separate entity that we have to get  
5 extra permits. If you want to do something, add more  
6 permits to the 2,000. Keep it just the way it is. And as  
7 it is right now, the people that are permitted are going to  
8 be the only ones using it, so we'll be buying two separate  
9 stickers to go on two separate lands and it should be all  
10 one and all that's all I have to say.

11       MR. CLARK: Elizabeth Falcone.

12       MS. FALCONE: I've been hiking and fishing in  
13 the South Florida area land since 1966. I find it  
14 reprehensible to be even having this hearing but we are  
15 here for the sake of the plants and animals that have no  
16 voice.

17           It is absolutely clear off-road vehicles  
18 destroy plant and animal life so why are we even discussing  
19 it? Because we care about the preserve.

20 I just returned from Alaska's magnificent  
21 Denali National Park. Why is it so magnificent and why  
22 will my grandsons be able to see its unspoiled splendor?  
23 I'll tell you why. We were taken by school but into the  
24 park. The park ranger narrated about the habitats of the  
25 bear, caribou and moose along the half our drive.

1           The bus stopped and the ranger said,  
2 "Before you get off the bus I want you to know this. We do  
3 not allow cars on our park roads because we feel traffic  
4 will disturb the animals and soon you will not be able to  
5 see bear, moose, caribou or the other animals you saw  
6 today."

7           I applaud the attitude, the attitude by  
8 the Denali leadership, and I think you should emulate it.  
9 I hope -- and I'm going to be as eloquent as possible --  
10 that the leaders that are in charge of the Big Cypress will  
11 not be driven to by the off-road vehicle lot.

12           I urge you to implement Plan F-4. May  
13 God help the animals and plants who are unaware that they  
14 live in a preserve that does not give them the protection  
15 they would have in a national park.

16           Thank you.

17           MR. CLARK: Let's keep the comments down  
18 please.

19           Patrick Kerr.

20 MR. KERR: For the last time, Patrick Kerr.

21 I believe that this as wilderness area

22 and should be designated as a wilderness area. Plants and

23 animals need protection. Among all of the animals and

24 fishes that are currently in the reserve, 72 of them are

25 listed as endangered, threatened or suspicious of concern.



1 Among those are the panther, and this habitat for the  
2 panther, the foliage in the area as well as the food supply  
3 are in danger.

4 This being said, I also believe that this  
5 is an area that needs to be protected, as I mentioned  
6 before, for everyone in the nation so they have the  
7 opportunity to see it in its magnificent and undisturbed  
8 setting, not only for us but as a lesson to the rest.

9 MR. CLARK: Please hold the applause.

10 Jonathan Blum.

11 MR. BLUM: Good evening. Thanks again. My name  
12 is Jonathan Blum, for the record.

13 Number one, setting aside a pristine area  
14 is a great idea. However, land in question is nowhere near  
15 pristine. As has been mentioned many times, there have  
16 been numerous activities including oil extraction, mineral  
17 extraction, orange grove, etcetera, etcetera in the area.

18 Wilderness designation was not a part of  
19 the original intent of the creation of Big Cypress or of

20 the addition or to be made a park. It's not a park. It

21 should not be managed like a park.

22           The national park restricts more and more

23 land from our use every year. Historically one can see

24 that either by closures, permits, etcetera. Another

25 gentleman mentioned it will now require additional permits

1 to get into the Addition Lands.

2 I agree with what he said, it should just  
3 be the Big Cypress National Preserve, not one preserve here  
4 and another preserve here with a different set of rules.  
5 It is so darn confusing and one requires so many permits,  
6 stickers, cards in your wallet, all kinds of things to go  
7 out there and have a good time, unless you want to walk  
8 around and look at nature which we do sometimes.

9 People really believe it is your intent  
10 to get all people out of the interior all together and just  
11 have tourist or basically all of us see the park from a  
12 boardwalk.

13 Some people really want to work with you  
14 guys but the trust issues are sometimes too hard to fathom  
15 because historically you are restricting us out of the  
16 preserve. Please remember there would not be a Big Cypress  
17 Preserve without the past efforts of Gladesmen and  
18 sportsman.

19 Please remember that we also love the

20 woodpeckers and the wood storks and not just shooting deer  
21 and hogs so there really shouldn't be a confrontation  
22 between some factions that are here. It's just the lack of  
23 understanding perhaps on both parties, but we all really do  
24 I think have the intent of preserving this land for all of  
25 our use, not simply preserving it for the benefit of the

1 animals only. We should be able to work this out together.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. CLARK: Charles Moorehead.

4 MR. MOOREHEAD: Good evening. I'm Charles

5 Moorehead. I'm a fourth generation Miamian. I've been

6 using the addition land and around it since 1970.

7 The wilderness designation criteria

8 cannot be met in the Addition Lands. One of the largest

9 highways in the State of Florida runs right through the

10 middle of it. That alone should be a disqualifying factor.

11 So other wilderness designated land has such a highway

12 through the middle of it.

13 In 1979 you all surveyed the then Big

14 Cypress and found not one inch of it worthy of wilderness

15 designation. This is simply an additional piece of Big

16 Cypress which is no different and for consistency, both

17 legally and morally, the same designation should apply.

18 It's no defense to say "Our policy is

19 slightly different now." Wait a minute, the Big Cypress is

20 not wilderness, it never was, and never should be.

21           The land has been used for additional

22 uses, cultural uses, logging as well as cattle use, all

23 inconsistent with wilderness designation. You can put

24 lipstick on a pig but it does make it a beautiful woman and

25 the addition land is no exception.

1           Thank you.

2           MR. CLARK: Bishop Wright.

3           MR. WRIGHT: I would like to thank you all for  
4 the opportunity to speak tonight. Bishop Wright with  
5 Florida Airboat Association and I'm the voice of 26,000  
6 registered airboaters because we are the umbrella  
7 organization of all airboating organization in the state of  
8 Florida.

9           With that said, I just want to say you've  
10 heard a lot of testimony tonight on why this should not be  
11 a wilderness. There's no surprise to the people that use  
12 the area and understand the area.

13           There's abandoned farm fields. You've  
14 got all the documents. No one has even talked about the  
15 pipeline that was put in there that's all rusted out, still  
16 there. Alligator Alley has been discussed.

17           Everything has been discussed and the  
18 reasons why and the intent 20 years ago was not to be  
19 wilderness, and it was well used back then.

20                   And what the other side wants to talk  
21 about is all of the changes that will occur on the land  
22 from a little bit of traffic, but the truth is that land  
23 already had that and it's been 20 years so I don't  
24 understand how we can talk about how pristine it is when  
25 the truth is it's not.



1 I just want to end this real quick by  
2 saying it's just ludicrous to think that you can do this  
3 and to make it a preserve. I don't support the preserve.  
4 I support the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and I just  
5 think we need all the access we can get.

6 The taxpayers of Florida bought it. The  
7 taxpayers of Florida should be able to use it and, not to  
8 mention, we're going to still want those taxpayers to  
9 maintain it because the maintaining part is going to be the  
10 toughest part.

11 If you don't give them the tools and  
12 allow them into the area to do fire control, fire burns and  
13 everything else, it will be like all your parks.

14 And no one visits the parks for a reason,  
15 there's no access to a park. Look at the numbers of  
16 visitors that attend the park. I can name you plenty of  
17 land that we bought to make them hunting lands, like the  
18 Kissemee State Park. Three thousand people attended that.  
19 We have more than that in hunting season.

20           Thank you.

21           MR. CLARK: John Storms.

22           MR. STORMS: Good evening. My name is John

23 Storms. I'm president of the Broward County Airboat Club.

24           I'm sure you all received and reviewed

25 the documentation from FWC, including the letter from Dick

1 Wiley and the resolutions they put out.

2 This is a pendency that's in the plan in

3 Section 5: "The secretary shall permit hunting, fishing

4 trapping on lands and water under its jurisdiction within

5 the preserve and the addition in accordance with the

6 applicable laws of the United States and the State of

7 Florida except he may designate zones where no hunting,

8 fishing, trapping may be permitted for reasons of public

9 safety, administration, Florida panther protection and

10 management for public use and enjoyment. Except in

11 emergencies any prescribing such restrictions relating to

12 hunting, fishing and trapping shall be put into effect only

13 after consultation with the appropriate state agency having

14 jurisdiction over hunting, fishing and trapping

15 activities." That would be the FWC.

16 "Notwithstanding this section or any

17 other provision of the Act, members of the Miccosukee Tribe

18 of Indians of Florida and members of the Seminole Tribe of

19 Indians of Florida shall be committed subject to reasonable

20 regulation established by the secretary to continue in  
21 their usual and customary use and occupancy of federal or  
22 federally acquired land and water within the preserve  
23 including hunting, fishing and trapping on a subsistence  
24 basis and traditional tribal ceremonies."

25               So if this being part of the plan, there

1 is to be no mistake that wilderness designation cannot and  
2 should not be implemented in this plan, so I strongly  
3 support the FWC's resolution and support Alternate B with  
4 no wilderness designation and no back country designation.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. CLARK: Lyle McCandless.

7 MR. McCANDLESS: Lyle McCandles again speaking  
8 for myself individually and as president of the Big Cypress  
9 Alliance.

10 I would like to again express our total  
11 support of the FWC's recent resolution, adamantly objecting  
12 to any wilderness or permanent back country in the Addition  
13 Lands.

14 Everyone in this room should read Lawton  
15 Chiles' letter to congress back in 1988, including the  
16 extreme environmentalists in this room and including all  
17 park staff people in this room. If you put that in your  
18 favorite reading pile and read it one week for a while I  
19 guarantee you the environmentalists are going to start

20 wondering whether you're right or not because the intent is  
21 so clear.

22           And going to the -- one thing I missed  
23 earlier. I asked this question before. I represent a big  
24 group of people. I'm affiliated with a dozen major  
25 sporting groups in South Florida. I've spoken to all of

1 them. Not one of them -- not one of them prefers the  
2 preferred alternative, not one of them.

3 And my question is who -- and the Parks  
4 have said that the preferred alternative is their preferred  
5 alternative supposedly supporting the comments. Someone  
6 needs to help me there. It's not preferred by anybody I  
7 know.

8 Prior to the closure of the Addition  
9 Lands by the Park Service in 1988 it was heavily tramped  
10 by all including: Farming, ranching, logging, oil  
11 exploration, hunting in private property, hunting camps  
12 going back to the 1940s. This past activity alone makes  
13 the area inappropriate for wilderness.

14 Wilderness designation would make  
15 adaptive management impossible as well as severely restrict  
16 management activities including fire suppression, removal  
17 of exotics, animal tracking, control of the Burmese python,  
18 etcetera.

19 All areas between RV trails are de facto

20 wilderness areas making all wilderness designations

21 unnecessary to protect the resources. All areas between RV

22 trails are accessible on foot so it's as effective as a

23 wilderness right there.

24                   And I would say to Mr. Hinder I would

25 like to have your card before we leave. I would like to



1 give you all the factual information you need as a  
2 representative of the Park Service representing wilderness  
3 hoping you heard enough here today to give your logical  
4 mind the feeling for the inappropriateness of wilderness,  
5 but I would like to have your card and I would like to give  
6 you Lawton Chile's letter and some other stuff so you can  
7 be more appraised.

8 Thank you, gentlemen.

9 MR. CLARK: Paul Moshanko.

10 MR. MOSHANKO: My name is Paul Moshanko. I'm  
11 with the Everglades Conservation Sportsman's Club. I want  
12 to thank our president. He's pretty well said what I was  
13 going to say and I go with what he says on it. I have  
14 nothing else.

15 MR. CLARK: Thank you. Sir.

16 Mara Slackman.

17 MS. SLACKMAN: Good evening. My name is Mara  
18 Slackman. I'm a member of the Sierra Club and I'm reading  
19 a letter from Mike Schwartz, the Everglades chair, who had

20 to be out of town and regretfully could not be here.

21 Reading media reports on the battle of

22 Big Cypress one would think the conflict is near epic

23 proportions is raging between the various groups here

24 today. I don't believe that's true.

25 Several years ago the National Parks

1 Service brought a facilitator to Broward County.  
2 Environmentalists and off-road vehicle supporters were put  
3 together in a room from sunrise to sunset to see if a  
4 mutually agreeable solution could be hashed out on the  
5 future of the Addition Lands.

6           It's unfortunate that a video of that day  
7 is not available. Much of it would have been at least as  
8 entertaining as Kanye West and Sarah Swift at the MTV Music  
9 Awards. I'm sure that everybody that was in that room will  
10 remember it for a lifetime.

11           For many of us it was the first time we  
12 had met. There were some rough moments in the beginning  
13 but as the day wore on mutual respect seemed to win out.  
14 At the end of the meeting no compromises were reached and  
15 absolutely nothing had been decided.

16           However, several weeks later  
17 environmentalists and NPS staff joined candidates and  
18 several others from the Big Cypress Sportsman Alliance for  
19 buggy trip and picnic at Lyle's Camp at the Turner River.

20 My most memorable moment from that day is when Lyle took us  
21 to what is possibly the largest old grove cypress tree  
22 remaining in the preserve after it was logged out in the  
23 '40s and '50s.

24               Several weeks later Lyle joined the  
25 Sierra Club on a four-mile hike through a section of the

1 addition land. We laughed a lot. I've had other  
2 experiences of a similar nature.

3 One night on the way home from a wedding  
4 in Naples a friend and I decided to stop off Bear Island  
5 and decided to do some dark sky observing. The visibility  
6 of the sky was awesome. But when we tried to move the SUV  
7 we found it sunk in the mud just enough to keep us from  
8 going anywhere.

9 MR. CLARK: Thank you.

10 MS. SLACKMAN: The solution to the conundrum to  
11 the Addition Lands is staring us in the face: Do nothing,  
12 leave it as it is, choose Alternative F.

13 MR. CLARK: Rick Sanda.

14 MR. SANDA: Good evening all. I'd like to thank  
15 Commissioner Reynolds, Superintendent Ramos and your staff  
16 for being here.

17 I'd like to point out several items --  
18 four items, to be exact. The first is land suitability for  
19 a wilderness designation. That has already been discussed.

20 I'd just like to reiterate that your exclusion criteria far  
21 outweighs your inclusion criteria for these lands being  
22 designated as wilderness, not to mention farming, roads,  
23 etcetera. There's also a couple of mineral exporters,  
24 etcetera.

25           Also that no land would be found suitable

1 at that time due primarily to existence of oil, etcetera,  
2 etcetera, so there's many other factors that you may not  
3 have included there.

4 Point No. 2, Historic assistance of the  
5 public sector. This might not have been covered here  
6 today. Historically the involvement of the public sector  
7 in disasters. To name a few, the Eastern 401 crash, the  
8 Value Jet crash of '96, also private planes access. The  
9 private sector has been involved in that.

10 The other one is non-competing uses. We  
11 don't have competing uses. Some people here like to  
12 observe the sites from the road. Others like to conjoin up  
13 close. We are nowhere near each other. They are close  
14 hiking distance. We are many miles penetrating into the  
15 area.

16 Other historical damaging activities,  
17 Point Three. It's a misconception. People do not cause  
18 these problems. Some of the historical problems have been,  
19 many years ago, land reclamation in the way of water

20 control. And this place right here -- this place right  
21 here was built on the Everglades. We just reclaimed some  
22 of that land. That is different than non-native species  
23 and development.  
24 We the people want our land. That's it.  
25 It's live and let live. We don't want to keep anybody out.



1 Please don't keep us out. We are not hurting anything.

2 Please take some of these people up on their offers. Go  
3 out there and stomp some grass on your own.

4 Thank you much for your time.

5 MR. CLARK: Roger Morris.

6 MR. MORRIS: Roger Morris. I'm a member of the  
7 Airboaters Association of Florida and I say no to  
8 wilderness, no back country, and I support FWC.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. CLARK: Marshall Jones.

11 MR. JONES: Good evening. Thank you for giving  
12 us this opportunity. We all appreciate it. Without  
13 evenings like this, nothing would ever happen.

14 I'll start by saying we the Gladers here  
15 in South Florida are unwilling to be persuaded by any more  
16 of these unnecessary regulations.

17 The addition land restrictions being  
18 lobbied by the Sierra Club is in opposition to the ways of  
19 our heritage. Our families have traversed these lands

20 since long before there were designated access points or  
21 regulations imposed, and far less harm was done by them in  
22 those many years than by a couple of decisions made behind  
23 some desk and boardroom, the Alligator Alley and things of  
24 that nature.

25 The NPS through its existence been a

1 hindrance to the average Joe who makes his living off the  
2 land. In some cases, people have been imprisoned for  
3 simply trying to put food on the tables of their hungry  
4 families.

5 I'm not condoning anybody going out there  
6 doing illegal activities or intentions by which people  
7 profit from the exploitation of the resources within the  
8 NPS boundaries.

9 In Southern Florida there are fewer and  
10 fewer places to access and recreate in traditional ways.  
11 We have to rely on your decisions, decisions which have a  
12 large impact on Gladers individually and, more importantly,  
13 their families, families with rich histories.

14 In closing, I would like to thank you for  
15 giving us this opportunity to inform you of our needs and  
16 desires with respect to the NPS. We hope that better land  
17 management will result -- we hope that better land  
18 management will result from the FWC and that you will be  
19 able to make fully informed decisions and have the

20 knowledge of the people of whom those decisions affect.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. CLARK: Jim Coletta.

23 MR. COLETTA: Gentlemen, it's unique being on

24 this side of the table. I kind of enjoy it. I have to go

25 to these meetings on a continuous basis and it gets kind of

1 repetitive.

2           The message seems to be coming across  
3 quite clear, and I have to tell you that my connection to  
4 this whole thing doesn't have to do with my role as a  
5 county commissioner. I have a strong interest in access,  
6 access not only to our wild lands but access to our  
7 waterways.

8           Recently I helped the county purchase the  
9 Quarry Island Marina. I've been very active in trying to  
10 maintain the bridges going across 441. It's for fishing  
11 access for people who like to do it.

12           So it's just natural when I see something  
13 like this, it's something that's not intrusive. It doesn't  
14 do anything really to impair the wilderness area.

15           We have to be realistic about what we're  
16 looking at so I urge you Plan B without the wilderness  
17 designation and better interconnectivity with the existing  
18 preserve that's there today, and forget the 29 having no  
19 access. There should be access off 29 too. Reasonable

20 access for reasonable people is not too much to ask for.

21 Thank you very much for your time and

22 consideration.

23 MR. CLARK: Damon Carol.

24 MR. CAROL: Good afternoon. I came here to

25 speak on behalf of the Broward County Airboat Conservation

1 Club but, in listening to some of the stories, it took me  
2 back to where before any of us belonged to any organization  
3 or anything. We just had a natural love of the woods.

4 And I think we're missing a big point  
5 here that the "traditional," "traditional." I keep hearing  
6 it and I don't think anybody actually understands what it  
7 means. I looked it up while I was waiting and it says, you  
8 know, "In relating to or in accordance with the tradition."  
9 Tradition, we all know what that means.

10 It's just everything is getting lost in  
11 translation here. We need to speak in layman's terms.  
12 We're a lot of woods guys. I mean, the trails already  
13 exist. These trails have been ridden by four wheelers and  
14 buggies and half tracks. I heard one guy mention, "I have  
15 full tracks."

16 The amount of area that we can take our  
17 ORVs is dwindling. We don't hurt anything. Don't make an  
18 enforcement issue a reason to band traditional ORV or  
19 recreational access. The hunters and sportsmen are the

20 true caretakers and watch dogs of your woods.

21 My kids and their kids deserve an

22 opportunity to see these woods as I have with my parents,

23 not just pictures being shown to them in a chapter of their

24 history class in school.

25 To enjoy Florida is to see it, is to



1 touch it, is to hunt it. Whether hiking or riding an ORV,  
2 please don't limit our use. Wilderness designation is  
3 unacceptable.

4 MR. CLARK: Rick Ornsky.

5 MR. ORNSKY: I'm Rick Ornsky and I didn't know  
6 if I was going to come up here and speak. I didn't know  
7 how I felt but having listened to a lot of your arguments  
8 what we need to do is call a spade a spade.

9 I think, and maybe I'm wrong, but we  
10 should all agree that natural areas continue that  
11 tradition, the way the natural area is, and that the needs  
12 of the many outweigh the needs of the few. If you left  
13 things alone, it might be better for everybody with regard  
14 to that natural area.

15 We also have to consider that the  
16 preserve was established with the condition that the  
17 traditional uses continue, and I think therein lies the  
18 cause for such conflict.

19 In my opinion, I think this traditional

20 use needs to be American Indians -- Native Americans should  
21 continue to use the land as they have, campers should be  
22 allowed to continue camping, and hunters hunting. And I  
23 think, in my opinion, if we restricted the traditional uses  
24 to just those groups it would probably please everybody  
25 here and limit the amount of damage that is going to occur

1 or the amount of regrowth -- allow the natural amount of  
2 regrowth in the area.

3 I think we need to be able to restrict  
4 control on those traditional uses and not just open it to  
5 ORVs or to people that just want to start mudding. I don't  
6 think anybody here wants to see that, but hunters and  
7 backpackers going out there, people calling themselves  
8 Gladesmen, I think we have to continue to allow them to go  
9 in.

10 On the other hand, people are getting up  
11 and objecting to the wilderness area -- to any wilderness  
12 area. I'm not familiar with the law but I think clearly  
13 the entire area does not qualify to be a wilderness area.  
14 I think certainly we should look at specific areas that are  
15 environmentally sensitive.

16 MR. CLARK: Thank you, sir.

17 Dennis Wilson.

18 MR. WILSON: My name is Dennis Wilson and I've  
19 been recreating in Big Cypress since 1963 and I can tell

20 you unequivocally that there is no wilderness there and  
21 there has never been a designation of wilderness in any  
22 part of Big Cypress.

23 I've thought about the definition of  
24 wilderness so many times it sticks to my mind, "A place  
25 untrampled, a place where man visited but never stayed."

1 Folks, no part of Big Cypress qualifies for that.

2 I took a look at that corridor down 29  
3 this afternoon on the way to work and in about 15 minutes I  
4 came up with Mile C Prairie -- there's agricultural furrows  
5 there -- Rock Island Prairie, agricultural furrows, five  
6 canals, 11 railroad tracks, six rock pits, Wagon Wheel  
7 Road, 14 occupied homes, the Deep Lake Fire Station, three  
8 of them camps, and the Park Service's worker's camp is all  
9 there.

10 Now I ask you, is that a wilderness? Do  
11 you want that to be wilderness? It doesn't match. It  
12 doesn't match.

13 And, you know, we are a nation lost, and  
14 all these conversations we've been having about animals and  
15 conservation, the law is very clear -- it's very clear, it  
16 says no wilderness.

17 And Secretary Reed testified before  
18 Congress. He said the place is going to be used as and he  
19 said that before Congress. Now, that changes our policy as

20 national park and we should adhered to that because if you  
21 do anything else, you're going to be in contempt of  
22 Congress; aren't we? I think so.

23               Now, Superintendent Ramos' comments down  
24 in Miccosukee, he said, "In the end we're going to have to  
25 obey and abide by the law." The law is clear gentlemen,

1 ladies, no wilderness.

2 MR. CLARK: Barbara Jean Powell.

3 MS. POWELL: About 100 years ago our fathers  
4 raised cows on the addition land and it supported  
5 commercial and recreational activities ever since until it  
6 was closed for almost 20 years in a deliberate attempt to  
7 let nature reclaim all evidence of man's trampling. How do  
8 we know that? A former superintendent warned us of this.

9 The presence of hundreds of miles of  
10 historical trails were omitted from the status quo map  
11 erasing connectivity between units and cleansing history to  
12 better support the wilderness designation.

13 I have what I call the spaghetti maps.  
14 These are maps that you created 10 years ago and I'm not  
15 saying this is what we want, this lovely use. These lines  
16 represent 100 years -- more than 100 years of use of that  
17 area. This was just 10 years ago. You all did this map.  
18 This is what you all said the conditions were 10 years ago.  
19 There is no way that can meet the definition of untrampled

20 by man.

21 Natural areas do not fair better if left

22 alone down in South Florida. It would be redundant for me

23 to repeat Franklin Adams' eloquent statement as to why

24 wilderness would be unwise, but, please, no wilderness, no

25 back country primitive. The preserve will be better



1 protected without it.

2 Thank you very much.

3 MR. CLARK: Steven DeLine.

4 MR. DELINE: You must be getting near the end of  
5 the list.

6 I'm Steven DeLine. I have website called  
7 Bigcypressfarm.com. I'm a land owner in the original  
8 preserve, not too much below the Addition Lands.

9 I support the Fish and Wildlife  
10 Commission's opinion on the wilderness area. It pretty  
11 much does not meet the criteria for a wilderness, and they  
12 can more eloquently explained it than I can.

13 For those that are concerned about the  
14 panthers, my experience is that they're alive and doing  
15 well. They're actually eating themselves out of house and  
16 home at Big Cypress so the solution to them is more  
17 habitat and not ORV restrictions. They're alive and doing  
18 well with ORV trails and in pristine private properties.  
19 Their biggest problem is they have eaten most of the small

20 game, the raccoons, the possums, the armadillos, the wild  
21 hogs, so they have to expand their range to expand beyond  
22 their numbers.

23 That's pretty much it. I'll keep it  
24 short.

25 MR. CLARK: Judy Lamb.

1 MS. LAMB: Good evening. Thank you for your  
2 attention. I'm here on my own.

3 I have back packed and hiked many, many  
4 times in these Addition Lands and the thing that I have  
5 enjoyed the most about it absolutely is being totally far  
6 away from motorized vehicles, city lights and noise.

7 My personal feeling is that the Addition  
8 Lands should be preserved as wilderness. People can use  
9 them but they have to use their feet.

10 I have also seen destruction caused by  
11 ORV vehicles in the Olcala National Forest when I helped a  
12 group of people and rangers to plan over 200 site shed  
13 ceilings in the destroyed area there.

14 So I stated my point. I think that there  
15 should be an area where vehicles are not allowed.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. CLARK: Fred Haas.

18 MR. HAAS: My name is Fred Haas. I am  
19 representing myself.

20 I don't belong to the Sierra Club or any  
21 of these organizations here but I also hike in that area.  
22 I enjoy it. I retired in 1971. I enjoy the peace, the  
23 quite, the solitude, kayaking the rivers, and hiking in Big  
24 Cypress and whatnot.  
25 I am completely supportive of it being a

1 wilderness area. There are enough areas around for the  
2 motorized vehicles in Big Cypress. There are deep ruts in  
3 many places where these vehicles have gone through, the  
4 ground is soft. They spin their wheels. There are big  
5 ruts that we have to walk around and whatnot.

6 I think it's perfectly appropriate to  
7 have some wilderness area in this area to enjoy, like I  
8 said, the solitude, the peace and quiet, and the enjoyment  
9 of nature and seeing a deer and occasional things of this  
10 nature. I'll guarantee people that have the off-road  
11 vehicles will not see deer grazing. I find the airboats up  
12 and down around the Everglades.

13 I think it's important that we do have  
14 areas for people like myself that want some peace quite and  
15 solitude.

16 MR. CLARK: Thank you.

17 I want to remind everybody, I understand  
18 there's a lot of emotions. I understand that there's a lot  
19 of disagreement but we need to respect each other. That's

20 the basic rule and there is no tolerance for anything other  
21 than that.

22 Scott Sommer.

23 MR. SOMMER: Scott Sommer, sportsman.

24 I do not agree with the wilderness plan,  
25 the back country. I do support the FWC's plan.

1 MR. CLARK: Tom McWatters.

2 MR. McWATTERS: Tom McWatters, vice president of  
3 the Florida Sportsman Association. I'm stating for myself  
4 and the club, we do not support back country or wilderness.  
5 We do support the FWC.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. CLARK: Rande Owen.

8 MS. OWEN: I was not actually planning to speak  
9 tonight and I'm not completely ready at the moment, but I  
10 will be submitting written comments in my capacity as a  
11 scientist in conservation biology. I'm also a dues paying  
12 member of the Florida Wildlife Federation and a member of  
13 Sierra Club so for what that's worth.

14 I didn't have the good fortune to be born  
15 in Florida but my grandmother and grandmother were both  
16 born in Florida. When my grandmother was born in Florida  
17 in the early 1900s Gladesmen only killed what they could  
18 carry out. The only ATV was the human foot and there were  
19 not eight million people living in South Florida.

20                   If we fast forward in 2009, not 1909,  
21   there are eight million people living in South Florida. In  
22   1989 the estimated visitors in the preserve were  
23   approximately 81,000 people, most of those were hunters,  
24   ORV users, sportsmen and I think what you've heard here  
25   tonight speaks to the passion and the commitment that come



1 from these people that have long and direct experience with  
2 the Big Cypress.

3 But today, according to the Park's  
4 estimate, in 2007 there were over 800,000 visits to the  
5 park. All of these people were not hunters or ORV users or  
6 sportsmen. They were people who I believe are something  
7 different. 800,000 people cannot visit the Addition Lands  
8 in ORVs. 800,000 people cannot visit the Addition Lands on  
9 foot.

10 As I said, I will be making my written  
11 comments in my capacity as a scientist, but I want you to  
12 consider that even the most restrictive alternatives would  
13 put an ORV trail within a mile and a half of any place that  
14 you can physically be within the Addition Lands.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. CLARK: Tim Spaulding.

17 MR. SPAULDING: Thank you for having this  
18 meeting today. My name is Tim Spaulding. I've lived in  
19 the preserve since '72 and used it since '57.

20 I've been in all parts of the preserve on  
21 just about a daily basis and I have yet to see a grass  
22 prairie or a pine island or cypress that's died from swamp  
23 buggy or airboat use.  
24 I support the game commission alternative  
25 and I don't believe that there should be any designated

1 wilderness area in the Big Cypress.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. CLARK: John Conti.

4 MR. CONTI: Good evening. My name is John  
5 Conti. I was born here in South Florida. Back in 1998 I  
6 joined the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission as a law  
7 enforcement officer and they sent me back to Broward  
8 County. I've spent six and a half years patrolling the  
9 Addition Lands on swamp buggy and four wheeler.

10 And everybody has some valid points on  
11 why it should not be designated as wilderness area and I  
12 agree with that, but I'm going to give my point of view  
13 instead of repeating what everybody else has spoken about.

14 In the six and a half years, I've spent a  
15 lot of nights and days patrolling on foot, on four wheeler,  
16 on swamp buggy. I never saw anybody in there hiking to  
17 look at flowers past the levy or 100 yards from the levy.  
18 The only people I saw were camp owners or people using the  
19 area as sportsmen.

20 I grew up as a sportsman and what I  
21 understand is that sportsmen contribute to these lands and  
22 we should be able to use them, so I disagree with the  
23 wilderness area.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. CLARK: Brianna Jones.

1                   What would you like to share with us?

2           MS. JONES: I live in the Everglades. I've seen  
3 many things change like people born like Georgia and --

4           MR. JONES: That's her great grandma, Nola  
5 Jones.

6           MS. JONES: And I live in a fish camp and they  
7 changed it a lot.

8           MR. JONES: Changes to the Everglades, she's  
9 talking about.

10                   See, what it is, we have a bunch of old  
11 photo albums at the house that show the way things used to  
12 be going back to my great grandparent's day. And the Nola  
13 Jones that she's speaking about, she raised me and my  
14 brother because my mother died when I was three years old,  
15 and we grew up there barefoot on the Miami River bank just  
16 the way our mother did, the way our grandfather did because  
17 our great grandfather raised him there.

18                   And basically, I mean, I was told  
19 stories -- like I said, my mom died when I was three. She

20 would take an old Honda 90 cc three-wheeler from the fish  
21 camp, go down along the Miami River on the levy, take the  
22 old 67, which they put in the 67, and all the way out west  
23 to the Tamiami Trail and then along Tamiami Trail, go past  
24 teepees. She would stop and get supplies and stuff.  
25 She'd pick up what she didn't have.

1           She'd get out there to the Wild Hog  
2 Jamboree and she'd stay there for two or three days. That  
3 used to go on -- I believe it was about, what, a two-week  
4 long festival out there? It was not a one-day barbecue.  
5 And she'd come home after about the first week, my mamma,  
6 and she'd tell my grandma, you know, "I ain't got no more  
7 money left." My grandma would give her a couple of bucks.  
8 She'd either get back on her three-wheeler or she'd get in  
9 her Camaro and she'd drive back out there just to hang out  
10 because that's what people did back then, they got  
11 together.

12           You can go to church -- and probably half  
13 the people in this room go to church -- I'm telling you,  
14 they're in a rush to get to church, and I'm telling you  
15 when they say "bye" at the end of the service, they're in a  
16 rush to get in their cars and go home.

17           The only time you really see people  
18 socialize, okay, is when they're in a place where they're  
19 comfortable and, let me tell you, I think everybody in this

20 room is comfortable out in the woods. Whether they're tree  
21 huggers or if somebody wants to go and shoot an animal, I  
22 think we all got something in common and that's we all  
23 enjoy mother nature's God's green earth. That's just the  
24 way that it is.  
25               Some people don't want to see buggies.



1 Well, I'm sorry that's part of our lifestyle. It is.

2 MR. CLARK: Mr. Clark.

3 MR. CLARK: I'm Bill Clark, Big Cypress Alliance  
4 and Conservation.

5 You all know the preserve is unique. It  
6 was created in 1974. Do you think we didn't have the  
7 environment in mind? Of course not. Do you think our  
8 preserve creators didn't know swamp buggies leave tracks  
9 and rust? Of course not.

10 It does not say swamp buggies can only be  
11 allowed in a small portion of the preserve. It says that  
12 the preserve will be used and used hard, even in the  
13 Addition Lands.

14 It also says the addition land should be  
15 united when you're in the preserve and treated as the same,  
16 and you can find that in your 1988 caucus.

17 It was not created for any wilderness and  
18 not created to stop the interior access of swamp buggies.

19 We don't want to trample over everything.

20 We don't have to stay in the designated trails. That's  
21 okay. We do need more than 140 miles of trails in the  
22 Addition Lands.  
23 Please do the right thing and correct  
24 this injustice. Follow the original intent. I support the  
25 FWC's position, no wilderness, no modifications.

1           Thank you very much.

2           MR. CLARK: Albert Bryan.

3           MR. BRYAN: Thank you for this opportunity. My  
4 name is Albert Bryan. I'm president of the Dade County  
5 Club and a father of four kids.

6           We support the resolution for the FWC  
7 with no wilderness. I think it's also safe to say I also  
8 support Alternative Plan B with no wilderness.

9           I started going out in the Big Cypress in  
10 the addition land with my dad back in the 50s, and now I  
11 have four kids and I can't take them out in the Addition  
12 Lands like we used to, stop along the road and do whatever  
13 we were going to do.

14           The original agreement on Cypress was  
15 suppose to two years. It's been about over 20 years I  
16 guess. I don't know why it's taking so long. You know  
17 what the intent was. The Congress wanted this to be used  
18 not as a wilderness.

19           The trail system is there throughout the

20 whole area. The hikers that go out there, if they do go  
21 out there -- and we don't see the hikers because we're on  
22 the buggy trails.

23           The original plan was not to shut us out  
24 but to come up with some sort of regional management plan.  
25 If somebody wants to be in wilderness, they can go to

1 Everglades National Park. That's one and a half million  
2 acres of Florida land already designated as a wilderness.  
3 You want to see a wilderness, go to Everglades National  
4 Park.

5 People confuse the preserve with the  
6 park. This is not a park. This is a preserve.

7 Like I said, I'm a father of four kids.  
8 You're hurting my culture. I can't take my son out to the  
9 so-called Addition Lands. You're taking away our culture,  
10 what we're all about. You're messing up what we're all  
11 about here.

12 MR. CLARK: Thank you.

13 MR. BRYAN: Please reconsider.

14 MR. CLARK: Looks like we have come to the  
15 end of the list. Is there anyone that would like to speak?  
16 Please come forward, sign your name to the sheet, and then  
17 we will take your statement.

18 MR. CLARK: Mark Dombrowski.

19 MR. DOMBROWSKI: My name is Mark Dombrowski,

20 president of the Florida Sportsman Conservation

21 Association.

22 First, I'd like to make mention that we

23 do not want to see this area to a wilderness area.

24 We've heard a lot of different things,

25 Gladesman's culture, sportsman's culture, everything else.

1 Things have changed over the last 50 years. I remember  
2 years ago when I used to go down there myself when you  
3 didn't see anybody on Alligator Alley all night, not a car  
4 let alone a car boat on the alley itself.

5 Then things changed. The Park Service  
6 came in and a lot of these areas changed. What's happened  
7 is it created an area where everybody has to launch their  
8 boat in the same area. Some folks say there's impact now.  
9 Well, there's the same impact there was 50 years ago. The  
10 only thing that's changed it's that now it's noticeable.  
11 All the airboats, all the vehicles, everybody is in one  
12 spot. I'd like to see that the area be opened up, be  
13 opened up to the entire area.

14 And the trail system, I'd really like to  
15 see the trail system expanded into the park system and I'd  
16 like to see that the entire park be managed as one unit.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. CLARK: Stuart Krantz.

19 MR. KRANTZ: Stuart Krantz.

20                   Perhaps Congress needs to change the  
21 national policy. We're not the problem, neither are you.  
22 Overpopulation is.  
23                   I don't know how many of the studies the  
24 NPS does across the nation but I can guess that they  
25 probably all end with the same type of chant: Not in my



1 backyard.

2 I watched the movie premiere about Global  
3 Warming called The Age of Stupid. Whether you believe in  
4 global warming or not, in the movie there were these many  
5 people who did not want a wind farm in their backyard.  
6 Why? Not in my backyard.

7 Perhaps me need a Kennedy: "Ask not what  
8 your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your  
9 country."

10 Biodiversity is at risk and unless and  
11 until the Earth's people -- and that includes all of us --  
12 do more than we can do to stop the Earth's largest mass  
13 extinction this century, the 21st Century: Three per hour.  
14 All habitats we can preserve must be preserved until then.

15 Once we figure out what wildlife's needs  
16 are, then we can let humans use -- and some will abuse --  
17 the rest.

18 As for no visitors to the park, right now  
19 our country suffers from what's called nature deficit

20 disorder but I do believe that will change and that's why

21 we can't get rid of our parks.

22 Also any land can become a wilderness

23 preserve. All you have to do is be patient no matter how

24 it was used in the present here.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. CLARK: Brian Blackwelder.

2 MR. BLACKWELDER: Thank you.

3 I've been working on conservation issues  
4 in the state for -- since 1979 and I just think it's  
5 certainly ironic, all the people that have worked to  
6 support and preserve the Everglades, Biscayne National Park  
7 and Big Cypress, to create it, somehow end up here looking  
8 at each other as some type of extremists on each side of  
9 this debate.

10 We've had great progress in the state to  
11 create and manage these areas. It just seems ironic to me  
12 that also the two interest groups in these areas would  
13 contemplate basically a totality of either no wilderness or  
14 no something else to the extreme to dedicate. I think some  
15 sort of compromise has to be struck here. We have to see  
16 some wilderness in this area.

17 Wilderness is not something like the moon  
18 before Neil Armstrong set foot on it. Wilderness often has  
19 had human impact, but this is a real biodiversity hot spot

20 of the globe and this is something that has to be handled

21 with the greatest attention to sensitive measures.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. CLARK: John Adornato.

24 MR. ADORNATO: Again, I'm John Adornato. I'm

25 with the National Parks Conservation Association and NPCA

1 and our membership supports the full wilderness designation  
2 of 110,000 acres as provided by Alternative F.

3 We appreciate some of the ORV users -- we  
4 recognize the requirement for the Park Service to move  
5 forward with evaluating wilderness, and I would repeat that  
6 in the Big Cypress Addition Lands Act that the secretary  
7 shall review the area in accordance with the bill and  
8 provide recommendations to its suitability or  
9 non-suitability of any area within the addition for  
10 preservation of wilderness and any designation of any such  
11 area as a wilderness shall be accomplished in accordance  
12 with the section of its title.

13 And so there is a requirements to review  
14 and I think the Park Service has done a good job. There  
15 are requirements that you've met and that, in fact, you've  
16 done that with the wilderness evaluation and, in fact,  
17 you've also done your due diligence with respect to  
18 identifying the suitability for ORV trails.

19 One of my questions is how is it that the

20 Park Service has validated denying almost 30,000 acres of  
21 wilderness that you have identified instead to allow for  
22 the off-road vehicles. There is no explanation of that in  
23 the plan as it exists right now the way it is.

24 I would also mention with respect to  
25 wilderness area, there's been some comments tonight and in

1 the past where folks have said that when you leave the  
2 trail or you leave this impacted area alone for a while it  
3 grows back, and it's used both as a reason to say you  
4 shouldn't have wilderness as well as a reason to say you  
5 should have wilderness.

6           Again the legislative history for this is  
7 that the area -- the House and Senate Report state that the  
8 area included in the preserve is largely undeveloped at the  
9 present time and will be managed in a manner which will  
10 assure its return to the true wilderness character that  
11 once prevailed, so you have every right and responsibility,  
12 quite honestly, to make sure that there is some of that  
13 within this preserve so I appreciate that.

14           The only other thing that I would say too  
15 is that the preferred alternative is very complex and NPCA  
16 would suggest that no plan should be implemented until and  
17 unless the preserve gets the increase in funding that you  
18 propose it will cost for either one of them for any of the  
19 alternatives.

20           Thank you.

21           (Time noted: 8:30 p.m.)

22           (Further proceedings were had, not made a part  
23           of this transcript.)

24           (Evening adjournment: 8:47 p.m.)

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24 ANA REID

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25 Commission Expires: July 15, 2011