

ITEM 7:

REQUEST: Consideration of a request by the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks for approval of an accelerated process for amending land management plans to facilitate the development of new public camping facilities in state parks.

LOCATION: Statewide

STAFF REMARKS:

Camping in the outdoors has been an integral part of Florida's state parks program since the Civilian Conservation Corps developed the original state parks in the 1930s. Over the 76-year history of the state park system, camping has provided memorable outdoor experiences for millions of Florida residents and visitors. Camping has also contributed significantly to the state's economy and the economies of local communities.

Currently, 53 state parks offer facilities for overnight family camping. "Family camping areas" consist of campsites that are designed to accommodate a variety of camping equipment, including self-contained recreational vehicles, pop-up campers and tents. They typically include paved or stabilized roads, stabilized camping pads, bathhouses or restrooms, picnic tables and grills, connections for water and electrical service, and other amenities such as playgrounds and interpretive facilities. State parks currently provide a total of 3,501 family campsites. More than 2 million visitors enjoyed family camping in state parks during Fiscal Year 2009-2010, generating revenues exceeding \$15.5 million.

The Department intends to expand family camping opportunities throughout the state park system. A total of 56 parks which do not currently offer family camping have been identified as having the potential for development of family camping facilities. The new facilities will be designed, constructed and operated by private entities selected through the Department's procedures for soliciting and contracting state park concession services. The Department will retain full control over all aspects of planning, design, construction and operation of the new facilities to ensure consistency with the mission and quality standards of the state park system. This system-wide expansion of camping opportunities will increase the level of public benefits state parks provide, enhance the economic benefits of state parks, create jobs, and move the state park system closer to economic self-sufficiency.

To implement this expansion, the Department will solicit business proposals from interested private entities for the 56 identified parks. Based on the responses, the Department will select parks to receive further consideration for new development. Management plans for those parks will be amended to identify the location and scale of new camping areas in the same manner as done in all state park management plans. The amendment process will include a local public meeting for all of the parks. Amendments for parks larger than 160 acres will also be reviewed by an appointed advisory committee, as required by Section 259.032, Florida Statutes.

At the conclusion of the public review process, plan amendments will be submitted to the Division of State Lands for consideration by the Council. The Department requests that the Council's review of these amendments be conducted through a negative response process, in which only those specific amendments that are requested by one or more Council members would be scheduled for consideration at a regular meeting of the Council. All plan amendments would be posted on the Council website for at least two weeks, as is currently done for land management plans smaller than 160 acres and minor plan amendments, and an electronic mail

notice would be sent to Council members, staff and interested parties to inform them of proposed plan amendments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approve

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____
- DEFER
- WITHDRAW
- NOT APPROVE
- OTHER: _____

Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Potential for Expanding Family Camping in Florida State Parks

State Parks with Existing or Approved Family Camping Areas

Alafia River State Park	Lake Griffin State Park
Anastasia State Park	Lake Kissimmee State Park
Bahia Honda State Park	Lake Louisa State Park
Bald Point State Park*	Lake Manatee State Park
Big Lagoon State Park	Lake Talquin State Park*
Blackwater River State Park	Little Manatee River State Park
Blue Spring State Park	Little Talbot Island State Park
Cayo Costa State Park	Long Key State Park
Collier-Seminole State Park	Manatee Springs State Park
Colt Creek State Park*	Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park
Curry Hammock State Park	Myakka River State Park
Dunns Creek State Park*	Ochlockonee River State Park
Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park	O'Leno State Park
Falling Waters State Park	Oleta River State Park*
Faver-Dykes State Park	Oscar Scherer State Park
Florida Caverns State Park	Paynes Creek Historic State Park*
Fort Clinch State Park	Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park
Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park	Rainbow Springs State Park
Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach	River Rise Preserve State Park
Grayton Beach State Park	Sebastian Inlet State Park
Henderson Beach State Park	Silver River State Park
Highlands Hammock State Park	St. Andrews State Park
Hillsborough River State Park	Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park
Hontoon Island State Park	Suwannee River State Park
John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park	T.H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park
Jonathan Dickinson State Park	Three Rivers State Park
Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park	Tomoka State Park
Koreshan State Historic Site	Topsail Hill Preserve State Park
Lafayette Blue Springs State Park	Torreya State Park
	Wekiwa Springs State Park

*New family camping area in approved management plan.

State Parks with Potential for Providing New Family Camping Areas

Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park	John D. MacArthur Beach State Park
Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek Preserve State Park	Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park
Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park	Lake June-in-Winter Scrub State Park
Beker State Park	Lake Talquin State Park
Big Shoals State Park	Letchworth-Love Mounds Archaeological State Park
Big Talbot Island State Park	Lovers Key State Park
Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park	Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park
Blue Spring State Park	North Peninsula State Park
Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve	Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park
Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park	Oleta River State Park
Crystal River Preserve State Park	Ponce de Leon Springs State Park
Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park	Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park
De Leon Springs State Park	River Rise Preserve State Park
Deer Lake State Park	Rock Springs Run State Reserve
Don Pedro Island State Park	San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park
Econfina River State Park	Savannas Preserve State Park
Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park	Seabranh Preserve State Park
Estero Bay Preserve State Park	Skyway Fishing Pier State Park
Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park	St. Marks River State Park
Fanning Springs State Park	St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park
Faver-Dykes State Park	Tarkiln Bayou Preserve State Park
Fort Cooper State Park	Terra Ceia Preserve State Park
Fort Pierce Inlet State Park	Torreya State Park
Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park	Troy Spring State Park
Honeymoon Island State Park	Washington Oaks Gardens State Park
Hugh Taylor Birch State Park	Weeki Wachee Springs State Park
Ichetucknee Springs State Park	Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park
Indian River Lagoon Preserve State Park	Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park