

Public Meeting
Proposed Conceptual Public Access Plan Summary for
Thousand Islands Conservation Area
Environmentally Endangered Lands Program
Brevard County, Florida
June 25, 2019 at 6:00 PM
Sams House at Pine Island
6195 N. Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, FL 32953

Introduction

The purpose of this attachment is to provide an overview of what will be discussed in the posted meeting. This meeting is to gather public input from stakeholders and users on a proposed public access plan for the Thousand Islands Conservation Area. This Sanctuary is part of the sanctuary network established by the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program in Brevard County. The intent of the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program is to acquire and manage environmentally sensitive lands as a first step towards long-term protection of essential natural resources, open space, green space, wildlife corridors, natural ecosystems, environmental education, and public access for passive recreation. The Conceptual Public Access Plan and public meeting are part of a larger land management planning process currently taking place for the Thousand Islands Conservation Area. The following is the Public Access and Passive Recreation section of the proposed Thousand Islands Conservation Area Management Plan.

F. Public Access and Passive Recreation

Public access and opportunities for passive recreation will be provided within the Thousand Islands Conservation Area boundary (Figure A) pursuant to public use and recreational policies of the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program's Sanctuary Management Manual adopted by the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners in 1997. It has been determined that passive recreational activities best support the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program's goals. The Environmentally Endangered Lands Program's Sanctuary Management Manual (Brevard County, 1997) defines passive recreation as follows:

"a recreational type of use, level of use, and combination of use that do not individually or collectively, degrade the resource values, biological diversity, and aesthetic or environmental qualities of a site."

Members of the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program's staff have performed a recreational assessment for the Thousand Islands Conservation Area in order to determine the best placement of hiking and kayaking trails, the location of parking, and other recreation-related needs. An initial public meeting related to Thousand Islands Conservation Area will be held on June 25, 2019. A meeting of the Recreation and Education Advisory Committee regarding Thousand Islands Conservation Area will take place in September 2019. The minutes of those two meetings and future public meetings will be recorded and added to an Appendix within the Thousand Islands Conservation Area Management Plan. Staff will continue to work with groups to improve passive recreation while still managing the lands for biodiversity through responsible stewardship of Brevard County's natural resources.

1) Hiking

Thousand Islands Conservation Area

All proposed hiking trails are currently designated within the Thousand Islands Conservation Area. The Environmentally Endangered Lands Program's staff has established three hiking trails within the Sanctuary (Figure B) for hikers and birders. The first trail is located south of Fourth Street. This trail is broken up into two sections and has benches for resting and observing wildlife along the pathway. The second trail is a loop trail on the North Crawford Island. The trail is accessed from a kayak and small boat landing on the southeast corner of the site. The third trail is on the Reynolds Island and begins at the kayak landing and ends at a small overlook platform. These trails give visitors the opportunity to experience the lagoon and related habitats. Informative signs will be placed along the trails where appropriate, and any research or restoration projects that may be ongoing (such as wetland or spoil island restorations) will be included in the signage or in the kiosk at the beginning of the trail. Restoration projects will be done while taking into consideration the public use, but will not be limited due to the public use on the site. Some portions of the site may be closed during these projects, just as parts may be temporarily closed during or after storms.

2) Parking and Public Access

Thousand Islands Conservation Area

The parking area for the Thousand Islands Conservation Area is currently provided at the end of Ramp Road. This area is parking for the boat ramp, and surrounding area. There are no plans in the future to expand parking at the site. Sanctuary access is from any of the 5 kiosks. See Figures A and B.

3) Hunting and Fishing

Thousand Islands Conservation Area

No hunting is proposed within the Sykes Creek Management Area unless it is required for species management in the future. Fishing is a permitted activity and all FWC rules apply for licenses and size limits.

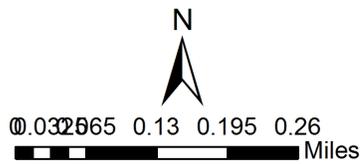
4) Bird Watching

Thousand Islands Conservation Area

Birding is a passive recreational activity that should be encouraged at all the Sanctuaries. Specific bird observation areas are established along the hiking trails and at the observation platform.

The central theme for environmental education within the Thousand Islands Conservation Area will be the wetland ecosystems, and how those natural communities support a vast array of species.

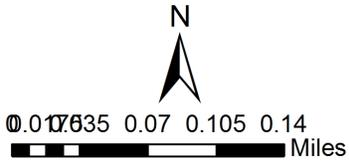
The Environmentally Endangered Lands Program's Staff will work with area schools, the school board, and other agencies and organizations offering education programs. This will be done as staffing and operational funding allows. The long-term success of the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program and the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Sanctuary network is directly linked to the level of citizen support, active participation, and commitment to conservation. The Environmentally Endangered Lands Program actively recruits volunteers from diverse backgrounds and promotes the involvement of disabled citizens.



- Thousand Islands Conservation Area Boundary
- 1000 Islands Kiosks
- 1000 Islands Kayak Trail
- North Crawford Trail
- Overlook Trail
- Hiking Trails
- 4th Street Trail

Thousand Islands Conservation Area Site Map

Figure A



- Thousand Islands Conservation Area Boundary
- 1000 Islands Kayak Trail
- 1000 Islands Kiosks
- ▲ Observation Platform
- Overlook Trail
- +— 4th Street Trail
- North Crawford Trail

Thousand Islands Conservation Area Site Map

Figure B