

Addendum 2—Advisory Group Members and Report

Advisory Group Report

Local Government

Chuck Hess, District 5 Commissioner

Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners

Bert Boldt II, District 2 Commissioner

Franklin County Board of County Commissioners

Lara Edwards, Mayor

City of Sopchoppy

Thomas Herndon, Outreach Coordinator

Wakulla County Tourist Development Council

John Solomon, Director

Franklin County Tourist Development Council

Fonda Davis, Interim Director

Franklin County Parks and Recreation

Bryan Roddenberry, Director

Wakulla County Recreation Department

Cathy Davis

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Wayne Cooper, Chair

Wakulla Soil and Water Conservation District

Agency Representatives Kristen

Ebersol, Park Manager

Bald Point State Park Ochlockonee River State Park

Jonathan Brucker, Aquatic Preserve Manager

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection

Larame Ferry, Land Conservation and Planning Administrator

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Chris Colburn, Manager

Tallahassee Forestry Center Florida Forest Service

Clinton A. Davis, Operations Administrator

Tallahassee Forestry Center Florida Forest Service

Terry Peacock, Manager

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Benjamin Faure, Chief

Bureau of Land Management Operations
Northwest Florida Water Management District

Local Stakeholder Groups Grant

Gelhardt, Chair

Sierra Club, Big Bend Chapter

Kathleen Carr, President

Apalachee Audubon Society

Elwood McElhaney, Chair

Florida Trail Association, Apalachee Chapter

David Rodenberry, President

Florida Native Plant Society, Sarracenia Chapter

Derry Walsh, Region B Co-Director

Florida Paddling Trail Association

Ben Houston, Government Outreach Coordinator

Alligator Point-St. Teresa Association

Nancy Stephens, President

North Florida Backcountry Horsemen

Advisory Group Report

The Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) held two public advisory group meetings to review the proposed unit management plans (UMP) for Ochlockonee River State Park and Bald Point State Park. The first meeting was held at the Sopchoppy City Hall in Wakulla County on Tuesday, October 4, 2022 from 3:00pm to 7:00pm. The second meeting was held on Wednesday, October 5, 2022 from 3:00pm to 7:00pm at the Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory in Franklin County, Florida. Due to the combined nature of the two parks' UMPs, the same information was presented at both meetings. Meeting notices were published in the Florida Administrative Register, September 28, 2022, Volume 48, Issue 189, included on the Department Internet Calendar, posted in clear view at the park, and promoted locally.

The meetings on October 4 and October 5 provided a forum for engaging and informing the public on the proposed unit management plans. Both meetings were conducted in an open house format. Posters of maps were placed on easels throughout the meeting room, depicting each park's natural resources, existing facilities, and conceptual land use plans. Park, district, and central office staff were present at each map station to provide information and converse with members of the public. This format facilitated one-on-one conversations, in which citizens and advisory group members were able to discuss issues with staff and propose solutions.

The purpose of the advisory group meeting is to provide the advisory group members an opportunity to discuss the draft management plan. Advisory groups for Florida State Parks consist of stakeholders – which include representatives of local, state, and federal government agencies, environmental organizations, recreational user groups, adjacent landowners, and the park's citizen support organization.

Public Participation:

Public Meeting Attendees **26**

Written Comments from General Public **1**

Advisory Group Report

The public advisory group meetings for the proposed unit management plans for Ochlockonee River State Park and Bald Point State Park were held on October 4, 2022 at the Sopchocopy City Hall and on October 5, 2022 at the Florida State University Coastal and Marine Lab. Both meetings were conducted from 3:00pm to 7:00pm.

Clinton Davis and Jason Love represented the Florida Forest Service; Diana Pepe represented the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Jonathan Brucker represented the Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve; Ricky Jones and Michael Moron represented Franklin County; Nancy Stephens represented the North Florida Backcountry Horsemen; Kathleen Carr and Rob Williams represented the Apalachee Audubon Society; Derry Walsh and David Morse represented the Florida Paddling Trails Association; and David Rodenberry represented the Florida Native Plant Society. Appointed members unable to attend included Chuck Hess, Bert Boldt, Lara Edwards, Thomas Herndon, John Solomon, Fonda Davis, Bryan Roddenberry, Cathy Davis, Wayne Cooper, Terry Peacock, Benjamin Faure, Grant Gelhardt, Elwood McElhaney, and Ben Houston.

Attending DRP staff included Steve Cutshaw, Sasha Craft, Harrison Nichols, Daniel Alsentzer, Joel Allbritton, Kristin Ebersol, and Jonah Snelling.

Summary of Written Advisory Group Comments

Diana Pepe and **Nick Vitale** (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) provided various comments regarding corrections and updates to the plans' imperiled species lists and objectives. They pointed out several species mentioned in the plans which are no longer listed as imperiled. They recommended adding an objective to improve shorebird nesting habitat and provided several potential action items to go along with such an objective. They expressed concern with the plan's proposal to assess the feasibility of a boat ramp along Alligator Harbor, noting that increased human activity in the harbor could be detrimental to nesting and roosting shorebird habitat in the area. They also recommended adding several periodically submerged sandbars/islands located in Alligator Harbor and the mouth of Ochlockonee Bay to Bald Point State Park's optimum boundary, explaining that these areas provided shorebird nesting and foraging habitat. Finally, they recommended updating Bald Point's park boundary to ensure the current shoreline profile is included.

Jason Love (Florida Forest Service) noted the need for short- or long-term estimates for each objective as well as the need for discussion of surplus lands determinations. He commented on the importance of coordination between the DRP and the Florida Forest Service in conducting timber harvesting on the St. Teresa tract, as the tract shares management roads with the adjacent Tate's Hell State Forest. He further emphasized the importance of coordination to allow for connectivity of hiking and equestrian trails between the St. Teresa tract and Tate's Hells State Forest.

Advisory Group Report

Jonathan Brucker (Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve) was concerned with the proposed potential development of a boat ramp along Alligator Harbor. He pointed out that by Aquatic Preserve rule, expansion of existing facilities should take precedence over development of new facilities. He stated that expansion of marine facilities could adversely impact water quality, critical wildlife species, and habitats, while noting that, as an Outstanding Florida Water, degradation of Alligator Harbor's ambient water quality is not allowed. He reiterated several times that feasibility studies and environmental impact analyses would be necessary to determine if improvements to Leonard's Landing or development of a new launch at Two Rut are possible.

Dorsey Demaster (Florida Paddling Trails Association [FPTA]) expressed enthusiasm for the potential for the parks in this plan to expand paddling, hiking, and biking opportunities. She offered the FPTA's assistance in development of camping platforms for paddle-in campsites across the parks, something that the FPTA has extensive experience in constructing. She requested the development of an additional small access point from Bear Creek south of the St. Teresa bluffs, in addition to the access point north of the bluffs included in the draft plan. She also requested the establishment of a paddle-in primitive campsite in the Shell Hammock area and encouraged the DRP to explore opportunities to provide biking and paddling access to select primitive campsites. Finally, she noted the FPTA's desire to see separate locations for paddle craft launch from existing paved ramps and ADA-accessible ramps, noting that paved ramps are often damaging to paddle craft and can create conflicts with motorized boaters while ADA-accessible launches often cannot accommodate larger kayaks and canoes.

Nancy Stephens (North Florida Backcountry Horsemen) indicated her group was excited by the proposed primitive equestrian campground, noting that the nearest comparable equestrian camps on public land were located some 200 miles away in the Blackwater River State Forest. They were also excited by the opportunity for longer trail rides afforded by the large acreage of the St. Teresa Tract and the potential for even more mileage by connecting with Tate's Hell State Forest. Ms. Stephens requested up to 30 miles of equestrian trails within the St. Teresa Tract and 10 miles of trails within the Bald Point Tract, as well as additional semi-primitive facilities including a portable restroom, overflow pens, a manure dump site, and provision of water and shade. She advocated for an equestrian day use parking area near US Highway 98 to mitigate wear and tear on park roads due to increased use by trucks with horse trailers. She also expressed desire for equestrian trails that led to/along the Ochlockonee River and/or Bay. Finally, she consistently reiterated her group's desire for equestrian facilities to be well-separated from other day- and overnight-use, stating that this separation would be safer and provide a better experience for all user groups.

Ricky D. Jones (Franklin County Board of County Commissioners) provided brief written comments requesting that the new management plan include language to "build a boat ramp that includes adequate parking, with access to Alligator Harbor, on state land." He indicated that the two existing county boat ramps in the area cannot currently handle the increased use caused by the aquaculture lease holders.

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Rob Williams (Apalachee Audubon Society) provided thorough comments on various aspects of the draft management plan. Some of these comments included corrections to the imperiled species inventory, suggestions for more robust imperiled species monitoring actions, and emphasis on protecting existing bird habitat found within the parks. Mr. Williams was especially concerned with protecting the small area of maritime hammock found within the North Point beach access area, noting that this area was an important stopover point for many species of migrating birds. He also emphasized the importance of the North Point beaches for foraging and nesting by shorebirds. Thus, Mr. Williams strongly advocated for limiting any further development in this use area and suggested further protective actions be taken, such as designating the area as a "Bird Friendly Beach," conducting small-scale vegetation management to improve potential habitat, and expanding signage and interpretation related to damage caused by pets, litter, and improper visitor activity. Mr. Williams also suggested adding monitoring of the Bachman's Sparrow to the plan's resource management actions, reasoning that the presence of this species is reflective of the health of southern pine forests and can be used to help guide natural community management decisions. Finally, Mr. Williams echoed the comments received from FWC by advocating for the addition of the semi-submerged sandbars/islands located north of the North Point beach area to the park's optimum boundary and by recommending DRP staff ensure Bald Point's park boundary matches the current shoreline profile.

Notes on Composition of the Advisory Group

Florida Statutes Chapter 259.032 Paragraph 10(b) establishes a requirement that all state land management plans for properties greater than 160 acres will be reviewed by an advisory group:

"Individual management plans required by s. 253.034(5), for parcels over 160 acres, shall be developed with input from an advisory group. Members of this advisory group shall include, at a minimum, representatives of the lead land managing agency, co-managing entities, local private property owners, the appropriate soil and water conservation district, a local conservation organization, and a local elected official."

Advisory groups that are composed in compliance with these requirements complete the review of State park management plans. Additional members may be appointed to the groups, such as a representative of the park's Citizen Support Organization (if one exists), representatives of the recreational activities that exist in or are planned for the park, or representatives of any agency with an ownership interest in the property. Special issues or conditions that require a broader representation for adequate review of the management plan may require the appointment of additional members. The DRP's intent in making these appointments is to create a group that represents a balanced cross-section of the park's stakeholders. Decisions on appointments are made on a case-by-case basis by Division of Recreation and Parks staff.