

May 8, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jessica and I have grown up visiting Cayo Costa "the narrows" area frequently for over 30 years. My family has been part owners in one of the few homes in this area for over many years. As owners of property in the area, we feel a responsibility to protect, preserve and guard the nature and wildlife on Cayo Costa.

There is simply not enough places in Florida dedicated to letting nature "do it's thing". - Cayo Costa needs to continue to be one of those places.

We have seen first hand how the beach and bay area have drastically changed due to the amount of people visiting the narrows at Cayo Costa. The wildlife activity has noticeably decreased in recent years with fewer birds, fish and ghost crabs, for example. Much of this decline seems to be caused from the multiple visitors who arrive on large tour boats several times each day who park at the short dock on the bay side of the narrows. The bay waters appear to be altered by these large boats also.

Although nature and the beauty of Cayo Costa should be appreciated by anyone interested, there should be limits and rules to protect this fragile ecosystem. In the area of the narrows, there is no regulations or supervision provided by the State Park. Every day we are on the island, we pick up trash that has been left on the beach from visitors and we haul the trash back to the mainland for proper disposal. The State Park north inside Pelican Bay is the place where commercial groups should visit because this area is designed to handle more human impact with trash cans, restrooms and physical supervision of guidelines provided by the Park's rangers.

Therefore, I am asking the Department of Environmental Protection/Division of Recreation and Parks to immediately cease all commercial activities at the south dock to help reduce human impacts on Cayo Costa. I encourage these groups to use the Cayo Costa State Park north facilities to more responsibly experience this beautiful island.

Thank you for your consideration.

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