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cc

Subject Big Cypress ORV Trails

July 22 2010

Ref: Big Cypress National Preserve ORV Trails

Superintendent Ramos and Others:

FYI and for the Record:

In the late Ninety's Myself, Franklin Adams, Barbara Jean Powell, Wayne Jenkins and many other dedicated members of the public spent countless hours in public meetings and workshops to determine a fair and reasonable ORV trails system in the original 580,000 acre Preserve. Then superintendent John Donahue was present and officiated in all these meetings and workshops. During this process, ORV trails requested by the Public were marked on maps. These ORV trails were existing and had been established and used regularly by the Traditional Swamp Buggy people going all the way back to the Forties and beyond. As a result of these meetings, workshops and marking trails on maps, it was clearly understood

and agreed between Superintendent Donahue and We the public that approximately Fifteen Hundred miles of ORV trails would be allowed in the Original Preserve to provide reasonable ORV access in the Preserve as INTENDED in the 1974 Preserve legislation.

During this same time period that this Fifteen Hundred mile ORV trail system was being worked out, there was litigation going on between the National Park Service and the Bio-Diversity Project. The NPS made an out of court settlement with the Bio-Diversity Project. Very much to the detriment of the Public the NPS agreed in this out of court settlement, among other things, to limit ORV trails in the Original Preserve to only Four Hundred miles. Four Hundred miles of ORV trails in the Original Preserve puts the trails about Five miles apart, which is totally unreasonable and does not follow the INTENT of the 1974 Preserve legislation. Fifteen Hundred miles of ORV trails in the Original Preserve would put the trails about One and One Half Miles apart which would have been reasonable as INTENDED in the 1974 Preserve legislation.

The Park Service also agreed in that out of court settlement with the Bio-Diversity Project to establish a system of Designated ORV Trails and or Use Areas. The Park Service chose to completely ignore this ability to incorporate Use Areas in the trail system. One Third to One Half of the Preserve could have and should been Use Areas. Allowing dispersed use in these Pine and Palmetto upland areas would spread the ORV's out resulting in less impact than concentrating all the ORV's on a single trail in the area. Written requests have be made to the NPS for an explanation as to why Use Areas were no incorporated in the system as per minutes of meetings etc. No explanation was produced by the NPS either verbal or written.

Four Hundred miles of ORV trails in the Original 580,000 acre Preserve equates to approximately One and One Half miles of ORV trails per One Thousand acres.

Now we come to the 147,000 acre Addition Lands. The NPS has chosen to place the Addition Lands under a completely separate Management Plan than the Original Preserve. The fact that the Additions Land are to be under a separate Management Plan, the minimal Four Hundred trail mile formula used in the Original Preserve should not apply to the Addition Lands. Having said that, doing the math, the minimal One Hundred Thirty Nine miles of ORV trails proposed by the NPS in the 147,000 acre Addition Lands equate to only One mile of ORV trails per One Thousand acres. One Third less than the Original Preserve.

I offer the above facts to make sure we are all acutely aware of the continuing downward spiral of OUR Traditional Cultural rights in OUR Big Cypress National Preserve.

Sincerely  
Lyle McCandless  
Pres. BCSA  
Member DMTAG