



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Big Cypress National Preserve
33100 Tamiami Trail E
Ochopee, Florida 34141-1000

In reply refer to:

October 26, 2010

Memorandum

To: Pedro Ramos, Superintendent

From: Big Cypress Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Committee (ORVAC)

Re: Recommendation for Managing Trail Pull-offs, Including Dispersed Camping

As you requested, the ORVAC has taken up the issue of managing trail pull-offs, including dispersed camping, at two recent meetings (4/20/10 and 8/17/10). Through these discussions we have developed the following recommendations for your consideration and for assessment by you and your staff. The intention of these recommendations is to allow reasonable off-road vehicle access to backcountry areas of BICY without harming this precious resource. We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

The ORVAC recommends the following policies:

- BICY should continue its efforts to establish a functional primary and secondary trail system that offers access to a diverse array of areas attractive for hunting, dispersed camping, photography and other recreational pursuit and is consistent with the 2000 ORV Management Plan.
- In upland areas with stable soils only, BICY should consider allowing pull-offs up to 100 meters on either side of the trail (width depending on presence of upland topography), for vehicle access and parking for purposes such as dispersed camping, hunting, establishment of tree stands, game retrieval, and photography. This recommendation is conditional on BICY enforcement staff's assessment that it would be adequately enforceable.

The success of the second recommended policy above will depend on ORV user recognition of appropriate upland areas. The ORVAC recommends the following approaches:

- The ORV permit process should include education about how to identify those upland areas that are allowable for pull-offs up to 100 meters, including materials such as a guide to identification of indicator species of appropriate upland areas and a list of the Leave No Trace principles.
- BICY should not add any additional signage along the trails to designate areas allowable for pull-off.
- BICY should consider adding information about allowable pull-offs at entrance kiosks, including information about how to identify the indicator species of appropriate upland areas.
- Permit holder training materials and entrance kiosk signage should clearly state that ORV operators will be held responsible for any damage to the resource, including off-trail rutting, breaking of trees, etc, and that damage to the resource will lead to citations, and may require restitution in cases of gross violations.

- BICY should monitor the impacts of this policy over time and modify it if needed, using adaptive management practices.

We offer the following quote for possible use as part of the educational program:

"It's a matter of common sense and elevation". Franklin Adams