

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION OF RECREATION AND PARKS
OFFICE OF PARK PLANNING



**ALAFIA RIVER
STATE PARK**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia State Park improvements proposed
Date: Monday, April 1, 2019 3:11:52 PM

FYI

From: Robert Warthen <robert.rwarthen1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2019 7:09 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia State Park improvements proposed

Mr. Maldonaado,

Dear Sir, I was impressed with the presentation your office made on March 27th of this year concerning the Alafia River State Park. It is pleasing to see that the state is interested in the continuing efforts to increase the potential use of the available properties for recreational activities. As I expressed in the meeting about the Three Fingers Equestrian parcel; in my opinion, this area must, or should, be left as is. There are several reasons for this:

This area is a quiet, peaceful, provides a pleasant ride, with some very beautiful scenery.

This area has with it a verity of trails that allow riders to choose their estimated ride time limit for riding. It also provides areas for walk, trot, and canter.

Equestrian riders ride the trails because they want to be in the natural Florida outdoors. Adding anything that would detract from this, would be an upset to the balance of this beautiful natural area.

This is not an active cattle range, which limits the quantity of nuisance flies, especially in the hot, humid summers. This adds appeal of the Equestrian rider.

Lastly I would suggest that we take very careful considerations in how we view our increase use of the properties that we have available to us, and to try to avoid potential threats to losing these areas to over use and overcrowding, which already provide prime opportunities for our outdoor activities as they are. While I realize that the job you, and others, have to ensure the fair and equitable use of these lands is challenging, we should never allow money to be the end goal, for this will defeat the purpose: "To enjoy the Florida outdoors, safe and free from over use and overcrowding, and destroying the habitat and the natural beauty that our state has."

Thank you,
Bob Warthen
Robert.rwarthen1@gmail.com
863-797-5873

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia State Park Management Plan
Date: Monday, April 1, 2019 3:11:58 PM

FYI

From: rjb1998@aol.com <rjb1998@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2019 10:30 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia State Park Management Plan

Tyler,

Thank you for taking the time and having the meeting yesterday evening regarding the Alafia State Park Management Plan. What a challenge it has to be for you and your department to balance the wants, needs, and wishes of so many groups. There was some meaningful feedback given at the meeting. I would have been interested in hearing the biologist and park manager opinion on development impact on the natural aspects of the park, as well as the functional impact of these proposals. It's a nice park, and the staff is very good, and I'm glad the state of Florida continues to put an emphasis on our natural resources. There's a reason so many people enjoy these parks.

Also, I would like to also say that my family and I over the many years have enjoyed the many state parks of Florida.

A few concerns about the development of the north side:

- disruption of current trails and peaceful riding, equestrian or biking or hiking.
- The north access would have road which potentially would cut right up the middle of the current recreation area as well across a gopher tortoise habitat.
- disruption of the little bit of "natural" habitat currently there. There are gopher tortoise areas in those north areas, as well as few deer as well. Any development or the process of development would disrupt this.
- While I appreciate our out of state visitors, we need to be careful that the current stakeholders in this park and Florida residents do not give up the benefit of the north side of the park in favor of providing more facilities to be booked by those out of state. The benefit of many who use the park day in and day out, year round, should not be compromised in favor of providing facilities to be booked and used through the winter months by the out of state visitors disproportionately to Florida residents.
- I would like to see more shaded (not pavilions) picnic options in the park. Currently for day use, those options are few. There are a few individual tables scattered.
- It would be great to add camp sites, but with minimal impact to existing natural areas of the park.
- Cabins are a low priority for me, as the impact of sewer, water, maintenance, etc. in my opinion would outweigh the benefit or "return".
- It would be good to know about what options there are for the many acres of "restoration areas" to the east side of the river? Maybe the future cabin/campground plans could be there?
- I think river access and opportunity for enjoyment of the river would be good. Currently, access or even viewing is limited.

Additional opinion regarding the fee structure for camping:

If it's not already been done, there should be some overall analysis state-wide on the pricing model for camping for out of state guests versus Florida residents, as well as availability preferences for Florida residents. At \$22, it's pretty cheap, especially with a dump station, and water and electricity at each site. It would be nice for the state park system to be able to obtain additional funds that would improve and maintain its state parks.

Thanks again for taking the time for the meetings and input requests.

Sincerely,
Robert J. Boone

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](mailto:Maldonado.Tyler)
To: [Baxley, Demi](mailto:Baxley.Demi)
Subject: FW: alafia
Date: Monday, April 1, 2019 3:12:22 PM

FYI

From: jgvizzi@verizon.net <jgvizzi@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2019 2:01 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: alafia

Hi: I won't be able to meet with the advisory group on Thursday. Enclosed are some of the comments posted by the River Riders members regarding improvements to Alafia River State Park.

On the equestrian Day Use parking:

1. No water for the horses to drink or cool off.
2. Entrance is getting difficult to egress and leave, because of the heavy traffic from the main street.

Some suggestions on the day use parking lot were, to move the whole parking lot near the barn, close to areas that do have water.

Thus, there would be access to water. This would also help with the entrance comment since the entrance would be through the main entrance.

On the overnight equestrian camping area:

1. Because of non horse campers taking over the equestrian area 6 to 11 months before the desired date, persons with horses are not able to put reservations through Reserve America since the area is booked already. The idea was to make this area for equestrians only and to be used by non horse campers only in a hardship situation.
2. Many of our members voiced a dissatisfaction with Reserve America both in procedures and prices.
3. There were complaints that the water by the barn is not clean enough for the horses to drink.

Thank you,
Jaqueline Vizzi

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River state park 10yr plan
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 9:51:52 AM

FYI

From: Ron Haertlein <rondoth@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 02, 2019 11:51 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia River state park 10yr plan

G'day Tyler,

this was my first public meeting, entertaining. i liked the presentation. i also like the plan..

an observation, the equestrians were very vocal about keeping "THEIR" section of the park as is.. but here's my take, i've only been active in this park for 4 years, as a mt biker i see volunteers from the community build & maintain the trails. what i don't see is equestrian volunteers, i see the park & it's volunteers mowing & trimming. and my pet peeve is, equestrians seem like they're only 10% of the users, while taking the bulk of the park's resources to keep their trails rideable.. and mtb is 75% of usage and gets barely any resources allocated...

camping, yes to opening it up.. perhaps 15 equestrian sites up north, off Reserve America, rough or not...
30-60 sites where the existing camp sites are. even campers 75% or more come to ride the MTB trails..

and is there a way to get a minor fee added, a quarter per car, allocated to the CSO, it takes \$\$\$\$ to buy materials to keep trails at their optimum. our goal is to make all trails rideable all year round.. and having to deal with a high water table give use challenges that places with Mountains have no idea of... LOL

thanks for listening to my rambles,

ron

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park proposed management plan
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 9:52:02 AM

FYI

From: Janet Schneider <jm_schneider@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 02, 2019 7:01 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia River State Park proposed management plan

Dear Mr. Maldonado,

I was very distressed to hear of the location of the proposed additions at the Alafia River State Park. Horse people are heavy users of its trails, and--as I understand you heard at the meeting--have strong concerns about your proposed build-up of features and density around the trails.

The goal of any person using Florida State Park trails is to get away into nature. Situating a large campground, adding cabins, and increasing the density of users in the center of the trails destroys the ability of hikers, bikers and horse people to actually enjoy the natural environment. Building a road to connect all your proposed "enhancements" will also destroy the ambiance and environment.

Horse people must, of necessity, always be aware of safety. A biker coming at speed around a corner can cause a horse to spook. Walking a trail beside pavement engenders anxiety, since we all know that cars do not obey speed limits and have, at times, actually veered toward horses just to watch them jump. Crossing pavement is hazardous to horses' hooves and increases the danger of slipping and falling. Running children do not always understand that horses are not big dogs. These are only a few of the challenges horse people face, often thanks to planners who do not understand and will not adjust plans to accommodate all users of the park.

I strongly protest all the so-called "enhancements" to Alafia State Park. While they will probably bring more overnight people to the park, they will also lose many of your staunch users and supporters by destroying the many features of the park that we now enjoy. Please remember that the mission of the Florida Park System is the show the natural Florida, not turn it into another vacation resort.

Sincerely,

Janet Schneider
2821 Knights Station Road
Lakeland, Florida 33810
863-858-6848

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia Horse Trails,
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 9:52:11 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

FYI

From: Julie A Magruder <Julie_Magruder@Progressive.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2019 7:47 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; eric.drapler@floridadep.gov
Subject: Alafia Horse Trails,

Dear Mr. Maldonado and Mr. Drapler,

I was recently made aware of the plans to develop part of the horse trails at Alafia River State Park, please...do not allow this to happen!

We have way too much building and development going on in Hillsborough County already and Alafia, much like all state parks, is a place we riders go to escape the insanity of the congestion in our county. The proposed additions to the park are simply more of the same....way too much congestion on too little of land. Apparently our county is on target to develop every single inch of available land, it's disgusting. Please do not allow Alafia River State Park to fall into this trap.

Please save and preserve the horse trails as they are today!

Thank you,

Julie Magruder
Registered Voter in Hillsborough County
Frequent Alafia River State Park Equestrian Trails user

Julie Magruder

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Riverview, FL 33578
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From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW:
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 9:52:24 AM

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Barbara Carlin <bcarlin801@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2019 7:48 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject:

Hello, I am an avid trail horse woman in Florida . I've just heard that you're planning on decimating the Alafia trail system to replace with campgrounds. Alafia is the absolute best trail system in the state of Florida. It's so popular, it's hard to get a reservation to stay so you have to think about it in advance. The trails are well marked and footing is perfect. The overhead coverage on most of the trails are amazing and perfect for riding. I can't imagine the government taking this away from the horse back riders . Just in Lee and Collier there are over 5,000 horses. And yes, we do go to Alafia. Please reconsider this motion.

Barbara K Carlin
Fort Myers, Fla

Sent from my iPad

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Equestrian trails
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 9:52:32 AM

FYI

From: Michael Canfield <mcanfiel@mail.usf.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2019 8:25 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Equestrian trails

Hello,

I am writing regarding the proposed reuse of the Alafia park moving away from offering as many equestrian services.

My first fear is that this will of course eliminate one of the few remaining trail areas within Hillsborough that offers any real quality of experience.

I recognize that there may be some element of preservation, but I feel that the extensive planning takes away too much from the horse experience.

I do not mind the evolution, however I would like to see it mirror the traditional land use of that region. Consider offering a premium equestrian experience alongside the proposed reuse. For example, more stalls (charge of course, revenue streams matter) and create the opportunity for a culture of all purpose use.

Right now the feeling is that the changes will entirely decimate the equestrian area - I think perception here matters and ensuring that you will keep at least some of them would help the changes.

I get that ownership is dying in hillsborough - it sucks because its a ton of fun to own them, just too expensive.

Our parks system does a great job really, I just wish we had more opportunity for horse camping within this area than we currently do.

But its probably expensive, not all horse owners are created equal, and many will not clean up after their horse.

--

Michael Canfield
Manager, USF IT

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Save the Equestrian Trails and facilities at Alafia (and ALL Parks!)
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019 10:12:17 AM

FYI

From: Sylvia Warren <horselady41@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2019 1:36 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; eric.drapler@floridadep.gov.
Subject: Save the Equestrian Trails and facilities at Alafia (and ALL Parks!)

I love to ride the Florida Parks by horseback. I also like to be able to horse camp. I have a paid year Pass to the Florida Parks.

It is real nice to have facilities like stalls, wash racks, water and wonderful trails to go enjoy my horse and the outdoors.

With cities and towns expanding, the countryside is slowly getting smaller with less dirt roads and undeveloped land to ride horses on.

The Florida Parks are all we will have left when development expands throughout private lands.

PLEASE keep the Equestrians in mind, included, and happy as you do future planning in the Florida Parks !

Sincerely,

Sylvia Warren

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alacua River State Park
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019 10:12:27 AM

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Bernadette Schoppman <mikeandsamsmom@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2019 6:03 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: eric.drapler@floridadep.gov
Subject: Alacua River State Park

As an equestrian who rides at Alafia fairly frequently, I object to the new plans to infringe on our riding trails!! We go to ride in nature, not to doge bikes and hikers and campers. Most horses do not like bikes, and it seems most bikers do not realize that they can easily spook a horse and cause a serious accident when they come racing out of the woods without warning. We try to educate them when this happens so they will be more careful next time. My friends and I stick to the "horses only" trails but have encountered lost bikers on horse trails numerous times. Please don't take these trails away from us, there are very few places nearby as beautiful to ride at. We are respectful of the rules and would just like to continue to enjoy the beauty of this state park. Why should another group get to overtake our trails when they have existing facilities in place already??

Thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bernadette Schoppman

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park UMP
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019 10:12:34 AM

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: kturbevi@tampabay.rr.com <kturbevi@tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2019 8:53 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia River State Park UMP

It is my understanding that it was suggested that the proposed new RV campground in the horse trail section of Alafia, become a primitive equestrian campground. Great idea! All that would be needed would be water as horses require a lot. Depending on how close the proposed bathroom is from the campground, a portable potty might be needed. Whatever it takes to keep this campground off of Reserve America needs to happen.

Alafia's horse trails & camp sites have been much used by equestrians for many, many years. The barn & paddocks are evidence of this. The addition of the other proposed items should NOT be put in the horse trail area because of the possible conflict. Horses are prey animals which means they think 'something' is out to eat them all of the time...like squirrels. The traffic of bouncing trailers of kayaks & boats would be a scare to the horses. Bike racks should not be in this area as bikers should not be in this area as they have their own very large area. The cabins, recreational hall, & camp store should be located nearer the RV campground for more usage....not in the horse trail area.

Thank you for your work in helping the Florida State Parks grow!

Karen Turbeville

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park Changes
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019 10:12:43 AM

FYI

From: Lindsay Roth <lindsayroth@coreconstruction.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2019 8:55 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; eric.drapler@floridadep.gov
Subject: Alafia River State Park Changes

To Those It May Concern:

Good morning,

I write to you today as a life-long equestrian located in the Sarasota area. I have been hauling my horses to Alafia for decades, enjoying all the trails with my equestrian friends. It is our favorite place to go trail riding for hours in any direction from home. I have been trail riding at Alafia twice in the past 3 weeks and plan to go again for an equestrian related event this coming Sunday. I am deeply concerned about the changes being proposed to the park that would negatively impact the horse trails/amenities.

I HIGHLY OBJECT to the addition of cabins, another RV campground, the kayak & paddling launch, more bike racks, the horse corral, the recreational hall, and the camp store! These additions would be located in the area of and directly in the way of the horse trails! Also please consider changing the 30-site RV campground to a primitive equestrian campground. This small corner of the park should be reserved for only horses & hikers as it is now! ***High density traffic areas and horses do not mix!***

Thank you for reading.

Respectfully,

Lindsay Roth
Marketing

CORE Construction Services of Florida, LLC
8027 Cooper Creek Boulevard, Suite 110 | University Park, FL 34201-3002
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E: LindsayRoth@COREconstruction.com
W: COREconstruction.com

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From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia Equestrian Trails Need Preserved
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019 10:13:09 AM

FYI

From: Tara Harter <taraharter@mail.usf.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2019 10:13 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia Equestrian Trails Need Preserved

Hello Mr.Maldonado and Mr.Draper,

My name is Tara Harter, a resident to Lithia and an Environmental Science graduate student. Additionally, I have been working with the South West Florida Water Management District, in the SWIM section, on many restoration projects.

I am saddened to find out about future plans for the Alafia State Park Equestrian Trails. While our population continues to increase many natural habitats for animals are lost. Not only do I enjoy riding my horse out in Alafia's beautiful park but I am concerned for the impact that the wildlife will also endure.

I hope that Alafia's natural habitat and wildlife are considered when making decisions for the park to become more of a tourist destination. We need to be advocates for the plants and animals that regard Alafia State Park as their home and that is not by disturbing their habitat.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tara Harter

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia equestrians
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 9:30:58 AM

FYI

From: Amy Sheridan <sheridan_amy@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2019 10:33 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia equestrians

Please do not do anything to infringe in the access to the beautiful horse trails at Alafia state park. So much of the area is becoming housing developments and the wild areas are being taken away. This is such a lovely place and it would be such a shame to reduce access to horses and lose the wonder of the state park. Please do not take away or reduce the number of horse trails! Please, places like this are what makes the area so special. Florida equestrians adore this gorgeous park and our access to places like this continue to be taken away. Please don't let that happen to Alafia.

Thank you

Amy

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia State Park - Conceptual Land Use Plan
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 9:31:10 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

FYI

From: Lisa Wolfson <info@lisawolfson.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2019 5:19 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia State Park - Conceptual Land Use Plan

Hello Tyler & Eric,

I am a horseback rider who has enjoyed the trails at Alafia State Park for the past ten years. There are so few equestrian friendly parks in Hillsborough County. I just read the Conceptual Land Use Plan for the park and have serious concerns.

The plan to develop deep into the park, in my opinion, is reckless and counter productive to the conservation goals outlined in the report. If additional development is to be made, wouldn't it make more sense to locate any cabins, campsites and retail near the front of the park? To construct domiciles & retail deep into the heart of the park will create chaos, cause pollution, drive out wildlife, destroy habitat and ruin the park.

I respectfully request that more public input be sought prior to implementation of this plan. Many many people in the horse community, including myself, are just today learning about this proposed plan via word of mouth and social media. We would appreciate the opportunity to share our suggestions.

Thank you for your consideration.



Lisa Wolfson
Realtor, Top-Producer
WOLFSON TURNER TEAM
Signature Realty Associates
2234 Lithia Center Lane
Valrico, FL 33547

www.WolfsonTurner.com

Cell 813.431.4001

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia Horse Trails
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 9:31:21 AM

FYI

From: Velvet Arnold <velvet.arnold@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2019 7:55 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia Horse Trails

Hello Tyler and Eric,

It has just come to my attention that you're planning to decimate the horse trails at Alafia State Park.

I strongly oppose this plan! Alafia is one of the few safe options to ride a horse for some distance. Roads are too busy and narrow...its very unsafe. As you know, horses are herd animals and are jumpy by nature - think a 1200+ deer. No matter the amount of training, they can jump and dart/spook at anytime. Horses are NOT compatible with MULTI-USE trails! This is unsafe for us riders/others and completely unfair to take away this option from us. There are already endless options for other trail users...let us keep our trails!

Florida has the largest number of horses in the country...the equestrian community is already feeling the squeeze from the increasing population and urban sprawl.

DO NOT TAKE OUR TRAILS!!!!

Velvet Arnold
Bradenton, FL

[\(850\) 612-0181](tel:8506120181)

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Equestrians at Alafia River State Park
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 9:31:30 AM

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: TomandJo@Mail.com <tomandjo@mail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 8:12 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Equestrians at Alafia River State Park

You must rethink your plan to replace some of the best & most beautiful horse trails in FL with a 30-site campground, cabins , etc.

it would be such a travesty to deny this area to Equestrians who not only have enjoyed riding here for years but have worked hard to maintain the area with facilities-built a barn, etc, & ensure the trails remain a safe place to enjoy the beauty of nature. A campground, cabins & more will destroy all of this. Pls reconsider your plans and leave the trails as they are!!

Thank you.

Jo Iwanski

Ft Myers

Sent from Jo Iwanski's iPhone

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed Recreational Amenities at Alafia State Park
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 9:49:03 AM

FYI

From: Mandy Parks <mparks@laneengineering.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 9:47 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Proposed Recreational Amenities at Alafia State Park

Mr. Maldonado,

As an avid user of Florida state parks and public land for both equestrian and non-equestrian activities for over 30 years, I strongly urge to consider the following in regards to the information presented at the March 27th public meeting that would result in shifting non-equestrian focused activities into the predominantly equestrian area of the park.

1. Please make the proposed 30-site RV area a primitive equestrian campground.
2. Please do not place recreation halls, camp store, kayak/canoe launches, and other public gathering focused areas in the area of the horse trails

The Alafia state park is truly a gem that is currently shared by many types of users, in mostly separate areas, in harmony. Moving high volume, non-equestrian activities into the equestrian area is both unfair to equestrian users of the park as well as extremely dangerous for all parties. A “yield” sign showing the (horse, biker, and hiker) will hardly be sufficient to provide guidance to the public for the potential interactions that will take place.

Ultimately, the proposed changes as they stand will drastically reduce equestrian use of the park. Sadly, equestrians will be forced to go elsewhere to safer and ever dwindling spaces reserved for their enjoyment.

Mandy L. Parks, PE
mparks@lane.engineering
813-758-4858

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: ALAFIA SAVE THE HORSE TRAILS, NO DEVELOPMENT
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 10:58:52 AM

FYI

From: Lark Campisano <campisa7@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 10:47 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: ALAFIA SAVE THE HORSE TRAILS, NO DEVELOPMENT

Dear Sir, I am from Fort Myers, FL and I also belong to the South FL Trail Riders in Miami. We camp/ride horses in Alafia regularly therefore helping support the local economy. We do not want any development in this area. Please speak against that.

Lark Campisano 239-731-3265

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: 10-YEAR PLAN FOR ALAFIA STATE PARK
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 12:09:27 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

FYI

From: Heidi Habhegger <hhabhegger@neminc.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 12:07 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: 10-YEAR PLAN FOR ALAFIA STATE PARK

I understand there is consideration to decimate the horse trails at Alafia State Park in favor of building an additional campground with cabins and additional roads, that will interfere with the current horse trail paths.

This is very disconcerting. Alafia is known as having the most beautiful equestrian trails in the state of florida. We utilize them quite often in the summer months when it is very hot, due the extensive shade on the majority of the trail paths.

These trails co-exist with a labyrinth of off-road mountain biking trails as well. Is it within the 10-year plan to decimate these as well?

I do not see how these two systems of trails would not affect the other. And if your intention is to keep the cycling trails, the equestrian trails should remain as well.

I can understand if some of the mileage is used for this new campsite project, but cannot imagine the complete equestrian trail system would have to be eliminated. This does not make much sense.

Alafia is a beautiful place, utilized by people that participate in numerous outdoor activities. I would hate to lose it to development and paved roads.

I urge you to reconsider this in your 10-year proposal, and come up with alternatives, in order to save the equestrian trails.

Speaking for myself and many other equestrian users of the park, we would understand if the state park system could even impose a yearly use fee that would allow us to bring our horses, these monies would then be able to allocated to maintenance of the trials and the general welfare of the park.

My best regards,

Heidi Habhegger
Sarasota, Florida
941.780.4431



www.neminc.com | 2820 62nd Ave. E. Bradenton, FL 34203

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 2:29:17 PM

FYI

From: Mary Abraham <maryaabraham@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 1:36 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia

It has come to our attention that someone is trying to take away our wonderful horse park. We high tied our horses for years, and then the barn got built and it was even more wonderful to go there. I don't know who is behind this but it needs to be stopped. Mary Abraham, Calloosa Saddle Club, North Ft. Myers, Fl.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Baxley, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia
Date: Friday, April 5, 2019 2:29:27 PM

FYI

From: Mary Abraham <maryaabraham@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 1:51 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia

Please don't take away from the equestrians the best park we have in Florida! We waited so long to have a barn instead of high tying and now you want to take it all away. Please reconsider, Mary Abraham, Caloosa Saddle Club, North Ft. Myers, Fl.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alifia
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:19:28 AM

From: Jerry Knapp <jdknapp@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 9:48 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alifia

Please keep Alifia as it is! We love riding our horses there.

DeAnne Knapp
12501 Astor Place
Fort Myers, FL 33913

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:19:32 AM

From: Mitzie Newsome <huminbird1@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 06, 2019 1:30 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia River State Park

Hi, my name is Diane Newsome and a friend just told me bout a recent meeting about our favorite horseback riding area , Alafia River State Park. I have had a sinus infection for the last 3 weeks so havent been able to ride much but I would have come to the meeting if I had known about it. Could you please call me so I can find out more about this issue? My number is 613-966-8784 . Sincerely, Diane Newsome, owner of SugarHawk Stables in Lithia FL

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: PLS KEEP THE TRAILS
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:19:37 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Steffany dragon <steffany.dragon@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 06, 2019 5:28 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: PLS KEEP THE TRAILS

> Dear Sirs:

> We are very concerned about the proposed changes or elimination of the Alafia State Park Equestrian Trails. We have a very strong equine industry here & the trails have been a very important part of life for the many equine & nature enthusiasts alike for years. This trail is not only important for the quality of life of humans & horses (the horses truly benefit from and need more, not fewer trails) but also for the wildlife appreciating the habitat the trails provide. Horseback riding is an ideal way to experience the beauty of Florida's native plant & animal life that does not disturb it. We truly hope you reconsider your plans now that we have brought the high importance of the trails to your attention, as well as the negative impact it would have to lose them, on plant, animal and human lives, alike!

>

> Please keep us informed,

> Steffany

> Sent from my iPhone

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](mailto:Maldonado.Tyler)
To: [Degagne, Demi](mailto:Degagne.Demi)
Subject: FW: Alf planning meeting
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:19:44 AM

From: Vicki Lawry <vicshadyl@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 07, 2019 4:44 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alf planning meeting

April 7 2019

Tyler,

First thank you for having this meeting. However, many people asked how was the information simulated out to the public. I have no idea but it was very poorly announced. After the meeting it was blasted on FB with incorrect information as if DEP is trying to rid Alafia River State Park of equestrians. In some ways I have to agree with the image of all these different user groups placed in one area in the north section of the park named Three Finger Lakes.

We are not against recreating on multi use trails but it is extremely important that we have separation on some parts of the trail system including a parking lot. The cost of a new road from the main entrance to the north along 39 to the now exiting parking area to the east of this so called new parking area (Three Fingers Lake) would eat a huge chunk of money. This will also be removing some of the equestrian trails. The same will happen where the proposed Three Finger Lake parking area that has so much crammed onto a small area will also be removing sections of our trails. Oh lets not forget the 30 site campground & cabins!

Why place so much in such a small amount of usable land? Why not wait & expand when made available the MOSAIC land?

Placing horses & large horse trailers in a congested area with other users will be creating a safety issue for all users, Why would anyone think that all of this in one area is ascetically pleasing. How many slots? Loss of revenue if we are turned away due to a lack of parking. Sometimes the north parking is so full we park on the other side of the gate in the field. Asphalt is highly dangers to load & unload a horse due to slipping. Why the parking by the main area was left in grass.

A horse corral not needed for day time use. Restroom yes, pavilions are nice but most of use stay near our trailers & or load & leave. Remember we have a living animal that doesn't get placed on the bike rack of my vehicle or a kayak tied to the roof. These objects need no attention!

I do understand other users use pavilions and they are nice to have and I am not saying no. Its cost. NO BIKE RACKS! If bikers start to use the trails in the north section whats left.

I stated that myself & others volunteered for years to bring Alafia River State Park to what we envisioned the park would be like. We worked out a plan for separate trail users and multi-use trails. An equestrian campground that we have a hard time trying to get in with reservations. Why would we have to move when a barn that was built by sweat equity is in the existing campground!

This whole process needs to be reviewed over & over and back to the drawing table each time. Please don't wait for a meeting of commits to show possible changes. Somehow the user groups need to be brought into the beginning process. Information before a planned meeting. Yes lets

invite the community properly it is our park after all..

I voted 2x on preservation 2000 funding. I am a tax payer! I do write my concerns to my senators.

Looking forward to a response..Thank you,

Vicki Lawry

813-601-0228

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: ALAFIA RIVER STATE PARK PLANS
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:19:49 AM

From: Maureen Vos <movos@Tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2019 11:57 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: ALAFIA RIVER STATE PARK PLANS

Dear Mr. Maldonado,

As the owner of 6 horses and a frequent trail rider at the Alafia River State Park, I write to state my objections to the proposed plans for changes to the Alafia River State Park.

I ride my horses there (with friends) to enjoy nature and quiet. I generally stick to the north west side of the park so that I do not encounter bicycles and not too many hikers over there. I have been thrown from horses twice on the bike side of the park due to the quiet whirr of the bikes going by in the bushes, woods, near the trails, and suddenly surprising the horses. I have a few friends this has also happened to. Of course, I am not faulting the bicyclists. They were doing nothing wrong, just minding their own business, but my horses are not bombproof, so I stay away from the bicycle areas. There is (presently) lots of room to do that.

However, if the new plan takes place and an RV park and bicycle racks are put on the north west side of the park, then there is no sanctuary for horseback riders from the people who don't understand horses and bicycles. Currently, we do encounter hikers on the horse trails and they are always polite and respectful, but if those plans that I saw are enacted, then there will be so many more people, families. It's going to be a tourist destination with all that RV parking. Our enjoyment of the horse trails will effectively be gone and so, we horse people will have to be gone also. The very things we go there to enjoy, will be gone.

There are currently, IMO, plenty of picnic areas in the park and I'm not looking for a horse corral. There could never be enough corrals for all the horses anyways. I want to trail ride, maybe enjoy a light snack with friends and go home. At times, there are a LOT of horses in the park. A month ago, we came across 20 riders on a trail ride together and many other rider groups on the trails that day. Do we really want MORE? What's that going to do to the eco system. I realize that that is mostly a weekend situation. The park is mostly deserted during my week day rides. But, I believe the "tourists" are going to come on the weekends for the most part.

It is a shame that most of us day riders had no idea that there was a meeting, so of course we didn't come. I only found out because I saw a post on the Myakka River Riders Facebook page afterward.

Please consider either another meeting, or a change in the plans.

Thanks for taking the time to read this comment.

Sincerely,

Maureen Vos
8725 Erie Lane,
Parrish, FL 34219

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed Recreational Amenities at Alafia State Park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:19:55 AM

From: liz2004@tampabay.rr.com <liz2004@tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2019 7:51 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Proposed Recreational Amenities at Alafia State Park

Mr. Maldonado,

I frequently ride my horse at Alafia State Park. I've read about the proposed changes to the park, and the information presented at the March 27th public meeting (adding non-equestrian focused activities into the predominantly equestrian area of the park).

The proposed types of mixed use activities in close proximity to the equestrian areas could cause stress and fear in the horses, which would endanger the horses and their handlers. Please reconsider this plan and keep the equestrian area a safe place for our use. If the proposed changes are incorporated, I feel that it would discourage equestrians like myself from using the park.

Referencing the proposal specifically:

1. Please do not place recreation halls, camp store, kayak/canoe launches, and other public gathering focused areas in the area of the horse trails
2. Please make the proposed 30-site RV area a primitive equestrian campground.

Sincerely,

Liz Barksdale
813-920-3861

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park HORSE Trails
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:00 AM

From: Amy Chenard <a.chenard@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2019 10:10 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia River State Park HORSE Trails

Hello,

I just saw a FB post that there was a planning meeting to decide the fate of the horse trails at Alafia River State Park. I load up my trailer with my horses and friends and use the park often. Please tell me this is "fake" news since losing the ability to ride in the beautiful park would break my heart. We are developing too much, too fast and losing everything amazing that Florida is. The last thing we need is more roads, more cabins, and more building. I beg you to reconsider this decision for the sake of the wildlife, and the tax paying citizens like myself who find peace in this beautiful setting.

Amy Chenard
Sarasota, FL

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia State Park - Equestrian Trails
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:04 AM

From: kbpfxhnt@gmail.com <kbpfxhnt@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2019 1:21 PM
To: FLStateParkPlanning <FLStateParkPlanning@dep.state.fl.us>; Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia State Park - Equestrian Trails

Good Afternoon,

I am a 20 year resident of Hillsborough County, and Alafia State Park is a treasure because of its horse trails. Please listen to my fellow equestrians that our trails are constantly being threatened and almost never being expanded. Hikers and bikers have so many alternatives to their form of recreation. Horses do not. It is the writing on the wall for us equestrians, that if mixed use on horse trails are allowed, that someone will complain about the horses, and the horse trails or accessibility by horses will be eliminated. The horse community need assurance that their form of recreation is not threatened.

I was not at the recent March meeting presenting the plan, but I am conveying to you that the horse community on Facebook is highly agitated and mobilizing. I hope you can find a way to hear their concerns and assure them in writing that you are indeed protecting the horse trails for our use too.

Cordially,
Katie Parker
450 Knights Run Ave
Tampa, FL 33602

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Draft Changes to Alafia State Park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:14 AM

From: Maxwell, Bryon
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2019 5:01 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Fwd: Draft Changes to Alafia State Park

FYI

Bryon Maxwell
Park Manager
Alafia River State Park
813-917-2816

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jan and Tom McDonald <janetandtommcd@gmail.com>
Date: Apr 9, 2019 4:47 PM
Subject: Draft Changes to Alafia State Park
To: "Maxwell, Bryon" <Bryon.Maxwell@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: Cynthia Huffman <rhuf926999@verizon.net>

Dear Ranger Maxwell: I have received a large number of comments to the proposed draft change to the park that would entail the closing of the north or equestrian entrance. To date, I have found that no accidents have occurred at the north entrance due to trailers entering the park. The consensus of the comments made to me were that the park users were very afraid that the closure of the north entrance and the re-routing of all trucks and trailers and cars with hikers and ham radio club members would result in a back log of vehicles.

These vehicles, some of which would be trucks with long trailers, could be forced to line up at the main park entrance and forced to stay along side the busy SR 39 roadway. This is an unsafe area to have trailers with horses park. It would be creating congestion and a dangerous situation.

Unfortunately, I have seen the tragedy of a trailer with horses that was rammed by a trailer truck that was unable to stop. I do not want to see this happen near Alafia State Park. Trucks frequent SR 39 and sometimes travel at speeds in excess of the limit. Please do not create an unsafe situation. If the north entrance must be closed then a long turning lane must be created for all the vehicles trying to enter the park at the main entrance. Alternatively, could the current service road that is used for the hunter paces be turned into an equestrian entrance.?

I know that you and everyone in the park value the safety of all the park visitors. Please consider these suggestions and the concerns of a large group of equestrians.

Thank you for your anticipated assistance. Jan

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia Horse Trails
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:20 AM

From: Elizabeth "Betty" Gentry <gentrysceltickennels@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 3:30 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia Horse Trails

Please leave them alone! We ride there regularly. It's beautiful wide open terrain and always beautiful wild life!! If you take out the horse trails, people would have no where loca to ride their horses and enjoy the beauty of our area! Please leave them alone! We live within 15 miles of the park, and it's why we moved here!

Elizabeth Gentry

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia state park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:25 AM

From: qmixer@aol.com <qmixer@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 3:55 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia state park

This is in regards to the expansion of TV camp sites in Alafia, the horse trails are already limited as please don't take away more of the trails. The combination of campers and horses aren't going to be good, there are so few places left to ride. Thank you
Sent from my Sprint Phone.

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](mailto:Maldonado.Tyler)
To: [Degagne, Demi](mailto:Degagne.Demi)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:29 AM

From: Ellen Alence <vetellen11@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 8:39 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia River State Park

Good evening.

I have been a southeast Hillsborough County resident for 18 years.

I frequently utilize Alafia River State Park with my family and friends. Activities that I regularly participate in at his location are:

- 1) Riding the equestrian trails
- 2) Participating in the hunter pace equestrian events.
- 3) Running the trails with my dog.
- 4) Running in the trail races run by Tampa Races
- 5) Mountain biking

With all of the uncontrolled growth allowed by Hillsborough County, Alafia River State Park remains a gem. A gem where Florida residents can enjoy outdoor activities. Please don't take this away from us by adding cabins and other "amenities" that just aren't needed.

A lot of the RV sites are taken by out of state people. If you need more camping, maybe further restrict stays by out of state people.

As far as adding canoeing or kayaking, there is already canoeing and kayaking available right up the road at Alderman Ford.

If you want to add things, please do not do so at the expense of the existing activities, like the equestrian trails, which are also used by hikers and runners.

In this day and age with all the untethered growth and lack of face to face contact with people (vs electronics and social media), being able to go out to Alafia River State Park either alone or with family and friends is a blessing.

Being a frequent user of this facility, the camaraderie and sense of community is invigorating. Please do not add "things" that take away from what is already there and being utilized by residents.

If you are looking to add, why not enhance what is there? Better and expanded parking (both sides)? Mounting blocks along the equestrian trails? Maybe create crosscountry equestrian trails (add

jumps).

Please don't take away our equestrian trails or bike trails.

Thank you.

Dr. Ellen Alence

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: 10 year plan for the Alafia River State Park.
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:42 AM

From: Lynn Ryder <Lryder2@tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 9:37 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: 10 year plan for the Alafia River State Park.

Hello,

While I appreciate the time and effort used to hold the public meeting on the 10 year plan for the park, I can't help but be concerned about the information provided related to that plan. Several members of the equestrian community spoke at the meeting and they all voiced concerns over placing new camp grounds in the area currently being used as a riding site with numerous horse trails. This planned development would impact the riding trails and the general wilderness feel. New Camp grounds and mixed use areas will bring more paved roads. The roads would diminish the natural feel and look of the area. It will reduce the available riding area. There was a discussion regarding safety for the horses, riders and campers when all of the users are coming together in one area. Families camping with their children don't want to worry about keeping their children safe around these animals. And children want to run and play and be loud. They should be allowed to do all of that but not around the horses. If the new campgrounds are located away from the current equestrian trails, everyone would benefit.

I believe everyone wants to see the park expand and grow but not at the expense of services and natural areas already in use. Those areas should be left alone.

Thank you for taking the time to read my opinion.

Lynn Ryder
817 Old Welcome Rd.
Lithia, Florida 33547



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia State Park Horse Trails
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:47 AM

From: Cheryl Decker <cdecker71@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2019 9:35 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia State Park Horse Trails

Good day sir

I am emailing you in regards to the Alafia state park horse trails that are tentatively scheduled to be removed due to adding other amenities such as an extra campsite.

I strongly ask that you don't touch the horse trails. That state park is huge and there should be plenty of room to accommodate the other amenities that you'd like to add without destroying or taking away what the equestrian riders love at that park. I can't believe that there wouldn't be other options to still add new amenities to that park without bothering what is already there for the equestrian riders. How about you look into adding more equestrian trails?

I hope you please listen to all of our concerns destroying the equestrian trails and I hope to hear response back from you.

Thank you have a great day.

Concerned Equestrian Rider
Cheryl Decker

--

[Have a great day.](#)
[Cheryl](#)

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia State Park Equestrian Use
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:53 AM

From: Ellen May <oakgrovearabians@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2019 11:27 AM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; Draper, Eric <Eric.Draper@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Alafia State Park Equestrian Use

My family is from Florida although I now live in Arkansas. I return every year with my horse to enjoy Florida's natural beauty, weather, people and most especially, to horse camp and trail ride. I have long said Alafia State Park is one of my favorite places to ride anywhere in the US (I have ridden trails in all 48 states).

For years, I have known to book early if I have any hope of having a camping site there. I usually go mid-week and discover that I am the only or one of a very few horse campers there. Locals may come over to day ride, but those hoping to camp with their horse have virtually been pushed out by RV campers. I am glad to see the park being enjoyed by so many bikers, hikers, canoes, fishermen and such but please leave room for the horse people too!

I have suggested to staff and volunteers in the past, that it is a real shame the lovely barn and pens donated by Friends of Alafia remain so seldom used. Is there some reason the areas near the barn which are already open, level, partially shaded and close to the bath house can't be permitted as a primitive (water is already there for horses) equestrian camping area?

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Ellen May
Winslow, Arkansas
479 236 2550

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Alafia River State Park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:20:58 AM

From: Rosemary Arway <Rarway@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2019 10:43 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>; eric.drapler@floridadep.gov
Subject: Alafia River State Park

Hello,

PLEASE, PLEASE do NOT change anything at Alafia State Park with regard to the existing horse facilities and camping. It is absolutely the BEST place in Florida and you all have done such a wonderful job in maintaining this beautiful equestrian park.

It would be unforgivable to change anything and the equestrians in our state would REALLY appreciate your commitment to keeping it the same.

Please recognize that there are limited places for us to enjoy nature with our horses. Please do not take this away or change it in any manner.

With appreciation,
Rosemary Arway

From: [Maldonado, Tyler](#)
To: [Degagne, Demi](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed Changes at Alafia River State Park
Date: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:21:17 AM

From: Maureen Vos <movos@Tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2019 5:14 PM
To: Maldonado, Tyler <Tyler.Maldonado@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: Proposed Changes at Alafia River State Park

1. The proposed new RV campground should be a primitive EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND, similar to Colt Creek's. Water/bathroom under future discussion.
The new campground for equestrians may take away some trails but it will be worth it.

NO WE DON'T NEED MORE CAMPGROUND AND/OR the things that go with it. DON'T WANT IT. WE DO NOT WANT TO LOSE TRAILS TO A CAMPGROUND or anything else.

2. The park will keep only one park entrance. An interior road will run along side HWY 39 to get to the north area parking/trail head. From this road, a road will run along the power line to get to the new EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND with an off road leading directly into the campground.

NO! We do not want a road inside the park taking away the trail that runs up Hwy 39, nor a road down the power line trail. What is wrong with the way it is now. We put our money into the box to use the park. We don't need congestion, nor another road inside the park.

What should horse people email about BY April 12th? Do away with the addition of cabins, another RV campground, kayak & paddling launching, bike racks, horse corral, recreational hall, and camp store that would be located in the area of the horse trails. Change the 30-site RV campground to a primitive equestrian campground. This small corner of the park should be reserved for only horses & hikers as it is now!

NO! We don't want more cabins, RVs, more launching areas, bike racks. We don't need a horse corral (what good is A horse corral). Definitely don't need a camp store in the horse trails. ARE YOU ALL INSANE?

We need the quiet horse trails. That's what we need. Most of us just use this small area to ride in. Please don't take it away from us.

Maureen Belknap-Vos
Frequent user of the horse trails at Alafia River State Park