

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



**CAYO COSTA  
STATE PARK**

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS  
AND COMMENTS**

**From:** Melanie & Brian Holaway  
**To:** [FLStateParkPlanning](#)  
**Cc:** [Alsentzer, Daniel](#)  
**Subject:** Cayo Costa State Park UMP  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 21, 2018 4:22:21 PM

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Good afternoon.

I had the opportunity to attend the Public Meetings on March 20 & 21 related to the Cayo Costa State Park UMP this week.

I applaud the staff for conducting these meetings, especially Daniel. I felt staff truly listened and were authentic in responding to the comments. I agree with most of the comments made, but feel the need to articulate my concerns with the "weighted" amount of comments related to the South End Dock usage since there were no general users of the south end dock present or tourists to present the other side.

I mentioned this to Daniel in person today and want to mention it again. The key word that continues to come up in these discussions, is BALANCE. Please keep in mind a balance of use when it comes to the Commercial Operations at the South end. Many in attendance today were pushing for all commercial operations to take place at the north end of the island, but this is not going to provide BALANCE. I recognize and agree with concerns related to the amount of commercial usage at the south end dock, however, commercial operations have been operating successfully for almost 20 years at the south end prior to the change implemented in 2016. I believe there are a few ways to continue operating a large commercial boat at the south end of the island.

One is to go back to just how things were prior to the south end dock being used.

**Some other ideas to lessen the impact to the south end of the island are:**

- Only operate large boats to the south end at the point 5 days a week. (ex: no commercial trips on Sunday or Mondays).
- Only use the south end dock when weather does not allow to safely anchor beach side or bayside at the south end point.
- Special events such as wedding receptions or other events involving tents to only be conducted at the North end.

**Some opportunities to better relations between the concessionaire and the private owners at the south end:**

- Install a pay pole at the south end which the concessionaire would be responsible for collecting daily and remitting to the park.
- Concessionaire to participate in park approved dune and plant restoration efforts near the south end.
- Educate concessionaire on sensitive vegetation, native plants, shoreline nesting birds, etc on the island and how they can manage flow of people better on their trips to the south end.

Again, these daily commercial trips operated for 20 years with little or no resistance

from the public or land owners.

The large concessionaire boat going to the south end does have a bathroom aboard for visitors to use, provides shade and drinks for those who want to just sit on the boat to people watch. When the boat is docked at the south dock, the bathroom is less accessible and the boat is out of view for those wishing to sit and watch on the boat. The bayside view is less appealing for many and honestly much more buggy.

The presence of the concessionaire using the south end is valuable for another set of eyes monitoring park activity and communication to the park staff on a regular basis. Also, for safety reasons the concessionaire staff being at the south end is valuable for anyone needing help such as a person being stung by a sting ray.

I truly don't believe ceasing all commercial operations at the south end is a balanced approach and does not provide sufficient access to the public who do not own a boat and wish to visit the south end as they have done for decades. I know a primary reason of concern is erosion, which I agree has accelerated near the south end dock with the increased commercial use (especially near the dunes), but the primary erosion at or near the south point and below the high tide line is primarily natural. The beach changes on a daily basis and people cannot be primarily blamed for the change of beach below the dune lines. The majority of passengers on the commercial boat anchoring at the south end point are primarily staying below the high tide line as they are searching for shells.

Keep in mind, none of the discussion at these meetings addressed the 500 acres of park on North Captiva Island of which there is a commercial boat going to almost daily. How would that commercial operation be impacted if all commercial operations must go to the north end of Cayo Costa?

Almost everyone who touches their foot on Cayo has an immediate appreciate and respect for this largely unspoiled piece of Florida. Thank you for all you do to help preserve, protect and promote one of Lee County's biggest assets for its tourists and residents.

Melanie Holaway  
Lee County Resident

**From:** [Alsentzer, Daniel](#)  
**To:** [FLStateParkPlanning](#)  
**Subject:** Cayo Costa SP...thanks.  
**Date:** Friday, March 23, 2018 12:32:06 PM

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**From:** margi29@aol.com [mailto:margi29@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 22, 2018 10:45 PM  
**To:** Alsentzer, Daniel <Daniel.Alsentzer@dep.state.fl.us>  
**Subject:** Cayo Costa SP...thanks.

Daniel,

First of all, it was a pleasure to meet you and to work together on the UMP for Cayo Costa State Park. You are very gracious and patient and the FPS is lucky to have you in the position you are in. It is not easy to juggle the different personalities and issues that face each park you work for but you did a great job at the meetings this week juggling multiple challenges.

One very passionate Cayo Costa advocate, Virginia Morton, was not able to attend Tuesday night due to a medical issue. She is the direct descendant of the Padilla pioneer fishing family who lived on Cayo in the 1800s. I am going to send you some written comments from her along with a letter written by her relative, the first person born on the island during those times according to her family records. She has quite the story to tell. The Padilla Cemetery, referred to in the UMP, is where many of her family are buried. When we did the first "Mullet and Mangroves" video, she was interviewed.

We know you have a lot to do to absorb all of the meeting notes and input to take it to the next step. After the April 4th date, do you anticipate another 4-6 weeks to produce the final draft? Just trying to get a timeline and I can let others know.

I think our points were clear on the commercial use of the south end and we do hope the FPS makes the changes necessary to protect the irreplaceable resources Cayo Costa SP offers. We are in this for the long haul.

Again, thank you for everything Daniel.

Kind regards,

Margi Nanney

**From:** [Alsentzer, Daniel](#)  
**To:** [FLStateParkPlanning](#)  
**Subject:** FW: question  
**Date:** Friday, March 23, 2018 12:32:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**From:** Alsentzer, Daniel  
**Sent:** Friday, March 23, 2018 12:25 PM  
**To:** Ed Franks <[efranks@breezenewspapers.com](mailto:efranks@breezenewspapers.com)>  
**Cc:** Rogers, Karen M <[Karen.M.Rogers@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Karen.M.Rogers@dep.state.fl.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: question

Hi, Ed –

Karen Rogers is the District 4 biologist who developed the resource management component and attended the public meetings.

I've copied Karen on this email.

Thanks for your participation.

Regards,  
Daniel



**Daniel Alsentzer**  
Park Planner  
Office of Park Planning  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks  
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**From:** Ed Franks [<mailto:efranks@breezenewspapers.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 23, 2018 9:55 AM  
**To:** Alsentzer, Daniel <[Daniel.Alsentzer@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Daniel.Alsentzer@dep.state.fl.us)>  
**Subject:** question

Hi Daniel:

Great meeting the other night - thanks for coming to Pine Island.

Can you please forward the name of the biologist who answered a few questions? I failed to get it.

Thanks,

Ed

Ed Franks

Editor

Pine Island Eagle

Ph.: 239-283-2022

Email: [efranks@breezenewspapers.com](mailto:efranks@breezenewspapers.com)

**From:** [Alsentzer, Daniel](#)  
**To:** [FLStateParkPlanning](#)  
**Subject:** South Dock of Cayo Costa  
**Date:** Friday, March 23, 2018 2:07:42 PM

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**From:** Randy Johnson [mailto:rjohnson@sakata.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 21, 2018 4:57 PM  
**To:** Alsentzer, Daniel <Daniel.Alsentzer@dep.state.fl.us>  
**Subject:** FW: South Dock of Cayo Costa

Daniel...

Thanks again for inviting me to the meeting today.

I was a participant in BJ's meeting at the Charlotte Harbor Station on March 4, 2016 in which we were assured a prompt resolution to the controversy. Here's a long winded email I sent to staff 2 years ago, without any response. I hope we get one soon. You will recognize the same EXACT points I made in the management plan meetings last night and today. After chatting with the man driving the boat in the attachment it was apparent he was affiliated with Captiva Cruises (Mr. McCartney's friend)..which seemed unfair.

Thanks,  
Randy

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**From:** Randy Johnson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 27, 2016 12:36 PM  
**To:** [margi29@aol.com](mailto:margi29@aol.com); [karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us); [valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us); [Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com](mailto:Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com); [donald.forgione@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:donald.forgione@dep.state.fl.us); [william.nash@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:william.nash@dep.state.fl.us); [chad.lach@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:chad.lach@dep.state.fl.us)  
**Cc:** [ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us); [Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us); Ruane, Laura <[lrwane@gannett.com](mailto:lrwane@gannett.com)>; [jlfrock@yahoo.com](mailto:jlfrock@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** South Dock of Cayo Costa

All,

I am a boater and longtime user of the "state dock". While my main motive for getting involved in this issue revolves around public access rights, I would concur with the points made by Margi in recent emails. Public use of the south dock area has grown exponentially to 50-100/day along with the associated undesirable impacts. I would estimate this is as much as a 10X that of historical visitation numbers. Margi is correct that the high traffic areas through the dunes are creating a depression for storm surges to more easily cut through the island. The path will eventually create a "hard pan" that sea oat rhizomes or other plant roots cannot penetrate, thus exacerbating the problem. On the bay side, I have watched the Captiva Cruises gun their motors when leaving, which I suspect is creating a "blowout area" near the dock and undercutting the mangroves. I am also seeing an increase in larger private boats (see photo) being moored at this dock which I suspect may be affiliated with Captiva Cruises/South Seas Resort. Larger boats like this could not moor at the

state dock in previous years because the stern piling never existed. Neither the dock or the shallow grassy bay area approach are compatible with daily traffic involving these sorts of boats. Finally, I have noticed that the passenger boats are not taking a consistent path through the unmarked natural channel and are often cutting across the grass flats. I would like to ask the state to monitor this daily traffic and the potential impacts to the large grass flat to the east and south. As of now, I am aware of no daily boat/passenger limits for Captiva Cruises, so I am concerned that more traffic is on the horizon (i.e. boats from Punta Gorda, Pine Island, etc. going to the south dock rather than the main dock).

The lock has been taken off the gate so that others beyond Captiva Cruises can use the boardwalk, but technically not the new dock. The process can be very difficult and chaotic. I am also seeing impacts of private boats having to tie up to mangroves (per Chad Lach's suggestion) This is NOT the answer, and neither is the suggestion to drop a bow anchor and wade to shore without some sort of stern anchor on land to help stabilize the boat. Historically, the "local knowledge rule" for the "old" state dock (pre-Hurricane Charlie) was once 3-4 boats were moored, the dock was at capacity and others would have to wait for a spot. Now, chaos rules on the weekends and you will begin to see people trimming mangroves back along the shore to increase space for private boats because there is not enough room for the CC passenger boat plus ~2-3 small private flats or bay boats.

A while back, Chad mentioned 2 main reasons for the policy shift towards Captiva Cruises: #1) to increase visitors to the park; and #2) to help spread out the density of visitors from the Captiva Cruises charters more evenly from Captiva Pass to the state dock. Of all places, increasing visitors to the south end and "the narrows" area does not make sense because of environmental, archaeological (Faulkner Mound), and logistical reasons. Reason #2 seemed like a good idea, but in reality, it seems that Captiva Cruises has abandoned their Captiva Pass landings, so the full impact has shifted to "the narrows".

I believe in public access for all within reason and without significant detriment to the environment. It seems that the access priority to the south dock rests with a charter service whose average client is an upscale tourist vacationing on another barrier island to the south. Captiva Cruises is advertising this as a "shelling charter". Has Captiva Island combed their beaches to such a degree that tourists need to go shelling elsewhere? What about a mainland resident like myself who are year-round stewards and supporters of the park? Do we have a voice? I have heard the argument about collecting the park fee from private boaters would be difficult at the south end, but my suggestion of selling annual park decals was met with disinterest. Hundreds of boats anchor in the surf of Cayo Costa each spring/summer weekend, but the main boat basin does not have the capacity to take on that traffic merely to pay a few dollars in park fees. Most of us would be happy to support Cayo Costa through annual decals if money is the driving force behind giving the park vendor more latitude.

The imbalance between the park vendor, private local boaters, island residents, and the environment has become obvious. There needs to be a ceiling of visitors/boats/boat types to the state dock at "the narrows", and private boaters should be included in the average daily quota. Moreover, private boaters deserve a more formal way of mooring in order to access the boardwalk more easily.



In the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, I was promised a swift resolution, but we are approaching 2 months without one.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Randy



**Randall R. Johnson**

FL Station Branch Manager / Plant Pathologist

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[VEGETABLES](#)



**From:** [margi29@aol.com](mailto:margi29@aol.com) [<mailto:margi29@aol.com>]

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 27, 2016 9:28 AM

**To:** [anhinga42@comcast.net](mailto:anhinga42@comcast.net); [millercornell@mindspring.com](mailto:millercornell@mindspring.com); [karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us); [valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us); [Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com](mailto:Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com)

**Cc:** [ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us); [Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us)

**Subject:** Re: Plovers gone, dune systems being destroyed

All,

Sorry I am so tardy about the timing of my response to these recent emails, have been out of town.

Consistent monitoring of the birds along the southernmost beaches of Cayo (known historically as "the narrows") has been inconsistent and sometimes non-existent. We know this is because of lack of staff/time/money and because it's simply hard to access. Because of it's remote nature, this is the exact reason why the birds came to the south end, to get away from all the people, noise and hoopla. Now a large portion of this habitat is being taken away from them on Cayo.

Because of our recent outcry to the park system over the new commercial use of a new south dock the state has stepped up its monitoring in that area. It is clear the hundreds of people coming now have truly disturbed what was once "wild Florida" and a prime area for protected plovers and other creatures/plants that depend on such habitats to have healthy life cycles.

Since 1978 I have had a cabin on the south end adjacent to the new dock. There are five families who have had private houses together, this dock is in between these houses on a state owned lot sold to the state using EEL funds in 1978. Because I have been down there the most and have hiked (and worked

killing exotics) along that long stretch of beach for almost 40 years my empirical knowledge of the area is very strong.

About 5 to 6 years ago we began to see a large number of snowy plovers (the others birds you mention have also been present but the plovers were relatively "new" to the area). About 10-15 years ago the south "point" (where fallen trees are in Gulf) began to shift south and the past few years since Charley a new "emerging" dune system has begun to grow widening this fragile south end of the island. Hurrican Charley came on shore right at the spot where this "dock" is...it's still recovering.

While I am not formally trained to count/note and record these birds I can say we had as many as 12 pairs from the "new" point (wide area) south to the area where our houses are. I have a photo of eggs in the sand in front of our houses from 2014. I don't think the state has the consistent oversight we do to note these birds but they WERE there. Now they are gone. The closest plovers I saw were about a mile north,, none to the south.

Our concern is the loss of habitat for the birds as well as the turtles (hard to keep 3000 people per month off the nests since this part of the beach is so narrow to begin with)...not to mention the destruction of the dune system. We had a meeting March 4 with DEP officials where local boaters and property owners were present. We have had no formal response to this point from out pleas to stop this destruction. We are pursuing every avenue to see that all commercial groups (Captiva Cruises is bringing these groups and has the concession) go to the north end where there is infrastructure to handle such large numbers.

I am taking the liberty of sharing a recent, short pdf/power point with you that will show you photos of what we are talking about.

We hope the state has the wisdom to seek a solution that makes sense. This is just not right.

I would like to meet with you Charlie and see what I can do to become a volunteer with Audubon.

Thank you for listening!

Margi Nanney (941) 527-7865

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

From: anhinga42 <[anhinga42@comcast.net](mailto:anhinga42@comcast.net)>

To: Brad Cornell <[millercornell@mindspring.com](mailto:millercornell@mindspring.com)>; margi29 <[margi29@aol.com](mailto:margi29@aol.com)>; karen.schanzle <[karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us)>; valinda.subic <[valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us)>; Harris, Katheryn <[Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com](mailto:Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com)>

Cc: ezell.givens <[ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us)>; Gloria Beauchamp <[Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us)>

Sent: Mon, Apr 25, 2016 1:48 pm

Subject: RE: Plovers gone, dune systems being destroyed

Hi Brad and All,

As for any survey data questions, I am part of a group of Lee County Bird Patrol (volunteer group affiliated with Lee Parks and Rec/Conservation 2020) folks that 5 years ago began doing shorebird nesting surveys for FWC and their efforts to coordinate a cooperative effort to survey all the coastline in SWFL for nesting shorebirds during that season (Mar-Jul). We keep our data in an eBird account, and share it with both the FWC database and the Cayo Costa personnel/admins. We also survey outside the breeding season as we can fit it in. In short, there are 5 years of recent data for the island's outer beach and Gulf coastline. While I haven't personally surveyed the south end of the island (I have covered from the lagoon north), I can say those that have probably did not cover the backside of the island where there are structures and docks.

Also should be said since it was mentioned, the nesting season for shorebirds, including the Snowy

Plovers, in most cases begins in earnest around mid-March. This year is a good example of the timing with eggs, as they have been reported around the state for a few weeks now, and the first known Snowy chick in SWFL was reported this weekend. Any birds seen in January would most always be wintering individuals/pairs, and there are always a good number of them present at Cayo. As an example, the data I have access to from a 15 March survey this year by Karen and some other park personnel had 4 Snowies present north of the Tunnel of Love area, and 10 south of Tunnel of Love with no nesting observed. Just recently another survey had 10 Snowies north of the Tunnel of Love, and 6 to the south. No nests were observed, but many of the birds were noted to be in pairs, and given the date were likely mated pairs that may have already made nest scapes or laid eggs.

As for the campground area, I/we haven't seen nesting activity anywhere near there over my 5 years involved.. While there is a dune system in that area, it has not been attractive to nesting species like Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, Least Tern, Black Skimmer, or American Oystercatcher. The lagoon area and farther down the island to the south have been the preferred nesting areas.

We are not involved in policy or management decisions, only surveys, so that's all I can really address.

Charlie

Charlie Ewell  
Cape Coral, FL  
[anhinga42@comcast.net](mailto:anhinga42@comcast.net)

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S® 5 ACTIVE™, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Brad Cornell <[millercornell@mindspring.com](mailto:millercornell@mindspring.com)>  
Date: 04/22/2016 3:18 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: [margi29@aol.com](mailto:margi29@aol.com), [karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us), [valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us), "Harris, Katheryn" <[Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com](mailto:Katheryn.Harris@MyFWC.com)>  
Cc: [ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us), Charlie Ewell <[anhinga42@comcast.net](mailto:anhinga42@comcast.net)>, Gloria Beauchamp <[Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Gloria.Beauchamp@dep.state.fl.us)>  
Subject: RE: Plovers gone, dune systems being destroyed

Hi Margi, Karen, Charlie and all,

This is an old email and I have not been engaged on this for the past month, so I would like to know if DEP or FWC, or Lee Bird Patrol has been able to record snowy plover nesting on Cayo Costa this spring and reported them on the Florida Shorebird Database. In particular, is there a way to post (sign, posts and twine) nests found near high activity areas like the campgrounds, or the dock described below? The dock situation especially seems in need of oversight, so I also wonder if this situation has been addressed.

Audubon is conducting its volunteer nesting season Shorebird Stewardship training tomorrow, 4/23 at Lovers Key S.P. for new and veteran stewards from 9am - 11am. However, the nesting area we monitor is the south end of Ft. Myers Beach and we have not extended our work to Cayo Costa until Margi N. brought this to our attention. Please advise.

Thanks,





SCOUT

**From:** Lisa Kreiger  
**To:** [FLStateParkPlanning](#)  
**Subject:** Cayo Costa State Park  
**Date:** Monday, March 26, 2018 3:19:36 PM

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The purpose of this email is to submit comments regarding the proposed improvements and facilities at Cayo Costa State Park.

I strongly support the inclusion of a predator control objective (Objective B, p. 74) in the Cayo Costa State Park Unit Management Plan. I would like to emphasize the importance of this control by providing you with personal observations, gleaned through involvement. I worked as the Friends of Cayo Costa State Park's Adopt-A-Nest Program Coordinator for four years. The Adopt-A-Nest Program is a fund-raising program in which supporters "adopt" a sea turtle nest, and the funds raised are used to support sea turtle conservation efforts at the park.

As a review, the Recovery Plan for the NW Atlantic Population of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle states a recovery objective goal of ensuring the annual rate of mammalian predation on nests be 10% or below by implementing ecologically sound year-round predator control programs. I know this may not be expected, a goal, feasible, nor required, for Cayo Costa. But - it appears that the park had an approximate nest predation rate (partial or full) of 69% in the 2017 nesting season based on data collected by park staff and turtle interns. The high rate of nest predation in 2017 is mentioned on page 49 of the Unit Management Plan.

The park tracks nest productivity data every year, including predation data. This data can be used as leverage to request additional funding for a year-round trapping program, and assist in obtaining grant funding for predator control. In talking to the leadership of the Friends of Cayo Costa (CSO), they too have expressed concern for the level of predation and appear willing to fund or partially fund additional trapping resources. So whether the Park is able to obtain grant funding, state funding, or assistance from the CSO, I look forward to increased support that will help grow the rate of successful nests.

The interns at the Park did an amazing amount of work this past year, including screening the nests, but the predators are very clever. I know there is more we can do to minimize turtle exposure to predators. I hope that by including year-round predator control in the Unit Management Plan, the Park can request consistent funding for this activity from the state. It is a defensible request based on data.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Kreiger

Brad

Brad Cornell  
Southwest Florida Policy Associate  
Audubon of the Western Everglades/Audubon Florida  
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**From:** [margi29@aol.com](mailto:margi29@aol.com) [mailto:[margi29@aol.com](mailto:margi29@aol.com)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 15, 2016 11:39 AM  
**To:** [karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:karen.schanzle@dep.state.fl.us); [valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:valinda.subic@dep.state.fl.us)  
**Cc:** [ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ezell.givens@dep.state.fl.us); [millercornell@mindspring.com](mailto:millercornell@mindspring.com)  
**Subject:** Plovers gone, dune systems being destroyed

Valinda and Karen,

I was remiss in not copying you on the email I sent Mr. Givens yesterday explaining my grave concern over the loss of habitat on Cayo Costa's south end as a result of hundreds of people being newly offloaded along the island's narrowest section. As you know, this section was directly hit by Hurricane Charley in 2004 and is struggling to recover. As well, the newly rebuilt dock runs between private properties and is creating a dangerous divide. The sea oat dune line which has been forming the past two years has been destroyed where this path comes out and all of the dunes are trampled on.

When I was there in January and many times over the past five years, I have witnessed as many as 12 pairs of nesting snowy plovers. In January there were between 8 and 12 I saw along this stretch of beach. This past weekend I SAW NONE. Because most of your bird surveys were not done along this area, it is important to use empirical data such as our sightings to account for these endangered birds and the others who call Cayo home.

There are no other sites this pristine (or were pristine) that can act as a natural nesting area that are not over-run with people, lights, buildings and such. Cayo is probably one of the ONLY place their numbers are growing because their other habitats are disappearing rapidly.

The turtles are the same way. Would you pick a beach with lots of lights or one that is dark to lay your eggs on if you were a turtle?

YEs, I am emotional. Yes, we will see that something is done but after more than a week no one from the department has done anything. The trampling continues, the destruction continues. There is even ATV tracks landward of the dune lines showing park staff has no respect for these valuable, irreplaceable resources.

As well, the Captiva Cruise captains sit on their boat, there is no oversight of these people who are continuing to trespass on private property, trample the dunes and leave trash for us to pick up.

Please help. THIS NEEDS TO STOP IMMEDIATELY

Margi Nanney

From: Stephen Kent  
To: [FL State Park Planning](#)  
Subject: Submission of solicited public comment on proposed Cayo Costa State Park management plan  
Date: Tuesday, April 3, 2018 5:49:41 PM

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Florida Department of Environmental Protection staff members  
and  
Members of the Acquisition and Restoration Council:

Following are my comments in response to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's solicitation of public comment on the proposed park management plan for Cayo Costa State Park.  
Deadline for submission: April 4, 2018.

Submitted on April 3, 2018, by:  
Stephen Kent  
1111 Stephen Dr.  
Niceville FL 32578

Background: I have been a visitor to what is now Cayo Costa State Park since the early 1960s, when it was a Lee County park.

Comments on proposed 2018 management plan for Cayo Costa State Park:

**1) "Optimum boundary."**

The proposed plan should not concern itself with proposing expansion of the park to an "optimum boundary" (p. 48 and following). Rather, the plan should concentrate on results-oriented plans for management of the park as it exists. In any case, no justification or cost estimates are set forth in the proposed plan for expanding it. Further, I was unable to find a statutory basis authorizing a park management plan to recommend an "optimum boundary" that identifies by implication public and private lands for acquisition. The authorizing statutes cited on page 2 of the proposed plan seem to require a performance-oriented management plan, not a wish list. A proposed budget for effecting and operating such an expansion is not included in this plan. Acquisition by the park would increase costs for an already-strained parks budget. Several years ago, the state proposed selling its "surplus" parcels on Cayo Costa and North Captiva. Why does this plan now propose expanding the park?

**Recommendation: References to a park "optimum boundary" should be stricken as unfounded and unnecessary.**

**2) Acquisition of submerged lands.**

The proposed plan should not recommend expansion of the park to include Florida sovereign submerged lands. The new plan proposes expanding the park by extending it westward, under the waves, to include the 25-foot strip of sea bottom bordering the entire Gulf shoreline adjoining publicly owned and privately owned lands (pages 78 and 95; map on the unnumbered page preceding page 95). No case is made for this other than "resource protection." These are garden-variety submerged lands already held in trust by the State of Florida, and protected as such. Acquisition by the park would increase park costs, subject these lands to additional regulation and access controls as parkland, and achieve no substantial additional public good. No case is made that such expansion would benefit park users, park resources, or the citizens of Florida in general. A budget for administering the expanded area is not included in this plan. I was unable to find a statutory basis for including such a proposed expansion in what is supposed to be a performance-oriented plan specifying measurable outcomes.

**Recommendation: References to expanding the park to include sovereign submerged lands should be stricken as unfounded and unnecessary.**

**3) Long-lasting ATV tracks carved on the beaches.**

The plan includes no proposals for what, in recent years, have become semi-permanent tracks of state-operated all-terrain vehicles on the park's beaches. In years past, park personnel patrolled the southern portions of the island typically at low tide, careful steer below the expected line of the next high tide, so that the vehicles' tracks would be erased by the waves within hours. Sadly, this is no longer the case. Now is it standard practice for operators of park ATVs to travel on dry sand at any time. As a result, many visitors arriving on this remote island expecting to find "the old Florida" are instead confronted by ATV tracks. (Recent photo attached.)

**Recommendation: Add as a goal that beach patrols on ATVs take place at low tide, and traverse below the expected line of the next high tide, emergencies excepted.**

**4) Recommendation: Operation of private motor vehicles, including private all-terrain vehicles, should be prohibited on the beaches of Cayo Costa State Park.**

Thank you for your kind attention.

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