

Sumter County Parks and Recreation Summary of Recommendations

Introduction:

Mr. Bradley Arnold, Sumter County Administrator, requested the Director of Public Works to review Parks and Recreation facilities and outline proposed direction for the County's Park system. Gary Kuhl, Director of Public Works, Jackey Jackson, Assistant Director of Public Works for Operations and Maintenance, and Bruce Root, Supervisor of Parks and Recreation, visited each Park and community facility site recently. Each facility was viewed with respect to progress made in the past year and to potential improvements that might increase the value to Sumter County citizens. Notes were made at each site and these are summarized below.

1. Cherry Lake Park



- a. **Current Status**-----Another nicely maintained park except the basketball court is in bad need of pavement repair. Probably "low" utilization park.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Repair basketball court by resurfacing.

2. Lake Miona Park



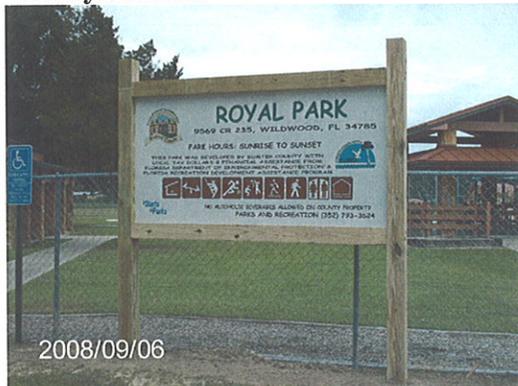
- a. **Current Status**-----Very nice park including boat ramp, restrooms, dock and picnic facilities. "High" use park during boating and fishing season.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Parking lot curbing needs repair; FWC may assist with constructing dock to accommodate disabled. Perhaps a bench on the dock would assist elderly and disabled.

3. Lake Okahumpka



- a. **Current Status**-----Very nice park with “high” use designation. A \$250,000 grant for boat ramp improvements has been applied for and Public Works staff was informed recently that a dredge project is to begin at the park in late February 2010.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Manage dredge project and boat ramp project through State assistance programs.

4. Royal Park



- a. **Current Status**-----Park is in excellent condition and well maintained. This is a “high” attendance park with very nice playground amenities and community center. Recent improvements and upgrades and strong community support have made this park an outstanding facility.
- b. **Future Direction**-----The community center needs a good inside paint job and new venetian blinds (or other window treatment). The perimeter trail should be resurfaced with shell as current woodchips make for a difficult trail for wheelchairs and disabled citizens. The County should consider placing surplus concrete barriers in the parking lot to bar entry of automobiles into the park area during high attendance events. There is a diseased oak tree in the parking lot that should be removed for safety and liability reasons.

5. Rutland Park—Boat Ramp



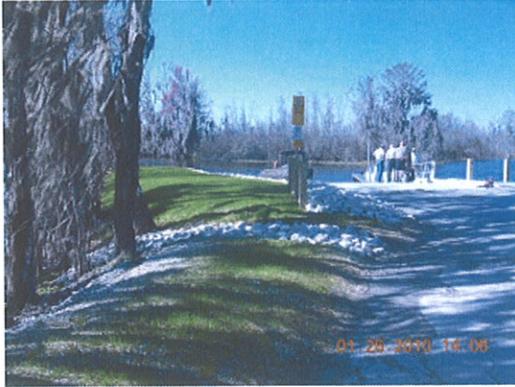
- a. **Current Status**-----This is a very nice boat ramp and parking facility for access onto the Withlacoochee River. There are no other amenities at the site. Ramp has “high” utilization on a seasonal basis by the boating public.
- b. **Future Direction**-----This facility could be enhanced with a couple of nice picnic pavilions and cookout grills with assistance from SWFWMD, FDEP and/or FWC.

6. Marsh Bend Outlet Park



- a. **Current Status**-----Another very nice Sumter County park facility with beautiful natural Florida surroundings, boat ramps, handicapped “friendly” fishing bridge, cooking grills, picnic tables and “beach sand” volley ball court. Probably a “medium” use park.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Short term improvements could include placement of bollards to block vehicle parking within the park area, “mill” or shell driveways to picnic pavilions and volleyball court, and covered pavilions for picnic tables. Longer term improvements such as restrooms and a dock at the boat ramp would be great additions.

7. Coleman Landing



- a. **Current Status**----A new boat ramp and landing dock have been constructed at the park site by FWC. It is a first-class facility. County Road and Bridge staff have cleaned the area and plan to revitalize the parking area and entry road. While not yet open to the public, it is anticipated that this facility will draw “high” attendance.
- b. **Future Direction**-----The Sheriff’s Office and Public Works are jointly developing a plan for park security since the site is in a remote area and State financial participation requires that the park be open to the public 24 hours a day. It is expected that a security camera system will be installed in the near future.

8. Lake Panasoffkee Recreation Park



- a. **Current Status**-----This is a very “high” use facility, nicely maintained and equipped with a new federal stimulus pedestrian trail under construction to facilitate walking traffic to the park. This park has very nice baseball fields (lighted), soccer fields and shuffle board facilities along with a well-maintained indoor community center.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Entry sign to the park could be upgraded to improve the overall appearance of the facility. New poles and lighting are being installed at the baseball facilities. The park storage building could stand some maintenance and cleanup. There are some areas in the park where construction debris and materials need to be removed. The soccer field on the south end of the park could be greatly improved utilizing a roller and some additional soil material. Parking areas could be improved

with either “mill” or shell. Continue to apply for grants to improve facilities.

9. Lake Panasoffkee Community Building



- a. **Current Status**----Lake Panasoffkee Community Building (also constructed in 1939) is in very good condition for its age.
- b. **Future Direction**----Again, use of this facility is in the “low” range but it serves a positive function for residents in the rural local area. The County sign could use some nice landscaping and the trees need trimming from over the roof.

10. Sumterville Community Building



- a. **Current Status**-----Small Park with “low” use designation; building in good condition.
- b. **Future Direction**-----No future plans at this time.

11. Wahoo Community Building



- a. **Current Status**----the Community Building (constructed in 1939) is in very good shape having been cleaned and painted in 2009. The outside area is neat and lawn and landscape have appearance of routinely being “manicured”. A few small groups meet at the site on a regular schedule but use of the facility would have to be categorized as “low”. The facility does serve as a voting precinct. New facility sign is neat and distinct in appearance and consistent with other park facility signage.
- b. **Future Direction**----Wahoo Community Building is a very nice site typical of rural Sumter County. The area has historical significance as the general area of a battle between U. S. soldiers and Native Americans in the mid-1800’s. Perhaps in the future some sort of annual (or every other year) recognition of the battle and the site from a historical perspective could be conducted. Probably would have to be organized by the historical society or the Chamber of Commerce.

12. Roy Bug Story/Gant Lake Park



- a. **Current Status**-----Very Small Park with a likely, “low” use designation. Even though the park is small, the entry canal and Gant Lake could be a very nice kayak and canoeing area.
- b. **Future Direction**----Driveway entry road needs repair.

13. Croom-A-Coochee Park



- a. **Current Status**-----Nicely maintained park; has been subject to some vandalism. Probably a “low” use park.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Back-slope on southwest corner of the park needs to be stabilized; it is adjacent to the Little Withlacoochee River and is subject to erosion and ATV traffic. Lighting in the park might make it conducive to more use in the evenings and improve security.

14. Lake Panasoffkee Headwaters

- a. **Current Status**-----The beautiful setting on Shady Brook could provide a nice kayak or canoe launch site for tours on Lake Panasoffkee and backwaters. No current facilities at the site (one picnic table and one
- b. **Future Direction**-----Clean bank area and install parking, roads and a canoe launch.

15. Shady Brook Greenway

- a. **Current Status**-----The beautiful setting on Shady Brook could provide a nice kayak or canoe launch site for tours on Lake Panasoffkee and backwaters. No current facilities at the site (one picnic table and one garbage can) and no real public access at this time.
- b. **Future Direction**-----addition of picnic tables and trash collection facilities in the near term and restroom facilities long term would make this a great recreation site. Recommend continued restriction of “no outboard motors” or improved boat launch site (ramp).

16. Lake Panasoffkee Pedestrian Trail

- a. **Current Status**-----Federal stimulus project is currently under construction; project ties pedestrian traffic from neighborhoods to schools, Lake Panasoffkee Park and potential “eco” park (spoil site). Scheduled for completion by March 1, 2010. Expected to be a “high” use facility.
- b. **Future Direction**-----Parks and Recreation staff plan to maintain this facility at a high level as other similar facilities in Florida have developed into very nice hiking and jogging trails. Perhaps a few “Florida native”

landscaped sites along with a rest bench every several hundred yards could add to the project for relatively low cost and maintenance. Mowing and edging will be needed periodically during the “growing” season.

17. Lake Panasoffkee Trail and ECO Viewing Site (spoil site)

- a. Current Status-----**Discussion on the Lake Panasoffkee Pedestrian Trail has been outlined above. In addition, the Lake Panasoffkee spoil site on the east end of the pedestrian trail and just south of C 470 could be, with minimal investment, a nice “eco” type park for hiking and wildlife observation. Could develop into a “high” utilization park facility.
- b. Future Direction-----**While it might be a “stretch” to think the trail and the spoil site could provide some economic development potential, trails and eco parks in other areas of Florida, draw a substantial economic boost to associated communities. It may be possible to obtain a park or trail development grant from the SWFWMD, FWC and/or FDEP (Parks) in the future to make the combination trail and spoil site into a very nice eco site to include hiking trails, observation sites, kiosks and perhaps picnic pavilions.

February 12, 2010