

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF RECREATION AND PARKS

Bureau of
Land Acquisition and Development

POLICY MANUAL

MEMORANDUM NUMBER 6

WILDERNESS PRESERVES

May 7, 1974

A. General

Wilderness Preserves provide a distinct and positive use of selected lands of the State recreation and parks system, and should be recognized, used, and managed in this light. Wilderness Preserves are not merely left over, or temporarily unused, portions of areas of the system. Rather, they constitute a major and important part of the land use programs of many areas. Their formal, designation and establishment — in the same sense that a nature trail, picnic area or bathing beach is formally designated and established — enable the State recreation and parks system to serve more effectively one of its basic functions, that of natural values preservation.

The selection of a Wilderness Preserve is, to a great extent, governed by the suitability of the land features and the indicated need for the types of public benefits which would be derived, as is the case for a recreation site.

Definition

A Wilderness Preserve is contained within an area of the State recreation and parks system, and is undeveloped land which has retained essentially its principal character and influence — without permanent alteration. It is protected and managed in a manner to preserve its natural appeal and values. The characteristics of a Wilderness Preserve are as follows:

1. Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticable;
2. Offers outstanding opportunities for solitude, or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;
3. Is expansive and sufficient in size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practical;
4. May also contain ecological, archaeological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.

C. Procedure for Establishment

Lands proposed for the Wilderness Preserve designation are submitted to and processed by the Bureau of Land Acquisition and Development, as are all proposals for land use. The Bureau will then conduct, as necessary, an on—site investigation with appropriate specialists, to include Bureau of Park Operations' personnel, to study the attributes of the proposed preserve, and its possible inclusion as a Wilderness preserve in an area's overall land use plan. The processing of proposals in this manner facilitates maximum coordination and efficiency in establishing the best uses, and the proper

After review of a Wilderness Preserve proposal, the Bureau of Land Acquisition and Development arranges a meeting with the Bureau of Park Operations and the Division Director and makes a formal presentation and recommendation to the Director. Approval by the Director gives the Wilderness Preserve status equal to any designated site within an area. The area base map is marked accordingly by the Bureau of Land Acquisition and Development and a copy furnished to the Bureau of Park Operations.

Analysis of Proposals

In reviewing a proposal, the following criteria are considered:

1. Should possess all characteristics as defined under the Wilderness Preserve definition, paragraph B above.
2. Should offer a compatible and logical land use in relation to the overall land use plan of the area within which proposed.
3. Should exhibit a truly high quality wilderness character, thereby assuring their continued existence with a high level of integrity, while allowing more questionable lands to serve other public purposes.

E. Implementation

Upon approval of a Wilderness Preserve, the Bureau of Park Operations will notify the appropriate field personnel of the designation and provide them a base map with site boundaries, and a complete management statement, which is to include protection measures to be taken and means of supervising the authorized forms of public use. Implementation begins immediately.

F. Management

All management activities contribute to maintenance of the site in its natural and pristine condition. In general, limited activities are more likely to enable the site to retain its wilderness characteristics. Occasionally, it may be desirable to initiate a carefully planned resource management program, with the objectives of returning a portion of the site to a more pristine condition by erasing signs of man's previous activities. A management statement, covering protection and supervision of the authorized forms of public use, is prepared by the Bureau of Park Operations for each such site.

Precise protection measures which supplement general Division regulations are as follows:

1. No artificial manipulation of insect populations.
2. Cutting of native vegetation is to be highly selective and is permitted only for authorized development and the maintenance of management and use facilities. The cutting of dead trees is permitted only when they are determined to be a hazard at a designated use area or a boundary fence.
3. Ecological burning may be initiated if necessary to maintain natural processes. Accidental or natural fires should be controlled so as not to endanger nonfire-type communities or private property. Under suitable conditions, they may be allowed to burn out naturally.
4. Fire lanes are to be combined with service roads when possible. All unnecessary fire lands are abandoned.

5. Maintain only those existing service roads that are needed for control. All others are abandoned.
6. Provide a boundary (hog wire) fence and fire lane around upland portions, except where the Wilderness Preserve joins the primary area.
7. Motorized vehicles and motorized boats are normally permitted for control purposes only.
8. Exotic plants and animals are eliminated when it is possible to do so by approved means which will preserve wilderness qualities.
9. Collecting must have the purpose of gathering baseline ecological data for scientific research which will benefit the preserve, the overall area, outdoor recreation, or the protection of the natural environment. Collecting is limited to small amounts and is discouraged when specimens can be found elsewhere.

G. Public Use

Uses are to be limited and passive in nature and related to the aesthetic, educational and scientific enjoyment of the features and conditions maintained. Other uses may be permitted if fully compatible. Compatible uses, and carrying capacities for them, are to be established for Wilderness Preserves on an individual basis. Activities which are generally recognized as being compatible with wilderness use are hiking, canoeing, nature study and natural scenery appreciation. Facilities are limited to those considered essential for management and appropriate forms of public use.

H. Revision Requirements

Wilderness preserves are intended to have a high degree of permanence, and require stringent protection. Accordingly, an exhaustive assessment is made of any proposed modification. Any modification must be authorized in accordance with the procedure discussed above in paragraph C, Procedure for Establishment.