

The Planning Process

1 Pre-Planning

- Onsite park visit
- Staff planning meeting with park manager, district biologist, cultural resource expert, and lead planner
- Preliminary public meeting and/or visitor input survey

2 Plan Development

- Determine goals and objectives for resource management and recreational facilities
- Develop draft management plan
- Internal Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) review of draft management plan

3 Plan Review

- Present draft management plan at public meeting and advisory group
- Solicit public input on the content of the draft management plan
- Revise plan based on public comment received

4 Plan Approval

- Submit revised management plan to Governor-appointed Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC)
- Present proposals to the Acquisition and Restoration Council in a public forum
- Recommend approval

Public Comment

Thank you for taking the time to share your comments with us. Please provide any comments you may have by **February 8, 2019**. Provide your comments to any of the following:

Call or email: (850) 245-3070 or Tyler.Maldonado@floridadep.gov

Conventional Mail:
Office of Park Planning
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 525
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

About Park Planning

Learn more about park planning and find each park's unit management plan here:

Division of Recreation and Parks: www.floridadep.gov/parks

Recreational and Parks Quick Links > Office of Park Planning > Office of Park Planning Quick Links > Management Plans

Public Meeting
January 24, 2019
6:30 PM–8:30 PM



Myakka River State Park

AGENDA

6:30–7:00 pm - Open House Viewing of Unit Management Plan Maps and Staff Interaction

7:00–7:30 pm - Staff Presentation of the Unit Management Plan Update

7:30–8:30 pm - Q&A Session and Public Comment—Open House Continues

8:30 pm - Adjournment

Significant Features of the Park

- One of nine original state parks
- Myakka Wild and Scenic River
- 7,500-acre wilderness preserve
- 14,500+ acres of dry prairie habitat
- Canopy tower walkway
- Interpretive land and water tours

PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to receive public input on the draft 10-year unit management plan update for Myakka River State Park.

What is a Unit Management Plan?

Required under Florida Statutes 253 and 259, a Unit Management Plan (UMP) is a planning document that is prepared for all 175 state parks and trails. The Myakka River State Park UMP consists of four main sections.

Introduction

States the purpose of acquisition
Identifies the significance of the park
Establishes DRP management authority

Past Accomplishments

Future Objectives

Notes previous accomplishments
Outlines future management objectives
Calculates estimated 10-year costs

Resource Management

Describes existing natural resources
Records known cultural resources
Defines resource management objectives

Land Use and Recreation

Analyzes regional growth trends
Inventories existing infrastructure/facilities
Proposes future recreational land uses



10-Year Key Accomplishments

- Volunteers contributed over 225,000 hours of service.
- The Friends of Myakka, Inc., has provided the park with funding for education, research, publications and a new website; specialized equipment for park operations/resource management, including computer equipment, firefighting equipment, mowers and other needed equipment; and funding for canopy walkway repairs.
- Prescribed fire management conducted on 82,000 acres.
- 3,400 acres treated for exotic plants species.
- 8,950 exotic animals were removed from the park, including 8,600 feral hogs.
- Nine blocked or failing culverts were repaired or replaced along the park drive.
- Mechanical treatment/fire prep conducted on 4,880 acres for Florida dry prairie habitat improvement.
- Connected administration office, south restroom, shop building, and two residences at the shop to main wastewater system and abandoned septic systems.

Myakka River State Park

At one of Florida's oldest and largest parks, the first state-designated wild and scenic river flows through a vast expanse of unspoiled wetlands, prairies, hammocks, and pinelands. Arching palm trees and live oaks reflect on the winding tea-colored blackwater stream, while alligators and turtles sun lazily on logs and riverbanks.

Total Acreage – 37,197 acres



Myakka Wild and Scenic River

Designated by Florida Statute in 1985
Regulates development within the "River Area"
Total of 34 miles in Sarasota County
Approximately 12 miles within the state park

"The Myakka River possesses outstandingly remarkable ecological, fish and wildlife, and recreational values which are unique in the State of Florida. These values give significance to the river as one which should be permanently preserved and enhanced for the citizens of the State of Florida, both present and future." (Florida Statutes)

Imperiled Plant and Animal Species

Notable Imperiled Species (55 total imperiled species)	
<i>Plants (17 total imperiled plant species)</i>	
Pine Lily	State-Listed Threatened
Many-flowered grass pink orchid	State-Listed Threatened
Giant airplant	State-Listed Endangered
Cardinal airplant	State-Listed Endangered
<i>Animals (38 total imperiled animal species)</i>	
Florida burrowing owl	State-Listed Threatened
Crested caracara	Federally-Listed Threatened
Florida sandhill crane	State-Listed Threatened
Florida scrub-jay	Federally-Listed Threatened
American alligator	Federally-Listed Threatened
Gopher tortoise	State-Listed Threatened
Florida manatee	Federally-Listed Threatened

Resource Management Objectives

- Conduct a hydrological assessment and feasibility study to determine the effects of historical hydrologic alterations on the Myakka River system.
- Manage fire-dependent natural communities by conducting prescribed burning on between 10,384–17,314 acres per year.
- Conduct habitat restoration activities on 2,000 acres of dry prairie, mesic flatwoods, and scrubby flatwoods over the next 10 years.
- Develop a plan for Florida dry prairie restoration on the abandoned pasture south of State Road 72.
- Treat a minimum of 45 infested acres (300 gross acres) of exotic plant species per year.
- Annually monitor and evaluate 43 recorded cultural resources.

Land Use and Recreation Objectives

- Support the efforts of the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council to determine an appropriate recreational carrying capacity for the Myakka River.
- Develop a conceptual master plan for the park that considers traffic circulation at the south entrance, mobility options between use areas, recreational uses, and interpretation.
- Relocate park management support facilities.
- Address facility repair and renovation needs.

10-Year Average Attendance

415,000 visitors per year
86% day use visitors
14% overnight visitors

Estimated Economic Impact

\$30.5 million per year

Optimum Boundary

Approximately 12,250 acres have been identified for potential acquisition to achieve the park's optimum boundary. Benefits from acquisition would include:

- ⇒ Hydrological maintenance and restoration of the Myakka River and its watershed.
- ⇒ Prescribed fire management and restoration of native habitat.
- ⇒ Preservation of a natural buffer between development and wilderness areas.