

Audit of Collier-Seminole State Park

Division of Recreation and Parks

Report: A-1415DEP-037

Office of Inspector General

Internal Audit Section

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of the Division of Recreation and Parks (Division) Collier-Seminole State Park (Park). This audit was initiated as a result of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2015 Annual Audit Plan.

Scope and Objectives

The scope of this audit included selected activities at the Park during the period of January 1, 2014 through January 31, 2015. The objectives of this audit were to determine:

- the accuracy of reported revenue
- whether the Park is in compliance and controls are in place with respect to revenue collection, expenditures, Department personal property, overnight accommodations, attendance and visitation, and Park volunteers.

Methodology

This audit was conducted under the authority of section 20.055, Florida Statutes (F.S.) and was a component of the OIG FY 2014-2015 Annual Audit Plan. The audit was conducted in conformance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, published by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Our audit procedures included review of Division and Park records and interviews with staff of the Park, the Division, and the Office of Operations.

Background

Located in Collier County in Southwestern Florida, the Park covers over 7,000 acres of various natural communities, including a portion of one of the largest mangrove swamps in the world. The Park offers visitors numerous activities including bicycling, birding, hiking,

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fishing, and picnicking. Amenities at the Park include a boat ramp and canoe/kayak launch, hiking and nature trails, playgrounds, interpretive exhibits, and boat tours. The Park also offers full-service, primitive, and group camping.

The Park generates revenue through camping fees, day-use entry fees, bicycle and canoe rentals, and sales of merchandise. The Park also generates revenue through a short-term permit agreement with a vendor offering paddleboard tours. The table below shows the Park's reported revenue and visitation for FY 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014.

Fiscal Year	Reported Revenue	Reported Visitation
2011-2012	\$ 342,156.00	60,540
2012-2013	\$ 383,042.00	77,504
2013-2014 ¹	\$ 253,353.00	64,806

Results and Conclusions

Revenue Collection Controls and Oversight

Cash is collected through the Park's cash register located in the Ranger Station. According to Park management, the cash register is opened by the Park Manager and operated by Park staff or volunteers in two shifts. At the end of each shift, Park staff count the cash on-hand and document collections on daily shift reports. At the beginning of each shift, Park staff verifies the previous shift's entries on daily shift reports. Overages or shortages are documented on the Daily Deposit Worksheet (DDW). When transactions are voided, Park staff document the reason for the void. When refunds are processed for visitors, the Park retains a copy of the refund receipt provided to the visitor.

¹ During part of FY 2013/2014, the Park's campground was closed to online reservations due to a planned renovation construction project. This resulted in reduced revenue and attendance.

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Cash deposits are prepared by the Park’s Administrative Assistant and deposited by the Park Manager. Cash deposits are made on weekends if a large amount of cash is collected; otherwise, cash collections from the weekends are stored in the Park’s safe and deposited on the following Monday. According to Park management, four Park staff has access to the Park’s safe. When there is turnover in these positions, the combination to the safe is changed.

We reviewed the Park’s revenue for the months of January and March 2014. We compared revenue on the DDW with daily shift reports, Financial Session Summaries, deposit slips, and credit card settlement reports. The table below shows the Park’s revenue according to the DDW, daily shift reports, Financial Session Summaries, credit card settlement reports, and deposit slips for the month of January 2014.

Source Document	Cash and Checks	Credit Cards
DDW (Reported)	\$ 10,139.73	\$ 9,397.58
Daily Shift Reports	\$ 10,139.56	\$ 9,314.68
Financial Session Summaries / Settlement Reports	\$ 10,118.83	\$ 9,418.63
Deposit Slips	\$ 10,139.81	N/A

The table below shows the Park’s revenue according to the DDW, daily shift reports, Financial Session Summaries, credit card settlement reports, and deposit slips for the month of March 2014.

Source Document	Cash and Checks	Credit Cards
DDW (Reported)	\$ 14,947.18	\$ 15,753.58
Daily Shift Reports	\$ 14,946.76	\$ 15,718.78
Financial Session Summaries / Settlement Reports	\$ 15,025.79	\$ 15,753.58
Deposit Slips	\$ 14,947.28	N/A

Reported revenue agreed with daily shift reports, Financial Session Summaries, credit card settlement reports, and deposit slips with minor discrepancies. According to Park staff,

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discrepancies were due to entry errors made by Park staff operating the cash register and completing daily shift reports.

Visitation Determination and Reporting

The Park reports visitation on the Daily Tabulation of Visitors. The Daily Tabulation of Visitors includes the number of day-use visitors entering through the Ranger Station (including pedestrian visitors), on-site overnight camping visitors (full-service, primitive, and group), and departing camping visitors. The Park uses the ReserveAmerica reservation system to track the number of on-site overnight camping visitors and departing camping visitors. Day-use visitors are tracked through the Park's cash register.

We compared the Park's reported visitation with register Z-1 reports and daily shift reports for the months of January and March 2014. The table below shows the Park's reported visitation and visitation according to register Z-1 reports and daily shift reports for the month of January 2014.

Visitation Category	Reported	Register Z-1 Reports / Daily Shift Reports
Day-use Visitors	2,858	2,858
Pedestrian Visitors	13	17
On-Site Overnight Camping Visitors	7,510	7,181
Departing Camping Visitors	2,544	2,544
Month Total	12,925	12,600

Reported pedestrian visitors and on-site overnight camping visitors did not agree with register Z-1 reports and daily shift reports. According to Park staff, these discrepancies were due to entry errors made by Park staff operating the Park's cash register or completing the daily shift report. This included an error in which the staff completing a daily shift report did not note the number of on-site overnight camping visitors on one day in January.

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The table below shows the Park's reported visitation and visitation according to register Z-1 reports and daily shift reports for the month of March 2014.

Visitation Category	Reported	Register Z-1 Reports / Daily Shift Reports
Day-use Visitors	3,038	2,990
Pedestrian Visitors	21	656
On-Site Overnight Camping Visitors	3,500	3,542
Departing Camping Visitors	1,605	1,631
Month Total	8,164	8,819

Reported visitation did not agree with register Z-1 reports and daily shift reports.

According to Park staff, discrepancies were due to entry errors made by staff operating the Park's cash register or preparing daily shift reports. In addition, Park staff explained that pedestrian visitation according to register Z-1 reports included visitation reported by the Park's Citizen Support Organization (CSO) for a CSO event held in February 2014.

Management of Department Personal Property

According to Park management, staff conducts a physical inventory of all property listed on the Park's Master Property File. The Park Manager, who serves as the Property Custodian, is not involved in the inventory process. Items are surplus as needed based on the cost to either repair or replace the item.

According to the Park's Master Property File, there are 80 personal property items and no firearms located at the Park. Of the 80 personal property items on the Master Property File, we selected a sample of 19 (24%) to identify during our site visit. Of the sampled items, 18 (95%) were physically identified during our site visit. The remaining item had been surplus, but had remained on the Park's Master Property File. Park staff provided documentation confirming the item had been surplus.

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Vehicle Usage and Fuel Purchase Oversight and Controls

Vehicle usage, fuel purchases, and maintenance are tracked on Monthly Vehicle/Equipment Usage Logs for each vehicle. Each of the Park's vehicles is assigned a fuel card used to purchase fuel for the vehicle. The Park also uses a Miscellaneous Fuel Card (MFC) to purchase fuel for smaller equipment. Miscellaneous fuel purchases are documented on Monthly Miscellaneous State Fuel Card Usage Logs. Each month, the Park submits Monthly Vehicle/Equipment Usage Logs and Monthly Miscellaneous State Fuel Card Usage Logs to the Bureau of General Services.

We reviewed a sample of vehicle and MFC fuel purchases made by Park staff in January and March 2014. For each sampled fuel purchase, we reviewed either Monthly Vehicle/Equipment Usage Logs or Miscellaneous State Fuel Card Usage Logs to determine if the purchase was supported by log entries and attached purchase receipts.

During January and March 2014, Park staff made a total of 38 fuel purchases. Of these 38 purchases, we selected a sample of 17 (45%) purchases. Of the 17 sampled purchases, all were supported by log entries and purchase receipts. For 15 (88%) of the 17 sampled purchases, log entries included a destination or purpose.

Purchasing Card Controls and Oversight

All full-time equivalent staff at the Park has been assigned purchasing cards (P-Card). According to Park management, when purchases are made, a form is completed with a description and justification for the purchase. Purchases are reviewed by the Park's Administrative Assistant. When the Administrative Assistant makes a purchase, the purchase is reviewed by a different Park staff member.

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We reviewed the Park's P-Card transactions during the months of January and March 2014. In January and March 2014, Park staff made a total of 67 purchases. From this, we selected a sample of 15 (22%) transactions to review. For each sampled transaction, we reviewed purchase documentation to determine if each purchase was supported by a receipt or invoice, pre-approved by management, and reviewed by a staff member other than the purchaser. In addition, we reviewed purchase documentation to determine if each purchase appeared to be reasonable and if the purchase was allowable according to the Division of Administrative Services' P-Card Exception List.

Of the 15 purchases in our sample, all were supported by receipts or invoices, pre-approved by management, and reviewed by a staff member other than the purchaser. In addition, all 15 purchases were allowable and appeared to be reasonable.

Tax-Exempt Visitor Documentation

Based on interviews with Park management, Park staff does not collect and store tax-exempt certificates from tax-exempt-visitors who made their reservation through the Park's online reservation system, ReserveAmerica. When reservations are made at the Park, staff collects and stores the tax-exempt certificates.

Based on reports from ReserveAmerica, eight reservations received tax-exempt status in January and March 2014. Of the eight tax-exempt reservations, two had either a certificate number in the reservation system or the Park provided physical copies of tax-exempt documentation. The remaining six reservations had no documentation at the Park or in the reservation system supporting the reservation's tax-exempt status.

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Volunteer Management and Oversight

Park volunteers assist with equipment maintenance, trail maintenance, campground hosting, working in the Park Ranger Station, and selling firewood and ice at the Park campground. The Park has 4 campground host sites and 12 “volunteer village” sites. Volunteers are provided with complimentary camping at these sites as long they meet the Park’s minimum work requirement, which requires at least 20 hours of service per week per site.

We analyzed the timesheets of the Park’s volunteers who received complimentary camping. To ensure documentation was available and relevant, we reviewed documentation for volunteers active at the Park in January 2015. According to the Park’s volunteer roster, there were 32 volunteers occupying 16 volunteer sites in January 2015. Of these 16 sites, all sites’ volunteers had met the Park’s minimum work requirement (20 hours per week).

According to Park staff, when volunteers begin serving at the Park, they must complete a volunteer agreement and various training courses. In addition, the Park performs a sexual predator/offender search for each volunteer. For each of the 32 volunteers active at the Park in January 2015, we requested volunteer agreements and documentation of sexual predator/offender searches in both statewide and national databases. The Park provided volunteer agreements and documentation of searches in the statewide database for all 32 volunteers. National database sexual predator/offender search documentation was not provided for any of the 32 volunteers.

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Documentation of sexual predator/offender searches in the statewide database indicated the searches were conducted approximately two weeks prior to our site visit. According to Park staff, in the past, Park staff did not print out search documentation.

Campground Renovation Closure

According to the Park Manager, the Park's campground was closed for online reservations from April 2014 to November 2014 due to a planned renovation of the Park's campground. During this period, no construction activities took place at the Park's campground due to unforeseen contract issues. Our findings and recommendations are included in the remainder of this report.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: Sexual Predator/Offender Searches

Chapter 2, section 3(f) of the Division's Operations Manual (OM) requires the Park to conduct sexual predator/offender searches in the national databases for all volunteers. In addition, the Park was required to maintain documentation of the searches in each volunteer's personnel file. Prior to June 2015, chapter 2, section 3(f) required searches in both national and statewide databases.

During our site visit, the Park provided documentation of sexual predator/offender searches in the statewide database for all active volunteers. The provided documentation indicated the searches were conducted approximately two weeks prior to our site visit. Previously, Park staff did not retain search documentation. In addition, the Park did not have documentation of searches in the national database for any active volunteers. Park staff explained that searches of the national database had not been conducted.

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Recommendation

We recommend Park Management conduct sexual predator/offender searches in the national database for all new and returning volunteers prior to the volunteer serving at the Park. Documentation of these searches should be maintained in each volunteer's personnel file.

Finding 2: Tax-Exempt Visitor Documentation

According to chapter 8, section 3(b) of the Division's OM, when Park visitors request an exemption from paying sales tax, the Park is required to obtain and file a copy of the visitor's current Florida Consumer's Certificate of Exemption. Any Park visitor without a valid Certificate is required to remit sales tax.

According to Park staff, tax-exempt documentation is only obtained from visitors making camping reservations at the Park. Park staff do not obtain documentation for reservations made through the online reservation system. In January and March 2014, the Park had eight reservations that were tax-exempt. Of the eight reservations, six had no tax-exempt documentation in the online reservation system or at the Park. The Park collected a total of \$770.00 from these six reservations. Based on the Park's state sales tax rate of 6% and local discretionary tax rate of 4%, the amount of tax not collected for these six reservations totaled \$77.00.

In 2014, an audit conducted by the Florida Department of Revenue found that Parks had not obtained valid Certificates of Exemption for all tax-exempt transactions. In September 2014, the Assistant Division Director communicated new guidelines for tax-exempt transactions

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requiring Division staff to collect valid Certificates of Exemption or collect sales tax for all transactions.

Recommendation

We recommend the Department remit payment of \$77.00 of uncollected sales tax to the Department of Revenue. Going forward, we also recommend the Park maintain a copy of the Consumer's Certificate of Exemption from tax-exempt visitors, as directed in the Assistant Division Director's correspondence to the Division in September 2014. If visitors cannot provide a valid Certificate for the reservation at the time of check-in, the Park should require payment of sales tax.

To promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in state government, the OIG completes audits and reviews of agency programs, activities, and functions. Our audit was conducted under the authority of section 20.055, F.S., and in conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, published by the Institute of Internal Auditors, and Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General, published by the Association of Inspectors General. The audit was conducted by Gabriel Earnest and supervised by Valerie J. Peacock.

Please address inquiries regarding this report to the OIG's Audit Director by telephone at (850) 245-3151. Copies of final reports may be viewed and downloaded via the internet at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/ig/reports.htm>. Copies may also be obtained by telephone (850) 245-3151, by fax (850)245-2994, in person or by mail at Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Inspector General, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Mail Station #41, Tallahassee, FL 32399.

Valerie J. Peacock, Director of Auditing

Candie M. Fuller, Inspector General



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Memorandum

TO: Valerie Peacock, Audit Director
Office of the Inspector General

FROM: Donald V. Forgione, Director
Division of Recreation and Parks

SUBJECT: Audit of Collier-Seminole State Park, Division of Recreation and Parks
Report: A-1415DEP-037

DATE: August 21, 2015

JVF

This memorandum will serve as the Division's response to the subject audit findings and recommendations.

Finding 1: Sexual Predator/Offender Searches

Chapter 2, section 3(f) of the Division's Operations Manual (OM) requires the Park to conduct sexual predator/offender searches in the national databases for all volunteers. In addition, the Park was required to maintain documentation of the searches in each volunteer's personnel file. Prior to June 2015, chapter 2, section 3(f) required searches in both national and statewide databases.

During our site visit, the Park provided documentation of sexual predator/offender searches in the statewide database for all active volunteers. The provided documentation indicated the searches were conducted approximately two weeks prior to our site visit. Previously, Park staff did not retain search documentation. In addition, the Park did not have documentation of searches in the national database for any active volunteers. Park staff explained that searches of the national database had not been conducted.

Recommendation

We recommend Park Management conduct sexual predator/offender searches in the national database for all new and returning volunteers prior to the volunteer serving at the Park. Documentation of these searches should be maintained in each volunteer's personnel file.

Division Response: The Division is in agreement and the Park has completed all required verifications. All files are currently up to date and all new and returning volunteer verifications will be completed in accordance with the Operations Manual, prior to the volunteer beginning work.

Finding 2: Tax-Exempt Visitor Documentation

According to chapter 8, section 3(b) of the Division's OM, when Park visitors request an exemption from paying sales tax, the Park is required to obtain and file a copy of the visitor's current Florida Consumer's Certificate of Exemption. Any Park visitor without a valid Certificate is required to remit sales tax.

According to Park staff, tax-exempt documentation is only obtained from visitors making camping reservations at the Park. Park staff do not obtain documentation for reservations made through the online reservation system. In January and March 2014, the Park had eight reservations that were tax-exempt. Of the eight reservations, six had no tax-exempt documentation in the online reservation system or at the Park. The Park collected a total of \$770.00 from these six reservations. Based on the Park's state sales tax rate of 6% and local discretionary tax rate of 4%, the amount of tax not collected for these six reservations totaled \$77.00.

In 2014, an audit conducted by the Florida Department of Revenue found that Parks had not obtained valid Certificates of Exemption for all tax-exempt transactions. In September 2014, the Assistant Division Director communicated new guidelines for tax-exempt transactions requiring Division staff to collect valid Certificates of Exemption or collect sales tax for all transactions.

Recommendation

We recommend the Department remit payment of \$77.00 of uncollected sales tax to the Department of Revenue. Going forward, we also recommend the Park maintain a copy of the Consumer's Certificate of Exemption from tax-exempt visitors, as directed in the Assistant Division Director's correspondence to the Division in September 2014. If visitors cannot provide a valid Certificate for the reservation at the time of check-in, the Park should require payment of sales tax.

Division Response: The Division agrees with the recommendation and will work with the Bureau of Finance and Accounting to remit payment of uncollected sales tax to the Department of Revenue.

Campers, both those with reservations and those who are walk-ins, seeking exemption for sales tax will be required to provide a valid Consumer's Certificate of Exemption upon check-in. The Park will maintain a copy of the Consumer's Certificate of Exemption for any sales tax-exempt transactions. If visitors cannot provide a valid Consumer's Certificate of Exemption for the transaction then the Park will require payment of sales tax.