

Hillsborough River State Park Unit Management Plan Amendment

INTRODUCTION

In support of Florida's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is working to enhance public access, recreation, and lodging at state parks—reinforcing the state's dedication to conservation, the outdoor recreation economy, and Floridians quality of life.

Land use planning and park improvement decisions are based on the dual responsibilities of DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks. These responsibilities are to preserve Florida's natural landscapes, heritage sites, and to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities for Florida's citizens and visitors. Over time, park-specific management plan amendments are implemented to accommodate park-specific needs in real time to boundary changes and land acquisitions, impacts from natural forces like hurricanes and severe weather, and to prioritize additional opportunities for outdoor recreation and other amenities as needed.

PLAN AMENDMENT

Overview

This amendment to the current Acquisition and Restoration Council-approved unit management plan for Hillsborough River State Park includes the additional recreation facilities. These proposals are organized and presented by use area. Design details and precise location of proposed facilities will be determined and developed according to conceptual land use elements described below and are contingent on funding and concession agreements.

Best Practices

All improvements shall employ best practices utilized by park systems across the country, ensuring that all facilities, functions, and amenities are welcoming and reflective of Florida's heritage, harmonious with park-specific resources, compatible with native lands and plants, aesthetically fitting within surrounding landscapes, and are functional.

CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLAN

Main Day Use Area Vicinity – Pickleball and Disc Golf

Objective: Introduce new recreation facilities.

Action:

- *Design and develop pickleball courts.*
- *Design and develop a disc golf course.*

Construction of up to four pickleball courts is recommended either within or immediately adjacent to the existing space of the swimming pool/bathhouse complex. The location should be in reasonable proximity to both day-use and overnight visitors alike.

Recognizing similar evolutions in recreation interests, construction of a disc golf course is recommended within the mesic hammock south of the swimming pool complex. The course should be readily accessible and available to all park visitors, offering scenic pathways through this natural area of the park.