



# OLETA RIVER STATE PARK

## Draft Unit Management Plan

### Executive Summary

#### *Park History*

#### *Park Significance*

### **Park History**

Oleta River State Park was initially acquired on June 9, 1980 with funds from the P200 / A& I program. The park is currently 1,013.64 acres.

### **Park Significance**

The parks name sake, the Oleta River, is the last remaining river in the Miami area not having been dredged or channelized due to increasing development. Naturally draining into Biscayne Bay, the river allows fresh water to eventually reach the neighboring Atlantic Ocean. Largely undeveloped, the seven-mile stretch of the river provides scenic viewing opportunities of various wildlife and the only remaining riverine mangrove forest, situated in view of the skyline of North Miami.





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#### *Purpose and Significance of the Park*

#### *Park Interpretive Themes*

### Central Park Theme

Oleta River State Park is restoring wild Miami along the shores of Biscayne Bay, where communities have gathered long before the area became a modern metropolis.

### Primary Interpretive Themes

#### Park History

People have gathered along the water's edge for the opportunity to hunt and fish South Florida's natural diversity, beginning with the Tequesta people thousands of years ago.

#### Hydrology

Oleta River feeds into regionally significant Biscayne Bay, but hydrological alterations have permanently changed this from fresh to a saltwater environment.

#### Natural Communities

Just like the bustling city, Oleta River's vibrant mangrove forests are filled with diverse life and provide valuable ecosystem services to the surrounding communities.

#### Restoration Efforts

Although human action and development have altered the land, park staff and partners work to restore habitats so that the park can be a refuge for future generations of people and animals.





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#### Park Quick Facts

#### Natural Community Composition

- ◆ **Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks
- ◆ **Acreage:** 1,013.64
- ◆ **Location:** Miami -Dade County
- ◆ **Lease Management Agreement Number(s):** 3426
- ◆ **Use:** Single
- ◆ **Responsibility:** Public Outdoor Recreation and Conservation
- ◆ **Sublease:** None
- ◆ **Encumbrances:** See Appendix 1 for details
- ◆ **Public Involvement:** See Appendix 2 for details
- ◆ **Optimum Boundary:** None
- ◆ **Surplus Lands:** None

Natural Communities	Acreage	Percentage
Mangrove Swamp	462.03	45.58%
Altered Landcovers	356.50	34.17%
Marine Unconsolidated Substrate	154.85	15.28%
Maritime Hammock	48.19	4.75%
Marine Consolidated Substrate	11.21	1.11%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>1,013.64</b>	<b>100%</b>



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#### *Park Accomplishments: 2008 — 2022*

#### *Ten-Year Planning Period Objectives*

### Previous Accomplishments

Since the 2005 approved unit management plan, significant resource management and protection accomplishments have occurred. Two resource management projects were developed for removal of the invasive Australian Pine along with a mitigation project for Johnson's seagrass within a former borrow area. Visitor use was also improved with the interior renovations of park cabins, along with fishing pier renovations at the south beach access area. Renovations were also done at the Blue Marlin Fish House Concession. In 2015, the park recorded over 667,000 visitors.

### Future Objectives

Moving forward throughout the next 10 years of this Unit Management Plan, the park plans to continue resource management efforts by removing non native plant and animal species such as the green iguana, Australian Pine, and Burma reed. Restoration efforts of the parks uplands include removing all Australian Pine and to revegetate the area with native vegetation representative of maritime hammock such as Sabal palmetto and Wax myrtle. Two isolated mangrove swamp areas, containing a mix of red, white, and black mangroves, will be restored. This will be accomplished by replacing and/or repairing existing culverts to allow improved tidal flow to reach the mangroves. Additionally, the park will continue to implement monitoring for the imperiled Johnson's Seagrass with annual assessments to monitor growth. To continually enhance the visitor experience, improvements will be made to all use areas including adding a new fishing pier at the Intracoastal Use Area, replacement and or renovations of the cabins, and restroom renovations at the beach area. The park will also plan on developing new interpretive opportunities focused on roving and guided programs highlighting the park's natural communities including the stretch of mangroves, which is a popular area for paddling, hydrology of adjacent waters including the Oleta River and Biscayne Bay, as well as continued restoration efforts of the park's uplands.



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#### *Hydrological Management*

#### *Natural Community Management*

### Hydrological Management

**Goal:** Protect water quality and quantity in the park, restore hydrology to the extent feasible and maintain the restored condition.

**Objective:** *Restore and improve water flow to isolated mangrove swamps and reduce flooding in developed areas*

The hydrological conditions of two isolated mangrove areas are to be restored by replacing, adding or repairing existing culverts. Improved tidal flow will aid in restoring the ecological function of this natural community. Feasibility studies will first take place to assess conditions of current culverts (i.e. locations and functionality). Continued maintenance will be performed annually on these culverts to ensure functionality and the exchange of fresh water. Monitoring of the isolated mangroves will be done to assess health and functionality of mangrove health.

### Natural Community Management

**Goal:** Restore and maintain the natural communities / habitats of the park.

**Objective:** *Conduct natural community restoration on 170 acres of spoil area by transitioning area into representative maritime hammock .*

Within in the spoil areas, efforts to remove Australian pine will take place. Current spoil areas have a heavy overstory dominated by Australian Pine. Removal will be done through mowing and later mulching. Once removed, revegetation will take place in all areas.





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### *Non-Native Invasive & Nuisance Species*

### *Cultural Resource Management*

#### Invasive Species Management

**Goal: Remove invasive species from the park and conduct needed maintenance control**

**Objective: Annually treat 86 infested acres of non-native invasive plant species in the park**

86 infested acres (170 gross acres) of non native/ invasive plants are to be treated annually. Australian pine has been the main focus of removal along with Burma reed and Brazilian pepper. Once removed, native vegetation representative of maritime hammock natural community will be planted, those include: Sabal palmetto, white indigo berry, and Jamaica caper. Annual work plans will be updated for continued removal of invasive plant species and maintenance. Additional known non native invasive & nuisance plant species found within at Oleta River State Park include:

- Oyster plant
- Lead tree
- Old world climbing fern
- Wedelia
- Golden leather fern
- Chinese brake fern

**Objective: Implement control measures on 1 exotic animal species in the park**

Continued monitoring of Green iguanas will take place in an effort to remove their populations within the park. Park staff will survey and opportunistically remove the green iguanas following occasional frost and cold events. While total eradication is unlikely, it is important to keep populations reduced to minimize impacts on the parks native species and natural systems.

#### Cultural Resource Management

**Objective: Conduct a level 1 archeological survey for priority zones identified by the predictive model**

Three sites within the park boundary are listed on the Florida Master Site File. Two archaeological sites from the Glades Period and structural remnants from the original Blue Marlin Fish House. A level one archeological survey will be conducted for priority zones identified by a predictive model.



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### Management Goals & Objectives

### Imperiled Species

#### Imperiled Species Management

**Goal: Maintain, improve or restore imperiled species populations and habitats.**

**Objective: Monitor and document imperiled plant and animal species in the park**

Continued monitoring of Johnson's seagrass will take place from a mitigation project of a former borrow area. An annual assessment will take place to determine amount of seagrass coverage. Sparse amounts of gopher tortoises are found within the park's spoil areas, most likely through unofficial releases. Efforts should be made to monitor the gopher tortoise population in accordance with FWC guidelines. In 2018, an American crocodile was spotted within the park's mangrove swamp. Park staff will routinely monitor park boundaries for new sightings of crocodiles.

Oleta River State Park provides habitat for 32 imperiled species including:

- Cassis Blue Butterfly
- Florida Sandhill Crane
- Golden leather fern
- Cinnamon Bark
- Inkberry
- Osprey





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### Management Goals & Objectives

### Recreational Use & Infrastructure

## Recreation and Facilities Management

**Goal: Develop and maintain use areas and support infrastructure**

### Park Entrance

- Improve Landscaping

### Beach Use Areas (2)

- Restroom Renovations
- Landscaping Improvements
- Replace Fishing Pier
- Playground Update

### Support Area

- New Shop Building
- Add Pole Barns (3)
- Small Administrative Office
- Reorganize Shop Area

### Intracoastal Picnic Area

- New Fishing Pier

### Concession Area

- Renovate/ expand concession building
- Path Development
- Interpretive Panel(s)

### Cabin Area

- Cabin renovations / replacement
- Road Stabilization
- Volunteer site

### Residence Area

- New residences (2)

