

**Land Management Review of
Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park
Lease No. 4291
January 11, 2006**

Prepared by Division of State Lands Staff

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For

Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park Review Team

FINAL

June 23, 2006

Land Manager:	DRP
Area:	3,296 acres
County:	Pasco
Mgmt. Plan Revised:	03/15/2001
Mgmt. Plan Due:	10/25/2011

Management Review Team Members

Agency Represented	Team member Appointed	Team member In attendance
DOF	Bill Korn	Bill Korn
DEP	Albert A. Gagne Jr.	Albert A. Gagne Jr.
DEP	Sally Braem	Sally Braem
FWCC	Jennifer Roberts	Jennifer Roberts
Pasco County DRP	Michael Smith	Michael Smith
Defenders of Wildlife	Elizabeth Fleming	Elizabeth Fleming
Private Land Manager	Stephen G. Komlos	
Observer	Louis Tesar	
Observer (FNAI)	Carolyn Kindell	

Process for Implementing Regional Management Review Teams

Legislative Intent and Guidance:

Chapter 259.036, F. S. was enacted in 1997 to determine whether conservation, preservation, and recreation lands owned by the state Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Board) are being managed properly. It directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish land management review teams to evaluate the extent to which the existing management plan provides sufficient protection to threatened or endangered species, unique or important natural or physical features, geological or hydrological functions, and archaeological features. The teams also evaluate the extent to which the land is being managed for the purposes for which it was acquired and the degree to which actual management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the adopted management plan. If a land management plan has not been adopted, the review shall consider the extent to which the land is being managed for the purposes for which it was acquired and the degree to which actual management practices are in compliance with the management policy statement and management prospectus for that property. If the land management review team determines that reviewed lands are not being managed for the purposes for which they were acquired or in compliance with the adopted land management plan, management policy statement, or management prospectus, DEP shall provide the review findings to the Board, and the managing agency must report to the Board its reasons for managing the lands as it has. A report of the review team findings are given to the managing agency under review, the Acquisition and Restoration Council, and the Governor and Cabinet.

Review Site

The management review of Werner Boyce Salt Springs State Park considered approximately 3,296 acres in Pasco County that are managed by the Division of Recreation and Parks. The team evaluated the extent to which current management actions are sufficient, whether the land is being managed for the purpose for which it was acquired, and whether actual management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the management plan. The management plan update is due on October 25, 2011.

Review Team Determination

Is the land being managed for the purpose for which it was acquired?

After completing the checklist, team members were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to this question. All team members agreed Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park is being managed for the purpose for which it was acquired.

Are actual management practices, including public access, in compliance with the management plan?

After completing the checklist, team members were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to this question. All team members agreed that Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park is in compliance with the management plan.

Commendations to the Managing Agency

- 1. The team commends the manager and staff for the outstanding fire program, invasive plant removal program, and excellent coordination with outside groups. (VOTE 6+, 0-)**
- 2. The team commends the manager and staff for the outstanding use of volunteers to enhance resource management and inventory, invasive control in addition to park operations. (VOTE: 6+, 0-)**
- 3. The team commends the manager and staff for establishing a CSO and for bringing together diverse interests to work together to support the mission of the park. (VOTE:6 +, 0-)**

Exceptional Management Actions

The following items received high scores on the review team checklist (see attachments), which indicates that management actions exceeded expectations.

Exceptional management actions:

- Management of the xeric hammock, mesic flatwoods, baygall, marine unconsolidated substrate, marine tidal swamp, marine grass bed, estuarine tidal marsh, marsh lake, hydric hammock.
- Management and protection of the the animals including the black rail, bald eagle, and the gopher tortoise.
- Protection and preservation of the cultural resources.
- Area, frequency and quality of the prescribed burns.
- Restoration of the dump site.
- Control of non-invasive and problem species.
- Gates and fencing and law enforcement presence.
- Multiple-uses including timber harvesting and reforestation.
- Public access including recreational facilities, management of visitor impacts and interpretive facilities & signs.
- Environmental education and outreach programs.
- Waster disposal, sanitary facilities, and equipment.

Recommendations and Checklist Findings

The management plan must include responses to the recommendations and checklist items that are identified below.

Recommendations

The following recommendations resulted from a discussion and vote of review team members.

1. The team recommends the DRP establish spring flow baseline data for both springs. (VOTE: 6+, 0-)

Manager's Response:

Agree; baseline data on water quantity is needed for spring flow within the park. This information will be necessary to assess the impact from urban stormwater runoff.

2. The team recommends that a survey of, and mapping of the sea grass beds be undertaken. (VOTE: 6+, 0-)

Manager's Response:

The marine grass bed community is delineated on the Natural Communities Map in the current Unit Management Plan. The map will be refined with additional information gathered via GPS technology and ground-truthing for the next revision of the Unit Management Plan.

3. The team recommends that DRP continue to pursue funds to restore the wetlands impacted by mosquito ditches. (VOTE: 6+, 0-)

Manager's Response:

Agree. The objective identified in the Unit Management Plan is to remediate to the extent possible any hydrological disruptions caused by ditching for mosquitoes. This must be done within the constraints of the Arthropod Management Plan adopted by the Pasco County Mosquito Control District and FDEP in 2004. Any filling of mosquito control ditches must be reviewed by both DRP and the Subcommittee on Managed Marshes, Florida Coordinating Council on Mosquito Control prior to any action.

4. The team recommends that DRP establish property boundaries in areas where they are not clear (Westport and Pineland Park). (VOTE: 6+, 0-)

Manager's Response:

Agree.

5. The team recommends the DRP complete a baseline vertebrate inventory of the park. (VOTE: 6+, 0-)

Manager's Response:

Agree. This is already included in an objective under Goal #3 in the Unit Management Plan, Biological Inventory and Monitoring.

6. The team recommends that DRP pursue coordination with the County to obtain the marine science center, and with the City to obtain management of the 25 acre parcel on Post Road that is owned by the Trustees, both of which are adjacent to the park. (VOTE: 6+, 0-)

Manager's Response:

Agree. DRP has indicated their interest in the marine science center and environs, but the County has not responded favorably. The other parcel will be addressed in future discussions with the City.

Checklist findings

The following items received low scores on the review team checklist (see Attachment 1), which indicates that management actions, in the field, were insufficient (f) or that the issue was not sufficiently addressed in the management plan (p). These items need to be further addressed in the management plan update.

1. Discussion in the management plan to address the management issues related to the marine grass bed and spring run stream communities.(p)

Manager's Response:

Agree. An objective listed in the current management plan is to describe the geological nature of the spring(s) and reveal if any specific protective actions are required.

2. Discussion in the management plan of the protection and preservation of the Wilson's Plover.(p)

Manager's Response:

Agree. Habitat use by Wilson's Plovers in the park was not documented prior to the current Unit Management Plan.

3. Discussion in the management plan of the need for a boundary survey. (p.f)

Manager's Response:

Agree; if a boundary survey remains to be completed at the time of the next revision of the Unit Management Plan, it should certainly be discussed.

4. Discussion in the management plan of the managed area uses including airboats and motorboats. (p)

Manager's Response:

Agree. DRP is drafting a Waterway Management Plan that addresses all types of boating within the park.

5. Discussion in the management plan uses proposed including the paved trail. (p)

Manager's Response:

Agree. The Land Use Component of the Unit Management Plan discusses current and future planned uses. This discussion will be revised in the next plan.

6. Discussion in management plan of the public access program including boat/canoe/kayak access.(f)

Manager's Response:

Agree. These are discussed in the Unit Management Plan in the Land Use Component.

Team Member's Comments

Natural Communities: protection and maintenance: (I.A)

- Good initial process to control Brazilian peppers, especially in the north end in the maritime hammock and the edge of the tidal marsh. Excellent effort to introduce fire in the flatwoods and tidal marsh edge. Heavier palmetto had been moved prior to burning. Management plan provides habitat descriptions that seem at times too general. More detailed descriptions and evaluation of

management needs is needed for grass beds and spring run in the management plan. Seagrass beds need to be mapped.

- Spring runs need to look into storm water retrofit.
- For most of the communities there was no specific management action specified. (Mesic flatwoods were described as well as management)
- Addend page to management plan with specific comment to each community – brief statement. Re: Management action required.
- Sea grass needs to be tracked and cataloged. Spring plan/Flood plan.

Listed Species: protection and preservation (I.B1, I.B.2)

- Good survey work on Black rail and Gopher tortoise. Management plan however lacks sufficient detail regarding population and management needs of Black rail and Wilson Ploves.
- Inventory current use and location of animals.
- Need current inventory of animals in park line. No amphibians listed as here.
- May need small mammal survey.
- Addend statements directed toward management of listed species. Addend statements regarding management of plant species listed on state list.
- Monitoring needed, inventory update.
- Mention the listed species within the community descriptions.

Cultural Resources: (II.A; II.B)

- All these staff are trained as archeological site monitors. A phase 1 survey has been completed. An annual archeological report is not being completed. Good understanding of needs to protect cultural sites.
- Need more detail on location and protection of archaeological site.
- Summary statement on preservation includes shoreside sites.

Prescribed Fire (Natural Community Maintenance): (III.A)

- Great effort to establish a three year burn cycle in flatwoods. The management plan should provide greater detail on prescribed fire plans for burn frequency, acreage goals and season of burn.

Restoration of Disturbed Natural Communities: (III.B)

- Expand statement regarding restoration of ruderal sites.

Non-native Invasive and Problem Species: (III.D)

- Good work treating Brazilian pepper in north end along tidal marsh and upland ecotones. Fifty percent of maritime hammocks have been treated initially. Excellent use of grant money initially. Second visit starting this year on the south

end for Brazilian pepper. The exotic plan control plan described as p. 24 of the management plan has not been prepared, although excellent work to document current efforts.

- Good control of hogs and cats.
- Mention cats/dogs in the plan. Make clear that this is ongoing process in the plan
- Making progress.

Hydrologic/Geologic Function (III.E)

- Limited work has been completed to formally evaluate restoration of mosquito ditches and storm water management. Initial storm water task group formed, but no specific action taken yet. A storm water engineering study remains unfunded.
- Plan needs to address mosquito ditch restoration.
- Clarify this management approach in plan.

Ground Water Monitoring (III.E 2)

- Spring flows are not being monitored for volume flows on either of the two spring runs.
- Spring sampling done.
- Add comment to plan.
- Spring monitor.

Surface Water Monitoring (III E. 3)

- Need data on fresh water ponds. Need to get magnitude of spring.
- Add comment to plan regarding flow analysis.
- Fresh water monitoring.

Resource Protection (III. F.1, III. F. 2, III. F. 3, III. F. 4)

- Southern hold of property, especially near subdivisions and gas spring lacks good survey line. This should be a priority. Good effort to fence near public entrances and where boundaries are well defined.
- Need to have boundaries of park surveyed.
- Need more boundary signs.
- Need more survey work.
- Enforcement on water and review in plan.
- Need better boundary survey.

Adjacent Property Concerns (III.G)

- Good efforts to purchase optimum management lands in southeast end of park. Optimum management boundary should be amended to include gas spring run.
- Need to look into purchase of adjacent parcels.

- Add Gar Springs.
- Address storm water issues in plan. Amend map to reflect new additions.

Public Access and Education: (IV.1; IV.2; IV.3; IV.4; IV.5)

- Proposed entrance (off US 19) and ranger station has changed. Substantially from management plan and an amendment should be submitted to ARC for approval.
- Need to address parking and access to park. Rec ops – only one access park, scenic drive, need access points.
- Review decision on highway 19 entrance. Make change to plan to reflect above.

Management Resources: (V.1;V.2;V.3;V.4)

- Need better office space.
- Great use of volunteers to assist in exotics removal and prescribed fire.
- Probably need more staff. Mainly dependent on volunteers.
- Staff gets a lot of mileage out of volunteers, that enables them to burn acres and remove exotic pets.
- Require staff addition. Require funding enhance.

Exceptional Management Actions

- Excellent work by park manager to institute prescribed fire throughout flatwoods. Good work to start treating cogon grass and Brazilian peppers. Excellent start up day use trailhead sited to allow initial public access to the property.
- Excellent volunteer base.
- Prescribed burning and exotic plant removal with the help of volunteers is working well and should be maintained and expanded. It is remarkable for a new park to have this level of natural resource management.
- Great burn plan.
- Burning, exotics, public access, rapport and volunteers.

Areas of insufficient management

- The park manager appears to have a reasonable handle on running the park at present. However, since the park is not actually open to the public to a very large degree and the population in the area is increasing rapidly, use of the park is likely to become more intense in the future. Natural resource and enforcement support should be made available to park staff. Nature viewing opportunities should be increased along with canoeing and kayaking.

Recommendations for Improving Management of this Site:

- Purchase of the Marine resource center for a park office. Review of Gar Springs location. It should be included along with its run in the boundary of the park. Storm water engineer assessment.
- More interpretative and educational materials.
- Vertebrate inventory. Acquire land holdings surrounding salt spring and run. Storm water study to be commenced. Spring flow baseline data establishment. Sea grass survey undertaken. Restoration of mosquito ditch funding. Commence boundary survey as necessary to establish boundaries.

Survey	II.A	4	3		5		5	5	4.40
Protection & Preservation	II.B	4	3		5		5	5	4.40
Resource Management, Prescribed Fire (III.A)									
Area being burned	III.A.1	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.8571429
Frequency	III.A.2	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.71
Quality	III.A.3	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.71
Restoration of Ruderal Areas (III.B)									
Dump Site	III.B.1	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	3.8571429
Wildlife Management									
Non-Invasive & Problem Species (III.D)									
Animals	III.B.1	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	4.57
Plants	III.B.2	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4.29
Hydrologic/Geologic function Hydro-Alteration (III.E.1)									
Roads/culverts	III.E.1a	3	X	3		4	3	X	3.25
Ditches (Mosquito)	III.E.1b	2	2	3	4	2	3	3	2.71
Storm Water Controls	III.E.1c	2		3	4				3.00
Ground Water Monitoring (III.E.2)									
Quality	III.E.2a	3		3	4	2	2	3	2.83
Quantity	III.E.2b	2		3	3	4	2	X	2.80
Surface Water Monitoring (III.E.3)									
Quality	III.E.3a	4	4	2	4	2	2		3.00
Quantity	III.E.3b	3	3	2	4	4	2	1	2.71
Resource Protection (III.F)									
Boundary Survey	III.F.1	2	3	3		1	2	1	2.00
Gates & Fencing	III.F.2	3	4	4	4	4		5	4.00
Signage	III.F.3	3	2	4	4	3	4		3.33
Law Enforcement Presence	III.F.4	3	5	4	3	4	5	5	4.14
Adjacent Property Concerns (III.G)									
Land Use									
Expanding Development	III.G.1a	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	3.43
Water Resources									
Inholdings/additions	III.G.3	4	4	4	3	4		4	3.83
Forest Management									

Timber Harvesting	III.H.1	4	5	4	5	5	3	4	4.29
Reforestation	III.H.2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00
Public Access & Education									
Public Access									
Roads	IV.1.a	3	1	3	4	4	2		2.83
Parking	IV.1.b	3	1	3	4	4	2		2.83
Boat,Canoe Kayak Ramp Access	IV.1.c	2		3	3	1			2.25
Recreational Opportunities	IV.2	3	3	4	4	4		5	3.83
Mgmt. of Visitor Impacts	IV.3	4		4	4	4		5	4.20
Interpretive facilities & signs	IV.4	4	4	3	3	4		5	3.83
Environmental education/outreach	IV.5	3	4	3	4	4		5	3.83
Management Resources									
Maintanance									
Waste disposal	V.1.a	4		3	4	4		5	4.00
Sanitary facilities	V.1.b	4		2	4	4		5	3.80
Infrastructure									
Buildings	V.2.a	3	3	3	4	4		3	3.33
Equipment	V.2.b	4	5	3	4	4		3	3.83
Staff	V.3	3	4	3	4	4		2	3.33
Funding	V.4	3		3	2	4		1	2.60