



CCA FLORIDA

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR

CANAVERAL NATIONAL SEASHORE

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Canaveral National Seashore (CNS) contains some of the finest saltwater fishing in Florida. One of the premier areas is Mosquito Lagoon, the home of huge redfish. Anglers come long distances to fish the lagoon in search of world records on light tackle. It is an outstanding area for fly fishermen. Many records have been taken in the lagoon because of the unique relationship of redfish and the lagoon. Redfish in the Mosquito Lagoon are known to spend their entire lives in the lagoon and do not migrate offshore to spawn as do most redfish. Therefore, the lagoon contains huge spawning size redfish year round. Huge redfish in shallow water year round is a lure that brings light tackle anglers from all over the country to Mosquito Lagoon.

The Mosquito Lagoon and Indian River areas are an important and valuable component of Florida's 18 billion dollar saltwater recreational fishery. The real challenge to CNS managers is to work cooperatively with recreational fishers to develop plans which provide angler access and resource protection. CCA Florida has a proven history of support for marine fisheries conservation programs and we look forward to working with the CNS to achieve those goals.

RECOMMENDATION

CCA Florida could support the CNS's Preferred **Alternative B** if it was amended to (A) make clear that any future fisheries management plan envisioned



by the plan would be cooperatively developed and approved by the CNS, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), (B) maintain the access to and use of the boat ramp on the northern edge of the CNS seven days a week and 24 hours a day.

COMMENTS

1.CNS AUTHORITY TO MANAGE LANDS AND SUBMERGED LANDS IN PARK - The uplands and submerged lands in the area were originally provided to the federal government for the development and construction of the Canaveral Space Center in the form of six Dedications from Florida's Trustees of the Internal Trust Fund. The Trustees are the Governor and Cabinet and they hold title to all state lands, both upland and submerged sovereignty lands. One of the Dedications was an amendment which would allow the establishment of a wildlife refuge; therefore, the State of Florida has some remaining title interest in the area. That remaining interest is just one good reason for the Florida FWC to be intimately involved in the development and approval of any fisheries regulations.

2.FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS – We strongly request that the management plan be amended to clearly state that the Florida FWC be involved in the development and approval of any marine fisheries management plans and regulations. The State of Florida, through the FWC, has done an outstanding job of managing Florida's fisheries and providing angler access to fisheries. The excellent redfish and spotted sea trout fisheries in the CNS and statewide are examples of the FWC's ability to manage fisheries.

3. NO FISHING ZONES – We are pleased to see that current management of the CNS and the Preferred Alternative B does not contain any no fishing zones. CCA Florida does not support no fishing zones as a management measure. Prohibiting recreational access and recreational fishing is a last resort, draconian action. The FWC and the recreational fishing community have done an excellent job of protecting and managing fisheries in the Mosquito Lagoon and surrounding areas.



The outstanding redfish and sea trout fisheries are evidence of the good management and the strong angler support for the fisheries.

4.NO MOTOR AND POLE – TROLL ZONES – We do not have a problem with the placement of limited P and T Zones provided the areas are not so large that it prevents reasonable ingress and egress by anglers. The Merritt Island Refuge managers have worked with CCA Florida and other concerned anglers to establish some pole and troll zones in the Lagoon. The anglers helped to identify the areas and establish access corridors in the zones. The northern most zone in the proposed alternative B needs to have slow speed access corridors for motorized boats.

5.LIMIT ON PROFESSIONAL GUIDE PERMITS IN CNS – We do not have a problem with limiting the number of guide permits in the Mosquito Lagoon; however, any such permits must be limited to use by the guide that holds the permit. We strongly oppose allowing the permit holder to lease, transfer or sell to another entity. The CNS should have the ability to end the program at its discretion. Non use for a specified period of time would cause the permit to revert back to the CNS.

6.PERMIT FOR RECREATIONAL FISHING – We have no problems with the current no cost recreational fishing permit which is primarily an educational program and is not intended to limit angler access.

CLOSING COMMENTS

CCA Florida looks forward to working with the Canaveral National Seashore, Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission in developing management plans for the protection and management of the outstanding fisheries in the Mosquito Lagoon and Indian River.

Prepared by CCA Florida 10-19-2011