

## Briefing Statement

### PELICAN ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE CCP & EA

#### SUMMARY OF CCP SCOPING

Date: May 27, 2004 (updated)

**Refuge:** Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge

**Region:** Southeast (R4)

#### **Background:**

- Established 1903
- State House District - 80, State Senate District - 28  
Congressional District - 15
- ±5,444.66 (as of 10.31.2003)
- Pelican Island NWR was established on March 14, 1903 "as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds" through an unnumbered Executive Order and expanded in 1909 by Executive Order number 1014. Pelican Island NWR "shall be administered by him (the Secretary of the Interior) directly or in accordance with cooperative agreements and in accordance with such rules and regulations for the conservation, maintenance, and management of wildlife, resources thereof, and its habitat thereon" [16 USC 664 (Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act)]. The Refuge shall "conserve fish, wildlife, and plants, including those which are listed as endangered species or threatened species" [16 USC 1534 (Endangered Species Act)]. Further, the Refuge serves "...the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources... [16 USC §742(f)(a)(4) (Fish and Wildlife Act)] ...for the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in performing its activities and services..." [16 USC §742(f)(b)(1) (Fish and Wildlife Act)]. Later, the Refuge Recreation Act was also applied to the Refuge "...for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species..." [16 USC §460k-1 (Refuge Recreation Act)]. The existence of the Refuge serves the "...conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans..." [16 USC §668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act)]. Finally, the Pelican Island Wilderness Area "...shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them (wilderness areas) unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness..." [16 USC 1121 (note) (Wilderness Act)].
- Different agencies within the State of Florida have been participating in the Pelican Island Working Group since 1996. A letter inviting participation by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) in the Refuge's CCP was sent to the FWC Director on March 3, 2000.
- Initial public scoping for both Pelican Island and Archie Carr NWRs was scheduled from April 24,

2000 (NOI) to June 30, 2000 with 90 people attending public meetings and with 117 people submitting ideas, issues, concerns, and comments.

Neighborhood Public Meetings:

Parish Center, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, south Melbourne Beach - May 3, 2000

Environmental Learning Center, Wabasso Island, Vero Beach - May 25, 2000

Chapel by the Sea, north Melbourne Beach - June 1, 2000

Countywide Public Meetings:

Sebastian River High School, Sebastian, Indian River County - June 14, 2000

Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Brevard County - June 15, 2000

**Major Issues Identified:**

Internally

- Halt the Erosion of Pelican Island Proper (conduct shoreline stabilization)
- Restore Refuge Habitats and Mimic Natural Hydrology to Benefit Native Species (especially the 14 threatened and endangered species occurring on the Refuge)
- Control Exotic, Invasive, and Nuisance Species
- Increase Land Acquisition Efforts to Address High Development Pressures within the Refuge's Acquisition Boundary
- Address the Negative Impacts of Human Activities and Use on and near the Refuge
- Provide Environmental Education (e.g., to limit negative wildlife and habitat impacts)
- Protect the Historic Kroegel Homestead
- Provide Visitor Facilities
- Increase Funding and Staffing
- Alter the Lease with the State of Florida (to enable the enforcement of Service regulations on Refuge managed lands and waters to eliminate wildlife and habitat impacts and disturbance)
- Protect Archaeological and Cultural Resources

State of Florida & Governmental Partners (Intergovernmental Coordination Team)

- Address/Reverse the Impacts of Habitat Degradation and Loss on and near the Refuge
- Protect and Preserve the Natural Environment
- Address the Impacts of Adjacent Development and Encroachment
- Protect Federally and State Listed Threatened and Endangered Species
- Protect Cultural and Historical Sites
- Provide Visitor Facilities, Visitor Center, Environmental Education, and Visitor Services
- Increase Funding and Staffing
- Increase Land Acquisition Efforts
- Address the Impacts of Adjacent and on Site Human Uses

Tribes - no issues were identified

Public

The issues, ideas, concerns, and comments raised by the public are varied. Comments were submitted addressing:

- fish, wildlife, and plants (including controlling feral and free roaming animals; controlling exotic, invasive, and nuisance species; protecting land crabs; protecting sea turtles; assessing the health of the fishery; establishing rookery buffers; and protecting feeding, loafing, and nesting birds);
- habitat management (including improving water quality; controlling exotic, invasive, and nuisance species; protecting the juvenile sea turtle nursery; restoring citrus groves to maritime hammock; stabilizing Pelican Island proper; restoring mangrove shorelines; increase seagrass beds; and restoring hydrology);
- land protection and conservation (including aggressively acquiring additional lands and waters, increasing law enforcement activities, acquiring the Kroegel Homestead, and working with the

- State to enable the enforcement of Service regulations on Refuge managed lands and waters);
- education and visitor services (including addressing threats, impacts, and disturbance of public use activities on wildlife and habitats; educating the public about the locations and reasons for closed islands; posting waterway speed limits; expanding environmental education efforts and partnerships; conducting much more outreach to the community and visitors; developing a visitor center and visitor facilities; providing interpretation of the history of the Refuge System and the area at the Kroegel Homestead; charging users fees; and increasing the volunteer base);
  - administration (including increasing funding and staffing, increasing coordination with the governmental and non-governmental partners, and altering the lease with the State of Florida so that Service regulations apply); and
  - archaeological and cultural resources.

**Regional Contact:**

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