

The Villages Paddling Club

5/19/2009

Comments by FWC staff in italics; Jerrie Lindsey, Office of Recreation Services (ORS), Major Paul Ouellette (Boating & Waterways Section), Liz Sparks (ORS)

Access

We need consistency with access in state parks and with rules about liveries – some require reservations, other as first come/first serve. Some are accommodating while others are like you need tractors to get boats to access the water. Alexander Spring only runs one shuttle a day and we have to wait for hours sometimes.

During the fire season at Alexander Springs we had a trip planned and tried for weeks to get an answer to see if the park was closed. At the last moment someone answered the phone and said they were closed x 10 days; there was no voice message, no info on the website.

Sharing the Waterways

Jerrie – what types of problems do you have with sharing the waterways?

Our favorite rivers are pretty narrow and shallow and we try desperately to avoid motor boats. That issue is a pretty small one for us because of the types of water bodies we use.

One of the major concerns is people in kayaks/canoes and people in small motor boats or PWCs (personal water craft) are not paying attention to the wake speed. There is no way we can notify the Law about this violation besides writing down the registration number. Some cities are coming up with red-light running cameras; maybe there could be a way to mount cameras along waterways to ticket violators.

Paul – discussed regulatory schemes to separate users, we try to seek non-regulatory solutions. Posting a camera at Crystal River has eliminated a lot of problems even though they are not manned 24 hours.

Waterway Management

Jerrie – do you have problems with navigation and obstruction issues in your area?

Deadfall keeps powerboats out so it's not a problem.

There is nothing you can do to control the level of the water but if you get stuck on logs it is part of the fun of doing the trip

Jerrie - Do you believe you have an impact on fish and wildlife through your sport?

Powerboats with dogs are a problem. Air boaters drive their boats through areas with no regards to nesting sites

We are seeing less and less when we go out-even to the point we are excited when we see one bird on a trip

We never see any birds flush because we stay in the middle of the waterway to avoid the gators.

Safety & Education

When we go on the website and look for river information there is a lot of different formats provided – maybe if there was a standardized format it would be easier for us to have access. We use Google earth to locate boat ramps, etc because we can't find good maps and guides.