



Office of the Mayor and Town Council

Mary Ann Mixon
Council Member, Seat 1

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Town Council
From: Mary Ann Mixon, Council Member - Seat 1
Date: January 20, 2016
Re: Opposing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Plan to Expand the Practice of "Hunting", "Cattle Grazing" or "Timber Harvesting"

REQUEST

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CUTLER BAY, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NOT TO CONSIDER EXPANDING THE PRACTICE OF "HUNTING", "CATTLE GRAZING" OR "TIMBER HARVESTING" AS POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES ON STATE PARKS; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORIZATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (the "FDEP") is considering revising a uniform checklist used by park planners to include the consideration of "hunting", "cattle grazing" and "timber harvesting" as possible activities on all state parks. These activities are currently allowed on certain State Parks where feasible; however, the new proposal will open the door for these activities to expand to additional State Parks at the discretion of park planners following a period of vetting and public comment.

Florida's Award-Wining State Park System (the only park system in the nation to have won a National Gold Medal for Excellence award three times) is for preservation of natural resources, wildlife, and wildlife habitat. The intention of state parks is to be able to see wildlife in its undisturbed, natural condition. If the FDEP allows commercial and privatized enterprises such as timber harvesting, cattle grazing, and hunting, the very design and purpose of our precious State parks will be ruined.

Florida's environmental laws and traditions fully embrace the ideal of preserving nature for nature's sake. Florida's state parks are a treasure that belong to the people of Florida, there should be much more transparency in the process of their management. At the very least, any policy changes that abandon that principle should be made easily accessible to the general public for review and comment. These changes should also be made by elected officials and legislators who are accountable to voters.





I urge my fellow Council Members to please join me in informing our Governor and FDEP Secretary that this criminal proposal is in no way acceptable and should be prohibited.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Town Council adopt the attached Resolution opposing plans to allow park planners to consider expanding the practice of hunting, cattle grazing, timber harvesting or any other activities that disturb the native landscape and wildlife in our State Parks.

