

# Indian River Sanctuary Draft Public Access Plan

## Site Summary

The sanctuary ([seen in Figure 1](#)) is a 43-acre site located east of U.S. 1 in Mims, Brevard County, Florida. Indian River Sanctuary is directly adjacent to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge managed lands to the south and is located in the vicinity of a number of other conservation properties that offer similar recreational opportunities. The sanctuary can be accessed from Orlando Avenue on the north side of the sanctuary. The site is bordered by private property to the north and west, and the Indian River Lagoon to the east. The majority of the sanctuary consists of salt marsh and disturbed wetland. The remainder consists of hydric hammock and abandoned citrus grove. This is a "Category 2 site" within the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program and as such, minimal capital improvements will be allowed.

## Passive Recreation Definition

To the extent they do not interfere with biological management goals, Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) sanctuaries provide a range of passive recreation opportunities for the public. As a general guideline for EEL Program management decisions, passive recreation is defined as, "a recreational type of use, level and combination of uses that do not individually, or collectively, degrade the resource values, biological diversity, and aesthetic or environmental qualities of a site."

Before developing a site public access plan, staff conducts a Public Access Site Assessment. From this assessment, the types and extent of activities can be determined with the goal to balance human use with the protection of natural resources. Items considered during the assessment include environmental, cultural, recreational and educational resources, stakeholder interests, potential conflicts, universal access, connections to other recreational resources, and potential management and/or maintenance conflicts and constraints.

Activities that allow for the quiet enjoyment of nature are conducive to EEL Program goals. Common activities on EEL sanctuaries are hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and equestrian use. Activities and uses that are generally not allowed on EEL sanctuaries without permit include, but are not limited to:

motorized vehicles, smoking, overnight use, commercial use, hunting/shooting sports, removal of plants or animals, relocating plants or animals, and pets.

## **Public Access Site Assessment**

During the Public Access Site Assessment, existing trails, saltmarsh habitat, and the Indian River Lagoon were identified as resources on site. Similar or complimentary recreational resources are the nearby Scottsmoor Flatwoods Sanctuary, South Lake Conservation Area, Indian Mound Station Sanctuary, Buck Lake Conservation Area, and Canaveral National Seashore. Access to the site is limited through a long, narrow public Right of Way through several private properties. It is not financially feasible to improve the road to a county standard to allow for public access. However, the site can be utilized for limited environmental education opportunities.

## **Recreational Uses and Amenities**

A gate off Orlando Avenue will serve as a maintenance access to the site. There are no restrooms on site. The small size of the sanctuary, proximity to homes, and limited access roads make it unsuitable for public access.

## **Environmental Education Opportunities**

The property includes a saltmarsh adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon. Indian River Sanctuary is the only site managed by the Environmentally Endangered Lands program in the north region that contains a saltmarsh ecosystem, creating an environmental education opportunity that currently does not exist. A maintenance path will allow access through most of the sanctuary habitats and offer opportunities for educational hikes. Guided canoe and kayak trips could be scheduled for the property as well.

Figure 1

### Indian River Sanctuary Proposed Access Plan



[Link to Site Summary](#)

[Link to Figure 1 Descriptive Text](#)

## Figure 1 Descriptive Text

The satellite image map is an aerial view of the Indian River Sanctuary in northeastern Mims, Florida with the Indian River Lagoon to the east. The Florida East Coast Railway runs the entire map north to south along the Indian River Lagoon. The Indian River Sanctuary being addressed in the map is bordered to the north by Orlando Avenue, to the east by the Indian River Lagoon, to the south by Grantline Road, and to the west by a privately-owned cattle pasture. There is a gate located at the northwestern corner of the sanctuary. A maintenance path traverses southward from the gate at the northwestern corner and meanders to the east along a marsh. This path eventually turns north venturing along the eastern side of the property along impoundments and stops near the middle of the eastern border. There is a thin triangular inaccessible section of this sanctuary located to the east of the railway.

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