PRELIMINARY STUDY

GULF HAMMOCK

FLORIDA

United States
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Region One

Prepared by:

(SIGNED)
Carl P. Schreiber, July 8, 1959
Regional Chief, Proposed Park
Studies Section

Cleared for Transmittal:

(SIGNED)
Albert Cox, July 9, 1959
Regional Director

SCANNED
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SYNOPSIS

1. Gulf Hammock, located along the gulf coast of Florida between the Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers is a region of sluggish streams, salt marshes, cypress swamps, and broad expanses of pine and oaks.

2. Much of the wilderness character the area once possessed has been destroyed by production of timber, pulpwood, and naval stores.

3. The most important recreational activity is hunting with somewhat less interest being shown in fishing.

4. All of the area is in private ownership.
NAME

Gulf Hammock.

LOCATION

Levy County, Florida.

AUTHORIZATION AND PURPOSE

Authorization for this investigation was given by Acting Director Scoyen by his approval on March 30, 1959, of the Recommended Work Program, National Park System Plan, Region One, submitted by memorandum dated January 29, 1959, in which a preliminary investigation of the Gulf Hammock area was recommended.

The purpose of the investigation was to gather facts about the scenic, scientific, historic and recreational values of the area upon which a recommendation concerning national significance could be based.

INVESTIGATION ACTIVITIES

This investigation was made May 5-7, 1959, by Carl P. Schreiber, Regional Chief, Proposed Park Studies Section, Region One.

During the three days spent in studying the area considerable information was secured through conversations with fire tower lookouts, Florida Forest Service Rangers, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission officers and the County Clerk of Levy County.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Gulf Hammock, a region of salt marshes, sluggish streams, cypress swamps, extensive stands of pines and oaks and broad areas of cut-over land is located along the Florida Gulf Coast between the Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers.

Logging has been extensive throughout the area and some of the pine land devoted to pulpwood production is now being recut on a 10 to 12 year rotation. Large areas formerly in pine have, because of repeated fires and the grazing of cattle and hogs, been taken over by scrub oaks and other species of hardwoods.

Included in the study area is the 120,000 acre Gulf Hammocks Wildlife Management Area. Here, by agreement with Paterson-McInnis Lumber Company and several other land owners, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission carries on wildlife management activities designed to improve wildlife conditions and increase animal populations.

Hunting is permitted during the season upon purchase by the hunter of a $5.00 Public Hunt Permit. This permit is also good in most of the 31 other areas managed by the Commission. On most of the rest of the area considered the land is posted prohibiting hunting except by special permission of the owners.

Wildlife in the Gulf Hammock area includes deer, bear, turkeys, squirrels, quail, ducks, wood ibis, herons, gulls, crows, and many songbirds. In the streams are found black bass, bream, perch, catfish, crappie and pickerel.
NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT VALUES

This area does not appear to be of national importance.

Scenic Values

Only along the coast are there localities of scenic interest. Here the salt marshes, bayous, and scattered hammocks of cabbage palms and oaks present a pleasant picture. Elsewhere the cut-over land and areas being managed for pulp, turpentine, and lumber are lacking in scenic appeal.

Recreation

Hunting is the most important recreational activity on the area with somewhat less interest shown in fishing. Camping is done to a limited extent in connection with hunting on the game management area and there is some boating on the rivers and streams of the area.

PRESENT DEVELOPMENT AND USE

All of the land considered in this study is in private ownership with five large holdings comprising most of the area. Pulpwood production is the principal activity of the region with lumber and naval stores being of somewhat lesser importance. Cattle and hogs are grazed at times on some of the cut-over land.

POPULATION

According to estimates of the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research and the Georgia State Department of
Health, the population on July 1, 1958, within 50, 100, and 200 miles of Gulf Hammock was as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 miles</td>
<td>157,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 miles</td>
<td>1,185,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 miles</td>
<td>2,785,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACCESSIBILITY

Gulf Hammock is accessible from all directions by air, rail, bus, and private automobile. From the north and south the general area is crossed by U. S. Highways 19, 129, and State route 24. From the east and west the area is accessible by U. S. Highways 27 and 98. A network of state and county roads criss-cross the area in all directions. Public transportation is provided to nearby cities and towns by Seaboard Air Line Railroad, Eastern Air Lines, and Greyhound Bus Lines.
Key to Photos
Gulf Hammock.
CLASSIFIED MATERIAL

ROUTE TO (Hand Carry):

☐ Reg. Dir. Cox
☐ Asst. Reg. Dir. Lisle
☐ Chf. of Opera. Smith
☐ Reg. Adm. Off. Mulvany
☐ Prog. & Plans Cont. Off. Burns
☐ Prog. Analyst Pugh
☐ Office Services Supv. Ciucci

☐ Adm. Asst. Floyd
☐ Secretary Yarbrough
☐ Fin. Off. Meanerhan
☐ Budget Officer Greene
☐ Personnel Off. Roberts
☐ Secretary Leary

Date

It is recommended that the following employees be designated to have access to the attached material which is classified "For United States Government Use Only."

Approved:

Regional Director Name, Title and Date

It is recommended that the attached material be declassified.

Approved:

Regional Director Name, Title and Date
Region One
P. O. Box 5031
Richmond 20, Virginia
July 10, 1959

Memorandum

To: The Director

From: Regional Director, Region One


Attached, in duplicate, is the report on Gulf Hammock, Florida, prepared by Carl P. Schreiber, Regional Chief, Proposed Park Studies Section, following his preliminary investigation May 5-7, 1959.

SUMMARY

Gulf Hammock, a region of salt marshes, sluggish streams, bogs, cypress swamps, and extensive stands of pines and oaks, is located along the Florida Gulf Coast between the Suwannee and the Withlacoochee Rivers extending inland for about 15 miles. Although considered wild country some 25 or 30 years ago, logging, naval stores production, farming, and grazing have since taken most of the wilderness character from the area. Noted in former years as providing good hunting for deer, bear, turkey and small game, this activity today is confined for the most part to the Gulf Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

Gulf Hammock does not appear to be suitable for inclusion in the National Park System.

CONCLUSIONS

Federal ownership of the Gulf Hammock area is not recommended. This conclusion is reached because the present owners appear to be making the best possible use of the land
in the production of lumber, pulpwood and naval stores. Park-like features are not particularly outstanding and the recreational activities of hunting and fishing are being provided in the best manner possible under present conditions. The attached map Exhibit "A" shows the general outline of the study area. Enclosed within it are approximately 250,000 acres. Five large ownerships and a number of smaller tracts are involved, (see Exhibit "B").

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that no further consideration be given to the Gulf Hammock area.

(SIGNED)

Elbert Cox
Regional Director

Attachments

CPSchreiber:ph

General
Daily
PRELIMINARY STUDY

GULF HAMMOCK

FLORIDA

United States
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Region One
1. South from 100' high Levy fire tower. Homes in foreground occupied by turpentine workers families. Interesting to note that an 80' tower 100 yards away, built in 1935, is no longer usable because tree growth is now above it.

2. Although some pine trees of 12" diameter and up are tapped for turpentine the most important forest product is pulpwood. In this region of fast tree growth pulpwood production on a 10 year rotation is possible.
3. As river front sites become scarce canals are dug from rivers or lakes to provide water outlets for housing developments.

4. Typical cut over land.
5. Public boat ramp, Suwannee River.

7. A small pond formed in an old borrow pit.

8. A small stream bordered by moss draped bottom-land
   hardwoods.

10. Slash left after logging a small island of 12" diameter pines.
11. Cut over land with scattered palms and pines remaining.

12. A salvage cut removed almost all the standing trees following a fire in what was once a turpentine "orchard."

Views from Suwanee Tower. In all directions the predominating tree is oak although there are scattered pines, palms, and lesser species.
19. Small clumps of young cypress are numerous.

20. An oak hammock.
21. A broad expanse of coastal salt marsh.

22. Royal Palms stand out on the border of this salt marsh.
23. Typical salt marsh of the coastal area.
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region One

From: Chief, Division of Recreation Resource Planning

Subject: Report of Preliminary Investigation, Gulf Hammock, Florida

This will acknowledge your memorandum of July 10 transmitting two copies of the subject report.

Mr. Schreiber's report is clear and concise. We concur in your conclusion that Gulf Hammock now is probably unsuitable for inclusion in the National Park System.

Ben H. Thompson, Chief
Division of Recreation Resource Planning

In duplicate
Coral Reef Spot In Keys Is Saved For Public Use

GEORGE HANNAH, MIAMI, July 16 — Federal and state officials have agreed to save a $100,000 reef area off Key Largo as a public scenic attraction.

They issued a statement yesterday in an attempt to settle differences in the area's designation as either a federal or state property.

State Attorney General R. Hal McAdoo said he had not been informed of the decision to declare the reef a public scenic area.

The reef is located near the lighthouse and is visible to swimmers from the lighthouse.

A. S. Haywood, director of the Everglades National Park, said the reef would be open to the public.

FROM: Everglades National Park

Homestead, Florida