



National Forests in Florida Forest Update

U.S. Forest Service

Ways to Comment On Access

- Visit one of our Forest Open Houses.
- Electronic comments can be mailed to comments-southern-florida@fs.fed.us.
- Written comments can be mailed to Will Ebaugh at 325 John Knox Rd. Tallahassee, FL 32303 or 850-523-8567.
- Oral or hand delivered comments can be received within our normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

Comments must be received by December 1, 2004

Make comments as specific as possible and include the following:

- Name, address and (if possible) telephone number
- Title (Ocala Access DEIS) of the proposal on which your comment is being submitted
- Specific facts or comments you believe the Responsible Officials should consider in reaching the decision.

Only those who submit timely and substantive comments will have standing to appeal. For appeal eligibility, individuals must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request



Ocala National Forest Reschedules Open Houses

Due to recent hurricanes in and around the Ocala National Forest, two of the Access Designation Open Houses were postponed. Recognizing the importance of this project and in an effort to encourage maximum public involvement new dates are planned for the open houses. The comment period has also been extended to December 1, 2004. All comments must be received by that date.



Those interested in access to the Ocala are invited to stop by anytime during the open house hours to discuss alternatives, ask questions and give comments. No formal presentation will be given. The dates and

locations for the meetings are:

Wednesday October 6, 2004
Ramada Plaza Hotel, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., 7470 Hwy 192 West Kissimmee, FL 34747

Monday October 12, 2004
Ocala City Auditorium, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., 836 N.E. Sanchez Ave. Ocala, FL 34470

Tuesday October 13, 2004
Lake County Fairground, Clements Building, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., 2102 CR 452 Eustis, FL

Hurricane Effects National Forests in Florida

Damage from the recent hurricanes to the National Forests in Florida is extensive in many areas in the forest. Cleanup could take several weeks or months to ensure areas are accessible and safe for forest visitors.

Roads, trails and developed recreation areas will remain **CLOSED** until public safety hazards are removed. These areas will re-open on a case by case basis after they are cleared of all hazards.

Visitors are reminded that much of the general forest area is heavily stressed from the storms. These areas are not accessible because of downed trees and debris.

An even bigger, and potentially fatal, safety concern will be leaning trees or trees with broken tops. These trees could fall to the ground without warning in the slightest breeze. Be aware of your surroundings if you are in the woods this fall.

While we appreciate visitors wanting to use the forest, we are asking users to be patient while we continue with the clean up efforts. It is not advised that forest users try to clear debris to access forest trails, roads and recreation areas. As a matter of fact, we urge you to not do so due to concerns for your safety and, with the best of intentions, you could be violating federal law. Forest Service personnel are

working with trained professionals to restore access to all areas that will be reopened. Our commitment to you is that we will do so as quickly as possible.

If you plan to visit the National Forests in Florida contact the Ranger District Offices for the latest closure status. Updates on closures can be viewed on the web at: www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/florida

