

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT DATA INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

This section provides a recreation inventory and analysis pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 163.177(6)(f), Florida Statutes.

**Recreation and Open Space Inventory:** Table 8-1 identifies the recreation and open space facilities located within the corporate limits of the City. *Map 11: Recreation and Open Space Facilities*, shows their locations.

**TABLE 8-1:  
City Recreation and Open Space Resources**

Name of Facility	Type of Facility
Rotary Field of Dreams Park	City, Resource-Based neighborhood park providing Open Space
Sombrero Beach Park	City, Resource-Based community park, providing Open Space
Coco Plum Beach Park	City, Resource-Based community park, providing Open Space
Marathon Community Park	City, Activity-Based, community park
Jessie Hobbs Park	City, Activity-Based, neighborhood park
Sunset Bay Park Grassy Key	City, Resource-Based neighborhood park providing Open Space
Aviation Boulevard Boat Ramp	City, Resource-Based facility
The 33 <sup>rd</sup> Street Boat Ramp	City, Resource-Based facility
Marathon Skate Park	City, Activity-Based facility
City of Marathon Marina	City, Activity-Based facility
Curry Hammock State Park	State, Resource-Based, Regional facility providing Open Space
Blue Heron Nature Preserve	State, Resource-Based facility providing Open Space
FDOT US Highway 1 Boat Ramp	State, Resource-Based facility
Overseas Heritage Trail	State, Resource-Based facility providing Open Space
Museums & Natural History Trails of Crane Point	Non-profit, Resource-Based facility providing Open Space
Marathon Middle/High School	County, Activity-Based facility

**TABLE 8-1:  
City Recreation and Open Space Resources**

<b>Name of Facility</b>	<b>Type of Facility</b>
Switlick Elementary School	County, Activity-Based facility
Sombrero Country Club	Private, Activity-Based facility providing Open Space
Bicycle Paths	City & State, Resource-Based facility
Ensenada Park, Waloriss Subdivision	City, Neighborhood Open Space

Source: City of Marathon, Department of Community Development

This inventory identifies public recreational space within the City limits. Recreation facilities at public schools, though only available for public use when classes are not in session, are included along with the Sombrero Beach Country Club, a semi-private facility with gym, tennis courts and an 18-hole golf course and the Museums & Natural History Trails of Crane Point, a private non-profit organization, which is open to the public.

As a tourist based community, the City is home to numerous resort and tourist accommodation facilities, most that include recreational facilities such as pools, tennis courts, shuffleboard, boat ramps, etc. Although these are privately owned and not counted in the public recreational data, many of these facilities are available to the public. Recreation facilities that are owned and operated by the private sector are also available to some citizens through private clubs, home-owner association parks or at multi-family housing complexes. The Florida Keys also has an abundance of Federal, State and Regional parks and recreational spaces available to and frequented by Marathon residents.

**County Parks and Recreational Areas.** The Monroe County recreational facilities within the City are identified in Table 8-1. Approximately two miles west of the City, accessed via a segment of the old seven-mile bridge is Pigeon Key, a County owned historic site with museum. Although use of the bridge is still available, concerns by FDOT over the structural integrity of the bridge may force its closure. Should this occur, access to Pigeon Key would be limited to boat traffic.

**State Parks and Recreation Areas.** The Florida Keys are home to a number of State parks and recreation areas. State recreation areas include parks, botanical sites, historical sites and aquatic preserves. The list of recreation areas also includes state owned conservation areas. Table 8-2 summarizes the inventory of State parks and recreation areas in the adjoining Keys.

The State of Florida owns approximately 82,000 acres of upland and submerged lands in Monroe County, the Atlantic Ocean and Florida Bay, much of which includes significant marine and/or terrestrial habitats. The larger state owned areas contain resource based recreation opportunities such as camping, fishing and boating. The smaller sites generally are focused on facilities such as beaches, boat ramps, docks and picnic facilities.

**TABLE 8-2:  
Inventory of State Owned Parks and Recreation Areas**

Name	Location	Area in Acres		Facilities
		Total	Submerged*	
State Parks				
John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park	Key Largo	56,160.7	53,593.1	47 RV/trailer sites, 122 tables, 21 shelters, beach, boat ramp, marina, visitor center, concessions, dumping station
Long Key State Park	Long Key	979.9	147.94	50 RV/trailer sites, 10 tent sites, 6 shelters, interpre- tive/nature trails, canoe trails & rentals, observation tower
Bahia Honda State Park	Bahia Honda Key	491.25	17.33	48 R.V./trailer sites, 32 tent sites, 6 cabins, 142 tables, 12 shelters, trails, beach, boat ramp, 2 marinas
Curry Hammock State Park	Fat Deer Little Crawl Key Long Point Key Deer Key	970.23	391.36	Basket ball court, beach and restroom facilities
Windley Key Geologic State Park	Windley Key	32.00	0	Interpretive Center, Nature Trails
Fort Zachary State Park	Key West	57	20	Historic structure, picnic tables, bike path, concessions & bath house
State Historic Site				
Indian Key	Indian Key	11.8	97.8 (Included in the Lignumvitea Submerged Lands Management Area)	Interpretive nature trail, docking facilities

**TABLE 8-2:  
Inventory of State Owned Parks and Recreation Areas**

Name	Location	Area in Acres		Facilities
		Total	Submerged*	
State Botanical Sites				
Key Largo Hammock	N. Key Largo	2,309.2	414.7	Transitional, under preliminary planning
Lignumvitae Key	Lignumvitae & Shell Keys	560.0	Approximately 10,000 acres of managed submerged lands	Historical and archeological structures, nature/ interpretative trail, docking facilities
State Aquatic and Archaeological Preserves				
Lignumvitae Key	Lignumvitae Key		8,320.0 (included in Lignumvitae managed submerged lands)	Historical and archeological structures, nature/ interpretative trail, docking facilities
San Pedro Underwater Archaeological Preserve	1 mile south of Indian Key		72.0	Historical and archeological dive site, mooring buoys
Coupon Bight	Big Pine Key	117.0	6,000.0	N/A
Other State Acquisitions				
Port Bougainville	Key Largo	274.0	24.9	Use undetermined; planning underway
North Layton Hammock C.A.R.L. Project		74.0	0.0	To be managed as part of the Long Key State Recreation Area
Cowpen's Rookery Preserve	Plantation Key	165.0	0.0	Leased to and managed by the National Audubon Society
Save Our Rivers Program South Florida Water Management District	Big Pine Key	190.3	0.0	Currently owned and managed by the SFWMD but eventually lands will be transferred to USFWS to be incorporated in National Key Deer Wildlife
Total		5,252	16,940	

\* Submerged lands are those located below the mean high water line

Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, 1999

- A. State Parks.** State parks are spacious areas established primarily to preserve a natural setting while at the same time allowing for compatible recreational activities. To qualify as a state park an area must have exceptional natural attributes of statewide or at least broad regional significance. Additionally, it must have some special quality that will attract visitors from long distances as their destination point, in spite of closer and more conveniently located parks.
- B. State Special Feature Sites.** State special feature sites include state historic, archaeological, botanical and geological sites. The State defines a special feature as a discrete and well-defined object or condition, which attracts public interest and provides recreational enjoyment through visitation, observation and study. State special feature sites must be of unusual or exceptional character, or have a statewide or broad regional significance.
- C. State Preserves.** A state preserve is an area set aside to perpetuate certain exceptional objects or conditions, which provide a type of recreational experience, which would not be possible otherwise. State preserves are usually large and expansive and are designed to save representative samples of variable size, of the natural conditions and characteristic of Florida.

**Federal Parks and Recreation Areas.** The Florida Keys are home to a number of federal parks and recreation areas. These recreation areas include national wildlife refuges, national marine sanctuaries and national parks. The list of recreation areas also includes federally owned conservation areas. Approximately 1.2 million acres of upland land and submerged lands are under federal jurisdiction in Monroe County. These areas have been purchased by federal agencies to protect and preserve resources and habitats that might otherwise be destroyed. Many of these large, resource based conservation areas include environmentally significant marine, wetland and terrestrial habitats. In addition, these areas provide passive and active recreation as well as environmental education opportunities for residents and visitors to the Keys. Table 8-3 identifies the federally owned recreational facilities within Monroe County.

**TABLE 8-3:**  
**Inventory of Federal Owned Recreation Areas**

Name	Location	Acres		Facilities
		Total	Submerged*	
National Park Service				
Everglades National Park	Mainland	942,702.0	N/A	<b>Visitor Centers/Information Areas:</b> Main, Royal Palm, and Flamingo visitor centers, Hidden Lake Interpretive Center, Daniel Beard Center <b>Canoe Trails:</b> Hells Bay, Bear Lake, Wilderness Waterway, West Lake, Noble Hammock, 9-Mile Pond <b>Hiking Trails:</b> Pinelands, Anhinga, Gumbo-Limbo, Pahay-okee Mahogany Hammock, Shark Valley <b>Other:</b> 235 RV/trailer sites, 31 primitive camp sites, 64 camp sites, 15 cabins, marina, beach, 3 boat ramps
Big Cypress National Preserve	Mainland	126,362.3 <sup>(1)</sup>	0.0	Hunting and hiking trails
Fort Jefferson National Monument	Dry Tortugas	61,519.3	61,480.0 <sup>(2)</sup>	10 tent sites, 10 tables, museum, interpretive building, hiking trail, beach
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service				
Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge	North Key Largo	5,387.0 <sup>(3)</sup>	N/A	N/A
Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge	Big Pine to Key West	7,408.0 <sup>(4)</sup>	N/A <sup>(5)</sup>	Beach
National Key Deer Wildlife Refuge	Big Pine to Sugarloaf	8,091.0 <sup>(6)</sup>	N/A <sup>(5)</sup>	Nature trail information center
Key West National Wildlife Refuge	Key West	2,019.0	NA	
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration				
Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary	Big Pine Key (offshore)	3,903.4	3,903.4	Historic/archeological structure

**TABLE 8-3:  
Inventory of Federal Owned Recreation Areas**

Name	Location	Acres		Facilities
		Total	Submerged*	
Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary	Key Largo (offshore)	73,649.9	73,649.9	N/A
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,231,041.9</b>	<b>139,033.3</b>	

Notes: \* Submerged lands are those located below the mean high water line

(1) Approximately 74.75 additional acres of privately owned lands are within the boundary of Big Cypress National Preserve

(2) Approximately 3,220 additional acres of submerged lands owned by the State of Florida are within the boundary of Fort Jefferson National Monument

(3) An additional 1,713 acres of privately owned lands within the boundary of Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge are planned for future acquisition

(4) The total acreage includes 1, 200 acres under a perpetual lease from the State of Florida since 1936

(5) Approximately 100 acres within National Key Deer Wildlife Refuge and Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge are submerged lands

(6) Approximately 3,400 additional acres of privately owned lands are intended to be acquired for the National Key Deer Refuge

Source: Monroe County Comprehensive Plan, 1997

### ***Recreational Analysis***

**Summary of Recreation Inventory.** The recreation and open space inventory indicates that Marathon has 759.45 acres of land dedicated for public recreation and open space. Based on the permanent resident and seasonal population ( $9,883 + 4,931 = 14,814$ ) for Marathon (Year 2000 data), this represents 51.26 acres per 1,000 residents. Since the quality of recreation cannot be evaluated solely on the available land area dedicated to and developed for recreational uses, the analysis must consider the facilities available to the public. In general, variety in the types of facilities located in public parks enable residents to participate in both active and passive recreation and to serve the recreation demands for a diverse range of interests and age groups. The demand for recreational facilities will be discussed further in the analysis.

**Current Recreation Needs.** Current recreation needs are evaluated according to resident population space demands and facilities needs as well as needs for special groups and ages.

**Recreation Demand** means the number of recreation facilities and/or acreage desired by either the population of Marathon or a specific component thereof.

**Recreation Need** means the number of recreation facilities and/or acreage necessary to meet the recreation demand. Recreation need is determined by subtracting the number of existing recreation facilities and/or acreage from the recreation demand for facilities and/or acreage.

**Recreational Acreage Demands and Needs.** Within Marathon, parks should be designed to provide service either to the surrounding neighborhoods or to the City as a whole. To meet the overall space requirements for the resident population, minimum land needs for area designated for recreation space should not be less than the existing level of service. Table 8-4 shows the current recreation need for the City. The recreation need is based upon the proposed level of service for total park acreage. Given that there are 759.45 acres of land currently dedicated to recreational facilities in the City, and the 2000 resident and seasonal population is 14,814, the actual level of service is 51.26 acres per 1000 residents. Table 8-4 indicates that currently the City of Marathon has a large surplus of recreation land within the City. This appearance of surplus is due to the fact that Curry Hammock State Park is within the City limits. However, the City has a deficit of neighborhood parks and open preservation land to improve the quality of life in the City.

**TABLE 8-4:**  
**Existing Recreation Acreage Demand and Need**

Type	Existing (Acres)	Actual LOS (Acres/1,000 People)	Adopted LOS (Acres/1,000 People)	Recreation Acreage Demands (Based On LOS)	Recreation Acreage Needs
Recreation	759.45	51.26	4.42	0	0

Source: The City of Marathon, 2000

**Recreational Facilities Demands and Needs.** Resident population demands for recreation facilities were examined by using the recommended population guidelines from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, from their publication *Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 2000*. Table 8-5 represents the median recreational standards recommended by the DEP and the actual level of service for the City for year 2000.

**TABLE 8-5:**  
**DEP Median Recreation Standards**

Facility	DEP Median Standards	2000 Actual LOS
Tennis Courts	1 court per 2,000 residents	1 court per 1,852 residents
Basketball Courts	1 court per 5,000 residents	1 court per 2,116 residents
Baseball/Softball Field	1 field per 5,000 residents	1 field per 4,938 residents
Football/Soccer Field	1 field per 6,000 residents	1 field per 7,407 residents
Equipped Play Area	1 area per 10,000 residents	1 area per 2,963 residents
Boat Ramp	1 ramp per 5,000 residents	1 ramp per 2,963 residents
Beach	1 mile/25,000 residents (.21 ft./resident)	4.5 miles/14,814 residents (1.6 ft./per resident)



**TABLE 8-5:  
DEP Median Recreation Standards**

Facility	DEP Median Standards	2000 Actual LOS
Volleyball Court	1 court per 6,000 residents	1 court per 7,407 residents
Golf Course	1 course per 50,000 residents	1 course per 14,814 residents
Shuffleboard	1 court per 6,000 residents	0
Picnic Area	1 picnic area per 6,000 residents	1 picnic area per 494 residents
Racquetball/Handball	1 court per 10,000 residents	0
Bicycle Path	1 mile/1,500 residents (3.5 ft./resident)	29.06 miles/14,814 residents (10.36 ft./resident)

Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2002

Recreation facility standards were compared to Marathon's 2000 population to estimate current demand for recreational facilities. Table 8-6 identifies the existing demand for those recreational facilities included in the facilities list. Existing demand is determined by dividing the City's total population (resident and seasonal) by the population standard. The existing demand illustrated in Table 8-6 demonstrates that the City has existing deficiencies in recreation facilities. Specifically, the City is deficient in shuffleboard courts, racquetball/handball courts, and football/soccer fields.

**TABLE 8-6:  
Estimated Existing Recreational Facility Demands and Needs**

Facility	Population Served	Available Facilities	Facility Demand	Need <sup>(1)</sup> (Surplus/Deficit)
Tennis Courts	2,000	8	7	+1
Basketball Courts	5,000	7	3	+4
Baseball/Softball Diamonds	5,000	3	3	0
Football/Soccer Fields	6,000	2	3	-1
Equipped Play Area	10,000	5	2	+3
Boat Ramps	5,000	5	3	+2
Beach linear mile	25,000 (.21 ft./resident)	4.5 miles	1.6 miles	+2.9 miles
Volleyball Courts	6,000	2	3	-1
Golf Course	50,000	1	1	0
Shuffleboard	6,000	0	3	-3
Picnic Areas	6,000	30	3	+27
Racquetball/Handball Court	10,000	0	2	-2
Bicycle Path linear mile	1,500	29.06 miles	9.8 miles	+19.26 miles

**TABLE 8-6:**  
**Estimated Existing Recreational Facility Demands and Needs**

Facility	Population Served	Available Facilities	Facility Demand	Need <sup>(1)</sup> (Surplus/Deficit)
(3.5 ft./resident)				

Notes: (1) = Recreation facility need is the same as surplus/deficit. Positive numbers indicate a surplus and negative numbers indicate a deficit or need.

Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 1994

**Recreation Needs for Special Groups Including Seniors, Children and the Physically Challenged.** The provision of recreational facilities should consider the needs of special groups such as the elderly, physically challenged and children. The 1994 recreation guidelines established by DEP do not specifically address recreation demands and needs of these groups. These groups require special consideration during the planning and design of parks and recreation facilities.

- A. Physically Challenged.** Parks and recreational facilities should generally be designed to accommodate the special access needs of senior citizens and other physically challenged persons. Parking facilities at parks should include parking spaces to accommodate these needs, while recreation facilities such as fishing piers, pavilions and ballfields should contain ramp structures at access points to enable passive participation in recreational activities. Without special design considerations at access points, many physically challenged persons will not be able to participate in both active and passive recreation activities.
- B. Senior Citizens.** Recreational interests of senior citizens and children vary from those of age groups that are more active. Some senior citizens, particularly those in their later years, may prefer more passive and less energetic activities such as shuffleboard, walking, fishing and picnicking to more demanding activities such as baseball, volleyball and soccer. However, some seniors continue to participate in active recreation activities and their needs can be met through planning for all age groups. Activities available to seniors should include numerous places for picnicking, walking and nature observation at area preserves. Although these recreation opportunities are available throughout the City, a greater diversity in available activities for seniors should be considered when planning for park facilities.
- C. Children.** Young children lack the physical size and strength to actively participate in certain recreational activities, but can do so where special facilities are provided. For example, shallow wading pools located immediately adjacent to swimming pools allow them to safely enjoy water activities. Playgrounds offering recreational equipment designed for young children are located in the Marathon Community Park, Jessie Hobbs Park, Sombrero Beach Park, Switlick Elementary School, and the Children's Rotary Park.

## Future Recreation Uses

**Future Recreational Space Demands and Needs.** Table 8-7 identifies the future recreational demands and needs. The methodology used for each factor is described below.

**A. Future Recreational Lands Demand.** The demand for future recreational land is based upon two factors: the future population and the adopted level of service. The City has proposed to adopt a recreational acreage level of service of 4.42 acres/1,000 population through 2020. The future demand is determined by dividing the future population by 1,000 and then multiplying it by 4.42.

**B. Future Recreational Land Supply.** The future recreation lands supply will continue to be 759.45 acres.

**C. Future Recreational Land Need.** With a projected 2020 population of 15,969 residents ( $15,969 / 1000 = 15.969$ ) and a LOS of 4.42 acres/1000 residents ( $15.969 \times 4.42 \text{ LOS} = 70.58$  acres for the 2020 population.) Marathon will still have a surplus of recreational and open space lands in the year 2020.

**Future Recreational Facilities Demand and Needs.** Table 8-7 illustrates the projected demand for recreational facilities. The total facilities listed in Table 8-7 includes the facilities currently along with the planned Phase II development of the Marathon Community Park, outlined in the Capital Improvements Plan, which will add 2 soccer fields, along with 2 shuffleboard, 2 bocce and 1 handball court.

**TABLE 8-7:  
Projected Demand for Recreational Facilities**

Facility	Population Served	Total Facilities	Demand		Surplus
			2010	2020	
Tennis Court	2,000	8	8	8	0
Basketball Court	5,000	7	3	3	+4
Baseball/Softball Field	5,000	3	3	3	0
Football/Soccer Field	6,000	4	3	3	+1
Equipped Play Area	10,000	5	1	2	+3
Boat Ramp	5,000	5	3	3	+2
Beaches linear mile	25,000	4.5 miles	.61 miles	.64 miles	+3.86 miles
Volleyball Court	6,000	2	3	3	+1
Golf Course (18 holes)	50,000	1	1	1	0
Shuffleboard Court	6,000	2	3	3	-1
Picnic Area	6,000	30	3	3	+27
Racquetball/Handball	10,000	1	1	2	-1
Bicycle Path linear mile	1,500	29.06 miles	10.2	10.6	+18.46

**TABLE 8-7:  
Projected Demand for Recreational Facilities**

Facility	Population Served	Total Facilities	Demand		Surplus
			2010	2020	
			miles	miles	miles

Sources: Florida Department of Environmental Protection and City of Marathon Department of Community Development

Based upon Table 8-7, deficiencies will exist in 2020 for the following recreation facilities: shuffleboard and racquetball/handball courts. All other recreation facilities listed have a surplus or have a recreation demand equal to the number of available facilities.

This section describes several alternative ways to provide recreation space and facilities that will be demanded by Marathon's future populations. Each alternative can be utilized as a component of the City's recreation plan.

**Distribution of Future Recreation and Open Spaces.** Most neighborhoods are within a close proximity to parks within Marathon. However, increased public accessibility to waterfront areas, the preservation of green spaces in neighborhoods for passive enjoyment, parks for children to play close to their homes, local linkages to a bicycle/pedestrian pathway network, community gardens and an array of other recreational issues have never before been comprehensively planned in Marathon. A recreation and open space master plan should be prepared for the City which fully examines these issues and addresses the maintenance and enhancement of existing lands and facilities to improve the quality of life in the City.

**Coordination with Monroe County Recreational Space System.** The City of Marathon shall coordinate its future recreation plans with the County and the State to avoid duplication of services provided by each jurisdiction from which Marathon citizens may benefit.

**Recreation Demand Created by Tourists and Provision of Private Recreation Facilities.** Much of the recreation demand created by short-term visitors is addressed by private recreation facilities, especially by those facilities provided at the resorts and hotels. Since many visitors to Marathon come to enjoy the natural resources, the City's efforts to preserve these areas will help ensure return visitors and a healthy economy. A number of private recreation facilities exist in Marathon, the City should consider coordinating its provision of recreation facilities with the private sector to avoid duplication of facilities as well as to ensure that the City is not competing with the private sector.