

## ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

All ExplorUS personnel policies and operational procedures will fully comply with all applicable state, federal, and local regulations – including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Florida Civil Rights Act (Title XLIV, Chapter 760, Part I of the Florida Statutes), the Florida Americans with Disabilities Act, the Florida Americans with Disability Accessibility Implementation Act, the Equal Opportunity Act, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Core to that is ensuring that our facilities meet all code and law governing accessibility. We will be doing a thorough site evaluation of Hugh Birch Taylor State Park to identify any such issues and resolve them appropriately. This will include in-house facility professional assessments assisted with our outside Architectural consultants.

Our Accessibility and Inclusion Liaison (A&I Liaison) and the Park Manager will monitor our ADA compliance. We are aware that the Department will include ADA compliance as a component of our Quarterly Evaluation Report.

## ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION LIAISON

We will designate an A&I Liaison, who will work closely with the Department if an ADA issue arises. At a location the size and scope of the concession operations at Birch State Park, the General Manager will likely serve as the A&I Liaison. We will provide their name and contact information to the Park Manager. The duties of the A&I Liaison include:

- Acting as a liaison and cooperating with the Department
- Educating and directing ExplorUS on-site staff in ADA matters and issues
- Understanding ADA requirements related to our operations
- Monitoring the ADA compliance of our operations (with the Park Manager)
- Work with the Division of Recreation and Parks' Accessibility and Safety Manager

### Liaison Contact

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## TRAINING FOR STAFF AWARENESS

The General Manager/A&I Liaison and all customer-engaging staff will complete training for disability awareness through our Human Resources Department. This course will include instruction on disability awareness, steps for creating an inclusive environment, how to respond to accommodation requests, and more. The standards provided in training are updated regularly as new accessibility technologies and best practices are introduced to the industry.

To ensure that staff are fully trained, all supervisory or lead roles will complete role-play scenarios to mimic potential visitor situations. This helps staff to retain information and identify potential areas for additional coaching. Once training is complete, visitors-facing staff will be able to:

- Give accurate and detailed accessibility information about the Concession Building, Garden Center, recreational areas, and other property sites.
- Provide accurate information on availability and location of accessible parking, restrooms, picnic tables, etc.
- Identify wheelchair accessible outdoor seating, quiet tables for those with noise sensitivities, and locate specially printed menus for those with low vision.
- Be prepared to fulfill reasonable requests for assistance, such as retrieving merchandise off shelves that may be out of reach.
- Understand the protocol for service dogs.
- Use the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park Accessibility Information sheet, which we will display at all workstations for employee reference.

These are just a sample of the situations that our staff will be prepared to respond to.

## SITE-SPECIFIC ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Visitors will be encouraged to enjoy all the Park's many accessible amenities, including the Concession Building, Garden Club Building, picnic pavilions, and more. Any construction or renovation of the facilities assigned to us will comply with accessibility standards, as will all our applicable operational procedures at Birch Taylor State Park.

The following accessible amenities are listed on the Department's website as being available:

- A beach wheelchair
- Large-print versions of Park brochures
- Audio versions of Park brochures

- A 1-mile guided audio tour of the park
- The quarter-mile Rail Trail
- All large pavilions
- The beach concession restroom
- The youth camp facility, including the full lodge and Cabin 6
- Accessible picnic tables throughout the park

## DETERMINING PRIORITY NEEDS

Once ExplorUS takes over management of the park contract, our management team will complete a walk-through of the entire park property to determine items that need to be addressed immediately.

### **Accessibility in the Concession Building, Marina Building, and Garden Club**

**Building:** For site amenities, we will take the following preliminary steps to ensure they accommodate those with special needs. This is just a sample of what our team will be making assessments for.

- We will work with the Department to ensure that ADA parking spots are clearly identified with effective signage, free of obstruction, and available for visitors with additional needs for ease of access and not used for large deliveries or otherwise inappropriate uses.
- Public walkways are clear of obstructions or debris.
- Ensure all circulation paths between tables in the café and bar are 36 inches wide; aisles are not obstructed by small display baskets, units, or decor in any way and have enough room for turnaround space.
- Install retail counters (where not already in place) that are at least 36 inches long and not more than 36 inches off the floor. In the case that this is not feasible, we will train our employees to walk around the counter to the customer while they are checking out and make additional accommodations to ensure the customer can see the employee.
- Maintain an accessible checkout counter free from equipment and merchandise.
- Ensure that decor and other seasonal displays do not obstruct pathways.
- Provide large-font menus.
- Include gluten-free menu items and snack offerings as some disorders are triggered or exacerbated by gluten.

**Posted Signage:** Fonts on all retail signage and menus will be clear, readable, and size appropriate for those with limited visibility. Pertinent accessibility information will be posted on bulletin/signboards. ExplorUS will provide ADA guidance in appropriate locations that are handicap accessible and fully compliant with ADA accessibility

standards. All brochures and other written material we create will include accessibility information.

**Website:** Our website should allow people of all abilities to discover everything that Hugh Taylor Birch State Park has to offer. A website that lacks accessibility considerations can prevent people with special needs from visiting the Park if they cannot access the information that they need. Designing for accessibility also helps individuals without any special needs to view the website by providing extra features and improving usability.

Our website for the park is ADA-compliant. Changes to the Park website for accessibility purposes will be submitted to the Department for approval before going live. We maintain compliant websites for all our locations. This entails meeting requirements that include:

- Providing text alternatives for all non-text content. This involves both describing all necessary information through text and providing alternative text for all pictures, videos, and graphics to be used by screen reading software.
- Allowing for text to be resized, space text effectively, and use high contrast colors to improve accessibility for people with partial visual impairments.
- Providing captions or transcripts for videos to improve access for individuals with a hearing impairment.
- Making all functionality available from a keyboard. If visitors must use a mouse to access any features on a website, it is not ADA-compliant. It is also important to ensure all components can be navigated away from with standard keyboard inputs.
- Avoiding content that may cause seizures or physical reactions, such as flashing images.
- Designing the architecture of the website to help visually impaired users navigate and find content. The way individual pages and the overall site are coded can help assistive technology to function more effectively.
- Considering inputs besides keyboards, including touch screens and use of a mouse. For example, small buttons and complicated gestures are more difficult to interact with.
- Designing the site to work well with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- Our marketing staff is responsive to changes in the standard Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to ensure that we continue to meet the current industry standards.

## HANDLING VISITOR COMPLAINTS ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY

Our team is committed to addressing accessibility complaints quickly and efficiently. For any accessibility complaints we may receive, we will first attempt to address the problem directly with the visitor. Hopefully, we can improve their visit while they are still in the park. Failing that, we will work to show them that their complaint was heard and led to action to correct the problem; we will invite them back to experience our improvements.

Although we expect our procedures to prevent problems from occurring, if any visitor requests information about how to file a complaint, we will direct them to follow the Grievance Procedure available on FloridaStateParks.org. This process should allow all parties to work together to address the problems that the visitor experienced and prevent future occurrences.

We are aware the Division of Recreation and Parks employs an Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator (referenced in some places as the Accessibility and Safety Manager) and we will consult with the coordinator each time an alleged ADA issue arises. We will work with the coordinator to negotiate an agreement between all parties involved.