



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED

November 4, 2021

Stacey Hectus, Planning and Zoning Director
Levy County Planning and Zoning Department
310 School Street
Bronson, Florida 32621

Dear Ms. Hectus,

This letter is being written in response to the Application for Planned Unit Development Approval for the Black Prong Equestrian Village submitted to Levy County on October 1, 2021. One of the management objectives described in the ten-year resource management plan for Goethe State Forest is to provide for resource-based recreation opportunities on the forest. Expanding the existing facilities at Black Prong Equestrian Village into a "full-service equestrian resort" as described in the application would support this objective. Horseback riding continues to be a popular recreational activity on the forest and this proposal would increase opportunities for equestrian users to access the trails.

Management strategies for Goethe State Forest center on the multiple-use concept, and recreation is one of the many activities that occur on the forest. Below highlights some of the other forest uses that may occur that could limit trail access or otherwise affect operation of this facility.

- Each year, the Florida Forest Service plans to prescribe burn approximately 15,000 acres on Goethe State Forest. While conducting these prescribed burns, trails may need to be closed. Additionally, smoke from burns may impact trail conditions well after burns.
- Timber is a valuable economic and ecological resource, and timber harvesting for the purposes of generating revenue, improving forest health, and biological restoration and maintenance, is critical. Trails may be closed while timber harvests are ongoing.
- In cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Goethe State Forest is managed as a Wildlife Management Area and is open for hunting.

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- The Florida Forest Service continually monitors the forest for the presence of invasive exotic plants. Care should be taken by forest users to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive exotics. Trails may be closed while treatment of invasive exotics occurs.
- After large storm events that result in flooding or excessive downed material, trails may be closed for extended periods.
- The Florida Forest Service charges a day use fee for recreational use, and this fee would need to be paid for each guest of the resort that is accessing the forest trails.

Please feel free to contact me at (352) 395-4933 if you need further comment.

Sincerely,



Rick Dolan
Waccasassa Forestry Center Manager