

Sent: Thursday, 21 February, 2008 20:03
Subject: [BRDBRAIN] Information About Negative Impacts to MINWR due to Proposed Launch Facility

Hi All,

We appreciate any help you all can give us in getting the information out to all birders in the U.S. Please forward it to any e-mail list serves that birders and environmentalists monitor. The fishing and hunting communities should also be concerned. Public comment is critical to preserving everything we love about Merritt Island NWR. This project is on a fast track since NASA is depending on a commercial entity to service the International Space Station after the Shuttle retires in 2010. Public comment on the proposed launch complex will close early this spring.

The U.S. Air Force has 40 launch pads. They are only using 8 of them. There is infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc) in place on the Cape in areas that have already been disturbed. Is it really necessary to impact pristine areas?

I know that this is short notice and it will be difficult for you to attend one of the public meetings next week. But please take the time to phone, fax or e-mail your comments to NASA.

I will try to send the public notice as an attachment in a following e-mail. Thanks and best wishes! Laurilee (NOTE: Laurilee is the organizer of the Space Coast Festival)

Public Notice

Future Plans by NASA for New Launch Facility Could Close Portions of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

NASA is proposing a new Commercial Launch Facility on 200 acres of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge which could have significant environmental and visitor impacts. Merritt Island NWR is an overlay of the Kennedy Space Center and the Refuge manages NASA lands through an agreement. The agreement allows NASA to withdraw lands for space facilities. The new facility would result in loss of scrub habitat, loss of wetlands, impact sea turtle nesting due to lighting issues, result in loss of habitat for several endangered or threatened species, and eliminate use of most visitor facilities and programs.

NASA has selected two potential sites for the commercial launch facility. Site 1 is located within the existing restricted area of Kennedy Space Center, but Site 2 is located in an area currently open to the public. Either site will have significant environmental impacts; however, Site 2 has the potential to close all areas south of Haulover Canal to the public. Impacts to Refuge facilities are still unclear, but based on the proximity to Site 2 the following facilities will likely be affected (closed):

- Black Point Wildlife Drive
- The Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center
- Cruickshank Trail, Scrub Ridge Trail, Oak Hammock Trail, Palm Hammock Trail
- Sandler Educational Outpost
- Bio Lab Road
- Boat Ramp at Haulover Canal, Bio Lab Boat Ramp

- Sports fishing south of Haulover Canal
- Waterfowl hunting south of Haulover Canal

The development of Site 2 would affect approximately 750,000 Refuge visitors annually. Impacts associated with the development of Site 1 or 2 to Playalinda Beach are unclear, but could potentially affect another three quarters of a million visitors each year.

NASA is preparing an Environmental Assessment on the project and the public will be allowed to comment on the proposals. Several public meetings are planned:

February 25, 2008, Titusville City Hall - Council Chambers, 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

February 28, 2008, New Smyrna Beach Public Library, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

To provide comments or obtain additional information the following options are available:

1. Go to the NASA website
<http://environmental.ksc.nasa.gov/projects/ksc-cvlc.htm>
2. Send an email: KSC-CVLC AT nasa.gov
3. Call, FAX or Mail Mario Busacca; Environmental Program Office

Phone (321) 867-8456 , FAX (321) 867-8040, Mail Code TA-C3,
Kennedy Space
Center, FL. 32899