

Regarding the story, "Island Dreams" in the Jan. 8, 2005 Daily Journal:

Edgewater Councilman Jim Brown wants to get the spoil islands under city control so they can be developed into the city's park system. He says they are "mostly uninhabited, save for the occasional camper or sea-bird." Obviously, he has not spent much time there.

These islands were created from the spoil resulting from dredging the Intracoastal Waterway, which caused great damage to the bottom habitat of the Indian River. Over the last 50 years or so, nature has compensated for this harm by developing habitats on these islands for many animals, including snakes, raccoons, mice, osprey and other birds.

Councilman Dennis Vicenzi considers Mr. Brown's plan pointless and a waste of time. I agree with Mr. Vicenzi and applaud him.

People who want to use the islands for day use (picnicking, bait cast-netting, etc.) or overnight camping do so now. They can launch kayaks from Kennedy and Menard-May parks any time. They can get maps of the river from any bait and tackle store. They can find peace and tranquility instead of a barrage of people. There are no rules other than common sense. Most are considerate and take out their trash. Many take out more than they brought in. The annual cost to the city of policing up the islands is a T-shirt for the many volunteers who participate in the annual Indian River Cleanup.

If the city makes formal camping areas, they will have to be policed, as well as policed up. And what about mosquito control? And where do I make reservations? Who will clean out the toilets? And to whom do I complain when I find a toilet "trashed" by inconsiderate "campers?" At what point will septic systems become necessary?

This is a bad idea that will cost the city a lot of money, and not give a return. People who want to use these islands already do, and the city has no responsibility for them. Let's keep the islands pristine for the "occasional camper or seabird."

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