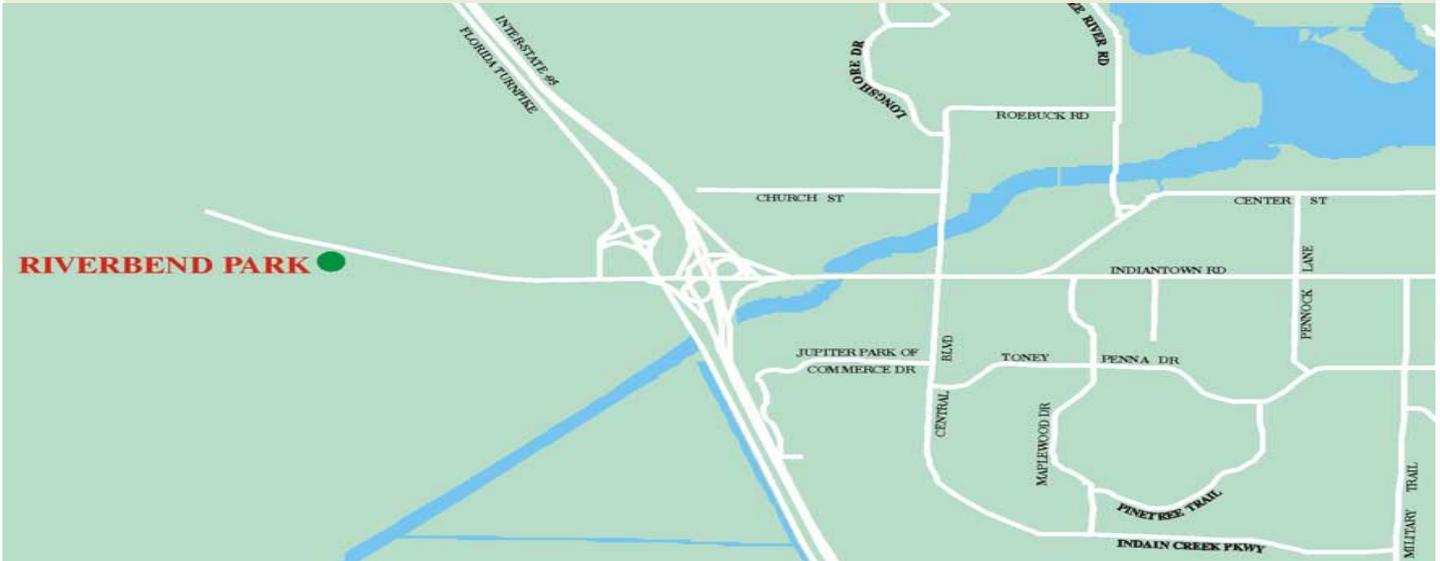




By Richard Procyk

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Riverbend Park Update

After years of delay and debate a corrected master plan for Riverbend Park was recently presented to the Board of County Commissioners and unanimously approved.

Work has now begun on the most significant multi-level historic site in Palm Beach County. There is evidence in the park of a continual time-line of prehistoric and historic people dating as far back as the Archaic Indian Period more than 5,000 years ago--to pre-ceramic civilizations.

Beside being a treasure trove of ancient habitation, the park has 50 important prehistoric and historic locations, including Seminole crops and village, two battlefields (Battle of the Loxahatchee and Powell's Battle--1838) from the Seminole Wars, and 100 years of pioneer history.

One of the most important features of the park is the state-of-the-art Interpretive center and Museum which will focus on the parks Indian, military, and pioneer history, along with the ecological importance of the Loxahatchee River--the southern most designated "Wild and Scenic"

river. The park will offer miles of equestrian trails; hiking and bike trails; and a five mile canoe route on our famous river.

Also involved in this project is the Town of Jupiter, who owns land on the west side of the Loxahatchee River and South Florida Water Management who has leased some of the land on the east side of the river to the county. Working together with vision and an eye to the future these agencies are creating one of the most important educational centers in south Florida.

With several Seminole Chickee huts just completed the county Parks and Recreation department is preparing to open a small segment of the park this fall, 2004. After years of waiting we will soon visit the battlefield where 166 years ago, on January 24, 1838, Maj Gen Thomas S. Jesup, commander of all forces in Florida, accompanied by 1500 troops¹ stormed the headwaters of the Loxahatchee River where he met 300 Seminoles in the lasting standing battle of the Second Seminole War.

The park site is located on the Loxahatchee River and Indiantown Rd.; west entrance just east of Sierra Square. A second entrance will be available in the fall. An announcement will be made at that time.