

Proposal for naming Riverside Park's new park (as well as its landing and the landing at Coontie Hatchee Park)

Submitted by:

Patsy West, ethno-historian, contributing author for the Seminole Tribune and University Press of Florida, instructor of Seminole Tribal History, creator of the Native American Press awarded history column "Reflections", direct descendent of early Miami/Fort Lauderdale settlers who remained close to the Native Mikasuki people, and 70+ year resident of Riverside Park

and

Tom Andrew, former Curator of Collections and Exhibits of the Ah-Tah-Ta-Ki Museum of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Fort Lauderdale Citizen of the Year 1995, and 40+ year resident of Riverside Park with 10 years of service as President of the Riverside Park Residents' Association

General Premise:

As was the case in naming Coontie Hatchee park near the Davie Boulevard bridge, the submitters of this proposal believe that respect and recognition should be afforded to indigenous peoples' history and language when naming public places for posterity.

Geographic and Historic Perspective:

In the process of becoming one of the most consequential figures in Florida history, the great Indian leader Abiaka transversed the waterways from the Atlantic Ocean and intracoastal waterway to the New River whose north and south forks define the eastern border of what is now the Riverside Park neighborhood of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

This neighborhood is now fortunate to have two waterfront parks along both forks of the New River with landings that were actually used by Abiaka and his people for establishing encampments, fishing, hunting, harvesting, commerce and, eventually, conducting military tactics during the bitterly fought Seminole War as the Native leader effectively commanded his peoples' resistance against the United State's policy of "Indian Removal" from the land that was sacred to them, which they knew as Econuckseh.

He was a skilled practitioner of Native medicine, highly intelligent, deeply respected, brilliantly resourceful, and was responsible for saving from extinction the Elaposhneechaathli, which means "The People Who Understand the Mikasuki Language".

Fort Lauderdale in general and Riverside Park in particular are steeped in Abiaka's lore. Accordingly, we propose naming the new park along the north fork of the New River after him. Further, in recognition and honor of the Mikasuki's elemental words for their Native identity and sacred land, we propose naming the landing there (as well as the landing at Coontie Hatchee park) as follows:

Proposed Park and Landing Names:

For the new park:

Abiaka Park

For the landing there:

Elaposhneechaathli Landing at Abiaka Park

For the landing at Coontie Hatchee Park:

Econuckseh Landing at Coontie Hatchee Park

Respectfully submitted,

Patsy West and Tom Andrew

Note: "Elaposhneechaathli" is pronounced

E-la-posh-nee-ch-ath-lee