

**Gulf Coast Visitor Center, Ranger Station, and
Commercial Services Facility**

Everglades National Park

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



January 19, 2012

Welcome!

Public Information Meeting

**REDEVELOPING THE GULF COAST
VISITOR CENTER SITE FACILITIES**

in

 **Everglades City, Florida**

January 19, 2012





Agenda

5:30 – 6:30	Open House
6:30 – 6:45	Welcome and Presentation
7:15 – 8:00	Discussions and Comments

Meeting Objective

The National Park Service is considering options for providing visitor opportunities, meeting park operational needs and supporting future concessions operations in the Gulf Coast District. This must occur in a way that recognizes federal budget constraints and the potential threats to coastal sites from storms and sea level rise.

The meeting objective is to provide the public with comprehensive information about the project and get public input about the redevelopment of the Gulf Coast Visitor Center site including options to best meet future needs and ideas that should be considered.

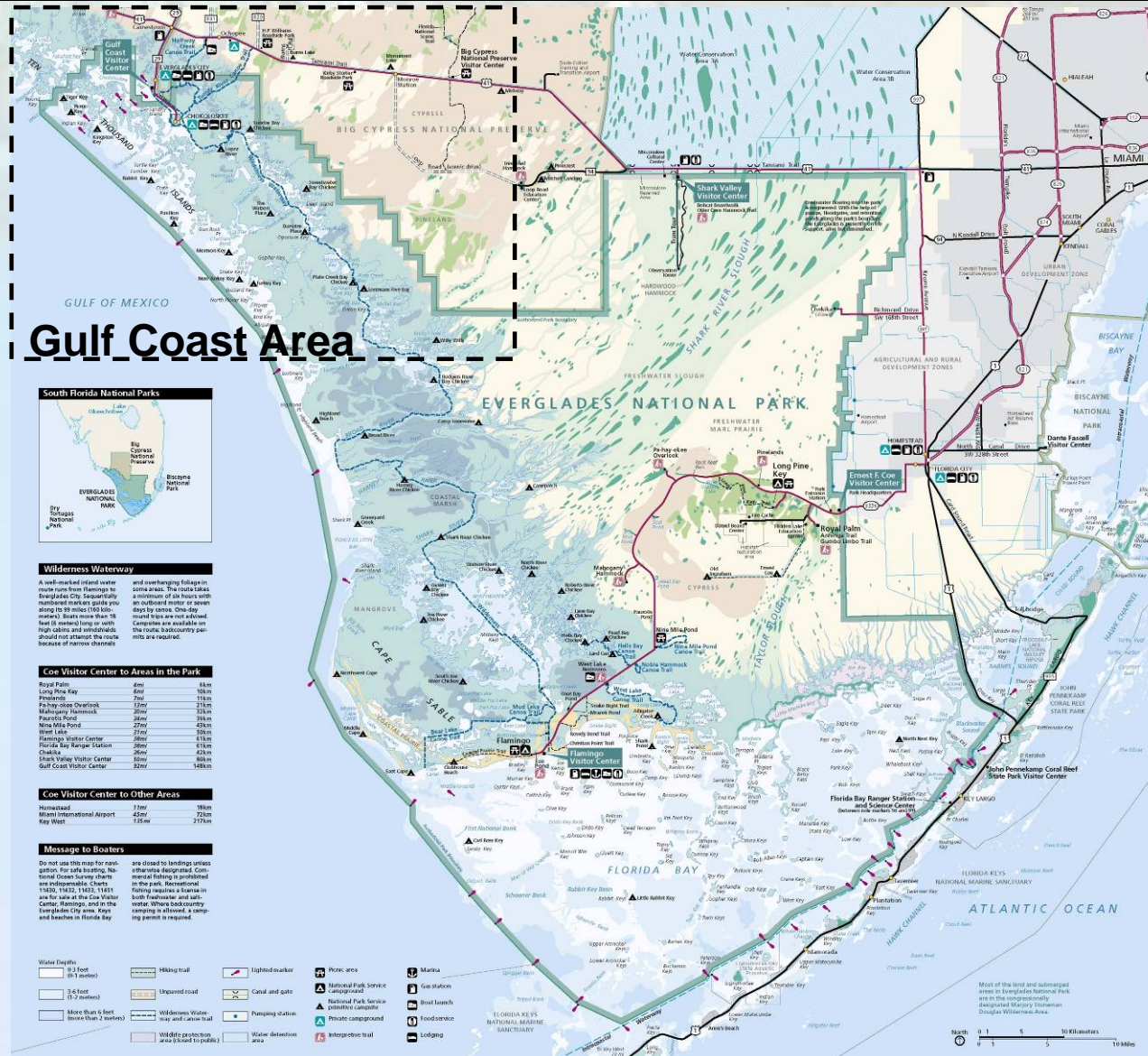
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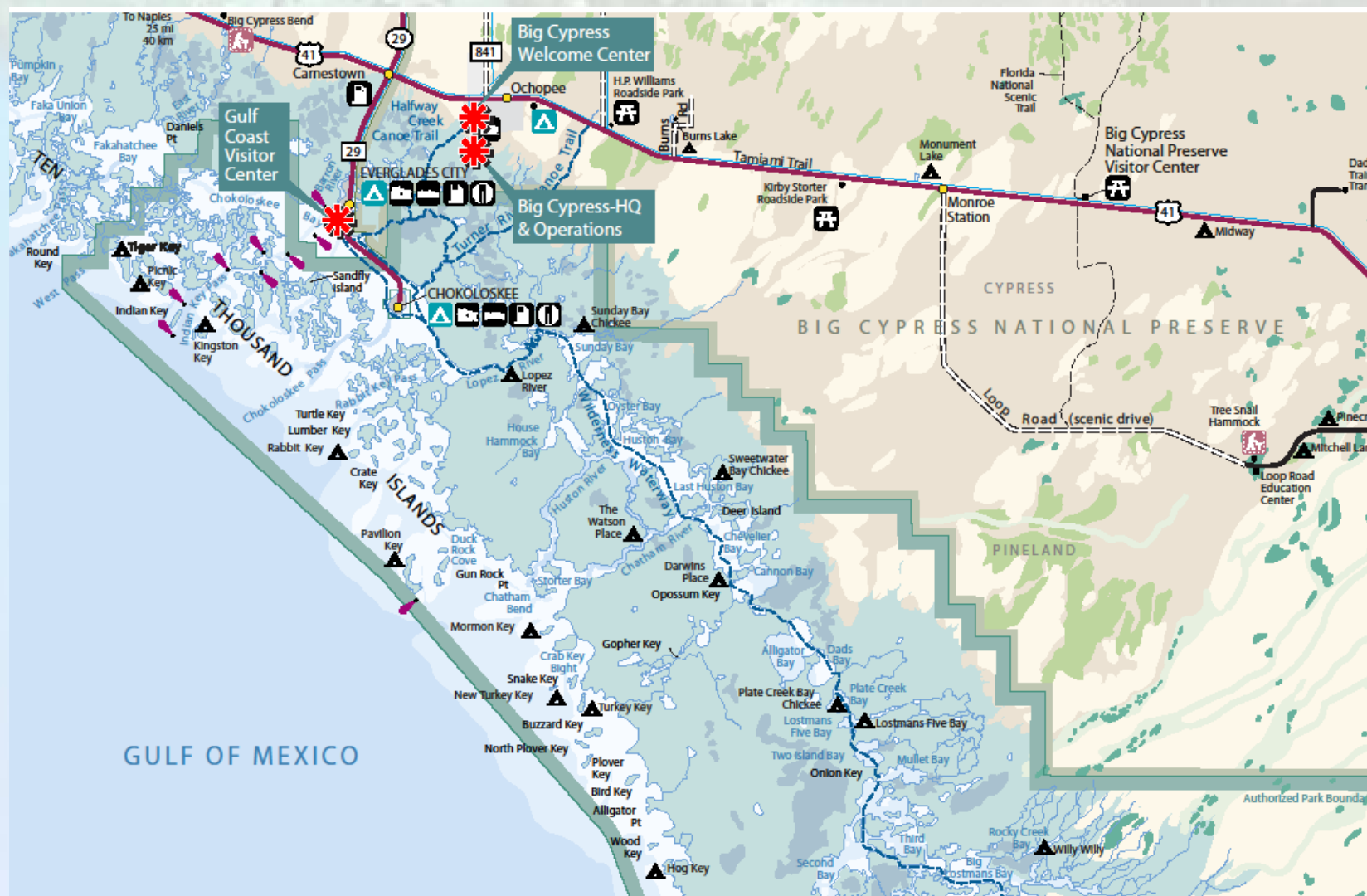
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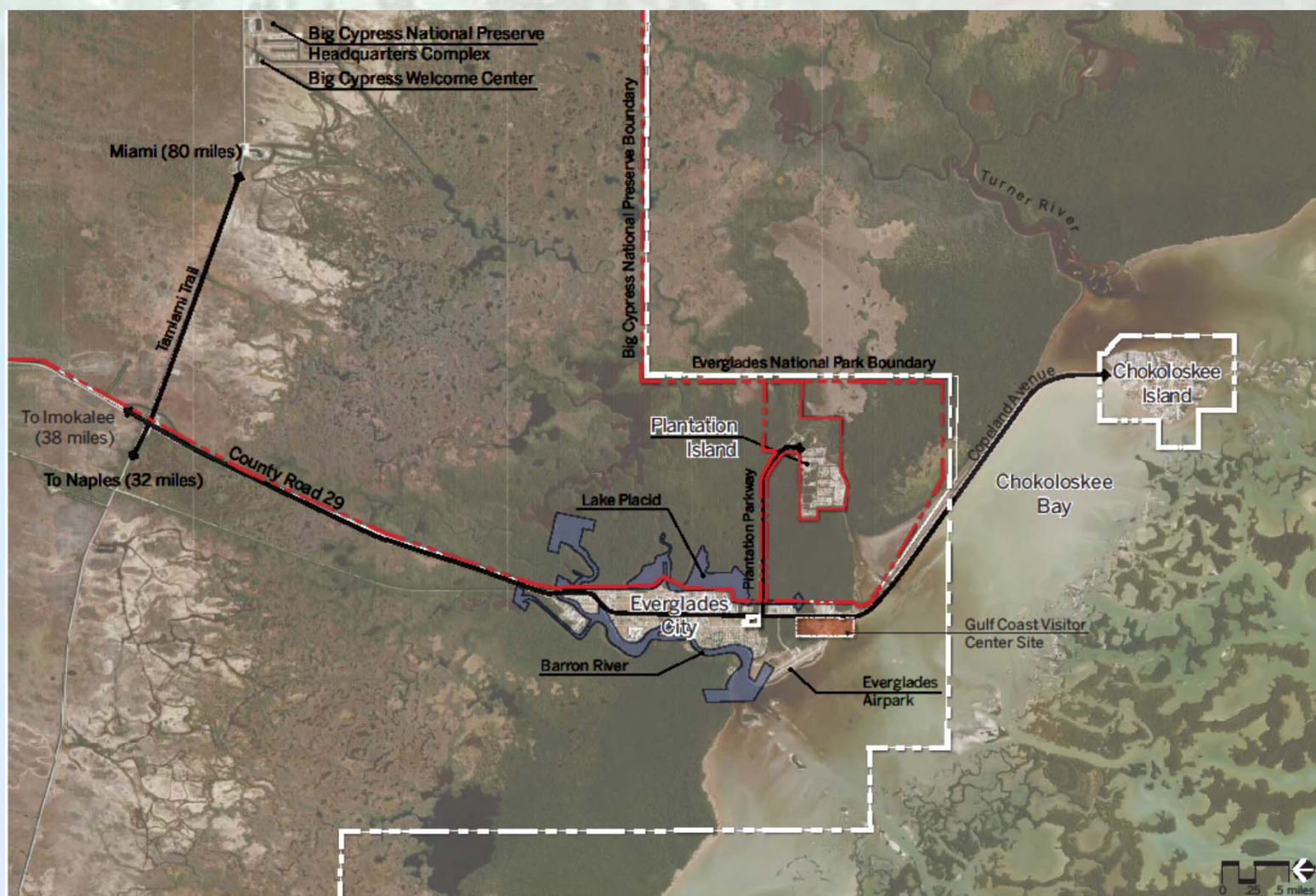
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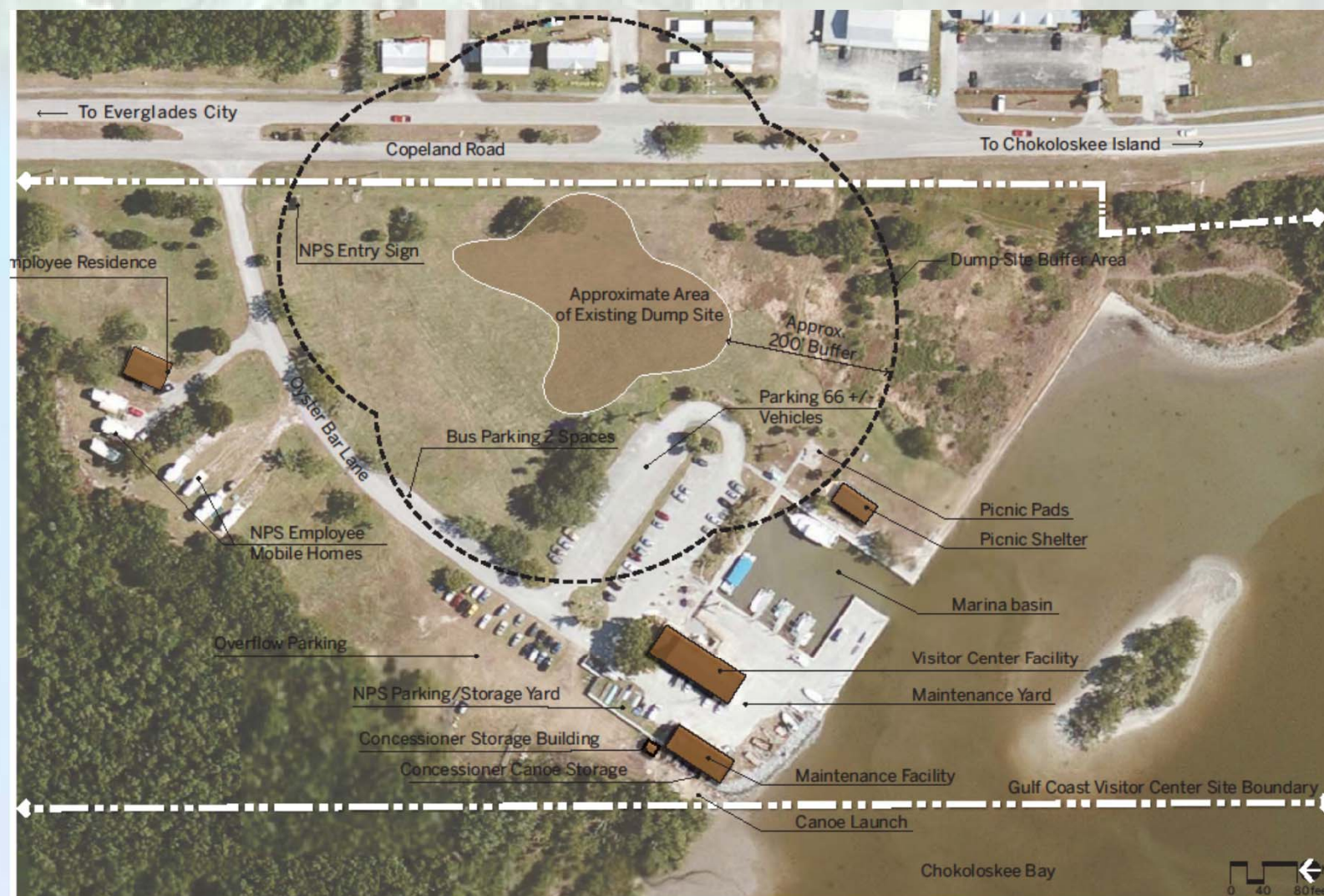
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Project Background:

- Existing facilities were constructed in 1966. Buildings have become functionally obsolete, structurally unsound, and are at-risk in this low-lying coastal setting.
- Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 authorized construction of a new visitor center at Everglades City designated the “Marjory Stoneman Douglas Center.”
- Earlier version of Draft General Management Plan (GMP) was considering more ambitious redevelopment options for Gulf Coast site and Flamingo.
- Due to existing and anticipated federal budget picture, scaled-back options are now being explored in this project; looking at smaller, more sustainable facility options and potential partnerships to meet future needs.
- Planning decisions from this project will be included in the Draft GMP and help guide site design and funding requirements for NPS and concessions facilities (current concessions contract expires in 2018).



Project and GMP Schedule:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Spring 2012: | Gulf Coast Site Project Planning, Conceptual Design & Preliminary Costs |
| Summer/Fall 2012: | Revise Draft GMP incorporating new information for Gulf Coast site and Flamingo |
| Spring 2013: | Issue Draft GMP for Public Review and Comment |
| 2014 & beyond: | Issue Final GMP and Record of Decision; begin GMP Implementation |



Opportunities & Challenges:

- The Gulf Coast facility is Everglades National Park's (ENP) primary visitor contact location on Florida's west coast.
- Gulf Coast Visitor Center site facilities receive more than 110,000 visits annually.
- The Visitor Center is over 45 years old and needs replacing.





Opportunities & Challenges:

- District operations are located on site:
Interpretation/backcountry permitting, Visitor Safety and Resource Protection (rangers) and Maintenance.
- Concessions boat tours operate several boats year round.





Opportunities & Challenges:

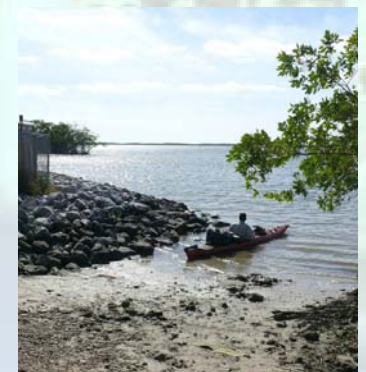
- Single marina basin provides critical water access for all Gulf Coast park operations and concessions tours.
- Canoe and kayak launch site is often muddy and therefore difficult and potentially unsafe to access.





Opportunities & Challenges:

- Site buildable area is limited by existing buildings and associated uses and former landfill with buffer zone.
- Coastal location increases the risks associated with hurricanes, storms and sea level change.





Project Goals:

- Maximize facility efficiency and sustainability
- Honor Marjory Stoneman Douglas
- Enhance the physical connection between Everglades National Park, Everglades City and neighboring communities
- Enhance public access to and use of the site's waterfront
- Improve site safety by separating visitor uses from operational functions
- Minimize marina and site congestion
- Improve canoe/kayak launching
- Improve site circulation (vehicular and pedestrian)





Potential Locations to Meet Future Needs:

Visitor Services

	Current On-site location	Revised On-site location	Off-Site partnership or commercial loc.	Off-site NPS loc. (ENP or BNP)
Visitor Orientation		o	o	
Education & Interpretation		o	o	
Backcountry Staging & Permitting		o		
Restrooms		o	o	
Parking	o	o	o	

Concessions

Offices		o	o	
Retail & Food Vending		o	o	
Ticket Sales		o	o	

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NPS District Operations

	Current On-site location	Revised On-site location	Off-Site partnership or commercial loc.	Off-site NPS loc. (ENP or BNP)
District Interpretation		o	o	
District Rangers (Visitor Safety & Resource Protection)		o		
District Maintenance (Water)	o	o		
District Maintenance (Land)	o	o		o

Boating Operations

Concessions Excursion Boats	o		o	
Concessions Tour Boats	o		o	
Concessions Canoe/Kayak Rentals	o	o	o	
NPS Interpretation Boats	o		o	
NPS Law Enforcement Boats	o			
NPS Maintenance Boats	o			
Canoe/Kayak Launch	o	o	o	



Comments & Suggestions:

How to Comment:

- Provide comments at this meeting. Spoken and written comments will be documented and included in project development.
- Visit the NPS Planning, Environment, Public Comment (PEPC) website and post comments online. See the comment form handout and/or newsletter for commenting instructions. <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ever>
- Mail or hand deliver comments to Park Headquarters:
Everglades National Park – Planning Office
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034



Comments & Suggestions:

Please provide comments by February 3, 2012

- Do you have any comments or suggestions about the:
Project background? Project opportunities & constraints?
Project goals?
- Do you have any comments or suggestions about the
potential locations to meet future needs information?
- Do you have any other recommendations or suggestions
that should be considered for this project?

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**Thank you for your
interest and
participation!**

