

Everglades National Park

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Park Implements Snake Bight Pole and Troll Zone in Florida Bay

Homestead Florida: Everglades National Park Superintendent Dan Kimball announced the designation of Snake Bight as a pole and troll boating zone in Florida Bay, effective January 1, 2011. “This new protective zone was created to provide enhanced protection of Snake Bight’s sensitive aquatic vegetation and wilderness resources, improve the quality of flats fishing, enhance paddling and wildlife viewing opportunities, and expand education on proper shallow water boating techniques,” said Kimball.

Boaters should be aware that within the pole and troll zone, internal combustion motors can only be used in Tin Can or Snake Bight channels (where on-plane transit is permitted), and in the Jimmy’s Lake idle speed-no wake area. Within all other areas of the pole and troll zone, boats may only be propelled by push poles, paddles, or electric trolling motors.

The idea for this management strategy emerged following General Management Plan (GMP) meetings in 2009, when new scientific and visitor use information, along with a new set of preliminary marine area alternatives, was presented to the public. That effort resulted in meaningful public input on ways to improve management of Florida Bay. Park staff developed several alternatives for a pole and troll zone, held public meetings, and received written comments over the past year on how to best implement a pole and troll zone in Florida Bay. In response to public input and support, park management selected the Snake Bight area to implement a pole and troll zone in advance of adopting the GMP, expected to be completed in 2012.

Implementation of the pole and troll zone will include an educational component. Waterproof brochures in English and Spanish will be distributed at the park entrance station and at local bait and tackle shops, marinas, and boat ramps. Rangers will also be talking with recreational anglers and park fishing guides about the new zone to ensure park users understand the new regulations. “This protective management measure should help prevent new seagrass scars in that area of the bay that take several years to recover and negatively impact the ecology of the bay,” said Kimball.

The park received financial support for the project from the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Coastal Restoration grant program and donations from the Herman Lucerne Foundation, the Flamingo Friendly Tournament, and the South Florida National Parks Trust. These funding sources allowed the park to print educational materials, fabricate and install signs, and conduct scientific monitoring activities.

As part of this new program, the park is implementing a monitoring plan to help assess the pole and troll zone’s effectiveness in protecting seagrass, while enhancing fishing and other recreational experiences. In addition, the park plans to meet periodically with users to obtain feedback on how well the zone is working and ways to improve it. If you would like to provide feedback on the Snake Bight Pole and Troll Zone, please [e-mail us](#).

For additional information, maps and updates, please visit the park's website: <http://www.nps.gov/ever/poleandtroll.htm>