

Dear Friends,

While it’s been some time since the previous Everglades National Park General Management Plan (GMP) newsletter, the planning team has been using the substantial public input received in 2003 and 2004 to develop the management alternatives that will be the basis for the draft GMP/environmental impact statement (EIS).

We look forward to sharing considerable planning information with you in 2006, and just as important, getting your views and suggestions on the range of options for managing and protecting the unique resources of Everglades National Park that are being considered.

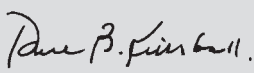
Based on public input and a recent management review of the Everglades National Park GMP project, the National Park Service has decided to expand the scope of the plan to include a Wilderness Study for the East Everglades Expansion Area lands.

Expanding the scope of the GMP to include the East Everglades Wilderness Study will result in efficiency and cost savings in the long-range planning and decision making for the park and the unique resources of the East Everglades. The expanded GMP process will fully consider all legislated uses and designations and will result in a viable management plan for the entire park, including the East Everglades Expansion Area.

As a result of this expanded scope for the GMP, the National Park Service will be soliciting additional information from the public relating to the East Everglades Wilderness Study. If you have previously submitted comments regarding East Everglades wilderness issues earlier in the GMP process, you do not need to re-submit your comments.

I appreciate your continued interest and involvement in the GMP process. Many of you have expressed your ideas and concerns about the park and its future, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue with you. Your input has been, and will continue to be, invaluable in helping us plan for the future of Everglades National Park.

Sincerely,



Dan B. Kimball  
Superintendent

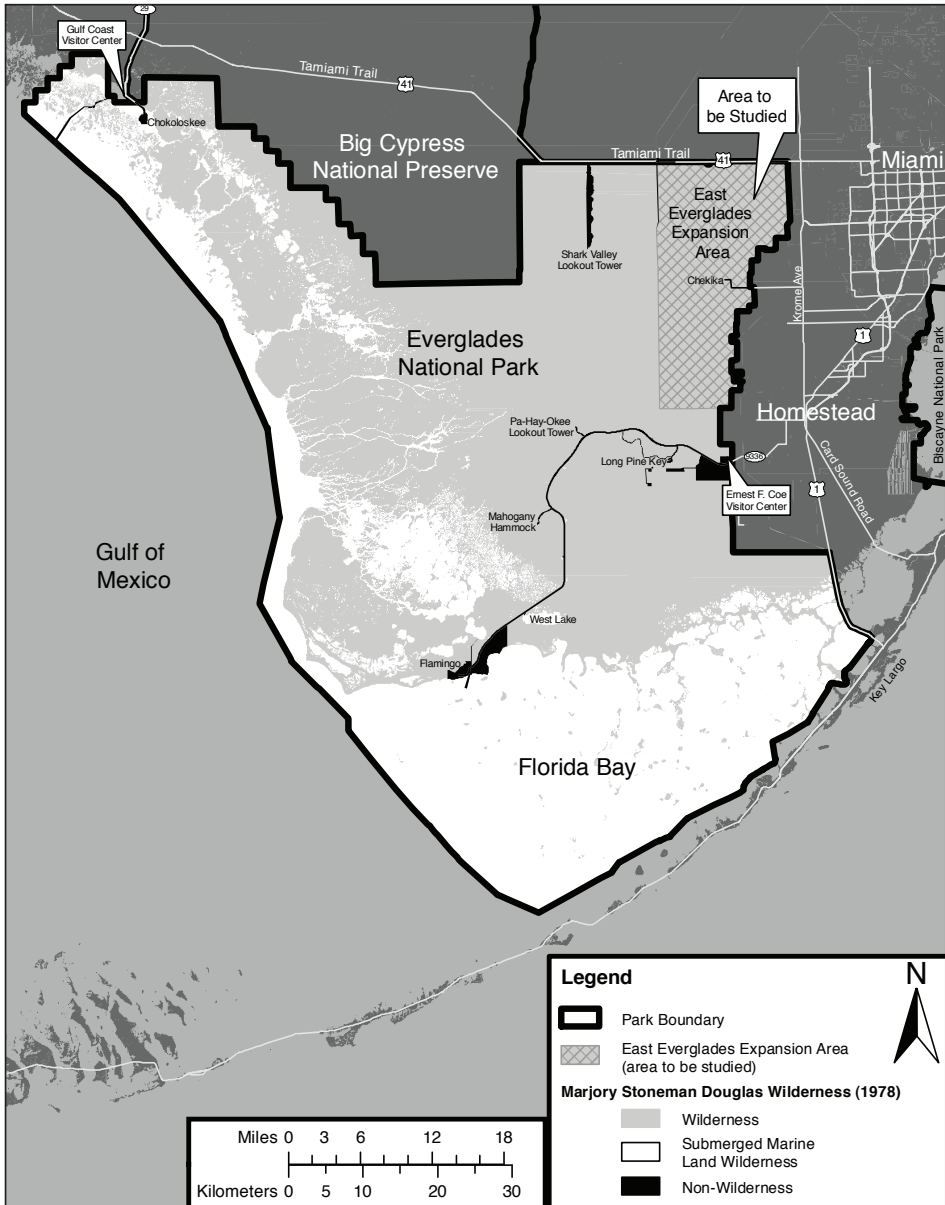
## OVERVIEW

In 1989 Public Law 101-229, the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act (the Act), was passed adding a 109,600-acre area to Everglades National Park. The Act’s purpose is to “increase the level of protection of the outstanding natural values of Everglades National Park and to enhance and restore the ecological values, natural hydrological conditions, and public enjoyment of such area by adding the area commonly known as the Northeast Shark River Slough and the East Everglades. . .” In addition, lands were added to “assure that the park is managed in order to maintain the natural abundance, diversity, and ecological integrity of the native plants and animals, as well as the behavior of native animals, as part of their ecosystem.”

The following is the specific language from the Act regarding  
airboating in the East Everglades Addition:

Private airboating: “...park shall be closed to the operation of airboats...except that within a limited capacity and on designated routes within the addition, owners of record of registered airboats in use within the addition as of January 1, 1989, shall be issued nontransferable, nonrenewable permits, for their individual lifetimes, to operate personally-owned airboats for non-commercial use in accordance with rules prescribed by the Secretary to determine ownership and registration, establish uses, permit conditions, and penalties, and to protect the biological resources of the area.”

Commercial airboat operations: “...The Secretary is authorized to negotiate and enter into concession contracts with the owners of commercial airboat and tour facilities in existence on or before January 1, 1989, located within the addition for the provision of such services at their current locations under such rules and conditions as he may deem necessary for the accommodation of visitors and protection of biological resources of the area.”



The Act also authorized the Secretary of the Interior to utilize other statutory authority that may be available and necessary for the preservation of wildlife and natural resources. This includes carrying out the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public law 88-577), Secretarial Order 2920, and 2001 NPS Management Policies require that the NPS review roadless and undeveloped areas, including new areas or expanded boundaries, within the National Park System to determine whether or not they are suitable for preserving as wilderness.

In 1978, Congress passed Public Law 95-625 designating 1,296,000 acres of Everglades National Park as the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness to be managed under the terms of the Wilderness Act. The entire East Everglades Expansion Area is the only area within the park never to have been studied for its wilderness values.

The East Everglades Wilderness Study will be conducted as a collaborative public process that is integrated into the Everglades National Park GMP/EIS, insuring full public involvement in identifying issues, developing alternatives, and analyzing impacts.

PUBLIC MEETING

The National Park Service has scheduled an open house to provide an opportunity for interested persons to learn about the wilderness study, ask questions, and share ideas, issues, and concerns. There will be brief presentations at 6:00 and 7:00 pm followed by workshop discussions.

Wednesday, August 9 , 2006

South Dade Regional Library

5:30 – 8:30 P.M.

10750 SW 211<sup>th</sup> Street

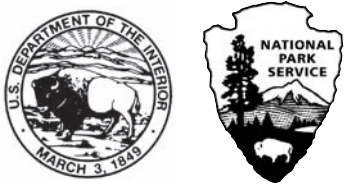
Miami, FL 33189

(Just west of exit 11 from Florida's Turnpike, next to South Dade Government Center.)

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WILDERNESS STUDY PROCESS

The wilderness study process will examine the entire East Everglades Expansion Area. The area will be studied for wilderness characteristics as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 USC 1132): A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean [ . . . ] an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

KEY STEPS

- 1. Lands that may possess the characteristics and values of wilderness, as defined in the Wilderness Act, are studied by the NPS to determine their suitability for possible wilderness designation.
- 2. The findings and conclusions of the formal wilderness study will be forwarded by the National Park Service Director to the Department of the Interior.
- 3. The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for recommending to the President those lands that meet the necessary criteria for wilderness designation.
- 4. The President is then responsible for transmitting to both houses of Congress his recommendations with respect to wilderness designation.
- 5. Congress then considers the President’s recommendation and may subsequently enact legislation to include the area in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

SCHEDULE

Planning Activity	Dates
• Public scoping meeting	Summer 2006
• Revise Alternatives	Fall 2006
• Alternatives Newsletter and public meetings	Fall 2006
• Preparation of Draft GMP/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	2007
• Final GMP/EIS and Record of Decision	2008

INTEGRATING THE WILDERNESS STUDY WITH THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The initial step in integrating the East Everglades Wilderness Study with the GMP is the publishing of the *Notice of Intent* in the *Federal Register* and release of this newsletter. These documents announce a change to the scope of the GMP to include the East Everglades Wilderness Study, and re-opens the public scoping period, focusing on wilderness issues that should be considered for the East Everglades Addition lands. The intent is to solicit comments and information from the public and park stakeholders as to whether or not, and to what extent, a portion of the East Everglades Expansion Area should ultimately be recommended for wilderness designation. This input will be integrated with the draft management concepts and zoning options developed to date as part of the GMP process and shared with the public in GMP Newsletter #4 later this year. The public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary alternatives described in the newsletter at public workshops to be held throughout South Florida. Other opportunities to comment by mail and through the internet will be provided.

How to be involved:

Public participation is essential to developing a successful plan. You may provide the planning team with your ideas on the East Everglades Wilderness Study in several ways:

- 1. Submit comments via the NPS planning website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Go to "Everglades National Park", and select the link to the General Management Plan.
- 2. Submit written comments (use the enclosed comment form or a send a separate letter) to: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Attn: Pat Kenney, 12795 W. Alameda Parkway, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO. 80225-0287, or by fax to: 303-969-2920.
- 3. Attend the public meeting listed on page one of this newsletter.

All comments must be received by the end of the scoping period, September 1, 2006.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
INTEREST IN EVERGLADES  
NATIONAL PARK!