

New Research, Backcountry Management, and "Adaptive Management"

Everglades National Park staff continue to conduct scientific research and gather other information that, like the propeller scarring of seagrass study and the boat use study mentioned earlier, will help the park make informed resource management and visitor use decisions within the context of Everglades National Park and its larger ecosystem. For example, park scientists are working to learn more about seagrass conditions and scarring in the park’s Gulf Coast region, as well as in other shallow water marine habitats, to determine conditions, trends, and potential management options. The park also continues to examine ways to improve backcountry boating safety and wildlife protection.

Adaptive management is a way of improving management policies and practices using the following basic steps:

- identify desired outcomes and develop strategies to bring about those outcomes,
- monitor conditions to determine how well the outcomes are being met, and
- modify strategies as needed to improve performance.

An adaptive management system allows the flexibility to change management strategies as new information becomes available. The

system also builds in a commitment to use these adaptive management principles over the life of a plan. The GMP team will continue to consider and incorporate new information into the general management planning process as it becomes available. Beyond that, the National Park Service intends to build the principle of adaptive management into the GMP implementation process so that the plan is dynamic and responsive to changing conditions, new information, and ideas from the public.



What's Next?

Following completion of the public meetings, stakeholder meetings, and the current public comment period (which ends May 15, 2009), our next step will be to review public and agency comments about the revised preliminary alternatives. Using that information, other comments received to date, and an analysis of the probable impacts of the various alternatives, the planning team will develop a preferred alternative to include in the Everglades National Park Draft General Management Plan/ East Everglades Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement. The preferred alternative may turn out to be similar to one of the preliminary alternatives, but it is more likely to combine elements from two or more of the preliminary alternatives.

The alternatives in this newsletter are referred to as “preliminary” because public comment or other considerations may lead the planning team to decide not to include one or more of the preliminary alternatives in the Draft General Management Plan. The alternatives that are ultimately carried forward into the draft plan are referred to as “draft alternatives,” with one identified as the NPS “preferred” alternative. The draft plan is currently scheduled for publication in 2010, and will be followed by a public comment period including public meetings and hearings.



Project Schedule		
Approximate Time Frame	Planning Step	Public Involvement Opportunities
Summer 2007	Preliminary Alternatives Present preliminary alternatives for managing Everglades National Park, including a range of wilderness options for East Everglades	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Newsletter #4• Public comments received through July 31, 2007• Participate in public meetings
2008	Conduct Research Studies Conduct boat inventory and propeller scarring studies to better understand certain marine resource impacts	
Spring 2009 WE ARE HERE	Revised Alternatives for Marine Areas Present revised preliminary alternatives for managing marine areas of the national park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Newsletter #5• Send your ideas and comments• Participate in public meetings
Fall 2009	Develop a Preferred Alternative Based on public comments, preliminary impact analysis, and other considerations, develop a preferred alternative and wilderness proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the general management plan link on the park’s home page for information updates
2010	Prepare and Publish Draft Plan Prepare and publish the Draft General Management Plan/ East Everglades Wilderness Study/ Environmental Impact Statement, which describes the alternatives and the impacts of implementing each	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the draft plan• Send your ideas and comments• Participate in public meetings/hearings
Spring 2011	Prepare and Publish Final Plan Based on public and agency comments, revise the draft plan to produce a Final General Management Plan/ East Everglades Wilderness Study/ Environmental Impact Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the final plan, including NPS responses to substantive public comments and official letters on the draft plan
Summer 2011 and Beyond	Implement the Approved Plan Issue a Record of Decision and implement the general management plan as funding allows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Everglades National Park staff to implement the plan

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

Park purpose statements are based on the specific legislation and associated legislative history for each park.

Significance statements capture the essence of the park’s importance to our country’s natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements represent the park’s distinctiveness and help to place the park within its regional, national, and international context.

PARK PURPOSE

Everglades National Park is a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. It is set apart as a permanent wilderness preserving essential primitive conditions, including the natural abundance, diversity, behavior, and ecological integrity of the unique flora and fauna.



PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Everglades National Park is national and internationally significant because it:

- Is a unique subtropical wetland that is the hydrological connection between central Florida’s freshwater ecosystem and the marine systems of Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It is the only place in the United States jointly designated an International Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage Site, and a Wetland of International Importance.
- Comprises the largest subtropical wilderness in North America. The park contains vast ecosystems, including freshwater marshes, tropical hardwoods, pine rockland, extensive mangrove estuaries, and seagrasses, which support a diverse mixture of tropical and temperate

plants and animals.

- Serves as a sanctuary for the protection of more than 20 federal and 70 state-listed threatened and endangered species as well as numerous species of special concern. Many of these species face tremendous pressure from natural forces and human influences in the South Florida Ecosystem.
- Provides important foraging and breeding habitat for more than 400 species of birds (including homeland to world-renowned wading bird populations), and functions as a primary corridor and refuge for migratory and wintering wildlife populations.
- Includes archeological and historical resources spanning approximately 5,600 years of human history, revealing adaptation to and exploitation of its unique environment.
- Preserves natural and cultural resources associated with the homeland of Native Americans of Florida (including the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, the Independent Traditional Seminole Nation of Florida, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma).
- Preserves the remnants of a nationally significant hydrologic resource that sustains South Florida’s human population and serves as a global experiment in restoration.
- Provides the public with the opportunity to experience Everglades’ wilderness for recreation, reflection, and solitude in proximity to a major metropolitan area.

General Management Plan Statutory Requirements consistent with the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 and National Park Service management policies:

1. The types of management actions required for the preservation of park resources
2. Types and intensities of development for public enjoyment and use
3. Visitor carrying capacities and implementation commitments for all areas of the park
4. Potential modifications to the external boundaries of the park, if any, and reasons for proposed changes



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Florida
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INVITATION TO PUBLIC MEETINGS

Please join us for public meetings on the revised preliminary alternatives for Everglades National Park’s marine waters. For your convenience, we have scheduled seven meetings in various locations. Specific dates and locations are listed below. **Each meeting is scheduled from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.** Meetings will begin with informal discussions among the public and park staff at 5:30 p.m., followed by a 6:00 p.m. presentation by the National Park Service and a formal public comment period. Following the comment period, park staff will be available to meet with the public until 8:30 p.m. If you are unable or prefer not to attend one of these meetings, you can still provide input to the planning team or view the webcast. Please see “How to Comment” section to the right.

	Location	Address and phone	Date
Week 1	Key Largo Grande Hotel	97000 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037 305-852-5553	Monday, March 30, 2009
	Everglades City School	415 School Drive, Everglades City, FL 34139 239-377-9800	Tuesday, March 31, 2009
	South Dade Public Library	10750 SW 211 th Street, Miami, FL 33189 305-233-8140	Wednesday, April 1, 2009
Week 2	Key Largo Holiday Inn*	99701 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037 305-451-2121	Monday, April 13, 2009
	John D. Campbell Agricultural Center	18710 SW 288 th Street, Homestead, FL 33030 305-248-3311	Tuesday, April 14, 2009
	Edison College Building J	7007 Lely Cultural Parkway, Naples, Florida 34113 239-732-3707	Wednesday, April 15, 2009
	Int’l Game and Fish Assoc. Fishing Hall of Fame	300 Gulfstream Way, Dania Beach, FL 33004 954-922-4212	Thursday, April 16, 2009
Web- cast	* The April 13, 2009 meeting at Key Largo Holiday Inn will be webcast starting at 6:00 p.m. To access the webcast, go to the park's website: www.nps.gov/ever and click on the "General Management Plan" link.		

For travel directions to any of the meetings, call the phone numbers listed above or go to: <http://maps.google.com>

TO REQUEST A COPY OF NEWSLETTER 5

Call Everglades National Park at 305-242-7700. If prompted by voice mail, press "2" at first prompt, and "5" at the second prompt; leave mailing information and a request for the newsletter.

HOW TO COMMENT

The planning team welcomes your comments at any time, but comments on this newsletter would be most helpful if received by May 15, 2009. We hope you are able to attend one of the public meetings listed to the left. Regardless of whether you are able to attend, we encourage you to submit your comments online by going to the park’s home page (www.nps.gov/ever) and clicking on the “General Management Plan” link.

Of course, you may also comment by filling out and mailing the enclosed comment form or by sending a letter to the planning team at: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Everglades Planning Team, PO Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287. We look forward to hearing from you.

