



## Gulf Coast Site Plan and Maintenance Dredging

The National Park Service (NPS) is excited to share an update on the plans to redevelop the Gulf Coast Site which include refinements to site planning work completed in 2012 and approved in the 2015 General Management Plan (GMP).

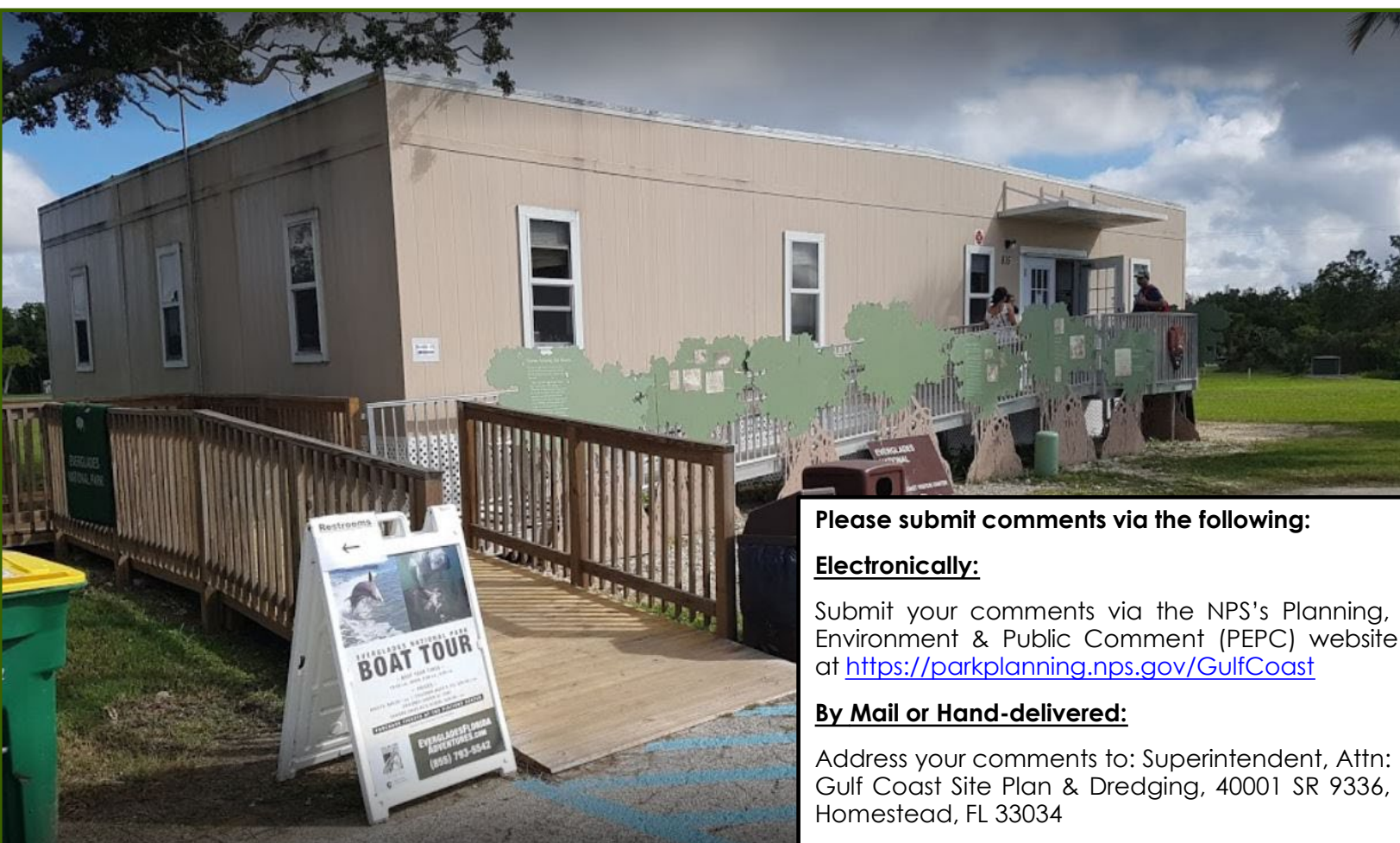
The Gulf Coast site is located five miles south of Tamiami Trail in Everglades City and serves as the gateway for exploring the Ten Thousand Islands of Everglades National Park, a maze of mangrove islands and waterways that extends to Flamingo and Florida Bay. The Gulf Coast District is the operational hub for approximately 25% of the park, or 275,000 acres, which covers more than 40 miles of coastline. The Gulf Coast site is a vital access point to surrounding natural areas.

The Gulf Coast site was significantly impacted by Hurricane Irma in 2017. The 50-year-old visitor center was damaged, the site was flooded, and utilities and

marina bulkhead were compromised. Additionally, the receding flood waters left sediment deposited in the marinas and the adjacent boat channels. In 2018, the condemned visitor center was demolished, and former facility functions were relocated to three temporary buildings on site.

### Project Objectives:

The purpose of this project is to address the hurricane damages to the Gulf Coast site infrastructure by implementing the facility improvements presented in the 2015 General Management Plan (GMP) and dredge the marina basin and boat channels to restore access for park and recreational non-motorized vessels. In addition, the project would fulfill Congress direction to construct and designate the "Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center." All proposed site improvements would be designed with hurricane resiliency features to support an optimal visitor experience throughout the next 50 years.



**Please submit comments via the following:**

### Electronically:

Submit your comments via the NPS's Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast>

### By Mail or Hand-delivered:

Address your comments to: Superintendent, Attn: Gulf Coast Site Plan & Dredging, 40001 SR 9336, Homestead, FL 33034



## Hurricane Irma, 2017

- In September 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida as a Category 4 hurricane.
- Wind and storm surge damaged the visitor center, the site was flooded, and utilities and marina bulkhead were compromised.
- The receding flood waters left sediment deposited in the marinas and adjacent boat channels.
- Since the hurricane, the visitor center was condemned and demolished, and critical facilities have been relocated into temporary buildings (trailers).



Post-Irma damages to facilities



The deposition of sediment have filled in the marina basin, access channels, and canoe/kayak launch/NPS administrative boat ramp making them unusable during low tides and/or inefficient.



# Development of Alternative Concepts

## Concept A - No Action

- No changes would be made to the Gulf Coast site, marina basin or boat channels. The current conditions would remain the same.
- The visitor center, visitor comfort station, concession operations, and ranger station would continue to function out of temporary facilities and the parking lot would continue to flood.

## Concept B - Gulf Coast Site Plan Improvements

- Restore and enhance visitor experience through a new, elevated visitor center, a new administration and concessions area and other infrastructure.
- Raise the elevation of the visitor center area and main parking area to mitigate tidal impact and seasonal flooding.
- Construction of a new entrance road to the Gulf Coast Visitor Center, including a sidewalk and deceleration lane.
- Construction of an improved canoe-kayak ramp and administrative boat launch to enhance visitor experience and support park operations.
- Expand the marina basin landward to allow better maneuverability of vessels.
- Replace and raise existing bulkhead in the marina basin to address projected sea level rise.
- Construct a living shoreline allowing mangroves to reestablish and enhance coastal resilience.
- Removal of sand and silt material by dredging in the marina basin, the access channel, and along the outer bulkheads on either side of the marina basin mouth to restore navigational access.
- Implement landscaping with native species throughout the developed area.
- Replacement of all utilities at the site.
- Rebuild infrastructure to meet Florida Building Code for coastal high hazard zones and address sustainability principles using energy and resource efficient elements.





# Gulf Coast Site Plan



## 1 PROPOSED VISITOR CENTER AND RANGER STATION

- Concessioner Operations
- Restrooms – Below Building

## 2 PROPOSED VISITOR DROP-OFF AREA

## 3 LARGE GROUP DROP-OFF AREA

## 4 PROPOSED VISITOR PLAZA

- Exterior Interpretive Exhibits
- Native Plantings

## 5 PROPOSED VISITOR GATHERING AREA

- Exterior Interpretive Exhibits
- Native Plantings
- Seating for relaxing/eating
- Outdoor education gathering area
- Boat Tour waiting area

## 6 BOAT TOUR LOADING AREA

## 7 OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER

## 8 OPEN LAWN

- Gathering for families and large groups

## 9 NATURE TRAIL

## 10 NATIVE LANDSCAPE

- Trail connection

## 11 RANGER PARKING AREA

## 12 ENTRY SIGN

- Welcome monument

## 13 NEW SITE ENTRANCE

## 14 EXISTING MARINA

## 15 VISITOR PROMENADE

- Connection between Visitor Contact Station and kayak area

## 16 ADA PARKING

- 7 spaces

## 17 MAIN PARKING AREA

- 32 spaces

## 18 SECONDARY PARKING

- 51 spaces

## 19 NATIVE LANDSCAPE PLANTING

## 20 NATIVE TREE LANDSCAPE BUFFER

## 21 HELIPAD

## 22 MARINA AREA

- Storage building
- Boat fueling

## 23 MARINA EXPANSION

## 24 CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH AND NPS ADMINISTRATIVE BOAT RAMP

## 25 CANOE / KAYAK PARKING LOT

- 15 oversized parking spots
- Gravel Lot
- 38 public vehicle parking spots

## 26 OVERSIZED / BUS PARKING AREA

- 3 parking spots

## 27 RENTAL KIOSK/COMFORT STATION

- Rentals
- Unisex Restroom/Shower
- Native Plantings

## 28 SEAWALL EXTENSION

## 29 LIVING SHORELINE

## 30 ROAD SIGN





Visitor Center Concept Views



Maintenance Dredging Area



## Public Participation

We love to hear from you! Public participation is an important element of the planning process and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) review. If you have any questions or suggestions on the proposed refinements and newly added resiliency features to the site plan, please share them no later than **May 13, 2022**.

You may provide your questions, suggestions, and/or comments as follows:

- **Via the project website at** <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast>, or
- **By writing to:**

Superintendent

Attn: Gulf Coast Site Plan & Maintenance Dredging

40001 SR 9336, Homestead, FL 33034

If you would like more information or have questions related to this project, please contact **Tatiana Marquez at [Tatiana\\_Marquez@nps.com](mailto:Tatiana_Marquez@nps.com) or 305-242-7821**. Thank you for your interest in the Gulf Coast Site Plan & Dredging project!

| Milestone   | Targeted Schedule     | Opportunities for Public Input  |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Civic engagement  | April 2022 – May 2022 | Review preliminary concepts and provide your comments at <a href="https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast">https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast</a>              |
| NPS analyzes public comments and refines site plan                    | May 2022              |   |
| NPS prepares revised site plan and initiates environmental compliance | Summer 2022           |   |
| Public review of site plan/<br>Environmental Assessment               | Fall 2022             | Review the plan/environmental assessment and provide your comments at <a href="https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast">https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast</a> |
| Decision document   | Winter 2022           | See final plan and decision document at <a href="https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast">https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GulfCoast</a>                               |

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*