



Preliminary Alternatives

Dear Friends,

On behalf of our planning team, I am pleased to inform you of the progress on Everglades National Park's General Management Plan (GMP). As we mentioned in our last newsletter, the park has undertaken a wilderness study of the East Everglades Expansion Area and is combining the findings and recommendations of that study with the GMP. Many of you provided us with your views regarding the wilderness potential of the East Everglades and approaches for managing the area. Although the wilderness study is in progress, the initial eligibility assessment concluded that most of the East Everglades Expansion Area is eligible for wilderness designation.

This newsletter presents four preliminary management alternatives for Everglades National Park that represent a range of long-term visions for how the park could be managed for the next 15 to 20 years. The alternatives are supported by the park's authorizing legislation and NPS policies, and are further linked to the park's purpose and significance. Issues identified by the NPS and the public were also considered in the development of the alternatives. We have developed a set of management zones that describe how specific areas of the park would be managed for resource protection, visitor experience, and park operations. These zones, applied in different configurations, reflect the particular emphasis and management strategies of each alternative.

The GMP will be wide-ranging, addressing critical issues such as management of Florida Bay and the East Everglades Expansion Area, as well as emerging challenges such as the impacts of the high cost-of-living and housing on the park's ability to recruit and retain park employees. Of course, the ability to fulfill the park's mission of protecting the unique natural and cultural resources of Everglades National Park so that current and future generations can enjoy, understand and appreciate this special place is the cornerstone of the guidance the GMP will be offering.

As you may know, due to the extensive hurricane damage suffered at Flamingo in 2005, the park initiated a Commercial Services Plan (CSP) that is focused on the overnight accommodations, recreational and educational services, and food and beverage services that would be offered at Flamingo in the future. The CSP will be completed later this year, and the alternative chosen in the Final Plan will be integrated into each of the GMP management alternatives.

I encourage you to review the preliminary management alternatives and provide us with your comments and suggestions. Your comments are particularly welcome as we undertake the process of selecting a preferred alternative that will be presented in the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement presently scheduled for public review and comment next summer.

Thank you for your continued participation in this critical planning effort that will help shape the future of Everglades National Park.

Sincerely,

Dave B. Kimball
Superintendent

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

All workshops will take place from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Recognizing people's busy work and leisure time schedules and the transportation challenges in the region, we will conduct 2 separate, repeated sessions at each workshop (5:00 – 6:30 p.m. and 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.). There will be overview presentations at 5:15 and 6:45 p.m. Before and after the presentations, there will be opportunities to learn more about the project through informational displays, and by asking questions and providing your ideas to park staff.

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

South Dade Regional Library
10750 SW 211th Street
Miami, FL 33189
Phone: 305-233-8140

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Everglades City School
415 School Drive
Everglades City, FL 34139
Phone: 239-377-9800

Thursday, June 7, 2007

Key Largo Holiday Inn
99701 Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 33037
Phone: 305-453-7150

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

Holiday Isle Resort
8401 Overseas Highway
Islamorada, FL 33036
Phone: 305-664-2321

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

International Game Fish
Association Hall of Fame
300 Gulfstream Way
Dania Beach, FL 33004
Phone: 954-927-2628

Thursday, June 14, 2007

Coe Visitor Center
(Main Park Entrance)
Everglades National Park
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034
Phone: 305-242-7700



Alternative A (Page 5)

No action alternative; presents how the park is currently managed. This alternative is required by law and serves as a baseline for comparing the other alternatives.

Alternative B (Page 6-7)

Focuses on providing in-depth visitor experiences; education and outreach efforts build support for increased natural and cultural resource protection.

Alternative C (Page 8-9)

Focuses on expanding the diversity of park visitors; new audiences experiencing the park broaden public understanding of the connection between the built and natural environments and results in enhanced conservation of park resources.

Alternative D (Page 10-11)

Emphasizes the park as an integral partner in the network of local, state, and federal land management agencies and organizations in South Florida; protection of park resources increased as uses with potential for adverse impacts are reduced/minimized.

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Planning for Everglades National Park’s General Management Plan (GMP) is progressing. The National Park Service has compiled relevant data, conducted scoping and focus group meetings with park stakeholders, and developed and refined the management alternatives. The change in project scope resulting from the addition of the East Everglades Wilderness Study to the GMP required the public scoping comment period to be re-opened, which has extended the planning process. The scoping period ended September 1, 2006. The public input received on the wilderness considerations for the East Everglades has been integrated with the draft management alternatives and zoning options presented in this newsletter.

The public will have several opportunities to review and comment on the preliminary alternatives, either by returning the enclosed comment form, using the electronic comment form at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, or by

attending any of the six public workshops listed on Page 1. The public comment period will continue through July 2, 2007.

Following the public comment period on the alternatives, the planning team will analyze the input received from the public and undertake the process of selecting a preferred alternative. The planning team will prepare the *Draft GMP / East Everglades Wilderness Study (EEWS) / Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* over the next year, releasing the *draft* in mid-2008. The *Final GMP / EEWS / EIS and Record of Decision* is presently on target for approval in 2009. There will be an extensive public review and comment period, including a full round of public workshops, following release of the *Draft GMP/EEWS/EIS*.

PARK PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Park purpose statements are by definition, 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.



- It serves as a sanctuary for the protection of more than 20 federal- and 70 state-listed rare, threatened and endangered species.
- It 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 major corridor for migratory bird populations.
- It includes archeological and historical resources spanning 5,000 years of human history. These range from prehistoric sites revealing a fishing-hunting-gathering adaptation to a tropical environment (unique within the continental United States), to surviving structures from a Nike missile installation constructed in the early 1960s as a part of South Florida's Cold War defenses.
- It preserves natural and cultural resources associated with the past and present 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).



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 the only place in the United States designated a World Heritage site, an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Significance.
- It comprises the largest designated subtropical wilderness reserve on the North American continent (1,296,000 acres). The park contains vast subtropical upland and marine ecosystems, including freshwater marshes, tropical hardwood, rock pineland, extensive mangroves and seagrass ecosystems that support world-class fisheries.

ISSUES

Everglades National Park began the GMP process in 2003 with a request for your comments and suggestions for the park’s long-term future. In addition to the wide-ranging and thoughtful comments provided by the public, we also received input from local, state, and other federal government agencies, and Native American Indian tribes.

Through newsletter comment forms, public meetings and discussions with NPS staff, we heard that you greatly value the park’s natural environment and history, and the opportunities to learn about this special place. In addition, you not only appreciate the diverse recreational and educational activities available, but you also enjoy being able to experience the natural quiet and subtle beauty that Everglades National Park continues to offer in ever-developing South Florida.

In thinking about what you hope to see and experience today and in the future in the park, you also told us about your concerns and ideas related to the long-term protection of Everglades National Park and its resources. These insights helped guide development of the preliminary management alternatives. It is easiest to think of the alternatives as different ways for managing and providing for the use of the park’s lands and waters. Each

alternative presents a different approach to defining what the park should look like and how it should function.

Based on the issues raised by the general public, public and private organizations, Native American tribes, and park staff, the GMP focuses on answering the following questions:

- What management strategies should the park consider to protect resources while addressing the desire for increased access to and within the park, and also accommodating a wide range of user groups that sometimes have conflicting desires?
- What are the ways Everglades National Park can provide opportunities for high-quality experiences for boaters while protecting and ensuring long-term sustainability of the resources?
- Given the predominance of wilderness designation in the park, how can new and upgraded facilities best meet the future needs of visitors with widely-varying abilities, interests, experience levels, and amounts of time, to learn about and interact with the park?

ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- What is the best approach for comprehensively managing the East Everglades Expansion Area, given the restoration and public use commitments (such as airboating) described in the 1989 Expansion Act?
- How best can the park enhance and expand the natural and cultural resource-based interpretive and curriculum-based education for park visitors? In what ways might the park work cooperatively with others to provide this information elsewhere?
- What types of partnerships can be formed to help meet future challenges and opportunities, recognizing the budget and staffing constraints at the park?
- What opportunities exist to increase the diversity of park visitors to reflect the diversity of South Florida and the nation?
- In what ways can the cost of concessions activities and some fee-based interpretive programs be matched with a range of high-quality, no- or low-cost opportunities?
- How should the park support and help implement Everglades ecosystem restoration efforts?



WILDERNESS

The 2006 National Park Service Management Policies state:

All lands administered by the National Park Service, including new units or additions to existing units since 1964, will be evaluated for their eligibility for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system.

Therefore, the NPS decided to complete the East Everglades Wilderness Study in conjunction with the GMP process and integrate the results into the GMP alternatives. The inclusion of the wilderness study in the GMP will fulfill the policy requirements, provide efficiencies of time and money to the government, and allows the public to participate in a more comprehensive, meaningful manner.

EAST EVERGLADES WILDERNESS STUDY

The wilderness study includes both a review of wilderness eligibility and an NPS recommendation for wilderness designation. An initial wilderness review of the East Everglades was recently completed by NPS staff with important input from the public. The 109,600 acres that comprise the East Everglades were evaluated for wilderness eligibility according to the Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 USC 1132), which defines wilderness in the following manner:

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 untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act 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.

The four criteria mentioned above were used to evaluate the wilderness characteristics and values of the East Everglades Expansion Area lands and to make a determination of their wilderness eligibility. The results of this review are described below.

Approximately 106,000 acres of the 109,600 acres (or 97%) of East Everglades were determined to contain (or potentially possess) wilderness values and characteristics. These lands are eligible to be included in a NPS recommendation for wilderness designation.

Areas determined not to be eligible include developed areas along the Tamiami Trail, the eastern park boundary, the Chekika developed area and some of the nearby roads. These areas total approximately 3,600 acres.

NEXT STEPS

Using the findings of the initial wilderness review, the NPS is incorporating various wilderness options into the preliminary alternatives. These alternatives are presented in this newsletter for your review. The NPS will host six public workshops, listed on Page 1, to gather feedback on the GMP and wilderness alternatives. Eventually, a draft and final set of alternatives that incorporates NPS-proposed wilderness areas will be published. If the preferred alternative contains lands considered eligible for wilderness, then at that time, it is proposed wilderness. Actual wilderness designation is a separate legislative process. See the text box below for additional information on the wilderness designation process.



WILDERNESS DESIGNATION PROCESS

- Step 1.** NPS completes wilderness eligibility review.
- Step 2.** NPS completes Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement as part of the GMP, and the NPS Director proposes wilderness area(s) for designation in the *Federal Register*.
- Step 3.** NPS Director sends wilderness proposal to the Secretary of the Interior.
- Step 4.** The Secretary of the Interior recommends wilderness designation and forwards a recommendation to the President. (The Secretary may approve, disapprove, or change the NPS proposal in his recommendation.)
- Step 5.** The President recommends wilderness designation and forwards recommendation to Congress. (The President may approve, disapprove, or change the NPS proposal in his recommendation.)
- Step 6.** Congress designates lands as wilderness or potential wilderness.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WILDERNESS

We have received many questions about how the East Everglades Wilderness Study would be integrated into the GMP given the public uses (primarily private and commercial airboating) allowed by law and park administrative uses for resource management, research and restoration activities necessary to meet our mission for the East Everglades Expansion Area. The information below is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions.

1. What is meant by “eligible,” “proposed,” “recommended,” and “designated” wilderness?
- “Eligible” wilderness refers to lands determined by the NPS, in consultation with the public, to meet the criteria for wilderness as described in The Wilderness Act. If lands have been found to be eligible, the NPS conducts additional, detailed examination of these lands. If the wilderness study concludes that lands should be recommended for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system, these lands will be included in a proposal to the Secretary of the Interior as “proposed” wilderness. The Secretary advises the President that any of the proposed areas should be included in wilderness, those areas are considered “recommended” wilderness. The President forwards the wilderness recommendation to Congress, and any lands subsequently designated by an act of Congress are “designated” wilderness.

2. How does the NPS manage eligible lands proposed as wilderness?
- Eligible lands that are proposed by the NPS as wilderness must be managed as wilderness until Congress either designates the lands as wilderness or specifically releases such lands from further wilderness consideration.

3. How does the NPS manage lands determined to be “potential” wilderness?
- Lands identified as “potential” wilderness are those lands that do not currently qualify for wilderness designation due to existing temporary non-conforming or incompatible uses. The NPS can consider identifying “proposed potential” wilderness for lands that could meet Wilderness Act criteria at some future date when non-conforming or incompatible use has ended. Specific to the East Everglades Expansion Area, airboating, private and commercial, is considered to be a non-conforming use. Rights granted in the 1989 Expansion Act for private airboating are fully recognized and could continue for another 50 years or more. The question of whether, and to what extent commercial airboating will continue will be answered in the GMP, and once that decision is reached, it will be fully recognized in the wilderness analysis.

4. May ORV use be allowed on eligible lands proposed as wilderness?
- No. The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment in wilderness. The NPS Management Policies 2006 provide that eligible lands proposed as wilderness are managed as wilderness, ORV use would not be permissible.

5. How does the NPS manage eligible lands not proposed as wilderness?
- Eligible lands not proposed by the NPS as wilderness must be managed to preserve their wilderness eligibility until Congress has taken final action.

PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES AND MANAGEMENT ZONES

Two critical building blocks needed to develop a GMP are management alternatives and zones. The following draft alternatives and zones have been developed after considering the park’s purpose, significance, and legal mandates as well as public and agency comments received during the scoping phase of the planning effort. The planning team was also asked to study and consider proposing a wilderness designation for the East Everglades Expansion Area. These preliminary proposals are shown on the alternative maps.

PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

Four draft management alternatives have been developed, presenting different options for managing resources and visitor use, and improving facilities and infrastructure at Everglades National Park. The no action alternative, which would continue current park management direction and policy, is required by law and serves as a baseline for analyzing the action

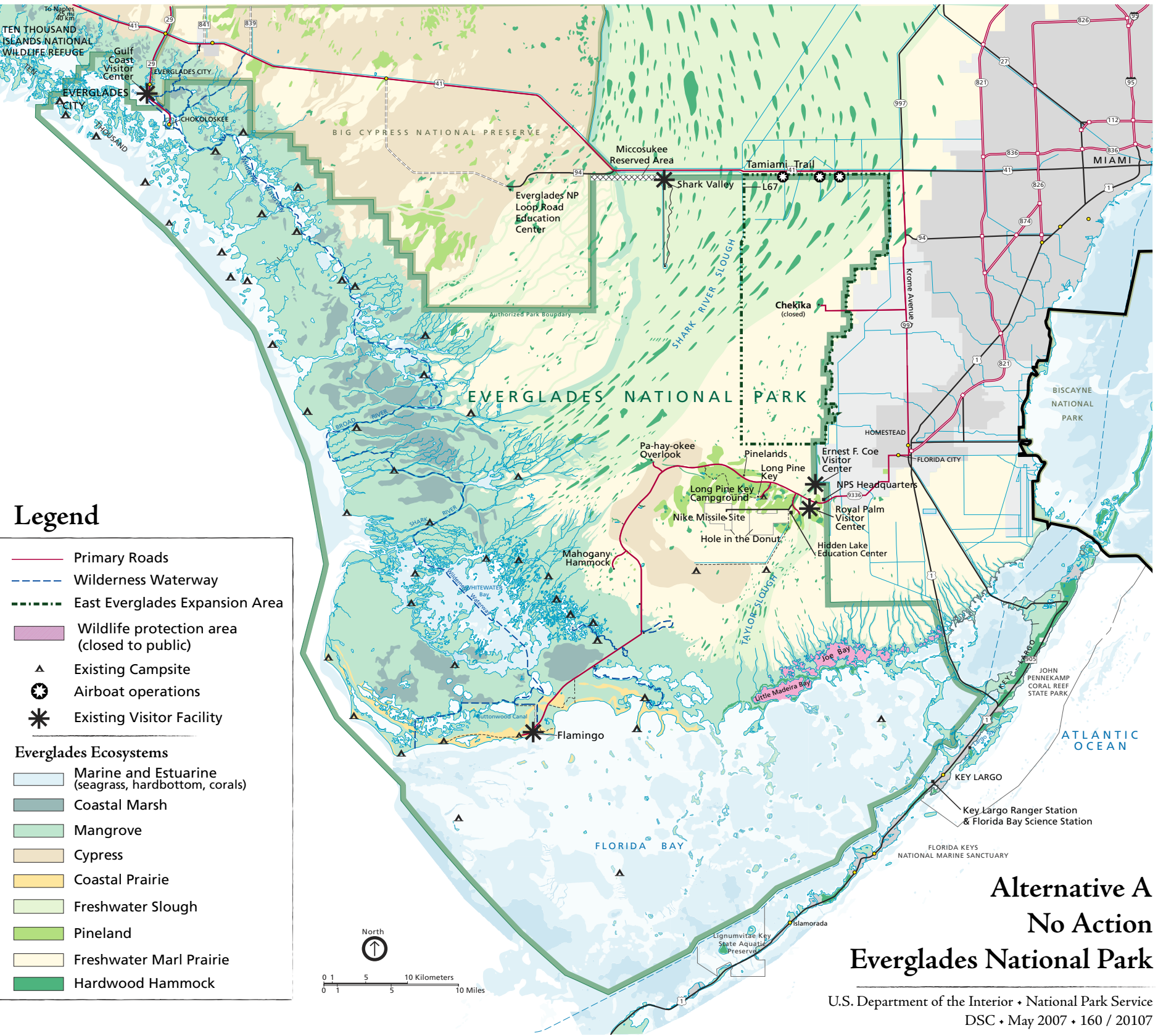
alternatives. The three action alternatives, focused on enhancing natural and cultural resource conditions, and visitor use and experience at Everglades National Park, organize the range of new concepts and ideas we have heard from the public, and that are within the framework of NPS laws and policies. The plan will reference the most current information related to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and other ecosystem restoration projects that have the potential to impact park resources and management decisions.

MANAGEMENT ZONES

Management zones are sets of descriptions of desired conditions for park resources and visitor experiences in different areas of the park. The following two tables illustrate the types of visitor activities and facilities that would be allowed in the various zones. The placement of these zones on park lands varies according to each alternative shown on the alternative maps.

Appropriate Visitor Activities and Facilities by Management Zone								
Activities	Developed	Frontcountry	Boat Access	Boat Size	Water Depth	Backcountry	Wildlife Habitat Protection	Research
Brief Description	Areas containing primary visitor and park administration facilities	Areas for interpretive and recreational activities; Airboating allowed in East Everglades	Boating allowed in accordance with applicable laws and regulations	Areas limited to motorized vessels 24 feet or less to protect shallow water habitats	Areas for polling & trolling (non-combustion engines) in waters less than 3 feet deep, and for paddling	Areas for exploration and self reliance; non-mechanized recreation only	Areas of sensitive wildlife habitat; may include some limits on public use	Areas primarily for scientific study; may include some limits on public use
Hiking	✓	✓				✓		✓
Biking	✓	✓						
Vehicle Camping	✓	✓						
Primitive Camping		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Motor Boating			✓	✓	✓		✓	
Paddling		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Private Airboating		✓						
Commercial Airboating	✓	✓						
Fishing		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guided Tours	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facilities	Developed	Frontcountry	Boat Access	Boat Size	Water Depth	Backcountry	Wildlife Habitat Protection	Research
Designated Trails	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Visitor Centers/ Contact Station	✓	✓						
Roads	✓	✓						
Chickees / Camp Sites		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Campgrounds	✓	✓						
Concession Facilities	✓							
Boardwalks	✓	✓						
Science /Research Equipment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Park Operations	✓							

ALTERNATIVE A, No-ACTION (HOW THE PARK IS MANAGED NOW)

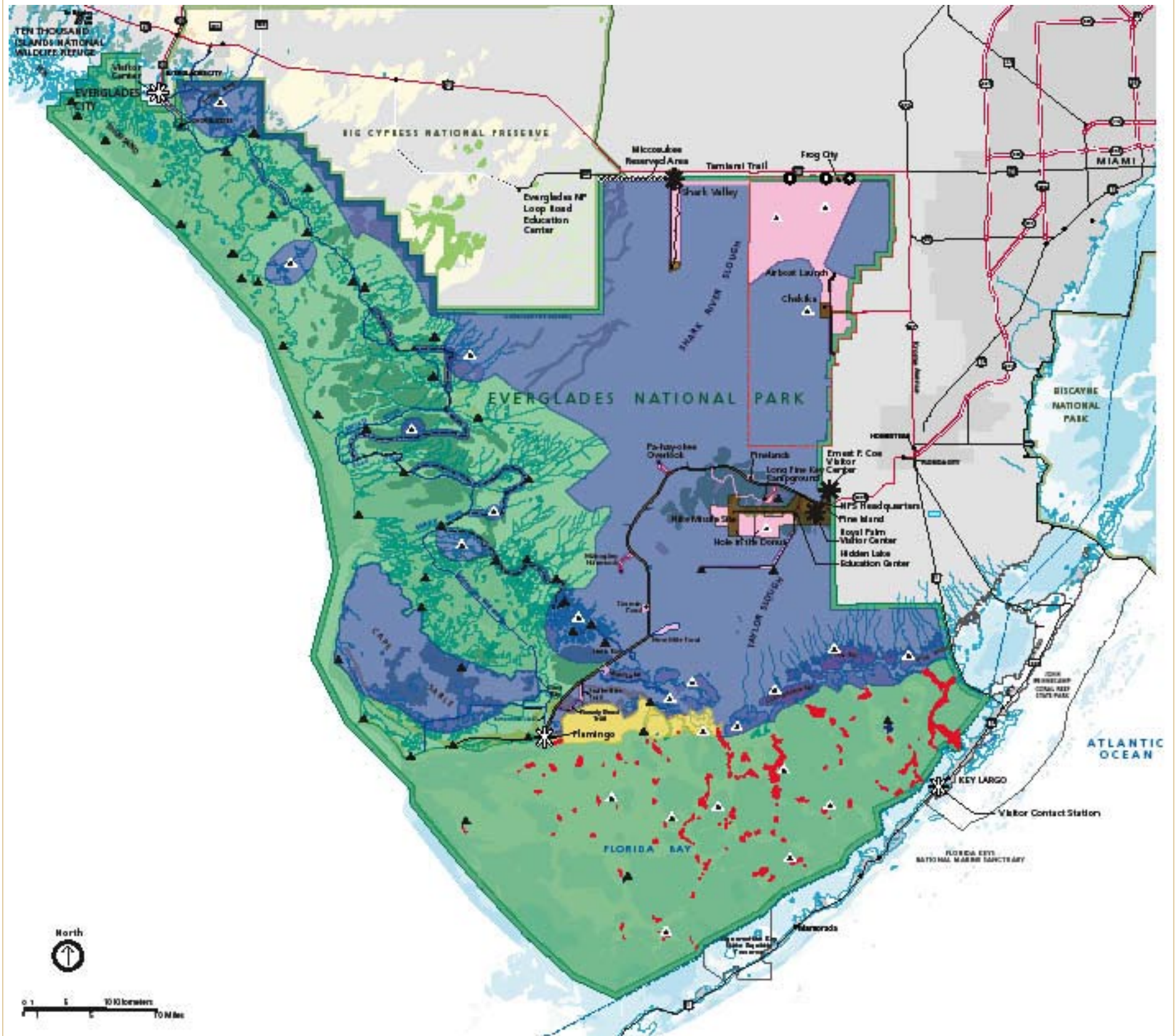


ALTERNATIVE A, No-ACTION (HOW THE PARK IS MANAGED NOW)

- Current management trends and strategies would continue.
- Existing facilities would remain and continue to be maintained.
- Ongoing projects would continue.
- Current resource management activities and visitor services would continue.
- No wilderness would be proposed in East Everglades.
- The Flamingo area would be managed according to a separate plan now underway, the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (CSP). The CSP is expected to be completed later in 2007 and the selected alternative will be incorporated into each of the GMP alternatives, and will be considered as common to all alternatives.



ALTERNATIVE B



Preliminary Alternative B
Everglades National Park

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
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Legend

- Primary Roads
- Wilderness Waterway and other existing paddling trails
- New Wilderness Waterway Sections
- East Everglades Expansion Area
- Tree Island with Camp (blow-up map)
- Existing Campsite
- One or more campsites proposed in this area
- Airboat operations
- Existing Visitor Facility
- Proposed or expanded Visitor Facility

Management Zones

- Backcountry
- Boat Access
- Developed
- Frontcountry
- Management by Boat Size
- Management by Water Depth
- Research
- Wildlife Habitat Protection
- Proposed Potential Wilderness

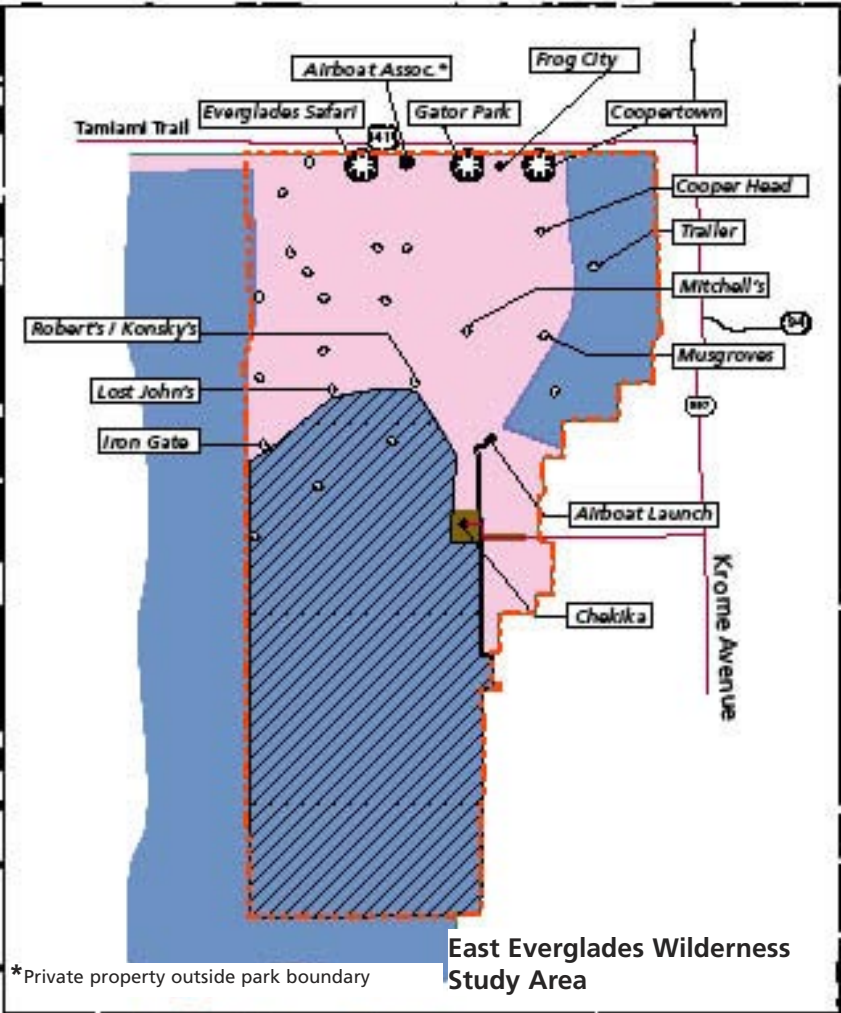
ALTERNATIVE B

Through a wide range of self-guided and programmed activities, visitors would have increased opportunities to learn about the park and have extended, in-depth experiences in the diverse habitats and landscapes throughout the park. Education about the park and its resources would be a primary focus of this alternative.

- More opportunities for longer duration, in-depth experiences provided with a focus on enhanced interpretation and education.
- Education and outreach would be the primary tools for communicating the significance and challenges confronting the park, protecting its natural and cultural resources, and the appropriate and safe ways to experience its many wonders.

EAST EVERGLADES

- Private airboating would continue according to the 1989 Expansion Act in the Frontcountry zone.
- Commercial airboat operations would continue under concessions contracts in the Frontcountry Zone, offering a wider range of tours, including specialized tours to more destinations. Chekika open at least seasonally for day-use and primitive camping (flooding could cause closure in certain times of the year).
- Establish paddling trails and primitive camping opportunities within portions of the East Everglades.
- About 51,000 acres within the East Everglades would be proposed as potential wilderness (and considered for wilderness designation once non-conforming, incompatible uses had ended and desired resource conditions had returned).



FLORIDA BAY AND THE KEYS

- Boating managed and sensitive resources protected through mandatory educational boating permit program.
- Expanded paddling and camping opportunities by adding additional chickees (camping platforms) in Florida Bay.
- Additional multi-agency visitor services provided in or near Key Largo.
- Madeira Bay to Long Sound (including Joe Bay and Little Madeira Bay) would be zoned Backcountry to provide paddlers the opportunity to experience this marine wilderness, with wildlife viewing, primitive camping and fishing among the opportunities provided.
- Partnership opportunities pursued to provide paddling and water access along the 18 mile stretch of U.S. 1 and/or the Upper Keys.
- Key Largo Ranger Station site would expand on its current functions to include public use opportunities that could include a visitor information kiosk, a canoe launch, and an interpretive trail through the hammock.

ROYAL PALM TO FLAMINGO

- Tram service would shuttle visitors between Coe Visitor Center and Flamingo with stops along the way.
- Flamingo operations would be guided by the outcome of the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (scheduled for completion in Fall 2007).
- Improve recreation opportunities by providing a dedicated bike path between the Coe Visitor Center and Flamingo.
- Nike missile site and Hole-in-the Donut areas interpreted with regularly-scheduled programs; open for day use and HID could offer limited primitive camping.
- Collections and museum facility constructed outside the park.



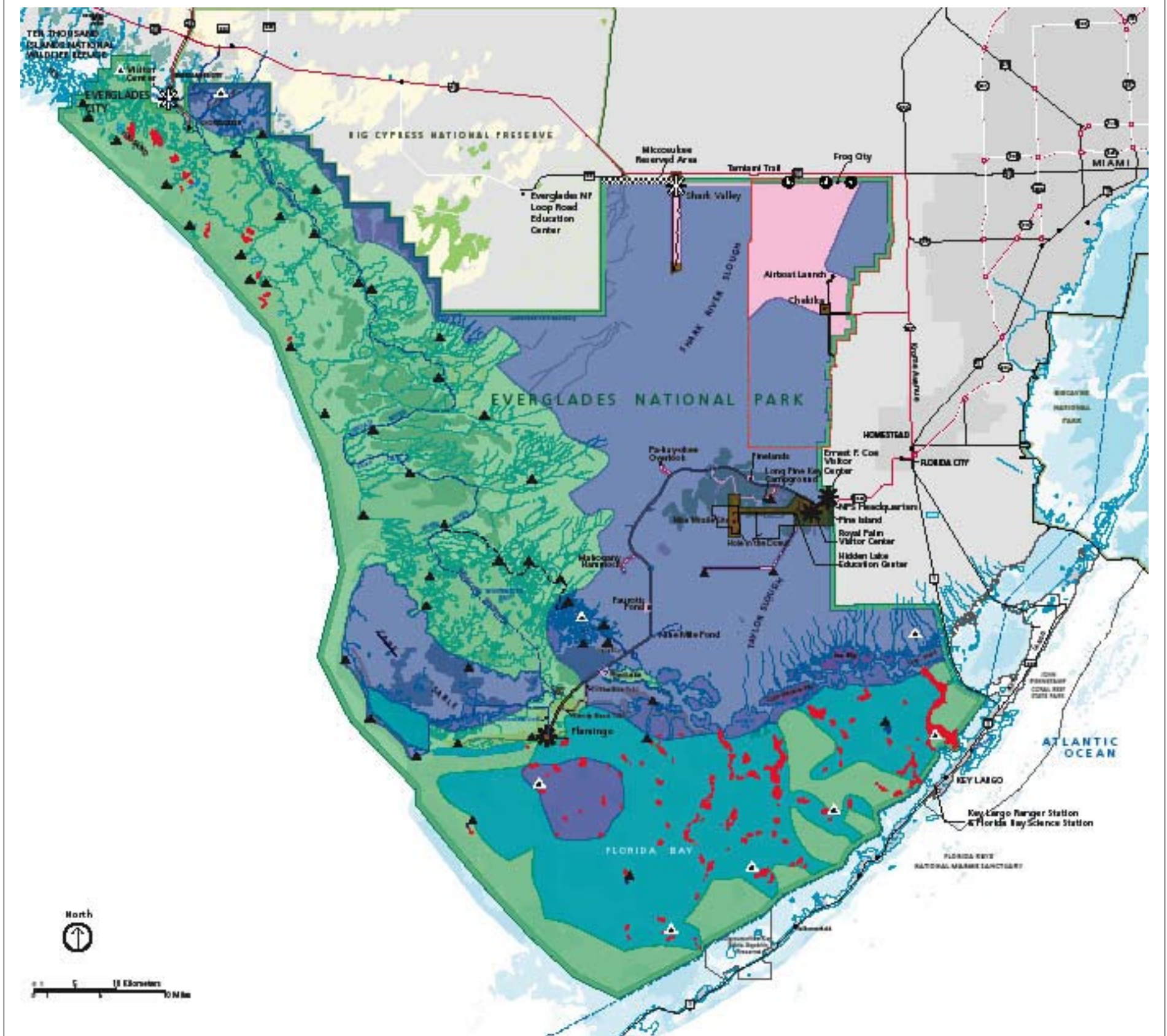
TAMIAMI TRAIL

- Enhanced public use areas along the Tamiami Trail, and within and adjacent to Shark Valley, including an expanded hiking and bicycling system, additional picnic/day use areas, and shade and rest areas along the Shark Valley Road.
- Consolidated administrative areas along Tamiami Trail to increase operational efficiencies and provide additional public use areas at Shark Valley.
- Redesign Shark Valley developed area to enhance visitor experiences and safety, emphasizing day and evening experiences; and safe access and parking for those traveling by motorized vehicle, as well as those walking or bicycling.

GULF COAST

- Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center would be constructed in Everglades City.
- Expanded camping opportunities by building additional chickees (camping platforms).
- Backcountry zone paddle-only areas established at several locations along and near the wilderness waterway.





Preliminary Alternative C Everglades National Park

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Legend

- Primary Roads
- Wilderness Waterway and other existing paddling trails
- New Wilderness Waterway Sections
- East Everglades Expansion Area
- Tree Island with Camp (blow-up map)
- Existing Campsite
- One or more campsites proposed in this area
- Airboat operations
- Existing Visitor Facility
- Proposed or expanded Visitor Facility

Management Zones

- Backcountry
- Boat Access
- Developed
- Frontcountry
- Management by Boat Size
- Management by Water Depth
- Research
- Wildlife Habitat Protection
- Proposed Potential Wilderness



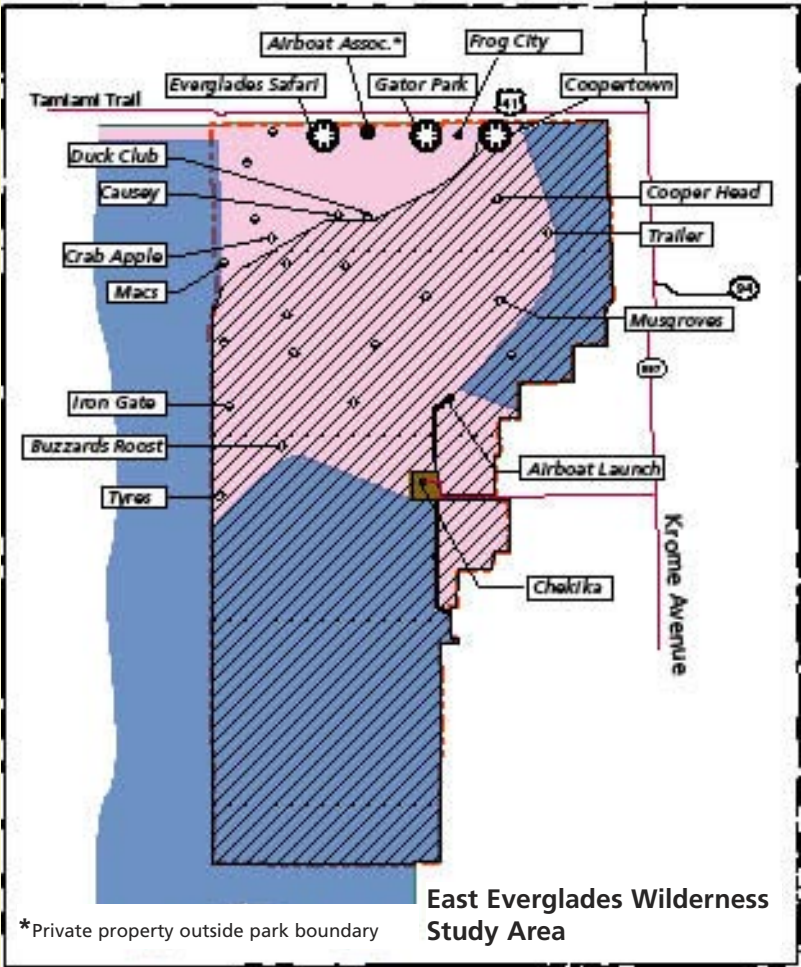
ALTERNATIVE C

The goal of this alternative would be to draw new, more diverse audiences to the park and reach out in new and creative ways to provide a wider range of visitor opportunities to enjoy and experience Everglades’ resources and ecosystems. This strategy would provide for visiting the park and receiving an introduction to its significance in an easier, more user-friendly manner.

- Focus on a wide-range of short-term visitor experiences in order to connect the park to new audiences and provide long-time visitors with new opportunities.
- Resource conservation achieved by increasing awareness of sensitive resources, the rich history in the park, and its complex ecosystems, that leads to support for long-term protection actions.

EAST EVERGLADES

- Private airboating would continue according to the 1989 Expansion Act in the Frontcountry zone.
- Commercial airboat operations would continue under concessions contracts in the Frontcountry Zone.
- Chekika remains open at least seasonally as a day-use area (flooding could cause closure in certain times of the year).
- About 94,000 acres within the East Everglades would be proposed as potential wilderness (and considered for wilderness designation once non-conforming, incompatible uses had ended and desired resource conditions had returned).



FLORIDA BAY AND THE KEYS

- Marine boating would be managed by boat size (24 feet or less) in shallower areas of Florida Bay to protect sensitive biological communities.
- Expanded paddling and camping opportunities by adding a backcountry zone and additional chickees (camping platforms) in Florida Bay.
- The Joe Bay/Little Madeira Bay area would be re-opened, with paddling-only access. Wildlife viewing and fishing are among the uses anticipated.



ROYAL PALM TO FLAMINGO

- Seek alternative / mass transit connections to park from Homestead/ Florida City.
- Enhance interpretive/educational opportunities at Royal Palm, Long Pine Key and along the main park road.
- Flamingo operations would be guided by the outcome of the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (scheduled for completion in Fall 2007).
- Nike missile site and Hole-in-the-Donut area open to visitors for day use and through guided tours.
- Collections and museum facility constructed in the park.

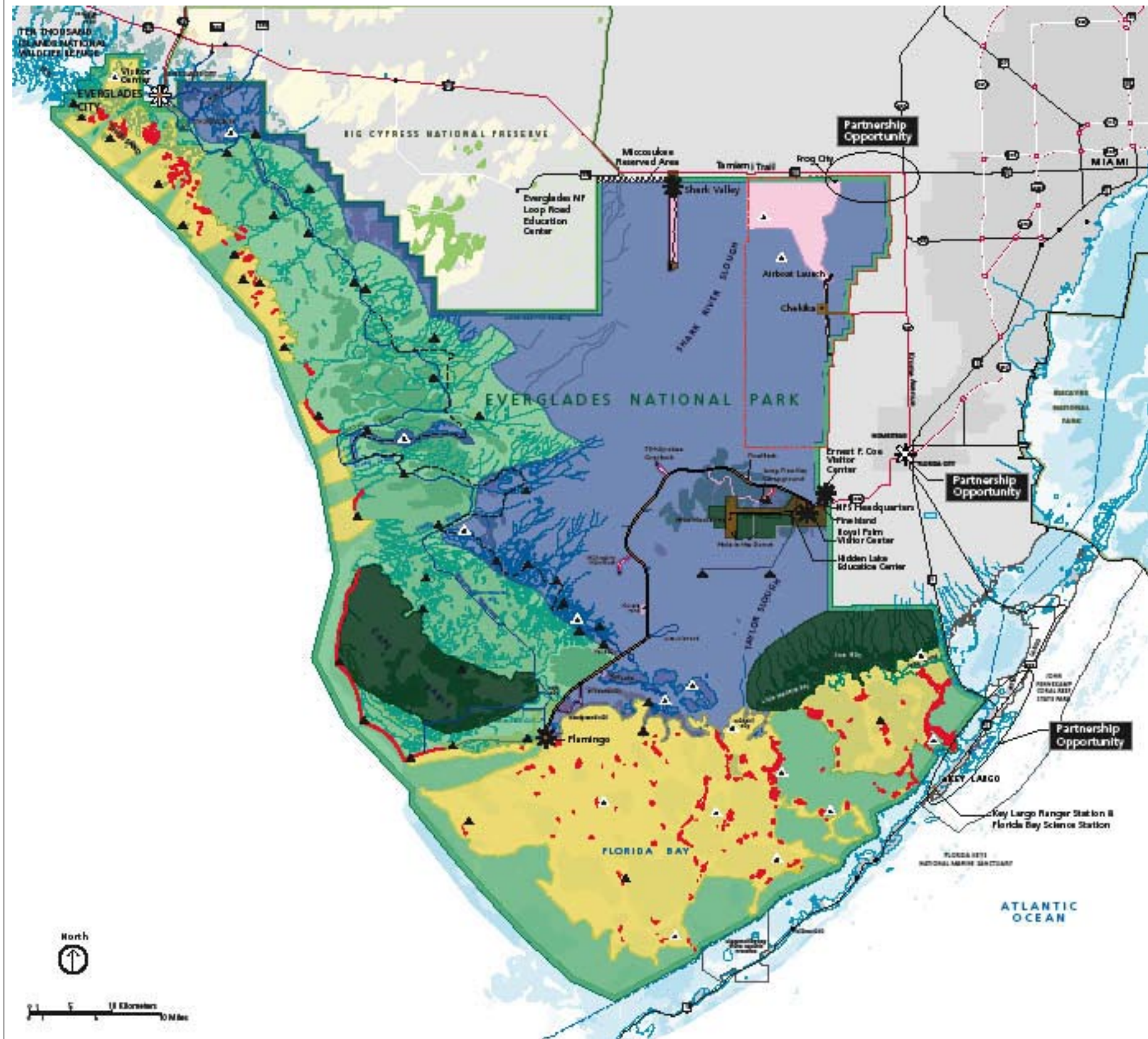
TAMIAMI TRAIL

- Enhance public use areas, including an expanded hiking and bicycling system.
- Seek alternative transit connections from Miami to Tamiami Trail destinations such as Shark Valley and commercial airboat operators.
- Reconfigure Shark Valley to more safely accommodate visitors, including those traveling by motorized vehicle, as well as those walking or bicycling.
- Provide opportunities for additional interpretive and recreational activities utilizing previously disturbed sites along Tamiami Trail.

GULF COAST

- Construct Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center in Everglades City.
- Provide non-motorized water trail segments along and near the Wilderness Waterway.
- Offer additional land-based programs and activities linking the park and neighboring communities, and a greater variety of water-based tours from Gulf Coast Visitor Center.
- Expand paddling opportunities in and around Cape Sable.





Preliminary Alternative D Everglades National Park

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • March 2007 • 160/20110

Legend

- Primary Roads
- Wilderness Waterway and other existing paddling trails
- New Wilderness Waterway Sections
- East Everglades Expansion Area
- Tree Island with Camp (blow-up map)
- Existing Campsite
- One or more campsites proposed in this area
- Airboat operations
- Existing Visitor Facility
- Proposed or expanded Visitor Facility

Management Zones

- Backcountry
- Boat Access
- Developed
- Frontcountry
- Management by Boat Size
- Management by Water Depth
- Research
- Wildlife Habitat Protection
- Proposed Potential Wilderness



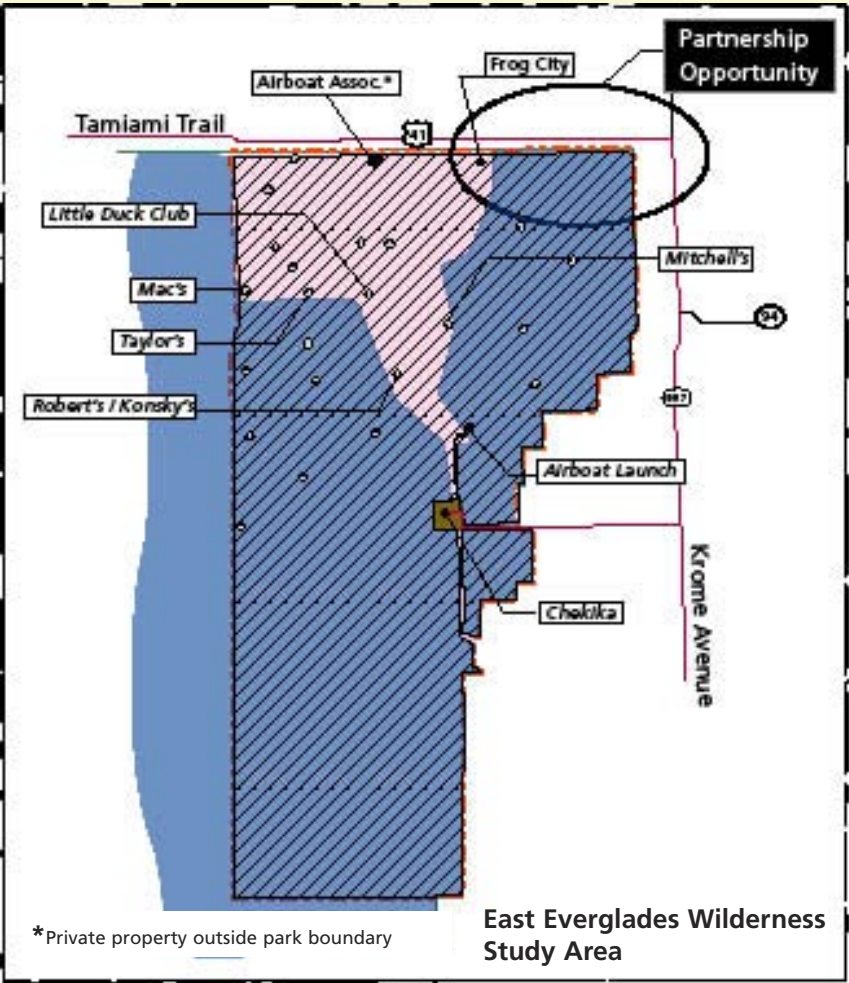
ALTERNATIVE D

Under this concept, Everglades National Park would be a part of an integrated partnership network that includes local, state, and federal land management agencies and park organizations in South Florida. Management emphasis at the park would focus on the core resources associated with the purpose for which the park was established. Visitors would receive orientation and education about the resources, interpretive and recreational opportunities at many locations in South Florida.

- Park leads and is part of developing a seamless network of public lands in South Florida. Partnership opportunities would provide visitors information needed for having rewarding experiences, while communicating the challenges and strategies identified to protect ecosystem resources.
- Natural and cultural resource management efforts focused on management and restoration of the resources central to the park’s purpose. Research Zone would provide opportunities to study core park and ecosystem resources; documenting past, current and future conditions in order to better guide future decisions.

EAST EVERGLADES

- Private airboating would continue, consistent with the 1989 East Everglades Expansion Act, on designated routes in the Frontcountry Zone in East Everglades.
- Commercial airboat operations would be acquired and closed.
- Partnership opportunities for visitor services along Tamiami Trail.
- Chekika continues to be open at least seasonally for day-use and cooperative education programs (flooding would cause closure during high-water periods).
- Establish paddling trails and primitive camping opportunities within portions of the East Everglades.
- About 106,000 acres within the East Everglades would be proposed as potential wilderness (and considered for wilderness designation once non-conforming, incompatible uses had ended and desired resource conditions had returned). About 3,600 acres in and around Chekika and along the northern and eastern boundaries would not be proposed for designation.



FLORIDA BAY AND THE KEYS

- Marine boating would be managed by water depth to protect the shallow portions of the bay. The Management by Water Depth zone would require boaters to use other than internal combustion engines when the water is less than 3 feet deep (poling, trolling, or paddling only).
- Additional camping opportunities in Florida Bay with additional chickees (camping platforms).
- Partnership opportunities pursued to provide paddling and water access along the 18 mile stretch of U.S. 1 and/or the Upper Keys.
- Partnership opportunities for additional visitor services in the upper Florida Keys.
- Little Joe/Madeira Bay and Cape Sable placed in Research Zone.
- Key Largo Ranger Station site would focus on meeting operational needs such as affordable housing and quality research facilities to support park management and restoration efforts.

ROYAL PALM TO FLAMINGO

- Regional commercial tours provided to and within the park.
- Alternative transit and tram service would shuttle visitors between Coe Visitor Center and Flamingo with stops along the way.
- Flamingo operations would be guided by the outcome of the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (scheduled for completion in Fall 2007).
- Nike missile site and Hole-in-the Donut areas open for interpretive and educational programs.
- Collections and museum facility constructed outside the park, somewhere in South Florida.



TAMIAMI TRAIL

- Multi-agency visitor information facility in Southwest Dade County, coordinating information about educational and recreational experiences whether offered by a government agency, Native Americans, or by private organizations.
- Enhance public use areas, including an expanded hiking and bicycling system.
- Restore former commercial airboat sites no longer needed for park administrative or visitor use purposes.
- Work with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida to enhance educational programs and activities offered; determine feasibility of sharing resources and facilities such as the existing parking areas along the Tamiami Trail to more efficiently meet park (Shark Valley visitor) and the Tribe’s needs.
- Coordinate with other land managing agencies along the Tamiami Trail in order to pursue cooperative projects that result in operational efficiencies and provide resource conservation benefits.
- Reconfigure Shark Valley to more safely accommodate visitors; those traveling by motorized vehicle, as well as those walking or bicycling.

GULF COAST

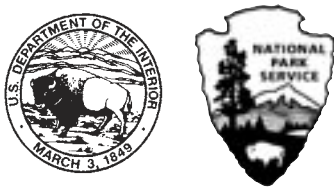
- Marine boating would be managed by water depth to protect the shallow and resource-sensitive areas. The Management by Water Depth zone would require boaters to use other than internal combustion engines when the water is less than 3 feet deep (poling, trolling, or paddling only).
- Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center would be constructed in Everglades City.
- Additional chickees and paddling opportunities.
- Alternative transit service would link the park and other southwest Florida destinations with the Naples, Everglades City/Chokoloskee areas.
- Non-motorized wilderness waterway provided.



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HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The planning team welcomes your comments anytime in the planning process. Right now, we would like to hear your ideas and recommendations with respect to the preliminary management alternatives and zones presented in this newsletter. Please comment through any one of the following methods:

1. Fill out the enclosed comment form and drop it in the mail
2. Attend one of the public workshops shown on page 1
3. Fill out an electronic comment form at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> (select Everglades National Park in the drop down box; then link to Everglades GMP/ East Everglades Wilderness Study)
4. Mail comments to the National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Everglades Planning Team, PO Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287

It is the practice of the NPS to make all comments, including names and addresses of respondents who provide that information, available for public review following the conclusion of the planning process. Individuals may request that the NPS withhold their name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. Commentators using the website can make such a request by checking the box “keep my contact information private.” NPS will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but you should be aware that NPS may still be required to disclose your name and address pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

PROJECT SCHEDULE		
Time Frame	Planning Activity	How You Can Be Involved
Summer 2007	Preliminary Alternatives The NPS developed a range of preliminary alternatives incorporating the wilderness study for East Everglades	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read newsletter• Send us your ideas and comments• Participate in public meetings
Summer 2007 – Summer 2008	Prepare and Publish Draft Document Draft GMP/EEWS/EIS and environmental impact statement is written and published. The draft document describes the alternatives and impacts of implementing each. Based on the impacts and public input, a preferred alternative is identified in the document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read draft plan• Send us your ideas and comments• Participate in public meetings/ hearings.
Summer 2009	Prepare and Publish Final Document Based on review by the National Park Service and the public, the NPS revises the GMP/EEWS/ EIS and distributes a final document. The plan is approved in a published Record of Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the final plan, including NPS responses to substantive public comments and official letters
2009 and beyond	Implement the Approved Plan After the Record of Decision is issued, and as funding allows, the general management plan is implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the NPS to implement plan

Everglades National Park