

August 2009

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS ON NEWSLETTER #5
(Revised Preliminary Alternatives for Marine Waters)**

General Management Plan/East Everglades Wilderness Study
Everglades National Park

In March 2009, the Everglades planning team published Newsletter #5, which described four revised preliminary alternatives (named Alternatives 1-4) for managing Everglades National Park's marine waters. In March and April 2009, we hosted seven public meetings in South Florida to gather your comments about these revised alternatives. Six hundred and thirty people attended the public meetings. We also met with various stakeholder groups to discuss the alternatives and gather input; 250 people attended the 16 stakeholder meetings. In addition, we received nearly 600 written comments from individuals and organizations.

At the public meetings and on the newsletter/online comment forms, we asked which revised alternative, if any, is close to your idea of a preferred alternative. We also asked which elements of the various alternatives you would like to see included in a preferred alternative, and which elements you would not like to see included.

Based on your responses, the planning team has challenging work ahead! Substantial numbers of people expressed support for each of four revised alternatives that were described in Newsletter #5, including the no-action or "business as usual" alternative. In addition, many people expressed support for "Alternative E/2.5", a modified version of Alternative 3 that was developed by a group of Florida Keys citizens.

Elements of the alternatives that people commonly mentioned as desirable (and undesirable) to include in the preferred alternative are listed below in the following two sections. Note that different perspectives are represented both within and between these two lists.

Elements Most Commonly Mentioned as Desirable to Include in the Preferred Alternative

- Better markings or navigation aids on the water
- More/increased education efforts to protect marine natural resources such as seagrass
- More ranger patrols and/or enforcement on the water to protect resources
- More backcountry campsites
- More launch sites on the main park road and 18 mile stretch
- More idle speed-no wake, pole/troll, and paddle only zones to protect resources
- Limit where motorboats can go (e.g., water less than 2 feet deep) to protect seagrass
- Boat size or horsepower limits to protect shallow areas
- Limit where motorboats can go for visitor experience reasons
- Keep the Crocodile Sanctuary closed to public access
- Open the Crocodile Sanctuary to paddlers
- Open the Crocodile Sanctuary as a pole/troll zone

- Establish alternative wilderness waterway
- Establish alternative wilderness waterway for paddlers only
- Use adaptive management during GMP implementation
- Improved visitor facilities at Flamingo

Elements Most Commonly Mentioned as Undesirable to Include in the Preferred Alternative

- Restrictions on motorboat access
- Extensive pole/troll zones, especially without reasonable access routes
- Navigation markers (too many or too large) that would ruin the scenic beauty or wildness of the park
- Establish alternative wilderness waterway
- Reduction (compared to now) in Florida Bay marked channels
- Idle speed-no wake zone along shore of Florida Bay