

## SUMMARY

Everglades National Park (the park) was authorized by Congress in 1934. Through the sustained efforts of many supporters, and critical funding provided by the Florida state legislature, the park was eventually established on December 6, 1947, with 460,000 acres. Boundary changes expanded the park to 1.4 million acres by 1958. In 1978, a 1,296,500-acre designated wilderness area that includes land, freshwater, and submerged marine areas was established within Everglades National Park. It was renamed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness in 1997. The Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 added the East Everglades Addition (109,506 acres) and brought the Northeast Shark River Slough within the park boundaries. This East Everglades Addition (the Addition) has provided the cornerstone of long-range planning to restore more natural hydrologic conditions and revitalize wildlife habitat and ecosystem health. The park now encompasses 1,509,000 acres, including the largest designated wilderness area east of the Rocky Mountains. Many governmental and nongovernmental organizations are working together toward a balanced and sustainable restored south Florida ecosystem. Restoration efforts have raised public awareness of issues within and around the park and changed the frame work for discussion of many issues affecting the park.

The approved general management plan will be the basic document for managing Everglades National Park for the next 20 to 30 years. It will define desired resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved and provide a frame work for decisions on how to best protect resources, how to provide quality visitor opportunities, how to manage visitor use, and what kind of facilities, if any, to develop in or near the park.

This new management plan for Everglades National Park is needed because the last comprehensive planning effort for the national park was completed in 1979. Much has occurred since then—patterns and types of visitor use have changed, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) was approved, and the national park boundary was modified in 1989 with the 109,506-acre East Everglades Addition. Also, recent studies have enhanced National Park Service (NPS) understanding of resources, resource threats, and visitor use in the national park. Each of these changes has major implications for how visitors access and use the park and the facilities needed to support those uses, for how resources are managed, and for how the National Park Service manages its operations.

This document includes a wilderness study for the East Everglades Addition. The wilderness study evaluates these lands for possible recommendation to Congress for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system. A study is needed because the Wilderness Act of 1964, Secretarial Order 2920, and NPS *Management Policies 2006* require the National Park Service to study roadless and undeveloped areas within the national park system, including new areas or expanded boundaries, to determine whether they should be designated as wilderness.

Wilderness studies assess the lands to determine if they possess wilderness characteristics and then propose all, some, or none of the eligible lands for designation as wilderness. Chapter 3 of this document discusses the wilderness study and proposal in detail and provides related background information about wilderness at Everglades National Park.

*This Draft General Management Plan / East Everglades Wilderness Study / Environmental*

*Impact Statement* presents and analyzes four alternative ways of managing Everglades National Park—alternative 1 (the no-action alternative), the NPS preferred alternative, alternative 2, and alternative 4. Alternative 3 was dismissed from detailed analysis (see the “Alternatives and Actions Considered but Dismissed from Detailed Evaluation” section in chapter 2 for more information).

Public and internal (NPS) scoping revealed several major issues for the general management plan to address such as effective management of motorboating in shallow marine waters, user capacity, park operations, management of the East Everglades Addition, and whether any areas within the Addition should be proposed for wilderness designation. The main areas of controversy have been management of marine boating, management of private and commercial airboating, and wilderness in East Everglades.

Continued scoping and internal review resulted in refinement of the alternatives, which reduced proposed one-time facility construction improvements and rehabilitation costs, as well as long-term operational commitments while maintaining the park’s focus on enhancing visitor services and opportunities at these important visitor areas.

A discussion of the process and issues identified and how the alternatives were refined is included in chapter 2. Other issues identified in more recent scoping and review such as how to support the resilience of the national park to expected impacts from climate change, such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, and higher storm surges, can be found in the mitigation measures section at the end of chapter 2.

The following portion of this summary is intended to highlight the differences among the alternatives rather than provide a comprehensive summary of what is contained in the alternatives. To understand the full details and actions proposed in the alternatives, please see chapter 2.

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) AND THE ACTION ALTERNATIVES (PREFERRED, ALTERNATIVE 2, AND ALTERNATIVE 4)**

There are several programs and processes that would be implemented in the action alternatives (preferred, alternative 2, and alternative 4). These programs are described below.

An **adaptive management program** would be developed to evaluate the success of management actions in achieving desired resource and visitor use conditions and modify management strategies as needed to improve success in achieving desired conditions.

An **Everglades National Park Advisory Committee**, composed of diverse stakeholders would be established to help park managers consider various perspectives on issues such as management of fisheries, access and visitor use (particularly the management of boating in shallow marine waters), and protection of endangered species during adaptive implementation of the approved management plan.

A **user capacity program** would be implemented to assist in managing the levels, types, and patterns of visitor use to preserve park resources and quality of the visitor experience. Components would include: (1) establish desired conditions for various areas of the park through management zoning, (2) identify indicators to monitor to determine whether desired conditions are being met, (3) identify standards (limits of acceptable change) for the indicators, (4) monitor indicators to determine if there are disturbing trends or if standards are being exceeded, and (5) take management action to maintain or restore desired conditions.

A **comprehensive cultural resource management program** would be established, focusing on efforts to inventory, document,

and protect all types of cultural resources; regularly monitor archeological sites and other historic properties to assess resource conditions and inform long-term treatment strategies; interpret selected cultural sites for the public; and better interpret and protect ethnographic resources in consultation with associated American Indian tribes and others traditionally associated with the park.

A **strong natural resource management program** would be developed to support implementation of desired conditions described in this general management plan, implement natural resource components of this plan, and contribute to the adaptive management and user capacity components of this plan.

A **boater education permit program** would be established to promote shared stewardship of marine resources, including shallow sea bottom areas, seagrasses, and wildlife. Operators of motorboats and nonmotorized boats (including paddled craft) would complete a mandatory education program to obtain a permit to operate vessels in the park. Program information would be tailored to the type of craft and/or type of trip and would be widely available at the park; on the Internet; in gateway communities, marinas, hotels; and from guides; etc.

## ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

### Concept

The no-action alternative (alternative 1), provides a baseline for evaluating changes and impacts of the three action alternatives. This baseline is characterized primarily by conditions at Everglades National Park as of December 2009, with continuation of current management practices into the future (i.e., business as usual). This alternative assumes implementation of some approved and funded facility improvements via the concessioner and other improvements via the National Park Service, as well as currently

unfunded improvements at Flamingo such as rebuilding visitor lodging and rehabilitating the visitor center as outlined in the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan. It is anticipated that the most financially feasible and viable approach will be defined and implemented via the upcoming 2013 concessions contract for Flamingo.

Otherwise, the built environment would remain at its current level. Existing facilities at the park headquarters area, Royal Palm, Long Pine Key, Key Largo, Shark Valley, and Gulf Coast would be maintained and continue to serve operational needs and visitors—in some cases at less than desired levels.

Management activities would continue to conserve natural resources and processes while accommodating a range of visitor uses and experiences.

Visitors would continue to have access to a wide variety of land- and water-based opportunities and programs, including concessioner trips at Gulf Coast, Shark Valley, and Flamingo, plus self-guided opportunities and guided trips throughout the park.

### Parkwide Visitor Experience and Facilities

Boat tours, canoe/kayak rentals, interpretive tours, fishing tours, and paddling tours would continue to be offered in the Gulf Coast and Ten Thousand Islands area via commercial service providers.

Existing facilities would remain.

### Florida Bay

Small areas of idle speed restriction would remain. Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and adjacent smaller water bodies (also known as

the Crocodile Sanctuary) would remain closed to public use.

### East Everglades Addition

The Addition would continue to be managed under the guidance provided in the Expansion Act and the Land Protection Plan.

Commercial airboating would continue at the discretion of owners. Private airboating would also continue.

**Operations.** There would be no change in existing operations or the full-time equivalent (FTE) employee staffing level of 214 in 2011.

**Key Impacts.** The most notable impacts of the no-action alternative would be (1) continued long-term, baywide, moderate, adverse impacts on vegetation (primarily seagrass) in Florida Bay from propeller scarring and boat groundings; (2) long-term adverse effects on manatees from boat and propeller strikes and habitat disturbance constituting a *may affect, likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (3) continued long-term, minor, adverse effects on sea turtles from human activities (primarily motor-boating), resulting in a *may affect, likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (4) localized, long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts on natural soundscapes resulting from noise associated with human activities (especially those involving motorized vehicles); (5) long-term or permanent, minor to moderate, adverse impacts on museum collections; (6) long-term, moderate to major, adverse impacts on the character of submerged marine wilderness in Florida Bay; (7) long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts as well as long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on visitor experience and opportunities; and (8) long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts as well as long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on NPS operations at the park.

## NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

### Concept

Using management zoning and collaborative techniques such as adaptive management, user education, and a national park advisory committee, the NPS preferred alternative would support restoration of natural systems while providing improved opportunities for quality visitor experiences. This concept is represented in management zoning by establishing pole/troll zones over some shallow areas of Florida Bay (submerged marine wilderness) and by managing about 21,700 acres in the northwest portion of the East Everglades Addition as the frontcountry zone, where commercial airboat tours and private airboat use by eligible individuals would continue. Much of the East Everglades Addition (the portion where airboat use would not occur) would be proposed for wilderness designation.

### Parkwide Programs

In addition to the parkwide programs listed earlier in this summary for the action alternatives, a boating safety and resource protection plan would be developed. This plan would address boating in marine waters of Florida Bay, the Gulf Coast, and Ten Thousand Islands in more detail regarding visitor safety and resource protection. The plan would evaluate how to further avoid/minimize the risk of boat-boat collisions, boat-wildlife collisions, groundings, and other impacts on the sea bottom, which is federally designated wilderness. Because this study would address how to minimize risks to wildlife (including the manatee and other marine endangered species), a separate manatee management plan would be unnecessary. The plan would study in more detail the Florida Bay channels, passes, and boat access routes shown on the “NPS Preferred Alternative” map and make more detailed decisions about how/if channels would be marked and accessed.

This plan would be developed with public input and would be updated regularly.

## **Parkwide Visitor Experience and Facilities**

As funding permits, Flamingo facilities would be improved or upgraded while preserving the historic integrity of the Mission 66 District as outlined in the Flamingo Concession Services Plan. The concession operation at Everglades City would offer expanded opportunities to visit Ten Thousand Islands, Gulf Coast, and Wilderness Waterway through boat tours and canoe/kayak rentals. Other commercial services would be pursued to provide visitors with more opportunities such as interpretive, fishing, and paddling tours. Additional land-based interpretive programs and activities would link the park and neighboring communities. A cultural heritage interpretive water trail would be established in the Ten Thousand Islands area.

The establishment of a backcountry zone in the East Everglades Addition and pole/troll zones and idle speed, no-wake areas in Florida Bay would change the way visitor's access and use these areas.

Chekika, a former state recreation area, would be open at least seasonally as a day use area with enhanced education and recreation programs.

Small facilities would be constructed to provide visitors with orientation information in the Homestead/Florida City area, along Tamiami Trail, and in Key Largo. These facilities would likely be operated in partnership with other agencies/organizations.

New campsites or camping platforms (chickees) would be constructed in Florida Bay, the East Everglades Addition, and along the Gulf Coast.

The collections management center, where museum items and artifacts are stored, would be relocated to a new facility in the park. This new facility would allow the public to view these items, as appropriate.

## **Florida Bay**

Approximately 131,392 acres in the shallows of the bay would be managed as pole/troll zones to better protect the sea bottom, including wilderness resources, seagrass beds, and important ecological habitats. These zones would cover about 33% of Florida Bay waters within the park. The zones would be traversed by designated channels/access routes. Portions of the waters along the north shoreline would be managed as idle speed, no-wake areas. Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and adjacent smaller water bodies (also known as the Crocodile Sanctuary) would remain closed to public use and managed as a special protection zone.

## **East Everglades Addition**

About 21,700 acres in the northwest portion of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone. The remainder would be managed as the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone.

Commercial airboating would be operated under concessions contracts, and commercial airboats would operate on designated routes. Private airboating (subject to provisions in the East Everglades Expansion Act) would be allowed on designated routes within the frontcountry zone.

About 80,100 acres would be proposed for wilderness designation, and about 9,900 acres would be proposed as potential wilderness.

**Operations.** A new East Everglades administration/operations center would be built near but outside the park on land acquired from willing sellers. Everglades

National Park has acquired a site close to the park boundary near Chekika, which will be used to support park administration and operational needs in the East Everglades. The National Park Service would strive to consolidate facilities in a more central location along Tamiami Trail, and the agency would coordinate with other land management agencies to share equipment and resources for improved operational efficiency.

An additional 35 FTE employees throughout the park would be needed to implement this alternative.

**Key Impacts.** The most notable impacts of implementing the NPS preferred alternative would be (1) long-term, baywide, moderate to major, beneficial impacts on vegetation (primarily seagrass) in Florida Bay from new programs and changes in management of recreational boating in Florida Bay; (2) reduced propeller scaring and boat grounding, decreased underwater noise from motorboats, improved habitat, and minor benefits to manatees from new programs and changes in management of recreational boating in Florida Bay, constituting a *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (3) reduced impacts on sea turtles and their habitats, resulting in long-term minor benefits and a *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (4) long-term, local, minor to moderate, adverse, as well as minor to moderate beneficial impacts on natural soundscapes at the park from noise associated with human activities (especially those involving motorized vehicles); (5) long-term beneficial and short-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts on museum collections; (6) long-term moderate beneficial impacts on the character of submerged marine wilderness in Florida Bay; (7) long-term, major, beneficial impacts on the wilderness character of the East Everglades Addition; (8) long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts as well as long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts

on visitor experience and opportunities; and (9) short- and long-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts and long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts on park operations.

## ALTERNATIVE 2

### Concept

Alternative 2 would strive to maintain and enhance visitor opportunities and protect natural systems while preserving many traditional routes and visitor access. This concept is represented in management zoning by the boat access zone in Florida Bay and a large (56,000-acre) frontcountry zone in the East Everglades Addition. This alternative would rely more on boater education and enhanced ranger patrols to provide some measure of increased protection for seagrass beds, banks, and other submerged marine wilderness values. Like the NPS preferred alternative, alternative 2 would continue visitor opportunities for commercial airboat tours. A modest portion of the East Everglades Addition (the southern portion, where airboat use would not occur) would be proposed for wilderness designation.

### Parkwide Programs

In addition to the parkwide programs listed earlier in this summary for the action alternatives, a manatee management plan would be developed to identify ways to improve manatee protection within the national park while maintaining as many existing recreational boating opportunities as possible. This effort would include staff participation of partner agencies having manatee management responsibilities. Protection measures would be implemented using management tools that are as flexible as possible such as the superintendent's compendium.

## Parkwide Visitor Experience and Facilities

As funding permits, Flamingo facilities would be improved or upgraded as outlined in the Flamingo Concession Services Plan.

The concession operation at Everglades City would offer expanded opportunities to visit Ten Thousand Islands, the Gulf Coast, and Wilderness Waterway through boat tours and canoe/kayak rentals. Other commercial services would be pursued to provide visitors with more opportunities such as interpretive, fishing, and paddling tours. Additional land-based interpretive programs and activities would link the park and neighboring communities. (This is the same as in the NPS preferred alternative, except that the cultural heritage trail would not be developed.)

The southern portion of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone.

Chekika would be open, at least seasonally, as a day use area and for primitive camping.

New campsites or camping platforms (chickees) would be constructed in Florida Bay, the East Everglades Addition, and along the Gulf Coast.

The collections management center, where museum items and artifacts are stored, would be relocated to a new facility in the park. This new facility would allow the public to view these items, as appropriate.

## Florida Bay

Small areas of idle speed restriction would remain. Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and adjacent smaller water bodies (also known as the Crocodile Sanctuary) would be open to the public for limited use.

## East Everglades Addition

About 56,000 acres in the northern portion of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone. The remainder would be managed as the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone.

Commercial airboating would be operated under concessions contracts, and commercial airboats would operate on designated routes. Private airboating (subject to provisions in the East Everglades Expansion Act) would be allowed in the frontcountry zone on designated routes.

About 39,500 acres would be proposed as wilderness; there would be no proposed potential wilderness.

**Operations.** A new East Everglades administration/operations center would be built near but outside the park on land acquired from willing sellers. Everglades National Park has acquired a site close to the park boundary near Chekika, which will be used to support park administration and operational needs in the East Everglades. The National Park Service would strive to consolidate facilities in a more central location along Tamiami Trail. The agency would coordinate with other land management agencies to share equipment and resources for improved operational efficiency.

An additional 26 FTE employees throughout the park would be needed to implement this alternative.

**Key Impacts.** The most notable impacts of implementing alternative 2 would be: (1) long-term, baywide, moderate, adverse impacts on vegetation (primarily seagrass) in Florida Bay from propeller scarring and boat groundings; (2) continued long-term, moderate, adverse effects on the manatee from boat and propeller strikes and habitat disturbance, but also minor benefits from new programs, constituting a *may affect, likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (3) benefits

to sea turtles from habitat protection and new programs and some continued, long-term, minor, adverse effects from human activities (primarily motorboating), which would result in a *may affect, likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (4) long-term, local, minor to moderate, adverse as well as negligible to minor, beneficial impacts on natural soundscapes at the park from noise associated with human activities (especially those involving motorized vehicles); (5) long-term beneficial and short-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts on museum collections; (6) long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts on the character of submerged marine wilderness in Florida Bay; (7) long-term, major, beneficial impacts on the wilderness character of the East Everglades Addition; (8) long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts as well as long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts on visitor experience and opportunities; (9) short- and long-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts and long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts on park operations.

### **ALTERNATIVE 3**

Alternative 3 was created during an early phase of alternatives development, but was dropped from detailed consideration in this plan. See the “Alternatives and Actions Considered but Dismissed from Detailed Evaluation” section in chapter 2 for more information.

### **ALTERNATIVE 4**

#### **Concept**

Alternative 4 would provide a high level of support for protecting natural systems while improving opportunities for certain types of visitor activities. This concept is represented in management zoning by establishing pole/troll zones over shallow areas of Florida Bay and managing 21,600 acres in the northwest

portion of the East Everglades Addition as the frontcountry zone (where private airboating by eligible individuals would continue). Commercial airboat tours in the national park would be discontinued in this alternative. Nearly all of the East Everglades Addition would be proposed for eventual wilderness designation.

#### **Parkwide Programs**

In addition to the parkwide programs listed earlier in this summary for the action alternatives, a manatee management plan would be developed to identify ways to improve manatee protection within the national park while maintaining as many existing recreational boating opportunities as possible (as in alternative 2).

#### **Parkwide Visitor Experience and Facilities**

As funding permits, Flamingo facilities would be improved or upgraded as outlined in the Flamingo Concession Services Plan.

As in the NPS preferred alternative, the concession operation at Everglades City would offer expanded opportunities to visit Ten Thousand Islands, the Gulf Coast, and Wilderness Waterway through boat tours and canoe/kayak rentals. Other commercial services would be pursued to provide visitors with more opportunities such as interpretive, fishing, and paddling tours. Additional land-based interpretive programs and activities would link the park and neighboring communities. A cultural heritage interpretive water trail would be established in the Ten Thousand Islands area.

Management of backcountry zones in the East Everglades Addition and pole/troll zones and idle speed, no-wake zones in Florida Bay would change the way visitor’s access and use these areas.

Chekika would be open, at least seasonally, as a day use area and as an environmental education venue.

Small facilities would be constructed to provide visitors with orientation information in the Homestead/Florida City area, in Key Largo, and along Tamiami Trail. These facilities would likely be operated in partnership with other agencies/organizations.

New campsites or camping platforms (chickees) would be constructed in Florida Bay, the East Everglades Addition, and along the Gulf Coast.

The collections management center would be relocated to a new facility outside the park, possibly in partnership with another entity. This new facility would allow the public to view these items, as appropriate.

## Florida Bay

Approximately 159,564 acres in shallow areas of the bay would be managed as pole/troll zones to better protect the sea bottom. These zones would cover about 41% of Florida Bay waters within the park. The zones would be traversed by marked channels. The waters from Middle Cape to East Cape would be managed as an idle speed, no-wake area. Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and adjacent smaller water bodies (also known as the Crocodile Sanctuary) would remain closed to public use and managed as the special protection zone.

## East Everglades Addition

About 21,600 acres in the northwest portion of the Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone. The remainder would be managed as the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone.

Commercial airboating would be discontinued. Private airboating (subject to provisions in the East Everglades Expansion Act) would continue in the frontcountry zone on designated routes.

About 42,700 acres would be proposed for wilderness designation, and about 59,400 acres would be proposed as potential wilderness.

**Operations.** A new East Everglades administration/operations center would be built near but outside the park on land acquired from willing sellers. Everglades National Park has acquired a site close to the park boundary near Chekika, which will be used to support park administration and operational needs in the East Everglades. The National Park Service would coordinate with other land management agencies along Tamiami Trail to pursue cooperative projects for improved operational efficiency.

An additional 37 FTE employees throughout the park would be needed to implement this alternative.

**Key Impacts.** The most notable impacts of implementing alternative 4 would be (1) long-term, baywide, moderate to major, beneficial impacts on vegetation (primarily seagrass) in Florida Bay from new programs and changes in management of recreational boating in Florida Bay; (2) reduced boat strikes, decreased underwater noise from motor-boats, improved habitat, and moderate benefits to manatees from new programs and changes in management of recreational boating in Florida Bay and along the Alternative Wilderness Waterway, a *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (3) reduced impacts on sea turtles and their habitats, resulting in localized, long-term, minor benefits and a *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* finding under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; (4) long-term, local, minor to moderate, adverse as well as minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on the natural soundscape at the park

resulting from noise associated with human activities (especially those involving motorized vehicles); (5) long-term beneficial and short-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts on museum collections; (6) long-term, major, beneficial impacts on the character of the East Everglades Addition; (7) long-term, moderate to major, adverse as well as long-term, moderate to major, beneficial

impacts on visitor experience and opportunities; and (8) short- and long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts as well as long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts on park operations.

The following table summarizes major differences among the alternatives.

**TABLE OF MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES**

	<b>Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	<b>Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 4</b>
<b>FLORIDA BAY MANAGEMENT</b>	Small areas of idle speed restriction would remain.	About 131,392 acres in the shallows of the bay would be managed as pole/troll zones to better protect the sea bottom. These zones would be traversed by designated channels/ access routes.	Small areas of idle speed restriction would remain.	About 159,564 acres in shallow areas of the bay would be managed as pole/troll zones to better protect the sea bottom. These zones would be traversed by marked channels.
	n/a	Portions of the waters along the north shoreline would be managed as idle speed, no-wake areas.	n/a	The waters from Middle Cape to East Cape would be managed as an idle speed, no-wake area.
	Crocodile Sanctuary would remain closed to the public.	Crocodile Sanctuary would remain closed to the public (managed as the special protection zone).	Crocodile Sanctuary would be open to the public for certain types of use.	Crocodile Sanctuary would remain closed to the public (managed as the special protection zone).
<b>EAST EVERGLADES ADDITION MANAGEMENT ZONES AND AIRBOATING</b>	There would be no new management zones.	A moderate amount of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone—about 21,700 acres in the northwest portion. The remainder would be managed as the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone.	A large amount of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone—about 56,000 acres in the northern portion. The remainder would be managed as the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone.	A moderate amount of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone—about 21,600 acres in the northwest portion.

**TABLE OF MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES**

	<b>Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	<b>Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 4</b>
<b>EAST EVERGLADES ADDITION MANAGEMENT ZONES AND AIRBOATING (cont.)</b>	Commercial airboating would continue at the discretion of owners.	Commercial airboating would be operated under concessions contracts, and commercial airboats would operate on designated routes.	Commercial airboating would be operated under concessions contracts, and commercial airboats would operate on designated routes.	Commercial airboating would be discontinued.
	Private airboating would continue.	Private airboating (subject to provisions in the East Everglades Expansion Act) would be allowed in the frontcountry zone on designated routes.	Private airboating (subject to provisions in the East Everglades Expansion Act) would be allowed in the frontcountry zone on designated routes.	Private airboating (subject to provisions in the East Everglades Expansion Act) would be allowed in the frontcountry zone on designated routes.
<b>EAST EVERGLADES ADDITION WILDERNESS PROPOSAL</b>	None	About 80,100 acres would be proposed as designated wilderness.  About 9,900 acres would be proposed as potential wilderness.	About 39,500 acres would be proposed as designated wilderness.  No potential wilderness would be proposed.	About 42,700 acres would be proposed as designated wilderness.  About 59,400 acres would be proposed as potential wilderness.

**NEXT STEPS**

After distribution of the *Draft General Management Plan / East Everglades Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement* there will be a 60-day public review and comment period, after which the NPS planning team will evaluate comments from other federal agencies, tribes, organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding the draft plan and incorporate appropriate changes into a *Final General Management Plan / East Everglades Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact*

*Statement.* The final plan will include letters from governmental agencies, any substantive comments on the draft document, and NPS responses to those comments. Following distribution of the *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* and a 30-day no-action period, a “Record of Decision” approving a final plan will be prepared for signature by the NPS regional director. The “Record of Decision” will document the NPS selection of an alternative for implementation. With the signing of the “Record of Decision,” the plan can be implemented.