

SUMMARY OF KEY DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF KEY DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES

PLANNING UNIT / TOPIC	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 4
PARKWIDE ACTIONS				
Overview	<p>As funding permits, Flamingo facilities would be improved or upgraded as outlined in the Flamingo CSP, as would other selected <i>planned</i> and <i>funded</i> facility improvements. Otherwise the built environment would remain at its current level. Existing facilities at the park headquarters area, 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. As funding permits, Flamingo facilities would be maintained until planned improvements are funded and implemented.</p> <p>Management activities would continue to conserve natural resources and processes while accommodating a range of visitor uses and experiences.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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 the management zoning by establishing pole/troll zones over some shallow areas of Florida Bay (submerged marine wilderness) and by designating 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 eventual wilderness designation.</p>	<p>Alternative 2 would strive to maintain and enhance visitor opportunities and protect natural systems while preserving many traditional routes and ways of visitor access. This concept is represented in the 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.</p>	<p>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 the management zoning by establishing pole/troll zones over shallow areas of Florida Bay, and by designating 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.</p>
Adaptive Management	n/a	Use the adaptive management process to (a) evaluate the success of management actions in achieving desired resource and visitor use conditions, and (b) modify management strategies as needed to improve success at achieving desired conditions.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Advisory Committee	n/a	Establish an Everglades National Park Advisory Committee comprised of diverse stakeholders to help park managers consider various perspectives on issues such as management of fisheries, access and visitor use (especially management of boating in shallow marine waters), and protection of endangered species during adaptive implementation of the approved management plan.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
User Capacity Program	n/a	Implement a user capacity program 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 (a) establish desired conditions for various areas of the park through management zoning, (b) identify indicators to monitor to determine whether desired conditions are being met, (c) identify standards (limits of acceptable change) for the indicators, (d) monitor indicators to determine if there are disturbing trends or if standards are being exceeded, and (e) take management action to maintain or restore desired conditions.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.

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Cultural Resource Management	As possible with available funding and staffing levels, strive to identify, protect, stabilize, and interpret (as appropriate) significant cultural resources and historic properties such as archeological sites, historic structures, and cultural landscapes in accordance with applicable policies and guidelines.	Establish a comprehensive cultural resource management program that would focus 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; better interpret and protect ethnographic resources in consultation with associated American Indian tribes and other peoples traditionally associated with the park.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Natural Resource Management Program	As possible with available funding and staffing levels, strive to protect and restore natural resources and systems. Continue park managers' participation in large-scale watershed and ecosystem restoration projects.	Develop a more robust natural resource management program 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.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Boater Education Permit Requirement	n/a	Implement a mandatory boater education permit program to promote shared stewardship for marine resources, including the 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; from guides; etc.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Boating Safety and Resource Protection Plan	n/a	Develop a boating safety and resource protection plan. This plan would address boating in marine waters of Florida Bay, the Gulf Coast, and Ten Thousand Islands in more detail as it relates to visitor safety and resource protection. It would consider 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. This study would address how to minimize risks to wildlife (including the manatee and other marine endangered species), so 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.	n/a	n/a
Manatee Protection		Manatee protection would be addressed by the boating safety and resource protection plan (see row immediately above.)	Develop a manatee management plan 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 participation by staff from 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.	Same as alternative 2.

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Paddling Trail Accessibility	n/a	Paddling trail accessibility would be improved, including for persons with disabilities.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
HEADQUARTERS / PINE ISLAND / ROYAL PALM / MAIN PARK ROAD				
Long Pine Key	The Long Pine Key area would continue to offer a picnic area and campground, and the Long Pine Key nature trail would be maintained for hiking and bicycling through the pinelands.	Same as alternative 1, plus at Long Pine Key campground, electric hookups and solar hot-water showers would be provided. Bicycle rentals, snacks, and basic camping supplies would be provided seasonally by a concessioner.	Same as alternative 1, plus at Long Pine Key campground, electric hookups and solar hot-water showers would be provided.	Same as alternative 1.
Royal Palm Area	The Royal Palm visitor contact station would continue to provide functional interpretive office and storage space and a cooperating association bookstore. The Anhinga and Gumbo Limbo trails would continue to provide opportunities for interpreting the Everglades ecosystem.	Interpretive programs and media would be expanded and updated at the Royal Palm area, including integrating prehistoric and historic themes into these programs. Where the road portion of the Anhinga Trail has created an impediment to water movement, more natural water flow would be restored by installing bridges or culverts.	Interpretive programs and media would be expanded and updated at the Royal Palm area.	Interpretive programs and media would be expanded and updated at the Royal Palm area, including integrating prehistoric and historic themes into these programs.
Visitor Orientation and Information	The Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center, near the east entrance of the park in the park headquarters area, would remain the primary park visitor center and would continue to provide visitor orientation, films, exhibits, and a cooperating association bookstore.	To enhance pre-visit information and orientation for visitors, park managers would pursue a partnership with the Homestead and Florida City area communities to provide a cooperative visitor contact station in this gateway area. As a short-term solution, develop an unstaffed orientation kiosk there and provide web-based information.	Same as alternative 1.	To enhance pre-visit information and orientation for visitors, park managers would pursue a partnership with the Homestead and Florida City area communities to provide a cooperative visitor contact station in this gateway area.
Alternative Transportation	n/a	NPS staff would pursue the goal of providing some form of alternative transportation from south Miami-Dade County to the national park's Coe Visitor Center/Royal Palm area and all the way to Flamingo. (Ideally the system would allow visitors to spend time at key interpretive stops along the way). Options could include simple transit and dedicated guided interpretive tours. The service would probably be offered during the high visitor use winter months at first and would be implemented incrementally based on economic viability, potential partnerships, funding sources, etc.	Same as the NPS preferred alternative except that the terminus of the service would be Long Pine Key.	Same as the NPS preferred alternative.
Hole-in-the Donut	Ecological restoration of the Hole-in-the Donut area would continue, as would seasonal, guided interpretive tours of the Nike Missile Base site. Buildings associated with the historic Nike complex would continue to be used for park purposes such as administrative and storage space.	Same as alternative 1, except that new interpretation of ongoing restoration and daytime hiking opportunities would be provided, and this could include spur overlook trails to one or two mounds.	Same as alternative 1, except that new interpretation of restoration activities for visitors and daytime hiking opportunities would be provided, as would primitive camping and evening programs at one or two mounds.	Same as alternative 1, except that that areas zoned backcountry would be restored to natural conditions and would be converted to designated wilderness during the life of this plan.
Beard Center, Robertson Building, and South Florida Collections Management Center	The Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building would continue to serve as administrative facilities for park resource managers, fire and aviation operations, and cooperating researchers. The Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building also would continue to house the South Florida Collections Management Center (SFCMC).	The Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building would continue to be used for park administrative purposes, and this would include space vacated by the South Florida Collections Management Center (see below). The South Florida Collections Management Center, currently housed in the Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building, would be relocated to a new museum in this area that meets NPS collections standards. Museum collections would continue to be acquired, preserved, and accessible to researchers, and the public would have its first opportunity to experience the center's vast resources and collections. Part of this new facility could be used to support interpretation and public use (e.g., interpretation and public tour staging space) of the Nike Missile Base site.	The Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building would continue to be used for park administrative purposes, and this would include space vacated by the South Florida Collections Management Center (see below). The South Florida Collections Management Center, currently housed in the Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building, would be relocated to a new museum in this area that meets NPS collections standards. Museum collections would continue to be acquired, preserved, and accessible to researchers. The public would have opportunities to experience the center's vast resources and collections.	The Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building would continue to be used for park administrative purposes. Space in these buildings vacated by the South Florida Collections Management Center (see below) would serve interpretive/educational needs related to the Nike Missile Base site. The South Florida Collections Management Center, currently housed in the Daniel Beard Center and Robertson Building, would be relocated to a new museum centrally located in the Homestead-Florida City area. The new facility, which could be a partnership with a university or other public institution, would meet NPS collections standards. Museum collections would continue to be acquired, preserved, and accessible to researchers, and the public would have access, as appropriate, to the collection.

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Nike Missile Base Site	The historic integrity of the National Register district would be maintained, and historic buildings at the missile site would continue to be used for park administrative purposes.	Guided interpretive tours of the Nike Missile Base site would be expanded into the shoulder seasons. Significant cultural resources would be preserved, site interpretation would be enhanced, and site improvements for access and circulation, parking, etc. would be made. A tram or shuttle for guided tours would be pursued. The historic integrity of the National Register district would be maintained, and historic buildings at the missile site would continue to be used for park administrative purposes.	Seasonal, guided interpretive tours of the Nike Missile Base site would continue. The historic integrity of the National Register district would be maintained, and historic buildings at the missile site would continue to be used for park administrative purposes.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except no tram or shuttle for guided tours would be pursued.
Bicycling and Hiking Opportunities	Bicycling on the main park road from the park entrance to Flamingo would continue to be allowed. Bicycling would continue to be permitted on other park roads where motor vehicles are allowed and on a few trails where bicycling is specifically permitted (e.g., Long Pine Key trail)	Same as alternative 1 plus connections with nearby trails comprising the South Dade Greenway Network, including the proposed Biscayne–Everglades National Park Greenway, would be provided where feasible. The park would also pursue development of some additional hiking/bicycling trails in frontcountry zones at Long Pine Key and Flamingo.	Same as alternative 1 plus connections with nearby trails comprising the South Dade Greenway Network, including the proposed Biscayne–Everglades National Park Greenway, would be provided where feasible.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Paddling Opportunities	Established paddle launch sites along the main park road (e.g., Nine Mile Pond, West Lake, and Hell’s Bay) would continue.	Paddle launch sites along the main park road would be improved.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
FLAMINGO				
Commercial Services and Facilities	<p>A new, long-term concession contract for Flamingo would be awarded. Concession services would include overnight accommodations, food service, a marina with boat rentals, the campground, and guided boat tours operated by a park concessioner. See chapter 1, the section titled “Ongoing Projects and Projects Planned for the Near Future, Flamingo Area Improvements” for more background information on this topic.</p> <p>New facilities at Flamingo would be designed to be sustainable, elevated/hardened/re-locatable structures. The existing gas station would be renovated to accommodate lodging reception. New overnight guest accommodations provided via concessioner operations would include cabins, houseboats, and seasonal ecotents. The visitor center would be rehabilitated to meet visitor information, orientation, lodging, tour, and rental needs. The historic Mission 66 visitor center would be rehabilitated, preserved, and adaptively reused to enhance visitor services and administrative workspace. Increased education and recreational opportunities would be based out of Flamingo and may include more guided tours, and land and water livery services. Food and beverage service to accommodate park visitors would be provided by the concessioner. Concessions housing would be rehabilitated, and some additional units of NPS and concessions housing would be provided to serve peak season operations. The NPS/concessions maintenance area would be improved (a few replacement buildings would be provided; workspaces would be reorganized, etc.). Restoration would occur restoration at camping loops B and C (approximately 50 acres).</p>	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.

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FLORIDA BAY				
Boat Access Points	Flamingo would remain the only Florida Bay boat access point within Everglades National Park. All other access to the bay would originate from outside the park such as from the Intracoastal Waterway in the upper keys that shares a 40-mile boundary with the park.	Flamingo would remain the main boat access point to Florida Bay within Everglades National Park. A new launch point for carry-in boats would be established near Long Sound on the 18-mile length of U.S. 1. The National Park Service would pursue partnership opportunities for additional public boating (motorized and nonmotorized) access sites onto Florida Bay.	Flamingo would remain the main boat access point to Florida Bay within Everglades National Park. A new launch point for carry-in boats would be established near Long Sound on the 18-mile stretch of U.S. 1.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Channels for Boat Access in Florida Bay	NPS boundary and channel markers for established channels would remain in use. Marked channels and recommended motorboat routes would continue to be identified on NOAA maps, commercially offered charts, and the "Florida Bay Map and Guide."	Established channels would remain in use. Future refinements to this system would be based on the boating safety and resource protection plan effort described in the first section of this table.	Same as alternative 1.	Compared to the no-action alternative, fewer channels would remain in use, to reduce bottom impacts from propeller scarring and groundings. Channels and recommended motorboat routes would continue to be identified on NOAA maps, commercially offered charts, and the "Florida Bay Map and Guide."
Boating Management of Florida Bay	There would be no change in how boaters use or access Florida Bay. Boating would remain relatively unrestricted throughout most of the bay.	Much of Florida Bay would be in the boat access zone. Pole/troll zones (about 131,392 acres or 33% of Florida Bay waters within the park) would be established to better protect designated submerged marine wilderness, vegetation, and wildlife resources while allowing for a wide range of recreational opportunities and reasonable access. The pole/troll zones in this alternative were developed with public input and are based on science and expert on-the-water knowledge of where boats can be operated with reduced likelihood of damaging seagrass beds and other shallow water habitats. The zone locations would be fine-tuned over time through the adaptive management process. The pole/troll zones would be minimally marked to preserve the scenery and aesthetics of Florida Bay and minimize maintenance requirements, so boaters would rely primarily on navigation skills, global positioning system (GPS) technology, marine charts, and materials developed for the boater education program to comply with the zone requirements. Within pole/troll zones, boats would have to be propelled using push poles, electric trolling motors, or paddles. Internal combustion engines could be used in designated channels/access routes. To access the majority (77.5%) of pole/troll zones, visitors would need to pole or troll 0.5 mile or less. Less than 20% of the pole/troll zones would require visitors to pole or troll between 0.5 to 1.0 mile, and less than 1% of pole/troll areas would be more than 1.5 miles away from traditional boat access zones. The majority of the bay would still be open to motorboat access and most pole/troll distances would be relatively short. The Pole/Troll Distance Analysis map, Pole/Troll Vessel Density Analysis map, and the Pole/Troll Analysis: Flamingo Area map for the NPS preferred alternative follow table 6.	Nearly all of Florida Bay waters would be in the boat access zone, so boating would remain relatively unrestricted throughout most of the bay. The few established short, idle speed, no-wake areas would remain.	Much of Florida Bay would be in the boat access zone. Pole/troll zones (about 159,564 acres or 41% of Florida Bay waters within the park) would be established to better protect designated submerged marine wilderness, vegetation, and wildlife resources. The pole/troll zones in this alternative cover the shallowest areas of Florida Bay (basically, mean depth 2 feet or less, based on the propeller scarring study's (NPS 2008b) prediction of areas at risk of propeller and grounding damage). The pole/troll zones would be marked and also shown on marine charts and GPS maps. Within pole/troll zones, boats would have to be propelled using push poles, electric trolling motors, or paddles. Internal combustion engines could be used in designated channels. The emphasis on preservation resulted in longer distances when compared to the NPS preferred alternative—boaters would have to pole or troll to reach their desired water destination (in some cases, exceeding 5 miles). The majority of the pole/troll zones (61.0%) would require visitors accessing these areas to pole or troll up to 0.5 mile. Visitors accessing the next tier of these zones (23% of pole/troll areas) would have to pole or troll between 0.5 and 1.0 mile. Under this alternative, 16% of pole/troll zones would require visitors to pole or troll more than 1.01 miles from motorboat access zones, as compared to less than 5% of pole/troll zones over 1.01 miles in the NPS preferred alternative. Under alternative 4, more than half of Florida Bay would still be open to motorboat access. The Pole/Troll Distance Analysis map, Pole/Troll Vessel Density Analysis map, and the Pole/Troll Analysis: Flamingo Area map for alternative 4 follow table 6.
Idle speed, no-wake Areas	The few existing small idle speed, no-wake areas in Florida Bay would remain.	The few existing small idle speed, no-wake areas in Florida Bay would remain. A 300-foot-wide idle speed, no-wake area would be designated along the mainland shoreline from Middle Cape eastward to Shell Creek (west end of Long Sound) to reduce shoreline erosion from motorboat wakes, improve safety and experiences for those on the shoreline or boating	Same as alternative 1.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except the 300-foot-wide idle speed, no-wake area would be designated along the mainland shoreline between East Cape and Middle Cape and around the keys in Florida Bay.

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		close to the shoreline, and better protect wildlife. This zone would also serve as a buffer that would improve the natural soundscapes in the adjacent backcountry and wilderness areas. In places where this idle speed, no-wake designation near shoreline would fall within a pole/troll designation due to shallow water depth, the pole/troll designation would prevail.		
Seagrass Restoration	Small-scale seagrass restoration and monitoring efforts (for selected areas badly damaged by propeller scarring and groundings) would continue.	A formal seagrass restoration program for submerged marine wilderness resources and sites damaged by groundings and propeller scarring would be established.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and Adjacent Water Bodies	Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and adjacent smaller water bodies (also known as the "Crocodile Sanctuary") would remain closed to public access.	Little Madeira Bay, Joe Bay, and adjacent smaller water bodies would be in the special protection zone, remaining closed to public access. These water bodies would continue to serve as a baseline area for long-term ecological monitoring and restoration studies.	After being closed for more than 20 years, Joe Bay would be reopened for paddling use only (and managed as the backcountry zone). Little Madeira Bay and adjacent smaller water bodies would be in the pole/troll zone. Fishing would be allowed in these areas.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Long Sound	Public boating access in Long Sound would continue.	Long Sound would be managed as a backcountry (nonmotorized) zone to improve wilderness-type paddling opportunities.	Long Sound would be zoned boat access, meaning public boating access would continue.	Same as alternative 2.
Keys and Chickees in Florida Bay	Two keys in Florida Bay (Little Rabbit and North Nest) would continue to be open to visitors for day use and camping. These sites, plus the two chickees at Johnson Key and Shark Point, would be managed in accordance with the park's backcountry permit program and backcountry management plan as updated. Bradley Key and Carl Ross Key would remain open to visitor use during daylight hours. Other keys in the bay would remain closed to public use to protect bird nesting and rookery areas.	As in alternative 1, Little Rabbit, North Nest, Carl Ross, and Bradley keys would remain open. All other keys would be in the special protection zone and remain closed to public use to protect nesting and roosting birds. <i>Three</i> additional chickees (platform campsites) would be built in Florida Bay.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except <i>five</i> additional chickees would be built in Florida Bay.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except <i>four</i> additional chickees would be built in Florida Bay.
KEY LARGO				
NPS Site and Tarpon Basin	Facilities at the 20-acre NPS site in Key Largo (ranger station and Florida Bay Interagency Science Center) would continue to provide a base of operations for NPS law enforcement, interpretation, and ecological research activities. The Key Largo ranger station would continue to serve primarily park operations, with limited visitor services.	Facilities at the 20-acre NPS site in Key Largo would remain. Improvements would include a new visitor information kiosk and a venue to support the boater education/permit program, a paddler launch, and an interpretive trail through the site's upland hammock. Both the existing site in Key Largo and the new Tarpon Basin property would be considered to meet resource protection, interpretive, and recreational needs.	Same as NPS preferred alternative without the paddler launch and interpretive trail.	Same as alternative 2.
Visitor Information/Orientation	n/a	NPS staff would pursue an interagency visitor information/orientation facility in the upper keys with other agencies. To allow maximum flexibility, existing facilities or a new facility in Key Largo would be used for this purpose.	Same as NPS preferred alternative but only existing facilities in Key Largo would be pursued for this purpose.	Same as the NPS preferred alternative but only a new facility or expansion of an existing facility in Key Largo would be pursued for this purpose.
EAST EVERGLADES ADDITION				
Overview	In 1989 the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act added 109,506 acres of the northeast portion of Shark River Slough (the "East Everglades Addition") to the park. Although the 1979 <i>Master Plan</i> does not address management of the East Everglades Addition, the 1991 land protection plan for the East Everglades Addition identified that all lands in the East Everglades were needed for ecosystem restoration, set priorities for acquisition, and gave examples of compatible and incompatible land uses. The East Everglades Addition would continue to be managed under guidance provided in the Expansion Act and the land protection plan.	The northwest portion of the East Everglades Addition, where much of the private and commercial airboat use typically occurs, would be managed as frontcountry zone (see "NPS Preferred Alternative" map). The remaining area would be managed as backcountry (nonmotorized), providing the classic Everglades wilderness experience of solitude and quiet.	The northern half of the East Everglades Addition (except for the easternmost part, which is mostly marl prairie and inaccessible to airboats) would be in the frontcountry zone (see "Alternative 2" map). Most of the rest of the Addition would be in the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone, providing classic Everglades wilderness experiences.	The northwest portion of the East Everglades Addition would be managed as the frontcountry zone (see "Alternative 4" map). Most of the remaining area would be managed as backcountry (nonmotorized), providing the classic Everglades wilderness experience of solitude and quiet.

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Wilderness	No wilderness is proposed, but wilderness-eligible lands (most of the East Everglades Addition) would be managed to preserve their eligibility for preservation until the legislative process of wilderness designation has been completed.	Proposed wilderness: about 80,100 acres Proposed potential wilderness: about 9,900 acres Total: 90,000 acres Potential wilderness would become designated wilderness once nonconforming uses such as private airboat use have ended and/or private property came into federal ownership.	Proposed wilderness: about 39,500 acres Proposed potential wilderness: 0 acres Total: 39,500 acres	Proposed wilderness: about 42,700 acres Proposed potential wilderness: about 59,400 acres Total: 102,100 acres Potential wilderness would become designated wilderness once nonconforming uses such as private airboat use have ended and/or private property came into federal ownership.
Private Airboating	According to the 1989 East Everglades Expansion Act, private airboat operators who were owners of record of registered airboats in use within the East Everglades Addition on January 1, 1989, may continue using airboats in the East Everglades Addition during their lifetimes. Most private airboat use would probably remain on commonly used airboat trails or routes, although there is currently no such requirement.	A private airboat permit system would be implemented. Private airboating by those eligible individuals would continue within the frontcountry zone. Airboats would be required to stay on designated routes, and other regulations could be established to protect resources. New and/or improved airboat launch sites would be established north of Chekika and along Tamiami Trail.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except the frontcountry zone (where airboats could operate) would be larger.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except the shape of the frontcountry zone would be slightly different because of the elimination of commercial airboat tours.
Commercial Airboating	Four commercial airboat tour operators based along Tamiami Trail would continue to provide guided trips into the East Everglades Addition (plus food/beverage service, wildlife shows, gift shops, etc.) for visitors with little input or oversight from the National Park Service; these businesses would continue to operate at their own discretion without a permit from the National Park Service.	Authorized commercial airboat operations would continue and would be placed under concessions contracts with the park. To support park and ecosystem restoration goals, the park would seek to minimize/consolidate the number of commercial airboat facilities shared by as many as four operators. The concessions contract(s) would include several provisions, as follows: Only services that are necessary and appropriate to Everglades National Park would be provided (e.g., airboat tours, food service, and limited merchandise sales). Interpretive and educational information for airboat tour visitors would be guided by park interpretive/educational standards and coordinated with the park's interpretive staff, as is already done at the Shark Valley, Gulf Coast, and Flamingo areas. A variety of airboat tours would be provided (not necessarily all by the same operator). Consistent with Public Law 101-229, commercial airboats would travel on designated routes and in a manner that protects biological resources.	Same as NPS preferred alternative except that: A wider range of airboat tours, including specialized tours to more destinations, would be provided. Livery services for transportation of paddlers and campers to designated locations in the East Everglades would be provided.	Commercial airboat operations within the park would end in this alternative, so visitors would no longer have the opportunity to take a commercial guided airboat tour. One fill site that is now used as commercial airboat base of operations would be used instead for visitor activities and programs such as picnicking, wildlife viewing, a canoe/kayak launch, and camping. If not needed for other purposes, the sites would be restored to natural conditions.
Paddling and Camping	Backcountry paddling would remain an option for visitors (with a special use permit required for overnight visits), but with no paddling trails or designated primitive campgrounds, such use would likely remain at very low levels.	Canoe/kayak launches would be provided along Tamiami Trail, allowing for both short- and long-distance paddling opportunities. The locations of these access points would be coordinated with Tamiami Trail Modifications: Next Steps. Permits would be required for overnight use in the East Everglades Addition, as is the case in other areas of the park. Long-distance paddling routes (unmarked) would allow visitors to connect through Shark River Slough to the main park road, Alternative Wilderness Waterway, or Whitewater Bay/Gulf of Mexico. Tree islands in both the frontcountry and backcountry zones would be identified for day and camping use. To protect wetlands and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, routes and sites might be periodically closed or have limited access during nesting seasons or low water periods. Other tree islands not specifically identified for visitor use would be closed. Public use areas could be maintained cooperatively via contractual agreements with commercial airboat concessioners or other stakeholder organizations.	Same as the NPS preferred alternative except that long-distance paddling opportunities would not be provided, and public use areas on tree islands would not be maintained via contractual agreements with commercial airboat concessioners or other stakeholder organizations.	Same as the NPS preferred alternative except that public use areas on tree islands would not be cooperatively via contractual agreements with commercial airboat concessioners or other stakeholder organizations.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF KEY DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES

PLANNING UNIT / TOPIC	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 4
Administrative and Operational Facilities	East Everglades administrative and operational activities would continue to operate out of adapted former residences within the East Everglades Addition, which are not well suited to park operational uses. This situation leads to operational inefficiencies and is inconsistent with the intent of the Everglades Expansion Act.	A new East Everglades administrative/operations center would be built near, but outside the park boundary near Chekika on land recently acquired under Public Law 108-483. This center would include a ranger/visitor contact station, a fire management station, housing for several law enforcement rangers, a helicopter landing zone, equipment and vehicle storage, wayside/exhibit kiosks, and offices. Residences in the park that are now being used for these purposes would be demolished once the operations center is functional and the sites restored to natural conditions.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Other Management Considerations	There are nine former hunting camps of various ages and conditions on tree islands in the East Everglades Addition. Use of such sites would continue without permits or regulations (aside from the permit requirement for overnight use).	Some East Everglades cultural sites would be maintained and protected through a site stewardship program. Shark River Slough cultural/archeological resources would be integrated into interpretive programs.	n/a	Some East Everglades Addition cultural sites would be maintained and protected through a stewardship program. Shark River Slough cultural/archeological resources would be integrated into interpretive programs.
Chekika	Chekika, a former state recreation area, would remain open for day use on a seasonal basis. Other area infrastructure, such as trails, roads, and borrow pits, would be informally used by the public for activities such as wildlife viewing, bicycling, and fishing.	Chekika would remain open at least seasonally as a day use area, with education and recreation programs focused on park natural and cultural resources and ecosystem restoration efforts. Borrow pits/ponds at Chekika would be filled in and restored to allow for more natural conditions.	Chekika would remain open at least seasonally as a day use area and for primitive camping. The level of education and resource-based programs would be increased.	Chekika would remain open at least seasonally for day use and would also serve as one of the park's environmental education venues; this could include overnight programs.
Other Visitor Opportunities	n/a	Education and recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and learning about Everglades restoration and history) would be expanded along Tamiami Trail, around SW 237th Avenue near Chekika, at some tree islands, and near the park's eastern boundary. This would be accomplished in cooperation with public and private entities that are involved in Tamiami Trail modification projects, eastern boundary water modification projects, restoration of natural flows into the park, and regional greenway efforts near the park. Previously disturbed sites would be used to the maximum extent possible.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
TAMIAMI TRAIL / SHARK VALLEY				
Alternative Transportation	n/a	NPS staff would pursue alternative transportation options (probably during the high visitor use season to start) from the Miami area to visitor destinations along Tamiami Trail (e.g., to commercial airboat tour sites and Shark Valley). Such options would likely involve cooperation and/or partnerships with other entities.	n/a	Same as the NPS preferred alternative.
Visitor Orientation/ Visitor Opportunities along Tamiami Trail	Many travelers along Tamiami Trail would remain unaware of their proximity to the national park and the educational and recreational opportunities available along the more than 20 miles of the road that borders the park.	A visitor information kiosk and a series of turnouts would be provided along Tamiami Trail for visitor orientation and an overview of natural and cultural resource issues, including ecosystem restoration. Locations would be coordinated with Tamiami Trail modifications related to ecosystem restoration.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	NPS staff would pursue with other partners (e.g., local, state, and federal management entities involved in Everglades restoration and Tamiami Trail rebuilding) a new multiagency visitor contact facility near the intersection of Tamiami Trail and Krome Avenue to provide a centralized location for visitors to get information about outdoor recreational and educational opportunities, resource issues, and ecosystem restoration efforts throughout the Tamiami Trail corridor.
Shark Valley	Shark Valley would remain the primary area of park orientation and interpretation along the northern boundary of the park. Visitors would continue to hike, bike, or ride an interpretive tram on the 15-mile Shark Valley loop road and visit the Shark Valley observation tower at the halfway point.	Same as alternative 1 plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional evening programs would be established ▪ Two shelters/rest stops would be added along the loop road within the footprint of existing development. ▪ The reservation system for tram tours and bicycles would be expanded to minimize parking and congestion in this area. ▪ Pre-trip information would also be expanded to encourage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same as alternative 1 except: ▪ Additional evening programs would be established ▪ Several shelters/rest stops would be added along the loop road within the footprint of existing development. ▪ Use current administrative area as overflow and/or bicyclist parking area. 	Same as alternative 2.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF KEY DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES

PLANNING UNIT / TOPIC	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 4
		visitation during off-peak hours, spread use out throughout the day, and inform visitors about what to expect.		
Administrative and Operational Facilities	Law enforcement, interpretation, and maintenance operations for the Tamiami Trail District would remain in existing facilities.	Law enforcement, maintenance operations for the park's Tamiami Trail District, along with some resource management administrative facilities and housing for several law enforcement rangers, would be relocated and centralized at a new operations facility at a previously disturbed site within the national park, e.g., a portion of the Gator Park site after NPS acquisition of the land. A ranger residence and interpretive operations would remain at Shark Valley. Current facilities would be removed once the new district facility is operational.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as alternative 1.
Partnerships	n/a	The National Park Service would coordinate with other land management agencies along Tamiami Trail to identify and pursue cooperative projects for improved operational efficiency. Park staff would pursue working cooperatively with the Miccosukee Tribe to integrate education programs and opportunities offered by both entities and to determine the feasibility of sharing resources and facilities to meet park and tribal goals.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
GULF COAST / TEN THOUSAND ISLANDS / EVERGLADES CITY				
NPS Facilities at Gulf Coast	Everglades City would continue to serve as the western gateway to the park. The 20 acres of NPS land in Everglades City would remain as the center for visitor services and park operations for the Gulf Coast. Visitor services include visitor information and orientation at the small Gulf Coast Visitor Center, concessioner-operated boat tours, and a small concessions store. Space is very tight in the small boat basin that is used for NPS maintenance and ranger operations and concessions tours. An NPS canoe launch is available near the visitor center, but it is in poor condition. The NPS structures at Everglades City would continue to serve park interpretive, resource management, law enforcement/protection, and maintenance operations. These facilities have very limited work and storage space. This site would also continue to support concessions operations.	Visitor and administrative facilities at Gulf Coast would be in the developed zone. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center would be constructed to replace existing facilities, as required in the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989. Operation of the visitor center would focus on interpretation, orientation to address visitor opportunities available in the western portion of the park, protection of resources, and issuing backcountry permits. The size and the scope of the \$7.9 million facility improvements would be consistent with the value analysis performed in 2012 to address the scaled-down version of improvements at the Gulf Coast. A modest-sized visitor center would be constructed on currently disturbed land while other areas of the site would be reclaimed and rehabilitated. New parking would be constructed at the boat basin. A new canoe/kayak ramp and launch would be constructed to support both NPS and concessions operations.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Boat Access	Boat access to marine waters, at marinas and ramps in the local/regional community, would remain limited.	NPS staff would pursue working cooperatively with public and private interests to provide improved boat access outside the park to Gulf Coast waters.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Visitor Opportunities	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.	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.	Same as NPS preferred except that a cultural heritage trail would not be established.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Alternative Wilderness Waterway	n/a	A new Alternative Wilderness Waterway route would be established to provide enhanced opportunities for a quieter, more tranquil experience. This route would be minimally marked to preserve scenery and minimize maintenance requirements. The route would be marked by GPS waypoints.	As in the NPS preferred alternative, a new Alternative Wilderness Waterway route would be established. However, in this alternative the route would be unmarked, but highlighted in the mandatory boater education program, marine navigation charts, GPS systems, etc. Also,	As in the NPS preferred alternative, a new Alternative Wilderness Waterway route would be established. Some segments would be in the boat access zone, and continued relatively infrequent use of these segments by motorboats would be anticipated. Some segments would

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF KEY DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES

PLANNING UNIT / TOPIC	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 4
		Most segments of the Alternative Wilderness Waterway would be in the boat access zone, and continued relatively infrequent use of these segments by motorboats would be expected. To provide wilderness paddling experiences, a few segments would be in the backcountry (nonmotorized) zone based on narrowness or shallowness of the water, low clearance to mangroves, and available alternate routes for motorboats; see "NPS Preferred Alternative" map.	except for existing idle speed, no-wake areas, the entire Alternative Wilderness Waterway would be in the boat access zone (meaning no new boating restrictions). Continued relatively infrequent use of these segments by motorboats would be anticipated.	be designated idle speed, no-wake areas or backcountry (nonmotorized) zones; see "Alternative 4" map.
Chickees and Campsites	Visitors could continue to camp at backcountry chickees and campsites along the Gulf Coast and interior waterways.	Same as NPS alternative 1 plus as many as eight new backcountry chickees would be provided.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.	Same as NPS preferred alternative.
Gopher Creek	At Gopher Creek, the existing idle speed, no-wake designation along the first (easternmost) mile or so would remain.	Same as alternative 1, plus where the creek opens up into a series of very shallow ponds, bays, and creeks, Gopher Creek would be managed as a pole/troll zone to protect very shallow, submerged marine wilderness and important wildlife resources.	Same as alternative 1.	Manage Gopher Creek as a backcountry (paddle only zone to better protect resources and enhance wilderness opportunities.
SPECIAL REGULATIONS				
	Existing closures and restrictions would be retained. The closure of Little Madeira and Joe bays (also known as the Crocodile Sanctuary) would be made permanent with a special regulation in the <i>Code of Federal Regulations</i> (CFR) in 36 CFR 7.	<p>Implementing the pole/troll zones and identifying designated airboat routes in the East Everglades Addition would restrict uses of these areas and so would require special regulations under sections 1.5 and 3.8(b)(2) of 36 CFR. Closure of Little Madeira and Joe bays and other special protection zones would be made permanent with a special regulation.</p> <p>Closures or use restrictions deemed necessary under adaptive management or user capacity programs (to protect cultural or natural resources or desired visitor experiences) would be accomplished through either special regulations or the superintendent's compendium.</p> <p>The closure of some tree islands in the East Everglades Addition to protect cultural and natural resources would be accomplished through the authority in section 1.5 of 36 CFR (Superintendent's Compendium) because it would not likely be a substantial alteration of public use patterns.</p> <p>Implementing the idle speed, no-wake areas would be accomplished under the discretionary authority of the park superintendent to set speed limits (36 CFR 3.8).</p> <p>Establishing the mandatory boater education/permit process is authorized under section 1.6 and 3.3 of 36 CFR.</p>	Same as the NPS preferred alternative.	Same as the NPS preferred alternative.
COSTS AND STAFFING				
Staffing	The NPS staffing level under the no-action alternative would be FTE staff members. Volunteers and partnerships would continue to be key contributors to NPS operations.	The staffing level needed to implement the NPS preferred alternative would be 249 FTE staff members—35 positions more than under the no-action alternative. Volunteers and partnerships would continue to be key contributors to NPS operations.	The NPS staffing level needed to implement alternative 2 would be 240 FTE staff members—26 more positions than under the no-action alternative. Volunteers and partnerships would continue to be key contributors to NPS operations.	The NPS staffing level needed to implement alternative 4 would be 251 FTE staff members—37 more positions than under the no-action alternative. Volunteers and partnerships would continue to be key contributors to NPS operations.
Costs	<p>Annual operating costs of this alternative would be \$17 million.</p> <p>One-time capital costs (for Flamingo improvements) would be \$10.8 million.</p>	<p>Annual operating costs for this alternative would be \$22.1 million.</p> <p>One-time costs (including new construction and nonfacility costs such as major resource plans and projects) would be \$40.8 million, inclusive of Flamingo improvements.</p>	<p>Annual operating costs for this alternative would be \$20.9 million.</p> <p>One-time costs (including new construction and nonfacility costs, such as major resource plans and projects), would be \$36.1 million, inclusive of Flamingo improvements.</p>	<p>Annual operating costs for this alternative would be \$22.1 million.</p> <p>One-time costs (including new construction and nonfacility costs such as major resource plans and projects) would be \$38.7 million, inclusive of Flamingo improvements.</p>