

Biscayne National Park (Park) Supplemental Draft General Management Plan (Plan)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



Welcome

PUBLIC MEETING

Agenda

- **6:00 p.m.** Meet & Greet
- **6:30 p.m.** Presentation
- **7:00 p.m.** Opportunity to Comment
- **8:45 p.m.** Closing Remarks



Purpose of Meeting

- Obtain your views on new alternatives presented
- Summarize Plan history and alternatives
- Describe new alternatives, including a new NPS preferred alternative & collaboration
 - Special recreation zone (SRZ)
 - SRZ fishing access



A Word from FWC

- Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
 - Jessica McCawley, Director
 - Division of Marine Fisheries Management



Purpose of Biscayne National Park

“To preserve and protect for the education, inspiration, recreation, and enjoyment of present and future generations a rare combination of terrestrial, marine and amphibious life in a tropical setting of great natural beauty.”

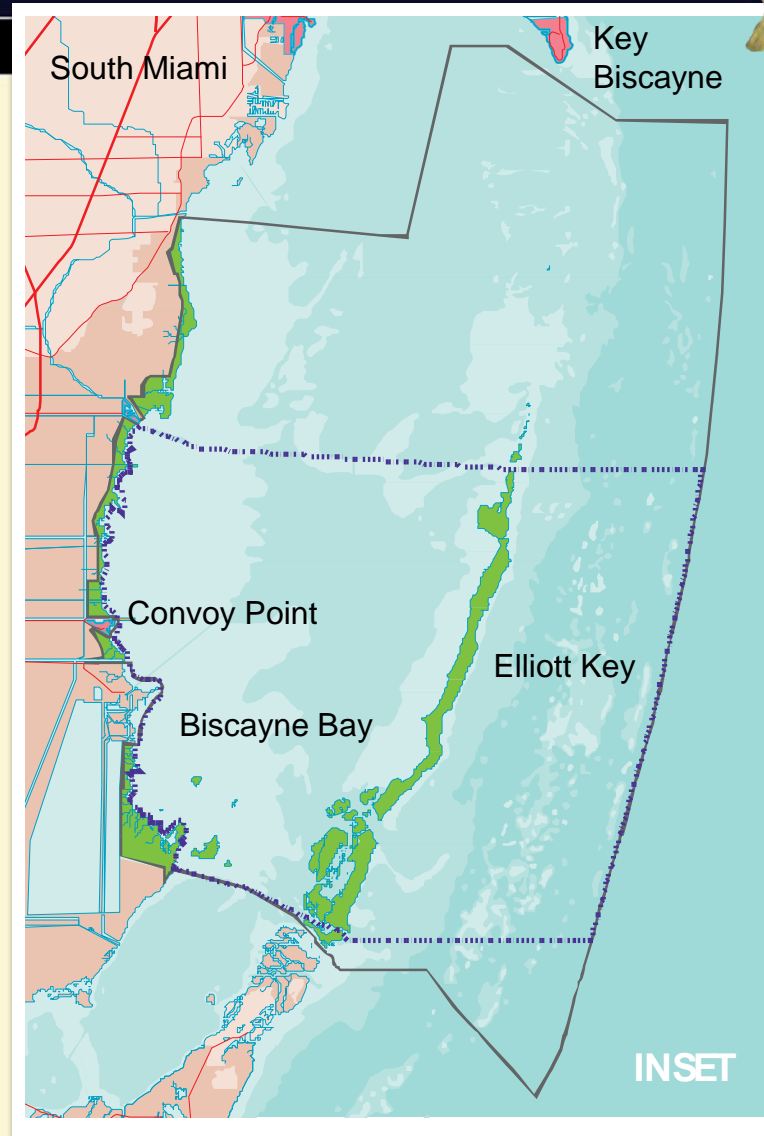


What is a General Management Plan?

- Proposed zoning for the park as a whole
- Sets desired resource conditions and visitor experiences
- Meant to last ~20 years (last one 1983)
- Provides a framework for decisions by future park managers
 - How to protect resources & provide visitor experiences
 - Manage visitor use
 - What kinds of facilities could be developed



Biscayne National Park Location



Biscayne National Park Highlights

- One of the largest marine parks (95% water) in the national park system
- Recreation destination for 496,000 people annually
- Provides recreational opportunity for 4.4 million people in South Florida within 50 miles of the park



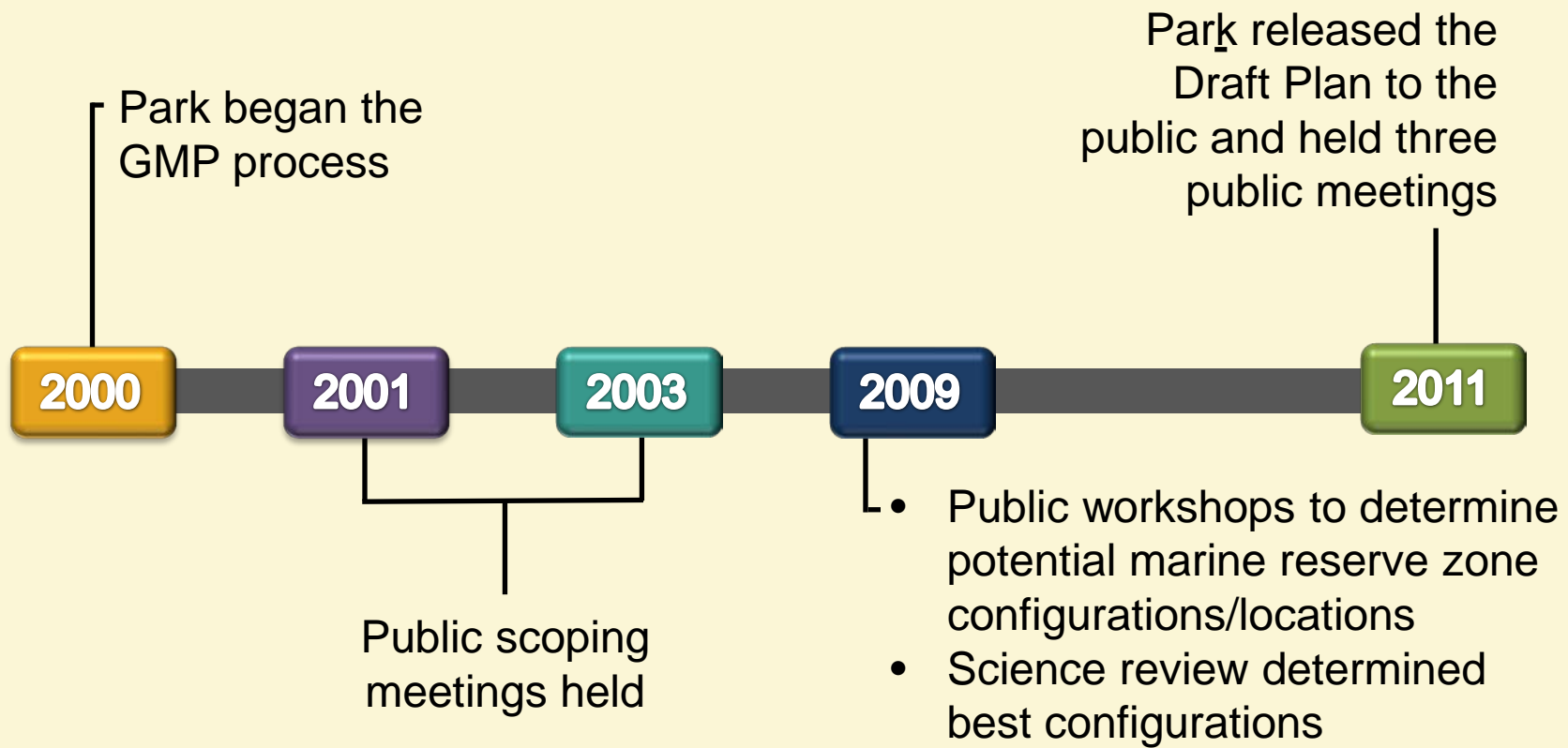
Biscayne National Park Highlights

Visitor opportunities to experience:

- multiple ecosystems
- wildlife watching
- snorkeling, diving, fishing
- historic shipwrecks
- historic structures
- coral reefs



General Management Plan History



Alternatives from 2011 Plan

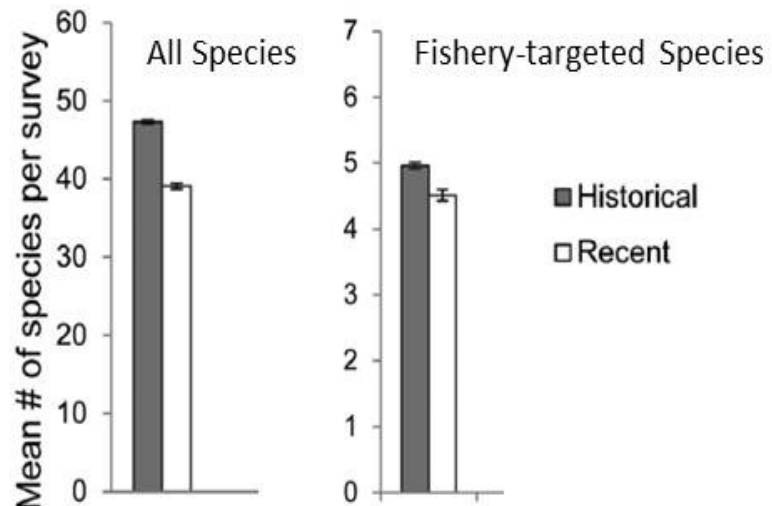
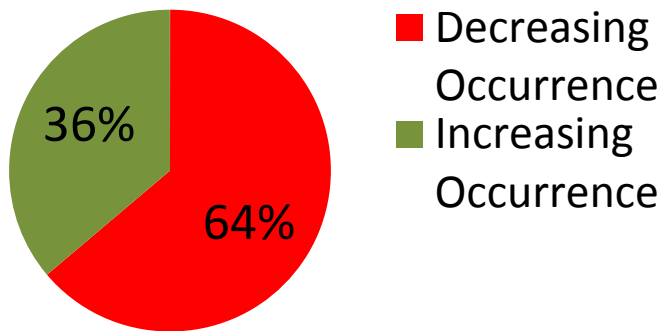
- **ALTERNATIVES 1-5** (Details in 2011 Plan)
- **ALTERNATIVE 1** (No Action)
- **ALTERNATIVE 4** (Original preferred)
with Marine Reserve Zone



Why increase reef protection?

The park has experienced a drastic reduction in fish abundances and diversity over the past 30 years, with most fish observed below the legal minimum size limit.

**Trends in reef fish species over
~30 years**



Furthermore... over half of fishing trips in park return with no fish.

ALTERNATIVE 1 (No-Action)

- Current condition
- Used for comparison



2011 Plan

ALTERNATIVE 4

Marine Reserve Zone

- Provide memorable visitor experience while maintaining a healthier reef
- Protect aquatic community and reef ecosystem
- Improve fishing opportunities outside of zone from spillover



Public Input on the 2011 Plan

Draft Plan released in August 2011 for public comment on alternatives 1-5.

- Over 18,000 comments on the draft plan
- Most comments were related to the proposed Marine Reserve Zone



Why Consider a New Approach?

- Comments included substantive comments on negative impacts from marine reserves
 - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 - Fishing stakeholders
- NPS considering a different approach:
 - Allow continued fishing
 - Still achieve many original MRZ goals
 - Healthier reef, memorable visitor experience, enhanced marine resource protection
 - Review progress over time with potential for future management changes
 - Process known as “Adaptive Management”

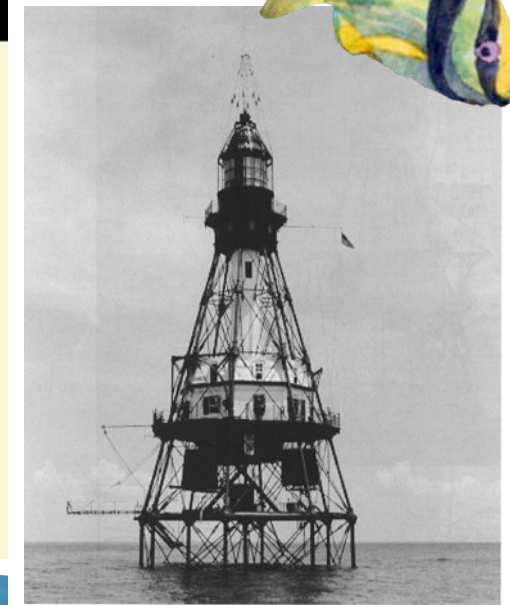


Development of Supplemental Plan



Overview Alternatives 6 (*preferred*) & 7

- Common to both alternatives
 - Implement Fishery Management Plan
 - Pursue acquisition of Ragged Keys 2, 3, and 5 from willing sellers
 - Maintain Fowey Rocks Lighthouse
 - Increased protection in a smaller area for Legare
- Mainland
 - Add platform and boardwalk
 - Install informational kiosks outside park boundary
- Keys
 - Porgy: Add canoe dock
 - Adams/Elliott: Add new kayak/canoe staging area
 - Arsenicker, West Arsenicker, and Swan: closed as natural resource protection zone primarily for bird nesting and protected plant species
- Reef tract
 - **NEW! Special Recreation Zone**



ALTERNATIVES 6 & 7

- Alternatives were based on Alternative 4
- Changes based on public comments
- Location of new zone similar to Alt 4
- Special Recreation Zone 39% larger
- Protect 70% of park's reefs
- Reduced Legare Anchorage



Marine Resource Protection in the SRZ

Special recreation zone larger than marine reserve zone while providing similar goals of healthier coral reef system.

- Balances visitor use and resource protection: less restrictive than a marine reserve zone
- Enhanced range of opportunities for visitor experiences
- Many protections retained: no anchoring, no traps, no commercial fishing except ballyhoo
- Mooring buoys



Fishing Access in the SRZ

- Dual state and federal permit system (Alternative 6 only)
- Spearfishing, lobstering, and grouper harvest prohibited
- Lionfish harvest encouraged (spearfishing allowed for exotics)
- Commercial fishing prohibited, except ballyhoo lampara net fishery



Commercial Fishing

- GMP **ALTERNATIVE 6** and **ALTERNATIVE 7** eliminate commercial fishing in the SRZ
 - Exception for lampara net ballyhoo fishery
- Final Fishery Management Plan is anticipated for release early 2014 and would phase out commercial fishing in the entire park
- Special state and federal regulations would be required to phase out commercial fishing
 - Ballyhoo commercial fishery would be phased out in Fishery Management Plan



Special Recreation Zone Goals/Benefits

- Larger than Marine Reserve Zone
- Balances visitor use and resource protection
- Provides unique opportunity to experience healthier reef system
- Reduces coral damage
- Allows for unique fishing experience
- Allows for adaptive management



Special Recreation Zone, **ALTERNATIVE 6** (*New Agency Preferred*)

- Fishing access allowed via state and federal dual permit system
 - 430 permits for public
 - 70 permits for guides

See poster for proposed permit details

FWC supports and will participate in implementation of this alternative




Special Recreation Zone, **ALTERNATIVE 7**

- Same as **ALTERNATIVE 6**, except for zone management.
- Same Special Recreation Zone geographic area and location.
- Differences in zone fishing access:
 - No zone fishing permits required
 - Open to fishing from October–May
 - Seasonally closed to fishing (June–September)

FWC would not participate in implementation of this alternative



Adaptive Management Strategy for Special Recreation Zone (both alts)

- Monitor/evaluate/adjust
 - Data reviews at 3, 5, 8, 10 years
 - Monitor Resource Trends – fish, benthic communities, etc.
 - Evaluate Management Tools – education, law enforcement, buoys
 - Adjust – number of permits (Alt 6 only), mooring buoys, education and law enforcement
- Independent panel review at 5 and 10 years
 - Provides recommendations on the science plan, monitoring results, and long-term management

After 10 years - NPS makes decision to continue special recreation zone or convert to marine reserve zone

Schedule





Thank You!

In a moment, it's your turn
to comment.

Ways You Can Comment

- **Verbal Comments Today**

- Sign up to speak at the microphone
- Give your comments to staff at an easel pad

- **Electronic Comments**

- Online via PEPC
- <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bisc>

- **Paper Comments**

- **Deliver in person** during this meeting, or go to the lobby visitor center
- **Mail to**
Biscayne National Park GMP
ATTN: Morgan Elmer (DSC-P)
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

