

# Chapter 4

## Consultation and Coordination



*Photo courtesy of: Everglades National Park Photo*

**EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK**  
**DRAFT**

**FLAMINGO COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**



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## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

Park staff place a high priority on meeting the intent of public involvement in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and giving the public an opportunity to comment on proposed actions. As part of the National Park Service (NPS) NEPA process, issues associated with the action were identified during scoping meetings with NPS staff, coordination with other affected agencies, public meetings, and public comment.

During the development of a commercial services plan, the park has actively involved the public in the process. The park's goals for public participation include: acceptance of the commercial services plan by the public; substantive and valuable input to help guide park decisions; and minimization of conflicts through dissemination of information and initiating discussion.

The park places a high value on maintaining a meaningful dialogue with interested parties and organizations. The park elicited public participation in the discussion of alternatives for the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan. Scoping and public involvement efforts included a number of open house meetings, press releases, website posting, and dissemination of information and gathering of comment through the internet. Four public meetings were held and are detailed below.

In addition, projects exploring design and funding issues related to the Flamingo CSP/EA have been pursued by several organizations. The graduate program at the Yale University School of Architecture and the Miami-Dade County Design and Architecture Senior High School conducted semester-long projects focused on the sustainable rebuilding of Flamingo, while the National Parks Conservation Association – Suncoast Office sponsored design project. The South Florida National Parks Trust has committed more than \$25,000 in seed money to initiate the rebuilding effort.

### **PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS**

Four public scoping open house workshops were held on October 17, 2006, October 26, 2006, October 28, 2006, and November 9, 2006 to initiate public involvement early in the planning stage and to obtain community feedback regarding the initial concepts for the development of the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan and Environmental Assessment. These meetings were conducted at four different locations: the International Game Fish Association Hall of Fame in Dania Beach, the Key Largo Grande Resort in Key Largo, the Palmetto Golf Course in Miami, and the Coe Visitor Center at Everglades National Park in Homestead. A newsletter was sent announcing the public meetings, meeting information was available at the Coe and Flamingo visitor centers and the marina store, meeting dates were posted on the park web site, as well as a press release, newspaper ads in English and Spanish and an email reminder. In addition, a number of elected officials were notified by letter (see Appendix B).

The public scoping meetings were structured as two separate, repeated sessions during each workshop. In addition, informational displays and question-and-answer periods with park staff occurred with an opportunity to provide comment. The meetings began with small-group/one-on-one discussions and an overview presentation was provided by the superintendent; the meetings then continued with follow-on small-group/one-on-one discussions. During the open house, the public was able to visit information stations that detailed different aspects of the project and were given the opportunity to make comments on flip charts.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The purpose of the public scoping meetings was to solicit input from the community on the purpose, need, and objectives, as well as the preliminary alternatives for the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan at Everglades National Park. The public meetings included numerous methods for the community

to provide comment. Each of the information stations had a flip chart where an assigned person recorded comments on that particular topic, or any other topic on which the community member had concerns or questions. If the commenter did not want to make comments at the stations, a table was provided at the meeting with comment sheets that could be filled out and returned. If the attendee chose not to fill out the comment sheet at the meeting, a return address was provided on the sheet to mail back to the park at a later date. Those attending the meeting were also directed to an informational brochure on the project that provided additional opportunities for comment on the project, including directing comments to the NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ever>.

NPS provided a more than 45-day public comment period during which the public could participate by mail or on the PEPC website. NPS also posted public scoping information on the PEPC website addressing:

- Issues, opportunities, concerns, or potential environmental impacts the public would like to see addressed in the plan;
- Management strategies or alternatives the public thought should be considered in determining future commercial services that could be offered at Flamingo; and
- Answers to questions regarding the purpose, needs, and objectives statements for the plan, the types of commercial services that the NPS should provide at Flamingo and any other suggestions the public thought should be considered as the commercial services plan was developed.

Issues and concerns identified by the public during public scoping include:

- Lodging: With only two exceptions, the public voiced a strong desire to have lodging available at Flamingo.
- Expanded Services: Commenters asked for more educational opportunities, particularly guided tours. Also requested were more rentals, particularly houseboats and bicycles.
- Mosquitoes: Many commenters reminded NPS that Flamingo can be 'buggy' and there were many requests that outdoor facilities be screened in (e.g., amphitheatre, grills, swimming pool).
- Air conditioning: Some commenters worried that sustainable design would not include air conditioning.
- Showers: Many commenters requested hot showers be provided at Flamingo.
- Swimming Pool: The majority of commenters were in favor of a swimming pool; however, several were concerned with putting a swimming pool in a floodplain.
- Food: Suggestions varied from limited groceries at the marina store to a five star restaurant, but most commenters suggested that basic food services be provided.
- Sustainability: The majority of commenters supported using sustainable design to rebuild Flamingo, particularly alternative energy and elevating structures above storm surge.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN/EA**

This draft CSP/EA will be distributed for a 45-day public review and comment period. The Plan/EA will be made available for public review through PEPC, individual mailings of documents and CDs as requested, and hard copies of the document will be placed in local libraries throughout South Florida.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

Following analysis and response to public comments on the draft CSP/EA and any revisions needed to the plan, and conclusion of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and other agencies, preferred alternative will be selected and efforts to implement the plan will begin in 2008.

## **OTHER CONSULTATION**

Coordination and consultation efforts for this planning process focused on the means or processes to be used to include the public, major interest groups, and local public entities. Coordination with local and federal agencies and various interest groups was conducted during the NEPA process to identify issues and/or concerns related to commercial service at Flamingo. Copies of the letters sent the following list of federal and state agencies can be found in Appendix B:

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Lehtinen, Vargas, Reiner, and Riedi (Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida)
- Lewis, Longman, and Walker (Seminole Tribe of Florida)
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection, S.E. District
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources - Bureau of Historic Preservation, Compliance and Review Section
- Florida State Clearinghouse Coordinator, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- South Florida Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

To date, responses have been received from the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida (see Appendix B).

The Commercial Service Plan/EA or notice of its availability will be provided to a variety of federal, state and local agencies. Notice of the document will be posted on PEPC and the following provides a sampling of the individuals and organizations that will be contacted through the public involvement process.

## **CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATES**

Senators: Mel Martinez, Bill Nelson

District Representatives: Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (18<sup>th</sup>), Mario Diaz-Balart (25<sup>th</sup>)

State House of Representatives: Trudi Williams (75<sup>th</sup>), Garrett Richter (76<sup>th</sup>), David Rivera (112<sup>th</sup>), Juan Zapata (119<sup>th</sup>), Ron Saunders (120<sup>th</sup>), State Senate: Burt Saunders (37<sup>th</sup>), Larcenia Bullard (39<sup>th</sup>)

## **FEDERAL AGENCIES**

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch, Miami  
U.S. Coast Guard  
U.S. Department of Commerce-  
    National Marine Fisheries Service-Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
    NOAA-Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary  
    NOAA/Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
    Bureau of Indian Affairs – Eastern Office  
    Fish and Wildlife Service – South Florida Field Office Supervisor,  
    Geological Survey- Biological Resources Division  
Big Cypress National Preserve  
Biscayne National Park  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force  
U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highways Administration  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Federal Emergency Management Agency – Natural Hazards Branch

**AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES**

Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida  
Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Office of the Governor  
Florida Department of Community Affairs  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
    Florida Coastal Management Program  
Florida Department of Transportation  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Florida Department of State-Division of Historical Resources  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Florida Senate, District 40  
Florida House of Representatives, District 112  
Florida House of Representatives, District 120  
South Florida Water Management District Governing Board and Executive Director

**REGIONAL**

South Florida Regional Planning Council  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

**COUNTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Broward County Department of Natural Resources  
Broward County Department of Environmental Protection  
City of Homestead  
City of Florida City  
Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor  
Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department  
Miami-Dade County Commission, District 8  
Miami-Dade County Commission, District 9  
Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management, Director, Mr. John Renfrow  
Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department  
Monroe County Commission, District 5  
Monroe County Commission, District 4  
Monroe County Commission, District 3  
Monroe County Commission, District 2  
Monroe County Commission, District 1  
Monroe County Public Works Division  
Monroe County Environmental Resources Department  
Monroe County Marine Resources Department  
Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department

**ORGANIZATIONS**

Audubon Society of Florida  
Biscayne Bay Foundation  
Broward County Sierra Club  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Everglades Association  
Everglades Coalition  
Everglades Coordinating Council  
Florida Defenders of the Environment  
Florida Keys Guides Association

Florida Wildlife Federation  
Friends of the Everglades  
Historic Redland Tropical Trail members  
Izaak Walton League  
Key Largo Fishing Guides Association  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
National Wildlife Federation  
Ocean Conservancy – Florida Keys Office  
Sierra Club Florida  
Sierra Club Miami Group  
South Florida National Parks Trust  
Tropical Audubon Society  
The Wilderness Society  
Word Wildlife Fund Florida Keys Office  
1000 Friends of Florida

**BUSINESSES**

Everglades Alligator Farm  
Flamingo Lodge Marina and Outpost Resort (Xanterra)  
Robert is Here  
Schnebly Redland's Winery

**OTHER**

Southeast Environmental Research Center, FIU  
University of Miami, RSMAS  
Homestead/Florida City, Chamber of Commerce  
Marathon Chamber of Commerce  
Tropical Everglades Visitors Association

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