



ADDITION GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Dear Friends,

It has been more than 10 years since the planning process for the Addition general management plan was initiated. There are many reasons it has taken so long, including the fact that the scope of the plan was expanded to include wilderness and ORV management. The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on the work that we have been doing this past year and share with you the next steps and anticipated completion date for the general management plan.

We reached a significant milestone in the summer of 2009 when the *Draft Addition General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* was released to the public. The draft plan included four alternatives that provided various levels of public access, facility development, and proposed wilderness. The National Park Service held four public meetings and wilderness hearings across south Florida to hear comments on the draft plan. The comment period on the draft plan closed on September 30, 2009, and we received about 17,000 comments.

Since that time we have met with many government agencies and tribes to discuss their concerns. In the fall and winter of 2009 we analyzed all of the many comments we received and made revisions to the alternatives and the plan. Throughout this process the National Park Service has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

A draft of the final plan has been prepared and has undergone a preliminary interagency review. During the next several months it will be finalized, and we will print and release the final plan later this year. An NPS decision to approve the final plan is anticipated by the end of this year.

It is important to know that once the plan is completed, it will take time, planning, lots of effort, and funding to implement the selected alternative. Approval of the general management plan does not provide guaranteed funding for implementation, although the National Park Service has funding to develop the two additional access points (at mile markers 51 and 63) off of I-75 (as required by the Addition Act) through our partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation. The National Park Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission are already

working in partnership with other agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Department of Transportation, the South Florida Water Management District, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida at mile markers 51 and 63 to provide safe access from Alligator Alley for walk-in hunting and hiking shortly after the completion of the general management plan.

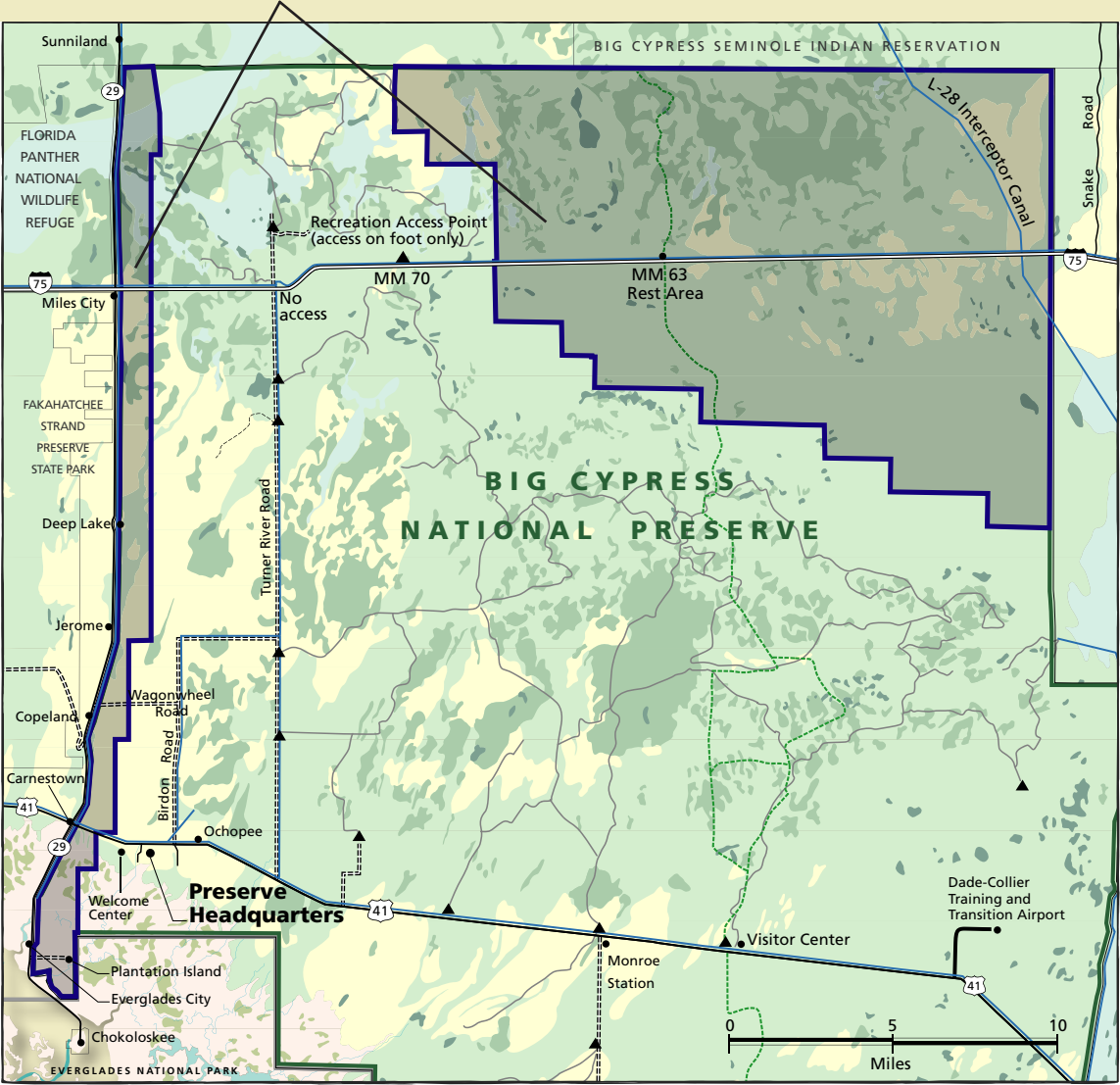


The planning process for the Addition has been difficult given the diversity of public input we have received over the years. The National Park Service commends all of the people and agencies that have remained engaged in the process and is convinced that the end product will be that much better because of the commitment of thousands of citizens with a common and genuine passion for Big Cypress National Preserve. Ultimately, we look forward to implementing a long-term management approach for the Addition that represents the interests and concerns we heard throughout the planning process and, most importantly, that follows the congressional mandate to protect this special place and provide for the enjoyment of all.

Sincerely,

Pedro Ramos
Superintendent,
Big Cypress National Preserve

Addition Lands



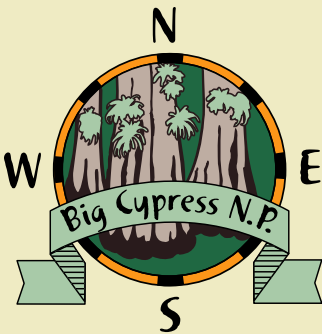
Next Steps

June–August 2010
Complete internal agency reviews of the final plan

September–October 2010
Print the final plan

November 2010
Distribute the final plan to the public, agencies, and tribes

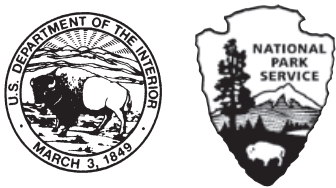
December 2010
Develop and sign the “Record of Decision” that approves the final plan



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PROJECT SCHEDULE

Time Frame	Planning Activity	How You Can Be Involved
Fall 2009 – Fall 2010	Prepare and Publish Final Document Based on public and agency comments, the Final General Management Plan is revised, printed, and distributed.	Read the final plan, including NPS responses to substantive public comments and agency letters.
Winter 2010	Agency Decision Following distribution of the final plan, the National Park Service approves the plan by publishing its “Record of Decision.”	Watch for an announcement about and read the “Record of Decision.”
2011 and beyond	Implement the Approved Plan After the “Record of Decision” is issued, and as funding allows, the plan is implemented.	Work with the Preserve to implement the plan.
For continued updates on the Addition GMP planning process, visit the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bicy where additional information is located and documents can be reviewed and downloaded.		

