

**EXCERPT FROM MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2009 MEETING OF THE
FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
A RESOLUTION FROM THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) REQUESTING THAT
THE SANCTUARY SUPERINTENDENT SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGARDING OUR COLLECTIVE THINKING FOR
INCLUSION IN THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK**

June 16, 2009

WHEREAS, Everglades National Park is a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and was set apart as a permanent wilderness, preserving essential primitive conditions including natural abundance, diversity, behavior and ecological integrity of the unique flora and fauna; and

WHEREAS, a six step process to develop a new 15-20 year General Management Plan (GMP) for Everglades National Park (ENP) was started in January 2003; and

WHEREAS, the main function of the GMP is to clearly define the Park's purpose and management direction and provide a foundation to guide and coordinate all subsequent planning and management; and

WHEREAS, the ecological health of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) is inextricably linked to that of Florida Bay and Everglades National Park, and

WHEREAS, a healthy Florida Bay ecosystem is essential to the economy and quality of life in the Florida Keys; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council brings members of a diverse community together to provide advice to the sanctuary superintendent (authority delegated from the Secretary of Commerce and the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere) on the management and protection of the sanctuary which is adjacent to the ENP;

NOW THEREFORE, THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL RESOLVES AND RECOMMENDS:

REVISED PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE FOR MARINE WATERS "3" BE SELECTED WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS AND THOUGHTS:

- Joe and Little Madeira Bay and their adjacent waters (a.k.a. the "Crocodile Sanctuary") be zoned as Research Natural Areas as incorporated in Alternative 4.
- Phase in Pole/Troll Zones, starting with areas that the *Patterns of Propeller Scarring of Seagrass in Florida Bay* resource evaluation report indicates as the most abused and areas that the *Aerial Survey of Boater Use in ENP Marine Waters* study indicates as most likely to protect user experiences, and then by use of Adaptive Management, phase in the remaining Pole/Troll Zones as indicated in Alternative 3.

- Prior to the finalization of the GMP, pilot the Pole/Troll Zone concept as soon as possible within Garfield Bight and from the Bowlegs cut to the northernmost Peterson Key.
- The establishment of an ENP advisory council (ENPAC) with a mission similar to the FKNMS Advisory Council should be given a high priority and initiated prior to the finalization of the GMP
- The ENP consider establishing a bay team based on the “Team O.C.E.A.N.” volunteer program in the FKNMS.
- Provide for more reasonable access, as conditions warrant, within the large new Pole/Troll Zones than currently indicated in the Alternative 3 map by locating all deeper waters inside the zones and zoning some or all of those deeper waters as Idle Speed-No Wake Zones or Boat Access Zones to better balance resource protection and access considerations.
- When marking new preferred routes and channels, use the smallest visual markers possible while still being compliant with United States Coast Guard (USCG) aids to navigation. Ideally these routes would not be displayed as traditional USCG markers on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) charts such as 33 or 33E or GPS displays, but would be appropriately obvious on a new “Florida Bay Transit Map and Guide” that would be widely distributed after the ENP GMP is finalized.
- If possible, place gated markers at the entrances of ENP marked channels in water at least 3 feet deep at mean low water.
- Expand the Idle Speed/No Wake Zone from 300 feet to 600 feet along the mainland shorelines indicated in Alternative 3 from Flamingo to the Middle Cape.
- Ensure that the recommended use of selected channels by draft (12 inches) be used as a guideline, not a regulation.
- Vessels with two or more motors be strongly encouraged to operate only in USCG marked and maintained channels while transiting within the ENP portion of Florida Bay, thus using the Intercoastal Waterway to Cape Sable then using the USCG marked and maintained channels to Flamingo.
- While highly recommending channels and routes, that the GMP not preclude highly knowledgeable and experienced users of motorboats from using other routes in Boat Access Zones to transit within the park.
- If certain keys serve as major bird roosting areas, require that transit by those keys be at idle speed and that they be closed during nesting season as is currently the case at Frank and the Buchanan Keys.
- Close Carl Ross Key to day use throughout the entire year due to its proximity to the Sandy Key bird rookery and expedite building a new campsite near Johnson Key as well as those planned within the Gulf Region.
- Fully embrace a mandatory education system such as the Florida Bay Eco-Mariner course, and trust it can and will work over time.
- Initiate an entrance fee into the ENP for those that access the Park by water as is currently the case for land access.
- Pilot marking a channel or two now using USCG standards for navigational aids, again ideally not requiring them to be shown as USCG markers as traditionally done on NOAA charts as disproportionally large squares, triangles and diamonds, while starting a detailed study regarding markers to accelerate smooth implementation in 2011 and beyond.

Passed unanimously on this date: June 16, 2009.

The Council is an advisory body to the sanctuary superintendent. The opinions and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.