



Flamingo Commercial Services Plan / Environmental Assessment Public Scoping Notice

Dear Friends,

In 2005, hurricanes severely damaged the Flamingo area of Everglades National Park. These storms caused overwhelming impacts to already aged facilities, and many of the visitor uses and services in Flamingo had to be shut down or reduced. The National Park Service has been asked by many of you to expedite the process for determining Flamingo's future. As a result, we have embarked on a planning process, through the development of a Commercial Services Plan (CSP), to identify choices and make decisions about Flamingo as soon as possible. Your involvement in the CSP is pivotal in terms of forging a new vision for Flamingo and making the planning effort a success.

The CSP will determine necessary and appropriate commercial services for the Flamingo area in accordance with all applicable laws and policies, while providing a viable long-term business opportunity for the concessioner(s) ultimately selected to operate the facilities. The results of this plan will be incorporated into the General Management Plan (GMP), the park's long-term, park-wide planning effort that many of you are participating in; however, the GMP is still several years from completion.

We have scheduled four public meetings to solicit your ideas, gather information, and discuss with you the range and type of services that should be provided at Flamingo. The public comment period continues through November 17, 2006, with opportunities to respond by internet or mail. I encourage you to think creatively about the potential for Flamingo to support the mission of the Park and also look forward to hearing your ideas about lodging options and marina, food, and other visitor services that you think are needed at Flamingo.

I have heard firsthand from many of you what a special place Flamingo is and how much you care about this place. Our challenge is to establish Flamingo, once again, as the "gateway" to Florida Bay and the Wilderness Waterway. We look forward to working with you in this planning effort and trust that with your involvement, Flamingo will become a destination more memorable than ever!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan B. Kimball".

Dan B. Kimball
Superintendent

Public Scoping Open House Workshops: You're Invited!

October 17, 2006
Time: 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Phone: (954) 927-2628

International Game Fish Association
Hall of Fame
300 Gulfstream Way
Dania Beach, FL 33004

October 18, 2006
Time: 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Phone: (305) 852-5553

Key Largo Sheraton
97000 South Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 33037

October 26, 2006
Time: 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Phone: (305) 238-2922

Palmetto Golf Course
9300 SW 152nd Street
Miami, FL 33157

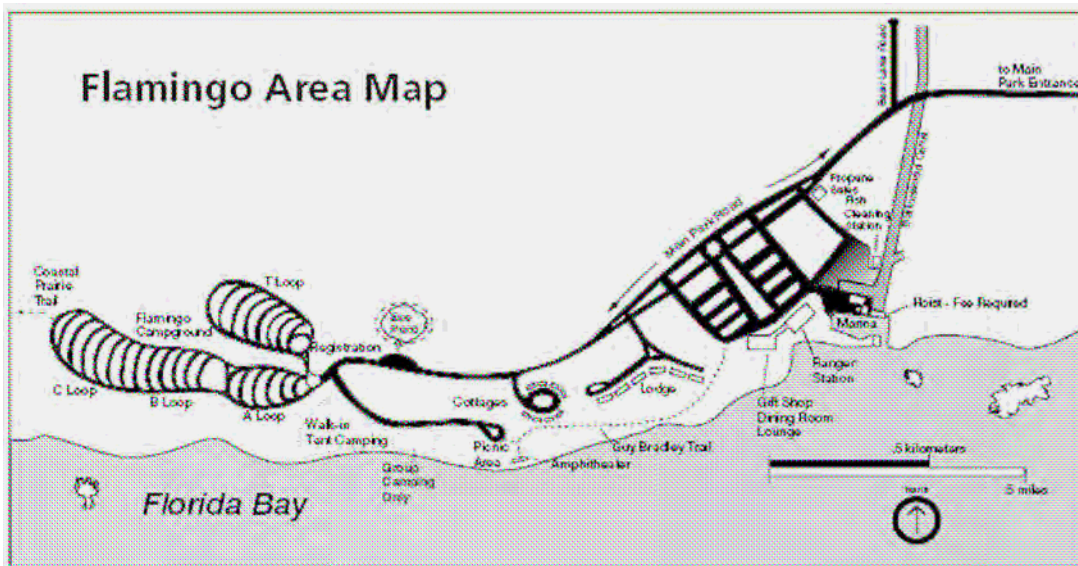
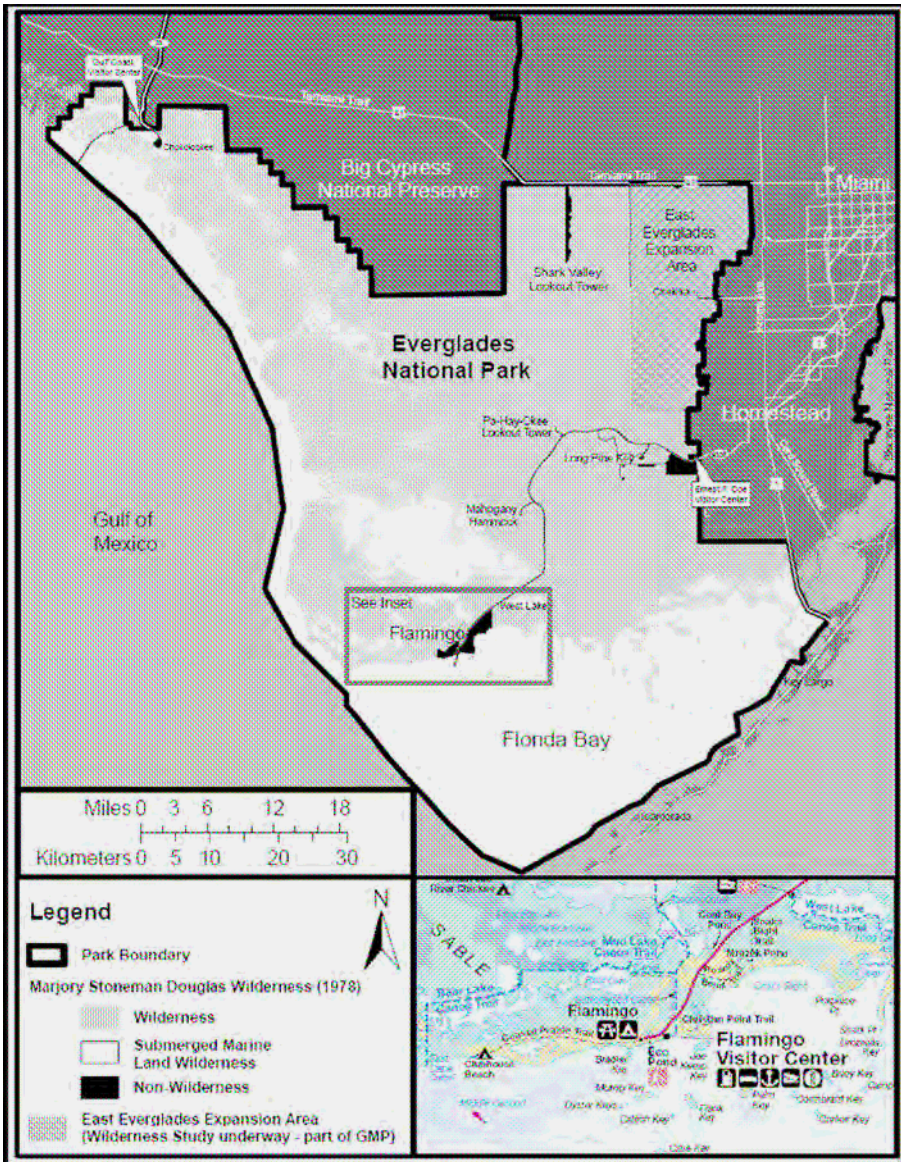
November 9, 2006*
Time: 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Phone: (305) 242-7700

Coe Visitor Center (Main Park Entrance)
Everglades National Park
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034

The workshops provide an opportunity for interested persons to have direct involvement in the planning process. There will be 2 separate, repeated sessions at each workshop, with a formal presentation at 6:00 and 7:30 p.m. Before and after the presentations, there will be opportunities to learn more about the project through informational displays, and by asking questions and providing your ideas to park staff. With this format, anyone attending should be able to fully participate in 1½ to 2 hours.

* Please note: this meeting added after the newsletter was mailed out

Park Location and Flamingo Area Maps



Project Purpose, Needs and Objectives

Draft PROJECT PURPOSE: To develop a plan for necessary and appropriate commercial visitor services in the Flamingo area.

Draft PROJECT NEED statements: The Flamingo Commercial Services Plan would meet the following three needs:

- The need to address strong public sentiment to reestablish visitor use, including overnight lodging, in the Flamingo area that was lost as a result of the substantial damage caused during the 2005 hurricane season.
- The need to provide necessary and appropriate commercial visitor services at Flamingo for visitors to better experience the park.
- The need to determine which commercial visitor services being considered at Flamingo are financially feasible.

Draft PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Planning Guidance

- Ensure that future commercial services facilities at Flamingo give strong consideration to the unique location and environmental conditions that affect development. This includes emphasis on NPS policies regarding sustainable design principles, “green” environmental practices, and safety and accessibility requirements; building code requirements for high-hazard flood zones, and recognition of intense seasonal weather conditions.
- Provide concessioner(s) with a reasonable opportunity to earn a profit at Flamingo.
- Work with a broad range of stakeholders in order to increase the likelihood of successfully implementing the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (CSP).

Visitor Use and Experience

- Allow for a wide range of appropriate visitor uses that may restore and expand the types of services, visitor capacity, and/or season of services available to the public in the Flamingo area.
- Ensure that the Flamingo CSP identifies the types and levels of visitor activities and services, consistent with protecting park resources and providing quality visitor experiences.
- Enhance visitor understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of park resources through commercial services provided at the Flamingo area.

Park Resources

- Develop a commercial services plan for Flamingo that minimizes impacts to the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Park Operations

- Develop a commercial services plan for Flamingo that maximizes operational efficiencies for both the NPS and the concessioner(s).



Images of historic Flamingo circa 1948



Calusa Hut

Damage at Flamingo



Flamingo Lodge



The cottages



Houseboats lifted out of the marina

Some Key Questions to be answered in the Plan

Lodging There are currently 200 campsites for tents and RVs at Flamingo. The 103 lodge units were damaged and will not be repaired. They are outdated and could not be brought up to building code requirements for facilities located in a coastal high-hazard flood zone. The 12 duplex cottages (24 one-bedroom units) were all damaged beyond repair by last year's hurricanes. *How many lodging units should be replaced? What kinds of accommodations would be most practical and appealing to visitors? What is financially viable?*

Educational and Recreational Services Past and current services have included boat tours into Florida and Whitewater Bays, guided canoe tours, boat and canoe rentals, and sales of fuel and retail merchandise. *Should these services continue? Should these services be expanded? What new services to enhance visitor activities such as birding and wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, and paddling, should be considered?*

Food and Beverage The marina store is currently operating, but the restaurant and café were damaged by the Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma and remain closed. Campers, overnight guests and day visitors' needs must all be considered. *What kinds of food services should be available at Flamingo? Would they allow for a financially viable business opportunity?*

Thinking Creatively and about Sustainability

Given this unique opportunity to essentially redesign and rebuild Flamingo, the park is committed to leading by example in incorporating sustainable design principles into the Plan and making Flamingo a state-of-the-art eco-tourism destination. Federal laws, Executive Orders and other directives guide Federal government facility managers to reduce the energy and environmental impacts of the buildings they manage. Sustainable principles would be used in site design, energy management, water supply, and waste prevention so that impacts to park resources are minimized and visitor experiences are enhanced.

The park is considering flexible and adaptable lodging facilities at Flamingo as part of the potential mix of overnight accommodations to meet a range of visitor needs. Eco-tents and yurts (at right) are among a range of options, along with more traditional-type structures such as lodge buildings or fishing-village cottages that could all be considered.

Some of these structures could be permanent, while others could be taken down and stored during hurricane season. Examples around the world show success in using innovative design, materials and energy sources to support sustainable facilities, able to withstand hurricane force winds and storm surge.



Eco-tent village (Bermuda)



Yurts (dwellings originally of ancient Central Asia; now popular for eco-tourism lodging world-wide)

What is scoping? Scoping is the first step to involve the public in the environmental impact analysis process. This allows you to tell the National Park Service what issues and alternatives you would like to see considered in the Flamingo CSP/EA before it is actually prepared.

Is scoping my only opportunity to comment on the project? No, there will be an additional opportunity. Once the draft plan/EA is developed, the document will be made available for public review and comment for a 45-day period, with additional public workshops held.

Please send your comments by November 17, 2006

The NPS will use the comments received to begin preparing the draft Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (CSP) / Environmental Assessment (EA). We are interested in your thoughts on:

- Questions included on the enclosed comment form
- Issues, opportunities, concerns or potential environmental impacts you would like to see addressed
- Management strategies or alternatives you think should be considered in determining future commercial services that could be offered at Flamingo
- Any additional information, concerns or comments that you would like considered

You may submit comments on the Flamingo Commercial Service Plan/EA

- at any of the 4 public scoping open house workshops (listed on the cover page)
- by e-mail through the NPS Planning website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Simply select "Everglades National Park" from the drop down box, then follow the link for the Flamingo CSP/EA
- by mail: cut out the enclosed comment form, fold and tape it together (no staples, please), affix a stamp and return; or you can mail a letter or postcard with your comments to:

Everglades National Park
Attn: Fred Herling, Flamingo CSP
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034

You may also pick up a newsletter and comment form at any park Visitor Center during the comment period (ends November 17, 2006)

For more information or questions, contact Fred Herling, Project Manager at 305-242-7704 or fred_herling@nps.gov.



Project Schedule

Milestone	Public/Agency Involvement	Timeline
Public involvement (scoping)	Newsletter, public workshops, public comment period	Closes November 17, 2006
Alternatives development and impact analysis	Agency and Tribal Consultations	December 2006 – February 2007
Draft CSP/ EA preparation		February – June 2007
Public review of Draft CSP/ EA	Public meetings, 45-day comment period	June – July 2007
Analysis of public comment		July – August 2007
Decision document – Final CSP/ EA	Review NPS decision	August 2007

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
ATTN: FRED HERLING, FLAMINGO CSP
40001 STATE ROAD 9336
HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA 33034

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



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Historic Flamingo – before and after a hurricane hit in 1948