



*Draft Updated
4/17/09*

Alternative E-Version 2.5

Everglades National Park (ENP)
General Management Plan (GMP)

April 2009

www.alternativee.com

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Alternative E to the ENP GMP draft alternatives was endorsed by The Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, The Don Hawley Foundation, The Ocean Reef Rod and Gun Club, The Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association, The Key Largo Chamber of Commerce, The Islamorada Chamber of Commerce, The Village of Islamorada, The Islamorada Fishing Club, The Key Largo Guides Association (with one exception), The South Florida Water Management District, The Federation of Fly Fishers, the NPCA, The Islamorada Fishing and Conservation Trust (IFACT) and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners. Alt E, 2.5 is in the process of gaining the same support plus MORE!



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Background Summary

- ◆ In January 2003 the ENP started a six-step process to craft a GMP that is intended to be a blueprint for Park Management to use over 15-20 years.
- ◆ The effort was estimated to take 4-5 years from start to finish. The National Park Service is now over six years into the process and is forecasting publishing the final GMP in 2011.
- ◆ In May 2007 four draft alternatives called A,B,C and D were published. They were sent back to the National Park Service (NPS) for rework by Park Superintendent Dan Kimball for the following reasons:
 - Lacked scientific evidence
 - Lacked emphasis on boater education
 - Lacked focus on better marked channels and preferred routes
 - Either did too little or essentially closed the park – no balanced alternative and lacked of proven and more creative options
 - Because NPS/ENP officials needed to become more knowledgeable of Florida Bay

In March 2009, the NPS published the ENP GMP Revised Preliminary Alternatives for Marine Waters and labeled them 1,2,3,4.

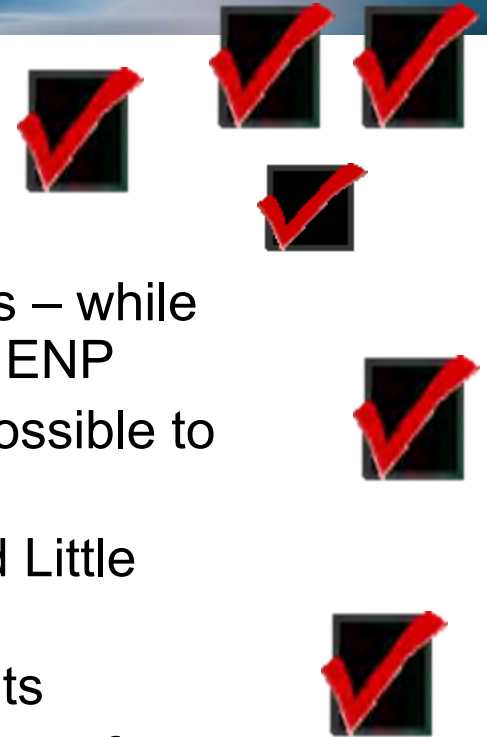


A Summary of
Alternative E
June 2007

Alternative “E” June 2007 Recommendation Summary

The ENP GMP SHOULD

- ◆ Do no harm to Local Economy/Traditions or Customs – while better protecting resources and users’ experience in ENP
- ◆ Require a realistic budget – not be a dream and impossible to implement
- ◆ Enhance experience for paddles by opening Joe and Little Madiera bay– with fishing allowed
- ◆ Not close any waters currently available to motorboats
- ◆ Provide for a no-wake zone within 300 feet of shorelines from Crocodile Point to Middle Cape – with some exceptions – better for paddlers, shore line anglers and resting birds and fish
- ◆ Provide for new troll/pole/paddle zones in waters LESS THAN 2’ in Snake Bight and Keys directly in front of Flamingo, **with safe travel speed ingress/egress in all waters 2’ or more** (per NOAA Charts)



Alternative “E” Summary 2



THE ENP GMP SHOULD:

- ◆ Place major focus on education – All vessel operators must take a class and pass test to prove knowledge of regulations, basic navigation in park waters and user etiquette while in the Park
- ◆ Place substantially more focus on strategically placed and well maintained markers signage
- ◆ Require all vessels be at idle speed when within 100 feet of paddled or anchored vessel and paddlers slow down to let motorboats pass them in narrow channels such as Buttonwood Canal
- ◆ Place no restriction to vessel size, motor horsepower or speed limits
- ◆ Welcome greater public and private partnerships with the Park
- ◆ Support a new more remote Wilderness Waterway primarily for use of paddlers but allow access by motorboats



SUMMARY OF
BENEFITS
IN REVISED PRELIMINARY
ALTERNATIVES

Revised Preliminary Alternatives BENEFITS



- ◆ Clearly listened to the Public and incorporated many remarks heard in public workshops and write-in comments
- ◆ Backed with a new seagrass and motorboat usage study
- ◆ Mandatory education fully embedded
- ◆ Added no-wake shorelines to some alternatives
- ◆ New Management Zones are more clear and understandable
- ◆ No hard restrictions on motorboat size or horsepower in any alternative – understands new technology will be developed
- ◆ Formally embeds “Adaptive Management” in alternatives
- ◆ Crowns of seagrass flats proven to be most vulnerable to prop scaring provided protection as pole/troll in some alternatives
- ◆ Focus on improved access and ability to experience the ENP for visitors with disabilities/handicaps
- ◆ The elements common across all Alternatives, with more clarification, seem thought out

Revised Preliminary Alternatives BENEFITS



- ◆ Provides new paddle only/backcountry zone in the Nightmare and parts of Wood River which is seldom used by motorboats
- ◆ Supports a new Wilderness Waterway that will provide paddlers a enhanced and extreme wilderness experience that this user group has been requesting
- ◆ Does little to unreasonably restrict users of motorboats in Gulf Zone, other than in Alternative 4
- ◆ Supports properly marking a key few channels in most alternatives
- ◆ Highly recommends routes by vessel draft, but does not prohibit using other routes except in Pole/Troll zones
- ◆ Opens Little Madeira and Joe Bay to public to some degree, other than in Alternative 4
- ◆ Alternative 1 and 4 are so extreme, it allows the public to focus on a combination of just two alternatives
- ◆ Supports a broad based seagrass restoration program



SUMMARY OF
CONCERNS
IN REVISED PRELIMINARY
ALTERNATIVES

CONCERNS 1

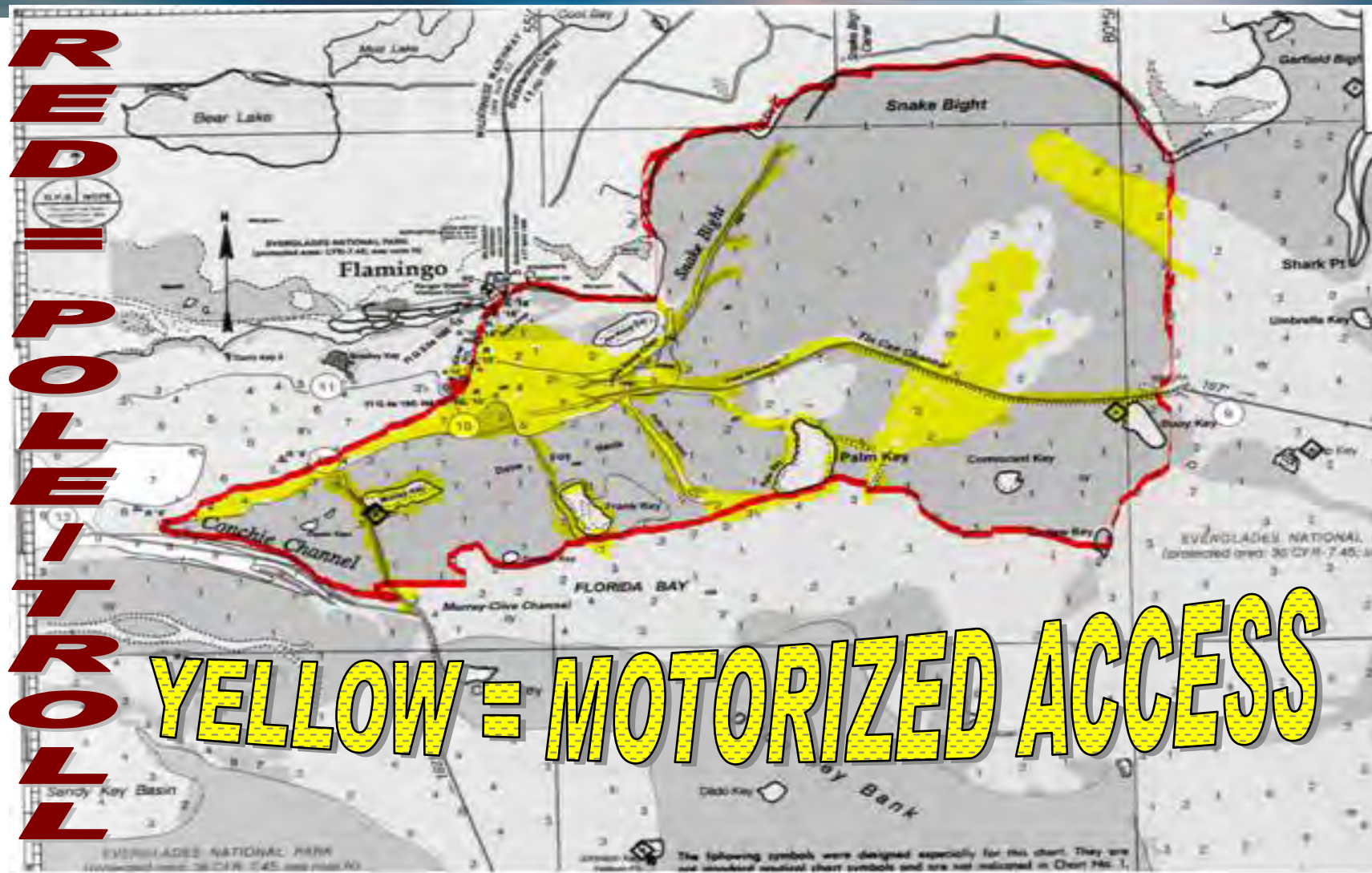


- ◆ The number and vast acreage of pole/troll zones in Alternative 3
 - To put things in perspective, just the pole/troll zone of Snake Bight and the waters around Murray, Frank, Palm and Cormorant keys is approximately twice the size of all the non-combustible motor zones from North Key Largo to Lower Matecumbe, ocean and bayside, and WITH essentially NO INGRESS/EGRESS indicated in draft alternatives
 - The non-combustible motor zones in the FKNMS have excellent ingress/egress. The largest with poor ingress/egress is South Key Largo – Newport – Airport Flat. It pales in size to all new proposed pole/troll zones in GMP
 - The troll/pole zone around Nine Mile and Rabbit Key is approximately the same size as the entire Lignumvitae State Park, plus all other non-combustible motor zones in the Upper Keys
 - **Specifically, Alt 3 states “Within pole/troll zones, motorboats may travel using combustible motors ONLY within Marked Channels.” This severely impacts access for users desiring to visit multiple destinations in a day**

THERE ARE ESSENTIALLY NO MARKED CHANNELS IN THE POLE/TROLL ZONES MAKING ACCESS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE AND UNSAFE

Large Pole/Troll Zones MUST allow reasonable access as originally recommended in Alternative E and fly anglers seldom use trolling motors so must POLE ONLY making their access even more unacceptable

Alt E – Pole/Troll Zone Recommended to Start With ACCESS & Expand as Science and Users Demand



CONCERNS 2



- ◆ The key few marked channels that must also meet USCG marker specifications are strongly recommended for use (by draft of boat) ONLY in Alternative 3

ALT 3 DOES NOT MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ANY AND ALL OTHER ROUTES, CHANNELS and WATERS CAN BE USED BY MOTORBOATS THAT ARE NOT DAMAGING SEAGRASS

- ◆ The new marked channels/routes do not make it clear that the size of the markers are intended to be as small as possible, while meeting USCG uniform marker standards
- ◆ Alternative 3, while offering limited public access to Joe and Little Madeira Bay, restricts all fishing – even catch and release
- ◆ No consideration for seasonal usage management
- ◆ No use of Bird Stakes at mouths of channels to repair prop scares and help funnel vessels into the mouths of marked channels and unclear about commitment to start marked entrance to channels in deeper water

CONCERNS 3



- ◆ Alternative 1 and 2, provide little for resource or user experience protection
- ◆ All Alternative 2 really does is open Joe and Little Madeira Bay to public fishing AND establishes a new Wilderness Waterway that allows vessels to travel almost all of it at full speed ahead reducing the Wilderness aspects of the trail and creating safety issues around sharp bends
- ◆ The concept of catch and release was not considered in any body of water
- ◆ NPS and ENP officials continue to demonstrate a lack of practical knowledge of the park and how users recreate on the water
- ◆ Much of the plan is not realistic to expect adequate funding to build and maintain
 - New Chickee Huts, The Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center, increased law enforcement , more launch sites— plus why more launch sites if Alt 4 or Alt 3 without reasonable egress/ingress into Pole/Troll zones is selected

CONCERNS 4 – All Regarding Alternative 4

- ◆ Alternative 4 is completely unacceptable, even more so than Alternative 1. It closes the heart and soul of the Flamingo Bay portion of the ENP and obsoletes the economics of the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan
- ◆ All waters less than 3 feet and some up to 3'11" would be troll/pole. No travel through essentially the entire FL Bay portion of the Park would be allowed unless traveling within a very, very few marked channels.
 - Virtually all sight fishing and recreation in the nucleus of the Park would be eliminated
 - Local economies would be substantially impaired
 - The majority of tourists planning vacations in the Florida Keys in order to recreate and fish in ENP would disappear
 - Significant portions of the new Wilderness Water Way could be banned to any vessel traffic, causing safety issues for paddlers and significantly impacting motorboat movement in the Gulf area
 - Keeps Little Madeira and Joe Bay a private area for only a handful of people in the world to ever see
 - Keeping closed only reinforces the fact the public should not support waters being closed, as they will not be returned to the public –even when the purpose for closure is no longer valid





ALTERNATIVE E

"EVERGLADES FOR THE EDUCATED"

Alternative E – Version 2.5

Detailed and Specific

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Alternative E Team stated in June 2007 that we would adjust our future suggestions/recommendations as more science became available, with continued input from the public and the process continues. The new revised preliminary alternatives, more input from the public, hundreds of hours of team study and applied research, along with a new seagrass and motorboat usage study have driven our new Alternative E, Version 2.5.

Alternative E, Version 2.5 Recommendations 1

We support and recommend with “conditions and stipulations” the following:

- ◆ The elements of the revised alternatives that are common to Alternatives 1-4 and 2-4
- ◆ Alternative 3 with the following adjustments
 - A phased in approach to pole/troll zones, starting with Snake Bight and expanding over several years based on science, public acclimation and practicality
 - Far improved egress/ingress into all pole/troll zones by allowing all water in pole/troll zones that are 2’ or deeper as shown on NOAA charts to be used by combustible motors
 - Little Madeira and Joe Bay be designated pole/troll with only catch and release allowed
 - they were closed to protect Crocodiles. The purpose for the closure is no longer valid and the waters should again be enjoyed by the public, although with limitations

Alternative E, Version 2.5 Recommendations 2

We support and recommend with “conditions and stipulations” the following:

- ◆ The New Wilderness Waterway be marked properly and frequently with small USCG conforming markers for safety and it be as remote as possible from motorboat usage
- ◆ The recommended channels and routes in Alternative 3 be marked using USCG standards, yet be as small as possible while serving intended purpose
- ◆ The mouths of recommended channels use bird stakes to repair prop scars and to help funnel traffic into the channel start the marked entrance to channels in deeper water than presently done. (The way many channels are currently marked by the ENP, with the entrances to channels being marked in very shallow water is a major cause of prop scars and seagrass damage)

Alternative E, Version 2.5 Recommendations 3

We support and recommend with “conditions and stipulations” the following:

- ◆ Motorboats are not restricted to using only marked “highly recommended” channels and can use any route, water or channels they wish as long as not damaging seagrass or in a pole/troll zone while in waters less than 2 foot deep as indicated on NOAA charts
- ◆ The GMP not rely so heavily on new charts being developed and GPS systems as reliable navigation tools
- ◆ Understand it may take decades for current charts that show current marked (maintained by ENP or not) channels to be no longer used
- ◆ Mandatory education be thorough and comprehensive

Alternative E, Version 2.5 Recommendations 4

We support and recommend with “conditions and stipulations” the following:

- ◆ Within, Alternative 3, the new Wilderness Waterway’s chickees be given a priority and built to include the campsite near Little Madeira Bay
- ◆ As soon as possible, with the powers of the Park Superintendent and compelling evidence regarding prop scar damage, make Snake Bight (North of Tin Can Channel only) into a pilot pole/troll zone to start the learning process and to protect this resource. Combustible motor use (egress/ingress) should be in allowed in all waters 2’ or more within Snake Bight
- ◆ Motorboats be strongly encouraged through education to not attempt to get on plane in waters less than 3’



Executive Summary of Alternative E Version 2.5

Executive Summary

The ENP GMP revised preliminary alternatives for marine waters are an improvement. They are backed with a bit more science and indicate the public was heard to some degree in 2007.

However, the charts and language behind the alternatives are concerning. To many they may even appear cryptic and deceptive. The key issue remains ACCESS! Access does not clearly exist in Alt 2-4 as written or charted.

Without unequivocal and on-going access for the public using motorboats to operate within ENP that essentially can only be enjoyed by water, Alternative 3 and certainly Alternative 4 would be devastating to the local economy, employment, tourism in the Upper Keys, the rights of recreational anglers and trust in NPS/ENP forever.

Generally, Alternative E, Version 2.5 recommends that the new Alternative 3 serve as the foundation for the final draft alternative. However, only with far improved and assured access into pole/troll zones; channels officially marked and maintained by the ENP be marked with as small of visuals as possible; and motorboats be allowed to operate in all waters 2' or deeper. Additionally we recommend Joe and Little Madeira Bay be opened to the public after decades of unnecessary closure, but as a pole/troll zone with catch and release fishing only allowed.

We also highly recommend that the new pole/troll zones be phased in over several years, allowing Adaptive Management to improve the success of future pole/troll zones with learnings and public acclimation.

After literally thousands of hours of work by the Alt E team, while actively seeking coaching and input from diverse stakeholders, we feel strongly that our recommendations will dramatically improve resource protection while maintaining solid access for recreational fishing, paddling and bird watching.