Biscayne National Park

Final General Management Plan

August 2015 presentation to Santuary Advisory Committee
Marathon, Florida
Purpose of Briefing

- Describe final plan and zone changes
- History of plan development
- Interagency consultation
- Public involvement
Need for Action

- Undersized Fish
- Bleached Coral
- Healthy Coral
- Dead Coral
- Marine Debris

Coral Reef Preservation
Public workshops held to determine potential no-fishing marine reserve zone shape, size & location, then a science review

- 60 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 81 attendees
- 36 individual map comments

Public meetings on Draft Plan

- 18,740 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 359 attendees

Public workshops, in coordination with FWC, on Alternatives 4, 6, 7

- ~400 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 241 attendees

Public meetings on Draft Plan

- 18,740 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 359 attendees

Public workshops, in coordination with FWC, on Supplemental Draft Plan

- ~14,000 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 241 attendees

Two rounds of public scoping meetings held to inform development of draft management actions

- 3,436 pieces of correspondence
- 7 public meetings
- 8 meetings with agencies

GMP Development

Final Plan public release 6/5/15.

Ongoing park outreach efforts.

New information on reef decline.

COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:
22 public meetings; over 1,000 attendees; 43,000 pieces of correspondence

New Information:

- FWC withdraws support for Alternative 6
- Dry Tortugas 5-year report, marine reserve success
- Congressional request for additional public meetings

Public meetings, in coordination with FWC, on Supplemental Draft Plan

- ~14,000 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 177 attendees

Public meetings, in coordination with FWC, on Alternatives 4, 6, 7

- ~400 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 241 attendees

Public scoping meetings held to ID preliminary alternatives

- 6,474 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 104 attendees

Public scoping meetings held to ID preliminary alternatives

- 6,474 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 104 attendees

Public scoping meetings held to ID preliminary alternatives

- 6,474 pieces of correspondence
- 3 public meetings
- 104 attendees
New slow speed zones: 1000’ off mainland shoreline

Currently:

- Increases manatee protection
- Increases paddler safety
- Reduces risk of vessel groundings – protects boaters and seagrass

Plan:

- Consistent with Miami-Dade Manatee Protection Plan
- Consistent with State of Florida boating zone names
Increases “slow speed zone” & renames it to “idle speed no wake”

Currently:

- Increases swimmer protection
- Increases boater safety
- Larger area for recreational anchoring
- Consistent with State of Florida boating zone names

Plan:
Reduced size of Legare “Anchorage”

Currently:
- Intended to protect a sensitive submerged archeological site
- Old boundaries based on visible markers; Triumph Reef tower removed by USCG. Marker GPS allows lat/long boundaries
- Increased access while maintaining protection
- Always no entering water or stopping – now also no traps

2014 acres

Plan:

756 acres
Non-combustion engine use zones at Featherbeds

Currently:

- West, Middle, and East Featherbeds are between Black Point Marina and Boca Chita – had many groundings
- Were previously marked as shoals
- Reduces chance of vessel groundings
- Increases seagrass protection
- Increases boater safety

Plan:
Increased non-combustion engine use zones around Jones Lagoon

Currently:

• Jones Lagoon is very shallow

• First proposal had a bigger increase, drew boater and FWC concerns about creek access

• Final zone is only a small increase to the north

• Increases boater safety

• Reduces risk of vessel grounding

Plan:
Added slow speed zone to protect docked boats at Adams Key

Currently:

- Boaters on plane through Caesars Creek resulted in docked boats at Adams Key smashing against dock
- New slow speed zone between CC Markers 20 and 24 will protect visitor, government and university vessels docked there

Plan:
Sensitive resource zones around waterbird colonies

Currently:

- All waterbird colonies in the park have State-listed wading bird nests
- Currently most colonies were closed. Public comments in favor of more protection
- Plan closes all colony islands and add State- and science-recommended buffer zones around them
Final Alternative

- **Marine Reserve Zone**
  - Same size and location as Alternative 4
  - Scientific basis, success worldwide
  - Mooring buoy transition instead of anchoring ban

- **Alternative 6 zones**
  - Single slow speed zone along shoreline
  - Marker, zone names same as State and County

- Developed via public engagement and agency consultation; public involved in zone design
Community Engagement

2014 outreach highlights:
• 4 anglers/recreational boaters groups
• 6 commercial fishing groups
• 4 environmental groups, including NPCA
• 3 public meetings with FWC support
• 3 elected/agency officials park tours including Senator Rubio staff
• South Atlantic Fisheries Mgmt Council
• New York Times article

2015 outreach highlights:
• 5 elected/agency officials tours/briefings: Rep. Curbelo, State & County Rep., USACE Ass’t Sec., new FWC Regional Director
• Stakeholder briefings, including Ocean Reef Club, Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council
• News story with Telemundo
Final Alternative
A Glimpse into the Future

More and Larger Fish

Improved Visitor Experience

Spillover Effect

HEALTHY CORAL REEF
Questions and Discussion
Alternative 4
Marine Reserve Zone

- 2011 Draft EIS preferred alternative
- Provides memorable visitor experience while maintaining a healthier reef
- 10,502 acre Marine Reserve Zone (MRZ)
- 6.3% of total park waters
- Protects 30% of park’s reefs
- Improves fishing opportunities outside due to spillover
- Dual zone along mangrove shoreline
Alternatives 6 and 7 – Special Recreation Zone

- Alternative 6 – permits; 2013 Supplemental Draft EIS preferred alternative
- Alternative 7 – seasonal closure; limited commercial fishing
- 14,585 acre Special Recreation Zone (SRZ), 39% larger than MRZ
- 8.8% of total park waters
- Protects 70% of park’s reefs
- Developed in consultation with FWC; adaptive management
- Single slow speed zone along mangrove shoreline
- Reduced non-combustion engine use zone around Jones Lagoon area
Agency Collaboration

2009 - Marine Reserve Zone science review
- NOAA Fisheries and University of Miami ranked public-proposed MRZ configurations by effectiveness
- Informed NPS decision on Marine Reserve Zone (MRZ) configurations in the DEIS

2011 – 2013 - Supplemental DEIS
- Significant collaboration with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and NOAA Fisheries to develop Alternatives 6 and 7
- FWC supported Alternative 6

2014 - Public workshops
- Collaboration with FWC
- Focused on Alternatives 4, 6, and 7
Public Comments – Marine Reserve and Special Recreation Zones

- Visitor access
- Equity among user groups
- Effectiveness of different proposals
- Economic impacts (tourism and guided and commercial fishing)
- Fishing pressure outside of MRZ/SRZ
- Size and location of zones and restrictions within them
- Anchoring (safety and access)
- Monitoring strategy
- Special activity licenses – equity, distribution, and cost