

Chapter 26: Organization, Budgets, Planning, Relationships with Other NPS Units

Organization

As Everglades National Park grew and added staff, its organizational structure became more elaborate. From early on, the complex political and institutional set-up in South Florida required the superintendent to largely devote himself to dealing with the SFWMD, the Corps, conservation groups, and public officials from the governor on down to the sheriff of Monroe County. This made the position of deputy or assistant superintendent very important; it became evident that internal park operations would be the purview of the deputy. Everglades got its first deputy superintendent, Allyn F. Hanks, in January 1953. The park has had a deputy or assistant superintendent position ever since, although it has been left vacant for extended periods. As one recent deputy put it, “the superintendent is out of the park probably more than he is in it,” and the deputy has responsibility for “keeping operations rolling day to day.”¹¹²⁶

The organizational structure approved by the regional office in 1950 recognized five divisions within the park: Engineering, Protection, Naturalist, Biologist, and the Office of Chief Clerk. Maintenance was not a separate division; an automobile mechanic reported to the chief clerk, while the remaining maintenance personnel were in the Protection Division. By 1971, Protection had become the Division of Visitor Protection and Resource Management, and the Office of the Chief Clerk became the Division of Administration. The Naturalist Division was now the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. The Biologist Division was the Natural Science Division, and there was a Division of Maintenance and Rehabilitation. In 1977, the new South Florida Research Center took over many of the functions of the Natural Science Division. Natural resource management functions since then have been divided between the SFNRC and the Division of Resource and Visitor Protection.

As of this writing, the major divisions in the park are unchanged from 1977; they are Interpretation, Resource and Visitor Protection, Administration, and Maintenance. There are four districts within Interpretation: Florida Bay, Pine Island, Flamingo, and Northwest (embracing Shark Valley and Gulf Coast). Education and outreach also falls under Interpretation. Under Resource and Visitor Protection are five districts: Pine Island, Flamingo, Florida Bay, Tamiami, and Gulf Coast. In addition, fire

1126 Whisenant interview.

management, fee management, and dispatch are in this division. Administration encompasses contracting, budgeting and finance, human resources, and information management. The Maintenance (Facility Management) Division has three districts (Pine Island, Flamingo, and Gulf Coast) and a professional services group. In addition to the four divisions, several smaller operations report directly to the Deputy Superintendent/ Superintendent:

- Cultural Resources, including the South Florida Collections Management Center
- Concessions Management
- Planning and Compliance
- Public Affairs Office

Finally, the director of the South Florida Natural Resource Center reports to the Everglades National Park superintendent. The site manager at Dry Tortugas National Park reports to the deputy superintendent.¹¹²⁷

Budgets

Everglades National Park was established at a time when the Service was still suffering from the drastically reduced funding levels of World War II. Congress actually cut the NPS's operating program allocation by 12.4 percent in fiscal year 1948. The Service received a healthy increase for fiscal year 1950, but subsequent increases were small until 1956, when the agency received its full budget request for the first time since the war. Funding for the Everglades was barely adequate in the early 1950s. The park's budget was cut by 17 percent in fiscal year 1953, and Superintendent Beard complained that he had to detail rangers to collect garbage because he could not hire maintenance employees. The Mission 66 program began in 1957, and Everglades benefitted greatly during its ten-year run. The vast majority of the funds went for the development of park infrastructure, however, and allocations for personnel, planning, and research generally remained inadequate.¹¹²⁸

Budget shortfalls seemed to have had the greatest impact on staffing levels; there seems never to have been a period when Everglades was able to fill all of its allocated full-time positions. In 1974, for example, the park was able to fill 78 percent of its allocated positions. It was not much different 30 years later—the park had 47 unfilled positions in 2003. The late 1960s, when the federal budget was strained by spending on

¹¹²⁷ ENP organization charts, Oct. 10, 2006 and Jan. 2013, EVER 22965; Jester interview.

¹¹²⁸ Dwight F. Rettie, *Our National Park System: Caring for America's Greatest Natural and Historic Treasures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 251; "National Park Service Appropriations," *National Parks Magazine*, Oct.-Dec. 1955, 191; SMR, Jan. 1952.

Great Society programs and the Vietnam War, was a particularly rough patch. In late 1968, Superintendent Raftery was forced to pull rangers from Fort Jefferson to handle winter crowds at Everglades and limit guided tours to five days a week. The high rates of inflation from 1973 through 1982 also presented challenges. Budgets increased, but seemingly never by enough to account for rising prices. From 1981 through 1989, President Reagan attempted to rein in federal spending, particularly funds for adding to federal land holdings. Everglades National Park's budget dropped 4.4 percent in fiscal year 1986 and by 15.6 percent in fiscal year 1989. As outlined above in chapter 11, the South Florida Research Center received increased funding following the enactment of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan in 2000, but funding for basic park operations remained flat (see Appendix C).¹¹²⁹

Planning

As recounted above in chapter 7, master planning for Everglades National Park began in the late 1940s. In this period, NPS frequently updated its master plans; this was especially the case in the Mission 66 era. The park in recent decades has continued to operate under the broad direction provided by its last master plan, approved in 1979. That plan noted that efforts to balance visitor enjoyment with resource protection had been "largely successful," adding "there is no valid reason to change the basic concept of development and use for the entire park." In 2000, the park began the process of preparing its first general management plan (GMP), which will replace the 1979 master plan. A GMP provides a broad conceptual framework to guide park decision-making over the course of 15 to 20 years. As a first step, the park entered into a project agreement with the NPS Denver Service Center for the services of its planners and began internal scoping sessions. By early 2003, the park was ready to begin involving the public in the GMP process. It began producing GMP newsletters as the primary means of keeping the public informed and soliciting its views. The first newsletter in January 2003 explained the GMP process and invited the public to participate. Those unable to attend public meetings were invited to write or email their comments. By this point, Everglades National Park Planner Fred Herling was coordinating the GMP process.¹¹³⁰

The planning team held six public meetings in 2003 and had separate meetings with representatives of public agencies and groups. About 230 people attended the

¹¹²⁹ SAR, 1974; "Budget Cuts Limit Visitors' Services in Everglades Park," *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1968; "Everglades Has Funding Shortfall," *Miami Herald*, May 26, 2003; "Park May Get \$789,000 Boost to Ease Effects of Cutbacks," *Miami Herald*, Jan. 22, 2004.

¹¹³⁰ NPS, *Everglades National Park Master Plan*, May 1979, 2; SAR, 2000; ENP, *General Management Plan, Newsletter One*, Jan. 2003, EVER 22965; "Glades Plots Path for Next 20 Years," *Miami Herald*, Jan. 28, 2003.

public meetings and altogether, some 1,800 comments were received. Those who attended the meetings seemed most concerned about maintaining access to backcountry areas, particularly by motorboat, and having improved recreational facilities. Mary Munson, regional director for the National Parks Conservation Association saw a need for the NPS to “find new ways for the local folks to connect with the park.” In a second edition of the newsletter in September 2003, the park summarized the comments it had received and explained that the planning team would move on to formulating a series of alternatives describing future park conditions.¹¹³¹

Recovery from the hurricanes of 2005 put a heavy strain on park staff and set back the park's GMP process. In addition, the NPS decided to expand the scope of the GMP to include a wilderness study of the newly acquired East Everglades Expansion area. By law and policy, the NPS is required to evaluate the wilderness potential of undeveloped areas that are added to a park. The NPS believed that folding the wilderness study into the GMP process would save time and money; it also meant that new public meetings and a new public comment period were needed. The 2005 hurricanes damaged the Flamingo lodge and cottages beyond repair, and the park began the preparation of a commercial services plan (CSP) dealing with recreational services and overnight accommodations at Flamingo. The CSP had its own schedule for public involvement, and its final conclusions were to be integrated into the alternatives generated for the GMP.¹¹³²

The planning team spent much of 2006 and early 2007 preparing and reviewing GMP alternatives. In May 2007, the park released the four alternatives and sought public comment, holding six public workshops around South Florida. Possible restrictions on motorboat access to Florida Bay and other park waters to protect the seabed emerged as an issue of considerable interest. Many of the attendees at the public meetings were recreational fishermen. After evaluating comments, the park revised the preliminary alternatives and released them for public comment in February 2009. Seven public meetings were held in March and April. This new round of public comments led to further revision of the alternatives, which were then presented to the NPS Southeast Regional Office in February 2010. In the meantime, the nation had gained a new Democratic administration and a new NPS director, Jon Jarvis. After conferring with the director, the park decided the planning for Flamingo and Everglades City needed to be revisited. The high cost of the planned Flamingo lodging,

1131 ENP, *General Management Plan Newsletter #2*, Sep. 2003, EVER 22965; “Public Wants More of ‘Old’ Everglades,” *Miami Herald*, Feb. 29, 2003.

1132 ENP, *General Management Plan Newsletter 3*, June 2006.

the short season, and the susceptibility of both areas to hurricanes and sea-level rise needed further study.¹¹³³

The draft GMP underwent further revisions and was released for public comment in late February 2013. The park held public meetings in Homestead and Key Largo to present the latest draft and solicited comments on-line and by mail. Park staff devoted considerable time in 2013 and 2014 to analyzing public comments and making adjustments to the plan. As of this writing, the plan is undergoing review at the regional and Washington levels and final approval is pending.¹¹³⁴

Planning and Compliance Branch

In a park as large and complex as Everglades, many different planning documents are required. These range in scope from a GMP (described above) to plans for concessions, interpretation, integrated pest management, and the like. Additionally, many proposed activities in the park entail compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Wilderness Act. In the early to mid-1990s, a committee headed by Wildlife Biologist Skip Snow coordinated NEPA compliance. Snow was eager to devote more of his time to his core duties, and for about two years, NEPA compliance was handled on an ad hoc basis. In the late 1990s, Brien Culhane, then a special assistant to the superintendent largely working on park planning, was asked to head up a new branch, Planning and Compliance. The division “coordinates the development, completion, and implementation of all the various levels of planning documents required by law, policy or regulation” for Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks. Until October 2007, the branch had responsibility for compliance actions under both the NEPA and the NHPA. The park hired a cultural resources branch chief in October 2007, who then took lead responsibility for NHPA compliance, although Planning and Compliance continues to have a coordinating role. The Planning and Compliance Branch also had

1133 ENP, *Draft General Management Plan/East Everglades Wilderness Study*, May 2007 version, EVER 22965; “Anglers Make Spirited Pleas,” *Miami Herald*, June 10, 2007; “Park Education Necessary,” *Miami Herald*, Sep. 16, 2007; ENP media release, Mar. 2010, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?parkId=374&projectId=11170>; “Work on Long-Range General Management Plan for Everglades National Park Slows Down,” *National Parks Traveler*, Jan. 3, 2012, <http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com/2012/01/work-long-range-general-management-plan-everglades-national-park-slows-down9238>.

1134 NPS, “Media Availability of Draft Everglades National Park General Management Plan,” Mar. 12, 2013, <http://www.nps.gov/ever/parknews/media-availability-for-everglades-national-park-draft-general-management-plan.htm>; Fred Herling, personal communications, Aug. 22, 2013, and June 26, 2014.

responsibility for the South Florida Collections Management Center until the cultural resources branch was created.¹¹³⁵

The workload of the Planning and Compliance Branch is large and complex. Coordinating the development of the park's GMP and the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan has been a major focus in recent years. The East Everglades addition to the park required several studies that were supervised by the branch, including an archeology study, a survey and evaluation of hunting camps, and an inventory of airboat trails. Beginning in FY2007, the branch began to work on the issue of the seven-mile-long utility corridor owned by Florida Power and Light Company that runs through the East Everglades addition. The branch also coordinates resource-specific studies. These have included a manatee study, an aerial survey of boating and fishing activity in Florida Bay, and an assessment of sea grasses in Florida Bay. The results and recommendations of many of these studies then must be incorporated into the ongoing GMP effort. An increasing amount of the branch's time is being devoted to adjacent land issues. Branch staff must review and assess the impact of activities proposed for nearby properties that have could affect the park and its resources. In addition, the branch is involved in some major projects such as the Biscayne-Everglades Greenway.¹¹³⁶

Each year, the Planning and Compliance Branch is responsible for identifying and evaluating hundreds of undertakings that trigger the provisions of the NEPA, the NHPA, the Wilderness Act, and other legislation. Analysis of applications for wetlands mitigation on nearby properties under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 is a major part of the workload. For projects within the park, decisions must be made about what level of documentation is required for NEPA and NHPA compliance, the appropriate disciplines consulted, and the process followed through to completion. Every year, some 11 to 20 proposed projects in the park in wilderness areas must be analyzed and a determination made of the minimum tools required to accomplish project objectives. Both the branch's planning and environmental compliance functions are hampered by a lack of staff and funding. Additionally, the branch consistently relies on advice and participation from experts in other park branches, who themselves are often stretched thin.¹¹³⁷

1135 Brien Culhane, interview by author, Oct. 7, 2011; Annual Reports, ENP Planning and Compliance Branch, FY2005-2010.

1136 Culhane interview; Annual Reports, ENP Planning and Compliance Branch, FY2005-2010.

1137 Culhane interview; Annual Reports, ENP Planning and Compliance Branch, FY2005-2010.

Relationships with Other NPS Units

At the 1947 establishment of Everglades National Park, Florida had three units of the National Park System: Fort Jefferson National Monument, Fort Matanzas National Monument, and Castillo de San Marcos National Monument. The Castillo and Fort Matanzas had been administered by the Department of the Army until transferred to the NPS in August 1933. President Franklin Roosevelt designated Fort Jef-

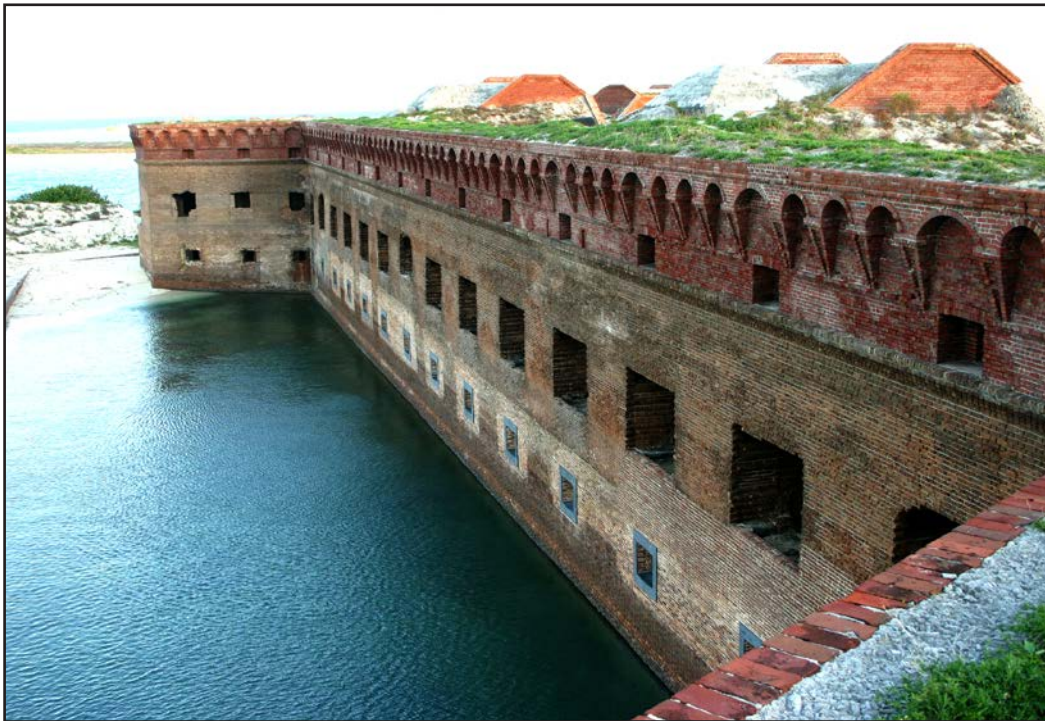


Figure 26-1. Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas National Park

erson a national monument on January 4, 1935. Beginning January 1, 1942, C. Ray Vinten, based at the Castillo in Saint Augustine, held the position of coordinating superintendent for southeastern monuments. He had responsibility for the Castillo, Fort Matanzas, Fort Jefferson, and sites in Georgia and South Carolina. After World War II, new units kept being added to the system in the Southeast, including DeSoto National Memorial on Tampa Bay, authorized 1948, and Fort Caroline National Memorial on the St. Johns River east of Jacksonville, authorized 1950. The NPS in 1951 abolished the position of coordinating superintendent. By this time, Fort Jefferson had already been placed under the administration of the Everglades superintendent, effective December 1949 (figure 26-1, Fort Jefferson). In February 1958, the NPS director brought

clarity to this arrangement by formally designating the Everglades superintendent as the superintendent of Fort Jefferson as well. At times between 1949 and 1959, the site manager at Fort Jefferson was styled a superintendent in NPS literature, but he never had the formal designation. For a brief period, from August 20, 1969, to November 14, 1971, the NPS experimented with an Everglades Management Group. During this period, the Everglades superintendent had a coordinating role for DeSoto, the Castillo, Fort Matanzas, and Fort Caroline.¹¹³⁸

Fort Jefferson National Monument (Dry Tortugas National Park as of October 1992)

As indicated above, since 1958, the Everglades superintendent has also been superintendent of Fort Jefferson. The staff at Fort Jefferson has always been small. A site manager at the fort, reporting to the Everglades deputy superintendent, handles day-to-day operations. Recent deputies have spoken of trying to get to the fort for a couple of days every month, but usually only managing every third month. The Everglades/Fort Jefferson superintendent has generally become involved only in major issues affecting the fort. As an example, in the late 1980s, jet pilots from the Key West Naval Air Station were frequently triggering sonic booms in the air space over the fort. The booms detracted from the visitor experience and damaged the masonry of the fort. Superintendent Mike Finley, after failing to get results from the base commander, used his contacts in the media to make this a public issue and succeeded in stopping the sonic booms.¹¹³⁹

Professional staff at Everglades have at times devoted considerable attention to the Dry Tortugas. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the planning and compliance branch took the lead for the NPS in planning and implementing the Dry Tortugas Research Natural Area, established in January 2007. This is a 46-square-mile portion of Dry Tortugas National Park where some activities, such as fishing and bottom anchoring, are excluded. The Research Natural Area adjoins the Tortugas Natural Reserve of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, which lies to the northwest. Together, these protected areas help to conserve “shallow water marine habitat, ensure species diversity, and enhance the productivity and sustainability of fish populations,” while providing unique educational and research opportunities.¹¹⁴⁰

1138 NPS Director to All Field Offices, Feb. 4, 1959, EVER 22965; C. Ray Vinten, interview by Boyd Evison, Apr. 6, 1971, St. Augustine Historical Society, 62; Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/tolson/histlist.htm.

1139 Arnsberger interview, Benjamin interview, Finley interview, Culhane interview.

1140 NPS and FFWCC, *Assessing the Conservation Efficacy of the Dry Tortugas National Park Research Natural Area* (Homestead, Fla.: NPS and FFWCC, 2007), 1; Culhane interview. The story of the development of the marine sanctuary surrounding Dry Tortugas is beyond the scope of this history, but it should be noted that it was largely the work of Gary Davis while in the South Florida Research Center that ultimately produced the sanctuary.

Fort Jefferson has traditionally been a popular vacation and fishing destination for congressmen and other VIPs. Jack Stark, Everglades superintendent from 1971 to 1976, has related that taking care of the needs of congressmen visiting Fort Jefferson was important to his success as superintendent. NPS directors, dating to George Hartzog (1964 to 1972) if not earlier, have used trips to Fort Jefferson with congressmen and other decision makers to advocate for agency positions in a laidback atmosphere far from the distractions of Washington. For these reasons, agency policy has been to leave day-to-day operations at the Dry Tortugas to a site manager, under the watchful eye of the Everglades superintendent.¹¹⁴¹

Biscayne National Park

As recounted in chapter 9, the controversy over industrial development on the shores of Biscayne Bay became heated in the early 1960s. The Everglades superintendent and staff were involved in many public and private meetings concerning the fate of the bay and its islands. A desire to preserve portions of the area led to the October 1968 authorization and June 1970 establishment of Biscayne National Monument (redesignated Biscayne National Park in 1980) (figure 26-2, Coral in Biscayne National Park). Everglades staff had many responsibilities in getting the new unit up and running. Biscayne got its first superintendent, Dale Engquist, in April 1971. The Biscayne superintendent was administratively under the Everglades superintendent until November 1971.¹¹⁴²

Big Cypress National Preserve

Congress passed an act in October 1974 authorizing the establishment of Big Cypress National Preserve, adjoining Everglades National Park on the northwest (Figure 26-3, cypresses in Big Cypress National Park). Everglades staff had major responsibilities in planning for the new unit. Irvin L. Mortenson became the unit's first manager in October 1976, reporting to the superintendent of Everglades. Big Cypress remained administratively under Everglades National Park until 1986. Soon after arriving at Everglades, Superintendent Michael Finley reviewed the management relationship and determined that Big Cypress should be administratively distinct. The NPS Southeast Regional Office approved his recommendation and in 1986, Big Cypress

¹¹⁴¹ Stark interview; Ring interview.

¹¹⁴² SMR, Dec. 1962, June 1963, Apr. and Aug. 1966; Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/tolson/histlist.htm.



Figure 26-2. Coral in Biscayne National Park

began reporting directly to the regional office (figure 28-3, Big Cypress). Because the preserve and the park are adjacent, staff and responsibilities at times are shared among the two units.¹¹⁴³

Biscayne-Everglades Greenway

In mid-2002, the city of Homestead began to explore the recreational opportunities of a dedicated bicycle trail connecting Biscayne and Everglades National Parks. The project took on the name of the Biscayne-Everglades Greenway. Both parks, Florida City, and the Miami-Dade Department of Parks & Recreation backed the plan. As of early 2012, the right-of-way and infrastructure for the trail were in place, and funding was being sought for trail amenities including a paved surface, parking, shelters, and other support facilities. Full implementation of the planners' vision will require \$30 million or more.¹¹⁴⁴

¹¹⁴³ SAR, 1974 and 1986; RDSE to Supt., Dec. 27, 1976, EVER 22965; Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/tolson/histlist.htm.

¹¹⁴⁴ "Bike Paths a Vision in Progress," *Miami Herald*, Mar. 25, 2007; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/ourWork/PromotingTrailUse/mgp/2012_Miami.pdf.

State Coordinator Responsibilities

For many decades, the NPS designated one superintendent in each state as state coordinator. This generally was the superintendent of the largest or most centrally located unit. The state coordinator monitored issues of potential political or environmental concern to the NPS and was a liaison for the Service's external programs. For example, the state coordinator kept an eye on national historic landmark properties and designated staff to investigate candidates for designation as national natural landmarks. In May 1967, Superintendent Roger Allin directed park staff to evaluate Jupiter Island as a potential national natural landmark. The position of state coordinator no longer exists in the Southeast Region.¹¹⁴⁵



Figure 26-3. Cypresses in Big Cypress National Preserve

¹¹⁴⁵ SMR, Aug. 1966 and Aug. 1967; Supt. Good to Florida supts., Jan. 12, 1977, EVER 22965. See the NPS website for further information on the national natural landmarks program, <http://www.nature.nps.gov/nml/>.