

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Everglades National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: EVER

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

EVER, the first national park established for its biologic diversity, dedicated on December 6 1947. Much has changed in America and Florida since EVER was set aside for the public as a park. Located at the southern tip of the Florida peninsula, this park provides the opportunity to experience 10 unique and very different habitats ranging from pinelands, to sawgrass and marl prairies, to the vast Florida Bay and submerged marine resources that lie below the bay. The million and a half acres that make up EVER and stretch across southern Florida from Miami to Naples and south to the Florida Keys are surrounded by rural communities, large areas of agriculture, protected public lands, and sandwiched in between dense, sprawling, growing coastal urban areas whose population of 7 million plus is expected to double by 2020. In such a vast, diverse, and growing place, EVER provides an oasis unlike any other place on earth. The cultural and historical heritage of this park runs deep and American and International visitors alike often boast to Rangers that as many as five generations of their families have made experiencing this park a tradition. In addition, to providing a broad range of visitor experience options and protecting park resources from development pressures, EVER is part of the largest ecosystem restoration programs every under taken in the history of this country.

Florida holds the distinction of being one of the fastest growing states in the nation for seven decades, with an expectation of this trend continuing park managers are embracing the Centennial Initiative and focused on the opportunities this program will provide to meet the needs of the next generation of visitors and to being good stewards of the park for the next 100 years.

The EVER Centennial Vision recognizes the importance of young people to the future of the park and the need to develop and implement new interpretive and visitor experience strategies that will meet the needs of a changing population. The park, working with partners, current staff, and volunteers, will incorporate cutting edge technologies in our education and outreach programs such as podcasts, video and audio clips, virtual and interactive education components on the internet to reengage young people's interest in the park. EVER will provide training opportunities and team mentoring to enhance existing staff skills in this area along with seeking creative partnerships to implement web improvement projects, increase ranger led programs for all visitors, and to enhance education and outreach efforts to reach broader audiences. The park is working to find resources to build the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center to better serve those who visit the park at its Gulf Coast entrance and preparing an innovative plan with input from architecture students on green and environmentally friendly facilities that will replace the Flamingo visitor resources damaged by hurricanes.

The EVER management team recognizes that the employees of the park are a critical component of achieving park goals and work to recognize and reward staff achievements, provide a variety of professional enhancement and training opportunities that make Everglades National Park a great place to work as well as to visit. A positive staff and focused management team will effectively help to prioritize and target existing staff, volunteer, and financial resources to achieve these goals by 2016.

The EVER team is committed to meeting the challenges of managing this park to effectively support both the critical restoration program for the Everglades ecosystem along with providing opportunities to a vast national and international audience to

experience this park for another five generations. We believe that we are on our way to meeting the goals and intent of the NPS Centennial Challenge and the needs of the future.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Dan Kimball

Site: EVER

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Incorporate new media, equipment, and products into programs, exhibits, and publications in order to allow all visitors access to EVER's interpretive story. (Develop audio versions of all site bulletins and the park map, develop a tactile park map, make assisted listening devices available for interpretive programs and the park film).

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Rehabilitate Historic Mission 66 Flamingo Visitor Center. Preserve historic HM-69 Nike Missile Base.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Restore the remaining areas of disturbed land in the park. These areas include former farmland, developed areas, canals, roads, etc. Restoration of these areas will eliminate more than 3000 acres currently dominated by exotic vegetation and restore them to high quality wetland. Develop and implement improved techniques for managing exotic animals.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

Restoration of disturbed areas will result in improvements to the aspects of the areas measureable by the vital signs:
Nutrient Dynamics
Invasive Exotic Plants
Vegetation Communities Extent and Distribution
Wetland Ecotones and Community Structure
Aquatic Invertebrates in Wet Prairies and Marches
Wetland Substrate

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Complete Ten Thousand Islands Shell Works National Historic Landmark Nomination.

Assess historic roads and canals in the Park.

Identify and protect traditional use areas and ethnographic resources in the Park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Construct the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Visitor Center at Gulf Coast; rehabilitate the the Flamingo and Shark Valley Visitor Centers using sustainable products and design, accessible exhibits, and design leading to excellent customer service and learning.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

STEWARDSHIP

Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Incorporate historic resources into new developments and recreational opportunities.

Complete the greenway project supported by local partners that will connect Biscayne National and Everglades National parks through a connected greenway system.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue working with the South Florida Natural Research Center affiliated with the park as one of the premier science staff in the country. This group of talented scientists work on supporting the complex science needs from the national park perspective Everglades Ecosystem restoration project that includes the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

Complete the "hole in the donut" project that removes invasive exotics from a former inholding in the park through a unique partnership with Miami Dade County.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Through programs and education materials, students will develop an understanding of Everglades National Park's value to the web of life in south Florida.

Through programs and materials students are motivated to participate actively in solving south Florida's environmental problems.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Park planning and compliance programs play an important role in reducing environmental impacts of park operations. The planning program focuses on activities that support park legislative and policy requirements, mission goals, and long term goals. The plans produced constitute a framework of management actions and decision making that takes place in the park. Through a broad range of projects, the planning program helps to focus park managers, staff, community leaders, and cooperating organizations on critical challenges associated with better protecting park resources, providing higher quality visitor experiences, improving the quality of facilities and operational functions, and establishing the parks as more meaningful parts of the South Florida Community.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Design and construct replacement facilities which reduce maintenance, utilize recycled and environmentally safe products, reduce energy and water consumption. Replace all water consuming fixtures with low flow plumbing fixtures. Reduce solid waste streams through green purchasing and recycle most remaining solid waste.

Design and construct replacement facilities which reduce maintenance, utilize recycled and environmentally safe products, reduce energy and water consumption. Establish new facilities to improve visitor services such as composting toilets at trailheads which operate on photo voltaic equipment.

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Site: EVER

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

Communicate the importance of water supply and conservation for park preservation and encourage visitors to engage in best practices at home; showcase solar energy and hybrid vehicles in curriculum-based education programs; have students engage in recycling while in the park.

Interpret examples of sustainable design and the use of alternate energy sources as buildings are retrofitted/constructed.

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Site: EVER

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Partner with Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden (Fairchild Challenge) and Miami-Dade County (Envirothon) to promote and celebrate student environmental actions that demonstrate stewardship.

Partner with the Native Plant Society and other organizations to install native landscapes around visitor centers and other public areas to promote opportunities for visitors to observe landscaping with natives and to observe native flora and fauna (e.g., butterflies).

Educate the community about the devastating impacts of non-native species on the park ecosystem through programs such as Don't Let it Loose.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

If base funding increase is received, hire full time volunteer assistant to facilitate volunteer work projects and opportunities for students seeking community service hours in the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with State Partners including the Florida Department of State and the Florida Public Archaeology Network to promote heritage tourism and site stewardship in the Park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Pursue funding for a permanent, year-round tri-lingual community outreach ranger to provide programs to Spanish, Haitian-Creole, and English speaking summer camps, schools, youth organizations and other groups.

Students participate in hiking, wildlife watching and canoeing during curriculum-based education programs and are invited to return to the park with their families.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Seek funding to market and publicize interpretive programs and to reinstate the variety and numbers of interpretive programs offered in FY2001.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Apply new and emerging technologies such as podcasts and an enhanced web page to reach younger and "virtual" audiences.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with the South Florida National Parks Trust to develop and endowment fund to sustain the park's education program in perpetuity.

Seek funding for and engage teachers to develop park curricula for high schools.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Seek funding for and expand e-field trips; develop student-produced podcasts.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Reach out to new audiences and constituents for their ideas for the Long Range Interpretive Plan.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: EVER

PROFESSIONALISM

a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Present Chief of Interpretation-made rewards (cookies, brownies) to each interpretive work unit that has an accident and injury-free quarter.

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