

Table 7: Consequences Specific to the Proposal and Each Alternative

	<u>Proposal: Moderate Develop- ment</u>	<u>Alternative 1: No Action</u>	<u>Alternative 2: 1978 General Management Plan</u>	<u>Alternative 3: Minimal Requirements</u>	<u>Alternative 4: Expanded Develop- ment</u>
NATURAL RESOURCES					
Mainland Shoreline	<p>The mangrove shoreline within the park would remain natural with the exception of the existing unnatural openings of canals and the associated canal spoil banks.</p> <p>Protection of flood-plain and wetland values would be increased by new monitoring and control programs and special studies.</p> <p>No significant impact would be expected from the proposed canoe trail.</p>	Similar to proposal (no canoe trail)	Same as alternative 1	Same as alternative 1	Similar to proposal Litter would increase in the vicinity of the new camping platforms (no mangroves would be cut or removed for the platforms).
Convoy Point	<p>Some mangrove branches would be trimmed to accommodate the interpretive boardwalk.</p> <p>1,400 cubic yards of fill and 2,200 cubic yards of excavation would be required to modify the boat basin.</p> <p>Groundwater contamination would be eliminated with new sewerage system.</p> <p>Additional culverts would improve tidal flushing and water quality in the boat basin and canal. (The boat basin is an artificial, highly impacted site and does not support a viable wetland community.)</p>	<p>Groundwater contamination by existing septic tanks during tidal flooding would continue.</p> <p>Tidal flushing would continue to be poor without new culverts, resulting in poorer water quality in the boat basin and canal.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>No mangroves would be disturbed.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>There would be very little dredging or filling.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>10,000 cubic yards of material would be excavated to create a new boat basin, and approximately 0.3 acre of mangrove vegetation would be removed. The limited tidal flushing in the new boat basin would create the potential for a long-term adverse effect on water quality in North Canal.</p>

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
NATURAL RESOURCES (continued)					
Arsenicker Keys	Nesting habitat for wading birds and bald eagles would continue to be protected.	Same as proposal	Same as proposal	Same as proposal	Similar to proposal There would be increased potential for disturbance of nesting birds by canoers and other recreationists; however, use would be controlled during critical nesting periods.
Bay	Protection of benthic communities, fish, and invertebrate populations would be improved. Adverse effects of polluted freshwater discharged into the bay might be reduced.	The potential for disturbance of benthic communities would be increased by fewer restrictions on motorboat use.	Same as alternative 1	Same as proposal	Same as alternative 1
Totten/Old Rhodes Keys	The area would remain in a natural state. No significant impact on wetlands or potential crocodile habitat would be expected to result from guided boat tours.	The area would remain in a natural state.	Same as alternative 1	Same as alternative 1	Similar to proposal Some vegetation would be cleared to establish a trail.
Adams Key	An unnatural opening in the hardwood hammock vegetation would be retained to accommodate development.	Same as proposal	Similar to proposal Construction of a footbridge to Elliott Key would probably result in the introduction of Mexican red-bellied squirrels, feral cats, or other exotics, which could disrupt the natural distribution of native species.	A large portion of the existing open land would succeed to hardwood hammock stands.	Same as alternative 2

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
NATURAL RESOURCES (continued)					
Elliott Key	<p>An unnatural opening in the island vegetation would be retained to accommodate development.</p> <p>At University Dock, new toilets would improve sanitation and reduce the potential for contaminating adjacent bay waters.</p> <p>No significant impacts would be expected at Tannehill house.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Lack of sanitary facilities at University Dock would increase the potential for contamination of bay waters.</p>	<p>Similar to alternative 1</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Removing University Dock would decrease visitation to the site, resulting in less potential for contamination of bay waters.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Construction of a bicycle trail the length of the key would increase visitor use in the backcountry, but with little impact on the natural environment.</p>
Sands Key	<p>By filling the artificial canal, natural wetland values would be restored and enhanced.</p> <p>A more protected habitat for wading birds and other wildlife would be provided.</p>	<p>The keyhole would continue to function as an artificial boat basin, and recreational use of the site would continue to conflict with wildlife values.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Same as proposal</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>
Boca Chita, Ragged Keys, Soldier Key	<p>The islands would be restored to more natural conditions, with unnatural openings retained only at the developed site on Boca Chita</p> <p>Shoreline rehabilitation on Boca Chita would lead to reduced turbidity in surrounding bay and reef tract waters.</p> <p>Restoration of sea turtle nesting sites would be possible.</p> <p>The seed source for Australian pine and other exotic plants would be removed.</p>	<p>Unnatural openings to accommodate development would be retained on Boca Chita, Ragged Keys 1, 3, and 5, and Soldier Key.</p> <p>Existing bulwarks and revetments would continue to cause some turbidity due to wave reflection.</p> <p>Australian pines and other exotics would continue to provide seeds that could invade other park lands.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Boca Chita would be returned to a natural condition, along with the other keys. Approximately 15 acres of existing open land on Boca Chita would succeed to mangrove and hardwood hammock vegetation.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>In addition to Boca Chita, Ragged Key 3 would remain developed with facilities for visitor use.</p>

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
NATURAL RESOURCES (continued)					
Stiltsville	With continued occupation of Stiltsville, there would continue to be a potential threat to bay water quality from accidental sewage discharges.	Same as proposal	Same as proposal	Same as proposal	Same as proposal
Reef Tract	<p>The reef tract would receive increased federal protection. Fish and invertebrate populations would be maintained. Damage to coral reefs from boats or anchors would be reduced.</p> <p>A ranger station at Tannehill would improve surveillance capability and enforcement response time for protecting reef resources from vandalism or damage.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>The potential for vandalism or damage to reef resources would remain higher than with the proposal because of less surveillance capability and longer response time.</p>	Same as alternative 1	Same as proposal	Same as proposal
CULTURAL RESOURCES					
	<p>No significant impact on cultural resources is expected. The Cocolobo Club structures on Adams Key would be adaptively used and maintained. Conversion of the Tannehill house to a ranger station would improve surveillance of the reef tract shipwreck sites and reduce enforcement response time to protect submerged cultural resources.</p>	<p>The potential for vandalism of shipwreck sites would remain higher than with the proposal because of less surveillance capability and longer response time.</p>	<p>Similar to alternative 1</p> <p>The possibility of disturbing archeological resources would be increased by more construction activity.</p>	Same as proposal	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>The possibility of disturbing archeological resources would be increased by more construction activity.</p>

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
VISITORS					
Public Transportation System	<p>Opportunities would be greatly increased for the nonboating public to visit Elliott Key, Adams Key, the lower keys, and the reef tract, and to benefit from interpretation of these areas.</p> <p>The park would attract more non-boating visitors, and they would have a more satisfying park experience.</p> <p>Some private boaters might perceive the park as being overcrowded due to increased visitation.</p>	<p>After July 1983 there would be no access for the non-boating public to the Elliott Key interpretive center, the reef, or the lower keys, resulting in a less satisfying park experience.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>There would be no access for the non-boating public to the lower keys.</p>	<p>The nonboating public would continue to have access to Elliott Key Harbor on weekends, but those who were unable to time their visits to correspond with the tour boat schedule would continue to be frustrated by the lack of access. There would be no access for the nonboating public to the reef or the lower keys.</p>	<p>Same as proposal</p>
Mainland Shoreline	<p>Visitors following the canoe trail would have the opportunity to learn about the ecological significance of the mangrove and to enjoy the preserved scenic quality of the shoreline.</p> <p>The canal spoil banks would remain accessible to people walking from nearby parking areas, but visitors would lose the convenience of being able to drive their vehicles onto the banks.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Lack of canoe trail would result in a lost opportunity for this type of educational experience.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Visitors would enjoy the additional opportunity of being able to camp and experience the shoreline environment at night.</p> <p>Some visitors would consider the camping platforms to be a visual intrusion.</p> <p>Visitors would appreciate the convenience of a new interpretive boardwalk on Black Point.</p>

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
VISITORS (continued)					
Convoy Point	<p>New visitor facilities would increase the attractiveness of Convoy Point to prospective visitors and provide for a more satisfying park experience.</p> <p>Visitors' understanding and appreciation of the park's resources would be enhanced through improved interpretive facilities.</p> <p>Aesthetic qualities of the developed site would be improved.</p> <p>Visitors would no longer be able to launch private boats at the NPS site; however, additional ramps will be added to Homestead Bayfront County Park for this purpose.</p>	<p>Visitor contact and interpretive facilities would continue to be less than adequate, resulting in visitor dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Visitors would not have the opportunity for an interpretive walk through the mangrove forest and would continue to find it difficult to walk on the jetty, resulting in missed opportunities for learning about and enjoying the scenic qualities of the shoreline.</p> <p>Visitors would no longer be able to launch private boats at the NPS site; however, additional ramps will be added to Homestead Bayfront County Park for this purpose.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Visitors would not have the opportunity for an interpretive walk through the mangrove forest and would continue to find it difficult to walk on the jetty, resulting in missed opportunities for learning about and enjoying the scenic qualities of the shoreline.</p>	<p>Same as proposal</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Providing concession motorboats, sailboats, and canoes would duplicate a service to be provided at Homestead Bayfront County Park. Facilities for the concession would reduce the limited amount of open space at Convoy Point, and the activity associated with the operation would conflict with the quieter interpretive and picnicking uses proposed for the site. Some visitors would welcome the additional recreation opportunities and some would object to the additional activity.</p>
Bay	<p>Conflicts among bay users would be reduced, and visitor safety would be enhanced, resulting in a more satisfying visitor experience. Some visitors might resent zoning as overregulation. Damage to visitors' boats from grounding would be reduced due to marking of shallow areas.</p>	<p>Conflicts in visitor use would continue as at present without additional markers, monitoring, and appropriate restrictions.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Same as proposal</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
VISITORS (continued)					
Totten/Old Rhodes Keys	<p>Opportunities would be greatly increased for the non-boating public to observe the keys and tidal creeks, resulting in a more satisfying visitor experience.</p> <p>Interpretation of this portion of the park would be improved.</p> <p>Some people might consider public boat tours to be intrusions on the natural area.</p>	<p>Public transportation to and interpretation of the keys and tidal creeks would not be available, resulting in a less satisfying visitor experience.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Same as alternative 1</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Visitors would have the opportunity to take either canoe or motorboat tours of the tidal creeks. Canoe trips would be more hazardous than motorboat tours.</p>
Adams Key	<p>The visitor experience would be improved by additional picnicking and interpretation facilities.</p> <p>Use of the key would probably increase, and some current visitors might perceive a loss of solitude.</p> <p>The student interpretive program would continue.</p>	<p>There would be no change in the visitor experience, and the island would continue to receive little visitation. The student interpretive program would continue.</p>	<p>Use of the key would probably increase gradually.</p> <p>Visitors could view the Caesar Creek area from a tower and could hike to Elliott Key via a new bridge.</p> <p>Some visitors to the island, and boaters in general, would find the bridge and the tower to be visual intrusions. Boaters might find the bridge to be a hindrance to their travel in the channel between Adams Key and Elliott Key.</p> <p>There would be more visitor activity than under the proposal. Some visitors could perceive the key as overcrowded and overdeveloped. For others, the visitor experience would be improved.</p>	<p>Visitor use would decrease from present levels, and the key would provide a more primitive experience.</p>	<p>Similar to alternative 2 but possibly with greater visitor activity.</p>

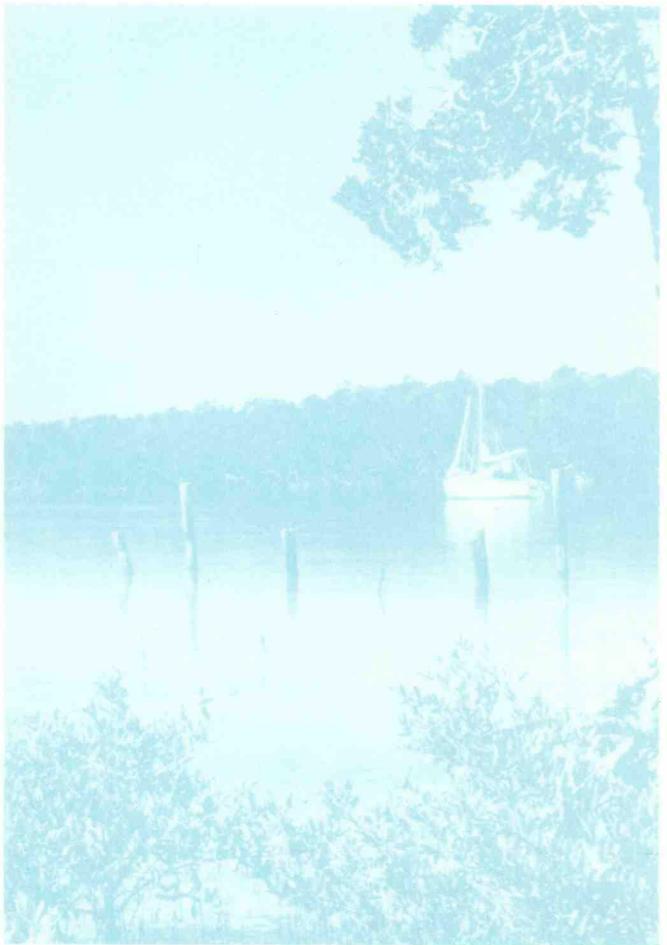
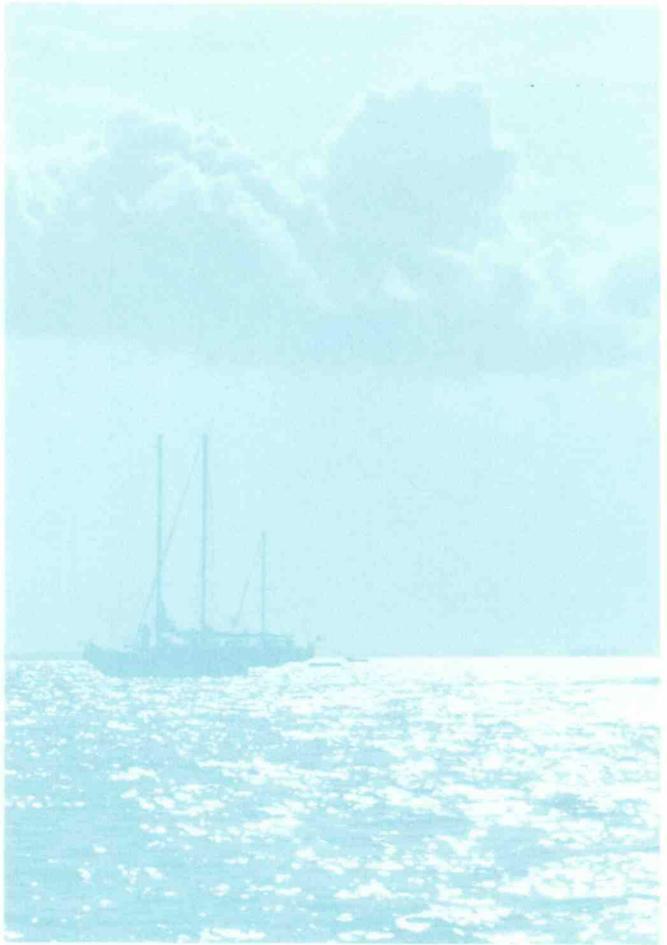
	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
VISITORS (continued)					
Elliott Key					
--Undeveloped Areas	Opportunities for hiking and backpacking would continue.	Same as proposal	Visitors would be able to hike to Adams Key over an interpretive trail and footbridge.	Same as proposal	Similar to alternative 2 Visitors would also have the opportunity to bicycle to Adams Key.
--Harbor Complex	Access for the non-boating public would increase, enabling more visitors to have a more satisfying park experience. Improved interpretive facilities and services would afford visitors a greater opportunity to view and learn about the resources of the bay, barrier islands, and reef tract. Some visitors might perceive the area as overcrowded.	Annual visitation would continue to be low and concentrated on summer weekends. After July 1983 the nonboating public would be frustrated by the lack of access to the harbor complex facilities. Interpretive opportunities would not be improved.	Public access would increase with the tour boat system. Interpretive opportunities would not be improved. Visitors could purchase snack foods and rent equipment.	Similar to proposal Access for the non-boating public would be limited to the weekends; on weekdays, the non-boating public would continue to be frustrated by the lack of access.	Similar to proposal Visitors could purchase snack foods and rent equipment. An amphitheater would provide a more structured setting for programs.
--University Dock	Visitor use would probably increase. Visitor safety, comfort, and orientation would improve. Some visitors might perceive the area as overcrowded and less primitive.	Use would continue to be fairly high on summer weekends. Some visitors would be dissatisfied with the lack of toilet facilities.	The level of use would decrease. Many visitors might resent the reservation requirement, and reservations would be difficult to enforce. Some visitors would be dissatisfied with the lack of toilet facilities.	Access to the beach would be made difficult by removal of the dock, and the level of use would decrease. Some visitors would be dissatisfied with lack of dock and toilet facilities. Others would appreciate the natural state of the area.	Same as proposal
--Tannehill House	With a new ranger station at Tannehill, visitor safety on the reef tract would be enhanced by the improved surveillance capability and reduced emergency response time.	Without a ranger station at Tannehill, there would be no improvement in visitor safety on the reef tract.	Same as alternative 1	Same as proposal	The Tannehill site would offer excellent opportunities for environmental education; however, the isolation of the site could make transportation and logistical costs prohibitively high for many school groups. The observation deck would provide an elevated view of the reef tract, further enhancing surveillance capability, emergency response time, and visitor safety.

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
VISITORS (continued)					
Sands Key	Use of the keyhole as an anchorage would be eliminated. Backcountry qualities of Sands Key would be enhanced. Birdwatching might be improved.	Visitors would continue to use the canal and keyhole for a boat basin.	Same as alternative 1	Same as proposal	Same as alternative 1
Boca Chita, Ragged Keys, Soldier Key	A new recreational day-use facility for private boaters on Boca Chita would reduce the potential for overcrowding and user conflicts at Elliott Key Harbor. Elevated views of the park would be possible from the existing tower at Boca Chita. Private boaters would be able to land upon and explore all of the keys.	Public use of the islands would continue to be prohibited.	Same as alternative 1	The open space on Boca Chita would revegetate, and the island would become unattractive for visitor use, resulting in a less satisfying visitor experience. Visitors could land upon and explore all the islands.	Similar to proposal In addition, facilities for visitor use, primarily for organized groups, would be available on Ragged Key 3. Transportation, logistical, and maintenance costs would be high.
Stiltsville	Stiltsville would remain as a visual intrusion in the bay until 1999.	Same as proposal	Same as proposal	Same as proposal	Same as proposal
Reef Tract	Opportunities would be greatly increased for the nonboating public to see the natural features and shipwrecks on the reef tract, enabling more visitors to have a more satisfying park experience. Improved interpretive services would enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the reef tract's resources. Visitor safety would be enhanced when Tannehill house was converted to a ranger station.	There would be no change in the visitor experience and no access for the nonboating public.	Public tour boats would improve accessibility of the reef tract.	Same as alternative 1	Same as proposal

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS					
Regional Economy	Increased park visitation would increase tourist related income in the Homestead area. The public transportation system could provide additional employment for 5 to 10 people.	There would be less tourist-related income to the local community than under the proposal, and no additional employment due to the lack of a transportation system.	Same as proposal	Similar to alternative 1 The limited transportation system might be operated by existing NPS employees, resulting in no additional employment.	Same as proposal
Flood Hazard	<p>Visitors would continue to be protected from flood hazards in accordance with the park hurricane evacuation plan.</p> <p>Development would remain in the coastal high-hazard area, where the risk of property damage would be greatest in a major storm.</p> <p>The risk of property damage in the 100-year floodplain and high-hazard area would be minimized through proper design of new construction and rehabilitation of some existing park facilities. The recently constructed facilities at Elliott Key Harbor were designed to withstand a 100-year flood. The potential for damage to property on the Ragged Keys and Soldier Key would be eliminated when the structures were removed. Private residences at Stiltsville would continue to be subject to storm damage.</p>	<p>Visitors would continue to be protected from flood hazards in accordance with the park hurricane evacuation plan</p> <p>Development would remain in the coastal high-hazard area, where the risk of property damage would be greatest in a major storm.</p> <p>Since there would be no redesign for floodproofing, many of the existing NPS facilities at Convoy Point and Adams Key could sustain damage in a 100-year flood, as could private developments at Boca Chita, the Ragged Keys, Soldier Key, Tannehill house, Porgy Key, and Siltsville. New structures at Elliott Key Harbor would probably not be damaged due to flooding in a major storm because they were designed to withstand hurricane flooding.</p>	<p>Similar to alternative 1</p> <p>Some facilities at Convoy Point and Adams Key would be redesigned for floodproofing.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Since Boca Chita would be returned to a natural state, there would be no development subject to storm damage.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Development remaining on Ragged Key 3 would continue to be subject to damage from storms.</p>

	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>Alternative 4</u>
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (continued)					
Energy Considerations	<p>Parkwide energy consumption would be increased by the tour boat system.</p> <p>Alternative energy sources would reduce the consumption of fossil fuel at Adams Key and Elliott Key Harbor.</p> <p>Energy consumption at Convoy Point would probably decrease due to new energy-efficient buildings and relocation of the maintenance area.</p>	<p>There would be less energy consumption than under the proposal due to the phase-out of the tour boat system.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Fuel consumption for tour boat system would be less than under the proposal.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p>
Park Operations at Convoy Point	<p>Efficiency of administration and maintenance, and working conditions for park staff, would improve when temporary facilities were replaced by permanent buildings.</p> <p>Administrative and maintenance functions would be more clearly separated from visitor use functions.</p> <p>Navigation would be improved with modification of the boat basin.</p>	<p>Administrative facilities would continue to be crowded in temporary trailers, and maintenance would be less efficient than under the proposal.</p> <p>Operational functions would continue to conflict with visitor functions.</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Maintenance would be less efficient.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 2</p>	<p>Similar to proposal</p> <p>Maintenance area would be more crowded.</p>

**PART TWO:
WILDERNESS STUDY
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**



PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE WILDERNESS STUDY

In the 1980 Biscayne National Park legislation Congress directed that the lands and waters within the boundary be studied for their suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designation, in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964. The 1964 act created a National Wilderness Preservation System to be made up of federally owned lands designated by Congress. The intent was to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." Congressional designation of each specific wilderness area is required to prevent the piecemeal erosion of wilderness values as a result of the day-to-day pressures and requirements which face federal land managers. The act also ensures public review of the designation process.

The Wilderness Act defines wilderness:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is . . . an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is . . . an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

The Wilderness Act prohibits certain uses in wilderness areas, stating that commercial enterprise, permanent or temporary roads not "necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area," motor vehicles, motorboats, and other forms of mechanical transport are incompatible with wilderness.

In the planning information and response form made available to the public in November and December 1981, the National Park Service requested the public's opinions regarding wilderness in the park. Of the 160 responses to the form, 57 percent commented on wilderness. The overriding concern was that the recreation opportunities that now exist in the park should be allowed to continue. Also, the public was generally opposed to any further development of the islands.

The public will be able to comment on the preliminary wilderness proposal presented in this document at a public hearing (the date of which will be announced) and through written comments. Following analysis of public response, the National Park Service will make a wilderness proposal to the secretary of interior, who will in turn make a recommendation regarding

wilderness designation to the president and Congress, as required in the park's enabling legislation. It should be emphasized that regardless of the NPS proposal, wilderness can be designated only by Congress.



Barge Traffic on Biscayne Bay



Florida Power and Light Company's Turkey Point Power Plant

SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

The National Park Service studied wilderness suitability at the same time that the proposal and alternatives were developed for the general management plan (GMP). The results of the wilderness study are therefore related to and consistent with the proposal in the GMP. The GMP proposal and alternatives, their environmental consequences, and a detailed description of Biscayne National Park are in part one of this document.

All areas within the authorized park boundary, including those not currently in federal ownership, were studied for wilderness suitability. Nonfederal areas cannot be designated as wilderness, but if found eligible, they can be designated as potential wilderness, pending acquisition by the federal government.

The determination of suitability was based on a consideration of the park's resources, purposes, and management and planning objectives as they related to the intent of the Wilderness Act. The most pertinent criteria in assessing suitability came from the Wilderness Act. To be eligible for wilderness an area must now, or in the foreseeable future, be without the lasting imprint of man, conducive to the experience of solitude or unconfined primitive recreation, and of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

The Wilderness Eligibility chart summarizes the various park areas and their eligibilities for wilderness based on these criteria. Four areas were found to be possibly eligible: the Arsenicker Keys, the southern keys and waters (south of Caesar Creek), the undeveloped portions of Elliott Key, and Sands Key. These areas are shown on the map entitled Areas Possibly Eligible For Wilderness Designation. All other areas of Biscayne National Park were judged not eligible for wilderness, for reasons explained below.

The mainland shoreline is interrupted by development at Black Point, Convoy Point, and Turkey Point. Numerous mosquito ditches, six major drainage canals, and tons of jetsam entwined in the mangroves give ample evidence of man's imprint. An experience of solitude and unconfined primitive recreation is difficult to achieve along the mainland shoreline because of the proximity of development (including visible power plants), the Intracoastal Waterway, motorboat traffic, and airplanes from nearby Homestead Air Force Base.

Similarly, the bay bears man's imprint in the form of dredged and marked channels--including the Intracoastal Waterway--over which the National Park Service has limited jurisdiction, and motorboat scars on the bay bottom. The visitor experience on or under the bay often is not one of solitude or unconfined, primitive recreation, especially on a weekend when the bay is teeming with pleasure craft.

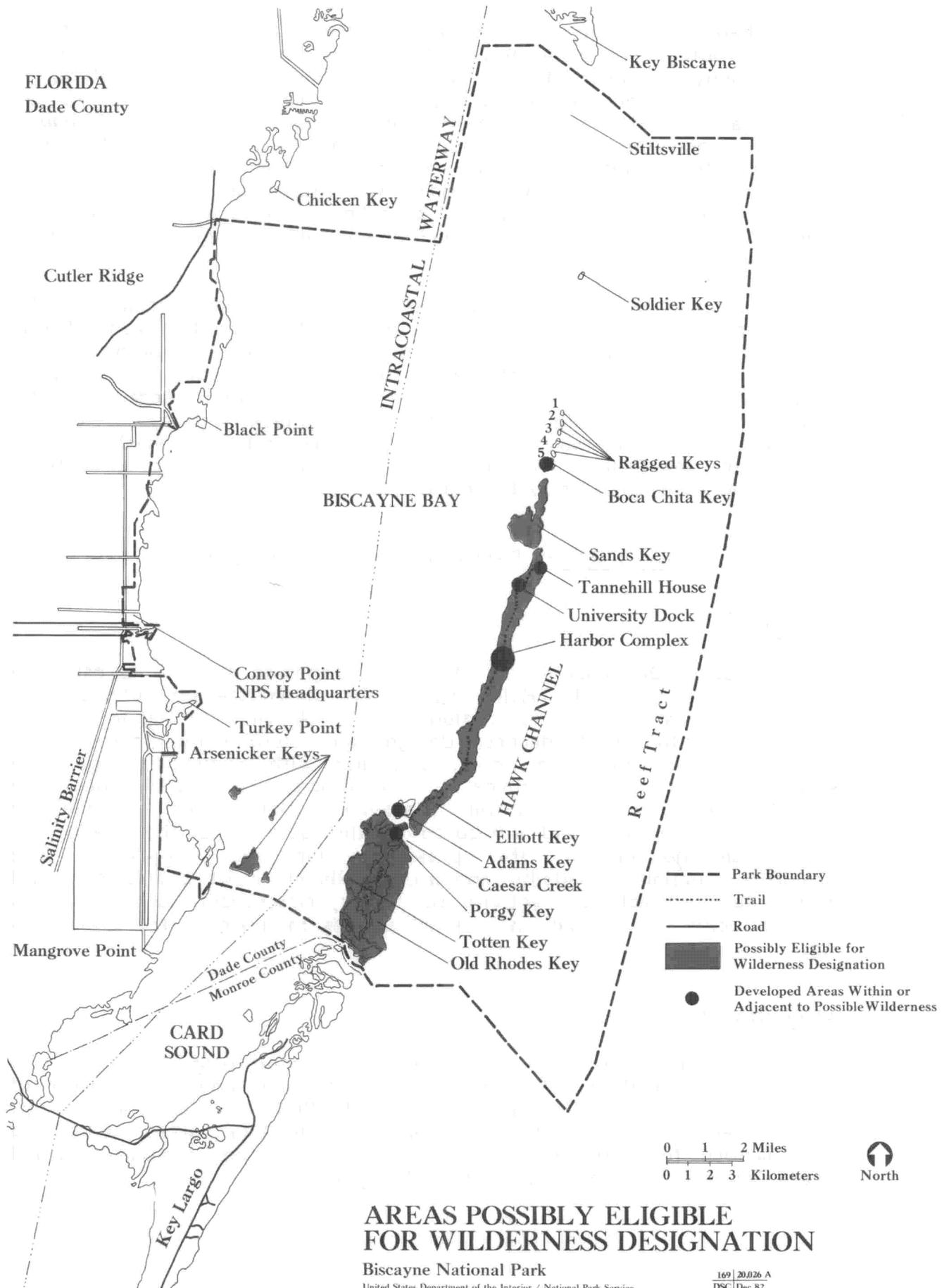
Adams Key and the keys north of Sands Key have been extensively altered. Their size and proximity to major shipping lanes preclude unconfined recreation and the feeling of solitude.

Wilderness Eligibility

<u>Area of Park</u>	<u>Criteria</u>			<u>Eligibility</u>
	<i>without man's imprint</i>	<i>solitude/unconfined, primitive recreation</i>	<i>sufficient size</i>	
mainland shoreline	O	O	O	not eligible
Arsenicker Keys	X			possibly eligible
bay	O	O		not eligible
southern keys/waters (south of Caesar Creek)	X		X	possibly eligible
Adams Key	O	O		not eligible
Elliott Key (undeveloped)				possibly eligible
Sands Key				possibly eligible
northern keys (north of Sands Key)	O	O	O	not eligible
Hawk Channel	O	O		not eligible
reef tract	O	O		not eligible

X = satisfies criteria
 | = may satisfy criteria
 O = does not satisfy criteria

FLORIDA
Dade County



AREAS POSSIBLY ELIGIBLE FOR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION

Biscayne National Park

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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Hawk Channel, though not dredged, is marked and managed as a major shipping route. The adjacent reef tract is also marked with daymarkers, whistle buoys, lighted buoys, and major lights. The multitude of powerboats rules out solitude along the reef tract. Their presence can be seen and heard above and below the surface of the water. Although swimmers along the reef are required to conform to certain established safety practices, and boaters are required to steer clear of other boats displaying diving flags, the swimmer will always be aware of possible dangers inherent in areas where motorboats are present. For these reasons, it is questionable whether an unconfined, primitive, solitary experience is possible in this area.

The Arsenicker Keys, keys and creeks south of Caesar Creek, and the undeveloped portions of Elliott Key evidence little imprint of man. Sands Key has been considerably altered by the previous dredging of the keyhole, but the remainder of the island is largely pristine. In all these areas, however, the feeling of solitude is questionable. Because of the views of the 415-foot-high Turkey Point smokestacks and the activity in the Intracoastal Waterway and Hawk Channel, and the almost constant sounds of low-flying jet aircraft and powerboats, an unconfined "wilderness experience" may be unattainable.

WILDERNESS PROPOSAL AND ALTERNATIVE

PROPOSAL

In its report (December 7, 1979) that accompanied the bill to establish Biscayne National Park (H.R. 5926), the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs asked the National Park Service to "give serious consideration to the Wilderness designation potential for parts of the park, not only for land areas, but also with particular regard to subsurface and aquatic resources." The National Park Service has done this and finds no area within Biscayne National Park suitable for wilderness designation and will so advise the secretary of the interior for his recommendation to the president and the Congress. The proximity--spatially, visually, and acoustically--to major development and well-established motorized activity (airplanes, motorboats, large ships) is not conducive to an experience of solitude as intended in the Wilderness Act.

ALTERNATIVE

Four areas of Biscayne National Park were found possibly eligible for wilderness designation: Arsenicker Keys, the keys and creeks south of Caesar Creek, the undeveloped portions of Elliott Key, and Sands Key. As an alternative to no wilderness, these four areas would be recommended for congressional wilderness designation (see map entitled Areas Possibly Eligible for Wilderness Designation).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WILDERNESS PROPOSAL AND ALTERNATIVE

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

A determination of nonsuitability for wilderness would not significantly affect the natural or cultural resources of the park. Those areas that were judged possibly eligible for wilderness, regardless of designation, will be zoned and managed as undeveloped natural areas in which traditional compatible recreational uses will be permitted. The natural, scenic, and recreational values of the areas will thus be preserved, whether or not wilderness is designated.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

Wilderness designation would add legislative prohibition against future development of the Arsenicker Keys, the keys and waters south of Caesar Creek, Sands Key, and the currently undeveloped portion of Elliott Key. Traditional uses are allowable in wilderness, and designation of wilderness would not necessarily preclude the use of motorboats in the southern creeks. It might cause a controversy, however, over which traditional recreational activities should be allowed.

LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHOM
COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT WERE SENT

Federal Agencies

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Department of Agriculture
Department of the Army
 Corps of Engineers
Department of Commerce
Department of Energy
Department of the Interior
 Fish and Wildlife Service
 Geological Survey
Department of Transportation, Region IV Secretarial Representative
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

State Agencies

Florida Planning and Development Clearinghouse
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer

County/Regional Agencies

Metropolitan Dade County
 Department of Environmental Resources Management
 Department of Parks and Recreation
 Department of Planning
South Florida Regional Planning Council