

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Everglades National Park • Florida



Dear Friends,

The National Park Service (NPS), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, plans to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate options and potential impacts for acquiring lands owned by the Florida Power and Light Company (FPL) within the East Everglades Addition of Everglades National Park (the park). This will include the potential exchange of lands authorized in the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 and other reasonable alternatives.

The Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 expanded the boundaries of Everglades National Park to include approximately 109,600 acres, and through that act and additional legislation authorized the National Park Service and Army Corps of Engineers to acquire lands within the East Everglades Addition. Florida Power and Light Company owns, and has since the 1960s and early 1970s, about 320 acres of undeveloped land within the East Everglades Addition. Because the FPL property is currently undeveloped and is needed for the restoration and enhancement of the ecosystem (through improvement of natural hydrologic conditions), the National Park Service is seeking to acquire the FPL property, manage it as part of the park, and maintain it in its undeveloped condition.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with information about the project and related issues and to ask for your help. This project is important in restoring natural hydrologic conditions and ensuring that fundamental resource conditions in the park remain. The project is important to the future of Everglades National Park, and that is why we are seeking your input on the proposed project and the alternatives and issues to be included in the environmental assessment. Please plan to attend a public meeting on July 9, 2009, to be held at the John D. Campbell Agricultural Center in Homestead, Florida. You will have the opportunity to speak with park staff, ask questions, and comment on this project. If you cannot attend the meeting, you may also submit comments electronically via the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> or by sending mail to the National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Planning Division, at the address listed on page 3.

Please provide your input on or before July 28, 2009.
We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dan B. Kimball
Superintendent, Everglades National Park

You are invited to attend a public meeting on

July 9, 2009

John D. Campbell Agricultural Center
18710 SW 288th Street
Homestead, FL 33030

5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

The first hour of the meeting will be an open house, and NPS staff will be available to discuss the project, answer questions, and record public comments. At 6:30 p.m. there will be a brief presentation on the project, followed by a public comment session.

Everglades National Park Florida

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Project Schedule

Steps	Planning Activity	Dates	Public/Agency Involvement Opportunities
1	Scoping: Identify planning issues and opportunities	Public comment period June 26, 2009 – July 28, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend public scoping meeting Submit written comments by July 28, 2009
2	Prepare <i>Draft Environmental Assessment</i>	July 2009 – October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency and tribal consultations
3	Publish and distribute <i>Draft Environmental Assessment</i>	November 2009 30-day public comment period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the <i>Draft Environmental Assessment</i> and provide comments to the National Park Service Attend public meeting
4	Federal decision anticipated	December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review NPS decision

Project Purpose and Background

The Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 (16 U.S.C. 410r-5) expanded the boundaries of Everglades National Park (the park) to include about 109,600 acres, and through that act and additional legislation authorized the National Park Service (NPS) and Army Corps of Engineers to acquire lands within the park's East Everglades Addition. The Florida Power and Light Company (FPL) owns, and has owned since the 1960s and early 1970s, property 330 feet to 370 feet wide and about 7.4 miles in length (north-south) that encompasses about 320 acres in the East Everglades Addition. The FPL property is authorized for acquisition by the United States.

The FPL property is undeveloped and is needed for the restoration and enhancement of the ecosystem (through improvement of natural hydrologic conditions), as well as to ensure that the park's fundamental resources and values are maintained. The National Park Service seeks to incorporate the FPL property into the park and to maintain the land in its undeveloped condition. Florida Power and Light asserts that the FPL property is vital for the placement of critical infrastructure that is necessary for the transmission of high voltage electrical power for the benefit of South Florida citizens.

The Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 identified NPS property at the eastern edge of the East Everglades Addition as potential lands to be exchanged for the FPL property. The act authorized the secretary of the interior to exchange NPS lands for the FPL property and to convey a perpetual easement on lands contiguous to the NPS exchange lands for the purpose of vegetation management. The potential land exchange would be subject to such terms and conditions as the secretary may require.

The National Park Service seeks to determine the possible impacts, if any, on the environment from the potential land exchange and other reasonable alternatives in an environmental assessment (EA). The environmental assessment will also serve to develop the appropriate terms and conditions for the potential exchange. The National Park Service understands that Florida Power and Light plans to use either its existing property, or the exchanged property and easements, for constructing electrical transmission facilities.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

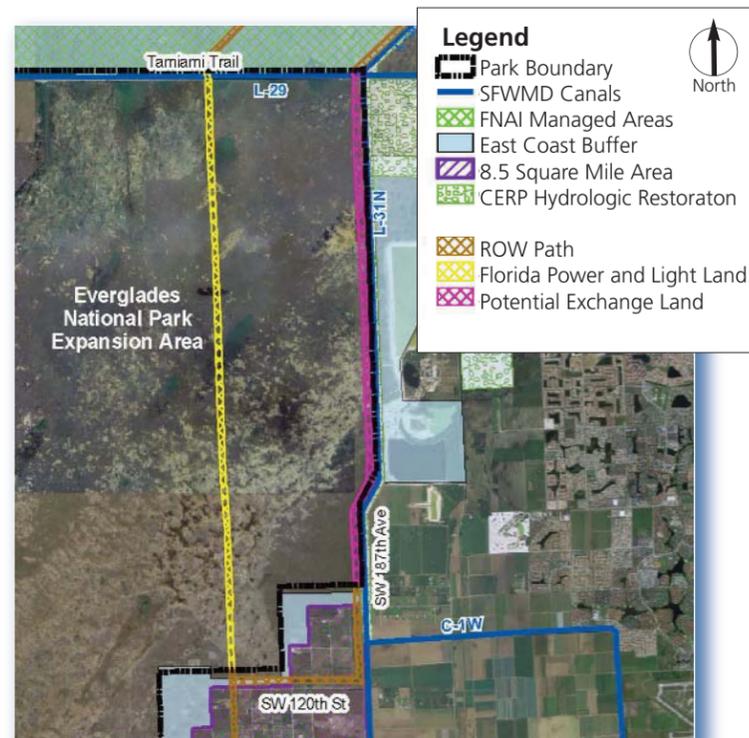
The environmental assessment will evaluate the possible environmental effects of the potential exchange of lands authorized in the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 and other reasonable alternatives. A range of alternatives will be considered, including a no-action alternative. At the conclusion of the process, the National Park Service will make a decision regarding this potential exchange of FPL property within the East Everglades Addition.

Scope

This study will consider impacts on cultural and natural resources, including archeological sites, hydrology, water quality, ecosystem habitat, fish and wildlife resources, and threatened and endangered species. It will also consider impacts on the socioeconomic environment and visitor experiences.

The National Park Service is the lead agency on this federal action. As the lead agency, the National Park Service will have decision authority over implementation. This project will likely involve a number of agencies and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels. To develop a realistic plan, the National Park Service will seek input from other resource and technical agencies and stakeholders, including but not limited to the following:

- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Division of Historical Resources (state historic preservation officer)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Public Service Commission
- Miami-Dade County
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- South Florida Water Management District
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey



How You Can Participate

At this time, the superintendent of Everglades National Park is announcing a public comment period to solicit public feedback on this project. During this period the public is invited and encouraged to comment on the proposed project and identify any issues or concerns so that the National Park Service can appropriately consider them.

There are a number of ways to participate in this process and make your voice heard. You may submit your comments electronically by going to the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>). Once on the website, select "Everglades NP" from the drop-down box, then "Acquisition of Florida Power and Light Lands/Environmental Assessment," and finally "Open for Public Comment." A paper copy of this newsletter may be requested by calling the park at 305-242-7700. If prompted by voice mail, press number 2 at the first prompt and number 5 at the second prompt to leave mailing information. Please state that you are requesting the newsletter for the Acquisition of Florida Power and Light Lands / Environmental Assessment project.

If you are unable to submit comments electronically, please submit written comments by July 28, 2009, to the following address:

**National Park Service
Denver Service Center
Florida Power and Light Planning Team
P.O. Box 25287
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287**

Finally, we invite you to attend the following public meeting to be held on:

**July 9, 2009
John D. Campbell Agricultural Center
18710 SW 288th Street
Homestead, FL 33030**

5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

The first hour of the meeting will be an open house, and NPS staff will be available to discuss the project, answer questions, and record public comments. At 6:30 p.m. there will be a brief presentation on the project, followed by a public comment session.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment — including your personal identifying information — may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

