Everglades & Dry Tortugas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Everglades & Dry Tortugas National Parks
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034

Going Green

Preparing for Another Century

The National Park Service will celebrate its centennial in 2016, with a goal of exemplary service and public enjoyment for 100 more years to come. Part of this goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foster sustainability and renewable energy in our parks. Both Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks have made significant progress towards addressing this goal.

Facilities

After a park-wide energy audit, Everglades improved and updated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems in many buildings to make them more energy efficient. Shortly thereafter, the superintendent for Everglades and Dry Tortugas established an energy conservation policy to lower energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The following projects help the parks achieve this goal.

At the Flamingo campgrounds in Everglades National Park, solar powered heaters are used to provide hot water for showers. Hot water was unavailable until the solar heaters were installed in 2010, so they also offer an improved, and energy efficient, service for you, our visitors.

Solar arrays provide hot water at Flamingo campgrounds.
NPS Photo

The observation tower at Shark Valley provides a great view of the Everglades. In fact, the restroom facilities there have no municipal power and use a solar powered system for lights and equipment.

Loggerhead Key in Dry Tortugas, as the name suggests, is an important site for nesting loggerhead turtles and other turtle species. In 2008, the diesel powered generators on the Key were replaced with a photo voltaic system. This new solar powered system uses alternative energy and is an important part of the park's sustainability goals. It also reduces air pollution and operates more quietly than the diesel generators.

Solar arrays power the generators at Loggerhead Key.
NPS Photo

Garden Key, the location of Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas, recently upgraded to more fuel efficient generators. The new generators operate more quietly than the previous generators and will offer an improved visitor experience by not disrupting beach campers.

Lighting

Electricity and lighting are an essential part of daily life and work. Lighting sources that use more energy also contribute more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. By 2010, most of the major buildings within Everglades converted to energy efficient compact fluorescent lighting.

Inside the Ernest Coe visitor center, lighting is from compact fluorescent lamps with the exception of the theatre (for dimming purposes). In the visitor center parking lot, solar power is used to light the lot when dark. This is a great opportunity to harness renewable energy in Everglades.

Semi-permanent structures, or Eco-Tents, are planned for the Flamingo campsites in Everglades. It is possible that these tents will be equipped with solar powered lights, and even fans or outlets.

The historic lighthouse located on Loggerhead Key at Dry Tortugas is maintained by park staff. The caretaker's house recently had many energy efficiency improvements, including the replacement of incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights.

Solar light at the Ernest Coe Visitor Center parking lot.
NPS Photo

Transportation

At 1.5 million acres, Everglades is a big park and our rangers and scientists travel throughout the expanse to meet with visitors and conduct research.

In 2008, Everglades received their first hybrid vehicles and have since replaced many more vehicles with fuel efficient hybrids.

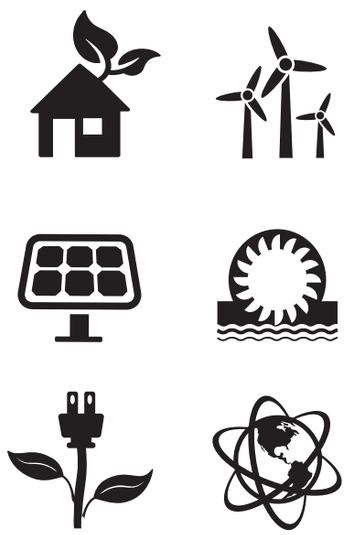
In 2012, the Shark Valley Tram Tours concession replaced its fleet of gasoline powered vehicles with biodiesel trams. Using biodiesel fuel significantly reduces the emission of greenhouse gases and harmful pollutants.

Hybrid vehicles are used for many park operations.
NPS Photo

How to Help

You can assist Everglades and Dry Tortugas efforts by reducing greenhouse gases in your home and community. Examples of how you can help are:

- using energy efficient ENERGY STAR appliances
- cleaning the air conditioning filter routinely
- turning off electronics such as lights, fans, computers, TVs, and cable boxes when not in use
- unplugging appliances such as hair dryers, toasters, etc.
- using compact flourescent lights (CFLs) or light emitting diode (LED) light bulbs



Does it Matter?

Our efforts to "go green" are important to the future of the Everglades and Dry Tortugas. Visit this link to learn how a warming climate is already bringing big changes to these special places.