

Biscayne National Park



Planning Efforts

Fishery Management Plan

General Management Plan

Presentation to South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Superintendent Brian Carlstrom
December 1, 2014

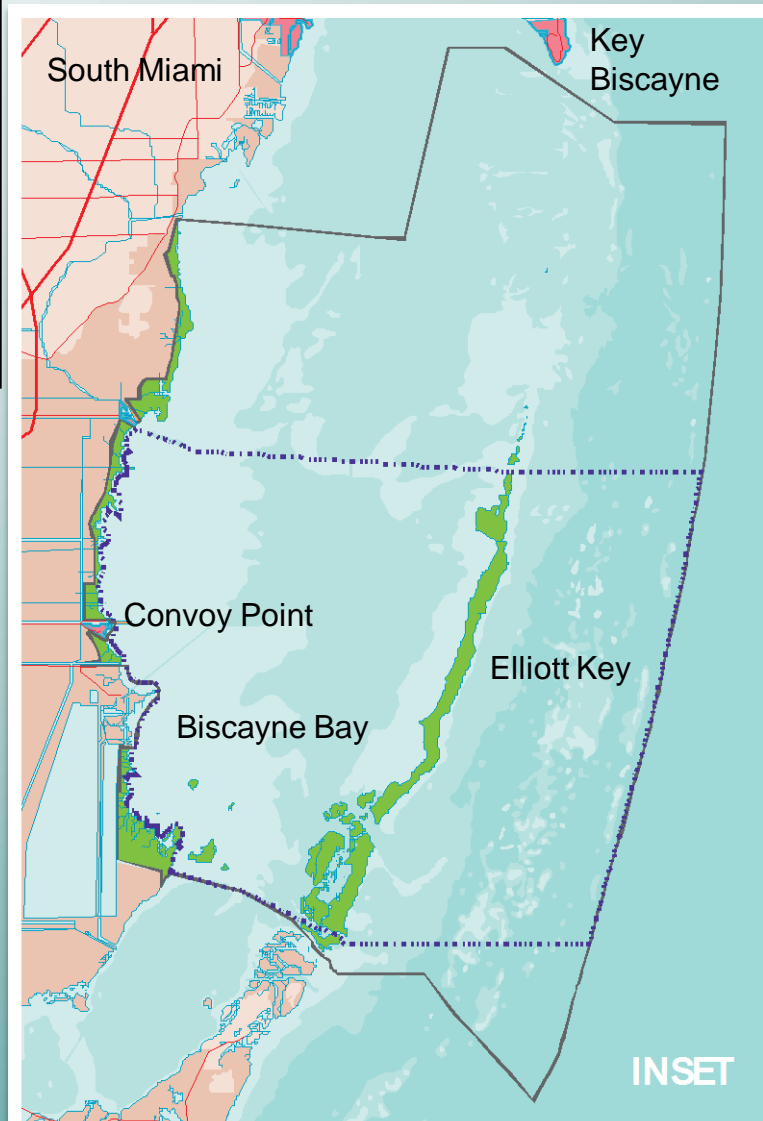
Purpose of Biscayne National Park



“To preserve and protect for the education, inspiration, recreation, and enjoyment of present and future generations a rare combination of terrestrial, marine and amphibious life in a tropical setting of great natural beauty.”



Biscayne National Park Location



Biscayne



- One of the largest marine parks 174,000 acres (95% water) in the national park system
- Recreation destination for 496,000 people annually
- \$38,000,000 contributed annually to local economy by park visitors



Biscayne's Significance



- Recreation opportunities



THOMAS M. STROM

Biscayne's Significance



- Unique marine habitat and nursery environment for sustaining native fisheries



Biscayne's Significance



- Rich source of submerged and terrestrial cultural resources



Biscayne's Significance



- Opportunities for education and scientific research



Why we need a Fishery Management Plan at Biscayne National Park



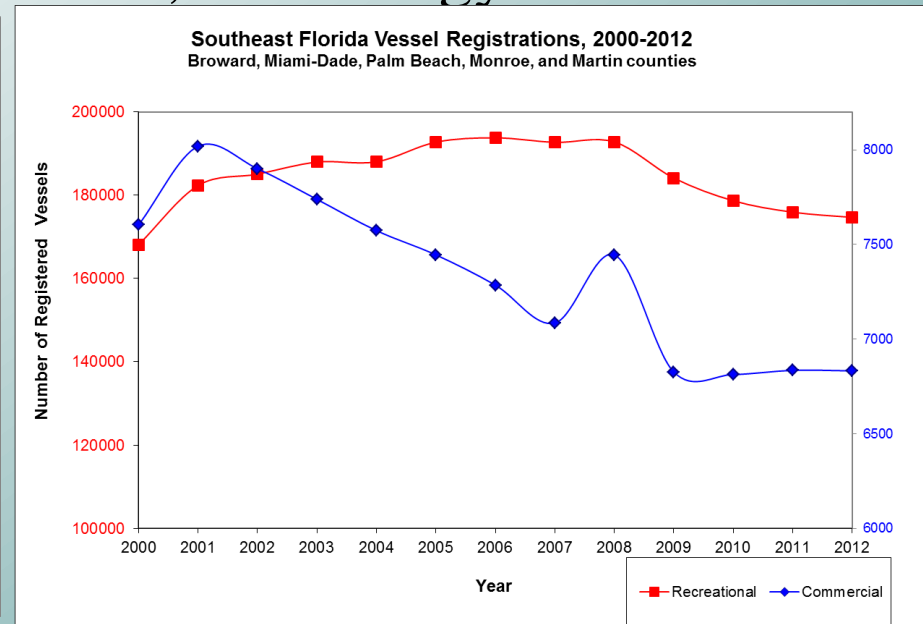
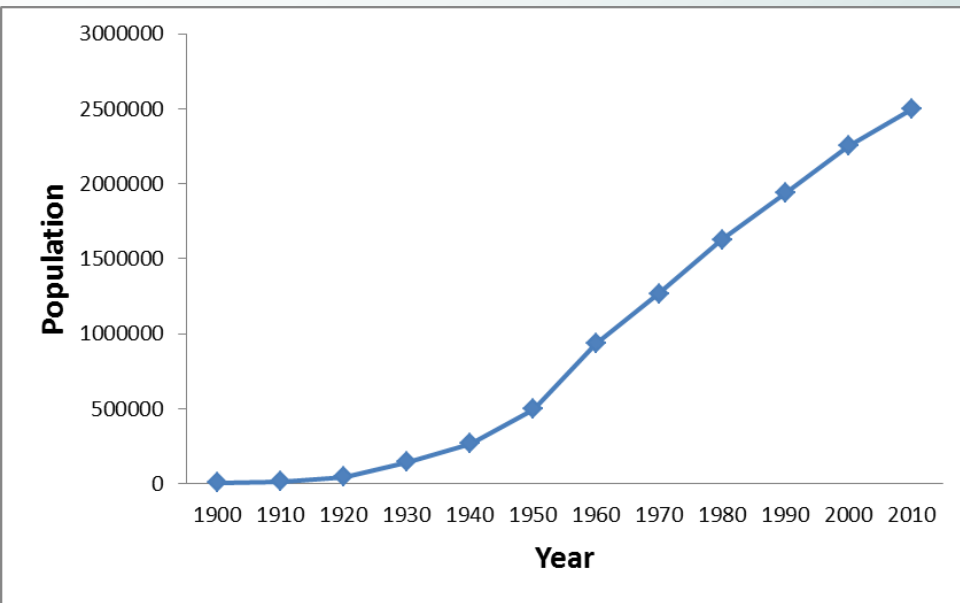
1. Challenges to preserving our fishery resources
2. Current status of fishery resources
3. Concerns about the fishing experience
4. Concerns about indirect effects on organisms and habitat
5. Concerns about fishery resource violations



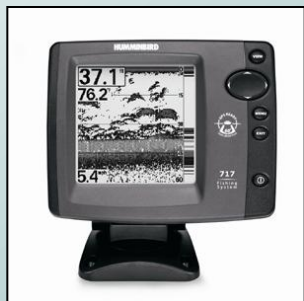


Challenges to preserving our fishery resources

Increases in population, fishing pressure, technology



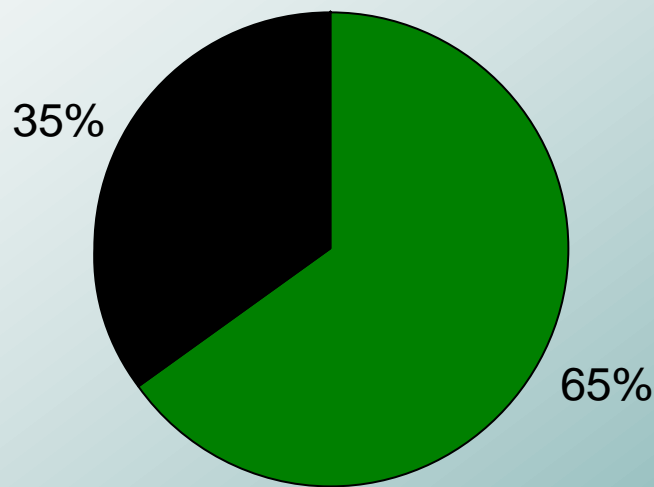
Source: US Census



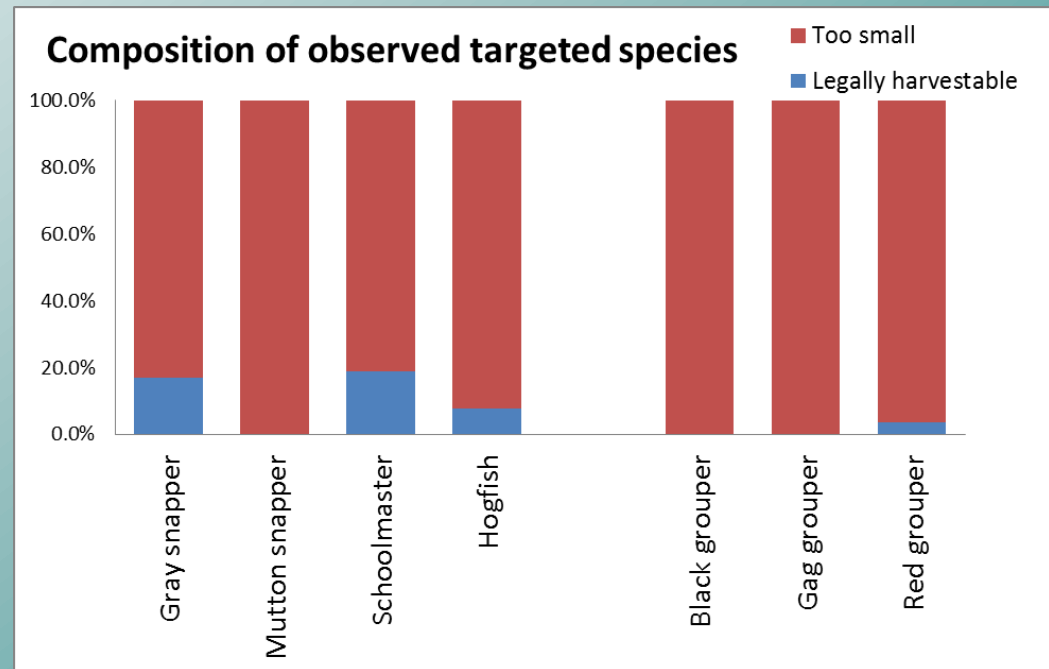


Current status of fishery resources

- Most reef species declined in frequency between historical (late 1970's) and recent (2006-2007) study periods intensively examining the same reefs
- Current surveys indicate that many targeted species are very rarely observed during underwater surveys
- Intensive underwater sampling effort (986 surveys) indicates that there are very few individuals of legally harvestable size



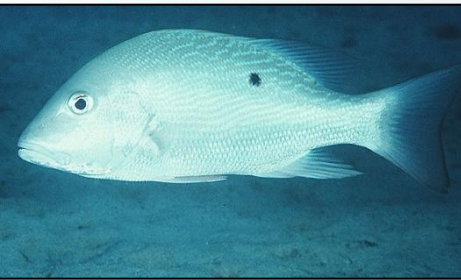
- Decreasing frequency of occurrence
- Increasing frequency of occurrence



Concerns about the fishing experience



How many hours fishing in suitable habitat does it take to catch one fish?



Mutton Snapper
25.2



Gray Snapper
10.5



Black Grouper
702.7



Red Grouper
167.3



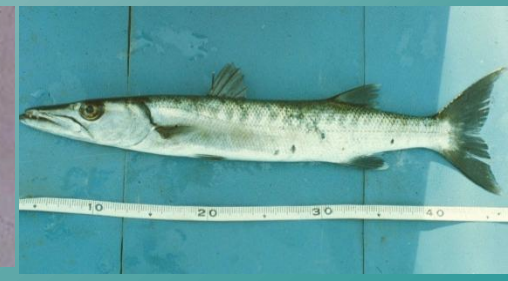
Hogfish
29.6



White Grunt
6.7



Cero
73.7



Barracuda
90.9

Concerns about fishing activity's indirect effects on park resources



Trap damaging coral



Fishing debris fouling a reef site

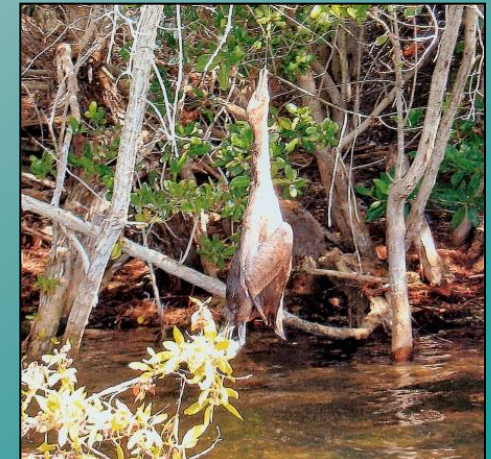


Spear through an archeological wreck site



Sea turtle killed from trap entanglement

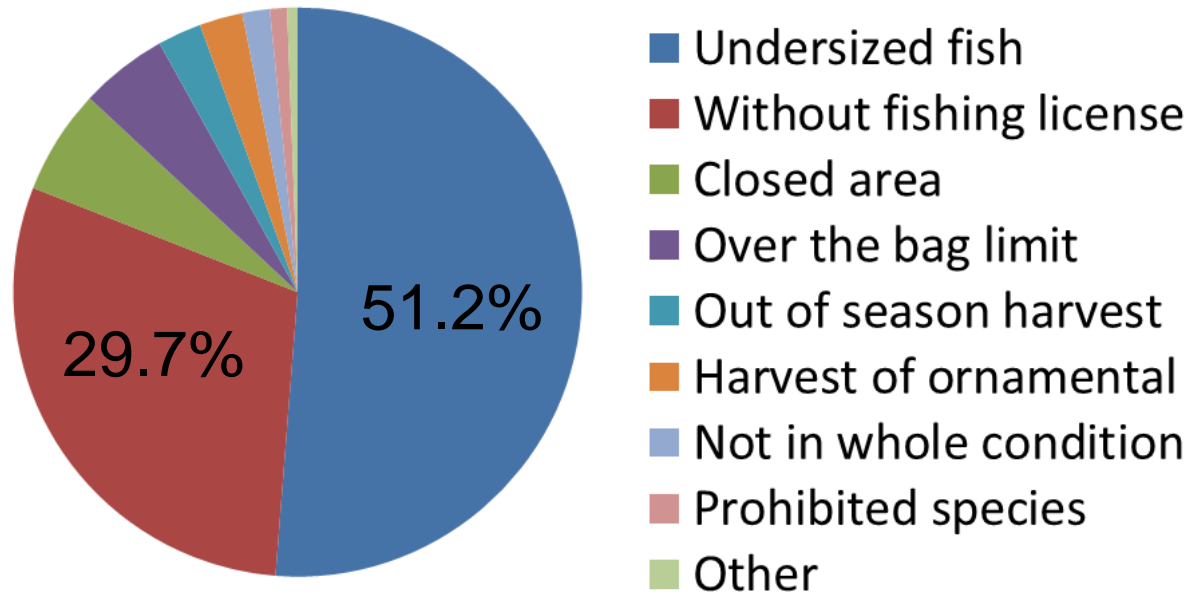
Cormorant killed from fishing line entanglement



Concerns about fishery resource violations



Types of Citations: 1998-2011



A total of 2,365 fishing-related citations/warnings were issued in this time period!

Fishery Management Plan



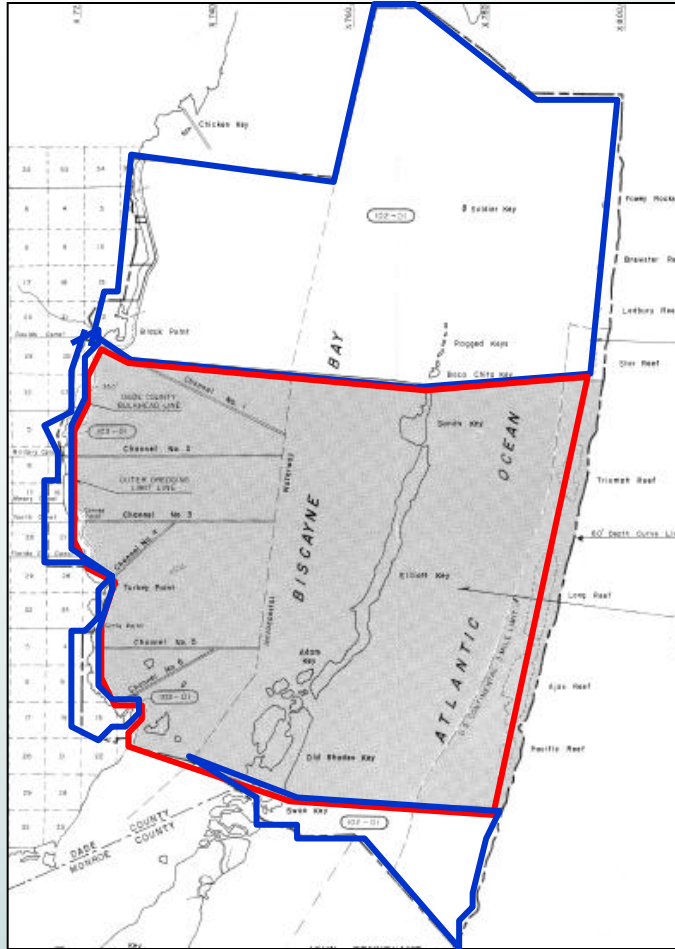
How can we conserve and protect our fishery resources?

What do we want the fishery resources to be like in the future?

What changes to current regulations will be needed to reach our goals?



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is an Essential Cooperating Agency



The transition from **National Monument** (est. 1968) to **National Park** (est. 1980) essentially created two management zones:

1) Original monument boundaries:

- Fishing regulations set by State
- NPS (through Secretary of Interior) may modify regulations to meet sound conservation purposes after consultation

2) Addition lands/waters:

- Fishing regulations set by the State of Florida (FWC)

FWC is a necessary partner since NPS wishes to manage fishing regulations uniformly across the entire park to reduce confusion for visitors and encourage more effective resource management and law enforcement

History of the FMP



- 2002: FWC Commissioners acknowledged park resources, sign MOU
- 2002-2003: Public scoping meetings
- 2004: Working group created, met six times.
- 2007: Multi-agency science meeting
- 2009: Draft EIS released, followed by 60-day comment period
- 2014: Final EIS released in May
Record of Decision issued in October



FMP Alternatives



1. **Maintain status quo:** no-action alternative; resources continue to decline
2. **Maintain at or above current levels:** maintain fishing at or below current levels to keep the abundances and average sizes of fishery-targeted species at or above current levels
3. **Improve over current levels:** Increase the abundances and average sizes of fishery-targeted species by at least **10%** over current conditions
4. **Rebuild and Conserve Park Fisheries Resources:** Increase the abundances and averages size of fishery-targeted species by at least **20%** over current conditions. **This is the selected alternative.**
5. **Restore Park Fisheries Resources:** Restore the abundances and average sizes of fishery-targeted species to within **20%** of historic, pre-exploitations levels

Key Elements of the Selected Alternative



To meet the goal of a 20% improvement in sizes and abundances of targeted species, the following actions could be implemented:

- Modifications to recreational regulations
- Elimination of two-day lobster sport season
- Spearfishing limitations
- Permits required for fishing guides
- Commercial fishing phase-out
- Proposed no-trawl zone in the bay



Public Involvement: DEIS to FEIS



- Draft EIS: open for public comment from August 5, 2009 through October 6, 2009.
- Three public meetings, attended by 154 people
- 337 pieces of correspondence containing 746 separate substantive comments were received
- Public comments guided changes from DEIS to FEIS
 - Proposed no-trawl zone included in Alternative 5 also added to Alternative 4
 - Updated scientific data considered
 - Removed proposed permit system required for all boats recreating in the park.

Outreach Efforts



- Florida Keys Commercial Fishing Association
- Florida Keys Guides Association
- Monroe County Commission
- Bonefish and Tarpon Trust
- Florida Keys Talk Radio
- Miami International Boat Show
- Four Congressional Tours
- Miami River Lobster and Stone Crab Fisheries
- Biscayne Bay Regional Coordination Team (includes Audubon, NPCA etc.)
- Ocean Reef Community Association
- Tropical Anglers Club
- Florida Sea Grant For-Hire Fishing Workshop



PROGRESSIVE

Miami International Boat Show

February 13-17, 2014 | Miami Beach Convention Center | Sea Isle Marina | Miamarina at Bayside

Federal Rulemaking



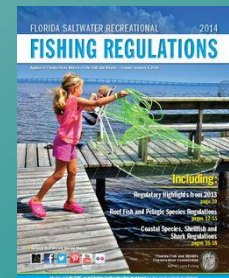
- Federal regulations process
- Will include a detailed socioeconomic cost-benefit impact analysis as part of the Federal Rulemaking process (Regulatory Flexibility Act)
- Consultation with FWC and NOAA-Fisheries
- Public comment opportunity



State Rulemaking



- Science group – NPS, FWC, NOAA-Fisheries, meeting to determine 20% goal specifics
- State rule-making process to establish park-specific, state fishing regulations which could include:
 - Increased species-specific size limits, decreased species-specific bag limits, establishment of a total bag limit for the park
 - Establishing lobster mini-season closure
 - Establishing spearfishing gear limitations
 - Establishing a no-trawl area in the Bay
- Public comment opportunities are available during state rule-making process



General Management Plan Basics



What is a General Management Plan?

- Provides zoning for the whole park
- Sets desired resource conditions and visitor experiences
- Provides a framework for decisions by future park managers to:
 - protect resources and provide visitor experiences
 - manage visitor use
 - maintain and develop facilities as appropriate



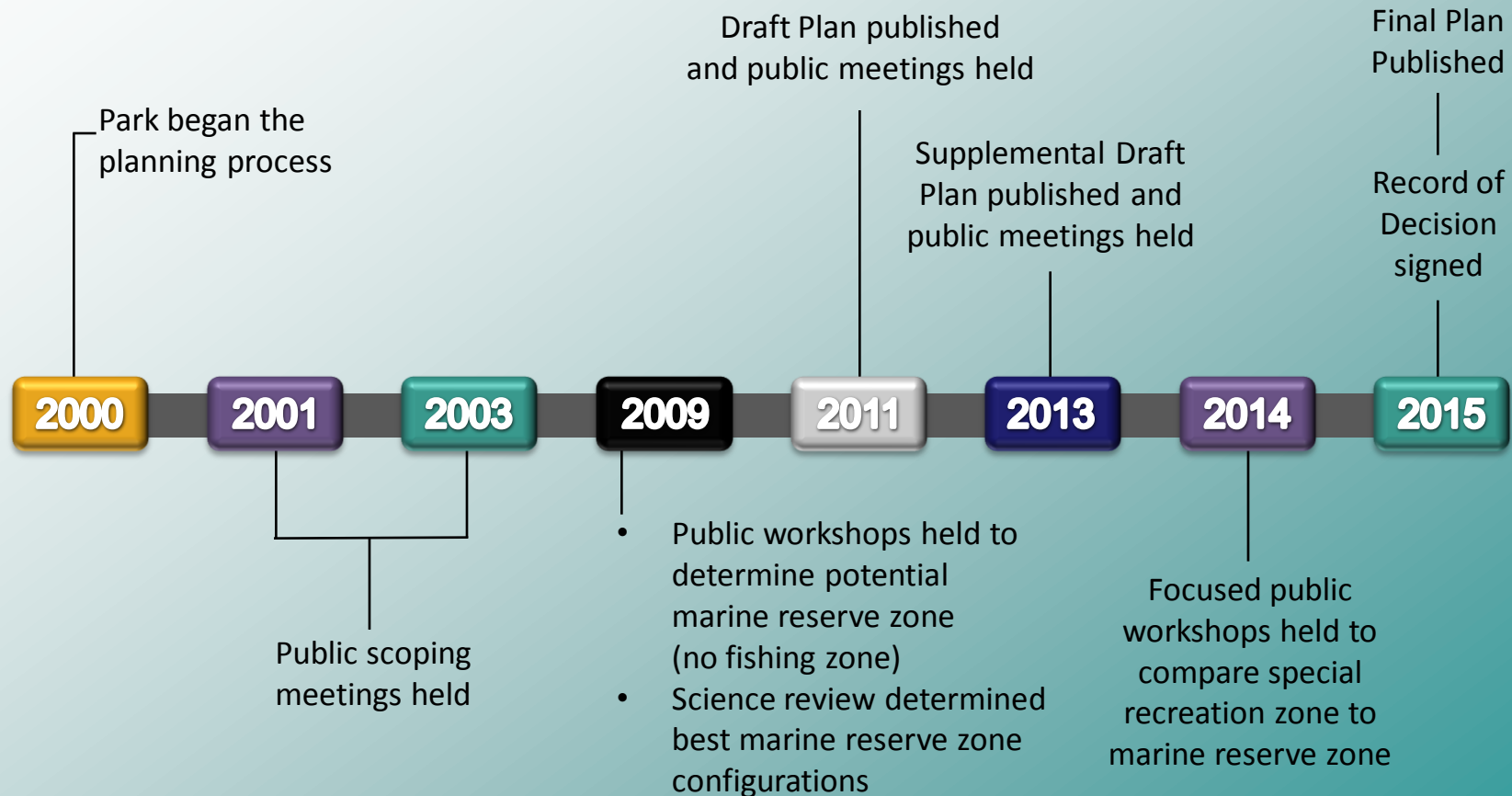
Issues



- Coral reefs
- Fisheries
- Visitor experience
- Interagency cooperation



General Management Plan Time Line



Alternatives



- **ALTERNATIVE 4**

- Includes a **Marine Reserve Zone**
- 2011 preferred alternative
- Details in the Draft Plan

- **ALTERNATIVE 6**

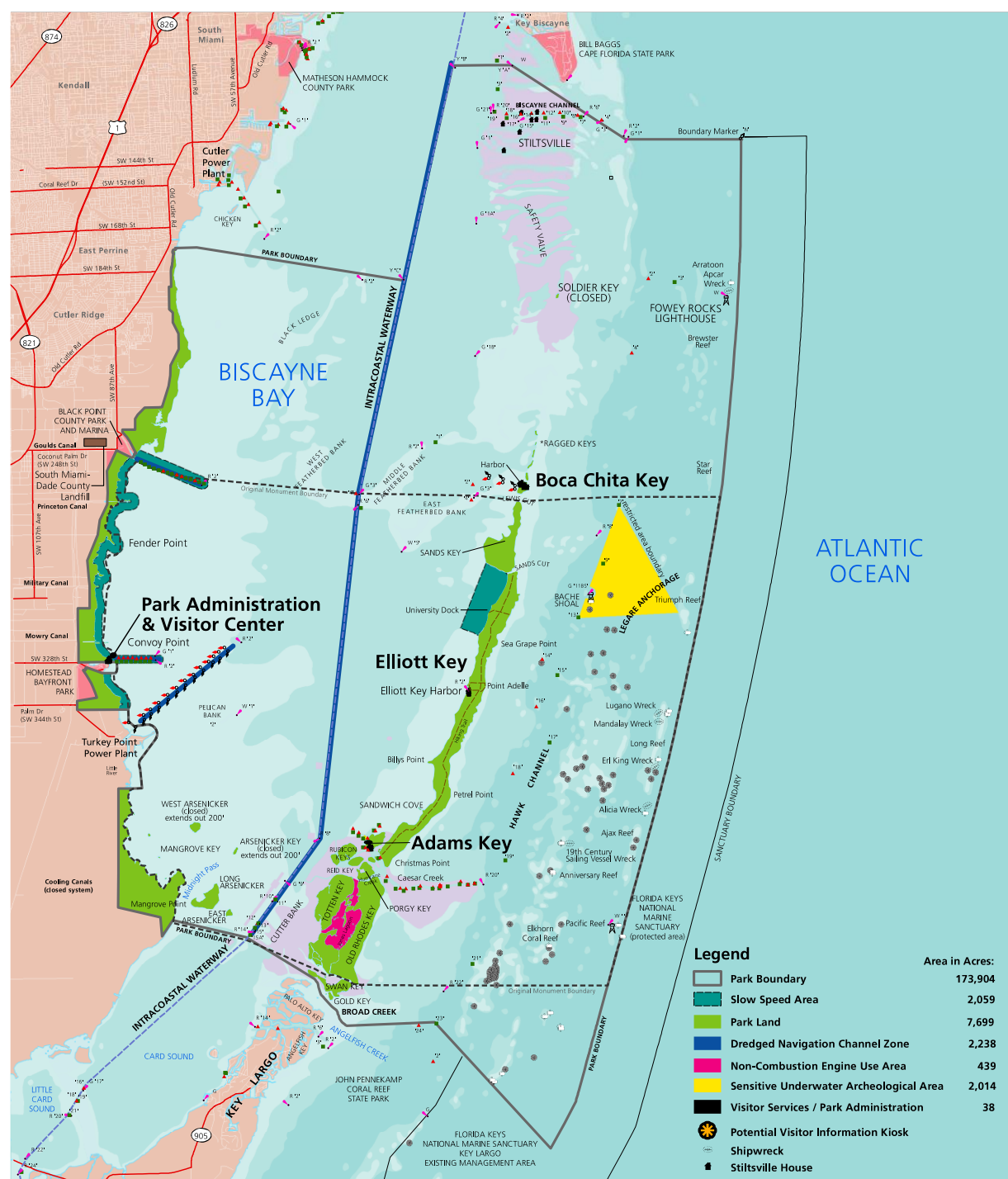
- Includes a Special Recreation Zone with **Special Activity License**
- 2013 preferred alternative
- Details in the 2013 Supplemental to the Draft Plan

- **ALTERNATIVE 7**

- Includes a Special Recreation Zone with **seasonal fishing closure**
- Details in the 2013 Supplemental to the Draft Plan

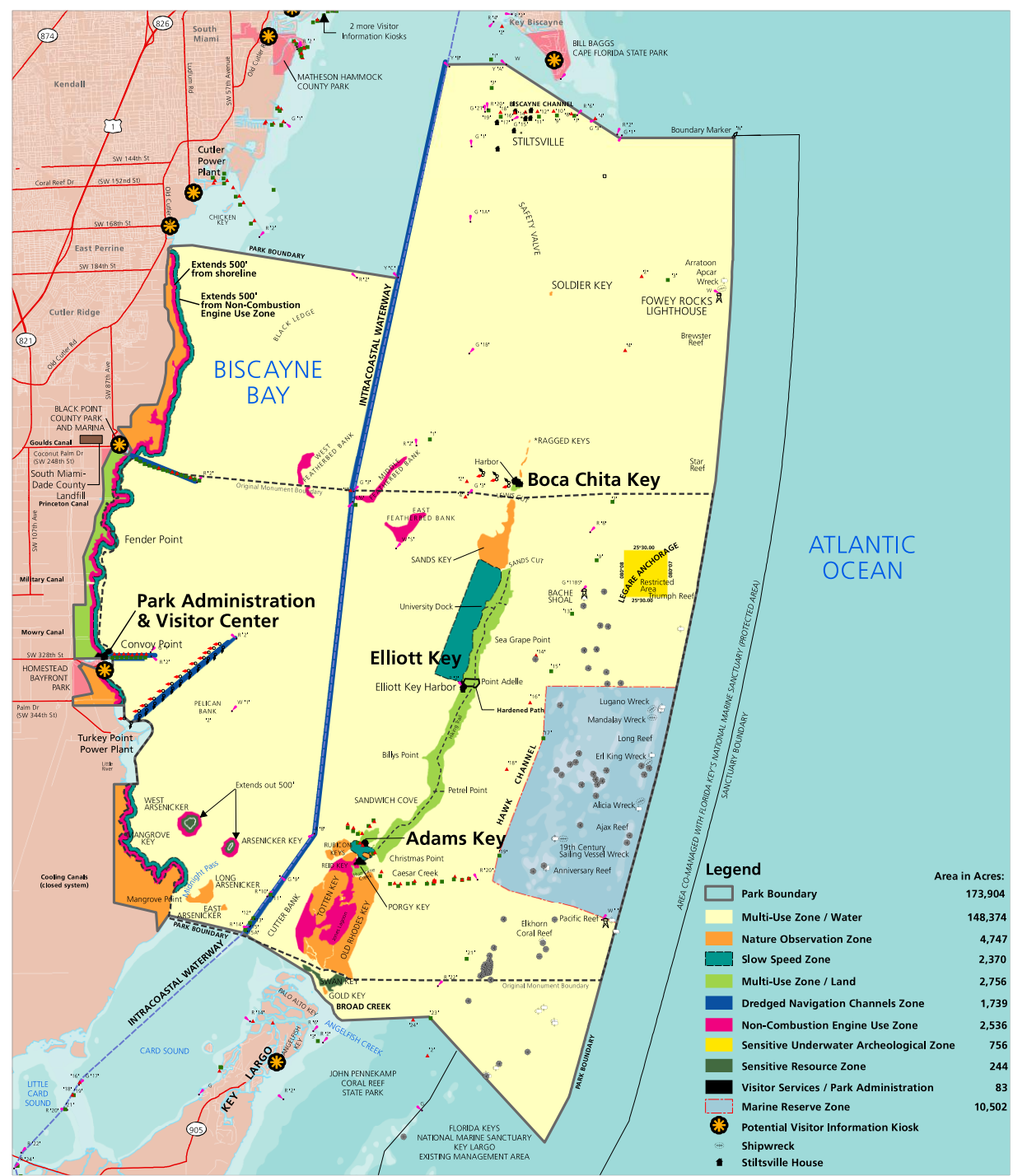
ALTERNATIVE 1 (No Action)

- Current condition
- Used for comparison



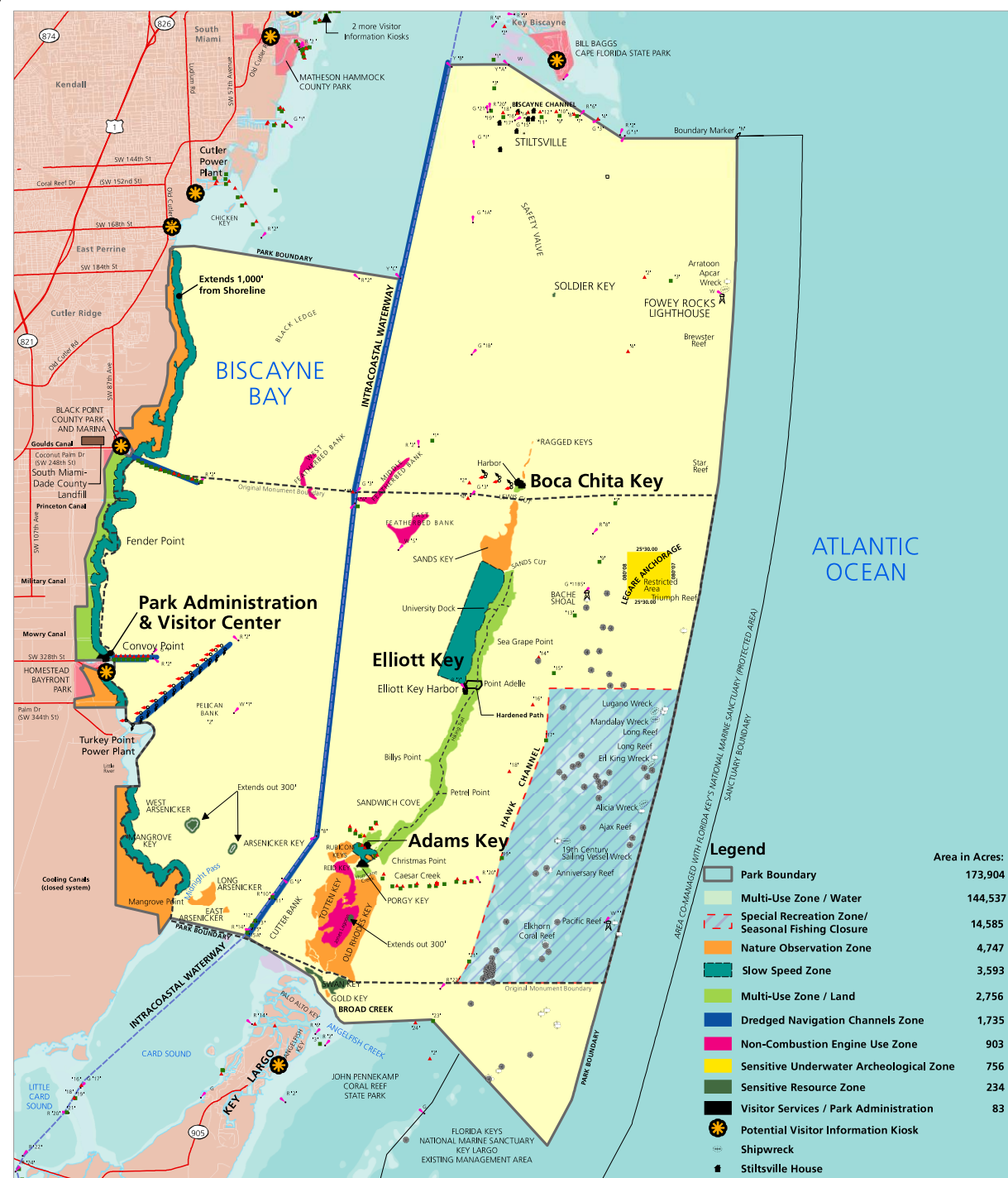
ALTERNATIVE 4 (Marine Reserve Zone)

- Provide memorable visitor experience while maintaining a healthier reef
- Protect aquatic community and reef ecosystem
- Improve fishing opportunities outside of zone from spillover
- *Reduced Legare Anchorage protected area*



ALTERNATIVES 6 AND 7 (Special Recreation Zones)

- Location of zones similar to Alt 4
- Special Recreation Zone 39% larger
- Protect 70% of park's reefs
- Reduced Legare Anchorage protected area



Actions Common to Marine Reserve and Special Recreation Zones



- Aquatic habitats and quality of visitor experience (includes fishing) monitored
- Law enforcement and education increased
- Anchoring allowed as buoys are phased in
- Diving allowed
- Spearfishing for lionfish allowed
- Commercial fishing prohibited (except ballyhoo)



Comparison of Marine Reserve and Special Recreation Zones



MRZ ALTERNATIVE 4

- Protected area (10,502 acres)
- No fishing allowed
- Unique opportunity to experience healthier natural coral reef system
- Ecological restoration benefits expected at a quicker rate
- Spillover effect with increased fish size and abundance in areas surrounding the MRZ

SRZ ALTERNATIVES 6 & 7

- Protected area (14,585 acres)
- Unique fishing opportunity - larger and more diverse fish
- Unique opportunity to experience healthier natural coral reef system
- Adaptive management applied
- **ALTERNATIVE 6** - # Permits dependent on habitat and fish response. Fee would be assessed
- **ALTERNATIVE 7** - Permits not required, seasonal closure open season from October to May

Public Comments



Continuing engagement with stakeholders via community presentations, briefings, and in-field visits

- 2013 heard from ~14,000 commenters
 - 1,800 unique comments (not form letters)
 - Vast majority supported a MRZ
 - Many concerns about SRZ in **ALTERNATIVE 6**
 - Few comments on **ALTERNATIVE 7**
- 2011 heard from ~18,000 commenters
 - 1,200 unique comments (not form letters)
 - Vast majority supported an MRZ
 - Concerns raised about limiting fishing access



Broad Public Support



Many aspects of **ALTERNATIVES 4, 6, and 7** are well supported:

- Bay and Ocean Waters
 - Implement approved fishery management plan
 - Maintain Fowey Rocks Lighthouse
 - Increased protection in a smaller area for Legare Anchorage
- Mainland
 - Add platform and boardwalk at Convoy Point
 - Install informational kiosks outside park boundary
- Keys
 - Pursue acquisition from willing sellers at Ragged Keys 2, 3, 5
 - Add canoe dock at Porgy
 - Add new kayak/canoe staging area at Adams and Elliott
 - Implement a protection zone at Arsenicker, West Arsenicker, and Swan



General Public Concerns about Marine Reserve and Special Recreation Zones



- Anchoring (safety and access)
- Education and law enforcement levels
- Concerns about fishing pressure outside of MRZ/SRZ
- Economic impacts (tourism and guided and commercial fishing)



GMP Next Steps...



- Approval by NPS SERO to release FEIS
- WASO consultation on commercial fisheries
- FEIS released to public
- Spread word via park mailing list
- No sooner than 30 days after FEIS released: Sign Record of Decision



Public Confusion over the FMP and the General Management Plan (GMP)



	GMP DEIS	GMP SDEIS	FMP
Purpose	Five alternatives were developed to establish what activities are appropriate in different areas, increase public awareness of the park, preserve natural and cultural resources while providing diverse visitor experiences	Two additional alternatives were developed in response to public and agency comments to achieve similar management goals	Respond to declining fisheries resources, guide fishery management decisions for the next 5 to 10 years
Major Components of Preferred Alternative	<p>Marine Reserve Zone (MRZ) covering 6% of park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fishing allowed Improved visitor experience in this zone 	<p>Special Recreation Zone (SRZ) covering 8% of the park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permits to limit fishing activity Regulations specifying allowable forms of fishing No grouper harvest, anchoring, or spearfishing (except lionfish) 	Proposed changes to many park-specific fishing regulations, Relies on State and Federal rulemaking to implement
Public Comment Period	Aug-Sept 2011	Dec 2013-Feb 2014	Aug-Oct 2009
Commercial Fishing	No commercial fishing in MRZ	No commercial fishing in SRZ, except for ballyhoo	Park-wide phase out of commercial fishing
Management foci	Park zoning, healthier coral reef ecosystem, quality of visitor experience for different user groups	Same as for GMP DEIS	Health of fisheries resources, improved visitor experience for fishers

Biscayne National Park

Planning Efforts



Any Questions?