

# Dry Tortugas National Park 2001 – 2005 Strategic Plan



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## Preface

This Strategic Plan was written to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). However, it is more than just a response to a legislative mandate. The law was a catalyst that caused the park staff to examine the park's fundamental mission and take a fresh, longer-range view of what results or outcomes are needed to accomplish that mission. It encouraged us to think and plan in new ways. The result, we believe, will be better planning, better management, and better communication with all of our constituencies and stakeholders, as well as amongst ourselves. We will know where we are, where we need to be, and how we are going to get there in the most effective and efficient manner.

### **Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)**

Congress passed GPRA to bring the federal government into the "performance management revolution." Performance management is a goal-driven management concept and practice already widely adopted by the private sector, and state and local government.

In a nutshell, performance management ensures that daily actions are guided by goal setting in pursuit of accomplishing an organization's primary mission, followed by performance measurement and evaluation. Importantly, the goals are quantifiable and measurable results or outcomes rather than outputs (activities, services, and products). The established and proven performance management approach is to *establish goals – allocate resources to accomplish those goals – take action/do the work – measure results – evaluate and report performance – use evaluation to adjust goals and reallocate resources – and continue the loop*. This process sharpens our focus on accomplishing our mission in the most efficient and effective ways, and it holds managers and employees accountable on a clear and measurable basis.

GPRA requires federal agencies to develop and use three primary documents to conduct their business and more effectively communicate with Congress and the American people:

- 1) A **Strategic Plan** of no less than five years duration, reviewed and revised every three years.
- 2) An **Annual Performance Plan** tiered off the Strategic Plan each year, showing how long-term goals will be accomplished in annual increments.
- 3) An **Annual Performance Report** reviewing each year's successes and failures and identifying areas where activities or goals need to be revised in the future. These documents are also to be submitted to Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

As required by GPRA, the National Park Service (NPS) developed a "servicewide" Strategic Plan in 1997. It provides the framework and direction for the entire National Park Service. Developed with public meetings and in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, Congress and the Department of the Interior, it defines success for the National Park Service and shows servicewide direction. It builds on previous planning efforts and the contributions of many people within and outside of the NPS.

The servicewide Strategic Plan covers all the National Park Service, reflecting its total **mission**:

*The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.*

The servicewide plan includes **mission goals** that reflect our preservation mission, which has a longer and indefinite time frame for goals than anticipated by GPRA. Mission goals are for perpetuity, are not quantifiable, and are comprehensive and all-inclusive of what we do. To be able to achieve the mission goals, **long-term goals** are identified. Long-term goals are the desired resource and visitor experience conditions with measurable outcomes. They are typically defined in increments of five years, and are not all-inclusive of what we do. A copy of the NPS Strategic Plan is available for review at park headquarters. It is also available on the Internet at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

Each National Park unit takes the servicewide mission and long-term goals and breaks them down into applicable park long-term goals and annual work plans. Then they add goals specific to their own legislative mandates, missions, resources, visitor service and issues needs. The local plans, then are a blend of national and local missions and goals.



### **About This Plan**

This Strategic Plan for Dry Tortugas National Park is a five-year plan covering fiscal years 2001-2005. It addresses three basic questions:

#### *Where are we going?*

This is explained by our mission and the long-term goals that break it down into clear, understandable and achievable pieces.

#### *What is the environment?*

We have examined the internal and external forces that affect our organization. We have also identified opportunities and threats that could impact our mission, and examined the gap between our goals and our ability to achieve them.

#### *How do we get there?*

Goals, action plans, their schedules and the resources required to achieve them address this question. The park's Strategic Plan focuses on the highest priority issues for the next 5 years as identified by the Park Management Team. Therefore, this plan does not address the total spectrum of all park responsibilities, programs and actions. That comprehensive review is within the purview of the park's General Management Plan, which is currently under revision. We anticipate the new GMP will be approved in December, 2000. Future Strategic Plans will draw from the conclusions of the revised General Management Plan.

A strategic plan documents the results of a strategic planning process through which an organization examines itself, sets priorities, establishes its vision and direction for the future and develops the resources necessary to create that future. This process requires making difficult choices in many areas, such as organizational, budgetary and human resources. Further, as a public agency, we must be aware of how these difficult choices affect our neighbors, constituencies and the general public.

The Strategic Plan outlines the goals and programs that will accomplish the park's mission. It communicates the direction of our agency and the park to the public, other agencies and employees. It consists of:

- a **mission statement** born out of the NPS organic act as well as the specific legislation establishing this park;
- **mission goals**, that illustrate broadly what we do far beyond just five years –“in perpetuity” – to accomplish our mission; and
- **long-term goals**, which target in quantified, measurable ways what we will accomplish in the next five years toward achieving our mission goals.

The long-term goals address both appropriate servicewide goals as well as park-specific goals. The goal numbering protocol follows that of the servicewide plan. Since not all servicewide goals apply to this park, some numbers are skipped. In addition, there are numbers containing 0's which are not in the servicewide plan and indicate a park-specific goal.

Following the goals, the plan contains a section on “Accomplishing Our Goals” which briefly sketches the park's organization, staffing, fiscal, infrastructure, and other resources available to achieve the plan's long-term goals. This is followed by brief discussion of “Key External Factors” over which park staff may have influence but not control, and which could positively or negatively affect goal achievement.

Finally there is a brief discussion of how the contents of the plan were determined and a list of persons who were consulted in the development of the plan.

It should be noted that the goals in this plan are generally predicated on “flat budgets” for the next five years. Where increases in appropriations were known or likely, they were taken into account. Obviously, limits on funding constrain what can be accomplished toward our goals and mission.



Each year that the Strategic Plan is in effect, beginning with fiscal year 2001 (October 2000), there will be a companion Annual Performance Plan which shows in *annual* goals that year's targeted incremental achievement of each long-term goal and a work plan for accomplishing that increment. Each year there will also be an Annual Performance Report discussing actual achievement of the prior year's annual goals and progress on long-term goals.

Additional copies of the Dry Tortugas National Park Strategic Plan are available at park headquarters. It will also be available on the Internet at [www.nps.gov/dрто](http://www.nps.gov/dрто). Questions and comments are welcome and encouraged and can be addressed to the Superintendent, Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Park, 40001 State Road 9336, Homestead, Florida 33034. As they are written and approved, copies of the current year's Annual Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report will also be available on request, with questions and comments equally welcome.

# Introduction

## About the Park

Dry Tortugas National Park is one of the most unique areas of our National Park System. Remote and isolated, this incomparable mixture of the works of man and nature offers increasingly rare opportunities for solitude in a tropical setting of incredible scenic beauty. It is at the same time a fragile resource. As with many such places, its superlative qualities have added to its fame as a visitor destination. The area is best known for its marine and bird life and for pirate legends.

The park comprises the westernmost part of the Florida Keys and is located 70 miles west of Key West, Florida, in the Straits of Florida. The 64,657 acre park encompasses a cluster of 7 coral reef and sand islands, surrounded by shoals and waters. Totalling 104 acres, the islands in the park are situated on the edge of the main shipping channel between the Gulf of Mexico, the western Caribbean, and the Atlantic Ocean. The islands and reefs pose a serious navigation hazard to ships passing through the 75-mile wide straits and have been the site of hundreds of shipwrecks, which still occasionally occur in the area. The shipwrecks on the reefs comprise one of the nation's principal ship graveyards.

Fort Jefferson, on Garden Key, is the park's central cultural feature and is the largest 19<sup>th</sup> century American coastal fort. Construction began on the structure in 1846, but the fort was never completed. Originally built to protect shipping access to the gulf, the fort was used as a military prison during the Civil War, housing Union deserters and four Lincoln assassination conspirators. Today the fort is the primary destination for people visiting the park.

Loggerhead Key is the largest key and contains a brick tower lighthouse built in 1857 that is still operable. Also on this key are the ruins of the first marine biological laboratory in the Western Hemisphere—the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. Marine Biological Laboratory.

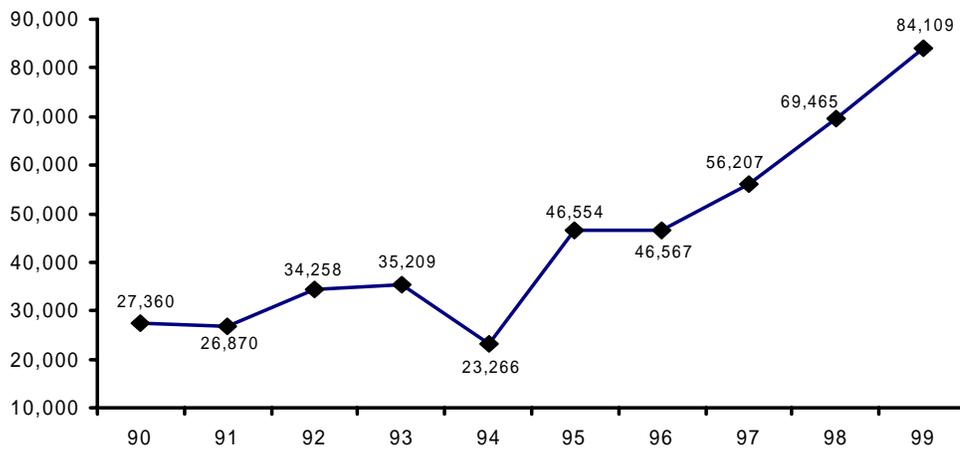
The Dry Tortugas are recognized for their near-pristine natural resources including sea grass beds, fisheries, and sea turtle and bird nesting habitat. In addition, the tropical coral reef of the Tortugas is one of the best developed on the continent and possesses a full range of Caribbean coral species, some of which are rare elsewhere. These resources play a vital role in South Florida's efforts to attain a balanced and sustainable ecosystem. For example, the park's protected spawning habitat produces larger apex predators (predators at the top of the food chain) and rich biodiversity of species such as reef fish, lobster, and shrimp. Movement and flow of currents in the keys disperse larva to distant areas, resulting in benefits to regional fisheries and therefore to recreational and commercial fishermen and research scientists beyond the park. Research indicates that recreational fishing, especially for trophy fish, is having a significant detrimental impact on the fisheries in the entire region. The contribution of these largest fish to productivity in the Tortugas region is essential to the marine-based ecology and economy.

The primary means of access to the park are by commercial boat, seaplane or private boat. Visitors from around the world come to enjoy touring Fort Jefferson, snorkeling, scuba diving, birdwatching, boating, and recreational fishing. Visitation at Dry Tortugas National Park has risen from 18,000 visitors in 1984 to more than 84,000 visitors in 1999. The first quarter visitation numbers for 2000 are 25% greater than 1999. Increased popularity of the park strains facilities, compromises visitor safety and quality of visitor experience, and threatens resources.

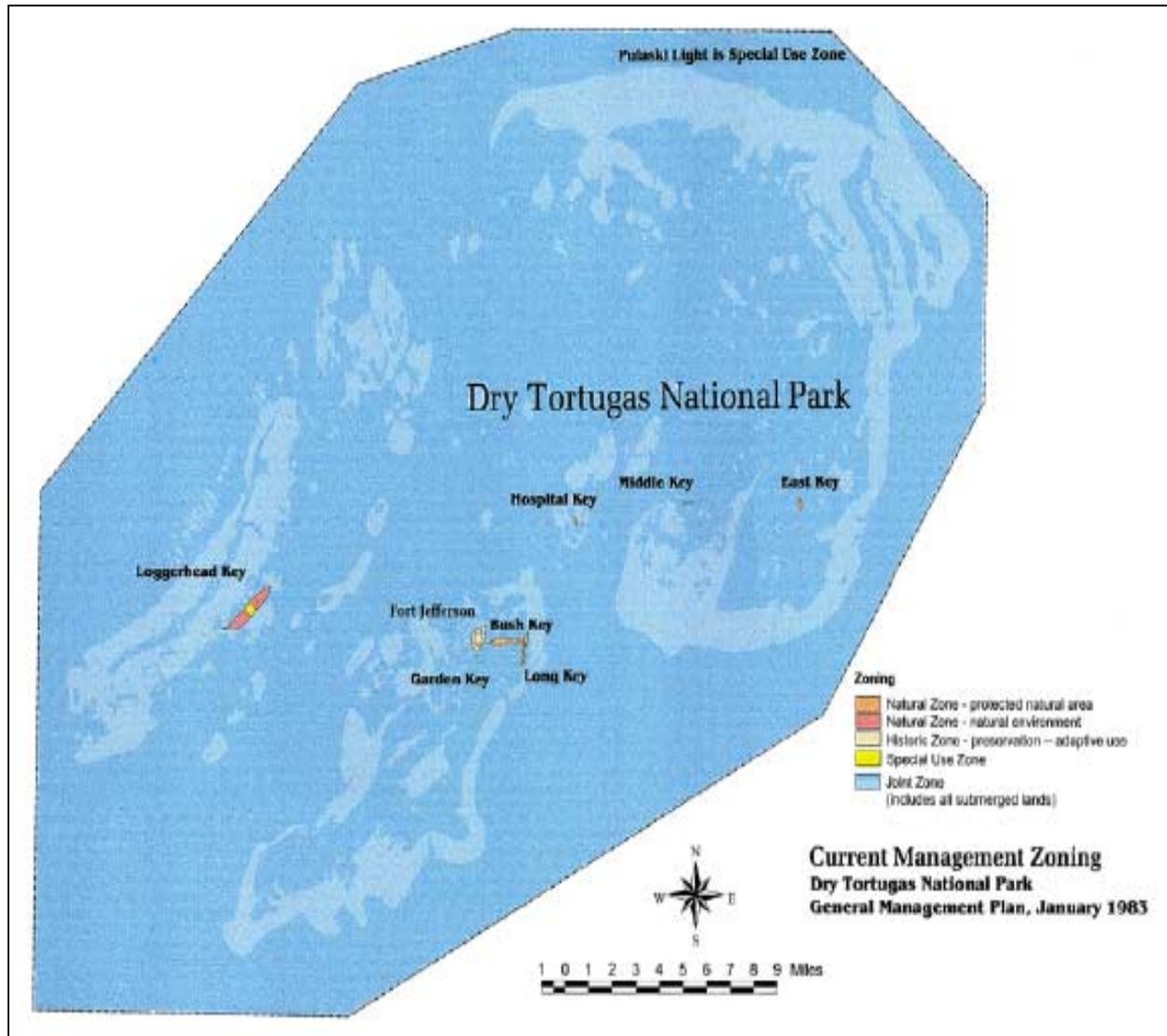
There are concerns that the trend in visitation will destroy the very resource qualities that make the area special.

There has been a steady increase of interest by the commercial sector during the past few years to operate in the park. Interest has been expressed for much larger vessels that would bring many more visitors to the park. Concerned that fragile resources in the park might suffer as a result of the increases being contemplated, park managers placed a moratorium on new commercial activity on May 25, 1999. In order to address these and other management concerns, a planning effort was started in 1988 to examine visitor use and commercial services at the park. This effort will result in completion of a new General Management Plan for the park in Fiscal Year 2001.

### 10 Year Visitation 1990-1999



# Park Map



## Mission

The mission of a national park is the combination of its purpose and significance. The purpose of a park is usually defined in, or derived from, the unit's enabling legislation and from other legal documents providing for its establishment. Significance statements identify those exceptional resources and values that must be preserved to accomplish the park's purpose. Together, they define the mission of the park.

### Purpose

Proclaimed as Fort Jefferson National Monument in 1935, the area was redesignated in 1992 as Dry Tortugas National Park *“to preserve and protect for the education, inspiration, and enjoyment of present and future generations nationally significant natural, historic, scenic, marine and scientific values in South Florida.”* (P.L. 102-525)

The following management purposes were identified in the enabling legislation:

- To protect and interpret a pristine subtropical marine ecosystem, including an intact coral reef community
- To protect populations of fish and wildlife, including loggerhead and green sea turtles, sooty terns, frigate birds, numerous migratory bird species, and other sensitive species
- To protect the pristine natural environment of the Dry Tortugas group of islands



- To protect, stabilize, restore, and interpret Fort Jefferson, an outstanding example of 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry fortifications
- To preserve and protect submerged cultural resources
- To provide opportunities for scientific research in a manner consistent with the above purposes

## Significance

Dry Tortugas National Park is nationally significant because it:

- Contains historic Fort Jefferson, a militarily and architecturally significant 19<sup>th</sup> century fort
- Protects the historic Loggerhead Key lighthouse, and the historic Garden Key harbor light
- Possesses one of the greatest concentrations of historically significant shipwrecks in North America, with some vessels dating back to the 1600's
- Maintains one of the most isolated and least disturbed habitats for endangered and threatened sea turtles in the United States
- Supports the only significant sooty and noddy tern nesting colonies on Bush and Long Keys and harbors the only U.S. frigate bird nesting colonies on Long Key.
- Serves as an important resting spot for migrating birds
- Provides unique opportunities to view tropical seabirds
- Protects the least disturbed portion of the Florida Keys coral reef ecosystem
- Presents outstanding potential for education, recreation, and scientific research related to the park's exceptional marine resources
- Affords an opportunity to understand and appreciate a rare combination of natural, historic, marine, and scenic resources.
- Offers a sense of remoteness and peace in a vast expanse of sea and sky



## Guiding Principles

To achieve its mission, Dry Tortugas National Park follows the guiding principles already established by the National Park Service. These principles are:

- **Excellent Service.** Providing the best possible service to park visitors and partners.
- **Productive Partnerships.** Collaborating with federal, state, tribal and local governments, private organizations, and businesses to work toward common goals.
- **Citizen Involvement.** Providing opportunities for citizens to participate in the decisions and actions of Dry Tortugas National Park.
- **Heritage Education.** Educating park visitors and the general public about their history and common heritage.
- **Outstanding Employees.** Empowering a diverse workforce committed to excellence, integrity, and quality work.
- **Employee Development.** Providing developmental opportunities and training so employees have the “tools to do the job” safely and efficiently.
- **Wise Decisions.** Integrating social, economic, environmental, scientific and ethical considerations into the decision-making process.



- **Effective Management.** Instilling a performance management philosophy that works towards common goals fostering creativity, focusing on results, and requiring accountability at all levels.
- **Science and Research.** Applying scientific information to park management decisions to preserve park resources. Promoting parks as centers for broad scientific and scholarly inquiry to benefit society.
- **Shared Capabilities.** Sharing technical information and expertise with public and private land managers.

## **Mission Goals**

Dry Tortugas National Park's mission is accomplished through pursuit of the following "in perpetuity" mission goals. Mission Goals are essentially visions of the future. They describe the desired future conditions that would best fulfill the park purpose. They are broad descriptions expressed in terms of resource condition and visitor experience.

### ***Goal Category I: Preserve Dry Tortugas National Park Resources***

***Park Mission Goal Ia1: All natural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in near pristine condition.***

***Park Mission Goal Ia5: All submerged and land based cultural resources have been identified, documented, protected, and or stabilized.***



### ***Goal Category II: Provide for the Public Use and Enjoyment and Visitor Experience of Dry Tortugas National Park***

***Park Mission Goal IIa: Available park facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to support operational needs, park staff, and visitors; appropriate recreational opportunities are safe and adequate for visitors and employees.***

***Park Mission Goal IIb. Visitors understand, appreciate, and are inspired by the park's historical and natural resources, and they support the protection of these resources.***

### ***Goal Category IV- Ensure Organizational Effectiveness***

***Park Mission Goal IVa. Dry Tortugas National is a responsive and efficient organization, enhancing managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies and individuals.***

## Long-term Goals Listing

This section places Dry Tortugas National Park mission goals and long-term goals in the context of NPS servicewide mission goals and long-term goals. The Dry Tortugas mission and long-term goals are shown in italics.

### **NPS GOAL CATEGORY I: PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES**

**NPS Mission Goal Ia:** *Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.*

***Park Mission Goal Ia1:*** *All natural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in near pristine condition.*

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia1B: Exotic Vegetation -** By September 30, 2005, exotic vegetation on 6.3% of targeted acres of parkland (167,500 of 2,656,700 acres) is contained.

***Park Long-term Goal Ia1B:*** *By September 30, 2005, 40 acres of disturbed park land is restored.*

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia2A -Threatened and Endangered Species:** By September 30, 2005, 19% of the 1999 identified park populations (84 of 442) of federally listed threatened and endangered species with critical habitat on park lands or requiring NPS recovery actions have an improved status, and an additional 18.1% (80 of 442) have stable populations.

***Park Long-term Goal Ia2A:*** *By September 30, 2005, breeding populations of loggerhead & green sea turtles increase.*

***Park Long-term Goal Ia02:*** *By September 30, 2005, fish and avian populations, including breeding populations of sooty and noddy terns, brown pelicans, boobies and frigate birds, lobster and conch populations and coral reef and other benthic-type communities remain stable.*

***Park Mission Goal Ia5:*** *All submerged and land based cultural resources have been identified, documented, protected, and or stabilized.*

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia5 – Historic Structures:** By September 30, 2005, 50% (12,113 of 24,225 structures) of the historic structures on the 1999 List of Classified Structures are in good condition.

***Park Long-term Goal Ia5:*** *By September 30, 2005, 3 structures listed on the List of Classified Structures are in good condition.*

***Park Long-term Goal Ia05:*** *By September 30, 2005, metal is removed from 30 of the 180 embrasures in the fort and they are re-bricked.*

**NPS Long-term goal Ia8 – Archeological Sites:** By September 30, 2005, 59% of the FY 1999 recorded archeological sites with condition assessments are in good condition. (7470 of 14,940 sites)

**Park Long-term Goal Ia8:** *By September 30, 2005, 45 of the recorded submerged cultural sites in 30' or less of water are not degraded due to human activity.*

## **NPS GOAL CATEGORY II: PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLIC ENJOYMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE OF PARKS**

**NPS Mission Goal IIa:** Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

***Park Mission Goal IIa:*** *Available park facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to support operational needs, park staff, and visitors; appropriate recreational opportunities are safe and adequate for visitors and employees.*

**NPS long-term goal IIa1 – Visitor Satisfaction:** By September 30, 2005, 95 % of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services and recreational opportunities.

***Park Long-term Goal IIa1:*** *By September 30, 2005, 95% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services and recreational opportunities.*

**NPS long-term goal IIa2 – Visitor Safety:** By September 30, 2005, the visitor accident/incident rate will be at or below 7.96 per 100,000 visitor days [a 16% decrease from the FY 1992 – FY 1996 baseline of 9.48 per 100,000 visitor days].

***Park Long-term Goal IIa2:*** *By September 30, 2005, the rate (19.80) of visitor accidents/incidents is reduced by 10% to 17.82.*

***Park Long-term Goal IIa02 :*** *By September 30, 2005, reliable and cost effective radio and telephone communications exist for 24 hours per day, 365 days per year for organizational and operational needs and employee and visitor safety.*

**NPS Mission Goal IIb – Visitor Understanding and Appreciation:** Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

***Park Mission Goal IIb.*** *Visitors understand, appreciate, and are inspired by the park's historical and natural resources, and they support the protection of these resources.*

**NPS long-term goal IIb1:** By September 30, 2005, 86% of park visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the park they are visiting.

***Park Long-term Goal IIb1:*** *By September 30, 2005, 86% of park visitors understand & recognize the significance of the park's historical and natural resources.*

## **NPS GOAL CATEGORY IV: ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

**NPS Mission Goal IVa:** The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

**Park Mission Goal IVa.** *Dry Tortugas National is a responsive and efficient organization, enhancing managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies and individuals.*

**NPS Long-term goal IVa5 – Employee Housing:** By September 30, 2005, 50% of employee housing units listed in poor or fair condition in 1997 assessments are rehabilitated to good condition, replaced or removed.

**Park Long-term Goal IVa5:** *By September 30, 2005, 5 of 14 housing units classified as being in poor or fair condition are removed, replaced or upgraded to good condition.*



## Goals Explanations

### NPS GOAL CATEGORY I: PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES

The goals in this category are tied to the legislative mandates from the NPS Organic Act "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein...", as well as the 1992 act establishing Dry Tortugas National Park, and other acts which reinforce and expand the park's mission. All NPS goals that deal with resource protection and the acquisition of knowledge from and about the park are included in this category.

**NPS Mission Goal Ia:** Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

***Park Mission Goal Ia1:*** *All natural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in near pristine condition.*

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia1B: Exotic Vegetation** - By September 30, 2005, exotic vegetation on 6.3% of targeted acres of park land (167,500 of 2,656,700 acres) is contained.

***Park Long-term Goal Ia1B:*** *By September 30, 2005, 40 acres of disturbed park land is restored.*

In 1999, 100% of the Casuarina (Australian pine) trees standing in the northern half of Loggerhead Key (ca. 15 acres) were cut and or treated with herbicide. This action completed the treatment of Casuarina for the entire 40-acre island, a project that began almost 10 years ago. Approximately 30% of the island requires further work (retreatments, prescribed burns) before it can be considered "restored."

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia2A -Threatened and Endangered Species:** By September 30, 2005, 19% of the 1999 identified park populations (84 of 442) of federally listed threatened and endangered species with critical habitat on park lands or requiring NPS recovery actions have an improved status, and an additional 18.1% (80 of 442) have stable populations.



***Park Long-term Goal Ia2A:*** *By September 30, 2005, breeding populations of loggerhead and green sea turtles increase.*

Florida International University researchers and park staff monitor populations of loggerhead and green sea turtles in the park. The total crawl count in 1999 was 5% lower than the 5-year average and the number of false crawls about 10% less than the 5-year average. These numbers are within the natural variability of the long-term ranges. Results of future monitoring will report to this goal.

**Park Long-term Goal Ia02:** *By September 30, 2005, fish and avian populations, including breeding populations of sooty and noddy terns, brown pelicans, boobies and frigate birds, lobster and conch populations and coral reef and other benthic-type communities remain stable.*

NPS wildlife biologists visually assess the avifauna at the park and in 1999 found populations to be within the long-term natural range of variability, signifying a stable status. The Florida Marine Research Institute visually assesses lobster populations to ascertain abundance, distribution, size and fecundity. In 1999, lobster abundance, size, and fecundity were significantly higher inside the park (a lobster sanctuary) when compared with those outside park waters (a fished area). In 1999 the NPS funded the Florida Marine Research Institute to establish 3 new coral monitoring stations inside park waters. These stations will become part of the greater U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Coral Monitoring Program. Results of future monitoring and research will report to this goal.



**Park Mission Goal Ia5:** *All submerged and land based cultural resources have been identified, documented, protected, and or stabilized.*

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia5 – Historic Structures:** By September 30, 2005, 50% (12,113 of 24,225 structures) of the historic structures on the 1999 List of Classified Structures are in good condition.

**Park Long-term Goal Ia5:** *By September 30, 2005, 3 structures listed on the List of Classified Structures are in good condition.*

Fort Jefferson's masonry has severely deteriorated because of the harsh marine environment. In some areas, large sections of the outer brick wall have fallen into the moat. Stabilization projects are underway to improve the condition of classified structures where feasible. Examples include replacement of the slate roof on the Engineer's quarters, repairs to the harbor light, preservation work on the sally port and its granite arch, repairs to cistern structures and stabilization of the fort's exterior walls. All effort to improve the condition of classified structures is to be reported to this goal

**Park Long-term Goal Ia05:** *By September 30, 2005, metal is removed from 30 of the 180 embrasures in the fort and they are re-bricked.*



One major restoration project is to replace original gun shutters that were designed to close after artillery was fired to provide protection from incoming enemy fire. These shutters were made of iron, and they have expanded during the process of corrosion, displacing the surrounding masonry. All effort to repair the embrasures is to be reported to this goal.

**NPS Long-term Goal Ia8 – Archeological Sites:** By September 30, 2005, 59% of the FY 1999 recorded archeological sites with condition assessments are in good condition. (7470 of 14,940 sites)

***Park Long-term Goal Ia8:*** *By September 30, 2005, 45 of the recorded submerged cultural sites in 30' or less of water are not degraded due to human activity.*

Dry Tortugas contains one of the largest assemblages of shipwreck sites in North America. These sites provide a rich archeological record spanning more than four centuries of international economic and political activity in the area. Material remains associated with these sites commonly include anchors, rock and iron ballast, cannon or gun tubes, iron chain, fasteners, ceramics and brick. NPS archeologists have compiled site information into a database that has facilitated analysis of wreck sites as an interrelated collection having associated research values. Knowing resource condition and how it changes on a continuing basis is fundamental to the park's ability to manage its resources and perpetuate their integrity. All effort expended to inventory, monitor, assess and maintain sites in good condition will be reported to this goal.

## **NPS GOAL CATEGORY II: PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLIC USE AND ENJOYMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE OF PARKS**



The mission goals and long-term goals in goal category II are inclusive of the mandate in the NPS Organic Act—"to provide for the enjoyment of the [resources] in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Subsequent legislation reinforced and expanded this authority. All NPS goals for visitor satisfaction, enjoyment, safety, appreciation, and understanding are appropriate to this category.

**NPS Mission Goal IIa:** Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

***Park Mission Goal IIa:*** *Available park facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to support operational needs, park staff, and visitors; appropriate recreational opportunities are safe and adequate for visitors and employees.*

**NPS long-term goal IIa1 – Visitor Satisfaction:** By September 30, 2005, 95 % of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services and recreational opportunities.

***Park Long-term Goal IIa1:*** *By September 30, 2005, 95% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services and recreational opportunities.*

Enjoyment of the park and its resources is a fundamental part of the visitor experience. Visitor satisfaction is affected by the quality of park programs, facilities, and services, whether provided by the National Park Service, a concessioner, or permittee. All efforts directed towards the preservation, protection, restoration, operation, maintenance of the park's resources, facilities and visitor services are to be reported in this goal.

To assist the NPS in complying with GPRA, a visitor survey was conducted in Dry Tortugas National Park in fiscal year 1999. The survey results indicated that 87% of park visitors were satisfied with appropriate facilities, services and recreational opportunities.

In addition to facilities and services, this goal also focuses on improving and maintaining the park's recreational opportunities. Recreational opportunities in the park include: exploring the fort and learning about its history, birding, photography, swimming, camping, snorkeling, scuba diving, sea kayaking, sport fishing and sailing. As visitation increases and the popularity of the park as a recreational site rises, opportunities to experience its wilderness values (such as solitude) are reduced.

Obviously, space is limited on the park islands. Some of the park's infrastructure and facilities do not have the capacity to meet today's visitation. Increasing the size of facilities is typically not an option, as it is in direct conflict with resource protection objectives. However, the park is seeking innovative and reasonable alternatives for managing visitation in such a manner that will ensure both visitor satisfaction and preservation. Many of the issues directly related to increased visitation and recreation are addressed in the DRTO General Management Plan, due to be completed by Fiscal Year 2001.

**NPS long-term goal IIa2 – Visitor Safety:** By September 30, 2005, the visitor accident/incident rate will be at or below 7.96 per 100,000 visitor days [a 16% decrease from the FY 1992 – FY 1996 baseline of 9.48 per 100,000 visitor days].

***Park Long-term Goal IIa2:*** *By September 30, 2005, the rate (19.80) of visitor accidents/incidents will decrease by 10% to 17.82.*

All effort spent to help ensure the safety and security of park visitors is included in this goal. Specific examples include: 1) preserving, protecting, restoring, operating, maintaining, monitoring, or evaluating park facilities for the protection of visitors; 2) providing services that directly contribute to the safety and security of visitors (such as law enforcement and protection, search and rescue, and criminal investigations); and 3) identifying, investigating, and correcting or mitigating sources of injury and property damage experienced by visitors.

***Park Long-term Goal IIa02:*** *By September 30, 2005, reliable and cost-effective radio and telephone communications exist for 24 hours per day, 365 days per year for organizational and operational needs and employee and visitor safety.*

Providing and guaranteeing radio and telephone communication in Dry Tortugas National Park's remote location is a challenge. There are many days when DRTO is unable to communicate

directly with the mainland. This is a major safety issue. It can also impede park staff's ability to effectively conduct business, limiting not only telephone communication, but also e:mail and faxing services.

**NPS Mission Goal IIb – Visitor Understanding and Appreciation:** Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

Visitors' experiences grow from enjoying the park and its resources to understanding why the park exists and the significance of its resources. Increased understanding of the park resources, processes and issues breeds increased desire to preserve and protect the resources and processes. Satisfactory visitor experiences build public support for preserving this country's heritage as contained in the parks.

***Park Mission Goal IIb.*** *Visitors understand, appreciate, and are inspired by the park's historical and natural resources, and they support the protection of these resources.*

**NPS long-term goal IIb1:** By September 30, 2005, 86% of park visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the park they are visiting.

***Park Long-term Goal IIb1:*** *By September 30, 2005, 86% of park visitors understand and recognize the significance of the park's historical and natural resources.*

All effort spent in providing information and orientation, interpretation, and educational services is to be reported to this goal. These services include visitor center interpretive operations, interpretive presentations, educational programs, exhibits, videos, and printed materials.

This goal addresses the core job of Interpretation, which is to provide visitors with an understanding and appreciation of the significance of Dry Tortugas National Park's resources and their roles in the ecosystem, history and the world. Interpretation is a NPS tool that fosters public awareness and appreciation of the natural and historical features of the parks, promotes an understanding of ecological concepts and relevance of historical knowledge, and instills a sense of stewardship towards the National Park System, the Earth, and all of its inhabitants.

Interpretation *is* a form of resource protection and management. One underlying goal of Interpretation is to educate visitors to reduce resource damage. Another role and goal of Interpretation is to actively develop a constituency that supports and understands the value of preservation and conservation. The future of Dry Tortugas National Park is dependent upon an informed and involved public, as well as responsible resource management.



*Ranger Kelly Bulyis in Historic Costume*

To meet this goal, educational opportunities are provided by NPS staff, although staffing levels (one interpretation ranger) are such that presentations cannot be offered on a daily basis. Personal connections provided by traditional ranger-led programs are still valuable and foster life-long benefits. However, in light of budget restraints, emphasis is shifting towards non-personal interpretive services and media such as television, exhibits, waysides or publications that have the ability to serve much greater audiences. The future development of the Key West Visitor Center will also increase visitors' opportunities for information and education regarding the park.

## **NPS GOAL CATEGORY IV: ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Category IV goals support the NPS mission by improving its organizational effectiveness. These goals measure workplace standards such as diversity and competency levels, as well as program execution efficiencies, such as the accuracy of construction cost estimates.

**NPS Mission Goal IVa:** The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

***Park Mission Goal IVa.*** *Dry Tortugas National Park is a responsive and efficient organization, enhancing managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies and individuals.*



**NPS Long-term goal IVa5 – Employee Housing:** By September 30, 2005, 50% of employee housing units listed in poor or fair condition in 1997 assessments are rehabilitated to good condition, replaced or removed.

***Park Long-term Goal IVa5:*** *By September 30, 2005, 5 of 14 housing units classified as being in poor or fair condition are removed, replaced or upgraded to good condition.*



Most park employees at Garden Key live in housing units that are built into casemates of the fort. Of the 14 total housing units, 11 are constructed within the historic walls and ceilings as part of the structure. One unit is a prototype that was installed in July 1999 and is self-contained and does not use any of the fort's historic fabric. The remaining two housing units are in former engineer's quarters. The casemate inserts that use part of the fort as structure have a limited life span, primarily because of humidity and large amounts of water that leak in when it rains. The quarters do not meet code and are an inconvenience when mortar from the fort falls into employee's food and onto furniture and clothes.

Two 4-plex units, in Key West, Florida were acquired in 1999 from the Department of the Navy. These units require rehabilitation, but will provide housing for a larger staff, as well as a temporary administrative site on the mainland.

## Accomplishing Our Goals

Dry Tortugas National Park's long-term goals will be accomplished in five annual increments detailed each year in an Annual Performance Plan. The Annual Performance Plan will contain annual goal increments of the long-term goals. It will also contain detailed work plans, which lay out the activities and products, along with their personnel and fiscal costs that will be carried out to achieve the park's goals. This section provides a brief description of the operational processes and the human, financial, and other resources that are required to meet the park's goals.

### Organization

The park is administered by a superintendent with headquarters located near Homestead, Florida. The superintendent is responsible for the management of both Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks, and the deputy superintendent functions as chief of operations for both areas.

Management of Dry Tortugas is organized into five operating divisions: The South Florida Natural Resources Center (research and resources management); Administration; Visitor and Resource Protection; Visitor Services and Interpretation; Facility Design, Operations and Maintenance. Staff in each division, except the SFNRC, is stationed at Fort Jefferson. Administrative functions including payroll, budget, procurement, contracting, and human resources are accomplished primarily at park headquarters. In addition, the headquarters' and South Florida Natural Resources Center staffs coordinate programs for research and resources monitoring, public affairs, concessions management, legal and legislative affairs, planning and compliance, and safety

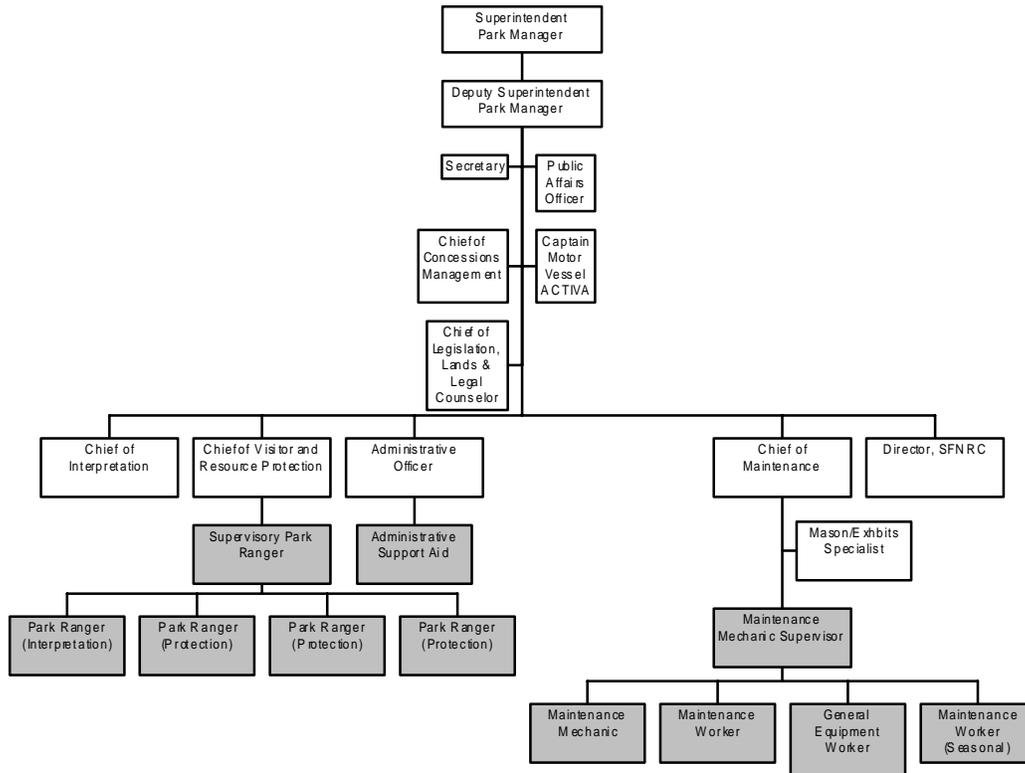
Permanent full-time positions on site at the fort include four park rangers in visitor protection, one park ranger in interpretation, one maintenance supervisor, one maintenance mechanic, one general equipment mechanic, one maintenance worker, and one administrative assistant. In addition, there is one seasonal maintenance worker. There is no park staff at Loggerhead Key. The park relies on a variable number of volunteers who commit to stay on the island for at least



one month. The volunteers operate the generator and reverse osmosis plant, accomplish facility and site maintenance, and contact visitors who come to the island.

The *Activa*, a 65-foot diesel powered supply vessel with a crew of two, provides transportation to and from the park for NPS employees and their families as well as logistical support for transporting mail, groceries, household goods and supplies. The *Activa* also runs trips for support of construction and rehabilitation projects, research work and search and rescue.

## Park Organization



Shaded boxes denote park staff stationed at Dry Tortugas National Park. Unshaded boxes indicate park management and administrative staff for both Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Parks. The *MV Activa* and its crew, based in Key West, are part of the superintendent's staff to provide transportation and logistical support for Dry Tortugas National Park.

### Additional Support

Additional specific assistance in achieving the park's goals will be provided by the National Park Service's Southeast Regional Support Offices in Atlanta, the Harper's Ferry Center, and the Denver Service Center. A new Cooperative Education Study Unit (currently in development) will also provide additional vital assistance through cooperative agreement services.

The Florida National Parks and Monuments Association (FNPMA), the park's nonprofit cooperating association, will continue to provide interpretive and educational materials to the public through the operation of a sales outlet at the fort. When the Key West Interagency Visitor Center is fully operational, it will include an additional FNPMA sales outlet.

### **Financial Resources**

Fiscal resources available to achieve the park's goals and carry out its mission include an annual base operating budget of approximately \$1.3 million in FY2001. This amount includes a \$258,000 base increase provided specifically to support the Coral Reef Initiative. The park's annual base operating budget (ONPS) is supplemented each year with donated funds or equipment, and funds generated through fee demonstration project fees, reimbursables, incidental business permits, etc. In addition, each year we anticipate receiving additional

support in repair and rehabilitation, cyclic maintenance, equipment replacement funds. The ONPS budget is primarily used to support day-to-day park operations and maintain the park's goals. All other funding sources will be used to attain or improve performance targets.

### **FY 2000 Budget Highlights**

**Natural Resource Protection: .....\$240,000**

Budget increase to address threats to natural resources, including the most pristine segment of the only U.S. continental coral reef, consisting of staghorn coral, patch reefs, sand flats, and seagrass beds. These funds will help advance the Administration's coral reef protection initiative.

**Visitor Services: .....\$199,100**

The National Park Service manages and provides a variety of visitor services that offer opportunities to experience and learn about the unique natural and cultural resources of Dry Tortugas National Park, including:

- Operation of visitor center/bookstore in historic Fort Jefferson, interpretive exhibits, campground on Garden Key.
- Ranger-guided and self-guided activities.
- Management of visitor activities supported by commercial services, including ferry and seaplane transportation, sailing, guided snorkeling, diving and recreational fishing, and photographic and birding workshops.
- Visitor and resource protection activities to provide for the protection, safety and security of park visitors, employees, commercial services permittees, and public and private property.

**Facility Operations and Maintenance: .....\$455,500**

- Operation and maintenance of facilities for visitor use, such as the visitor center in Fort Jefferson, interpretive exhibits, boat dock and campground. \$5,000 in estimated fee revenues will be used to upgrade visitor facilities, such as campground equipment or interpretive exhibits.
- Operation of facilities that support the park's administrative and operational needs, including utilities, employee housing, maintenance shops, storage, and offices.

**Park Administration: .....\$124,400**

This program area includes management staff and administrative support functions for the park, such as budget, contracting and procurement, property management, and human resources.

**Total: .....\$1,019,000**

### **Facilities and Development**

National Park Service development is limited to Garden Key and the central portion of Loggerhead Key. All administrative and maintenance facilities are on Garden Key, within or adjacent to Fort Jefferson. New development and rehabilitation of existing facilities is designed to minimize intrusion upon the historic structures and scene.

#### Garden Key

Occupying 16 acres on Garden Key, Fort Jefferson stands as an enduring monument to the strategic importance of the Dry Tortugas to American coastal defenses. The brick masonry fort was designed as a hexagonal structure intended for an armament of about 450 guns and a garrison of 1,500 men. The perimeter of the fort is nearly 0.5 mile in length, surrounded on all sides by a moat and outer counterscarp or seawall. The interior parade area contains the

foundation remains of former soldiers' barracks and officers' quarters. Two historic engineer officers' quarters remain, which are used for park housing. There are also two partially completed brick magazines and a shot furnace (a furnace that was used to superheat cannonballs for the purpose of inflicting further damage on targeted enemy ships by setting them ablaze). The fort's masonry has severely deteriorated due to the harsh marine environment. Stabilization projects are underway to preserve the masonry where feasible. The visitor center at the fort is open year-round. It encompasses two casemate spaces and is in need of improvements for climate control, leaks and size to adequately protect exhibits and improve the interpretive program.



On Garden Key there are two swim beaches, a picnic area, and 13 campsites available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$3.00 per day. Visitors must bring in all supplies, including water, and carry out all trash when they leave. Electrical power is supplied for current housing needs by three 100-kilowatt generators and one 120-kilowatt generator; only one runs at any given time. Potable water is supplied through a reverse osmosis (desalinization) process. There are two septic systems on Garden Key feeding into four leachfields. All solid waste brought into the park must be removed and disposed of on the mainland. The 120-foot dock at Garden Key is can be used for public docking when not being used for operational needs. Ferry vessels tie up to the dock only long enough to drop off passengers.

#### Loggerhead Key

Facilities on the island include two quarters structures for volunteers, the lighthouse and support structures for utility systems. There are no formal visitor services on Loggerhead Key and ferries are not permitted to use the small dock.

#### Anchorage and Buoys

Anchoring is currently permitted throughout the park, and overnight anchoring is restricted to within one nautical mile around the fort. Resource damage is occurring in some areas of the park due to anchors being dropped or dragged through coral reefs. The U.S. Coast Guard currently performs maintenance on the park's 17 boundary buoys.

#### Housing

The park has 14 housing units for park employees, cooperative researchers and volunteers. Twelve of these units are in poor condition.

## **Crosscutting Initiatives and Partnerships**

Dry Tortugas National Park is involved in several crosscutting initiatives and partnerships with other federal and state agencies, and non-profit organizations to achieve the goals and fulfill the mission of the park.

### General Management Plan Amendment

The National Park Service has prepared a *Draft General Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (GMPA/EIS)* for Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO). The plan will set forth the management philosophy and direction for the park for the next 15-20 years. The park has been operating under a General Management Plan prepared in 1983. Although much of the 1983 plan is still applicable, it does not address current issues. The 1983 plan needs amending to provide overall guidance for the future management and use of resources and facilities, to clarify research and resources management needs, and to address changing levels of visitation and use. Key issues addressed in the draft GMPA/EIS include: protection of near-pristine resources such as coral reefs and seagrass beds, the protection of Fort Jefferson and submerged cultural resources, the management direction of commercial services to provide transportation and assistance in educating visitors, and the determination of appropriate levels and types of visitor use. Development of the draft General Management Plan has been coordinated with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's Tortugas 2000 planning, and the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force's *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs* described below.

### Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Dry Tortugas National Park maintains a close working relationship with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS), administered by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. There is shared recognition of the mutual influences between park and sanctuary administration, including protection of the coral reef tract, research, operations and management. The park is a formal participant in the FKNMS' Water Quality Steering Committee. The FKNMS is an active partner in the South Florida ecosystem restoration effort. The two agencies continue their collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency in the production of "Waterways". This half-hour television show airs widely in the region and explores the natural resources and environmental issues of South Florida.

The NPS and the FKNMS are continuing an inter-agency planning effort to protect sensitive Tortugas habitats. The NPS is developing a Dry Tortugas National Park General Management Plan amendment that will determine ways to enhance resource protection while continuing to provide high quality visitor experiences. The FKNMS' Tortugas 2000 effort will establish a marine ecological reserve to protect biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. In the autumn of 1998, the agencies combined their initial scoping efforts to show the difference between the similar, but distinct, plans in a forum that encouraged strong public participation. Interagency hearings were held to gather public comments on the draft plans in June and July 2000. Completion of the final plans is expected by December 31, 2000.

### Coral Reef Protection

On June 11, 1998, the President signed Executive Order 13089 directing federal agencies to take actions to assist in protecting coral reefs, to fully consider the impacts of their actions on coral reefs, to further scientific research, including mapping and monitoring, and to undertake international initiatives for the same purposes. In October 1998, the first meeting of the Coral Reef Task Force established under the Order met at Biscayne National Park. The National

Park Service actively participated and, through its administrative responsibilities for Dry Tortugas National Park, will continue to be active in implementing the terms of the Order.



In March 2000, the Coral Reef Task Force adopted a *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs*. The plan contains a national strategy to implement Executive Order 13089 and covers the spectrum of coral reef conservation, including mapping, monitoring, management, research, education, and international cooperation. The plan calls for designating 20% of all U.S. coral reefs as no-take ecological reserves by 2010, mapping of all U.S. coral reefs by 2009, and monitoring to build an integrated national reef monitoring system that profiles and tracks the health of U.S. coral reefs. Collectively, these

actions are intended to provide a comprehensive road map for federal, state, territorial, and local actions to reverse the loss of coral reefs. The draft general management plan amendment for Dry Tortugas National Park has been coordinated with the national initiative, and if approved, would advance the two fundamental goals of the task force's action plan.

#### Green Parks Initiative

Dry Tortugas National Park is working with the Department of Energy to develop projects in support of energy conservation and the "Green Parks" initiative. The objectives are to reduce pollution and the reliance on fossil fuels to generate electricity.

#### Fort Jefferson Preservation Trust

In 1998, the Fort Jefferson National Trust was established, as a non-profit organization, to aid the National Park Service in its effort to stabilize and prevent deterioration of the fort. In May of 1999, Fort Jefferson received a major grant under the President's Save America's Treasures Program that will be matched with an ongoing non-federal fund raising effort to address major structural rehabilitation and stabilization needs. The grant of \$970,400 is a challenge grant to attract additional support on a matching basis, with potential to provide nearly \$2 million in desperately needed work on the massive fortress. In recognition of this urgent need, the park has entered into a cooperative relationship with the Trust and the National Park Foundation to raise private and corporate funds that would allow major stabilization work to proceed.

Achieving and/or exceeding the long-term goal performance targets is critically dependent on special project funds, donations, assistance, and partnerships. Dry Tortugas faces challenges associated with resource preservation, visitation, operations, and budgets. Many of these challenges could significantly affect the achievement of the goals in the Strategic Plan and in the Annual Performance Plans.



## Key External Factors

While park management and staff can plan, manage, and largely control much of what occurs in the park, other things they can only influence, especially things external to park boundaries. Some things, such as natural events, they have no control over whatsoever. A number of external factors that could positively or negatively affect goal outcomes were taken into consideration in developing this plan and its long-term goals. A few of the most important or most likely are identified below.

- **Population Growth and Visitation:** South Florida's population is expected to grow from 5 million to 12 million by 2050. Population growth and the increased popularity of the park have resulted in a significant increase in recreational visitors to the park over the past 14 years.
- **Partnerships:** Several park programs are carried out through partnerships with other organizations at the federal, state and local levels. Non-profit organizations also carry out important partnership initiatives with the park. Success in achieving park goals is dependent upon continued support and commitment from our partners.
- **Political and Legislative factors:** Congressional and executive branch support are vital for achieving park long-term goals. If the costs of management and providing products and services rise at rates greater than appropriations, then adjustments of goals and plans may be necessary.
- **Demographics:** Changing demographics of park visitors and the general public can challenge the National Park Service to find and implement new and relevant means of providing interpretative, educational and other services. It can also impact our ability to attract and maintain a talented, diverse workforce.
- **Natural Processes and Disasters:** Although many of the park's resources are in near-pristine condition, some marine resources such as coral reefs and sea grass meadows are being degraded by marine pollution, climate changes, and extreme natural events. Natural events, such as hurricanes can dramatically change the conditions at the park and can have a significant effect in the timing of goals. The Florida Keys experience more tropical depressions than any other area of the North American continent. Ship groundings still occur in the Tortugas area and can severely damage marine resources.

## Measuring Results

### Program Evaluation Methodology

During 1996, the management team and staff of Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Parks began GPRA implementation through joint planning with the staff of Biscayne National Park and the Big Cypress National Preserve. This effort resulted in completion of a South Florida National Parks Coordinated Management Framework that includes purpose, significance and mission goal statements for each of the four South Florida parks. It also includes the collective purpose, significance and mission goals of the National Park System units within the South Florida ecosystem. This document was circulated for review and comment by stakeholders in South Florida.

In 1997, park staff struggled with GPRA planning and produced the first set of park long-term goals and an Annual Performance Plan (APP). The analysis of human, fiscal and other resources needed to reach the goals was conducted during preparation of the first and subsequent APPs. In 1999 and 2000 the management team conducted a situation analysis to identify organizational strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. The objective of this analysis was to examine the park's organization and environment to understand where we stand now, and to identify issues that can affect our ability to achieve the park's mission and goals. Elements of this analysis are included in this document and will be incorporated into the park's Annual Performance Plan. A working draft of the Strategic Plan was prepared in the spring of 2000. The final plan will be submitted to the Southeast Regional Office in August 2000.



### **Schedule for Future Evaluations**

The park has scheduled quarterly and annual program reviews to measure progress toward annual goals. This analysis will be documented in the preparation of an Annual Performance Report each year. The park Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually and potential adjustments will be made based on annual performance achievement in the prior years.

## **Consultation**

GPRA requires that Congress, OMB, and other interested and affected parties be consulted in the development of Strategic Plans. Congress and OMB, as well as the Department of the Interior, were extensively consulted in the development of the NPS servicewide plan.



In the development of the Dry Tortugas Strategic Plan, the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group, the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida and stakeholders were consulted during the development of the South Florida National Parks Coordinated Management Framework in 1997.

The Dry Tortugas General Management Planning process has included extensive public involvement in the process of developing goals and strategies that will guide protection and management of the park for the next 15 – 20 years. Upon completion of the GMP in Fiscal Year 2001, the park will revise its Strategic Plan to align its 5-year goals and strategies with those of the new GMP. It is our intention to consult with interested parties and stakeholders during the next revision of the Strategic Plan.

## Contributors

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And, all park staff.

