



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Holly Raschein*

District 120

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August 3, 2015

Thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to share with you my concerns regarding the proposed Biscayne National Park general management plan and the impact that restricting access in certain parts of the park will have on our local community.

I and stakeholders on all sides of this issue understand and share the Parks Service's goal of protecting the incredible natural resource that is Biscayne National Park and that means doing everything we can to ensure our waters are pristine and our fish stocks healthy. But Biscayne National Park belongs to the public, and the public should continue to have the opportunity to access and enjoy the park. While I give my thanks to the Parks Service for their willingness to take input, there is a balance to be struck between public access and natural resource protection and I do not believe that the current proposed general management plan achieves this balance. Closures like those suggested by Biscayne National Park and restrictions that limit public access to public space should be used only as a last resort. At this time, there are other management strategies that can be utilized to better protect the park without limiting access or phasing out fishing including increased enforcement and education.

Eliminating recreational and commercial fishing in certain areas of the park also amounts to fisheries management, which based on Biscayne National Parks memorandum of understanding with the state should not be addressed in the general management plan but should be addressed in consultation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) through the Fisheries Management Plan.

I again want to express my thanks to the committee, to our state agency FWC, and to the Parks Service for their willingness to include all stakeholders in this process. I believe that with additional collaboration and compromise, we can find that balance of maintaining public access to public land while continuing to preserve and protect one of our most unique natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holly Raschein".

Holly Raschein  
State Representative, District 120

***Committees: Appropriations Committee, Highway and Waterway Safety Subcommittee,  
Regulatory Affairs Committee and Veteran and Military Affairs Subcommittee***