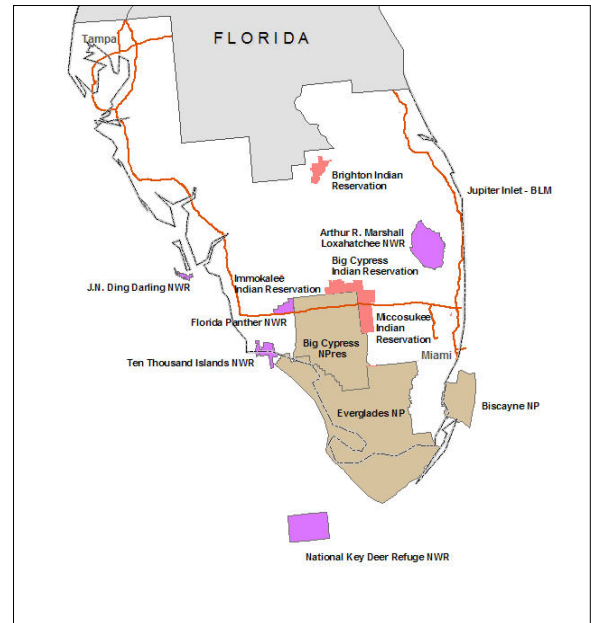


South Florida Fire Planning Unit Forging Working Relationships Everglades National Park, Florida National Fire Plan – Firefighting

In support of the National Fire Plan, federal land managers in South Florida have been working towards implementation of Fire Program Analysis (FPA). As of April 2005, partners in the South Florida planning unit have signed a charter establishing relationships and documenting objectives and responsibilities. Landscape scale data have been acquired and evaluated, and software testing continues as actual implementation deadlines approach. The working relationships established between Fire Planning Unit (FPU) team members have already had positive effects in day-to-day fire operations. While the different agencies and units have enjoyed both formal and informal working relationships in the past, FPA has brought the associations to a new level of cooperation. This cooperation was evident recently when Everglades National Park initiated efforts to conduct a hazard fuel reduction treatment adjacent to wildland urban interface, endangered species habitat and sensitive cultural sites.



South Florida Fire Planning Unit (FPU) Map as of April 2005. Map by Dean Gettinger.

In addition to Everglades National Park, resources from Biscayne National Park (NP), Big Cypress National Preserve (NP), Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), J. N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge and three “Call When Needed” aircraft (CWN) participated in this successful fuels treatment effort. This joint endeavor may be the first of many Fire Planning Unit wide efforts. Two weeks after the burn in Everglades National Park, FPU resources from Everglades NP, Big Cypress NP, Fackahatchee Strand State Park, Florida Division of Forestry, J. N. Ding Darling NWR, and Florida Panther NWR converged upon Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge to assist with hazard fuel reduction efforts there. Close working relationships, cost effective sharing of resources, increased awareness of regional fuels situations, and knowledge of local management constraints will allow FPA to succeed nationwide as it is succeeding in south Florida.

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