



## A World Heritage Site



### 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention

*The World Heritage Convention, administered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2012. To mark the anniversary of the international treaty that established the list of the world's most significant cultural and natural areas, Everglades National Park has declared Sunday, March 18, 2012, as "World Heritage Day".*

### World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention was introduced by the United States as an extension of the national park idea on the international level. It was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 1972 and the United States was the first country to ratify the treaty in 1973. Today the United States has 21 World Heritage Sites, 17 of which are units of the National

Park System, including such icons as Yellowstone, Everglades, Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, Mesa Verde and Independence Hall. The World Heritage label is well known abroad and is considered a magnet for tourism to stimulate local economies and generate jobs. Today, 936 places in 156 countries are listed as World Heritage sites.

### A World Heritage Site

Everglades National Park was among the first sites in the United States to be added to the World Heritage List in 1979. The designation states: "Everglades National Park is a noteworthy example of viable biological processes. The exceptional variety of its water habitats has made it a sanctuary for a large number of birds and reptiles and it provides refuge for over 20 rare, endangered, and threatened species.

These include the Florida panther, snail kite, crocodile, and manatee. The park provides important foraging and breeding habitat for more than 400 species of birds, includes the most significant breeding grounds for wading birds in North America and is a major corridor for migration."

### World Heritage in Danger

Everglades National Park was added to the World Heritage in Danger list in 2010. The list is designed to inform the international community of conditions which threaten the site, and to encourage corrective action. Armed conflict, natural disasters, pollution, poaching, uncontrolled urbanization and development pose major problems to World Heritage sites.

Disruption to the natural flow of water and loss of habitat are primary reasons Everglades National Park was added to

the World Heritage in Danger list. The National Park Service is working with a coalition of federal and state partners to address these issues. In 2000, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan was passed by Congress. This 40 year plan is designed to restore parts of the Everglades from Orlando south to the park, and combines science, engineering and innovation to implement one of the largest ecosystem restoration projects in the world.