



Naja Girard <bluepapermailbox@gmail.com>

FW: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: editor@thebluepaper.com

Florio, Antonia M <antonia_florio@nps.gov>
To: Naja Girard <editor@thebluepaper.com>

Thu, May 5, 2022 at 3:52 PM

Hi Naja, here is the answer to your questions:

Water quality is critically important to the health of all national parks whether marine or terrestrial. Water quality affecting our national parks continues to be a concern for all of us here in the state of Florida as it has a spiraling effect impacting the ability of our natural ecosystems to sustain their ecological functions. We do share the concerns reported in FIU and the Bonefish Tarpon Trust study. At this stage, more studies are needed to understand the origin of this pharmaceutical contamination while taking into account the movement of fish and its prey base. Below are some details about how human waste is managed within Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO).

Human waste management in DRTO is divided into two categories based on who generates it.

The first category is human waste generated by park visitors including ferry passengers, seaplane passengers, and recreational vessels. Human waste for these subcategories is strictly managed as follows:

1. *Commercial Ferry Passengers* - Only one NPS contracted ferry is permitted to operate within the park. The contractor is required to have onboard gray water and black water tanks. The tanks are discharged at the disembarkation site at the Key West Ferry Terminal when they return each day. All visitors ashore while the ferry is present from 10:30am to 2:45pm must use the bathrooms aboard the ferry regardless of whether they are passengers on the ferry, campers, seaplane passengers, or recreational boaters.
2. *Commercial Seaplane Passengers* - Except for the conditions described above, seaplane passengers are required to use the vault toilets adjacent to the park's campground. The human waste is collected in non-permeable vaults and is pumped out by park staff, transported to Key West, Florida, and discharged at a wastewater facility.
3. *Recreational Boat Passengers* - The park currently has no prohibitions on the number of recreational boats that may enter the park, however, the US Coast Guard has established a regulatory buffer zone around the park, through which vessels greater than 50 meters may not cross unless permitted by the Florida Key National Marine Sanctuary to do so. Recreational boaters are prohibited from discharging human waste under, 36 CFR § 2.14 - Sanitation and refuse.

The second category is human waste generated by operation of the park including park employees and partners. Human waste is generated in two locations with the park, Garden Key and Loggerhead Key and is closely managed as follows:

1. *Garden Key* - The facilities at Garden Key include a wastewater treatment plant and above ground leach field serving up to 55 people per day. The system is managed under the oversight of the U.S Public Health Service and in accordance with NPS policy. Solid waste is pumped out by park staff, transported to Key West, Florida, and discharged at a wastewater facility.
2. *Loggerhead Key* - The facilities on Loggerhead Key include septic tanks and leach fields and serve up to seven people per day. The system is managed under the oversight of the U.S

Public Health Service and in accordance with NPS policy. Waste is pumped out by park staff, transported to Key West, Florida, and discharged at a wastewater facility.

From: Naja Girard <editor@thebluepaper.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 3, 2022 5:21 PM

To: Florio, Antonia M <antonia_florio@nps.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: editor@thebluepaper.com

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