**Waterfronts Florida Program Managers’ Meeting**

**Crystal River, Florida**

**Meeting Summary**

**ATTENDEES:**

*Communities* **– Panacea:** Sherrie Miller; Paige Killeen; Walt Dickson. **Millville:** Tim Whaler. **Crystal River:** Dee Atkins;Laura Black;Marcia Chesnicka; Jim Dicks; Andrew S. Freund; Jackie Gorman; Andy Houston; Janis Huegel; Marybeth Knayfiel; Julie Lambert; Bob Mercer; Janet Mulligan; Paula Wheeler **Freeport:** Latilda Henninger. **Hernando County:** Patricia L. McNeese. **Inglis:** Charles A. Botts III. **Fort Pierce:** Anne Satterlee; Jon Ward.

*Speakers* – **Apalachicola NERR:** Rosalyn Kilcollins; **Crystal River:** Mayor Jim Farley; Keith Shewbart; Jackie Gorman. **Citrus County:** Marla Chancey. **DEO:** Julie Dennis. **Florida Yards and Coordinator:** Audrey Durr. **FWC:** Blair Hayman. **FWCC:** Major Jack Daugherty. **Kings Bay Rotary Club:** Art Jones. **Southwest Florida Water Management District:** Christina Collins. **University of Florida, NRLI:** Bruce Delaney. **US FWS:** Phil Horning, Captain Richard Moore; Lieutenant John Jones; Captain John Burton; Officer Kam Johnson; Lieutenant Darrin Riley; Captain Roy Brown.

*Others* – **Aardvark’s Florida Kayak:** Matt Clemons. **Citrus County BCC:** Joe Hochadel. **Citrus County Sheriff’s Office:** Brian Coleman; Jonathon Richey. **DEO:** Liesl Voges. **FWCC:** Terry J. Doonan; Andrew Gude; Clinton Smith. **Hospice of Citrus County:** Dee Peters. **Nature Coast Kayak Tours:** Tracy Colson. **Preble-Rish Engineers:** Clifford Knauer. **Save the Manatee Club:** Patrick Rose. **University of Florida – Department of Urban and Regional Planning:** Sean Reiss. **University of Florida Law Conservation Clinic:** Tom Atkersen. **US FWS.**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 55**

**OVERVIEW**

This meeting included topics on conflict resolution techniques, local partnerships to protect water quality through homeowner-based strategies, green infrastructure in coastal communities, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's mooring pilot project, derelict vessel removal, invasive species removal, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative. The meeting also included an extended discussion of communities' recently encountered successes and challenges with their revitalization efforts, an extended discussion of Crystal River's long journey to creating a successful revitalization program, and tours of the recently acquired Three Sisters Springs and of King's Bay. The meeting was followed by a meeting of Levy, Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco County participants in the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative.

**PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS**

**DAY ONE: May 24, 2012**

Meeting Participants met at Plantation on Crystal River. Mayor of Crystal River, Jim Farley, started the meeting with a warm welcome to meeting participants and reflection on Crystal River’s successes enhancing the local waterfront and maintaining the environmental integrity of the area. Mayor Farley’s welcome was followed by welcome from the Chairman of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Partnership, Keith Shewbart. Julie Dennis followed the local welcome with opening remarks and review of the day’s agenda.

Neighborhoods Protecting Water Quality: Homeowner-based Approaches

Audrey Durr of Citrus County Water resources gave an overview of the Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMPs) training required for all commercial fertilizer applicators as well as the youth education outreach programs offered by UF IFAS Extension offices across the state. GI-BMPs training was developed by FDEP, UP/IFAS, and the Green Industries to protect Florida’s water resources and has a two-pronged approach: to promote training to landscape companies and encourage homeowners to seek a certified professional. The youth education element includes 183 programs reaching over 8,100 youth and seeks to engage future homeowners on effective landscaping methods.

Christina Collins of Southwest Florida Water Management District discussed the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan which works to protect, restore, and maintain Florida’s threatened surface water bodies. Christina described how the plan focuses on behaviors that cause problems in our water, such as over fertilization of lawns. She also stressed the importance of how to present information to homeowners and interested parties by engaging them in the topic and future of their environment.

Jackie Gorman of Crystal River discussed some of the ongoing efforts in the city to improve the environmental conditions of the water ecosystem. These efforts include increased awareness of environmental issues and how homeowners can reduce their impact and physically improving the waterways through such programs as the “One Rake at a Time” program discussed later in the meeting. Jackie discussed how through these efforts the community has helped to improve the environment and made moves to protect specific areas, such as through the acquisition of the Three Sisters Springs.

Green Infrastructure in Coastal Communities

Rosalyn Kilcollins, of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, provided an overview of common problems with coastal development and some best practices to increase coastal community resiliency. Rosalyn suggested that communities steer development to areas that will: minimize operating and maintenance costs; protect natural resources; and protect local quality of life. Her presentation also described what green infrastructure is, how it can work in coastal communities, and how it can achieve multiple planning objectives.

Conflict Resolution: Resolving Community Disagreements

Bruce Delaney, of University of Florida: Natural Resources Leadership Institute, presented a brief introduction to the eight month leadership training program that helps people, industries, and agencies collaborate in achieving goals aimed at protecting the environment and fostering economic development. Bruce’s presentation discussed the process of community meetings, moving from contentious discussion in the “groan zone” to a “meeting of the minds” and final resolution. He discussed techniques to maintain a collaborative atmosphere at meetings and the meeting participants shared stories of meetings they have experienced that went poorly and what could have been improved. The next NRLI class is on Climate Change and Florida and more information can be found online at: <http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Guided Tour of Three Sisters Springs

Meeting participants met at City Hall where Andy Houston, Crystal River City Manager, introduced meeting participants to Three Sister Springs, why it is a valuable ecosystem, how it was acquired through joint collaboration with USFWS and other organizations, and future plans for the site. Meeting participants then toured the recently acquired Three Sister Springs. Meeting Attendees reconvened at City Hall for a presentation by Crystal River followed by a roundtable discussion.

Reflections on a Multi-year Local Revitalization Effort: Successes and Challenges in Crystal River

Andy Houston and Jackie Gorman presented on Crystal River’s local revitalization efforts. These efforts include revitalization efforts on the downtown street, Citrus Avenue, which incorporated widening of sidewalks, angled street parking, and improved lighting. Other improvements were made at 3rd Street Pier, which used to be derelict buildings and is now Kings Bay Park. Future plans include revitalizing the south side of Citrus Ave. to match the improved north side and branding the city to manage the tourist opportunity that has greatly increased in the past five years.

Roundtable Discussion

The roundtable discussion included an introduction to a University of Florida Department of Urban and Regional Planning study on rural coastal planning for sea level rise as well as updates from eight waterfronts communities in attendance. The following communities were represented in the roundtable discussion: Milville, Panacea, Freeport, Crystal River, Inglis, Fort Pierce, Hernando County, and Carabelle. Recent community successes included: acquiring grants to remove 28 derelict vessels; hosting a fishing tournament as a waterfronts fundraiser; completion of replacement dock downtown; near completion of pilot program for new Florida Waterfronts Partnership designation; acquisition of Three Sisters Springs; and creation of ecotourism commercial partnership. Challenges encountered include: low community involvement; misinformation and ignorance regarding waterfront revitalization projects; derelict boats; and developing consensus among community members.

**DAY TWO: May 25, 2012**

Julie Dennis and Jackie Gorman welcomed day two meeting participants, presented door prize, and reviewed the day’s agenda.

One Rake at a Time Program

Art Jones of the Kings Bay Rotary presented an overview of the community movement to rid Kings Bay of Lyngbya, an algae that is destroying the aquatic ecosystem in the bay and Crystal River. The mission is to manually remove Lyngbya and assist in the return of beneficial aquatic vegetation, returning water quality and clarity to the area. The “One Rake at a Time” program was started in September 2011 and has removed tons of lyngbya, which often finds use as a natural fertilizer on land. Art is currently working to raise funds to purchase more industrial equipment to aid in the volunteer efforts.

Kings Bay Tour

Meeting participants toured Kings Bay by boat. Tours were lead by community citizens and US Coast Guard.

Derelict Vessel Removal: Local Programs and Grant Opportunities

Phil Horning of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission presented an overview of local programs and grant opportunities related to derelict vessel removal. A new statewide database identifies navigational hazard derelict vessels, non-navigational derelict vessels, and at risk vessels as well as narratives, photos, warrants, audio filed, videos, witness statements, and bill of sales related to derelict vessels. The database has partnered with sheriff’s offices, police departments, county environmental agencies, circuit court prosecutors, and federal agencies across the state to help collaboration and communication in decreasing derelict vessels in the state.

FWC Mooring Pilot Project and Boating and Waterways Section Update

Major Jack Daugherty of FWCC provided an update on the anchoring and mooring pilot program. The FWC, in consultation with the DEP, was directed by the legislature to establish a pilot program to explore potential options for regulating the anchoring or mooring of non-live-aboard vessels outside the boundaries of public mooring fields. The selected locations include St. Augustine, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Monroe County/Key West/Marathon, and Stuart/Martin County. The locations are currently working with FWC to establish ordinances and by January 1, 2014 all findings and recommendations will be reported to the Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives.

Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative

Blair Hayman provided a brief description of the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative (CWCI), a part of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. CWCI is a partnership strategy to address coastal issues that impact wildlife and their habitats. Blair explained how the project was initially aimed at beach habitats but the goals can address any coastal area. CWCI uses a coalition-based approach and works to address gaps in information, outreach, and management of coastal habitats. Blair invited all participants to the CWCI meeting with Levy, Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties immediately following the Florida Waterfronts meeting.

Adjournment

Waterfronts Florida Program staff member, Julie Dennis, made final comments and asked participants to fill out evaluation forms rating the meeting’s quality. The dates for next meeting will be announced soon.