

A photograph of a waterfront area. In the foreground, two white boats are docked in the water. The boat on the right has 'MANANATHA' and 'V2990 X7770' written on its side, and '611570' on its hull. In the background, there are several buildings, including a large white building with a green awning and a tall metal tower. The sky is overcast.

City of Crystal River
**Waterfronts Florida
Partnership Program
2003-2005**

**Community-Designed Vision Plan
Resolution for Improving Water Quality**

Presented by
City of Crystal River
Waterfronts Partnership Advisory Board

November 16, 2004

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INTRODUCTION

The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program is a program of the Department of Community Affairs and funded in part through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Coastal Management Program pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration grant No. NA170Z23300.

Part of the application approval process was to appoint a group of individuals committed to coordinating the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program. This group became the City of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Partnership Advisory Board appointed by the Mayor and City Council members for a two year term 2003-2005. The Waterfronts Florida Advisory Board reports to the City Council

The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program has four major areas of focus: environmental and cultural resource protection; hazard mitigation; public access; and enhancement of the viable traditional economy.

Tourists are drawn to Florida to explore and enjoy the waterfront. This was viewed as a blessing or a challenge to manage, depending on the community's perspective.

Most of the Waterfronts Florida communities were very interested in expanding ecotourism in their area. As one explained, "We want ecotourism *and* we want to keep our fishing business." The compatibility of the two enterprises was not lost on those who had given it some considerable thought.

Ecotourism helped preserve the water quality that supported the fishing industry, while it provided an alternative source of employment for those who had intimate knowledge of the surrounding sea. An added boost was to expand the market for fresh seafood and small, informal dockside seafood restaurants.

Several communities are pursuing status as a scenic drive designation seeking a different type of tourist, generally more mature and anxious to explore the path less taken. Attracting tourists by bike and boat is another means of targeting tourists who have a low impact on the environment and pedestrian atmosphere, and where parking is a premium, as it is in most Waterfronts Florida locations.

Citrus County, Florida, is uniquely positioned on seven of Florida's Outstanding Waterways which offers excellent opportunities for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, diving and bird watching that promotes development of Eco-tourism for the county. Over the years, Citrus County's rivers, lakes and springs have changed from crystal clear to dark waters that originate from overland flows, sewage system, nitrate concentrations and swamp drainage. For nature-based tourism to be a truly successful part of our community's economy. Eco-tourism must

be sustainable. To be sustainable, it must be properly planned and managed to ensure a continuing high quality outdoor experience for the visitor, which means education within our community and guidelines for the tourists who come to our community of Sharing the Water Through Eco-tourism.

Visitors are attracted by those nature resources which are special in the community-forests, lakes, parks, preserves and uncommon wildlife. An awareness of the value of these to outsiders can spur renewed interest and pride among residents to conserve and preserve those elements which contribute to this uniqueness. Scenic lakes, marshes, rivers and other outdoor habitats are just a few examples of the nature elements which can be enhanced by the realization that they have a value beyond the boundaries of the local community. Citizen and government understanding of the visitor's desire for an aesthetically positive and healthy environment as a setting for the Eco-tourism experience can be instrumental in forging community goals and actions.

Protecting our eco-systems which include swamps, marshes and estuaries are essential as part of the plan. These resources are both tremendously productive and fragile as our community just experienced with the first scalloping season held in many years. These systems are probably the most productive known to man. They provide resting, feeding, and breeding grounds for many of the species of fish, birds, reptiles and mammals. Due to the fragile nature of these environments, care must be taken to assure minimum impacts. Estuaries are coastal bodies of water in which the fresh water flow meets the salt water tide. Many aquatic resources are already protected by state and federal laws. Identify those aquatic areas which may serve to attract visitors. It is essential that these areas are protected and activities in these areas should:

1. Maintain nature diversity;
2. Maintain or improve water quality;
3. Maintain or improve natural watersheds
4. Protect and restore threatened and endangered species and habitat;
5. Regulate and mitigate human activities to minimize adverse impacts;
6. Educate visitors about the importance and fragility of marine resources and threats to those resources.

Loss of these environments can mean both losing a major attraction and affecting the quality of life for our community. Of most importance to Eco-tourism is the quality of water in these areas since much of the recreational activities occur in the water.

National Geographic Traveler and Travel Industry Association of America sponsored a study on Geotourism. This study documented that the majority of the traveling public (71%) indicates that it is important to them that their visits to a destination not damage its environment. Nearly two thirds agree (61%) that their travel experience is better when the destination preserves its natural, historic, and cultural sites and attractions. Over half (53%) of travelers agree that their travel experience is better when they have learned as much as possible about their destination's customs, geography and culture.

COMMUNITY VISIONING

Community Visioning is a structured way for groups of citizens to meet and discuss the important issues affecting their local community now and in the future. As a result of this visioning, they can form citizen groups to implement what they would like to improve.

Part of the process is to identify community needs by conducting a series of community meetings to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. This can be accomplished by a community visioning process where a survey is taken from the residents on what changes they would like to see in the community.

Since April, 2004, the Waterfronts Partnership Advisory Board has followed the procedures outlined by the Department of Community Affairs and fulfilled requirements by forming subcommittees that consist of:

- Waterfronts Architectural/Design;
- Water Quality;
- Sign Kiosk;
- Marketing

Waterfronts Architectural/Design subcommittee has been working with the Conservation Clinic, University of Florida Levin College of Law, on developing a model historic preservation ordinance for Crystal River, FL, and in addition, has been working on a architectural land development code.

The Water Quality subcommittee has been educated by presentations from state and federal agencies, regarding water quality in Kings Bay, and the recommendation was to form a single entity to coordinate and develop a management plan. That entity needs to be recognized by government and legislature and would have the authority to move the process forward.

The Sign Kiosk was approved by the Waterfronts Advisory Board and for implementation a Sign Kiosk subcommittee was formed. This Sign Kiosk will be located at the City of Crystal River's N.W. 3rd Street Pier and will provide educational information and a visitor's center.

The Marketing subcommittee has been involved with community activities to promote community visioning. The Waterfronts Advisory Board donated funds to the Historical Society for printing of the Coastal Museum brochure, during Heritage Week, the Waterfronts Advisory Board had a booth with hand-outs at the N.W. 3rd Street Pier while bay tours were being given for a donation fee to the Historical Society. In addition, a monthly column will be written and submitted regarding community visioning to the *Citrus County Chronicle*, *Crystal River Current*.

Crystal River/Kings Bay **A Natural Wonder in Distress**

The Crystal River/Kings Bay system is one of the most complex and unique natural resources in the State of Florida. This system derives its water source from the Crystal River Springs group, a complex network of over 30 major springs, which discharges an average of over 975 cubic feet per second of fresh water into Kings Bay. The Crystal River then emerges from the northwest end of Kings Bay through saltmarsh estuaries and travels westward six miles into the Gulf of Mexico. This, combined with the Chassahowitzka, Homosassa, Hall's and Withlacoochee rivers feeds one of the largest remaining saltmarsh estuary systems left along the US gulf coast.

The freshwater discharge of the springs mixes with tidal waters from the Gulf of Mexico creating a diverse tapestry of changing ecosystems that supports a highly productive ecosystem utilized by a broad array of animals, plants, and salt and freshwater fish. The Crystal River and Kings Bay is world renowned for its wintering population of the endangered Florida manatee. During peak periods the population has exceeded 250 animals that depend on the 72-degree spring discharge to keep warm during cold spells.

For those who have known and interacted with the Crystal River system, there is the sad knowledge that it has declined from the crystal clear waters and clean white sand bottoms of the past. New visitors will still marvel at this amazing system, but then quickly develop a foreboding as deep as that of the area residents when they are told of its decline and see first hand the impacts that threaten it.

The decline of Crystal River/Kings Bay is a result of impacts that have occurred over the last 50 years. The causes are both bold and subtle, but always share a common linkage to 'man and the development that travels with us.

While Crystal River/Kings Bay is in distress, there is hope that through proper management, public education, and cultural change, we can halt its decline and perhaps even reverse the degradation. This website is dedicated to that cause and is the product of the many governmental agencies, community groups, residents, and visitors willing to aid in restoring the health of this unique Florida treasure. Please take the time to learn about Crystal River/ Kings Bay, its history, current state, and its future. It is our hope that you will join us in protecting and restoring this wondrous product of nature.

Jurisdiction Over Crystal River/Kings Bay

There are four government agencies with direct jurisdiction over Crystal River/Kings Bay and its springshed and many additional agencies that oversee specific issues, conditions, or activities or conduct research/restoration efforts. Provided below is a short description of each government entity.

City of Crystal River

The City of Crystal River is an incorporated local government that wraps around the eastern and northern shores of Crystal River/Kings Bay. The City controls all planning, zoning, and land use decisions, as well as implementation and enforcement of local codes within their jurisdiction. The City is governed by an elected board of five City Council members, a Mayor, the City Manager, and City staff.

Citrus County

Citrus County Government oversees all planning, zoning, and other land use decisions, as well as implementation of enforcement of local codes for the unincorporated areas of the County. This includes the western and southern shores of Crystal River/Kings Bay, as well as those lands within the springshed that do not lie within either the City of Crystal River or the City of Inverness. An elected Board of Five County Commissioners, the County Administrator, and County staff governs the County.

Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is the lead state agency involved in water quality, pollution control, and resource recovery programs. The Department sets state water quality standards and has permit jurisdiction over point and non-point source discharges, certain dredge and fill activities, drinking water systems, power plant siting, and many construction activities conducted within waters of the state. The Department also interacts closely with other federal and state agencies, including the Southwest Florida Water Management District, on water-related matters.

Crystal River Buffer Preserve

The Division of State Lands oversees the management of state lands, including state parks. There are three significant holdings of this type in the Crystal River/Kings Bay area. Much of the coastal uplands west of US-19 surrounding the Bay and River are publicly owned and managed as the Crystal River State (Buffer Preserve) Park. These lands were acquired to protect the health and integrity of the wetlands and surface waters contained in the St. Martin's Marsh Aquatic Preserve. The final tract emphasizes the long-term presence and use of the River by humans and that is the Crystal River State Archaeological Site .

U.S. Department of Interior

The primary water-related functions performed by this agency involve the review of proposed activities which may impact threatened or endangered species, review of US Army Corps of Engineers permits for potential effects on fish and wildlife, and management of all federally-owned public lands. Within the department, the US Geological Survey conducts investigations concerning hydrology, hydrogeology, water use, and ground and surface water quality. The

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manages and restores fish and wildlife populations and conducts research on the effects of pollution on those resources. The National Park Service maintains federal parks and sanctuaries, regulating multiple uses on these lands to achieve a balance of benefits for both man and wildlife. The department also oversees those requests and offshore activities associated with exploration and development on the outer continental shelf.

Within the Crystal River/Kings Bay system, the USFWS manages the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge, 20 small islands, and the surrounding surface waters and springs that are critical to the area's wildlife — in particular the Florida manatee.

In addition to the above listed agencies that have direct jurisdiction over the lands or waters within Crystal River/Kings Bay and its springshed, there are a number of agencies which have jurisdiction over one or more areas of impact which involve the Crystal River/Kings Bay system, its springshed, or natural resources within the system. Provided below is a short description of each government entity.

Many state agencies are involved in environmental regulation and resource management in the Crystal River/Kings Bay watershed and estuary. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the lead state agency in the protection and management of Crystal River/Kings Bay. Other relevant entities include the agencies listed below.

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS)

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, through its Division of Agriculture and Environmental Services (AES) regulates the registration and use of pesticides, including the purchase of restricted pesticides, maintains registration

and quality control of fertilizers, regulates pest control operations, mosquito control, and evaluates and manages environmental impacts associated with agrichemicals.

Withlacoochee State Forest

Through the Division of Forestry, the DACS is responsible for developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control forestry-related non-point source pollution. The Division of Forestry is also responsible for statewide implementation of BMPs and for monitoring public and private forestry operations to determine BMP compliance and effectiveness. Florida's State Forests and other parcels of public land are managed by the Division of Forestry.

The Division of Plant Industry is responsible for, among other duties, regulating the movement of noxious weeds and, with input from the Endangered Plant Advisory Council, protecting endangered, threatened or commercially exploited plant species.

The Office of Water Policy Coordination is responsible for participating in water policy issues to ensure the availability of an adequate supply and quality of water for the production of food and fiber. The office cooperates with agencies and agricultural producers to make available streamlined agricultural regulatory processes and voluntary, incentive-based, acceptable alternatives and agricultural BMPs consistent with the sustainability of agriculture and resource conservation. The office provides assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts, including the Tampa and the Manatee River Districts, in carrying out conservation activities at the local and watershed level, and providing improved local delivery of resource management services to agricultural producers. The office facilitates the participation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in water-related issues at the county or watershed level.

Department of Community Affairs

The Department of Community Affairs is responsible for reviewing local comprehensive plans and has jurisdiction over developments of regional impact (DRIs). DRI investigations are concerned with proposed developments that have the potential to affect the health, safety, or welfare of citizens of more than one county.

The Comprehensive Plans of Citrus County and the City of Crystal River have been reviewed by the DCA and are in compliance with the Local Comprehensive Planning Act.

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC)

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has responsibility for conserving the state's freshwater aquatic life, marine life, and wild animal life all under a single agency. The Florida Marine Research Institute (FMFI), the Office of Fisheries Management and Assistance Services (OFMAS) and the Bureau of Protected Species Management are all sub-agencies with the FFWCC.

The FMRI conducts studies throughout the Crystal River/Kings Bay with respect to habitat quality (e.g., marsh and seagrass habitats), habitat utilization and value with respect to important fisheries, and fish population dynamics and stock assessment.

The Bureau of Protected Species Management, with responsibility for managing imperiled marine life, is part of the FFWCC's Office of Environmental Services. The Endangered Species Section, which covers all other Florida protected wildlife, is part of the new agency's Division of Wildlife.

The FFWCC Enforcement Section is encharged with enforcing saltwater, freshwater, and wildlife laws. They also serve as the enforcement agency for the Florida Endangered and Threatened Species Act and the Oil Spill Prevention and Pollution Control Act, and enforces state motorboat laws and the saltwater fisheries regulations of the Commission.

Department of Health

The Department of Health is responsible for the permitting of septic systems and other on-site disposal systems (OSDS) through its county health departments.

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation's Project Development and Environmental offices assist in the design, review, and permitting of road and right-of-way projects in the Crystal River/Kings Bay region.

Florida Sea Grant Program

The Florida Sea Grant Program is supported by awards from the Office of Sea Grant National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under provisions of the National Sea Grant College and Programs Act of 1966. The Florida Sea Grant Program has three major components: applied marine research, education, and advisory services (through local marine extension agents).

Florida Sea Grant provides scientific research and habitat-related information that is useful in the management of Crystal River/Kings Bay natural resources.

State AFFILIATED Agencies

Two state affiliated agencies exist that are involved in the implementation of the Crystal River/Kings Bay Surface Water Improvement Management plan (SWIM). These agencies are the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council

The Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council is the Regional Planning Agency designated in Section 186.505 of the Florida Statutes. It performs the responsibilities described in that section and the Regional Planning Agency roles assigned in Section 380.05, F.S. (Resource Planning Committees, DRI reviews and Ch. 163, Local Plan Reviews).

Southwest Florida Water Management District

The Southwest Florida Water Management District is responsible for performing duties assigned under Ch. 373, F.S., as well as duties delegated through FDEP for Ch. 253 and 403, F.S., and for local plan review (Ch. 163, F.S.).

Federal

Federal jurisdiction in Crystal River/Kings Bay involves the regulatory responsibilities of the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Coast Guard, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Department of Interior (which coordinates its many agriculture-related activities with those of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services). Their main regulatory functions include overseeing dredge and fill activities, maintaining navigability of the waters of the United States, overseeing cleanup following pollution spills, protecting endangered species, protecting overall environmental quality, and managing offshore activities. These agencies, in conjunction with the US Geological Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, also contribute to the collection of technical data concerning Crystal River/Kings Bay and its watershed.

US Army Corps of Engineers

The US Army Corps of Engineers is concerned with all activities which affect navigable waters of the United States, particularly those involving construction of structures and dredging and filling in navigable waters. The Corps is also involved in permitting the placement of dredge and fill material into navigable waters and adjacent wetlands, and in funding aquatic plant control in navigable and public waters.

US Environmental Protection Agency

The US Environmental Protection Agency is the primary federal agency responsible for water quality protection. The agency oversees hazardous waste cleanups, protection of public drinking water systems, all point source pollutant discharges into waters of the United States (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits), and the protection and restoration of surface and groundwater. The agency also reviews Corps of Engineers permit activities, sets minimum quality standards, and sets guidelines for state environmental programs. EPA also funds sewerage facilities' studies through Regional Planning Councils and system improvements through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

US Coast Guard

The US Coast Guard is the primary federal agency entrusted with marine law enforcement. The Guard's mission also includes hazardous materials cleanups,

search and rescue, buoy replacement, vessel safety inspection, and right-of-way clearance on navigable waterways.

US Department of Commerce

Within the Department of Commerce, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which includes the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center, is a scientific and data collection agency which assimilates oceanographic and meteorological information in the form of maps, charts, interpretive reports, and other documents. The National Marine Fisheries Service administers NOAA's program to manage living marine resources for commercial and recreational use. It supports fisheries management operations, international fisheries affairs, fishery development, trade, and industry assistance activities, habitat conservation activities, and scientific and technical aspects of NOAA's marine fisheries resources programs.

RESOLUTION

The Waterfronts Advisory Board recommends that a Restoration Council be appointed for the purpose of restoring Kings Bay. The council can consist of eight voting members: two waterfront property owners, one environmental engineer, one biology student, one attorney, one engineer apprentice, one fishing industry representative, and one tourism representative, all to be appointed by the City of Crystal River City Council, and Citrus County Board of County Commissioners. No person serving on the council may be appointed to any other state-wide council, board, or commission. The council members shall serve as advisors to the governing board of the Florida Waste Management District. The council is subject to the provisions of chapters 119 and 120, Florida Statutes.

The council shall include nonvoting advisory group members which shall consist of: one representative each from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Transportation, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, the Withlacoochie River Basin Board, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, to be appointed by their respective agencies, all of whom must have training in biology or another scientific discipline.

RESOLUTION FOR IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

City of Crystal River 2003-2005 Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program

Resolution Urging the Commitment of Sufficient Federal, State and Local Resources for Improving Water Quality in Kings Bay and Requesting that an Entity is formed with the Sole Charge of Leading a Program to Restore Kings Bay, (such as Lake Tsala Apopka Restoration Council).

Whereas, Crystal River has been designated as a Waterfronts Florida Community;

Whereas, this designation enables the community to utilize the City of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program to promote and support efforts to revitalize waterfronts areas in a manner which incorporates environmental resource protection and integration of the viable traditional waterfronts economy among other things;

Whereas, good water quality is an essential element of the economy of this coastal village and therefore a necessary component for protecting and enhancing the traditional waterfront economy;

Whereas, Citrus County, Florida, is uniquely positioned on seven of Florida's Outstanding Waterways which offers excellent opportunities for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, diving and bird watching that promotes development of Eco-tourism for the county.

Whereas, nature-based tourism relies on environmental destinations to attract visitors to a community. For nature-based tourism to be a successful part of the community's economy, this tourism must be sustainable. To be sustainable, it must be properly planned and managed to ensure a continuing high quality outdoor experience for the visitor and community.

Whereas, numerous water quality studies and various plans have been completed over the years and;

Whereas, the water quality in Kings Bay has continued to decline;

Whereas, Federal, State, and Local government entities having varying interests, resources, and impacts in and on the Kings Bay watershed;

Whereas there are overlapping jurisdictions and no one entity has a lead role in restoring water quality specifically in Kings Bay;

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED,

The City of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Partnership Advisory Board finds that improvement of water quality in Kings Bay is an issue of utmost importance to the success of the City of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program and that further delays will likely increase the long term costs of restoration and decrease the chances of full recovery of Kings Bay;

That to be successful there must be a high level of intergovernmental cooperation, an adequate assignment of priorities, adequate commitments of resources, inter-agency and coordination of efforts from Federal, State, and Local Government entities including the City of Crystal River, Citrus County Board of county Commissioners, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Florida Department of Transportation, the Florida Legislature the Office of the Governor of Florida, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the United States Department of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

To insure effective coordination and oversight of this most important project, The City of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program Advisory Board calls upon the Crystal River City Council to charge the City of Crystal River Waterfronts Florida Advisory Board to immediately begin the process of forming a Kings Bay Restoration Council who's sole responsibility shall be to coordinate and oversee interagency efforts to halt the degradation of, and to restore to the extent possible, the waters of Kings Bay.

City of Crystal River

Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program

Community-Designed Vision Plan

Resolution for Improving Water Quality

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