

Steinhatchee, Florida: Riverfront Visioning Project



Quick Facts

County: Taylor
 Population: 1,453
 Growth Rate: 0.8%
 Median Family Income: \$34,929
 Median Household Income: \$26,188

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Waterfronts Florida Program

In May 2007, Steinhatchee was designated as a Waterfronts Florida Community by the Florida Department of Community Affairs. The result is a special area management plan to guide the revitalization of the community's designated waterfront area. This project will enhance the community's efforts to fulfill the Waterfronts Florida objectives.

Source: Florida Dept. of Community Affairs

Location Map



THE STORY OF STEINHATCHEE

Rivers have nourished delicate ecosystems and humble human cultures for millenia. Since the 1800's, Steinhatchee was a self-sufficient fishing village steeped in river culture and history, and remained hidden from real estate developers as a part of the "forgotten coast" of Florida.

As coastal property value skyrocketed, development finally began to creep into the marshes of Steinhatchee, a township that has only the resources and protections offered by Taylor county, one of the least prosperous and populated in the state. Without a city's development regulations, tax-based infrastructure, and powerful watchdogs, Steinhatchee lay unprepared and ripe for the taking.

Compounding the situation, recent changes in state fishing and wildlife law have adversely affected the economy. In response to these changes, the fishing industry moved from its historic commercial base to a recreational industry. At the same time, the real estate bubble burst, and many brand new developments are vacant.

This riverfront visioning project is the key to unlocking Steinhatchee's future as a vibrant recreational destination. And ultimately, empowered by a unified vision of its growth, the community will restore and maintain its collective unique heritage.

"Esteen Hatchee"

The name is derived from the Muskogee "ak" (down), "isti" (man) and "hatchee" (creek). It means "dead man's creek."

Source: Florida Dept. of State

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"I'd much rather go somewhere fresh water and catch as many brim as I can - ends up being cheaper after the gas."

-Local Resident

"...good down home country folk..."

-Local Resident

"We need a place for the kids to hang out."

-Local Resident

"I want to see little cracker style houses, in rows, like it used to be"

-Local Resident

"People come on the weekends and fish but won't spend a dime!"

-Local Resident

"...no parking for miles along the river..."

-Local Resident

Delicate Ecosystems



Culture & History



Township



Fishing Industry



New Development




Unique Heritage



The GRACE acronym, in addition to providing a framework for the use of specific criteria in the analysis, connotes a spirit of place. It facilitates one of the goals of the project, to give Taylor County a unique landmark(s) that clearly lets visitors know they are "there". The analysis was confined to the portions of the county where access to water was possible.

PROCESS FLOW CHART



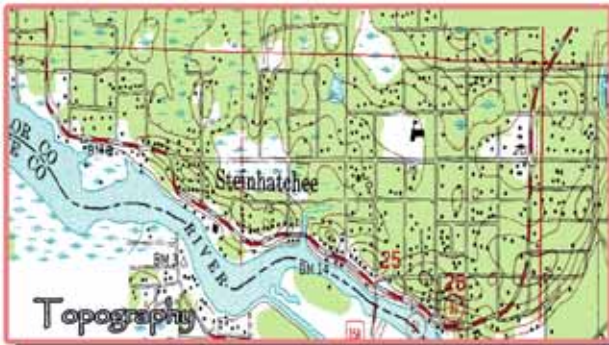
G Growth	Potential opportunities for land acquisition and Smart Growth	 	Taylor County's infrastructure provides adequate access to its coastal areas. The roads to popular destinations, Keaton Beach, Steinhatchee, and Spring Warrior are county maintained and paved; the roads to other potential sites are not. Also, adjacent natural areas need to be protected.
R Recreational	Diversification in recreational activities and social events that promote relaxation for a healthy body and mind.	 	Recreational scalloping, fishing, and boating are very important activities in Taylor County. Access to preferred sites is limited by the amount of available parking for vehicles and boat trailers, adequate ramps for larger boats, and the lack of well designed roads into access sites.
A Agriculture	Relating to agriculture or farming, soils providing great land for crops, and a possible import and export trading network.	 	Agriculture in Taylor County occurs inland not along the coast. The major activities of forestry and cattle ranching are clearly delineated from the uses along the coast. Here the mostly organic soils and limestone substrate are unsuitable for the construction of structures but are desirable for citing of parks.
C Culture	Relating to shared knowledge and values of a society.	 	From industry to recreation, nature provides the setting for understanding the culture of the people in Taylor County. Providing increased opportunities for the people to use the water resources will fortify the character of the County's cultural identity.
E Environment	Concerned with the ecological effects of altering the environment.	 	Protected waters, topography, and natural communities are environmental factors that should be taken into account when considering recreational development.
S Sustainability	Concerned with the sustainable effects of altering the environment.	 	Natural resources should be respected and celebrated with design conditions.



Steinhatchee, Florida Riverfront Visioning Project

Using the GRACES analysis as a basis, the designers analyzed Steinhatchee to aid in the development and implementation of design initiatives. A site visit and a thorough cycling of ideas led to the following compilation of images and information.

Maps of Steinhatchee's topography, flood plain, and relevant features provided valuable cultural background and environmental data.



Images Steinhatchee is a community that derives a great deal of activity and commerce from the Steinhatchee River. The series of images below depict the current state of Steinhatchee as well as possible improvements.



Fishing is a main activity in this community



Vision of clean structure elements



Growth Potential in Fish Market



Fishing is a part of Steinhatchee's Culture



Beautiful and Relaxing Environment



Attempt at Growth within the Community

Traffic - More recently, automobile traffic has increased along pedestrian areas resulting in areas that are dangerous for pedestrians and bikers. This study investigates traffic patterns intended to improve traffic flow and increase safety.

Traffic Study Alternative 1



Traffic Study Alternative 2



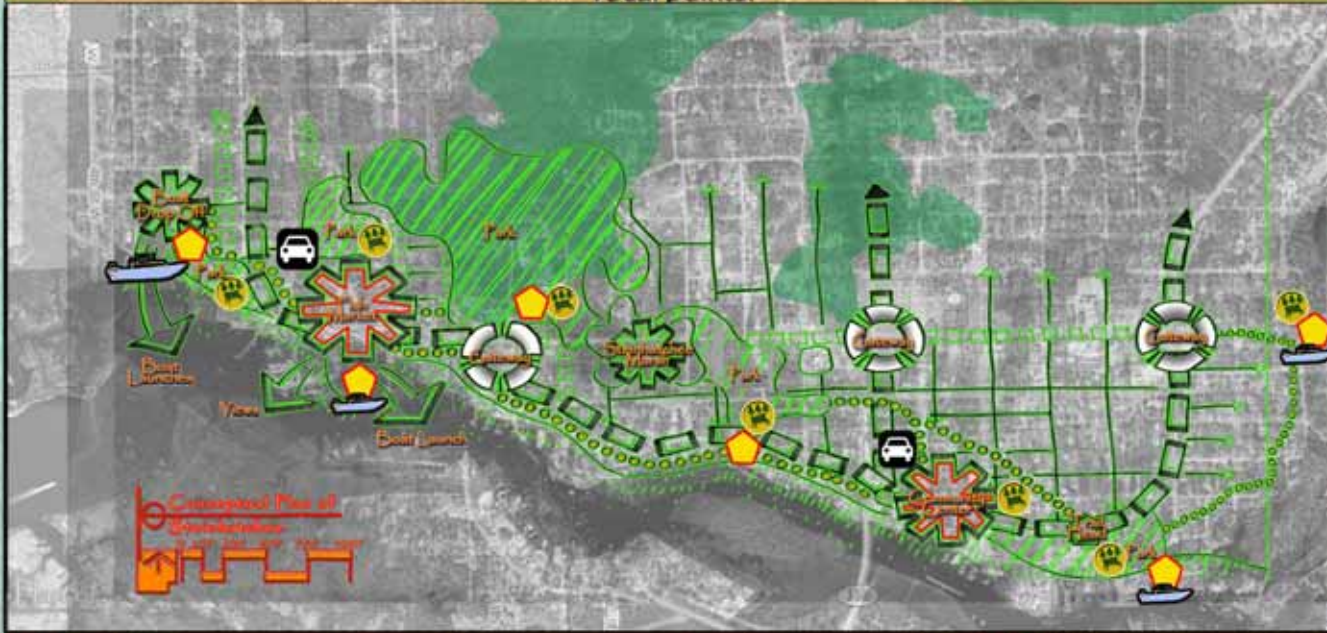
Traffic Study Alternative 3



Major 1-Way Road
Major 2-Way Road



The conceptual masterplan represents an improvement of land conditions through a series of progressive changes that include expansion, enlargement, and refinement. Studies that may strengthen the township of Steinhatchee include traffic, parking, trails, parks, preserved wetlands, and focal points.



THE CHALLENGE: How do we provide a way for Steinhatchee to invite the world to visit while simultaneously maintaining a community sense of ownership and privacy, protect the resources that created the village, and still close the door on over-development?







THE SOLUTION: We will repair the disconnection that has occurred in the economy of the fishing village, improve the sense of community to extend past SR51, and provide Steinhatchee some level of control of their future/destiny by proposing a front porch, a screen door, and a secure door for Steinhatchee's master plan.

Design Considerations and Initiatives

Growth	-Enhance parking and circulation to accommodate larger volumes of people. -Provide opportunities to promote economic expansion.
Recreational	-Present community gathering and activity venues for Steinhatchee citizens of all ages. -Consider proposed Steinhatchee trail and offer features to enrich that event.
Agricultural	-Increase are beautification using native plant species.
Cultural	-Compliment the sense of identity through celebrated landmarks and unique spaces.
Environmental	-Preserve the natural resources and habitats.
Sustainability	-Create low maintenance solutions utilizing adaptive reuse strategies wherever possible.

<p>Gateway</p> <p>Gateways which are connection points that acts as entrances to other areas are important for wayfinding and recognition icons. Areas to place gateways were studied.</p>	<p>Parking</p> <p>As the amount of automobile and boat traffic increase, the available parking spots have decreased. This study investigates ways to increase parking close to recreational areas.</p>	<p>Focal Point</p> <p>There are a few areas within Steinhatchee that are undeveloped. The main areas of concentration where development was most important included the community center and the fish market area.</p>	<p>Boat Launching Site</p> <p>In order to keep up with the growing amount of boats in the area more boat launching sites need to be developed. This study examined areas in which the boat launches could be placed.</p>
<p>Recreational Hub</p> <p>There are quite a few recreational opportunities in Steinhatchee. Locating recreational "hot spots" that already exists and potential areas is the purpose for this study.</p>	<p>Preserved Wetland</p> <p>For the purpose to create, restore, and enhance the area and native species in the area, this study identified areas to be preserved.</p>	<p>Park</p> <p>There are not many parks in the area. To make up for the lack of parks dead end streets are being transitioned into parks. This study examined areas in which the new parks could be placed.</p>	<p>Trail</p> <p>Recreation and relaxation are usually linked by trails. The trails are lacking so this study investigates where to connect existing conditions to proposed conditions.</p>



G		Existing facilities and property are underutilized and parking is limited for anticipated growth
R		Improved recreation equipment and programming to provide activities for a wide range of age groups
A		Access to the water from the community center to fishing spots via county owned riverfront property
C		Cultural activities are limited to small indoor events, while there is a need for outdoor event spaces for large public celebrations
E		Enjoyment of the outdoors is an important part of life in Steinhatchee, but is not currently suited to public use
S		Storm culverts are poorly suited for pedestrian and bicycle traffic - stormwater management can be integrated into the site

Precedents - Visual References & Inspiration



Augusta, GA Amphitheater

Apalachicola, FL Nature Walk

Baton Rouge, LA Street Park



San Antonio, TX Riverwalk



Pt. Lauderdale, FL Riverwalk

SKETCHES & PROCESS WORK



Concept Diagram



Legend

- Existing Building
- Existing Structure
- Open Space
- Existing Access
- View
- ▭ New Building
- ▭ New Structure
- ▭ Design
- ▭ Planting
- ▭ Pedestrian Circulation

Land Use Map

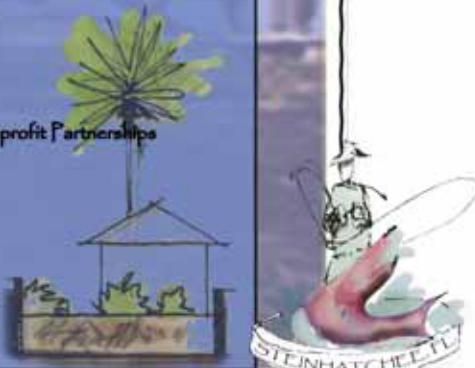


This map demonstrates that the community center is adjacent primarily to residential areas, natural areas, and public water access, which are important design considerations.

Principles for Making Parks Accessible to the Community

1. Make No Small Plans
2. Ensure Effective Community Involvement
3. Design for the Place and Its Users
4. Support Parks through Public, Private, and Nonprofit Partnerships
5. Create Programs for Diverse Users
6. Manage Well and Cultivate a Constituency
7. Make Maintenance Consistent
8. Finagle Funding

Source: Parks, People, Places Making Parks Accessible to the Community, Urban Land Institute



The park will draw many people every day, with a boardwalk that seamlessly weaves together covered stages, play structures, gardens, a community center, a look-out tower, and several open grassy areas for games and picnicking. Together with artist-designed benches and plentiful public art, the park's activity creates a unique fusion for growth, recreation, agriculture, culture, environment, and sustainability.



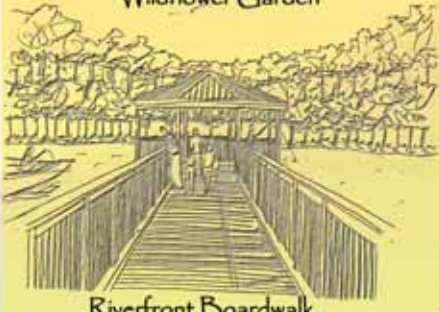
Part 1



Part 2



Wildflower Garden



Riverfront Boardwalk



Conceptual Plan of Steinhatchee



Playground Area



Waterfall



Riverfront Community Park Signage



Aerial View of Boardwalk

GROWTH
The Steinhatchee Riverfront Boardwalk will provide a unique tourist attraction to Steinhatchee Riverfront. The Boardwalk will also be used as an educational tool about the development of the riverfront area.

RECREATION
The Riverfront Park will provide an area of enjoyment for both adults and children. The park has an area for tots as well as older kids, a picnic area, and an interactive water feature.

AGRICULTURAL
The Wildflower Garden will provide an area of peace and beauty. In this garden one will have the opportunity to sit on a boulder or bench and enjoy a book or just take in the wonderful view.

CULTURAL
The Covered Stage and Restroom Area will provide an area for entertainment and relief. These public amenities will be a great addition to the area.

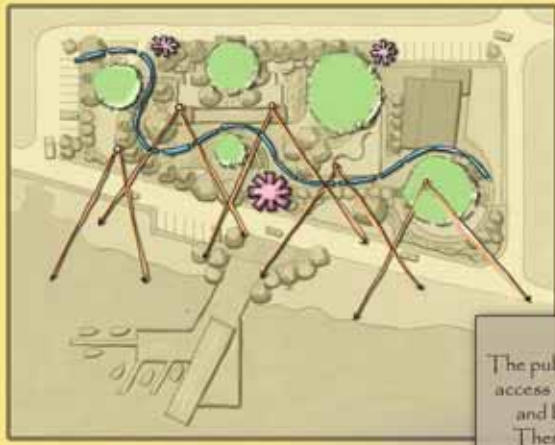
ENVIRONMENTAL
The Bird and Butterfly Garden provides a home for birds and butterflies to be merry and multiply. The Riverfront Tower provides an area for passerbys to stop and watch the beautiful creatures enjoy their lives. The Riverfront Waterfall also provides a tranquil atmosphere.

SUSTAINABILITY
Riverfront Walking and Biking Trail. Locals and tourists may experience beauty and solitude away from the hustle and bustle of the town's traffic on the beautiful walking and biking trail at the Riverfront Boardwalk and the Riverfront Park.



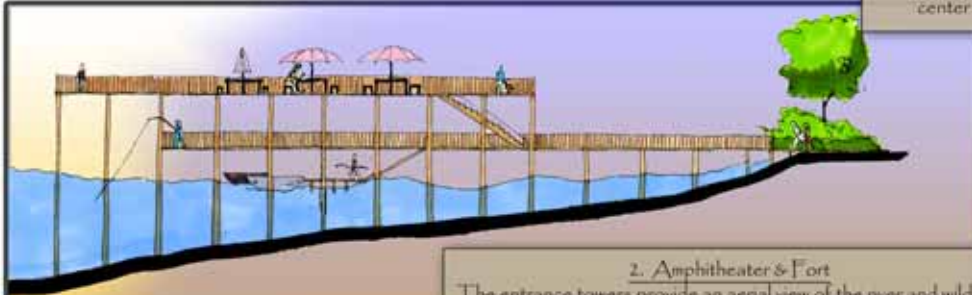
Fluid Boundaries Diagram

This diagram shows four distinct elements that were essential to the development of this master plan option. The blue line represents a fluid or dynamic boundary between the street, water, and community center property. The asterisks represent the primary entrance points and the green circles represent the main activity centers. Large v-shapes represent important views of the river that are enhanced and preserved in the design.



1. Public Pier
The public pier gives all citizens access to the water for fishing and boat rental/parking. There is room for fishing, crabbing, or sponging events, and connects to the community center for festivities.

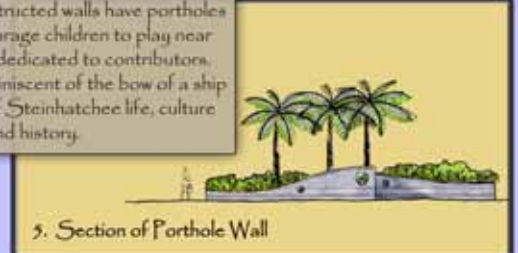
3. The Boardwalk
As viewed from the river, the boardwalk connects the fluid boundary, wrapping around the site. The wealth of greenspace encourages folks to garden, bring a lunch, or just play. Great views of the water abound, and outdoor events can be enjoyed in the amphitheater or the deck.



2. Amphitheater & Fort
The entrance towers provide an aerial view of the river and wildlife, a place to hang out, and public restrooms. The towers nearest the river are connected by an aerial boardwalk (the mezzanine), which also provides extra seating for amphitheater events.



4. & 5. Spring Fountain & Porthole Walls
Iconic "porthole" walls are incorporated in the interactive fountain area. These unique, locally constructed walls have portholes in them that encourage children to play near them, and can be dedicated to contributors. The curves are reminiscent of the bow of a ship - an abstraction of Steinhatchee life, culture and history.



Steinhatchee, Florida Riverfront Visioning Project

Community Center Proposal C

This proposal of the Steinhatchee Community Center uses a form derived from the street grid and the curvilinear river bank. Retaining walls serve to protect in flood situations and offer vertical space to hold plaques and tiles commemorating Steinhatchee's achievements. Native flowering shrubs and trees decorate throughout and open spaces alternate with shelters.



N-S Section



Site Plan



Plan Enlargement



Wide walkways and opportunities to enjoy nature



E-W Section

View of plaques on wall



Example of native planting



Plan Enlargement



Site Perspective



Gateway Park



Site Plan



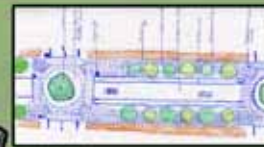
View of proposed On-Street Parking



View of proposed Farmers Market



Perspective Elevation View of proposed gathering Hub around the fountain in front of Farmers Market



Sketch Axon View of Fish Market, proposed Farmers Market, and Ball Park



Perspective View of proposed Farmers Market & Plaza



Section Elevation View of proposed Playground

The Fish Market area has a lot of potential. We've decided to revamp the area and bring in more activities such as a playground, open space for multicultural activities, Farmers Market, and Kiosks/Stands for various entrepreneurs. By bringing in more activities, people will come to the site.



Study Diagrams





Site Plan



Bird's Eye View of Common and Fish Market



Fountain Perspective



Tower and Hub



Studies for Steinhatchee Common

The Common connects the renovated Fish Market with the adaptive reuse boat park, to the north. The connection invites a stroll through the park, a visit to the new civic building, dining at the corner restaurant, checking on the trees at the Skate Park, or picking up a to-go lunch before hoisting the boat for a day of fishing. Not boating today? Shop at the Flea Market or cross the Mall to the Boutiques of Steinhatchee. Pause under the palms by the fountain or browse the Maritime Museum at the Fish Market before ending the afternoon in the Master Demonstration Garden.



Site planning, then is the organization of the external physical environment to accommodate human behavior. It deals with qualities and locations of structures, land, activities, and living things. It creates a pattern of those elements in space and time.

-Kevin Lynch, 1922



Steinhatchee



Local Opportunities

With some of the major issues in Steinhatchee pertaining to river access and parking, designs focused on some strategies to resolve problems and shed light on opportunities for Steinhatchee. The visioning project helps recognize the potential in some areas that should be acquired for preservation and management of the resources available.



Significant Site tower concept

Process work:

The development of all our efforts are made possible not only by countless hours of production but communication among the group members. Hopefully, this process can be expressed by the people of Steinhatchee and the region when realization of these suggestions or alternatives are made. Finally, a memorable Waterfront Community in the close future.



Trails & Boardwalks
Marshes present unique opportunities. They typically attract wildlife and bird species. This design demonstrates how to use the wetland for recreational and ecological purposes.



Above:
The areas highlighted are the places the design group found to have the most potential for design opportunities. Most of these areas are developed with public access considered and alternatives have been prepared.

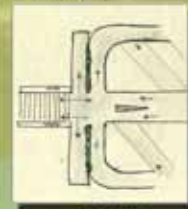
Below:
As Riverside Dr. is the most used road in Steinhatchee, designs encourage landscape, paths, lighting, some amenities and small canoe launches, boat launch, and parks.



Mid-Sized Boat Launch
A high volume boat launch facilitates the access to recreational activities on the water. Circulation within this area is meant to minimize traffic congestion and increase safety. The area is connected by trail to the FishMarket Area and the Community Center by means of Steinhatchee's Historic trail system.



Concept of Circulation at boat drop



Concept of Circulation at boat drop

Street End Parks

These parks are perfect for the smaller vehicle. Both alternatives have the same amenities including Canoe Launch, Restroom, Shower, Water fountain, Picnic and Outdoor Grill



Alt. A: Turn-around



Alt. B: Curved Road



THE FUTURE OF STEINHATCHEE

<p>Historic Preservation</p> 	<p>Economic Growth</p> 	<p>Re-Zoning</p> 	<p>Ecological Health</p> 
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Considerations & Implementation

G	Create public - private partnerships for the future of Steinhatchee. Require all new development to add amenities to the township as a part of the cost to build. Developers shall be asked to provide their own infrastructure as well as public access amenities such as sidewalks or boardwalks where appropriate, street lighting, and public parks. Allow the park requirement to link with the Street End Program, so that the Street End Program can be kick started. Encourage developers to provide the design implementation and construction on County owned land instead of requiring the parks to be contiguous with the new construction.
R	Continue to build on the strength of old Steinhatchee by providing new gathering areas to continue cherished outdoor festivals and add new ones as the places for these new gatherings. Enhance water access for the general public by reactivating the boat drop at the Fish market. Increase public access to the water by identifying and building new hubs on the water or by expanding existing ones. Create alternative boat launches for small boats and canoes through the Street End Program
A	Strengthen the fishing industry by renewing the concept of sales in the renovated Fish Market. Expand the wood products industry by encouraging artisans and light wood workers to set up shop in Steinhatchee. Use the business incubator model suggested below to stimulate growth in the industry.
C	Preserve a portion of the history of Steinhatchee by purchasing and renovating the Fish Market. Designate a part of the Fish Market as a Maritime Museum, featuring the seagoing and sponging history of the town. Continue and expand the tourism industry. Create and strongly recommend an architectural pattern book that includes, massing, height restrictions, materiality and architectural character.
E	Partner with independent conservation organizations to reclaim and maintain the Marshes of Steinhatchee and other endangered natural communities. Use native plants in all new community projects. Recommend pattern books that use green materials for new construction projects
S	In all grant writing include the funding to provide LEED certification for new and renovation projects. When renovating the Fish Market as a Maritime Museum, set aside spaces for business incubation. Small business can have a space rent free for a period of time in exchange for part time care of the museum and boat drop. Use sustainable materials in all new community projects.



Front Porch:
Visitors will be attracted to the new places that will serve as the village's 'front porch' areas. They'll come for a weekend or a week to boat, shop, fish like the marshes, and bird watch. The new gathering places attract the wider community for a variety of day festivals or for an evening.

Screen Door:
Artist in residence or part time residents will find Steinhatchee's screen door a place where new relationships are founded. The renewed Fish Market and the Community Center encourage interaction and forms the basis for the screen door- welcoming those new to the community. People in the the business incubator program may move to become full time residents.

Secure Front Door:
Year round residents now have a plan which can be used to define the future of their community, preserving its natural resources, developing smartly for economic growth and diversity, while enhancing a long cherished way of life.

