

A Comprehensive Maritime Management Master Plan for Brevard County, Florida

Community Vision

To maintain the environmental, economic, and recreational viability of Brevard County waterways

Heritage

Brevard County's waterways are environmental, recreational, and economic resources critical to the well being of the community. These waterways provide unique habitats for a diversity of plant and animal life. Access to these waters provides citizens opportunities including, but not limited to, power-boating, sailing, fishing, paddling, and nature viewing. Commercial and recreational water related businesses have been and continue to be vital to the overall economy of Brevard County.

Vision

Management of Brevard County's waterways should continue to conserve natural systems while enhancing economic and recreational opportunities. Management actions should ensure waterway access for all citizens while encouraging stewardship and promoting safe and courteous boating through education. Restoration and retention of working waterfronts and expansion of recreational and commercial infrastructure will promote economic development that strengthens Brevard County's prosperous water-based economy.

Public Input Process

County personnel have conducted five meetings to obtain public input regarding issues and priorities to be addressed within a maritime management master plan for Brevard County waterways. This document represents a draft compilation of input received from those members of the public who participated in the meetings. The format of this document is similar to that used for comparable master plans. The public input is recorded as plan elements, goals, objectives, and tasks.

It is important to note that this document only contains input that was provided by the public during the five public meetings. Nothing has been added or subtracted. Furthermore, none of the items listed below has been researched or vetted to determine its achievability or applicability. These steps, with Board direction, will occur at a later date. This document is only meant to serve as a tool to initiate further dialog and to move the master planning process forward.

Definitions: Goals, Objectives, and Tasks¹

Goals reflect the general aims of a community. For example: alleviating congestion at a boat ramp (or ramps).

Objectives are more specific sub-elements of goals that usually include measurable, mid-range strategies. Thus, objectives for alleviating congestion at ramps might be to add additional ramp lanes and/or parking.

Tasks are operational actions, usually with the purpose of relatively short-term implementation. Tasks for the objective of adding new ramp lanes might include: (1) making new ramp lanes the highest-priority item in the capital budget; (2) assessing a ramp user fee, with the revenues to be added to a fund to help pay for additional ramp lanes.

¹ Kelly, Eric D. and Barbara Becker. 2000. Adapted from Community planning: an introduction to the comprehensive plan. Island Press: Washington, D.C.

Plan Elements

I. Waterway Environments and Ecosystems

A. GOAL: Improve the quality of interior waterways (embayments)

1. *Objective: Assess the impact of altering the water flow (flushing action) within interior waterways and between these waterways and the Atlantic Ocean*
 - a. Task: Investigate opening locks more frequently and/or for longer durations
 - b. Task: Investigate installing a connecting pipe (or pipes)
 - c. Task: Investigate opening a new pass
 - d. Task: Investigate reestablishing “relief” bridge function for circulation of water
 - e. Task: Investigate increasing flow through dead-end canals by linking
 - f. Task: Investigate the effects of thermal discharge (thermal pollution?) and the loss of these discharges on flora and fauna
 - g. Task: Quantify the effects of marine sanitation device use and illegal discharge
 - h. Task: Investigate the effects of emergency discharge by municipal sewage treatment plants into the Indian River Lagoon (e.g., City of Cape Canaveral, Cocoa Beach)

B. GOAL: Manage waterways to safeguard their ecosystems

1. *Objective: Implement an ecosystem-based management approach (versus a species-based approach)*
 - a. Task: Identify keystone species and communities
 - b. Task: Remove muck from interior waterways (embayments and tributaries)
 - c. Task: Investigate the causes, effects, and solutions of bio-toxins
 - d. Task: Investigate establishment of a mitigation value for mooring fields
 - e. Task: Investigate establishing standards for sediment quality and benthic habitats
 - f. Task: Manage/eliminate invasive species
 - g. Task: Explore control of ballast and bilge water release
 - h. Task: Explore upland control along shoreline, etc.

C. GOAL: Manage land uses to safeguard waterway environments and ecosystems

1. *Objective: Reduce stormwater run-off (sewage and effluents)*
 - a. Task: Manage private/public mosquito impoundments to benefit the environment
 - b. Task: Investigate options for incentive-based voluntary retrofit programs for properties not meeting current storm water and septic requirements
 - c. Task: Investigate establishment of a grant program to upgrade failed septic systems
 - d. Task: Conserve upland buffers to waterways
 - e. Task: Explore the benefits and current regulations concerning shoreline setbacks for driveways and concrete
 - f. Task: Increase the availability and accessibility of hazardous waste collection sites
 - g. Task: Investigate the impact of freshwater canal outflows

- h. Task: Investigate Best Management Practices for lawn care and fertilizer application including the effectiveness of programs such as the University of Florida's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program

D. GOAL: Foster awareness and stewardship of coastal environments and ecosystems

1. Objective: Support, expand and increase awareness of existing education programs

- a. Task: Institute branding to promote sustainable waterway use and preservation
- b. Task: Implement marine science programs for kids (e.g., day trips to the lagoon)
- c. Task: Institutionalize education within County school system
- d. Task: Increase the use of hazardous waste collection sites (increase their availability and accessibility)
- e. Task: Promote awareness of problems associated with fertilizers and benefits of Best Management Practices
- f. Task: Educate boaters on their impacts to water quality and other environmental factors
- g. Task: Promote sustainable fisheries management practices (e.g. catch and release)
- h. Task: Improve enforcement of existing regulations regarding check pump-outs / bilges
- i. Task: Improve enforcement of existing regulations regarding environmental damage by users
- j. Task: Improve coordination of efforts between all agencies with an interest in water quality issues.

II. Waterfront and Waterway

A. GOAL: Engage all relevant planning and regulatory agencies to find solutions to access issues in a regional perspective

B. GOAL: Increase ramp, marina, dry stack, and managed mooring field options

1. Objective: Add ramps and expand the parking capacity of existing ramps where need is indicated by all data

- a. Task: Complete boating access study to evaluate current needs
- b. Task: Evaluate feasibility of ramp use fees
- c. Task: Investigate the feasibility of installing restroom facilities at existing ramps

2. Objective: Increase transient dockage for vessels at restaurants and other points of interest along waterways

- a. Task: Evaluate the effects of increased waterfront access on boating patterns, including nighttime traffic

3. Objective: Pursue the establishment of several managed mooring fields throughout the county

C. GOAL: Preserve and increase waterfront destination opportunities accessible by land and by water (e.g., parks, piers, restaurants, and “resort-type” destination)

1. *Objective: Acquire land to increase waterfront access opportunities*
2. *Objective: Strengthen incentives for retaining public access (discourage redevelopment that reduces public access)*
 - a. Task: Explore no-net-loss policy for public access
 - b. Task: Investigate the applicability of water-dependent facility overlay districts and classifications.

D. GOAL: Retain working waterfronts, including commercial fishing outlets, boatyards, and marinas

1. *Objective: Develop policy tools to preserve waterway heritage and cultural features*
 - a. Task: Explore zoning and access limits
 - b. Task: Explore more effective coastal and waterfront development practices
 - c. Task: Provide incentives for privately held public access points
 - d. Task: Investigate including waterfront restaurants with dockage in working waterfront designation
 - e. Task: Investigate vessel traffic corridors to encourage transport by water to land based businesses
2. *Objective: Explore funding needed to preserve waterway heritage*
 - a. Task: Promote capital reinvestment – private/government grants
 - b. Task: Maximize utilization of available funds
 - c. Task: Improve coordination of waterfront purchases
 - d. Task: Inventory historical, cultural, heritage, public access sites
 - e. Task: Determine the economic impact of “historical” water-oriented uses

III. Navigation

A. GOAL: Promote Safe Navigation

1. *Objective: Remove navigational hazards*
 - a. Task: Streamline process to identify, investigate, and remove derelict vessels
 - b. Task: Maintain waterway channels through dredging and by posting and maintenance of private aids to navigation
2. *Objective: Increase awareness of navigational hazards*
 - a. Task: Improve signage related to navigation and safety zones
 - b. Task: Mark shoals and environmentally sensitive areas
 - c. Task: Produce, update, and distribute navigational information in all available media

IV. Boating Safety

A. GOAL: Safe and Proper Operation

1. Objective: Improved courtesy and seamanship skills

- a. Task: Provide incentives to encourage education (insurance discounts, registration discounts)
- b. Task: Target educational programs to newcomers who may not be aware of local boating conditions
- c. Task: Work with boat dealers to promote educational opportunities for clients and the general boating public
- d. Task: Partner with the marine industry for the development of educational materials
- e. Task: Better advertisement of educational opportunities for boaters
- f. Task: Alert boaters to navigational hazards especially fixed objects not visible at night
- g. Task: Inventory available educational materials and sources
- h. Task: Develop county-wide education task force
- i. Task: Improve education of non-motorized boat operators

2. Objective: Increase coordination between and maximize effectiveness of law enforcement agencies

- a. Task: Evaluate current law enforcement strategies and identify needs and appropriate priorities
- b. Task: Improve geographic allocation of law enforcement resources between USCG/ FWCC/Sheriff/Cities
- c. Task: Establish city and county liaisons to state law enforcement
- d. Task: Develop a central dispatch for law enforcement agencies
- e. Task: Cross train officers to familiarize them with regulations specific to a given area
- f. Task: Encourage establishment of a law enforcement network that meets regularly
- g. Task: Promote use of new GPS emergency alert technologies
- h. Task: Increase compensation for law enforcement officers to promote retention
- i. Task: Investigate expanding the role of the county Sheriff's department to fill gaps left by other agencies
- j. Task: Encourage law enforcement to take a more "boater-friendly" approach, especially when dealing with transient boaters
- k. Task: Increase safety equipment courtesy checks (USCG Aux., etc.)

3. Objective: Increase enforcement of existing regulations

4. Objective: Improve access to safe harbor during adverse weather events

V. Intergovernmental /Agency Coordination

A. GOAL: Coordinate Planning Efforts with Local, Regional, and State Governments

1. *Objective: Improve the speed of information flow within and between agencies*
 - a. Task: Implement one stop permitting arrangement for infrastructure
 - b. Task: Produce guidance material for people trying to obtain permits to include what information will need to be gathered and estimated costs for the information
 - c. Task: Establish a county permit coordinator to specialize in marine permitting
 - d. Task: Simplify the overall permitting process
2. *Objective: Maintain consistency with county and municipality generated comprehensive plans*
 - a. Task: Modify existing Comprehensive Plan to encourage retention of working waterfronts
3. *Objective: Improve consistency of ordinances and regulations pertaining to waterway use between jurisdictions*
 - a. Task: Establish consistent design and placement regulations for signage
 - b. Task: Apply Manatee Protection Plan equally statewide
4. *Objective: Implement a marine task force to aid in local and regional coordination efforts and to help implement the Comprehensive Maritime Management Master Plan. The task force should include representatives from all agencies with law enforcement jurisdiction on Brevard's waterways as well as from recognized advocacy organizations, stakeholder groups and municipalities.*
5. *Objective: Increase awareness of homeland security policies and activities*

VI. Science-Based Management

A. GOAL: Maritime management actions should be data driven

1. *Objective: Determine demand for water-based recreation and where use is occurring*
 - a. Task: Estimate carrying capacity of waterways and facilities including commercial uses and facilities
 - b. Task: Identify demographics of user population and summarize trip profiles of users (where users go and why)
 - c. Task: Forecast user population with changes in regional total population
 - d. Task: Evaluate and consider changes in use patterns as regulatory changes have occurred
2. *Objective: Promote the use of GIS technology in plan development and implementation*
 - a. Task: Incorporate bathymetry into conservation regulations

3. Objective: Base priorities as identified by current, complete data and local input

For Example: Policy decisions

Dredging

Species impact

Water quality “hot spots”

Marine facility siting

- a. Task: Partner with universities and the Cooperative Extension Service to obtain relevant data

B. GOAL: Encourage community based “peer review” of science-based rules and regulations

1. Objective: Increase involvement of the existing Marine Advisory Committee in determining the need for and application of relevant studies