



Operation Kings Bay Shield

Evolving with change to improve the Kings Bay's environment and community

Kings Bay Evolving Issues



Visitors and Operators:

- Increasing visitation from boaters, paddlers, snorkelers and other recreationists
- Increasing commercial operations in sensitive and residential areas
- Increasing manatee aggregations in hot spot visitor areas

Jurisdictional / Enforcement:

- Lack of jurisdictional transparency: Who is in charge how, of what and where?
- Lack of collaboration among Law Enforcement entities
- Increased violations related to boating, manatee violations, other wildlife disturbance, habitat disturbance.
- Other issues pertaining to unsustainable eco-tourism, mooring and anchoring, littering and disturbance of residential areas.

Engaging jurisdictional stakeholders

Who

- US Coast Guard
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- City of Crystal River
- Citrus County
- Citrus County Sheriff's Department

How and Why are they being engaged?

- I - By initiating email contact among the six stakeholders sharing the following:
 - 1) The goals and objectives of Operation Kings Bay Shield.
 - 2) Background information on identified issues and the role of US Fish and Wildlife Service in Kings Bay.
 - 3) A questionnaire (provided by email) on their background information, their roles in Kings Bay, and expectations of Operation Kings Bay Shield.
 - 4) Essential information pertaining to the issues in Kings Bay while asking for their sharing of information as well.
 - 5) Sharing of comparable cases at state and nationwide as part of sharing process.

- II - By inviting them to preliminary meetings between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other stakeholders to make them feel part of the management of national wildlife refuge areas (e.g. Manatee Mid-Season Coordination Meeting with Tour Operators)

- III - By setting up stakeholders meeting(s) among the six stakeholders to:
 - 1) Share all jurisdictional aspects of each agency/department within Kings Bay
 - 2) Layout what each agency/department is currently doing within their jurisdiction in Kings Bay
 - 3) Identify what each agency/department is planning on doing in the future in Kings Bay
 - 4) to collectively predict what the future in King Bay may look like under the current trends
 - 5) Brainstorm strategies among all stakeholders to:
 - a) develop a communications plan among the stakeholders
 - b) identify new potential solutions to issues related to safety of visitors and wildlife
 - c) identify where other stakeholders could assist or be engaged on specific strategies

The six stakeholders and their interests

- US Coast Guard - Led by procedural mandates to provide boaters and swimmers safety, while providing LE presence.
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission - Led by procedural mandates to regulate and enforce Kings Bay for boaters and swimmers safety, while also assisting with monitoring and research of fish and wildlife.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service - Led by procedural mandates to provide protection to the FL manatee and its critical habitat via LE, permits and increasing awareness efforts.
- City of Crystal River – Improving and looking after the Kings Bay community, residential interests, while fomenting tourism and enforcing City residential and other codes.
- Citrus County – Enforcing county codes and fomenting tourism, while marketing for it.
- Citrus County Sherriff's Department - Led by procedural mandates to ensure human safety.

NRLI Competencies, skills, tools, techniques and strategies used



- **Understanding their positions and Interests** – By distinguishing between issues, positions and interests of each stakeholder, I strategized my approach with some of the stakeholders individually, while meeting some of their expectations in all three areas of the triangle of satisfaction.
- **Designing Meeting Agendas** – Developing stakeholders meeting agenda with stakeholders collectively via email communication prior to stakeholders meeting.
- **Interview skills (focus group)** via email (questionnaire) – Accomplished in the form of a questionnaire only to bring common ground on overall vision for the stakeholder's meeting, while getting to know each other a little before meeting in person.
- **Timeline exercise** – I shared a highly elaborate timeline of the USFWS history in Kings Bay since 1983, while asking stakeholders to bring some **milestones** within their own agencies related to their roles in Kings Bay. The timeline exercise will be finalized once all stakeholders fill in their respective milestones during meeting.
- **Sharing of information** by email to collectively determine what is **objective criteria** to be used during the stakeholders meeting(s).
- **Framing the issues** – When first addressing my intentions and the objectives of the meeting, I framed the issues focusing solely on areas of **common ground** that affect all six stakeholders in Kings Bay, while making all of them feel as part of the equation, while preventing excluding anyone from any areas of concern.
- Other **facilitative tools** and techniques: Success criteria, knowledge gathering, sharing visions that inspire new ones, gap analysis, V-R-C Process, reframing problems, forced field analysis, mapping road to agreement, critical path brainstorming, who/what/when brainstorming, troubleshooting brainstorming, decision go-around.
- **Other techniques**: Ranking with wall cards, brain-writing, and highly considering using blue world/yellow world/green world.

Kings Bay Jurisdictional Timeline

- 1975 State designates Blue Spring as a state manatee sanctuary (property purchased in 1972). (This was the first protected manatee area.)
- 1975 On December 16, 1975, FWS proposes critical habitat for the Florida manatee. Proposed areas include Crystal River and other important manatee areas, such as Blue Spring.
- 1976 On September 24, 1976, FWS designates critical habitat for the Florida manatee.
- 1978 In July 1978, State adopts the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act designating the entire state as a "refuge and sanctuary" for manatees. The Act provides for the regulation of boat speeds in 13 winter aggregation areas, including Crystal River.
- 1979 On January 23, 1979, FWS proposes a rule for the purpose of establishing manatee protection areas.
- 1979 On March 19, 1979, the State adopts manatee speed zone regulations for Crystal River.
- 1979 On May 15, 1979, FWS publishes special public entry and use regulations to restrict boat speeds in the Chassahowitzka NWR to "minimize potential harm to manatees."
- 1979 On October 22, 1979, FWS adopts a rule for the purpose of establishing manatee protection areas.
- 1980 FWS requests funds from the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee to acquire 42 acres of islands in Kings Bay, Crystal River to protect manatees. Plans include administering the islands as part of Chassahowitzka NWR.
- 1980 The Marine Mammal Commission funds the development of a manatee conservation plan for the Crystal River area.
- 1980 On January 11, 1980, FWS establishes on an emergency basis a manatee refuge in Kings Bay, Crystal River, Florida to prevent manatee harassment by divers and swimmers. (The area had

Kings Bay Jurisdictional Timeline

- 1980 On February 8, 1980, FWS proposes rules to permanently establish a manatee protection area in Kings Bay.
- 1980 On February 22, 1980, FWS renews special public entry and use regulations to restrict boat speeds in the Chassahowitzka NWR to “minimize potential harm to manatees.”
- 1980 On August 12, 1980, FWS proposes to establish three manatee sanctuaries in Kings Bay, Crystal River (the Banana Island, Sunset Shores, and Magnolia Springs sanctuaries).
- 1980 On November 12, 1980, FWS finalizes a rule establishing three manatee sanctuaries in Kings Bay, Crystal River.
- 1981 The 1980 appropriation request and Declaration of Taking (condemnation) are not approved. As a result, FWS leases bay bottoms and posts three sanctuaries. (The Nature Conservancy [TNC] obtains a purchase option for the islands and FWS indicates its willingness to enter into a management agreement to provide refuge protection for the islands through Chassahowitzka NWR.)
- 1981 On February 23, 1981, the State adopts additional manatee speed zone regulations in Kings Bay.
- 1982 TNC purchases the islands with plans to lease them to FWS.
- 1983 FWS purchases the islands from TNC and establishes the Crystal River NWR. FWS negotiates with present land owner for purchase of bay bottoms.
- 1984 FWS completes an EA and plans for site acquisition and a facility on Kings Bay for a refuge headquarters.
- 1985 The manatee conservation plan “Proposed Research/Management Plan for Crystal River Manatees” is published. The plan includes management recommendations for the Crystal River NWR.
- 1985 On December 4, 1985, the State adopts additional manatee speed zone regulations in Kings Bay.

Kings Bay Jurisdictional Timeline

- 1986 FWS files condemnation proceedings to acquire bay bottoms necessary for posting manatee sanctuary areas.
- 1988 FWS acquires 13-acres of bay bottoms through condemnation proceedings.
- 1990 Public meetings held on July 11 and 12, 1990 to solicit input for the new manatee interpretative center on Kings Bay.
- 1990 In May 1990, FWS prepares a preliminary report citing incompatible uses of the refuge, citing need to reduce impacts related to boating, swimming, and diving. The report recommends increasing the number of enforcement officers and constructing a visitor's center.
- 1991 Chassahowitzka NWR Complex headquarters moved to Kings Bay in July.
- 1991 FWS publishes special public entry and use regulations to continue restricting boat speeds in the Chassahowitzka NWR to "minimize potential harm to manatees."
- 1991 On November 15, 1991, new sanctuaries were added to Kings Bay through an emergency rule.
- 1992 The National Audubon Society, The Wilderness Society, Defenders of Wildlife, et al. file suit, contending incompatible uses are occurring on FWS refuges, including at Crystal River.
- 1992 On January 27, 1992, the State adopts additional manatee speed zone regulations in Kings Bay.
- 1992 On February 19, 1992, FWS renews sanctuary designations through an emergency rule.
- 1993 FWS settles with litigants, agrees to increase monitoring, education, and law enforcement efforts to insure that any level of recreational use is compatible with refuge purposes. FWS also agrees to prepare a public use plan, prepare compatibility determinations, hire additional staff, and increase law enforcement efforts.
- 1993 On January 22, 1993, FWS renews sanctuary designations through an emergency rule.
- 1993 On May 13, 1993, FWS proposes to establish sanctuaries (same sanctuaries designated through emergency rules).

Kings Bay Jurisdictional Timeline



- 1994 FWS adopts public use plan to address recreational uses.
- 1994 On May 12, 1994, FWS finalizes rule establishing additional sanctuaries.
- 1996 Crystal River NWR partners with Homosassa Springs Nature Attraction to develop a manatee education center at the Attraction.
- 1997 On November 26, 1997, FWS adds new sanctuary near Three Sisters Springs through an emergency rule. The new sanctuary is proposed as a final rule.
- 1998 On October 16, 1998, FWS finalizes rule for seventh Kings Bay sanctuary.
- 2002 On November 14, 2002, the State adopts additional manatee speed zone regulations in Kings Bay.
- 2009 Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) petitions FWS for rule-making banning swim-with interactions.
- 2010 On November 9, 2010, FWS adopts Kings Bay-wide manatee refuge pursuant to an emergency rule-making.
- 2011 On June 11, 2011, FWS proposes Kings Bay-wide manatee refuge rule.
- 2012 On March 16, 2012, FWS adopts Kings Bay-wide manatee refuge rule.

Outcomes:



- This Practicum has sparked participation interest from some of the six stakeholders in attending and getting directly involved in annual FWS planned meetings with many stakeholders, including the Kings Bay tour operators community.

**2016 Tour Operator Mid-Season Coordination Meeting
Agenda
2/2/2016, 6:00 pm-8:00 pm
Plantation Inn (Magnolia Room) Crystal River, Florida**

6:00 – 6:10 Welcome and Introductions and Agenda Structure - Ivan Vicente

6:05 – 6:25 Refuge Updates –Ivan Vicente

- Volunteer Program Improvements
- Manatee Numbers in Citrus
- Visitor Reports 2015
- King Spring, Jurassic, House and Hunters Springs (expectations)
- Manatee Manners Multi-language versions
- New tour operators, guides and captains (USFWS expectations)
- USFWS observations on SUP holders' in-water dynamics

6:25 – 6:45 Three Sisters Springs (TSS) – Andrew Gude

- Brief Update on draft Upland EA (proposed facilities, etc...)
- Temporary Closures vs. Open Days, so far
- Status of In-water Environmental Assessment, and expectations
- Research

6:45 – 7:00 Updates on Commercial Permits for Guiding (SUPs) – Ivan Vicente

- King Spring year round permit, Three Sisters warm season permit, Combined permit
- Updated SUP conditions

7:00 – 7:10 Open Discussion on USFWS topics – All Participants

7:10 - 7:15 Welcome and Introductions by US Coast Guard staff

7:15 – 7:20 Marine Casualty Reporting

7:20 – 7:30 Credentialing and Drug Testing

7:30 – 7:45 Vessel Inspection Requirements

7:45 – 8:00 Open Discussion on USCG topics – All participants

OPERATION MANATEE SHIELD



- US Coast Guard
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

Operation Manatee Shield was initiated by the U.S. Coast Guard, and stemmed from some of the steps in my Practicum regarding Operation Kings Bay Shield.

Goals of Operation Manatee Shield:

The primary goal was to protect manatees and boaters during Easter weekend, through a joint Law Enforcement patrol effort involving FWC, USCG and USFWS. The secondary goal was to further prevent other crimes including, but not limited to illegal fishing, safe boating, and other potential violations on the water.

Operations:

Assigning officers to provide manatee protection patrols through use of radar and other means, while conducting vessel stops and boarding when necessary.

Results:

Over 150 contacts were made by all the officers combined over the 3 days. Over 30 citations were written collectively. Some vessel statistical data was recorded for motorized and non-motorized vessels including paddlers not having PFDs on vessels, other unsafe boating practices, borderline violations and several manatee violations.

Outcomes:



- The idea of shadowing a “Community Development District” emerged, during a meeting with reps from City of CR and USFWS. The concept is still under an exploration phase spearheaded by FWS and City of Crystal River, who has already contracted a maritime law firm to further explore details of this alternate solution.

Yet to accomplish:



- Create current jurisdictional layout of jurisdiction / LE in Kings Bay.
- Develop Communications Plan among the six stakeholders
- Identify and agree to new jurisdictional strategies in Kings Bay

Lessons Learned:



- Empathic listening (and reading) has been an essential constant during the multi-stakeholders process.
- Building a cohort of trust with LE agencies has inspired new attitudes I didn't think I had.
- A well planned and anticipated timeline can serve as much more than it being just a timeline.

“AHHa moment” – How Operation Manatee Shield and Community Development District discussions evolved.

What has worked well so far...

- Timeline exercise as an email information sharing starting point.
- Participation from stakeholders in USFWS coordinated meetings with community and tour operators and what that has led to so far.

What would I do differently...

- I would have started the email communication process much sooner.
- I could have provided a better introduction of myself and my personal roles with USFWS in my original emails to the group.
- Offer my availability in joining them in some of their roles to understand their position better

What could other Fellows learn from this...

- Even a premature idea from someone else may be significant enough to change how your practicum flows. Don't ignore premature responses.

Next Steps...

- Upon the upcoming report from maritime law firm concerning the potential establishment of a “community development district” for Kings Bay, set up meeting(s) among all six stakeholders at Crystal River sometime in June 2016.
- Complete a first draft of the existing jurisdictional layout of Kings Bay using the information that the stakeholders have provided (including the Timeline exercise results), so that a final draft can be finalized among all the stakeholders during a meeting(s) with all six parties involved.
- Set up a separate meeting(s) with the stakeholders to create a communications plan among the six stakeholders in addressing the identified existing issues in Kings Bay; including a future scenario communication plan that may involve other non-jurisdictional stakeholders.

Professional impacts ahead

- I have lots to accomplish still with this practicum in order for me to reach a conclusion on what this may lead to professionally; but one thing is for sure: It's too late to turn my back on this, for this very likely will determine the future layout of most enforcing stakeholders of Kings Bay.