

# **Organizing Community Stakeholders to Discuss the Emergency Dredging of Matanzas Pass**

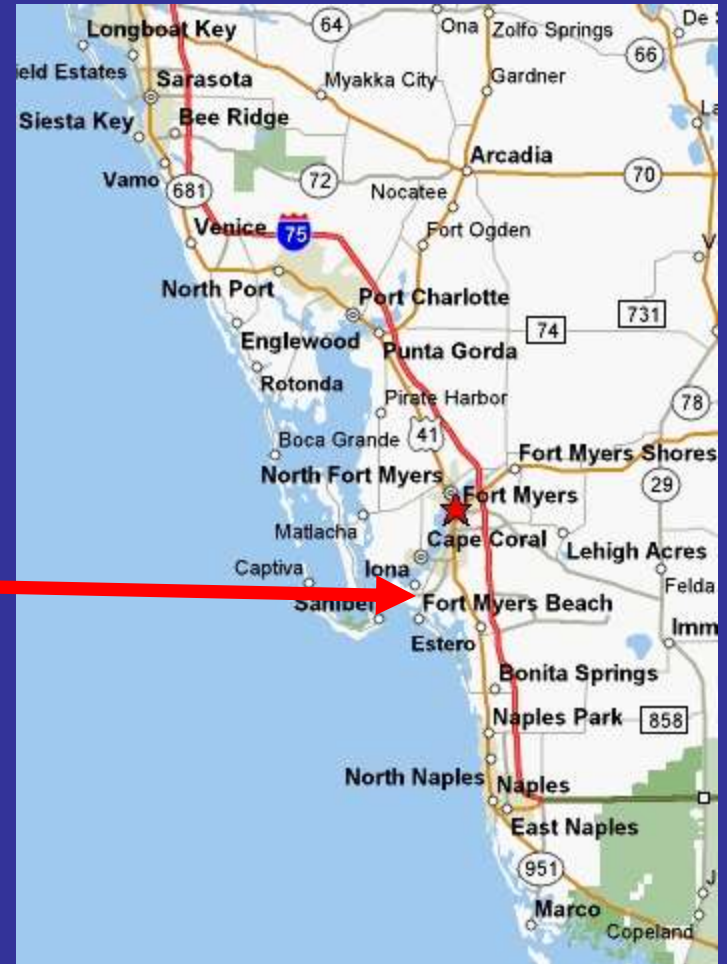
**Bryan Fluech, Florida Sea Grant**

**Joanne Semmer, Ostego Bay Foundation**



**NRLI 2008**

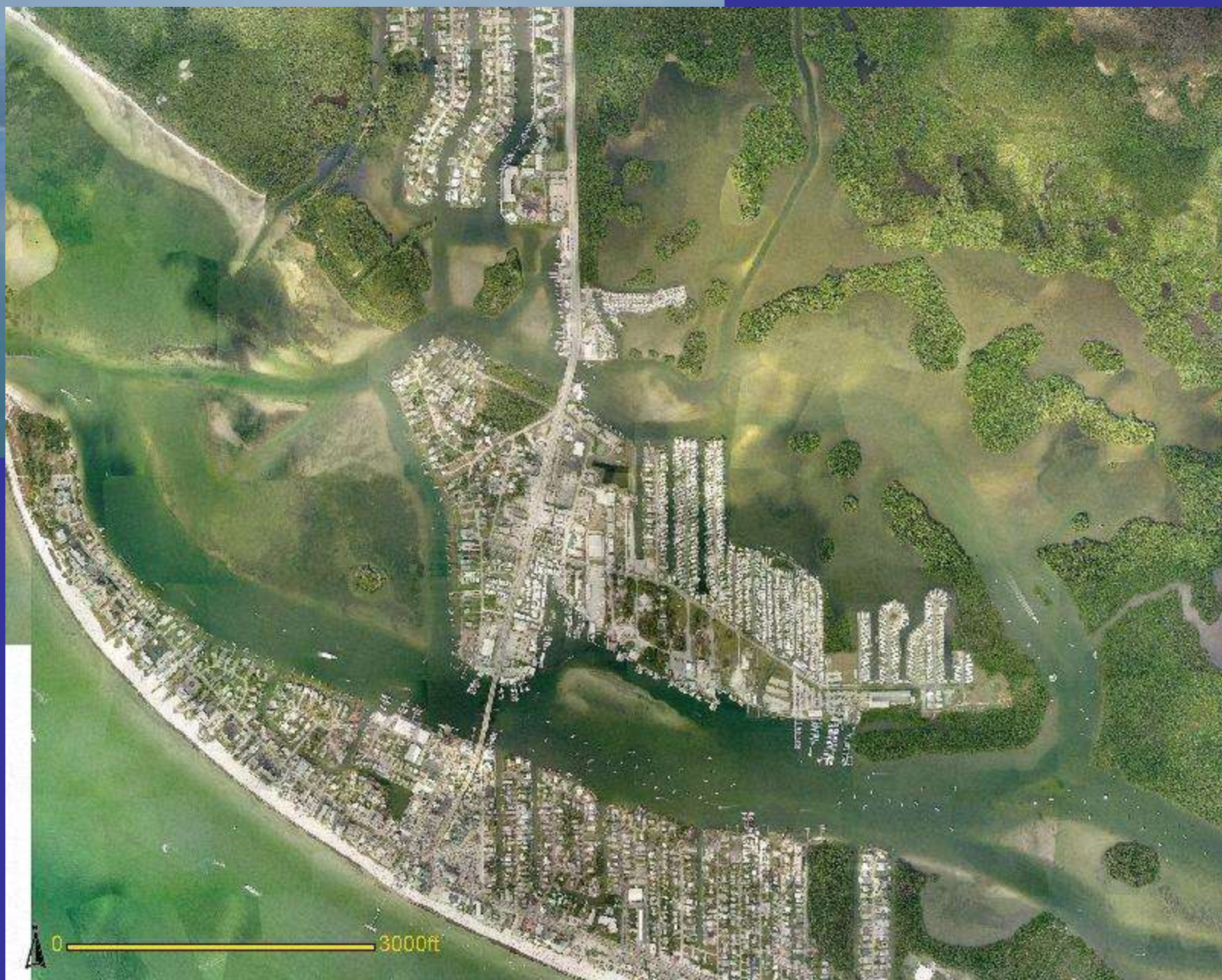














# SITUATION ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT MATRIX

FNRLI – Spring 2008

ISSUE: Whether to do an emergency dredge in a federal shipping channel (Matanzas Pass/ Bowditch Point) in Lee County					
STAKEHOLDERS	POSITIONS	INTERESTS	POWER	CONTEXT	OTHER?
Army Corp of Engineers	Responsible for maintenance of federal channels; Want to know if this project is high enough priority compared to other related projects	Navigation and safety of users is main interest, but their budget is tight. They have to be very selective on which projects they fund	Extremely powerful- makes ultimate decisions whether pass is dredged or not (1)	Long history of maintaining federal channels	
Commercial Fishermen (Shrimping Fleet)	Are in favor of having the pass dredged so they can get their shrimp boats out of Bowditch Point	Vessels are hitting bottom (bumping) at low tide and/or they can't get out at all; this can have a negative financial impact; also safety concerns for crew and lengthy time to fill out required paperwork when from Coast Guard when incidents occur	Part of a regional fisheries group; SE Fisheries lobbyists-relatively high power (0-1)	<del>Shrimping</del> boats have been at this port since the 50's	Part of the largest <del>shrimping</del> fleet in GOM
Lee County Government	In favor of having an emergency dredge; has limited funds	Economic and Environmental sustainability of county; wants to protect economic interests while maintaining environmental protection and safety; limited budget	Very powerful: County will be the one to apply for federal permit to get pass dredged whether for an emergency or maintenance dredge (1)	Commissioner Judah is well connected and known; could help with policy and influence other politicians to push this project forward	
U.S. Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Bch	Interested in point being dredged; safety and security is their main concern	Homeland security and emergency operations/ border patrol; have a station near point	Have authority over signage/ navigable waters in federal channel (1)	Very Credible, a lot of influence; respected by local community	
West Coast Inland Navigation District	In favor of emergency dredge and maintenance dredge; multi-county special taxing district, assists in the planning and implementation of waterway projects that promote safe navigation and the enjoyment of water-based activities	Chuck <del>Ustowski</del> feels pass not being dredged is a real safety issue. Is willing to help finance dredging but needs the County to get permission from the ACOE	Very politically connected and powerful; (1)	Long history of implementing dredging projects in multi-county region	Thinks permission is the real issue; not money
Big M Casino Boat	Want point dredged to be able to access the port and get their vessels offshore	Business depends on people gambling on their ship; ship hits bottom at low tides; damages ship and affect business (already have had to discontinue 8ft draft vessel due to bumping incidents; also worried C.G. vessels might not be able to get out of pass if rescue ever needed)	Relatively low compared to other groups. Privately owned, but owner is vocal (0)	Carry over 100,000 passengers a year and employ 110-120 locals.	
Key West Ferry	Interested in point being dredged to access port and get ship (100 ft long) offshore to travel to Key West	Business depends on number of people who take the ship; if sedimentation continues, could be a problem to get their ship into pass	Relatively low compared to other groups. Privately owned, but owner is vocal (0)	Vessels have not hit bottom yet, but are concerned. Their schedule is not flexible; people book months in advance; contribute to local economy	
Town of Ft. Myers Beach	In favor of dredging project; interested in spoil for beach re-nourishment	Economic and Environmental sustainability of city; realize the dredging of channel could have potential positive and/or negative impacts	Local municipality; dredging project would directly impact local businesses access for its citizens.	Pass is within the town	At the time of this practicum, the town was without a natural resource manager
Recreational Boaters	Could be in favor of point being dredged if it means open access	Interested in access to open water/ other boating destinations; larger boats especially sailboats could have trouble getting out of point	Not well organized unless the Marine Industries Association decides to step in to represent them (-1)	Pass is popular access point for many recreational boaters; 7 marinas along channel	
Other waterfront business owners	Could be in favor of point being dredged if it means open access	Interested in access to open water/ other boating destinations;	Not well organized unless the Marine Industries Association decides to step in to represent them (-1)	Several marinas, restaurants, hotels, fish houses along channel; Major contributions to local economy	

# Matanzas Pass Dredging Proposal Meeting

***Your Input is  
Needed!***



August 6th, 2 P.M.  
700 Fishermans Wharf, Ft Myers Beach

You are invited to discuss the proposed dredging of the Matanzas Pass Channel from Bowditch Point to the south end of San Carlos Island. Individuals and groups who use the channel can provide comments to and ask questions of the Army Corp of Engineers about the implementation of an emergency dredge in the pass. Topics of discussion will include:

- 1) **Safety and Navigation**
- 2) **Economic Vitality**
- 3) **Homeland Security**
- 4) **Placement of Dredge Material**

Meeting facilitators will provide a brief history on the channel's past dredging projects.

If you use Matanzas Pass for recreation or commercial purposes, please plan to attend. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Contact Bryan Fluech at 239-417-6310 x204 or Joanne Semmer at 239-470-4993 for more information.



## **Matanzas Pass Dredging Stakeholder Meeting**

**Purpose:** For stakeholders to provide comments to the Army Corp of Engineers regarding the need to conduct an emergency dredge of Matanzas Pass from Bowditch Point to the south end of San Carlos Island and discuss relevant issues relating to the proposed dredging project in a roundtable format.

**Audience:** Any individuals and groups who utilize Matanzas Pass

**When:** Wednesday August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 P.M.

**Where:** 700 Fishermans Wharf, Fort Myers Beach, FL

### **Agenda**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>2:00</b> | <b>Welcome, Meeting Overview</b><br>Bryan Fluech, Florida Sea Grant Extension & Joanne Semmer, Ostego Bay Foundation |
| <b>2:10</b> | <b>Self Introductions</b><br>Stakeholders  |
| <b>2:15</b> | <b>Dredging History of Matanzas Pass</b><br>Joanne Semmer  |
| <b>2:30</b> | <b>Stakeholder Concerns/Comments to ACOE</b><br>Stakeholders   |
| <b>3:00</b> | <b>ACOE explanation of emergency/ non emergency dredging procedures</b><br>ACOE representative                       |
| <b>3:15</b> | <b>Break</b>   |
| <b>3:30</b> | <b>Facilitated Discussion on Need for Emergency and Maintenance Dredging</b><br>Bryan Fluech & Joanne Semmer         |
| <b>4:00</b> | <b>Meeting Evaluations/ Adjourn</b>  |

This meeting is being sponsored by the Ostego Bay Foundation and Florida Sea Grant





Can you tell who is  
missing from the  
meeting????



The ARMY CORP  
of ENGINEERS!!!





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# Meeting Outcomes

- Stakeholder concerns documented
- Clarification of emergency dredge vs. maintenance dredge
- Permission, not money identified as the main issue
- Feeling of solidarity among group
  - Political influence needed
  - Proactive vs. reactive
  - County Commissioner contact information provided
- Appreciation for meeting addressed
- Local newspaper coverage
- Promise of follow-up





# After the Meeting

- Follow-up with the ACOE
  - Communication wasn't there
  - BIG apology!!
- Point person identified with contact information for meeting participants
- Clarification about permit application
  - Must come from County
- Summary of meeting with contact information sent to meeting participants
- *The Town Council of Fort Myers Beach and the Lee County Commissioners have since adopted a resolution to support the dredging project.*

# NRLI Tools Implemented

- Stakeholder identification
- Agenda planning
- Facilitated discussion with ground rules
- Active listening
- Honesty, accountability





# What we learned

- Always follow up with an email **AND** phone call to confirm the main speaker you've invited actually shows up!
- FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTABILITY
- Its harder than it looks to not let a meeting participant try and dominate the meeting's discussion.
- It helps to have a different person writing when trying to facilitate a discussion.

**Questions,  
Comments???**

**Thank You!!!!**

