

# Coastal Currents

Florida Coastal Management Program E-News—Winter 2009  
A PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## Florida's Ambitious Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail

By Doug Alderson

On a warm September day in 2008, Matt Keene, Matt Gallagher and Jodi Eller embarked on the 1600-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (CT). Battling heavy winds, waves, bugs and storms, they dreamed of becoming the first kayakers to paddle the new coastal trail that hugs Florida's entire coastline. The three adventurers are the type of long-distance users trail originators envisioned when they began to scout and map the trail in 2004. Over the next three years, the FDEP's Office of Greenways & Trails planned and mapped the CT from the Alabama state line in the west to the Georgia border in the east. The FCMP provided funds to map and compile information on nine of the 26 trail segments and to install trail facilities.

CT travelers have access to more than 80 primitive campsites including some on remote islands. Motels and public and private campgrounds are available for overnight stays and countless coastal parks provide rest stops. An important purpose of the trail is to expose

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## Getting Ahead of the Storm ~ Post Disaster Redevelopment Planning

By Sandy Meyer

Among the many lessons learned from the recent wave of intense and destructive hurricanes in the Gulf states is the need for every local government to have an "off the shelf" plan to guide redevelopment following the recovery phase of a catastrophe.

A "perfect storm" of misfortune develops when disaster strikes a community unprepared to make the timely, complex decisions necessary to recover and create a new vision for the community. In some cases, the very people that are critical to the process have been displaced, local government offices destroyed, and the planning infrastructure crippled. In short, this chaotic period is not the time to envision a successful, enduring future.

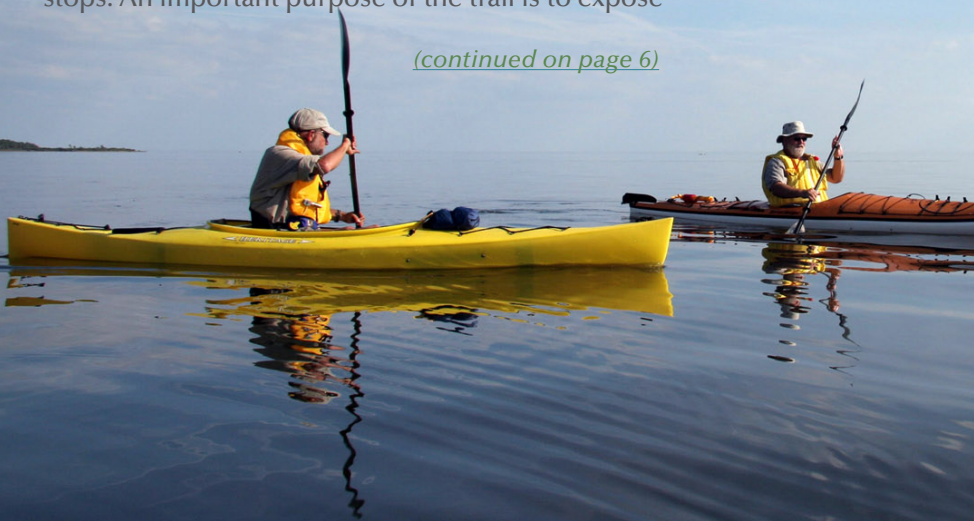
Recognizing this, the State of Florida requires that all coastal counties and communities produce a Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP) either as a component of the Local Government Comprehensive Plan or as a stand-alone document. Unfortunately, this requirement usually

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## Clean Marinas Protect Florida's Waterways

By Kristin Lock

It's no wonder that each year millions of visitors are drawn to Florida's internationally acclaimed beaches and beautiful ocean vistas along its 1,350-mile coastline. Recreation in Florida is defined by its oceans, bays, lakes and rivers, as evidenced by the state's one million registered vessels and approximately 2000 marinas. A quality natural environment is critically important to the state's \$65.5 billion tourism industry and the multibillion dollar marine and fishing industry. Florida's extensive water-based industry depends on clean water, which is the basis of the Clean Marina program – a voluntary program to protect water quality at Florida's marinas. The [Clean Marina](#) program began in the late 1990s and saw its first designation in 2000. It provides technical assistance to marinas across the state to learn about and practice environmental protection.

To become a designated Clean Marina, a marina must satisfy more than 125 environmental measures. Marina proprietors seeking the designation meet with DEP staff to go over a checklist and determine whether the marina needs to make any changes to qualify for approval. Once the 125 criteria are met, the facility is designated and may display the Clean Marina flags and signs, alerting customers to the positive and proactive steps they are taking to help protect the environment. In this way, the Clean Marina program promotes stewardship among facilities that not only protect water quality, but also benefit air quality and the upland environment.

Typical marina improvements completed as part of the designation process include:

- Enclosing work areas for bottom repair and painting to prevent water pollution
- Treating and reusing boat wash water
- Installing pump-out equipment
- Developing plans for stormwater and emergency management
- Distributing bilge socks and life vests
- Providing recycling bins

To date, nearly 200 marinas throughout the state have received the Clean Marina designation and have pledged to protect and restore Florida's waterways. Building on the success of the Clean Marina program, DEP and the [Clean Boating Partnership](#) have also developed the [Clean Boatyard](#) and [Clean Marine Retailer](#) programs to broaden the involvement of the marine industry in protecting the environment.

With predictions that Florida will become the third largest state in the nation by 2030, there will be an even greater demand placed on its natural resources. Clean Marinas are helping ensure continued, outstanding recreational opportunities for the millions of residents and visitors who boat, swim, dive, snorkel, fish, jet-ski, paddle, surf, or simply stroll along the magnificent waterways that are Florida. 🌊

**Kristin Lock** is the Marketing Project Manager for the Clean Marina program and can be reached at [kristin.lock@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:kristin.lock@dep.state.fl.us). To learn more about DEP's Clean Marina program, visit [www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina).

*The Clean Marina program is a key strategy of the Florida Coastal Management Program's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program developed under section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990.*

*The Clean Marina program is an ideal fit for the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, which focuses on pollution prevention rather than cleanup and encourages pollution control efforts at the local level.*



By Shawna Beji

The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program (WFPP) was created in 1997 by the Florida Coastal Management Program to assist coastal governments with preservation and revitalization of their commercial and recreational working waterfronts. The program provides hands-on technical assistance, support, and startup funds to help communities develop vision and implementation plans for Environmental and Cultural Resource Protection, Public Access, Economic Development, and Hazard Mitigation.

Since its inception, 21 Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program communities have been designated. The success of the WFPP was recognized in 2005 when the Florida Legislature authorized the program in statute.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs administers the WFPP and recently conducted a comprehensive assessment of the program's performance over the past ten years and developed a strategic plan to guide and enhance the program into the future. The plan aims to ensure the long-term viability of the WFPP by securing sustainable funding and increasing community participation. Specific strategies include:

- Developing an administrative rule to strengthen the WFPP legal framework and program participation
- Enhancing coastal resiliency in waterfront communities
- Promoting regional partnerships among waterfront communities

Building on the success of the WFPP and in response to new working waterfronts legislation, the strategic plan will also guide the development of a broader mission to provide technical assistance and support to all coastal local governments in the state, not only those included in the WFPP.

Throughout the lifetime of the WFPP, the Florida Coastal Management Program has provided technical and financial assistance for program administration and startup activities and makes grants available to waterfront communities through its competitive Coastal Partnership Initiative grant program. These grants have enabled coastal communities to conduct a range of activities, such as landscape and streetscape planning; updating land development codes; developing welcome centers, museums and parks; and improving commercial fishing facilities. The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program is a success story illustrating the value of federal-state-local partnership and the benefits derived from leveraging new initiatives with Coastal Zone Management funds. ~

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## Preserving Waterfront Communities ~ The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program



*Focus on Coastal Management  
Bay County, Florida*

*Bay County*, located in Florida's Great Northwest, has been experiencing a growth surge encouraged by its alluring beaches, mild climate and economic anchors like Tyndall Air Force Base and the Naval Support Activity facility in Panama City. The Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR, 2007) reported an overall growth rate of 11.67% for Bay County from 2000 - 2006.

Most of the coastal management activities and programs profiled in this issue of *Coastal Currents* are being implemented in Bay County, including some funded directly by the Florida Coastal Management Program. Through various partnerships, the FCMP helps coastal communities develop strategies to sustain healthy communities and protect natural coastal resources.

***Clean Marina Program (pg. 2)***

Bay County is home to three Clean Marina facilities: Bay Point Marina, Sun Harbor Marina and Naval Support Activity, Panama City.

***Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (pg. 1)***

The Bay County section of the CT is graced with emerald waters and majestic sand dunes, the "Old Florida" of Camp Helen and St. Andrews state parks, and unspoiled coastal habitats.

***Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program (pg. 3)***

St. Andrews Waterfront is the oldest and most active Waterfronts Community participating in the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program and is a model for other communities working to revitalize waterfront areas.

***Boating & Waterway Study (pg. 5)***

A study supported by the Florida Coastal Management Program will characterize boating practices in the St. Andrews Bay area.

The results will be used to inform policies relating to resource protection, public access and waterway management.

***Post Disaster Redevelopment Planning (pg. 1)***

Panama City is participating in a pilot project funded by the FCMP that will facilitate the development of post disaster redevelopment plans (PDRPs) throughout the State of Florida.

The Panama City PDRP was completed in 2008 and will be used to develop guidelines and best practices that can be used by other cities and counties.

**Bay  
County**

**Panama City**

West Bay

Gulf  
of  
Mexico





## Crowded Waters ~ The Benefits of Recreational Boating Studies

By Bill Sargent

Recreational boating is a key element of Florida's coastal lifestyle and a major contributor to the state's growth and economy. With more than one million boat registrations and several hundred thousand additional boaters visiting the state each year, Florida is the top destination for marine recreation in the United States. As the number of people enjoying boating-related activities in Florida continues to increase, there is growing competition for space on and greater demand for more access to waterways. Florida's resource managers are challenged to meet that need while preserving waterfront communities and natural resources, and providing adequate boater safety and education.

Since 2000, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and [Florida Sea Grant](#) have been working with local governments and boaters to provide planners with detailed information and tools for managing boating activity. The result has been the development of several studies characterizing boating activities, facilities and water resources in county and regional waterway systems. The studies were based on questionnaire responses from boaters who provided information about themselves, their

boating preferences, water travel patterns, conditions that detract from their enjoyment of waterways, and recommendations for enhancing waterway use. The information is then analyzed, along with information about waterway infrastructure, regulations, natural resources, and urban growth, to produce maps and waterway models.

These studies provide the comprehensive boating activity data that have previously been unavailable



Courtesy of FWC Division of Law Enforcement

*Annual Columbus Cay Regatta in Biscayne Bay*

to land managers and planners in most coastal communities. While a vast array of geographic information describing current use, infrastructure and travel patterns is available on land, the bulk of such information stops at the water's edge.

In 2006, the Florida legislature amended Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, to include incentives for waterfront communities to adopt recreational surface water use policies to protect working waterfronts, public access, recreation, and natural resources – especially manatee. However, the detailed, geographic information on boating needed to evaluate such management options is not available in many areas.

The Florida Coastal Management Program provided funds to the FWC to develop and test the boating survey methodology and to carry out a number of studies around the state. Following a pilot project in Charlotte Harbor in 2000, a full-scale study of Tampa Bay was conducted in 2003. Subsequently, Sarasota County determined that such information would be useful for boat facility planning and to enhance its manatee protection plan. With additional assistance from the West Coast Inland Navigation District, a boating study was conducted for Sarasota and Lemon bays.

*(continued on page 10)*



## Florida's Circumnavigational Trail ([back to page 1](#))

prehistoric temple mounds, and museums. Every type of Florida coastal habitat can be encountered along the way, from barrier island dune systems to salt marshes to mangroves. Paddlers may see manatees, dolphins, alligators, American crocodiles, sea turtles, a host of fish, rays and crabs, and birds ranging from bald eagles to brightly-colored warblers. The Circumnavigational Trail traverses a splendid array of protected lands, including:

- 18 national wildlife refuges
- Two national seashores
- Two national parks
- A national marine sanctuary
- 37 Florida aquatic preserves
- 47 Florida state parks
- Numerous local parks and preserves

Local support for the trail is growing. The City of Miami and Dade County helped organize a dedication of the Biscayne Bay portion of the trail in 2007. Such recognition will help ensure the success of the trail, which largely depends upon partnerships with outfitters, paddling clubs and various government entities. In many regions, especially in southwest Florida, the trail connects to county "blueways" trail networks geared to paddlers. More local governments are establishing new paddling trails and campsites, such as those being planned in Duval, St. Johns and Manatee counties. In 2008, the Coastal Management Program provided funds to produce a *Blueways Map and Guide*, signs, website and outreach material for the Jax Beaches Paddling Trail. The CT's continued success will also be ensured by the support of the newly formed [Florida Paddling Trails Association](#). This nonprofit organization will help maintain and improve the CT and other paddling trails. Members can access maps of the entire CT and information about more than 150 side trails on the association's Web site.

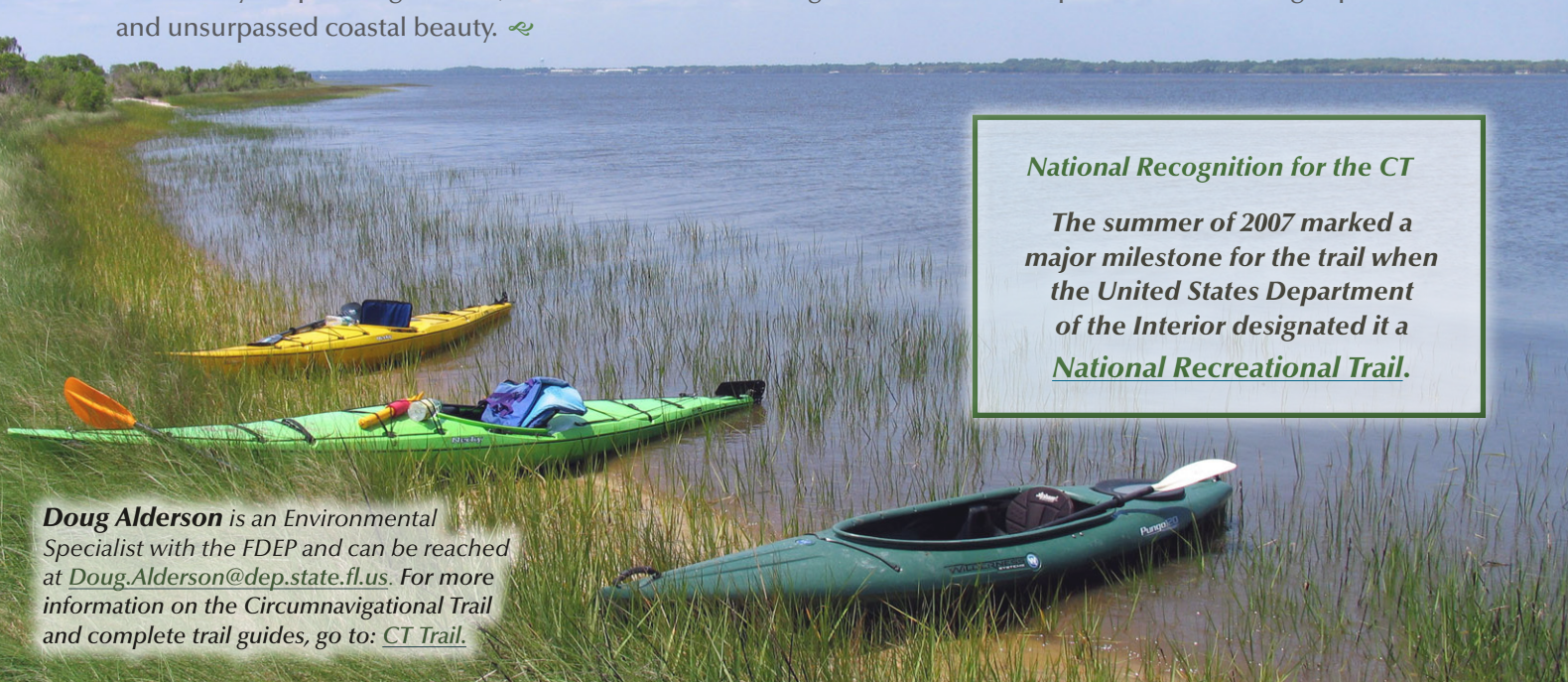
Each of the 26 CT segments is ideal for day trips and weekend excursions. Some paddlers may prefer to do the entire trail in sections over several years. But there is also the allure of completing the entire route in a continuous three to four month journey in the same way thru-hikers backpack the Appalachian Trail. Braving the extremes of nature, "You really learn to trust yourself," said long-distance thru-paddler Jodi Eller. "Nature has a way of opening your heart and mind and challenging your core, at the same time equipping you with everything that is needed. The more time you spend with anything the greater the secrets that are revealed." Her partner, Matt Keene, added, "As you progress in your journey, your needs become simplified, and with that comes a simpler view of living your life. You shed the weight of civilization—the stress, the doubt, the body fat. Your confidence rises and you learn to live day by day." In January, Matt was congratulated by the DEP and the paddling community when he became the first person to complete the entire CT. A diary of his remarkable journey is available at: <http://sunshineexpedition.com>.

Whatever your paddling interest, the 1600-mile circumnavigational trail serves up rich and rewarding experiences and unsurpassed coastal beauty. 🌊

### National Recognition for the CT

*The summer of 2007 marked a major milestone for the trail when the United States Department of the Interior designated it a [National Recreational Trail](#).*

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## Follow the Circumnavigational Trail!

The **Florida Circumnavigational Trail** begins at **Big Lagoon State Park** near Pensacola, only a few paddle strokes from the Alabama border. Emerald waters and high dunes highlight the Panhandle sections.



The trail ends at **Fort Clinch**, a Civil War-era fort at the Georgia border, now a state park. The last stretch of the trail boasts unspoiled stretches of public lands, mazes of tidal creeks, coastal bluffs, numerous sea islands and historic plantations.



Panama City's **St. Andrews State Park** marks the beginning of a 400-mile stretch, best described as "Old Florida," with small coastal communities, unspoiled peninsulas, wild barrier islands, dynamic bays, estuaries and unmarred vistas of salt marsh, tree islands and winding tidal creeks.



Pinellas County just above **Tampa Bay** marks the beginning of the more populous southwest Florida coast, but paddlers can still explore undeveloped islands and peninsulas, along with historic sites and points of interest.

The trail links to several "Blueways," extensive networks of marked paddling trails through bays, rivers, tidal creeks and along barrier islands. The trail then dips into the remote **Ten Thousand Islands**, a maze of undeveloped mangrove islands and tidal creeks that once served as a refuge for recluses and outlaws; the area is now a haven for wilderness lovers.



At **Everglades City**, paddlers can choose the **Wilderness Waterway**, a sheltered route of backwater streams, or a coastal island route with several days of uninterrupted paddling through Everglades National Park.

Discover tropical splendor and unique maritime culture in the **Florida Keys**. Paddle through lush mangrove tunnels, peer into gin clear waters rich with marine life, or dock at locally-owned restaurants and bars that often feature musical entertainment.



Manatees and bird rookeries abound in east coast sections of the trail including **Indian River Lagoon**. Camping opportunities are numerous on the many tree-covered natural and man-made islands along the way.

The region from **Oleta River State Park** to **Sebastian Inlet State Park** features lighthouses, museums, palm-lined beaches and balmy winter weather.

Heading north from the Keys, the trail traverses **Biscayne National Park**, North America's largest marine park, featuring shallow patch reefs and tropical fish. A mask and snorkel are suggested for this section of the trail.



## Getting Ahead of the Storm ~ Post Disaster Redevelopment Planning *(back to page 1)*

Coastal Management Program and the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Division of Community Planning initiated a PDRP pilot project in Panama City. The multi-year project is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration using Coastal Zone Management Act funds.

Post-disaster redevelopment planning began in July 2006 with an extensive literature review, assessment of existing PDRP plans, and input from a focus group of state and federal agencies and people from the planning, academic and emergency management communities. The focus group determined that a PDRP should identify policies, operations, roles and responsibilities for recovery and long-term redevelopment, especially to ensure the orderly resumption of business, economic redevelopment, housing and infrastructure repair and reconstruction, and environmental restoration.

Phase two, testing the guidelines in pilot communities, is currently underway. With the launch of the first pilot project in Panama City, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Florida Division of Emergency Management joined the effort by funding four additional PDRP pilots with federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds. The joint initiative will determine how effective the guidelines are in assisting local governments with Post Disaster Redevelopment Plans. The pilot communities are developing realistic plans that will be models for the rest of the state and possibly the nation.

The pilot communities, Panama City and Hillsborough, Manatee, Nassau, Polk, and Sarasota counties, were chosen because they represent diverse community types and have a high level of interest in the project.

Panama City was selected to compare the effectiveness of a city plan to a multi-jurisdictional, county-wide plan, especially since counties are already involved in emergency management and hazard mitigation planning. Polk County was chosen to determine if different guidance is needed for inland governments. The other counties represent varying levels of economic activity and development trends.

Each pilot formed a stakeholder group to oversee the planning process. In addition, the pilot communities located together on the west coast, along with other interested communities, formed

a work group to explore the potential for successful regional coordination. Because of the high level of interest, it is a challenge to manage the size of group meetings! It has also been a challenge for facilitators and members alike to keep the discussion focused on redevelopment instead of response, reflecting Florida's high level of expertise with the short term response/recovery phase of emergency management. Nonetheless, public involvement and the focus group process are key to the success of the pilot projects, which are expected to be a major step toward achieving prepared and disaster-resilient communities.

is not met because there is no clear framework for preparing such a plan. For this reason, the Florida



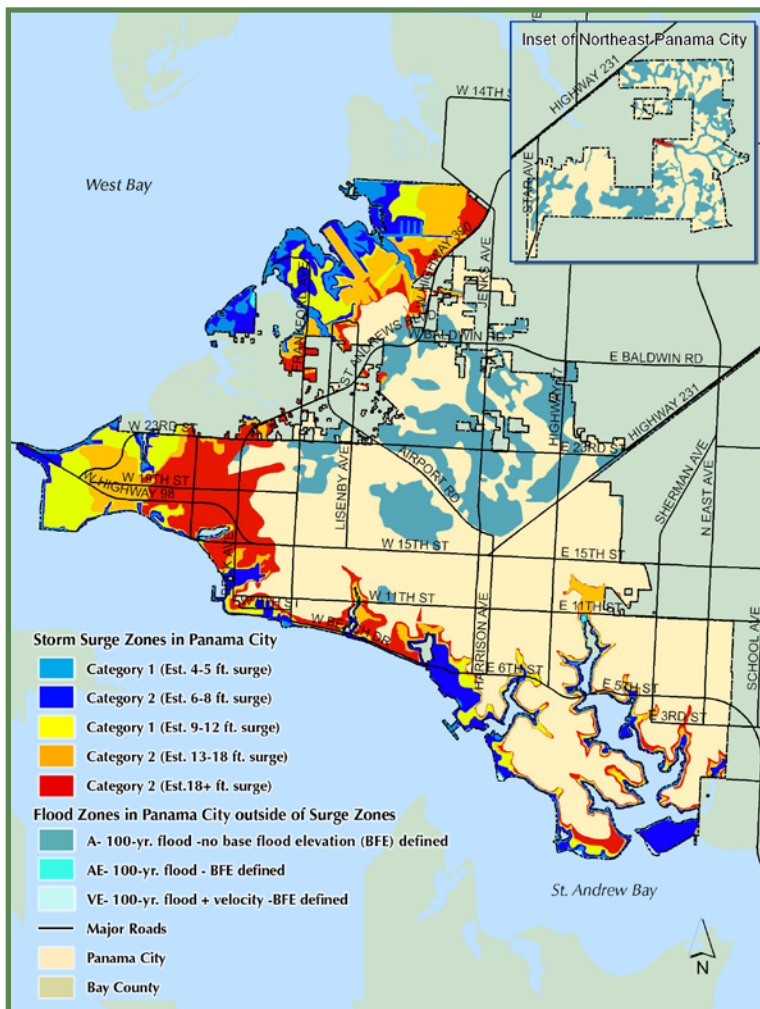
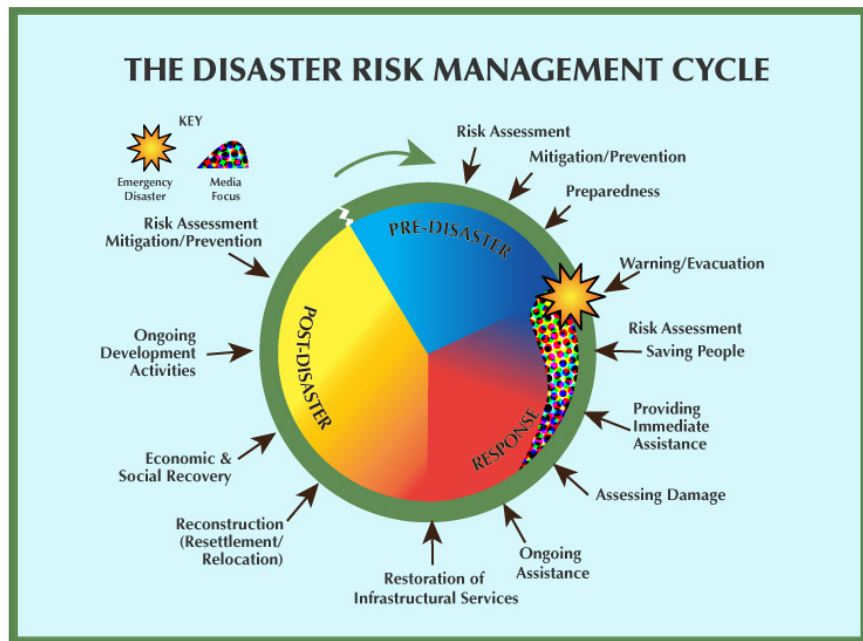
*Hurricane Ivan damage, US 98, Walton County*



A comprehensive vulnerability assessment, designed to reveal potential impacts from various hurricane levels, is a key component of the PDRP. The assessment is used by separate technical working sub-groups to develop both pre- and post-storm action plans which guide local governments and steer the effective use of finite governmental and non-governmental resources.

The third phase of the PDRP initiative begins this year with an objective analysis of the draft guidelines as tested on the six pilot communities; case studies of the pilot planning process; and lessons learned. The results will be used to create the final Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan guidebook, which will be incorporated in the *Best Practices* series published by the Florida Department of Community Affairs. Once the guidebook has been completed, regional workshops will be

## Getting Ahead of the Storm ~ Post Disaster Redevelopment Planning [\(back to page 8\)](#)



From the Vulnerability Assessment for the Panama City PDRP

conducted to educate local government planners and, if the anticipated budget permits, to announce grant opportunities for communities interested in developing PDRPs in keeping with the guidance.

Ultimately it is the goal of all involved in this important pilot initiative to provide the best possible planning template to help local governments prepare their Post Disaster Redevelopment Plans. Through sound preparation and planning before the storm, communities can survive, recover and redevelop a future forged from their own visions in partnership with state and federal government. ~

**Sandy Meyer** is the Project Manager for Florida's Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan pilot project. Contact Sandy at: [sandy.meyer@dca.state.fl.us](mailto:sandy.meyer@dca.state.fl.us).

For further information visit: <http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/DCP/PDRP/overview.cfm>.




## *Crowded Waters ~ The Benefits of Recreational Boating Studies* ([back to page 5](#))

In 2005, Brevard County requested a boating study for a Comprehensive Maritime

Management Master Plan to guide its efforts to ensure the environmental, economic and recreational viability of its waterways. The characterization was completed for Indian River Lagoon, Mosquito Lagoon, Banana River and the near-shore Atlantic Ocean, and is being used to manage anchoring and establish mooring fields.

County and municipal officials in Bay County need to examine the current and future demand for public boating access so that they can plan for growth while maintaining the heritage of waterfront communities around St. Andrews Bay. FCMP funded a recreational boating characterization for Bay County during 2007 and 2008 that is providing a wealth of baseline information, and led to the award of a major grant from FWC's Boating Infrastructure Improvement Program. The funds will be used to conduct both a boating facility economic assessment and a boating facility enhancement plan.

Collier County also received a grant in 2008 from the FWC Boating Infrastructure Improvement Program to complete a recreational boating characterization that was initiated with FCMP funds. These grants will help the county manage the challenges of explosive growth, provide adequate water access, and protect the coastal environment. The county intends to use the boating study information to update its Manatee Protection Plan, enhance artificial reefs, and prioritize boating access improvements.

The spreading interest in the boating studies from community to community reflects the need for practical management tools based on reliable geographic information. The boating characterization studies completed to date will put timely, scientific information in the hands of those responsible for local planning and resource management along Florida's busy waterfronts. 

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More information on recreational boating studies is available at: [http://research.myfwc.com/features/view\\_article.asp?id=23219](http://research.myfwc.com/features/view_article.asp?id=23219).



*Recreational boaters congregate in sand flats and seagrass beds  
Whale Harbor Channel, Florida Keys*



On November 20th, 2008, Florida's CELCP plan was approved by the National Oceanic and



Rogers property on the Guana Peninsula in the GTMNERR

## NOAA Approves Florida's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Though participation in CELCP is voluntary, only states that have a draft or approved plan are eligible to participate.

The CELCP plan outlines the process for nominating and selecting land acquisition projects in the state and must be updated once every five years to reflect changes that may have occurred within the state or region. **Florida is the 5th state to receive approval of its CELCP plan out of 32 participating states.**

In November, NOAA also released the prioritized list of 46 competitively selected projects that are ready and eligible for CELCP funding in FY 2009. Florida's projects ranked 4th, 17th and 28th. Funding for projects on the ranked list is contingent on Congressional appropriation. 🌊

## Time to Order Beach Safety Flags and Signs!

The Annual Ordering Period for:

- Beach Access Signs
- Beach Warning Flag Signs
- Beach Warning Flag Sets
- Rip Current Education Signs

closes on **FEBRUARY 1, 2009.**

Flags and signs are provided free of charge to eligible local governments and state parks providing coastal public access.

Order online at [www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/programs/safety.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/programs/safety.htm).

For more information email [FCMPMail@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:FCMPMail@dep.state.fl.us)

or call (850) 245-2161.





*Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building*

## *Upcoming Events*

January 29 *National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants Program Workshop* Contact [Nicole Adimey](#)

February 24-26 *CZM Program Manager's Meeting*

March 25 *Florida Oceans Day 2009*

April 22 *Earth Day 2009*

May 18-25 *Beach Safety Week*

May 19-21 *From Stem to Stern II: Boating and Waterway Management in Florida*

July 29-23 *Coastal Zone 2009*

Other *Upcoming Coastal Training Program Events at Florida's National Estuarine Research Reserves*

**Coastal Currents** is a publication of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Coastal Management Program to update our partners on issues and projects of interest to the coastal community.

Please send us your questions and suggestions for future editions to:

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