

The Carrying Capacity Study Needs You!

For the first time, we are embarking on a study of the entire Florida Keys in an attempt to gauge the effects of future development on our island chain.

We want *you* to be a part of this process. Public Meetings will be held throughout the Keys allowing all residents to learn about the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study and to share their knowledge and insight with the folks who will be performing the study.

Please come to the Public Meeting that is scheduled for your area and let us hear from you.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES DILLON O'ROURKE

Setting limits for what's acceptable in the Florida Keys — both in terms of quality of life for residents and visitors and the islands' natural resources — is what the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study is all about.

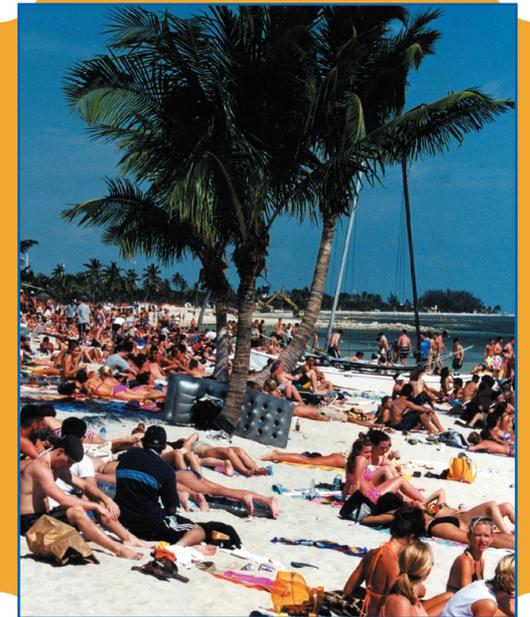
The Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study team is comprised of leading professionals in their respective fields ranging from marine biology to social economics. The project is managed by Ann Lazar from the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Debbie Peterson from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Ricardo Calvo, Ph.D., from the engineering firm Dames & Moore.

Ann Lazar recently joined DCA as a planning manager coordinating Monroe County projects. Ann spent eight of her 13 years with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the Florida Keys and received the Sustained Exemplary Performance Award. Ann received a Master of Science from the University of South Florida in Botany.

Debbie Peterson is a coastal engineer for the USACE with a Master of Science in natural resource management from the Florida Institute of Technology and is a professional engineer registered with the state of Florida. Debbie serves on the technical advisory committees for the Monroe County Sanitary Wastewater and Stormwater Master Plans.

Ricardo Calvo, Ph.D., serves as both a consultant and scientist with Dames & Moore and has successfully managed complex environmental projects, some of which have had far-reaching socio-economic implications. Ricardo holds a doctorate in ecology and his scientific work includes both theoretical and experimental work in plant ecology and population biology.

The Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study



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- *Natural Resources*
- *Social Environment*
- *Human Infrastructure*

What is the Carrying Capacity Study?

In order to maintain the beauty of our islands and our quality of life, we must know just how much development the Florida Keys can sustain. The purpose of the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study is to determine the ability of the Florida Keys ecosystem to withstand all impacts of land development while addressing the economy, quality of life and community values and expectations. In addition to natural resource issues like species richness

and water quality, the Study will consider the social environment with regard to such issues as sustainable tourism and human infrastructure issues such as potable water and hurricane evacuation. The Study will reflect the interconnected nature of the Florida Keys' natural systems and may analyze the carrying capacity of specific islands or group of islands and specific ecosystems or habitats including distinct parts of the marine habitat.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MONROE COUNTY

Why are we doing this?

Comprehensive planning is required in Monroe County to assure the sustainability of its unique resources and to address the complexity of the Florida Keys. The Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study is a logical extension of the ongoing planning efforts within Monroe County to support a healthy sustainable environment and economy.

In the past, like all local governments in Florida, Monroe County was required to prepare a comprehensive plan, yet it had to meet more strin-

gent planning standards as an Area of Critical State Concern. Administrative proceedings regarding the *Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan* highlighted specific aspects of the Florida Keys ecosystem as having already exceeded carrying capacity thresholds, including nearshore water, seagrasses, and the endangered Key Deer. Hurricane evacuation was also considered to have reached its upper capacity limit.

In 1996, the Florida Administration Commission and the governor called for the

preparation of a “carrying capacity analysis” for the Florida Keys. In a cooperative effort, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Florida Department of Community Affairs and Monroe County have begun the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study to look at the impact of land development on the Florida Keys.



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