



## *Islamorada, Village of Islands*

### Village Manager's Weekly Update

*November 27, 2024*

#### **Happy Thanksgiving from Village Hall**



As we approach this season of gratitude, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt thanks to each of you for being an essential part of our vibrant community. Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on the year and appreciate the connections we share. Whether you're spending the holiday with family, friends, or in the company of others who make a difference in your life, I hope this season brings peace, joy, and gratitude.

Please remember to take a moment for yourself, enjoy the special moments, and stay safe during your celebrations.

On behalf of our entire team, we wish you and your loved ones a warm, peaceful, and joyful Thanksgiving!

#### **Village Procurement and Grants Administrator to Retire After Over 20 Years of Service**

Happy Retirement to Finance's own Mary Swaney! Mary has been with the Village of Islamorada since February 2004 serving in a variety of different roles. She was the Assistant to the Village Manager/Public Information Officer, and most recently served as our Grants/Procurement Administrator. We will miss Mary and her thoughtful attention to detail, as well as her depth and breadth of knowledge. Thank you for your dedication and numerous years of service. Mary's last day is Tuesday, December 3. We wish her all the best in her next chapter!

#### **ROGO Conversation to Continue December 10**

On December 10, the Village Council will reconsider the number of ROGO allocations and distribution cadence. As you may recall, our prior Village Council had directed that 104.75 allocations be requested to be distributed over a period of 12 years. Most recently, the matter was discussed at the [November 19 Village Council meeting](#). The prior Village Council discussion and decision was at their meeting held on [October 10](#).

When available, the agendas for the December meetings can be found [here](#). The public is encouraged to watch the meetings on Monroe County's MCTV Comcast Channel 77. Alternatively, the public may view the meetings streamed live on the [Village website](#) or on [YouTube](#).

## Holiday Lights Installed Throughout the Village



The holiday season is officially here, and we are excited to share that our festive displays are up and shining bright! We have holiday displays around Founders Park, Southwinds Park, and the Hurricane Monument. Take a stroll through our holiday displays, enjoy the sparkling ambiance, and feel the spirit of the season all around. Whether you are looking for holiday inspiration or simply want to soak in the festive atmosphere, we have something special waiting for you! Wishing you a season filled with joy, wonder, and unforgettable moments!

## Toys for Keys Kids Toy Collection Drive

**TOYS FOR KEYS KIDS**

 **Santa is coming, and he really needs your help!**

**Please donate new, unwrapped toys!**

Bins located at ALL Upper Keys Fire Stations as well as at the following locations:

Friday, December 6: Holiday Fest, 4:00 to 10:00pm at Founders Park (entrance gate)

Saturday, December 7: Enchanted Florist MM 82.9, 11:00am to 4:00pm

Sunday, December 15: Islamorada Fire Department Santa Parade

The Islamorada Fire Department came to the rescue to fill in for the Toys for Tots program. Within hours of notification, helpers volunteered to save Christmas for children in need in the Upper Keys.

Volunteers across the Upper Keys are teaming up for this year's toy drive, Toys for Keys Kids. Collection bins for unwrapped toys are located at all Upper Keys fire stations, and will also be available at Holiday Fest on December 6, as well as the Islamorada Fire Department's Santa Parade on December 15. Also note that The Enchanted Florist will be collecting unwrapped gifts on December 7 from 11am to 4pm.

We are grateful to our fire department for helping to make this year's toy drive possible. Toys will be collected at the fire stations through December 16.

## Islamorada Fire Rescue Santa Claus Ride – December 15

**ISLAMORADA FIRE RESCUE PRESENTS**

**SANTA CLAUS & HIS CAROLERS**

DECEMBER 15, 2024

SPONSORED BY:  
ISLAMORADA FIREFIGHTERS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION and ISLAMORADA FIRE RESCUE



Come and join us for our Islamorada Fire Rescue Christmas Parade on December 15 beginning at 5pm. Santa Claus and his Christmas carolers will be stopping by several locations throughout Islamorada. We hope to see you around! For a full schedule of stops, click [here](#).

## South Florida Water Management District – Seeking Public Input on Draft Strategic Plan

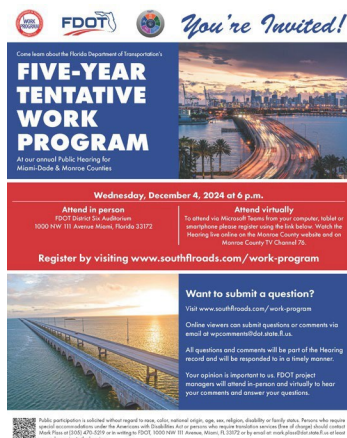


The [South Florida Water Management District](#) (District) is a regional governmental agency that manages water resources in the southern half of the state, covering 16 counties from Orlando to the Florida Keys. Created in 1949, the agency is responsible for managing and protecting water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems. Key initiatives include the restoration of the Everglades, as well as improving the Kissimmee River and its floodplain, Lake Okeechobee, and South Florida's coastal estuaries.

The District is seeking public comment for their Draft 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. The plan serves as a blueprint for achieving balanced regional water resource management. The District updates the Strategic Plan annually to highlight its work to continue advancing Everglades restoration, protecting communities from flooding, meeting the region's water needs, and engaging the public and stakeholders over the next five years. The strategies and commitments outlined in the Draft 2025-2030 Strategic Plan will be put into action to make a positive and meaningful difference for the people and the environment of South Florida. The District encourages public participation and feedback on this important planning document. You can read the draft strategic plan [here](#).

Comments can be submitted by completing an online public comment form on the [web board](#). If you have questions or need assistance with the web board, email [AskUs@sfwmd.gov](mailto:AskUs@sfwmd.gov). The deadline to submit a comment is Wednesday, December 4, 2024.

## The FDOT Five-Year Tentative Work Program



If you are interested in projects that the Florida Department of Transportation is proposing to be completed in Monroe County over the next five years, you may wish to attend their upcoming public hearing, either virtually or in person.

As added background, FDOT hosts an annual public hearing to develop their Five-Year Work Program. The hearing is one step in an ongoing process used to allocate funds for priority transportation projects planned for the next five years. The Work Program is based on their best available forecasts of project costs and funding, ensuring that the Department has the financial capacity to implement planned projects.

This year's public hearing will take place at 6PM on Wednesday, December 4. Those wishing to participate can attend online or in person and must register using this [link](#). You can learn more about FDOT's Five-Year Work Program [here](#).

## Upcoming Events at Founders Park

**[HOLIDAY FEST \(DECEMBER 6\)](#)** – The Islamorada Chamber of Commerce will be hosting Holiday Fest at Founders Park on December 6 from 4 to 10pm. This family friendly event will feature a festive holiday parade, unique holiday bazaar, and winter wonderland with snow!

**[BIRDING IN ISLAMORADA \(CLASSES BEGIN DECEMBER 9\)](#)** – The first installment of Birding in Islamorada with Program Leader Rachel Dipietro, Naturalist and Bird Expert will take place on December 9 at Founders Park. Enjoy a leisurely walk in the park and bird watching with Rachel! Classes will begin with a short introduction on the birds in the Islamorada area, followed by identification and discussing traits and habits of the birds that are observed. Binoculars and bird field guides are recommended! All adults 18+ are welcome to attend, classes are \$9.00 per person. Pre-registration is required; call 305-853-1685 or stop in to the Founders Park Office to reserve your spot.

**[24 MILES IN 24-HOURS SWIM CHALLENGE \(DECEMBER 7 & 8\)](#)** – The Friends of the Pool, in partnership with the Parks department, will be hosting the 24 Miles in 24-Hours Swim Challenge. Swim one mile (1600 meters) each hour at the top of the hour. Your rest between miles is the time leftover in the hour after you swim. Click [here](#) for registration details. Proceeds will support the Save Alligator Lighthouse initiative.

**[BEATS ON THE BAY \(DECEMBER 13\)](#)** – Join us for the next installment of our Beats on the Bay Concert series, Thomas Gabriel: A Tribute to Johnny Cash. Fun fact: Thomas is the grandson of the late Johnny Cash, and he sounds hauntingly similar! Come out to enjoy a night of outlaw country music under the stars. Food trucks, beer, and wine will be available for purchase. Gates open at 5pm and the concert starts at 6:30pm!

**[ISLAMORADA NATURE WALKS & TALKS \(CLASSES BEGIN DECEMBER 16\)](#)** – The first nature walk and talk with Program Leader Susan Kolterman, Florida Keys Naturalist, will take place on December 16 at Anne's Beach (MM 73). The goal of the series is to increase knowledge of flora and fauna of the Florida Keys and Everglades National Park while promoting responsible stewardship of our natural resources. These walks involve a brief discussion on the history of the Upper Keys as well as plant, butterfly, and bird traits. Sturdy shoes, sunscreen, water, binoculars, and/or a camera are recommended. All adults 18+ are welcome to attend, classes are \$9.00 per person. Pre-registration is required; call 305-853-1685 or stop in to the Founders Park Office to reserve your spot.

## Join Our Team! Multiple Positions Available!



The Village is seeking to fill vacancies across multiple departments. Positions include Senior Planner (Planning), Procurement/Grants Administrator (Finance), Lifeguard (Parks & Recreation), Facility Attendant (Parks & Recreation), Litter Removal (Public Works), and IFP Facility/Ground Worker (Parks & Recreation). Job descriptions and links to apply can be found [here](#). Please share and encourage qualified candidates to apply!