



Islamorada, Village of Islands

Village Manager's Weekly Update

December 6, 2024

ROGO Conversation to Continue at December 10 Village Council Meeting

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](#). More background information is available on the [Village website](#), as well.

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](#).

Household Hazardous Waste Collection – December 13 and 14



Our next hazardous waste collection will take place between 9am and 12pm at Founders Park on Friday, December 13, and Saturday, December 14. This service is free to Islamorada residents. Household waste materials include:

- Used motor oil, antifreeze
- Hydraulic fluids, paints, stains, strippers, wood preservations
- Roof and tar patching compounds

A full list of qualifying household waste materials can be found [here](#).

Blood Drive at Founders Park – December 12



The OneBlood Big Red Bus will be at Founders Park next Thursday, December 12 from 9:00am-2:00pm. Those interested in donating will receive:

- A \$20 eGift Card
- OneBlood six reusable cups
- Wellness checkup, including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, iron count, and cholesterol screening.

Appointments are encouraged. Please visit www.oneblood.org/donate-now and use sponsor code 5200 to sign up!

Islamorada Fire Rescue Santa Claus Ride – December 15



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](#).

Toys for Keys Kids Toy Collection Drive



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 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.

Celebrating Success: Climate Adaptation and Resilience



The Florida City and County Management Association hosted a short-form video showcase and competition highlighting municipal climate adaptation and resilience initiatives across the state of Florida. Village staff prepared a submission focused on our recent Founders Park breakwater restoration.

By raising the breakwater two feet, the marina is better protected from future storm surge, sea level rise, and erosion. This fully grant-funded project is just one of the many resiliency efforts the Village is undertaking to reduce risk and mitigate the adverse impacts associated with climate change. The breakwater stayed within the existing footprint and is currently closed to the public while we monitor mangrove restoration along its borders.

Special thanks to Frank Meulenberg (A/V and Social Media Specialist), Alyssa Panzer (Sustainability and Resiliency Coordinator/Planner), Stefanie Rodriguez (Assistant to the Village Manager/Public Relations Manager), and Rob Mather (Review Engineer) for their work on our video, as well as to Pete Frezza (Environmental Resources Manager) and his team for making the project come to fruition. You can watch the Village's submission [here](#).

Committee Positions Available

Islamorada has a strong tradition of volunteerism and civic engagement. Both our organization and community have benefited from dedicated residents willing to give their time to help shape the character and policies of our wonderful community. We hope that you will consider continuing this tradition through service on one of our citizen advisory committees.

We are currently accepting applications for appointments to the Local Planning Agency (LPA), Near Shore Water Regulation Committee, Workforce/Affordable Housing Citizens' Advisory Committee, and Land Acquisition Advisory Committee. Information about each committee, including how to apply, is available through our [employment portal](#).

Plan, Do, Check, Act: Validating Canal Restoration Success on Plantation Key



As part of the Village's greater effort to improve water quality and nearshore ecosystems across all waters, various canal restoration projects have been completed throughout the Village. In January 2024, a canal backfilling project was completed within Canal 116, located on Plantation Key between Plantation and Ocean Drives.

Prior to the project, monitoring revealed that extremely poor conditions existed within the canal, with very low oxygen levels and high turbidity. It also indicated there was no growth of any kind of plant or coral on the bottom of the canal.

Our ecosystem restoration effort included refilling part of the canal to cultivate improved circulation, oxygenation, and other ecosystem benefits. The results revealed that it does not take long for plants to colonize once the oxygen levels improve. By reducing the depth of the canal through backfilling and eliminating the anoxic zone that existed, a life-giving environment was created!

In less than a year, monitoring results revealed that seagrass and important macroalgae carpeted about 50% of the bottom of the canal. Starlet coral was also observed growing. This was a complete turnaround in canal life and an excellent indication that overall water quality conditions in the canal had improved tremendously. Village consultants will continue to monitor conditions on the bottom of the canal on a biannual basis. This is a success for both wildlife dependent on the habitat and for residents along the canal!

We planned the project, implemented it as planned, monitored the results to make sure that our strategies are producing the intended outcomes, and our future actions continue to be informed by the learnings from this and other important projects. By applying the Plan-Do-Check-Act method for project development and implementation, we maximize positive outcomes while honoring both our environmental and fiscal stewardship responsibilities.

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!

Upcoming Founders Park Events

[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.

[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 by the Founders Park Office to reserve your spot.

[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 Florida Keys and Everglades National Park flora and fauna while also 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 by the Founders Park Office to reserve your spot.