

BISCAYNE BAY STRATEGIC ACCESS PLAN ADVISORY TEAM

**MEETING #3
September 26, 2003**

TRANSCRIPT

PROJECT MANAGER REPORT-MAPS AND PHOTOS/TEAM COMMENTS:

1. Include an inventory of potential lands/walkway opportunities
2. Have a list of suggested literature
3. Have a map with city parks and other green areas
4. Add a list of fishing piers on maps
5. Boat ramps should be added to the list of marinas
 - a. How much do they charge
 - b. Are they full/at capacity
6. Show private parcels where the shoreline is required to be public; some of these are more significant than the public parcels
7. Show areas with deed restrictions
8. Show tour operators
 - a. Where do they leave from?
 - b. Who are they?
9. Blue trails need to be better defined; include manatee exclusion zones (seasonal/permanent)
10. Virginia Key is a critical wildlife area (this is related to #9)
11. Show boating exclusion zones
12. Comp Plan from each municipality re: access to Bay
13. Flight access
 - a. Helicopter
 - b. Glider
14. Stiltsville shown on map
15. Restrooms listed – any boat up to as well as walking
16. Rickenbacker Causeway – only passive vessels – ROW
17. Educational programs that are currently running
 - a. Visually as well as text
18. Some confusion on legends and illustrations
19. Public boating programs – lessons and rentals
20. Color not differentiated enough
21. Don't put too much on one map – separate out so not too much
22. Overlays
23. Facilities list – on map not on list/tributaries
24. Angling & Boating Guide
 - a. Opportunities for wildlife viewing
 - b. Birds, fish, etc. listed (i.e. Birds of Biscayne Bay)
25. Differentiate maps between
 - a. Working tool for group

- b. Public use map
26. Show activities available at Virginia Key

Finalized Vision Statement

Biscayne Bay shines as Miami-Dade County's crown jewel. Its crystal waters flow from a vibrant urban area to pristine, natural settings reminiscent of early Florida when unencumbered vistas blurred the line between sky and sea. We continually return to these shores and waters to see, feel and experience their magic by a well-defined and integrated system of green and open spaces, landscapes of trails and water-borne routes that offer safe physical and visual access to a diversity of recreational, commercial, cultural and natural experiences that entertain, challenge and restore our souls – no matter where we live, how old we are or what our abilities may be. We celebrate the Bay's inherent beauty and respect the wildlife that also calls it home. We use the Bay responsibly, ensuring its health, knowing that it is the key to our community's quality and vitality.

SMALL GROUP WORK:

GOAL (formerly called Issue Groups): Safe Enjoyment, Security, and Enforcement (names of those in group?)

SUBGROUP: Safe Boating

ISSUES:

1. Safe Boating Access
2. Increase in power boat use may result in increase in accidents/fatalities
3. License and lesson requirements for boating

OBJECTIVES:

1. Educate 25% of boaters in 10 years; develop safe boating skills as needed

ACTION STEPS:

1. Public relations / marketing
2. Build participation / schooling
2. Increase Community based educational programs / facilities to reach 40% of the boating public in 10 years

SUBGROUP: Law Enforcement / Home Security

ISSUES:

1. Lack of law enforcement

2. Lack of regulatory enforcement (vessel use, development)
3. Failure to enforce and/or implement existing public access or private and public development sites
4. Increasing incidence of illegal immigration via the Bay
5. Lack of law enforcement; nearly non-existent; at night none in many areas
6. Security and vandalism of access improvements
7. Need to increase awareness and preparedness of our security on water

OBJECTIVES:

1. Multi-agency coordination for effective law enforcement (County - City - 50% - 2 years)
2. Integrate law enforcement with educational programs (all - 5 years)
3. Seawatch (crimewatch) program (100% - 2 years - all access - marinas/places)

GOAL (formerly called Issue Groups): Comprehensive Environmental Education and Public Awareness

(Group members: Jim, Marsha, Greg, Jorge)

SUBGROUP: Appreciation

ISSUES:

1. Creation of community buy-in
2. Under-appreciation of the Bay by the masses... let's go to the beach instead
3. Cultural barriers to appreciation of the Bay

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create public appreciation of Biscayne Bay through "on the water" experiences

SUBGROUP: Advocates

ISSUES:

1. Public participation in preservation action

SUBGROUP: Public Awareness

ISSUES:

1. Public awareness

2. Challenge communicating to people not aware of access (change to: Lack of public communication about public access and value of the Bay)
3. Signage on major roads (U.S.1, I-95)
4. What is in the public's best interest (remove)
5. Lack of marketing of the Bay in relation to the beach and other attractions
6. Eco-adventure opportunities for tourism and community

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create public awareness of Biscayne Bay through media
2. Utilize Bay access facilities (i.e., marinas) to increase awareness of Bay
3. Improve signage on public right-aways to direct people to visual access of Biscayne Bay

SUBGROUP: Education

ISSUES:

1. Education
2. More Bay education at marinas
3. Coastal educational facilities
4. Lack of educational awareness of protecting the Bay
5. Uneducated politicians
6. Clean marina and clean boater program
7. Boaters education on physical/natural resources of the Bay
8. Educational component
9. Knowledge (or lack thereof) of physical characteristics of the Bay
10. Partnership with school system to reach youth
11. Educational component

SUBGROUP: Providers

ISSUES:

1. Lack of a partnership and coalition

SUBGROUP: Funding

ISSUES:

1. Lack of funding for programs, educational facilities, and public information (new item added to list)

GOAL (formerly called Issue Groups): Economic Vitality and Smart Growth

(Group members: Don, Ovidio, Dong, Allyn)

SUBGROUP: Shoreline Development

ISSUES:

1. Coastal development
2. Increasing development density and reduced access
3. Over-development of bayfront
4. No growth management; haphazard development on waterfront
5. Over-development
6. Condos, condos, condos
7. Need county shoreline review committee decisions checked on in development (i.e., are they doing what they are supposed to?)
8. No one follows comprehensive plan and shoreline development recommendations
9. Additional new construction directly on the waterfront that leads to loss of natural areas
10. Examine new construction directly on the waterfronts that lead to loss of natural areas
11. Development closing public access
12. Gated communities
13. Development
14. Decreased opportunities for access because of inappropriate development/building on the shoreline
15. Better enforcement of shoreline development regulations
16. Inappropriate development proposals on few remaining undeveloped parcels, both public and private
17. Private homes and condos along Bay
18. Private ownership of shoreline
19. Design treatment of water's edge
20. Enforcement of design guidelines

OBJECTIVES:

1. Miami-Dade Comprehensive Development Master Plan should be amended to require dedicated public access for all shoreline development (timeframe: during EAR process)
2. Enforce existing design guidelines for shoreline
3. Develop design guidelines for areas without

SUBGROUP: Public Lands

ISSUES:

1. Public land
2. Funding for public land

3. Public vs. private uses
4. Municipal tax bases outweigh public benefit and resource protection
5. Protection of Bay parks
6. Open/public/park lands often neglected, unsafe, in disrepair, full of homeless (e.g., Bicentennial Park)
7. A number of undeveloped parcels strategy to access issues remain that could, with intervention, become part of the solution rather than the problem
8. Preserving access

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create dedicated funding source for acquisition for public access within next 5 years; perhaps link to Nov.2004 general ob. Bond
2. Preserve and enhance existing public parks/access, including boating facilities

SUBGROUP: Port Development

ISSUES:

1. Port of Miami expansion / dredging

SUBGROUP: Economics

ISSUES:

1. Economic

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain or improve economic stability of marine industry

SUBGROUP: Visual Access

ISSUES:

1. View corridors
2. Development controls on new construction to maximize visual access
3. Too many high-rises blocking Bay view
4. Commercial development blocks visual access
5. New development blocking Bay views
6. Protection of extraordinary aesthetic values of Biscayne National Park shoreline from development

OBJECTIVES:

1. Implement height restrictions in relation to Biscayne National Park and 100% of other natural shoreline areas (timeframe: next EAR process)

SUBGROUP: Boat Access and Facilities

ISSUES:

1. Too much emphasis on accommodating more boats – how much is enough?
2. Not enough marinas will decrease the economy generated by boating on the Bay
3. Loss of water dependent shoreline uses and access caused by redevelopment
4. Commercial vs. pleasure/recreational use on the Bay
5. Recognition of economic impact/potential
6. Limited “big” boat access and wet-slips
7. Limited boat ramps

OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase slips and boat ramps by 10% by 2020

SUBGROUP: Smart Growth

ISSUES:

1. Divide between activists and developers; balance between economic development and resource protection
2. Potential destruction of environmental resources in order to create access (seagrass, hardbottom, mangroves, etc.)
3. Industries that only seek monetary gain and don't worry about social/environmental impacts to resources
4. Desire to make money off land no matter the environmental consequences
5. Putting “for profit” private development on public bayfront lands and submerged lands
6. Can people shift from exploiting the shoreline for profit to eco-tourism focus?
7. As costs for ships/boat facilities increases, access for lower-income groups decreases
8. Eco-tourism

OBJECTIVES:

1. Strike balance between environmentally sustainable development and public access

GOAL (formerly called Issue Groups): Coordinated Governance and Sound Public Policy

(Group members: Rod, Barbara, Craig, Rafaela)

SUBGROUP: Agency Coordination

ISSUES:

1. Increase inter-agency jurisdictional cooperation
2. Multiple jurisdictions over Bay access issues leads to miscommunications / lack of coordinated effort
3. Coordination between agencies
4. Lack of coordinated coastal management plan
5. Need to resolve debate which delays results unnecessarily
6. Difficulty of resolving federal/state/private debate... Therefore, no action taken until too late
7. Confusing jurisdictions... state/county/cities/Corp/National Park

Overarching Issue: Lack of agency jurisdictional coordination with respect to policy, plans, and regulations

OBJECTIVES:

1. Coordinated review and assessment of policies, plans and development proposals by a team comprised of relevant jurisdictions in 5 years

SUBGROUP: Political Issues

ISSUES:

1. Developers' abilities to get land use changes; Politicos beholden to developers
2. Uneducated politicians
3. Political support for Bay protection and political will to fight off self-serving interests
4. Environmental impacts of decisions
5. Not enough involvement by policy makers
6. Neighborhood association objections to public access projects
7. If Biscayne Bay had become an EPA national estuary would access have been addressed comprehensively?

Overarching Issue: (1) Uninformed decision-making by politicians and communities; (2) Lack of political will to implement sound policy decisions

OBJECTIVES:

1. 100% formal adoption of Biscayne Bay Access Plan within 2 years

SUBGROUP: Policy (Land Use)

ISSUES:

1. No commitment and enforcement to preserve land with access to Bay
2. Allowing variances to regulatory requirements that are intended to protect Bay or provide access
3. Public policy requiring more waterfront property to have adequate access and more water-dependent uses
4. Turkey Point expansion
5. Cities grant land use changes on waterfront then cry about having no waterfront, boat-slips, and marinas
6. Regulations to keep all shoreline from being privatized
7. Too many [zoning] variances granted
8. Lack of powerboat operator license program
9. Balancing access with maintaining Bay management
10. Appropriate use of state-owned submerged lands
11. That Army Corp dredging frenzy
12. Creation of overall master plan

Overarching Issue: (1) Lack of consistent policies balancing development, access and environment; (2) Lack of adherence to land-use policies

OBJECTIVES:

1. Comprehensive plans and development regulations amended within 5 years to follow recommendations of the Biscayne Bay Access Plan
2. Decrease the number of variances allowed by 80% in the next 10 years

SUBGROUP: Permitting Issues

ISSUES:

1. Balancing access with maintaining Bay management
2. Compliance with regulatory agencies to expensive to encourage marina development
3. Minimizing accessibility by over-regulation

Overarching Issue(s): Ineffective and cumbersome permitting

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop consistent, streamlined, and effective permitting process that implements policies of the Access Plan within 5 years

SUBGROUP: Coordination of Enforcement (Policing)

ISSUES:

1. Selective or lack of enforcement of regulations
2. Current regulations are not enforced... why pass more regulations when there is not enforcement currently?
3. Strong public policy base for public access not translated fully into implementing mechanisms and/or laws
4. Lack of regulatory enforcement (vessel use, development)
5. Inconsistent enforcement and lack of implementation of existing policies
6. Failure to enforce and/or implement existing public access on private and public development sites
7. Comprehensive plan not followed
8. No commitment and no enforcement to protect water quality
9. Lack of enforcement (comprehensive plan, shoreline review)

Overarching Issue(s): Enforcement of policies and regulations compromised by a lack of agency coordination and political will

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create adequately funded, multi-jurisdictional team to effectively enforce regulation

GOAL (formerly called Issue Groups): Respect for Wildlife and Environmental Sustainability

(Group members: Adrian, Dan, Cynthia)

SUBGROUP: Capacity

Sub-Goal: Provide opportunities to increase access without sacrificing environmental values or resources

ISSUES:

1. What is the carrying capacity of the Bay?
2. Impacts on water quality from increased use
3. Access Bay on boardwalks through sensitive areas
4. Lack of appreciation for preservation initiatives that have allowed some natural shoreline
5. Too much access could exceed the Bay's carrying capacity

6. Increased awareness / sensitivity toward sustainability!!
7. Without balancing access with other sometimes competing issues, such as aesthetics or environmental protection some intrinsic values of Biscayne Bay can be lost in the name of access
8. How can we balance access and preservation of habitats?
9. Create designated access points so people do not destroy fragile ecosystems while trying to find places to launch canoes, kayaks, etc.
10. The public might create a negative impact if access points are overused (trash, fragile ecosystems)
11. Does public access/ownership guarantee protection (e.g. habitats around access points)?
12. Must protect intrinsic values of Bay that create the “incentive” to want to access it
13. Lack of appreciation that humans are not the only ones who use the Bay

OBJECTIVES:

1. Immediately begin to establish parameters for resources with a determination of the maximum uses that provide for sustainability. Efforts should be dynamic, ongoing and dynamic
2. Implement and use cutting-edge management tools that increase access while preserving wildlife and habitat

SUBGROUP: Restoration

Sub-Goal: The bay must be made accessible to those entities that have the means and ability to environmentally restore the bay. A restored bay provides experiences that can't be provided otherwise.

ISSUES:

1. Ecosystem resources
2. Resource protection
3. Fragility of ecosystem
4. Habitat protection (e.g., seagrass and natural shoreline)
5. Avoidance of environmentally damaging human impacts
6. Restoring and preserving the environmental integrity of the Bay
7. Loss of habitat (e.g., seagrass and natural shoreline)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify opportunities within and along the bay for environmental restoration and/pr preservation. Complete this inventory within 1 year
2. Immediately define activities that have adverse impacts on the environmental quality of the bay and eliminate these uses
3. Focus on restoration projects that provide natural means of enhancing water quality (like seagrass, mangroves, sponges, etc.)

SUBGROUP: Wildlife

Sub-Goal: Healthy populations of wildlife and habitat need to be increased to enhance access experiences

ISSUES:

1. Loss of animal life (e.g., turtles and mammals other than manatees)
2. Fish/shellfish populations; increase biomass
3. Impact of Bay access on critical wildlife habitat
4. Not enough mind is paid to animals and plants in the Bay
5. Manatee protection
6. Manatees
7. Manatee protection laws
8. Protection of seabirds

OBJECTIVES:

1. Immediately, and as information becomes available, revise regulations as needed to enhance fish and other wildlife populations and increase habitat
2. Coordinate state and local agency efforts to maximize fishing and development regulations in order to protect wildlife and habitat

SUBGROUP: Pollution

Sub-Goal: Eliminate as many sources of pollution as possible

ISSUES:

A) Water quality

1. Need to control and limit pollution (point sources easier)
2. Water quality is important for access
3. Should be a Bay we can swim in
4. Runoff (stormwater)
5. Mechanical (exhaust, oil, solvents, fuels)
6. Sewage (boats, marinas, uplands)
7. Turbidity
8. Litter / trash
9. Trash in waterways leading to Bay impedes access
10. Trash along shore

B) Other

1. Noise
2. Air
3. Visual

OBJECTIVES:

1. Immediately determine sources of pollution
2. Within 5 years, ensure that all types of existing bay access facilities and sites include infrastructure to reduce pollution streams (pump-out stations, solid waste containers, restrooms, etc.); Make this infrastructure a requirement for all new access facilities and sites
3. Continue to retro-fit sources of stormwater pollution

GOAL (formerly called Issue Groups): Responsible and Balanced Access (changed from “Use”)

(Group members: ?)

SUBGROUP: Trails (walking/biking)

ISSUES:

1. Required baywalk “connector bridge” never constructed between Bayside and marina
2. Connecting pedestrian routes
3. Passive land access – bike trails/walking trails
4. Not a lot of pedestrian/visual access in North Bay
5. Bike/pedestrian access
6. Continuous baywalk/riverwalk
7. No bike/walk trails along bayside in safe, clean area
8. Master plan for a county-wide baywalk continually in urbanized areas (as much as possible)

OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop a comprehensive bay-wide walkway/bikeway which will provide visual and/or physical access to Biscayne Bay

SUBGROUP: Facilities

ISSUES:

1. Access vs regulations (Dredging and docks)
2. No growth for marinas
3. Not enough slips (wet or dry)
4. Limited launch sites for canoes and kayaks
5. Appropriate boating access
6. Safe boating access
7. Expanding access
8. Increase in yacht access generates sales and tax revenues
9. To increase vessel storage and accessibility
10. Need for more boat slips and ramps
11. Small boat use and access (boat ramps, marinas, etc.)
12. More access for canoes and kayaks

13. Lack of safe swimming (recreational) as in North Bay

ACTION STEPS:

1. For marinas (wet and dry storage) and boat launch sites (motor, sail, canoe and kayak):
 - a. Inventory existing sites
 - b. Educate people re: where
 - c. Determine need (carrying capacity) for more
 - d. Evaluate locations for more/expansion
 - e. Expand / provide more
2. Provide a variety of storage and launch boat facilities (motor, sail, canoe and kayak) at appropriate levels
3. The public knows where facilities are

SUBGROUP: Activity

ISSUES:

1. Recreational opportunities
2. Need more water transportation (water taxi, boat tours)
3. Water taxi/bus/ferry service like Ft. Lauderdale, New York City, etc.
4. Water-based tourism (boat tours, water taxi)
5. Eco-adventure opportunities for tourism and community
6. Responsible jet ski use
7. Responsible boating
8. Passive water-use; canoe and kayak
9. Commercial vs. recreational use of Bay
10. Visual access
11. Lack of adequate fishing spot along Bay
12. Not enough fishing access
13. High speed motorized cat

OBJECTIVES:

1. By _____, a variety of commercial operators (e.g., taxis, tours) will provide access to and across the Bay (within carrying capacity)

SUBGROUP: People

ISSUES:

1. Handicap access
2. Lack of access for non-boat owners
3. Lack of access to non-motorized vessels and other users of Bay
4. Increasing access of minorities to use Bay has to be a priority
5. Low-income population can not get onto the water

SUBGROUP: Carrying Capacity

ISSUES:

1. What is carrying capacity of Bay?
2. Overuse
3. Increase in power boat use may result in increase in accidents / fatalities
4. Too many power boats
5. Overuse – too many vessels on Bay
6. Tourism overcrowding

OBJECTIVES:

1. By 2006, maximum number of users for safety, sustainability and user conflicts will be known (within different areas)
2. Provide access commensurate with carrying capacity

SUBGROUP: Places

ISSUES:

1. Not enough upland access points
2. Public vs. private uses
3. Private ownership of shoreline
4. Amount of land in public ownership
5. Preserve historic sites and buildings on the coast
6. Stiltsville
7. North Bay ignored

OBJECTIVES:

1. By ____, all areas of the Bay will be included in a comprehensive plan to provide access to the Bay
2. By ____, a comprehensive access plan will utilize existing points of interest

SUBGROUP: User Conflicts

ISSUES:

1. Conflict of motorized boats and passive boaters
2. User conflicts (kayaks, jet skis)
3. Boaters resenting manatee zones
4. Competing interests for Bay access type (i.e., marina vs. fishing pier)