

MONROE COUNTY



2024 STATE OF THE COUNTY AND INFORMATION GUIDE

2024

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82,874

Monroe County Population Statistics 2020 U.S. Census

84.9

Approx. people
per square mile

.4%

of Florida's Population

3,738

Square Miles
(73 Percent Water)

1,783

Islands of 1
acre or larger

Established:
July 3, 1823

\$80,111

Median Household
Income

County Seat:
Key West
Commissioner
Districts: 5

1.9%

Unemployment Rate

4,988

Number of Employment
Establishments

Median Age 49.7

Average Commute to
Work: **19.4 minutes**

26,079

Registered Boats

Monroe County is Florida's 38th most populous county with .4 percent of the state's population. There are 67 counties in Florida. Monroe County is the southernmost county in the continental United States and consists of the entire Florida Keys chain, the surrounding waters, and a mostly uninhabited region of Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve on the mainland.

The 2024 Monroe County State of the County and Information Guide is produced by Public Information Officer Kristen Livengood and the Weekly Newspapers with the help of Monroe County's Senior Management Team and staff.

Cover Photo: Sunset in the Eden Pines neighborhood on Big Pine Key in November 2023. Photo by Keara McGraw

(Statistics from census.gov, edr.state.fl.us, floridajobs.org, and flhsmv.gov)

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW, 2024 WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE

2023 was a year of celebration as Monroe County entered its 200th anniversary, and today, our commissioners and staff continue to enhance the quality of the lives of our citizens, business owners, and visitors. I am proud of our commissioners and employees' remarkable accomplishments in 2023.

Department highlights from this past year include:

- Legislatively, Monroe County received \$20 million in Stewardship funding, which supports the health of our nearshore waters, \$6.25 million to complete our new Emergency Operations Center at Marathon airport, \$1.6 million for mooring field development, and state and federal funds for other essential projects like resilience against sea-level rise, storm risk mitigation, and bridge replacements.
- Sustainability applied for and received notice of grant awards from the Resilient Florida state resilience program for partial funding of four Road Adaptation projects with an estimated cost of \$186 Million.
- Engineering received approval from FEMA for the engineering, design, and permitting phase of up to \$178 million in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds for County Roads and sea-level rise adaptation projects.
- We received \$10 million from the State for the creation of a new artificial reef program, kicking off in 2024.
- Monroe County Transit completed its year-long Existing Conditions Study to determine exactly how transit services are being delivered throughout the county, taking us one step closer to making transportation in the Florida Keys safer and more efficient.
- Code Compliance reached an almost complete connection rate to the central sewer system --another giant leap toward improved water quality in the Florida Keys. The department worked with the remaining 1,400 property owners who had yet to complete their connection.
- Budget and Finance produced the \$667 million FY23 budget, which boasts Florida's lowest property tax rate for another year.
- Parks and Beaches' new Recreation Division developed the Keys Kids Swim and summer camp program and added two new community



centers to impact our community positively and meet recreation needs for all ages.

- Key West International Airport continues to construct its new terminal, which services more than one million passengers annually.
- Solid Waste held illegal dumping offenders accountable for their actions in several areas, making our streets cleaner and safer.
- Project Management completed the Supervisor of Elections buildout and is almost finished with the Public Defender's office in Key West.
- Information Technology continued supporting multiple departments by introducing new and modern software products while ensuring security, performance, and cost-effectiveness.
- Veterans Affairs assisted local Veterans in receiving more than \$6.9 million in new annual disability payments, an increase of \$1.4 million over last year.
- The library system's electronic collection of eBooks, eAudiobooks, and digital magazines saw unprecedented usage, amassing over 105,000 circulations for the year, a 36 percent increase from the previous year, and continues to add cutting-edge technology at the five branches.
- Employee Services resumed the employee Health and Wellness Fairs with record-breaking attendance for County and Constitutional Officer employees.
- Building and Permitting improved the online permitting and plan review process with user feedback.
- Fire Rescue strengthened its emergency medical services program to complement the BOCC's approval of three new medical helicopters. Trauma Star continues to provide a record number of lifesaving flights to the

mainland while transporting our residents with no out-of-pocket costs, and the sixth "Hot Shots" firefighter training class graduated – a program that waives tuition for residents.

- Guardian Ad Litem represented 100 percent of children involved in dependency proceedings through its Professional Child Welfare Team.
- Extension Service taught residents about local flora, fauna, and other vital Florida Keys resources. Also, it began offering First Aid and CPR certifications to the community.
- Strategic Planning is beginning to gather new information on community priorities to incorporate into a refreshed strategic plan.
- The Fleet Department received ASE Blue Seal awards for each garage for its high standards in maintaining County vehicles.
- Facilities Maintenance and Public Works worked to help others in the community following unnamed storms that affected many islands throughout the Keys.
- The County Attorney's Office celebrated the recommendations that Monroe County's 16th Judicial Circuit not be combined with Miami-Dade's circuit.
- Social Services served approximately 34,000 meals to seniors countywide.

2024 will be a year for community-wide courageous communication as we navigate through many critical challenges that will shape the future of the Florida Keys, from our Rate of Growth Ordinance and hurricane evacuation modeling to transportation issues and more.

For the past 15.5 years as Monroe County Administrator, the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners has been committed to creating a better life, every day, for everyone in the Florida Keys. We will continue to have open discussions and workshops about our future, and we will strive to make our island home a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, and play.

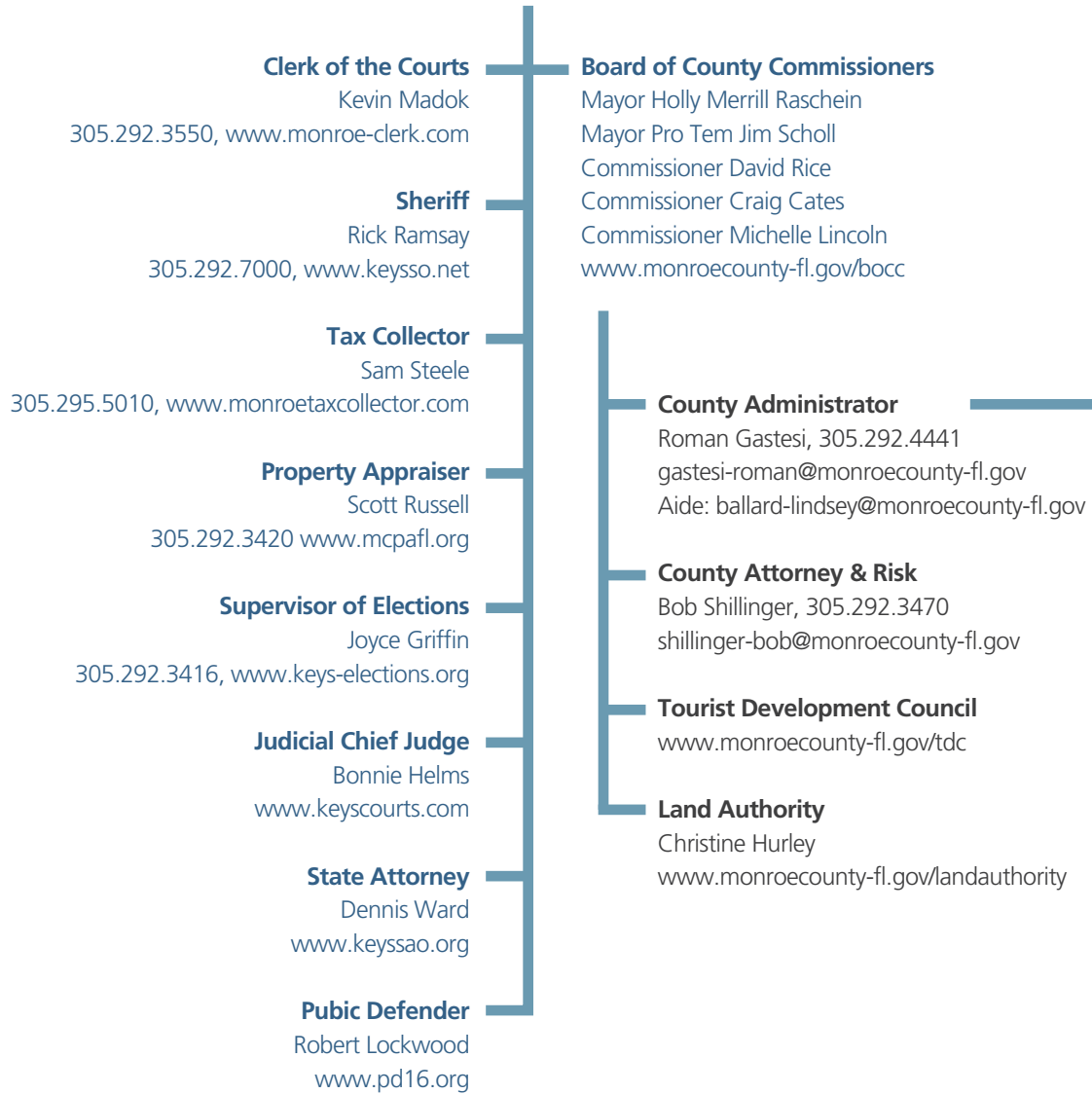
Cheers in Paradise,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Gt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roman Gastesi

Monroe County Administrator

PUBLIC



The County Administrator and his Assistant County Administrator, Kevin Wilson.

MONROE COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The county administrator, Roman Gastesi, is responsible for the daily operations of Monroe County's government, except for the Constitutional Offices. The Constitutional Officers are elected by the public and include the Clerk of Courts, Sheriff, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, and Supervisor of Elections. The County Administrator, County Attorney, Land Authority, Medical Examiner, and Tourist Development Council are appointed by and answer directly to the Board of County Commissioners.



Assistant Administrator

Kevin Wilson, 305.453.8788
wilson-kevin@monroecounty-fl.gov

Engineering & Roads

Judith Clarke, 305.295.4329
clarke-judith@monroecounty-fl.gov

Facilities Maintenance

William DeSantis, 305.292.4532
desantis-william@monroecounty-fl.gov

Fleet

Daryl Greenlee, 305.292.3452
greenlee-daryl@monroecounty-fl.gov

Parks & Beaches

John Allen, 305.453.8748
allen-john@monroecounty-fl.gov

Project Management

TBD, 305.292.4527

Solid Waste & Recycling

Cheryl Sullivan, 305.292.4536
sullivan-cheryl@monroecounty-fl.gov

Airports

Richard Strickland, 305.809.5210
strickland-richard@monroecounty-fl.gov

Budget & Management

Tina Boan, 305.292.4470
boan-tina@monroecounty-fl.gov

Building & Permitting

Rick Griffin, 305.289.2521
griffin-rick@monroecounty-fl.gov

Code Compliance

Cynthia McPherson, 305.289.2508
mcpherson-cynthia@monroecounty-fl.gov

Employee Services

Bryan Cook, 305.292.4558
cook-bryan@monroecounty-fl.gov

Emergency Management

Shannon Weiner, 305.289.6018
weiner-shannon@monroecounty-fl.gov

Extension Services

Alicia Betancourt, 305.292.4501
betancourt-alicia@monroecounty-fl.gov

Fire Rescue

Jim Callahan, 305.289.6004
callahan-james@monroecounty-fl.gov

Guardian ad Litem Office

Alexsa Leto, 305.292.3485
leto-alexsa@monroecounty-fl.gov

Information Technology

Alan MacEachern, 305.453.8792
maceachern-alan@monroecounty-fl.gov

Legislative Affairs

Lisa Tennyson, 305.292.4441
tennyson-lisa@monroecounty-fl.gov

Library System

Kimberly Matthews, 305.587.3683
matthews-kimberly@monroecounty-fl.gov

Medical Examiner

Dr. Michael Steckbauer
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/medicalexaminer

Planning & Env. Resources

Emily Schemper, 305.289.2500
schemper-emily@monroecounty-fl.gov

Public Information

Kristen Livengood, 305.680.8226
livengood-kristen@monroecounty-fl.gov

Social Services

Sheryl Graham, 305.292.4510
graham-sheryl@monroecounty-fl.gov

Sustainability

Rhonda Haag, 305.453.8774
haag-rhonda@monroecounty-fl.gov

Strategic Planning

Kimberly Matthews, 305.587.3683
matthews-kimberly@monroecounty-fl.gov

Transit

Richard Clark, 305.570.8744
clark-richard@monroecounty-fl.gov

Veterans Affairs

Cathy Crane, 305.295.5150
crane-cathy@monroecounty-fl.gov

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/bocc



MAYOR

HOLLY MERRILL RASCHEIN
District 5
102050 Overseas Highway,
Suite 234, Key Largo, FL 33037
305.453.8787
boccdis5@monroecounty-fl.gov



MAYOR PRO TEM

JIM SCHOLL
District 3
530 Whitehead Street,
Suite 102, Key West, FL 33040
305.292.3430
boccdis3@monroecounty-fl.gov



COMMISSIONER

MICHELLE LINCOLN
District 2
243 Key Deer Blvd
Big Pine Key, FL 33043
305.292.4512
boccdis2@monroecounty-fl.gov



COMMISSIONER

CRAIG CATES
District 1
500 Whitehead Street, Suite 102
Key West, FL 33040
305.292.3440
boccdis1@monroecounty-fl.gov



COMMISSIONER

DAVID RICE
District 4
9400 Overseas Highway,
Suite 210, Marathon, FL 33050
305.289.6000
boccdis4@monroecounty-fl.gov

EXECUTIVE AIDES:

Corie Abel

Abel-Corie@
monroecounty-fl.gov

Sue Burke

Burke-Sue@
monroecounty-fl.gov

Jennifer Garcia

Garcia-Jennifer@
monroecounty-fl.gov

Amanda Leggett

Leggett-Amanda@
monroecounty-fl.gov

Tamara Lamarche

Lamarche-Tamara@
monroecounty-fl.gov

CONSTITUTIONAL ESTABLISHMENT

Article VIII, Section 1(e) of the Florida Constitution states that except when otherwise provided by the county charter, the governing body of each County shall be a Board of County Commissioners composed of five members serving staggered terms of four years. After each decennial census, the BOCC shall divide the County into districts of contiguous territory as nearly equal in population as practicable. One commissioner residing in each district shall be elected by the voters.

Mission

To enhance quality of life by providing outstanding public service responsive to the needs of our citizens, our unique community and our environment.

Vision

Creating a Better Life Every Day for Everyone in the Florida Keys



2024 MONROE COUNTY BOCC MEETINGS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/meetings

The BOCC holds open public monthly meetings. The dates and agendas are posted on the website. Meetings start at 9 a.m. Due to the geographical challenge of the 100-mile island chain, the meetings are held on a rotating basis at three sites. The BOCC also holds public budget meetings and other special meetings during the year.

*Schedule subject to change

Nelson Government Center

102050 Overseas Highway, Key Largo
305.453.8788

March 20
No June Meeting
Sept. 11
Dec. 11

Marathon Government Center

2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon
305.289.6036

Jan. 31
April 17
July 17
Oct. 16

Harvey Government Center

1200 Truman Avenue, Key West
305.295.4385

Feb. 21
May 15
Aug. 21
Nov. 19



CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF MONROE COUNTY

On July 3, 1823, Monroe County became the sixth county in the Florida territory, preceding Florida becoming a state in 1845. In 1823, the County took up most of yet-to-be-populated south Florida, with the County line just below Lake Okeechobee.

To celebrate the 200-year milestone, the County hosted several celebrations culminating on July 3, 2023 at the Lower Keys Rotary's Annual July 3rd Firework celebration at Big Pine Key Community Park. The County, with the help of local key lime pie enthusiasts, regained its reign of having the world's largest key lime pie with its 13.14-foot pie. Other events to celebrate included a community concert with local trop-rock musician Howard Livingston in Key West, a sunset celebration on the Old 7 Mile Bridge, a sit-down Sea-to-Table locally sourced dinner, and a community family day barbecue that was held at Rowell's Park.

NEW IN 2024: MONROE COUNTY ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM

Monroe County was awarded \$10 million from the State to start an artificial reef program in the Florida Keys. The County and FWC met in 2023 to initiate the pre-planning process for the future of a Florida Keys Habitat Support Structure program. Stakeholders from the charter and commercial fishing industry were also in attendance and hopeful for the future of the program to take pressure off of local reefs.

"This is just the beginning, but we hope to set up a network of habitats from shallow to deep water that will support natural habitats and fish stocks. We will start with a focus on areas that are easier to permit outside of the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary," said Monroe County Administrator Roman Gastesi. "Every journey starts with a first step, and this is our first step."

The County acquired 37 50-foot hollow power poles from the Florida Keys Electric Co-op's Sea Oats Beach project in Islamorada, which will likely be used as one of the first projects to be started with the money. Other projects suggested included using concrete fish domes and other ideas used in other counties across the State.

There are more than 4,000 clusters of artificial reefs in Florida, and 37 coastal counties in Florida already have an artificial reef program in place. In the Florida Keys, there are 62 artificial reefs, including wrecks, that were mostly placed between 1982 and 1989. The most recent artificial reef placed in Florida Keys waters was the Vandenberg off Key West in 2009. Artificial reef sites are popular among divers and fishermen.

Following FWC's execution of the grant agreement, the framework for the program, establishing program goals and objectives, finding sites, meeting with stakeholders, and applying for permits will begin.



STAY IN THE KNOW ABOUT MONROE

There are several ways to stay up-to-date with County government.

MONROE COUNTY WEBSITE

www.monroecounty-fl.gov

Find the Board of County Commissioners, the budget, all County departments, County projects, County parks and museums, legislative advocacy for the Keys, permitting rules, hurricane preparedness and relief, links to department emails and phone numbers, and more.

HURRICANE INFORMATION

www.monroecountyem.com

Information Hotline: 800.955.5504

(activated for emergencies)

Sign up for ALERT!Monroe:

www.monroecountyem.com/alertmonroe

[f](https://www.facebook.com/MonroeCountyEM)/MonroeCountyEM

MONROE COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA

[f](https://www.facebook.com/MonroeCountyBOCC)/MonroeCountyBOCC

[@MonroeCounty](https://twitter.com/MonroeCounty)

[@monroecountybocc](https://www.instagram.com/monroecountybocc)

[flickr.com/monroecountybocc](https://www.flickr.com/photos/monroecountybocc)

Monroe County Fire Rescue:

[f](https://www.facebook.com/monroecountyfirerescue)/monroecountyfirerescue

Key West Airport:

[f](https://www.facebook.com/KWIAEWY)/KWIAEWY

[@eyw_kwia](https://www.instagram.com/eyw_kwia)

Guardian Ad Litem:

[f](https://www.facebook.com/galflkeys)/galflkeys

Monroe County Libraries:

www.keyslibraries.org

Sign up to receive County news releases directly to your email at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/notifyme. You can also sign up for custom calendars and alerts for meeting notifications for specific boards or advisory committees, bid notifications, employment openings, and more.

PUBLIC RECORDS

The County Attorney's Office manages the County's responsibilities under Florida's Public Records Act. Requests can be submitted at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/publicrecordsrequest.

Additional information on Public Records can be found on page 41.

MONROE COUNTY TV (MCTV)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/mctv

Comcast: Channel 76, AT&T U-Verse: Channel 99, ROKU, Amazon Fire TV, Online & Mobile Applications (iOS, Android)

Information Technology (IT) operates MCTV, the in-house government television station that covers regular and special meetings of the BOCC, including Planning Commission, Code Enforcement hearings and other live, pre-recorded, and original content. MCTV also covers local election coverage, approaching weather and emergency information, video bulletin board, and NOAA weather audio. See more on MCTV on page 33.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/publicinformation

The Public Information Officer's (PIO) primary responsibility is to provide accurate and timely information to the public and media about the actions, policies and public meetings of the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners and the County's 25 departments. The PIO also provides the primary information for the County's Emergency Management and Fire Rescue.

Responsibilities include:

- Writes and distributes news releases
- Maintains the County's official social media communications
- Creates content and maintains the official websites of Monroe County, Monroe County Fire Rescue, and Monroe County Emergency Management
- Responds to questions from residents and the media
- Arranges press conferences, ceremonies, and public meetings
- Works with state, federal and other local government entities to ensure County residents receive information about programs and opportunities.



Public Information Officer

Kristen Livengood
305.680.8226
Livengood-Kristen
@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 1

FLORIDA KEYS MUNICIPALITIES

Islamorada: www.islamorada.fl.us

Key Colony Beach: www.keycolonybeach.net

Key West: www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov

Layton: www.cityoflayton.com

Marathon: www.ci.marathon.fl.us

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Sheriff's Office: www.keysso.net

Supervisor of Elections: www.keys-elections.org

Clerk of Court: www.monroe-clerk.com

Tax Collector: www.monroetaxcollector.com

Property Appraiser: www.mcpafl.org

KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL & FLORIDA KEYS MARATHON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/airports or www.eyw.com

Monroe County owns and operates two Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certified airports: Key West International Airport (EYW) and Florida Keys Marathon International Airport (MTH). The airports are self-supporting Enterprise Funds, which use airport resources to provide for operational and financial needs through fees and charges paid by airport users and tenants. Additional funding is acquired through various FDOT and FAA grant programs. The department oversees, all services and requirements for safe and efficient operation, including all regulatory requirements, planning efforts, and passenger and operator needs are met. The airports lessens roadway congestion, enhancing the economic foundation, and offering convenient travel options for residents and visitors alike.



Executive Director

Richard Strickland
305.809.5210
Strickland-Richard@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Airport Employees: 20
On-Site Fire Rescue: 14
On-Site Sheriff's Office:
25
Budget: \$142 million



Key West International Airport's Master Plan: The airport developed renovation projects to enhance the passenger experience and efficient flow of aircraft operations. Efforts currently underway include the following:

Concourse A : EYW has begun a major capital project which will provide several upgrades while hardening the existing facility. The project includes eight boarding bridges, approximately 50,000 square feet of new terminal facilities, and an all-new concession program. The project is on track to be completed in 2025.

EYW

Key West International Airport has experienced record-breaking numbers in the last three years with increases in both unplaned passengers and the airlines that serve them. EYW served more than one million passengers in 2023 on flights from American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, JetBlue, Allegiant Air, and Silver Airways. Together, the airlines provided nonstop flights to destinations including Atlanta, New York, Newark, Chicago, Charlotte, Dallas, Washington D.C., Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Pittsburgh, Sanford, Tampa, Miami, Philadelphia, Boston, Houston, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Asheville, St. Petersburg, and Dulles. With convenient connections at these hubs, the airlines offer service to many major destinations around the United States.

The airport also supports home-based and transient general aviation aircraft. Last year, EYW handled approximately 33,000 general aviation aircraft operations and pumped more than 3.5 million gallons of aircraft fuel. General aviation services and aircraft fueling are provided by Signature Flight Support, 305.296.5422.

- **Total Land Area:** 334 Acres
- **Elevation:** 3 feet above sea level
- **Runway:** 9-27, 5,076 x 100 feet
- **Average Commercial Flights Per Day:** 60
- **Based Aircraft:** 25

MTH

Florida Keys/Marathon International Airport provides private aeronautical, emergency, business, and ground transportation services to the Middle Keys. The airport houses Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Trauma Star operations, and the soon-to-be-opened new Emergency Operations Center. In 2023, the airport had nearly 48,000 total aircraft operations.

General aviation services and aircraft fueling are provided by Million Air General Aviation, 305.743.4222 and Million Air Jet Center, 305.743.1995.

- **Total Land Area:** 197 Acres
- **Elevation:** 5 feet above sea level
- **Runway:** 7-25, 5,008 x 100 feet
- **Based Aircraft:** 65

Design for the all-new runway and runway shift is underway.

Marathon Airport Manager:

Michael Legere 305.289.6302
Legere-Michael@monroecounty-fl.gov

[f/KWIAEYW](https://www.facebook.com/KWIAEYW)
[@eyw_kwia](https://twitter.com/eyw_kwia)
[@eywairport](https://www.instagram.com/eywairport)



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET (OMB)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/budget

OMB provides effective development and implementation of Monroe County's budget; promotes efficient, sound financial management; ensures governmental procurement regulations are followed countywide; facilitates financially responsible grant funding; and maintains the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and prudent expenditure of public funds.

THE DEPARTMENT IS MADE UP OF THREE OFFICES:

1. OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB)

- Develops, publishes, implements, administers and monitors annual operating and capital budgets.
- Provides financial analysis and revenue and expenditure forecasting.
- Performs multi-year budget forecasts, analyzes the effect of the State budget on the County budget, and prepares financial information in collaboration with Monroe County departments for the Board of County Commission and the public.



Senior Director

Tina Boan

305.292.4467

Boan-Tina

@monroecounty-fl.gov

Employees: 10

Budget: \$6.7 million
(includes \$1.9 million operating, \$1.3 million employee housing, and \$3.5 million in nonprofit funding)

Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Adopted Budget

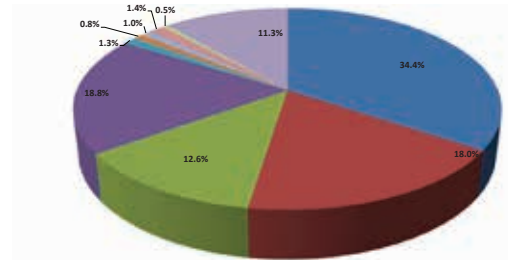
The Monroe County Board of County Commissioners finalized the FY24 \$667 million budget in September 2023. The budget includes the Board of County Commissioners, the constitutional officers, like the Sheriff's Office, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and Clerk of Court, and other appropriations for the Tourist Development Council, capital projects, and reserves.

DID YOU KNOW?

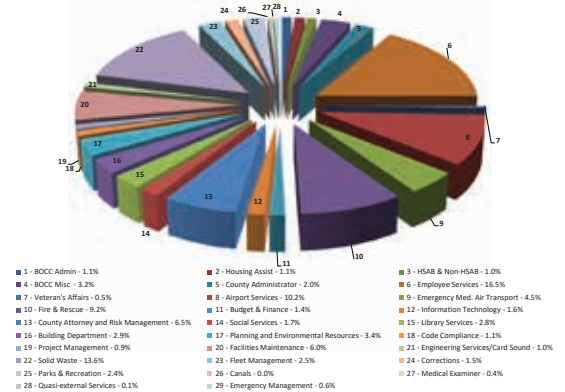
For FY24, the BOCC approved \$2.2 million in property tax revenues to 30 nonprofit human service organizations that provide needed services to vulnerable residents of Monroe County.

DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

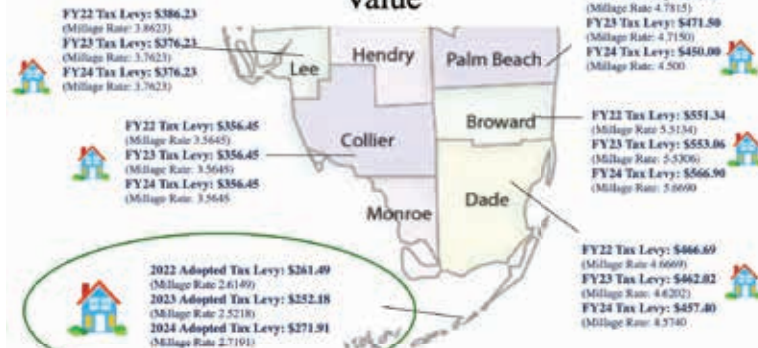
Total FY2024 Budget - \$667,311,304



How is the BOCC portion of the Budget Allocated?



South Florida Ad Valorem Tax Comparison FY2024 Countywide Services – Per \$100,000 of Value



Source: Florida Department of Revenue, Comparison of Property Taxes Levied

The budget is effective from Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 31, 2024. The FY25 Budget timeline will be posted at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/calendar when announced.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

- Held **57** bid openings
- Processed or verified: **2,897** regular requisitions, **40** disaster requisitions, **112** disaster-related invoices, and **939** purchasing card transactions
- **39 out of 65** - Hurricane Irma projects in the close-out process and **17** Hurricane Ian projects are in development or obligated.
- Answered **163** public records requests through the County Attorney's office

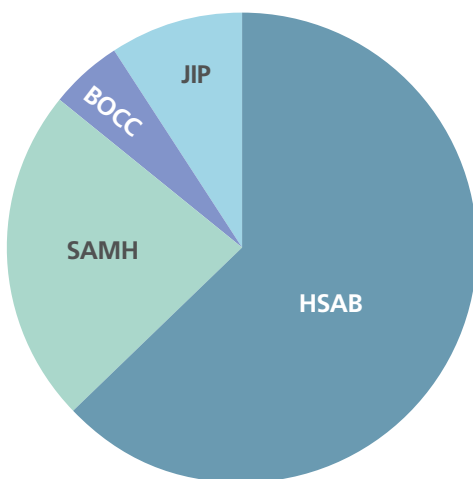
FY24 GRANT FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

HSAB: \$2,203,225 (30 organizations)

BOCC Direct Line-Items: \$175,797

SAMH/Baker Act: \$818,291

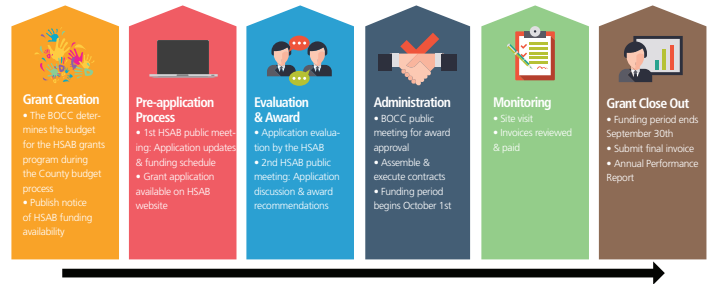
Jail In-House Substance Abuse Treatment Program (JIP): \$304,432



- **HSAB** \$2,203,225 (36%)
- **SAMH** \$818,291 (23%)
- **BOCC DIRECT LINE-ITEMS** \$175,797 (5%)
- **JIP** \$304,432 (9%)

Grand Total=\$3,871,090

HSAB GRANT CYCLE



FY24 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Countywide millage rate: 2.7191 or \$271.91 per \$100,000 of value, the lowest in Florida again. Reflects a property value increase with a total taxable value of \$41.2 billion, another historical high. Property values have doubled in the past 10 years.

Reflects continued investment in roads and bridges, resilience adaptation, facilities, and public safety infrastructure. A number of notable capital projects are funded in whole or in large part with non-local funding and grants. 12 notable projects with \$106 million in total costs have \$83 million in grant funding (78.5 percent of costs).

Funds for expanded programs and public services, like the transit program, community and senior centers, affordable housing projects, library improvements, recreation programs, and playground renovations.

Funds higher operational costs like CPI-based increases for vendor contracts, higher cost of fuel, supplies, and materials, higher utility and property insurance costs, and higher personnel costs.

2. PURCHASING OFFICE

Provides quality purchasing, procurement, and contracting support to all County departments in a timely, cost-effective, professional manner while following a strict code of ethics that promotes fair and open competition.

3. GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

Oversees the funding for competitive, discretionary, and mandatory grant programs funded by the BOCC. The BOCC awarded approximately \$3.5 million in grants designed to promote the well-being of vulnerable families, children, and individuals who live in Monroe County through nonprofit organizations. Other responsibilities include facilitating meetings for the Human Services Advisory Board (HSAB) and Substance Abuse Policy Advisory Board (SAPAB) and for application implementation and monitoring of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant programs, and the Clerk's Drug Abuse Trust Fund.



- 1) www.monroecounty-fl.gov/hsab
- 2) www.monroecounty-fl.gov/sapab

BUILDING AND PERMITTING

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/building
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/permitting



The Building Department, in coordination with Planning and Environmental Resources, protects public health, safety, and the environment by providing permitting for construction and development per Monroe County Code and the Florida Building Code, consistent with Florida Statutes. The department coordinates with other departments to ensure consistency with the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.

The Monroe County Building Department only accepts permit applications on its all-online permitting system. No paper applications or document submissions are accepted. Instructional videos on registering an account, applying for a permit, and a walk-through for applicants to see the application process from start to finish can be found at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/permitting.



Building Official

Rick Griffin
305.289.2521
Griffin-Rick
@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 44
Budget: \$6 million

The department:

- Provides plan review, permitting, and inspection services for compliance with the Florida Building Code, the Monroe County Code, and all other life safety codes.
- Coordinates unsafe structure abatement with Code Compliance and the County Attorney.
- Provides contractor registration, licensing, and testing programs.
- Provides staff support for the Contractor's Examining Board and the Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals.
- Coordinates administration and enforcement of the County's Floodplain regulations, pursuant to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations as required as a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), including its Community Rating System (CRS) for flood insurance discounts, and works with FEMA to review and evaluate new floodplain mapping. Staff works with FEMA to resolve instances of perceived regulatory insufficiencies reported on its National Violations Tracker (NVT) which may violate the County's NFIP participation agreement.
- The department implemented the new Building Safety Inspection Program (BSIP). The program is an initiative by the State of Florida and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners. The BSIP will work in tandem with the Florida Building Code and Monroe County Code.

WHERE TO FIND STATUS OF PERMITS, INSPECTIONS, CONTRACTORS, OR PROPERTY INFORMATION?

Prior to Oct. 3, 2022: MCESEARCH
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/mcesearch

After Oct. 3, 2022: Community Development
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/onlinepermitting

The interfaces allow the public to review the status and information on permits and inspections, search local licensed contractors, and review property information for unincorporated Monroe County.

- Permit searches can be done by the owner's name, address of property, permit or case numbers, and real estate (RE) numbers.
- Contractors can be found in a general "all" search, or by company name, category, license numbers, or contractor ID.

PERMITTING

Permits are required in unincorporated Monroe County for:

- site preparation: land clearing, placement of fill, and excavation
- demolition
- tie-downs of habitable structures
- signs
- fences
- sheds
- new construction and remodeling work of principal and accessory structures
- all work in the electrical, mechanical, and plumbing trades
- all work subject to the County floodplain management requirements
- resource extraction
- any work involving life safety

There are certain residential exceptions for several categories, contact the Building Department with specific questions.

Permitting Offices:

Key Largo: Nelson Gov't Center
102050 Overseas Hwy.
305.453.8800

Marathon Gov't Center

2798 Overseas Hwy., #300
305.289.2501

Big Pine Key

179 Key Deer Blvd.
305.289.2559

Stock Island

5503 College Road #203
305.295.3990

Ocean Reef

11601 CR 905, Key Largo
305.453.8765



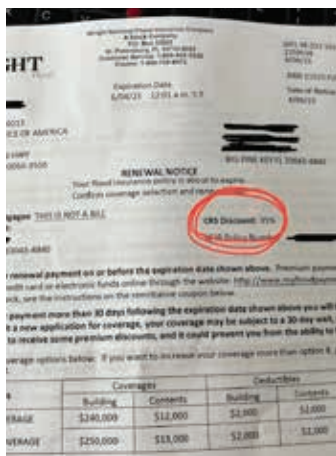
Monroe County codes can be found at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/codes



Building and Permitting
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/building
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/permitting



Sign up for Building
Department notification emails at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/notifyme



COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (CRS)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/crs

Unincorporated Monroe County is a class 3 CRS designation, saving 12,148 National Flood Insurance-backed policyholders approximately \$633 annually.

There are 244 CRS communities in Florida. Unincorporated Monroe County is one of four communities with a class 3 designation. There are no class 2 or class 1 designations, so the county is among the highest-performing communities in Florida.

Annually, brochures are sent to homeowners identifying flood risks.

DID YOU KNOW?

The County entered the CRS program in 2016. To date, participation in the program has saved policyholders approximately \$37 million.



FEMA FLOOD MAP CHANGES

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/floodmaps

The County received preliminary Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps in 2019 demonstrating newly modeled recommended regulatory elevations and risk areas for wave action. Current County zones include AE, VE, and X zones. New zones, like the Coastal AE zone, were added to the maps and will include a boundary showing the Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA) zones, where waves can also be expected to impact the strength of structures. Per the Florida Building Code, structures in a Coastal A zone must also be constructed strong enough to withstand wave action.

The County will be required to formally adopt the maps by ordinance in order for residents to remain eligible for coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program. The maps will be used when reviewing permits to establish finished floor elevation and determine building and site design requirements to reduce future risk of flooding. New lender requirements may go into effect along with flood insurance requirements. Currently, no timeframe has been announced for FEMA to finish reviewing the County's map appeals, nor has an effective date for the new flood maps been set. Once announced, the County will have a six-month advance notice of the new effective date.

Future FEMA mapping elevations will be measured using a different datum standard (NAVD88). Staff will be available to assist the public in understanding how these proposed changes will impact each property owner. Elevation Certificates created under the older datum will remain valid, subject to measurement conversions.

For more information, email floodmaps@monroecounty-fl.gov.

CODE COMPLIANCE

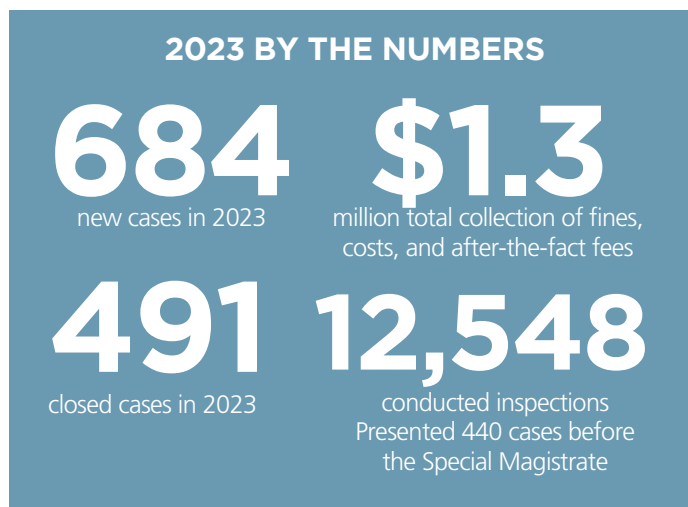
www.monroecounty-fl.gov/codecompliance

Code Compliance provides an equitable method of enforcement of building, zoning, land development, environmental, and other County codes to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of citizens. The department establishes working partnerships with neighborhoods and outside agencies to assist with compliance.

Efforts continue to resolve all open cases focusing on land clearing, unsafe structures, vacation rentals, navigational hazards, and neighborhood blight.

Code Compliance performs field inspections and investigates complaints relating to code and ordinance violations. It also:

- Prioritizes safety violations related to unsafe structures, work without permits, land clearing, sewer connections, and vacation rental violations based on elected official goals for compliance.
- Coordinates removal of abandoned vehicles/vessels, trash and debris, and maintenance of overgrown lots.
- Issues Courtesy Notices for less extreme violations and/or Notices of Violation, with emphasis placed on voluntary compliance, but if a property owner doesn't respond, Code Compliance will proceed with enforcement measures to achieve compliance.
- Provides assistance and information to Special Magistrate and the public regarding Monroe County Code of Ordinances.



- Coordinates litigation efforts with the County Attorney's Office.
- Provides collections of fines/liens related to violations.
- Coordinates with the real estate industry during the sale of property with violations or fines



CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUE:

File a complaint:

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/codecomplaintform

Code case status:

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/mcsearch

In-person or by phone:

Nelson Government Center:

305.453.8806

Marathon Government Center:

305.289.2810

Six General

Code Inspectors address:

- Complaints/violations
- Work without permits
- Abandoned vehicles and watercraft
- High grass and weeds
- Trash and debris
- Vacation Rental
- Wastewater Connection
- Land Clearing
- Unsafe Structures

(Casework includes issuing final orders, filing liens, lien releases, recordings, collections, and mitigation.)

In 2023, Code Compliance accomplished sewer connection compliance in the Florida Keys. Two years ago, more than 1,400 properties had not yet connected to the sewer system; today, only a few homes are not connected or have open permits. Code Compliance reached out to homeowners who had not connected or who had open permits to help them come into compliance. From April 2021 to November 2023, 482 open sewer cases were scheduled for Special Magistrate hearings compared to 490 regular cases, like work without permits, overgrown lots, etc.

The Florida Keys moved to sewers years ago to protect near-shore waters from sewage runoff from septic systems.



Director

Cynthia McPherson
305.289.2508
McPherson-Cynthia@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 15
Budget: \$2.3 million

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/planning



In July 2023, County administration met with FEMA officials in Atlanta, Georgia regarding the County's request to change certain floodplain regulations.

The department's goal is to foster sustainable, quality development in the County while conserving and promoting stewardship of the County's fragile environment, and the unique character of the diverse island communities. The department is responsible for the administration of the Monroe County 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code through the review of all development proposals for compliance with these plans.

The department's functions are handled by the following offices:

PLANNING reviews all development proposals for compliance with the comprehensive plan, including community character, growth management provisions and environmental compliance; and processes amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code based on changing conditions and applicant requests. Services also include transportation planning, administration of the County's affordable housing programs, and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) administration. Email Cioffari-Cheryl@monroecounty-fl.gov.

GIS develops, maintains, and disseminates geographic data and GIS resources for government and public use. GIS is used for FEMA flood mapping plans and remapping district lines, among



Senior Director
Emily Schemper
305.289.2500
Schemper-Emily@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 35
Budget: \$5.8 million

many other uses. Email Davisson-Bryan@monroecounty-fl.gov.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

reviews applications for compliance with environmental regulations, such as habitat identification, landscaping, stormwater, land clearing, and FEMA-required review of potential endangered species impacts under the Permit Referral Process. Staff works to protect the sensitive environment and local endangered species, coordinating with state and federal environmental agencies. The office works with the Monroe County Land Authority and the

Florida Department of Environmental Protection on land acquisition initiatives for conservation and retirement of development rights. Email Roberts-Michael@monroecounty-fl.gov.

MARINE RESOURCES works to protect the nearshore marine environment, ensure public water access, and provide waterway infrastructure for recreational boating. The office manages Boating Improvement Funds and secures marine-related grants to remove derelict vessels, maintain channel markers, and provide pump-out service throughout the Keys. The office also develops boating regulations in coordination with FWC for boater safety and anchoring and mooring management. Email Burtner-Brittany@monroecounty-fl.gov.

WHAT IS ROGO: RATE OF GROWTH ORDINANCE

The Florida Keys are designated as an Area of Critical State Concern by the State Legislature where policies have been adopted to control growth based on the carrying capacity. The carrying capacity is the lowest time required to safely evacuate the Florida Keys in the event of a hurricane, which is based on a state-given 24-hour evacuation model.

ROGO was implemented to provide safety to residents in the event of a hurricane evacuation and to protect the significant natural resources of Monroe County, as required by the State of Florida.

In 2012, the State of Florida mandated no more than 1,970 new housing ROGO unit permits be issued within unincorporated Monroe County through the year 2023. In 2020, staff processed Comprehensive Plan amendments to extend the time frame through 2026.

The incorporated cities within the Florida Keys also have limited ROGO permits to issue. The State's evacuation modeling process is still ongoing in early 2024 and may or may not result in more ROGO units being allotted to the County and municipalities. Visit www.monroecounty-fl.gov/calendar for any scheduled meetings.

MONROE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/firerescue

Monroe County Fire Rescue (MCFR) operates nine fire stations in the Florida Keys from Tavernier to Key West International Airport and Trauma Star air ambulance bases in Marathon and Key West. All certified firefighters are cross-trained as paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), with specialty certifications for flight medics, and Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting personnel (ARFF).

Responsibilities include:

- Fire suppression
- Aircraft Emergency Response (ARFF)
- Advanced ground emergency medical response and transport
- Critical Care Air Ambulance transport (Trauma Star)
- Fire Prevention and Safety education
- All-hazards disaster preparedness
- Countywide firefighting and EMS training
- Fleet services for all fire rescue vehicles and airport operations partnership with KWIA

Emergency response calls for service in 2023 included structure fires, woodland fires, brush fires, trash fires, vehicle fires, marine/boat fires, gas leaks, water-related rescues, vehicle extrication calls, hazardous material spills, aircraft incidents, and emergency medical calls.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

4,939

Total Fire Rescue emergency responses

911

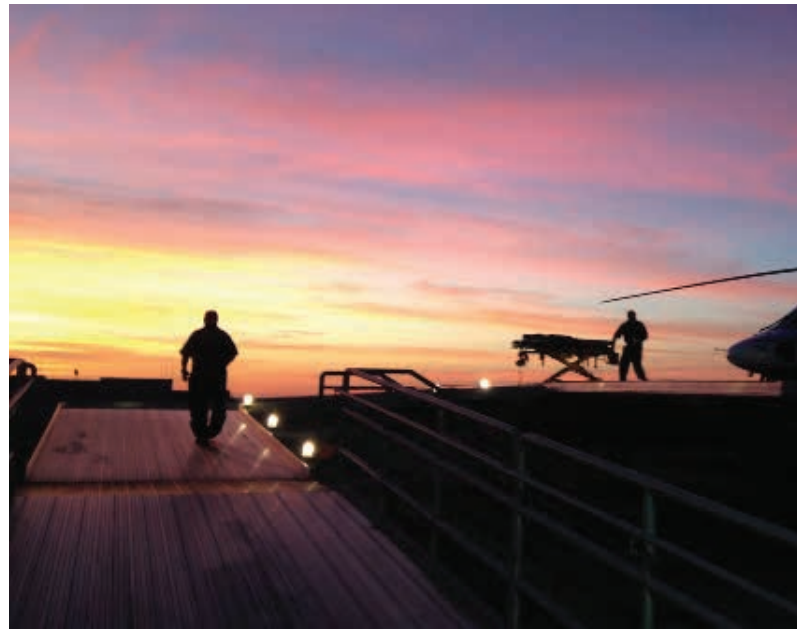
patients airlifted to out-of-county hospitals

3,159

Medical emergency responses by ground ambulance

32%

Trauma Star air transports are related to heart attacks, strokes, traffic accidents, and trauma-related incidents.



TRAUMA STAR

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/traumastar
305.289.6010

Trauma Star is the only air ambulance service in Monroe County and is jointly operated by MCFR and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). The aircraft is staffed by MCSO pilots and MCFR flight nurses and firefighter flight paramedics who are ready to launch at a moment's notice. The primary mission is to provide emergency helicopter transportation to individuals who are critically ill or severely injured, ensuring rapid access to definitive care. Trauma Star transports patients directly from the scene of an emergency and also from local hospitals for interfacility transport of critical patients to out-of-county hospitals for specialty care when ordered by a physician.

There are no out-of-pocket costs for County residents who use Trauma Star. If a Monroe County resident qualifies for a resident fee waiver, the County will seek reimbursement from any private insurance companies, and any remaining unpaid fees will be waived. The waiver form can be found on the Fire Rescue website.

Trauma Star has transported more than 10,000 patients to critical care not available in the Florida Keys since the program's inception in 2001.



Fire Chief

Jim Callahan
305.289.6088
Callahan-James@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 179
Budget: \$35 million



FIRE PREVENTION

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/firemarshal

Fire Prevention provides services to help eliminate fires and works to prevent accidents from happening, including inspections of businesses and multi-unit residences for compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code. The division provides building construction plan reviews, fire cause investigation, life safety code enforcement, occupancy inspections, and community outreach and education, especially to children. Inspection checklists and fees for commercial properties and vacation rental properties can be found on the Fire Rescue website under Fire Prevention.



FIRE TRAINING



HOT SHOTS PROGRAM

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/hotshots

The Board of County Commissioners graduated a sixth class of the "Hot Shots" program in 2023. The program provides free firefighting and first responder training for qualified residents in exchange for a commitment to volunteer for three years or work as a professional firefighter anywhere in the Florida Keys. There have been a total of 157 graduates since the program started. Students who successfully complete all 17 performance objectives will be prepared to take the State of Florida Firefighter I and II exams.



JOE LONDON FIRE ACADEMY

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/fireacademy

Monroe County owns and operates the Joe London Fire Training Academy located on Grassy Key. This facility is one of 51 certified firefighting training centers in Florida. The academy has a classroom facility for educating and training firefighters, as well as a training tower and burn building to prepare trainees to become state-certified firefighters. The academy offers medical and fire training for firefighters/EMTs and paramedics year-round.



AIRCRAFT RESCUE FIREFIGHTING (ARFF)

Station 7 at Key West International Airport (EYW) provides fire, EMS, and ARFF services to travelers. Crash rescue equipment is stationed and maintained on-site. The ARFF unit at EYW undergoes an in-depth FAA Safety inspection annually and continues to pass successfully.

MCFR wants to provide the public with the best services possible. A Customer Satisfaction Survey is available on the Fire Rescue website.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

www.monroecountyem.com



Director

Shannon Weiner
305.289.6012
Weiner-Shannon@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 7
Budget: \$987,366
(\$414,875 in grant funding)



Emergency Management prepares Monroe County to mitigate against, respond to, and recover from any event that might threaten the safety of the County's residents and visitors or impact property and infrastructure.

Emergency Management provides planning, preparedness, and coordination of response activities to events that might impact the infrastructure of Monroe County or the safety of its residents and visitors. Emergencies include weather events, like hurricanes, tornadoes, waterspouts, hazardous materials accidents, mass migration, terrorist activities, large fires, air crashes, civil disorder, nuclear incidents at Turkey Point, or pandemics.

In 2023, Emergency Management continued to work with municipal and infrastructure partners to secure more than \$100 million from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding to harden and protect infrastructure from the impacts of future storms.



In April 2023, AJAX celebrated the "topping off" of the new Monroe County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Marathon. The topping off is the completion of the highest point of the building. Monroe County Mayor Pro Tem Holly Merrill Raschein and Commissioners David Rice, Michelle Lincoln, and Jim Scholl toured the building with County Administrator Roman Gastesi, County Attorney Bob Shillinger, and other key staff who will call the new EOC home. Once finished, the category 5 rated EOC will house Monroe County Emergency Management, Monroe County Fire Rescue administration, and Monroe County Sheriff's Office 9-1-1 call center. The EOC is expected to be completed in spring 2024.

HURRICANE PREPARATION

www.monroecountyem.com/prep

Monroe County is vulnerable to hurricanes and has been hit by big storms, including the 1935 Category 5 Labor Day Hurricane that destroyed Henry Flagler's railroad and, most recently, Hurricane Irma in 2017.

SHELTERS

www.monroecountyem.com/shelters

In-county shelters are only available during category 1 or 2 storms. For stronger storms, shelters are located in Miami. All shelters should be a last resort. Additional services are not provided at shelters. Plan to bring bedding and snacks for up to 72 hours.

Register in advance - Special medical needs: monroecountyem.com/specialneeds
County shelters are pet-friendly. Register in advance at monroecountyem.com/petsregistry.
Prepare a supply or evacuation kit: monroecountyem.com/emergencykit.

RESIDENTIAL REENTRY

www.monroecountyem.com/reentrystickers

Plan to stay at your evacuation destination until it is safe to return. Monitor official sites for reentry information. Do not congregate at checkpoints entering the Keys.

CERT PROGRAM

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/volunteermmonroe

Citizens who go through Monroe County's Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) become part of the volunteer Monroe Emergency Reserve Corps (MERC) and can obtain early reentry placards.



BUSINESS EARLY REENTRY PROGRAM

www.monroecountyem.com/placardprogram

Businesses or organizations that are not represented within the EOC, but believe they have a response mission, can apply for the Business Reentry Placard Program. The placard program enrollment period and applications are announced on the website.



While Emergency Management monitored the threat of several storms this season, Monroe County was fortunate to convene the countywide coordinating call for only one storm this hurricane season. Hurricane Idalia threatened, but stayed west of Monroe County before making landfall in Florida's Big Bend region. Idalia brought 1-2 foot storm surge in addition to already high tides throughout the Lower Keys, causing localized flooding.

IF A STORM THREATENS, the best place to get information is through official channels, found on page 8.

- Everyone Needs to Have a Plan Determine your evacuation destination: to a relative, friend, motel, hotel, or public shelter (as a last resort).
- Gather needed supplies for at least three days, including cash, medicine, and pet food.
- Keep gas in your vehicle and ensure it is in good working order.
- Put up storm shutters and take other protective measures, including securing lawn furniture and tying down boats.
- Review your insurance policies and coverage and take photos and/or video footage of your property. Visually inspect your home and property.
- Charge your cell phone and make sure you have batteries for your portable radio.
- Follow official instructions and monitor official sites.

Coming Soon: Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Monroe County Project Management broke ground on the 28,321 square foot EOC in October 2022 at the Florida Keys Marathon International Airport. The design will withstand 220 mph winds with an impact rating for Wind-borne Debris Missile Criteria for Hurricane Shelter Safe Rooms. The first-floor elevation will be 17 feet above ground to account for wave action.

- The EOC will be self-sustaining for 72 hours for up to 150 people, including food,

water, electric, and wastewater storage with emergency communications via satellite phone/internet service.

- Occupants will include Emergency Management offices and Incident Command Center, 911 call center (24/7/365 operation), and Monroe County Fire Rescue headquarters.
- Cost: \$30.9 million funded through direct 2020 State legislative appropriation, FEMA/FDEM HMGP Grant, and FDOT airport grant.

Target completion: April 2024

EMPLOYEE SERVICES

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/EmployeeServices



NEED A JOB?

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/jobs

Monroe County hires about 105 employees each year in various positions and departments. For job openings and employment applications, visit the website or apply in person at computer kiosks located in the Historic Gato Building in Key West, Marathon Government Center, and the Key Largo library. Monroe County staff can also be found at numerous job fairs hosted throughout the county during the year.



Director

Bryan Cook
305.292.4458
Cook-Bryan
@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 11
Budget: \$38 million

The Employee Services Department provides guidance and information to the County's 634 full and part-time employees and the public. The department works to maintain a ready workforce that is talented, fairly compensated, healthy, diverse, and safety-minded while keeping pace with the evolving needs and goals of Monroe County.

The department includes:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Manages all matters relating to the County's most valuable resource, its employees, and is responsible for:

- Managing job recruitment, selection, and promotion
- Developing and overseeing employee compensation and job classifications
- Developing, promoting, and enforcing personnel policies
- Promoting employee career development and job training
- Providing orientation programs for new hires
- Providing guidance regarding disciplinary actions

GROUP INSURANCE BENEFITS

Provides and administers health, prescription, dental, vision, and life coverage to more than 2,650 BOCC and Constitutional Officer employees, retirees, and dependent spouses and children.

The County continues to offer health plan participants an opportunity to reduce the cost of employee premiums via the Passport to Wellness Program. Participants can save \$300 each year by participating in preventative health screenings.

Despite healthcare industry costs rising, the department has been able to maintain employee/retiree costs for medical, dental, vision and supplemental life.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Provides safety training and programs and workers' compensation to more than 1,700 BOCC employees and Constitutional Officer employees. Manages security programs and systems for County employees, buildings, and other assets.

The County continues to work towards enhancing safety and security for employees, the public, and county assets by expanding access control systems.

In addition to serving County employees, the Benefits and Safety offices provide services to the Monroe County Land Authority and the five Constitutional Officer agencies: Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Property Appraiser, Clerk of the Court, Tax Collector, and Supervisor of Elections.

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER



TANIA STOUGHTON

*FLEET BUSINESS MANAGER,
EMPLOYEE OF THE FIRST QUARTER*

Tania Stoughton first worked for the County from 2001-2004, when she left due to her husband's military assignments. She returned in 2011.

Stoughton was nominated by co-worker Generator Technician Lyle Tabb, who said her attention to detail and management of vendor contracts sets Monroe County fleet above the others. Fleet operates and manages County garages, vehicles, fuel, and generators, among other things.

"We technicians always have information on the front end, proactively, whenever there is a change or an update," said Tabb. "She is always professional, precise, and if she doesn't have an answer right away, she follows up quickly."



JANET GUNDERSON

*SENIOR GRANTS COORDINATOR,
EMPLOYEE OF THE SECOND
QUARTER*

Janet Gunderson started with the County in June 2016 and was nominated by Chief Resilience Officer Rhonda Haag, who said she went above and beyond when the resilience office was overwhelmed with an unprecedented amount of contracts, invoices, and grants in the department.

"Janet was able to step in and not only help process the tremendous workload but also fix outstanding financial issues," said Haag. "Without Janet's help, there would be fewer grants to the County, slower processing of millions of dollars in invoices, and potential late grant reports."

Gunderson continued to fulfill her job responsibilities in OMB, train another person to take on her previous workload, and carry out the duties of both departments. "She is the epitome of effectiveness and determinedness," said Haag.



BRADLEY ALBRIGHT

*BUILDING INSPECTOR AND PLANS
EXAMINER, EMPLOYEE OF THE
THIRD QUARTER*

Bradley Albright started with the County in March 2022 and was nominated by several of his co-workers, including customer service representatives Nicole Kozash, Lian Chamizo, Sara Lopez, and Permitting Administrator Crystal Sebben. They said he was a key player in helping explain the new online permitting system and is always willing to answer questions from staff and customers with knowledgeable answers and a positive attitude.

"Brad has gained the trust of the department and the customers in such a short time," said Sebben. "I feel Brad is an ideal employee who demonstrates Monroe County's values and is an outstanding employee who more than deserves this award."

ENGINEERING SERVICES AND ROADS MAINTENANCE

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/Engineering

The department includes Engineering Services, Upper and Lower Keys Roads Maintenance Departments, and the Card Sound Toll Authority.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Management of engineering design, permitting, and construction of county transportation infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, bridges, shared-use paths, and associated stormwater management systems.
- Review of right-of-way permit applications, issuance of permits, and inspection of work for conformance to county requirements.
- Review of property development/redevelopment applications and road abandonment applications for impacts on county roads and rights-of-way.
- Performing ongoing maintenance on 311 miles of county-maintained roads and 26 bridges, including cutting vegetation, fixing potholes, cleaning storm drains, repairing roadway shoulders, addressing flooding complaints, installing signage, sweeping, and maintaining bicycle and shared-use paths.

DUCK KEY BRIDGE UPDATE

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/duckkey

The work to replace the Bimini Drive Bridge on Duck Key began in 2016 when the county initiated the federal and state-required Cultural Resource Assessment Survey prior to replacing historically notable transportation infrastructure. Construction was substantially completed in September 2023.

The four bridges that connect the islands on Duck Key are considered significant due to the arch geometry and decorative railings. The engineering design met the current design standards while maintaining the historic arch geometry and decorative railing aesthetic.



Director

Judy Clarke, P.E.
305.295.4390
Clarke-Judith@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 36
Budget: \$51 million

The County approved the construction contract to replace the Seaview Drive Bridge in 2022. The contractor started in January 2023 and is scheduled to complete the replacement in July 2024.



KEY WEST: BERTHA STREET AND 1ST STREET

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/roadprojects

Monroe County's 1st Street and Bertha Street Roadway and Drainage Improvement Project in Key West was completed in 2023. The work consisted of the reconstruction and resurfacing of the two roads, the installation of a new stormwater collection system on Bertha Street, and the rehabilitation of the existing stormwater collection system on 1st Street.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

300

miles buzz bar operations

337 miles of sweeping

604 drain cleaning and inspections

1,149 miles mowing operations

411 linear feet of trench drains refurbished

459 Stop Bars Repainted

Sign Shop:

1,145 new signs installed or replaced
377 new posts installed
364 utility locates performed

Material Pick-Up:

3,474 tons of fill

Trash Picked Up:

185 tons

Seaweed Removal at

Harry Harris Park:

40 tons

Shoulder Work:

88 roads using 952 tons of material

Material Used to Fill Pot

Holes and repair roads:

512 tons

Coconuts Removed:

107 tons

130: right-of-way permits reviewed, issued, and inspected

115 miles: weed eating/cutting operations

Lower Keys hurricane debris removal: 153 tons

TRANSIT

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/transit



IMPROVING MOBILITY.

Enhancing Opportunities. Connecting Communities.



Director

Richard Clark
305.809.5210
Clark-Richard@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 1
Budget: \$626,000

The primary goal of Monroe County Transit is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Monroe County and its five municipalities by providing a public transit system that reduces congestion, has frequent and reliable service, and is safe to ride.

A modern and efficient system needs to be planned, designed, and built specifically for the uniqueness of Monroe County and its diverse communities. This process started with a year-long effort to look at how service is being offered today. Public meetings were held with elected of-

ficials, organizations, and the general public, with over 1,200 surveyed about how service is being provided today and what they would like to see in the future.

CARD SOUND TOLL AUTHORITY

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/cardsoundtoll

The Engineering Department is responsible for the Card Sound Toll. The electronic toll uses Toll-By-Plate, SunPass, and EZ Pass. No cash is accepted at the toll. The toll funds maintenance costs of the road and future repair and replacement of the five bridges along Card Sound Road.

Two discount programs are available for travelers with two-axle vehicles who use SunPass and have an account in good standing. In 2023, 279 annual passes were sold. More information on the monthly discount program, which requires no enrollment, and the annual pass program can be found on the website.

MONROE COUNTY TO LAUNCHES FIRST TRANSIT SERVICE

In early 2024, the first service offered by Monroe County Transit will begin serving residents on Stock Island and Key West to improve mobility and accessibility for residents of the County utilizing an on-demand, micro-transit service. Riders can hail, use an app, or book in advance.

This curb-to-curb service will help meet current ridership demands for Stock Island and Key West. It will allow residents to get to and from work, run critical errands for groceries and prescriptions, and safely enjoy a night out. This service will also serve as a model for other inter-island transit options as Monroe County Transit grows to serve the entire County.

Existing Conditions Analysis: A Glimpse into Transit Realities: Our existing conditions analysis serves as a cornerstone for progress, offering a detailed understanding of our current transit landscape. This comprehensive study scrutinizes ridership patterns, assesses infrastructure needs, addresses accessibility challenges, and captures the collective aspirations of Monroe County residents. It is a roadmap that guides us toward a transit system that evolves with our community's diverse and ever-changing needs.

Technological Advancements: Our vision includes embracing cutting-edge technology to enhance the efficiency and user-friendliness of transit services. Real-time tracking, mobile ticketing, and innovative planning tools are on the horizon.

Sustainable Initiatives: Environmental stewardship is a priority. We are exploring eco-friendly alternatives, such as electric buses, and championing initiatives to promote sustainable transportation methods, positioning Monroe County at the forefront of green transit solutions.

Community-Centric Planning: The heart of our transit evolution is community engagement. Forums, surveys, and collaborative initiatives will be central to ensuring that the community's voice shapes the transit system's transformation.

Your Voice Matters: Shaping Monroe County's Transit Future: As we embark on this transformative journey, your active participation is crucial. We invite every resident to engage in upcoming events, community forums, and surveys that will shape the direction of Monroe County's transit future. Together, let's navigate the path to a connected, sustainable, and vibrant future for Monroe County.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/fleet



Fleet Management operates, manages, and continues to improve County garages located in Rockland Key, Marathon, and Plantation Key. The department provides safety inspections, maintenance, and repairs for approximately 997 units, which include approximately 346 Monroe County Sheriff's Office vehicles.

Fleet maintains safety and environmental accountability, including large-capacity fuel tanks, fuel pumps, and backup generators. The department provides fuel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at the fully automated sites for County staff and the Monroe County School Board, even during electrical power outages. Fleet is always in hurricane preparation mode with in-house maintenance, inspections, repairs, and refueling for Monroe County's 70-plus emergency generators.

Additionally, the Fleet Department:

- Resolves manufacturer's vehicle and equipment safety recalls.
- Manages outside warranty, accident repairs, and other outsourced contract maintenance and repairs.
- Operates and maintains a preventative maintenance and repair tracking system, a fuel management tracking system, and the GPS vehicle and equipment tracking system.
- Manages and administers County Fleet contracts and written agreements.



Director

Daryl Greenlee
305.292.3452
Greenlee-Daryl@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 20
Budget: \$4.6 million

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

5,393

work orders completed in addition to performing preventative maintenance, repairs, and safety inspections

127,811 gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel dispensed

79.66%

of all repairs completed within 24 hours

96.39%

scheduled repairs performed

3.61%

non-scheduled repairs performed

Completed the sale of **26** surplus vehicles and equipment



NEED A NEW VEHICLE?

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/surplus

Fleet Management sells surplus vehicles and equipment 3 to 4 times annually.

2024 Goals

- Obtain the Certified Fleet Management Operation Fleet Certification by passing 120 specific certification criteria and addressing 20 critical areas of fleet management.
- Rate in the 100 Best Fleets in the Americas award and the Leading Fleets award that recognizes peak-performing fleet operations.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND PUBLIC WORKS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/facilities

Facilities Maintenance staff is often found helping other departments throughout the County with moving heavy and large items.

Facilities Maintenance and Public Works is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and operations of County-owned buildings. When a facility needs significant repair or improvement, the department collaborates with the Project Management and Parks and Beaches departments.

The department maintains more than a million square feet of County space and leased properties throughout the Keys. These include public facilities and offices, correctional facilities, historic properties, museums, parks, beaches, and boat ramps. The department is also responsible for testing air quality, certifying and maintaining alarm systems, and maintaining elevators.

The department has offices in Rockland Key, Big Pine Key, Marathon, and Key Largo.

Infrastructure

The County owns and is responsible for vital infrastructure throughout the Florida Keys, including some infrastructure located within Monroe County's five municipalities.

The County's infrastructure:

- 2 airports
- 23 parks and beaches
- 8 boat ramps
- 1 community pool
- 311 miles of County-maintained roads
- 26 County-owned bridges
- 5 libraries
- 3 government centers
- 3 courthouses
- 4 senior centers
- 4 museums
- 9 fire stations
- Fire training facility
- Medical Examiner's facility
- Several historic buildings
- State Attorney, Public Defender, & Supervisor of Elections offices
- Various other facilities throughout the Florida Keys used for County operations



Facilities Director

William DeSantis
305.292.4532
DeSantis-William@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 82
Budget: \$10.1 million



CORRECTION FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Manager: Derek Nappi

Nappi-Derek@monroecounty-fl.gov

Sr. Coordinator: Martina Lake

Lake-Martina@monroecounty-fl.gov

Employees: 10

The Correction Facilities Maintenance Department provides 24-hour, routine, and emergency maintenance to Monroe County Sheriff's Office's (MCSO) three detention facilities, three substations, the headquarters building, the gun range, the Trauma Star hangar, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and court holding. The employees are skilled in plumbing, air conditioning, locksmithing, electrical, carpentry, and appliance repair on industrial levels. This is required to provide the best support services for maintaining multiple well-functioning and safe facilities throughout Monroe County.

The department:

- Provides routine maintenance to all MCSO buildings to assure safety and security.
- Ensures that all accreditation standards are met by Correction Facility Public Works while working closely with MCSO deputies.
- Assists with developing new MCSO buildings and improvements on an expert level.

2023 Accomplishments:

- Buildout of Big Pine Senior/ Community Center for joint use by Social Services and Parks and Beaches
- Conversion of the old Plantation Key Courthouse to a Community/Activity Center for Parks and Beaches
- Remodeled and updated several offices in the Jackson Square Complex
- Repainted and sealed the African Memorial at Higgs Beach and upgraded the decorative fencing and lighting for the Memorial
- Repainted the Murals at the Big Pine Fire Station
- Coordinated the fumigation and tenting of the Harvey Government Center for termites

COUNTY PARKS & BEACHES

www.parksandbeaches.fun

Parks and Beaches strives to provide quality facilities, amenities, and services to meet the recreation needs of the entire Florida Keys community by leveraging the efforts of our staff, volunteers, and partners. We create opportunities to enjoy life, explore nature, and energize your health. The department maintains 23 properties, covering more than 100 acres of the island chain. Certain parks have community rooms, shelters and other amenities that can be reserved by the public.

CHAMPIONING SUCCESS: Committed to fostering continuous growth, staff are certified in numerous fields, including Turfgrass, Sea Turtle Conservation, Safety Playground Inspector, Sports Field Maintenance Management, Athletic Field Training, American Red Cross First Aid, CPR & AED and Water Safety Instructor, Master Project Manager, and various leadership roles in the community.



FIELD PREPARATION & MAINTENANCE: Our dedicated team consistently upholds a superior standard, implementing substantial enhancements across the entirety of the Keys.



PLAYGROUND: New playground at Key Largo community Park was installed in February 2023. More playground updates coming soon.

FITNESS EQUIPMENT: New state of the art equipment installed at various parks.



COURT SPORTS: Expanding Countywide.

ADA ACCESSIBLE: Beach Chairs Available (do not need to reserve).

DOG PARK: Additional parks coming soon.



RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Countywide - Community partnerships, leagues and other recreational opportunities are being established. Call 305.453.8748 for information.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLORIDA:

Proud supporter of the Special Olympics Florida - Coaching, Practice and Olympic Games.

DISC GOLF at KEY LARGO PARK:

Is a flying disc sport in which players throw a disc at a target using rules similar to golf.



Director

John Allen

305.453.8748

Allen-John

@monroecounty-fl.gov

Employees: 28

Budget: \$5 million



COMMUNITY CENTERS AND PAVILIONS: Big Pine Key and Plantation Key community centers are open daily and offer the space for different classes, programs, and meetings for our community.



KEYS KIDS SWIM is a water safety and swim lesson program that provides FREE swim lessons to students in kindergarten. During the pilot program in May 2023, kindergarten students from Key Largo School, received swimming lessons and water safety training five days a week for 45 minutes a day for two weeks. 67 students graduated from the program. The pilot Keys Kids Swim program was a collaboration between Jacob's Aquatic Center in Key Largo, Monroe County School District, and Monroe County Parks and Beaches.



BOAT RAMPS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/boatramps

- BIG COPPITT KEY**
Gulf View Boat Ramp, MM 9.3
- BIG PINE KEY**
Koehn Ave., MM 30.8
Bayside
Eden Pines, MM 30.8
Bayside
- CUDJOE KEY**
Blimp Road, MM 21.2
Bayside

- GEIGER KEY**
Geiger Key Boat Launch, next door to Geiger Key Marina, Atlantic Side
- KEY LARGO**
Mike Forster Memorial Park, MM 95.2
- LITTLE TORCH KEY**
State Road 4A, MM 28.5
Bayside
- TAVERNIER**
Harry Harris Park, MM 92.5, Atlantic Side

SCHOOL BREAK CAMPS AT BIG PINE COMMUNITY PARK, SUGARLOAF SCHOOL & PLANTATION KEY COMMUNITY CENTER

Parks and Beaches hosted its very first summer camp at Big Pine Key Community Park and Sugarloaf School for three weeks. Kids from the surrounding islands explored local parks, visited the Turtle Hospital, and had weekly visits from FWC. Due to its success, the camp will be offered again this year and also during spring and winter break.



COUNTY PARKS & BEACHES

- BIG COPPITT KEY**
Big Coppitt Volunteer Fire Department Park
Wilhelmina Harvey Park
- BIG PINE KEY**
Big Pine Key Community Park
Blue Heron Park
Palm Villa Park
Pine Channel Nature Park
Watson Field Park and Big Pine Key Dog Park
- KEY LARGO**
Friendship Park
Rowell's Waterfront Park
Key Largo Community Park & Pool
Peace Park - behind Murray Nelson Government Center

- KEY WEST**
Higgs Beach
Key West Pines Park
- GEIGER KEY**
Boca Chica Beach
- RAMROD KEY**
Ramrod Park
- SADDLEBUNCH KEYS**
Bay Point Park
- SUGARLOAF KEY**
Sugarloaf School
- STOCK ISLAND**
Bernstein Park
- TAVERNIER**
Old Settlers Park
Harry Harris Park
- LITTLE DUCK KEY**
Veterans Memorial Beach



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/projectmanagement

Monroe County Project Management contracts and builds all new public facilities for Monroe County, manages assigned special projects, and serves as the Tourist Development Council's grant compliance inspection service.

The department also manages all capital improvement projects for existing buildings, parks, beaches, and boat ramps, and currently manages capital projects with a total multi-year capital construction budget of \$100 million.

The department provides information and resources needed to make informed decisions. The One-Cent Infrastructure Sales Tax funds the majority of the work. Grant awards account for significant supplemental capital funding.

In 2023, the department assisted or was directly responsible for more than \$20 million in grant awards.

The services provided include:

- **Facilities Five-Year Capital Planning**
- **Capital Improvement Construction**
- **Capital Expansion Construction**
- **Cost Forecasting**
- **Scheduling**

See Projects in Real Time

Project Management debuted job site construction cameras in 2019. The job site cameras are solar-powered and upload images to a cloud-based system every minute. Images are assembled within the cloud to create a time-lapse video of the construction site. County staff and the engineering team can view the site in real-time by streaming high-definition video or on-demand historical surveillance video from start to finish of the project. The camera data is also uploaded to the project's webpage for anyone who is interested from the public.

MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Monroe County Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The \$30 million project is on target for an opening in early 2024. The building will house County Emergency Management, Fire Rescue Administration, a new 911 call center, and an incident command center which will double as an emergency management training site when not in use during declared disasters. The building is designed to support 150 people for three days with no outside support allowing key staff to ride out any storm and maintain continuity of operations.

Supervisor of Elections Office: This is a complete repurposing of the former assisted living facility of Stock Island. It brings all of the Supervisor of Elections space including secure voting machine storage into a single location which also serves as the lower Keys elections office, early voting site, and election canvassing site. It was completed in December 2023.

Public Defender's Office: This new site at 316 Simonton Street converted a historic building with a long Key West history to a state of the art office for the County's Public Defender. The conversion retained the historic facade but updated the building to current codes..

TDC Funds Five Monroe County Bricks-and-Mortar Projects

The Tourist Development Council awarded Project Management bricks-and-mortar grant funding for five projects throughout the Florida Keys totaling \$2.28 million in 2023.

The funding includes two Monroe County Parks and Beaches projects for pool refurbishments at Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo and the construction of a bandshell at Big Pine Key Community Park. Project Management also secured funding for restoring the historical brickwork at Fort East Martello in Key West, along with window and air conditioning unit upgrades on the property, and ADA bathroom improvements at the Key West Lighthouse.

The TDC bricks-and-mortar grants are funded through a percentage of the bed taxes charged to those who stay in Florida Keys lodging accommodations and can be used by government and nonprofits to make repairs or upgrades to tourism-related infrastructure.



Project Management Receives Two Historic Preservation Ceramic Star Awards for Pigeon Key Restorations

The Historic Florida Keys Foundation presented two ceramic star awards to Monroe County Project Management for its preservation work of the Pigeon Key Honeymoon Cottage and Commissary buildings. Hurricane Irma heavily damaged both buildings in 2017, knocking them off their foundations. This is Project Management's sixth preservation award in three years.

"This was an incredibly complex and challenging project considering its size and numerous historic hurdles," said Assistant County Administrator Kevin Wilson. "Additionally, the project started during COVID, and all the construction materials had to be brought to the island via boat."

Pigeon Key, located off Marathon and connected by the Old 7 Mile Bridge, is best known for its significant role in the construction and operation of the Florida East Coast Railway. Both wood-frame buildings were initially supposed to be temporary and are excellent examples of construction on the island during that time. The commissary building construction started in 1913, and the Honeymoon Cottage, directly adjacent to it, began in 1942.

Surviving historical materials, such as doors, windows, flooring, and porch components, were salvaged and reused wherever possible. When required, new material was selected to match the existing historical details, including the original profiles and dimensions. The work also involved removing or replacing non-historic features added over the years.

To learn more about Pigeon Key, visit www.pigeon-key.net.

Director

Open

305.292.4527

wilson-kevin

@monroecounty-fl.gov

Employees: 11

Budget: \$100 million



LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/legislativeaffairs

The department performs the following functions:

- Develops Monroe County's annual federal and state legislative agendas, identify priority legislation and appropriations, and determine specific strategies for achieving those priorities.
- Advances County's federal and state legislative priorities while guarding against legislation that negatively impacts Monroe County.
- Directs and manages federal and state lobbyists, assigns tasks, confers weekly, and tracks progress.
- Monitors congressional and state legislation, agency regulatory actions, preemptions, and budgets for potential impacts to Monroe County; advises Commissioners and staff with appropriate actions.
- Schedules and manages legislator and agency meetings, fly-ins, etc., and prepares itineraries, written materials, and legislative packages.
- Prepares all written legislative communications, including talking points, tri-folds, leave-behinds, and resolutions.
- Represents Monroe County in statewide and national legislative organizations, like FAC, Small County Coalition, Climate Compact, Gulf Coast Parishes and Counties, and NACO.

THE DEPARTMENT OVERSEES AND MONITORS:

- Restore Act Program in response to the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill in 2010
- Local Multi-Year Implementation Plan and monitoring of the Gulf Consortium's State Expenditure Plan, management of local pot and Consortium pot grant funds, and development and submission of applications for this funding
- Legislatvie funding is related to Everglades Restoration and protection of Florida Bay
- Licensing and remediation activities related to the Turkey Point Nuclear Facility.

2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

This year, the County's federal priorities include:

- Protection of affordable flood insurance and the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) with reforms that address Risk Rating 2.0.
- Affordable flood insurance protects property owners, property values, local tax revenue, and economic activity. Monroe County remains highly concerned about the new impacts of Risk Rating 2.0 on premiums, as well as the ongoing impacts of the current and unsustainable glide paths (18 percent for homes, and 25 percent for commercial properties.)

- Federal investment in infrastructure and resilience projects. The County is in the midst of a massive effort to make the Keys more resilient in the face of sea level rise and persistent severe flooding (\$1.8 billion county road elevation/drainage program) and more investment from the federal government will flow down to local governments to help our local initiatives.
- Funding for the following Army Corps of Engineers programs that directly benefit Monroe County:
 - Coastal Storm Mitigation Program
 - Florida Keys Water Quality Improvement Program
 - Everglades Restoration
- Support coral reef conservation efforts, congressional funding for disaster mitigation and recovery, changes to the Emergency Watershed Program, and funding for seniors, veterans, housing, and social services.
- Oppose oil drilling and exploration, lease expansion, and seismic testing.
- Federal appropriations



Director

Lisa Tennyson
305.509.1709
Tennyson-Lisa@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 1



STATE REPRESENTATION

State Representative James "Jim" Mooney

myfloridahouse.gov
District 120
District Office: Nelson
Gov't Center 102050
Overseas Hwy, Key Largo
305.453.1202

State Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez

flsenate.gov
District 36
District Office: 8401 NW
53rd Terrace, Doral, FL
850.487.5039

Gov. Ron DeSantis flgov.com

400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850.717.9337

FEDERAL REPRESENTATION

Senator Marco Rubio

rubio.senate.gov
Miami Office: 7400 SW
87th Ave., Suite 270,
Miami, FL 33173
305.596.4224 - Miami
202.224.3011 - D.C.

Senator Rick Scott rickscott.senate.gov

Miami Office:
901 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
Miami, FL 33134
786.501.7141 - Miami
202.224.5274 - D.C.

Rep. Carlos Gimenez

gimenez.house.gov
District 26
Key West office: 1100
Simonton St., Suite 1-123
202.225.2778 - D.C.

2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The 2024 session runs from Jan.9 through March 8.

Monroe County's priorities include:

- **\$25 million appropriation through the Florida Keys Stewardship Act (FKSA):** \$20 million for water quality projects, like canal restoration, and \$5 million is for land acquisition, and have the **Stewardship Act funded in the State's Land Acquisition Trust Fund** that funds environmental priorities annually with documentary stamp taxes.
- Maintain **Citizens' annual rate cap at 10%**, raise the Citizens' value cap of primary homes to \$1.5M, require only properties at flood risk to carry flood insurance, and allow that wind and flood policies not "be identical" as they relate to contents coverage.
- **Expand the eligible uses for Tourist Development Tax-generated funds** to include affordable/workforce housing for tourism sector workers.
- **Temporary flexibility to Monroe County's SHIP program** regarding its income distribution requirements to ensure Monroe County can use the full allocation to assist qualified families.
- **Ad valorem property tax relief** to owners of privately owned rental properties that voluntarily comply with affordability criteria.
- Marine protection appropriation **for the development of mooring field** shoreside facilities, support changes to the State's **Derelict Vessel Grant Program** to improve removal timeframes, support statutory language to define and classify "**migrant vessel**" to allow for their immediate removal, and support continued DEP funding and management of the **County**

marine vessel pump-out program.

- Support legislation for continuing **local licensing programs** for small, specialty tradespeople and contractors by repealing preemption and **clarifying Monroe's exemption** (carve-out) language.
- Funding for Monroe's projects submitted to the **Resilient Florida grant program** and for elevation/buyout/demo-rebuild programs, and reduce the 50% match requirement.
- **Protecting Monroe County's** local comprehensive plan **regulations from preemptions.**
- **Opposing Monroe County from preemptive vacation rental legislation.**
- Protecting Home Rule



FLORIDA KEYS DAY 2024

Monroe County Commissioners, senior staff, city officials, community leaders, and local business owners travel to the state capital for the Annual Florida Keys Day, a day set aside in Tallahassee to discuss all things Florida Keys related. The 2024 date is Jan. 25. Rep. Mooney and Sen. Rodriguez's offices host the event, contact floridakeysdays@gmail.com for more information.



SOCIAL SERVICES

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/socialservices

In 2023, approximately 34,000 meals were provided to seniors countywide.

Monroe County Social Services provides a holistic approach to case management, interim financial assistance, medical assistance, and other life-sustaining supportive assistance to eligible individuals and families needing these services throughout Monroe County. Social Services assists a growing and diverse population with a number of long-standing local, state, and federal programs.

OFFICES

- Key West: Gato Building
- Key Largo: Tradewinds Plaza
- Satellite Office: Marathon, 63rd Street Government Annex

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS INCLUDE

- Assistive Device Loaner Program: Loans equipment like wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, electric scooters, shower chairs, bedside commodes, etc. This program is need-based, not eligibility-based.
- Consumable Supplies: Provides adult diapers/briefs, bed pads, wipes, disposable gloves, nutritional drinks, etc. to eligible individuals who cannot afford them.
- Energy Assistance: The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is a federally-funded program that helps low-income households with home energy bills.
- Indigent/Pauper Cremations and Burials: Cover final expenses for those deemed indigent or paupers. **In 2023, Social Services handled 78 cremations.**
- Medical Assistance: Medical or dental financial help can be provided in emergency situations.
- Nutrition Services: Hot, fresh, congregate meals or frozen home-delivered meals are provided throughout all areas in the Florida Keys.
- In-Home Services: Homemaking, personal care, chores, companionship for the elderly, shopping assistance, in-home or facility-based respite, and group and individual caregiver training to eligible elderly and disabled individuals throughout Monroe County.
- Feeding South Florida (FSF) Partner: Many older adults throughout Monroe County are homebound due to the inability to drive, lack of transportation, illness, or inability to travel alone. To ensure these seniors receive the proper nutrition necessary for a healthier life, Social Services partners with FSF to conduct intake, determine eligibility, and then deliver food boxes to homes weekly. Boxes contain fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, canned foods, beans, pasta, and more.

- Alzheimer's Disease Initiative and Older Americans Act: Provides in-home service to the elderly and disabled adult citizens of Monroe County.
- State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP): Administers funding countywide to assist homeowners with SHIP Disaster Mitigation, SHIP Sewer Lateral Connections, and SHIP Rehabilitation. SHIP Homeownership Assistance is available via a 30-year forgivable loan for eligible applicants.
- Prescription Medication Assistance: Covers the cost of prescription medications and/or over-the-counter medications as prescribed by a physician for eligible individuals who either have no insurance, inadequate insurance, or cannot afford the co-payment.
- Weatherization Assistance Program: This federal program assists Monroe County's income-eligible families in improving the energy efficiency of their homes with critical repairs, renovations, and installation of cost-saving energy measures.
- Monroe County Special Transportation Services (STS): Door-to-door transportation for the elderly, disabled, and transportation disadvantaged. This allows transportation disadvantaged citizens to remain independent by assisting them in getting to and from required trips, medical appointments, etc. Citizens who are 60 years and older ride free.



Senior Director

Sheryl Graham
305.292.4510
Graham-Sheryl@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 35
Budget: \$6 million
(includes \$3.5 million in grants)



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/informationtechnology

Monroe County Information Technology (IT) provides efficient, reliable, and cost-effective technology, telephone, and video services to County employees, the Constitutional Officers, the Public Defender, the State Attorney's Office, the 16th Judicial Circuit Court, the Medical Examiner, Land Authority, Tourist Development Council, and the Arts Council. The department strives to be innovative and resourceful to support the IT needs of Monroe County.

SERVICES INCLUDE

- End-user computing support from the Service Desk, supplies and maintains desktops/laptops, monitors, phones, software, printers, etc.
- Infrastructure support services for IT infrastructure, including the data center, networks, servers, telecommunications, hardware, etc.
- Applications support for enterprise software, business systems, and web integration.
- Services for project management and procurement.
- TV broadcast and audio-visual needs through Monroe County Television (MCTV).

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Upgraded Monroe County's core server infrastructure to meet increasing demand and higher levels of performance
- Improved overall network redundancy and resilience by optimizing existing infrastructure and adding additional network capabilities
- Installed and configured core network and phone services to multiple new locations in support of the BOCC, the Sheriff, and other Constitutional Officers
- Upgraded and improved employee and citizen wireless access coverage across multiple core government buildings

2024 GOALS

- Extend our usage of the Oracle Community Development online application to include Code Compliance and Planning
- Replace legacy document storage application (Alchemy) with modern alternative (Laserfiche)
- Continue to extend MCTV, both through additional distribution as well as through the generation of original content



Director

Alan MacEachern
305.453.8792
MacEachern-Alan@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 14
Budget: \$3 million

MONROE COUNTY TELEVISION (MCTV)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/mctv

TV/Multimedia Manager: Jethon Williams II
MCTV@monroecounty-fl.gov | 305.295.5128

MCTV live-broadcasts all meetings of the BOCC, including special meetings, the annual budget meetings, and other county board and committee meetings. See page 8 for channel details.

MEETING BROADCASTS

All televised County meetings are rebroadcast one week following the original broadcast and are posted to Video On Demand one day later. Recordings of BOCC, the Planning Commission, and other meetings can be found on the MCTV Video-on-Demand system. Duplication requests for meetings can be submitted via the online Duplication Request Form or downloaded from Video On Demand.

MCTV also broadcasts information in the event of a hurricane or other local emergency as well as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather audio.

MCTV's primary programming consists of live, pre-recorded programs and original content as well as Local, State, and Federal Public Service announcements. MCTV also airs children's educational programming on Saturday mornings and afternoons.



SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/solidwaste

REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING

Call 9-1-1 if you see illegal dumping in action!

Solid Waste Management provides unincorporated Monroe County with a sustainable, environmentally sound, and cost-effective service for solid waste. Through education, cost management, and customer service, the department supports the needs of the businesses and residents of unincorporated Monroe County. Additionally, the department collects storm debris from residential areas affected by weather events, supports special environmental groups in the collection and education of nearshore water and right-of-way cleanup initiatives, and promotes "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" through community events, outreach and helps create a viable and safe environment for future generations.

Solid Waste is responsible for:

- Municipal Solid Waste
- Vegetation/Yard Waste
- Construction Debris
- Pollution Control on County "Right-of-Ways"
- County Owned Transfer Stations

THREE COUNTY TRANSFER STATIONS AND RECYCLING CENTERS

At the transfer stations, garbage, construction debris, and yard waste are collected and hauled off the islands for appropriate disposal. Residents can drop off items directly at the three County transfer stations. Hours: 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Includes electronic waste.



Director

Cheryl Sullivan
305.292.4536
Sullivan-Cheryl@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 17
Budget: \$22.3 million

Monroe County's transfer station locations:

- Cudjoe Key, MM 21.5, Blimp Rd.
- Long Key, MM 68
- Key Largo, 1100 County Rd. 905

COUNTY HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

The recycling initiative of household hazardous waste and electronic waste continues to be a key focus. Monthly collection points throughout the county allow residents to dispose of chemicals and electronic waste in an environmentally safe manner.

Household hazardous waste is collected at each transfer station as follows:

Cudjoe Key: First and third Wednesdays of each month, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Long Key: First and third Fridays of each month, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Key Largo: Appointment only. Call 305.745.4307
Key Largo (Corner of Atlantic and Homestead avenues behind Walgreens): Second and fourth Wednesday of each month, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS AND E-WASTE 2024 COLLECTION DATES:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Marathon:

10600 Aviation Blvd.

- April 13, 2024
- July 13, 2024
- Oct. 12, 2024
- Jan. 11, 2025

Stock Island:

Bernstein Park, 6751 5th Street

- Feb. 3, 2024
- May 11, 2024
- Aug. 10, 2024
- Nov. 9, 2024
- Feb. 8, 2025

BY THE NUMBERS

90,621

Tons household trash
(an increase of 3.21% over 2022)

34,339

Tons yard waste
(an increase of 24.58% over 2022)

8,678

Tons recycling
(an increase of 3.73% over 2022)

133,638

Tons removed from
Monroe County
Transfer Stations

Residentially, homeowners in unincorporated Monroe County will pay \$457.15 in 2024 for garbage, yard waste, and recycling collection. The fee can be found on your property tax bill.

STOCK ISLAND TO 7 MILE BRIDGE

Waste Management
Contact: 305.296.8297

Cudjoe Key Transfer Station: MM 21.5, Blimp Rd. 305.745.2513



Key West | Stock Island | Cudjoe Key | Big Pine Key

RECYCLING REMINDERS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/recycling

The recycling center accepts #1-5 plastics. An easy way to remember what plastic can be recycled is the “if the neck is smaller than the body, it can be recycled” rule. Milk jugs, water bottles, and bath products all fall within this. Red Solo cups do not. And, always remember to remove the lid, which can also be recycled.

According to a municipal solid waste report, only 1 out of 3 plastic water bottles make it to a recycling center. Tin, aluminum, cartons, cardboard, and newspaper are always accepted.

Reminders of things that CANNOT be recycled include plastic grocery bags (can be brought back to the grocery store), food waste, Styrofoam, furniture (including plastic outdoor furniture), toys, plastic planter containers (can be returned to garden store), garden hoses, hangers, electric wires, sporting goods, clothing, pots and pans, yard waste, hazardous materials and chemicals, and propane tanks, especially the small Coleman camping tanks.

Remembering what cannot be recycled is extremely important because if more than 10 percent of the recycling is contaminated, it goes to the landfill instead!

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE COMPOST PROCESS

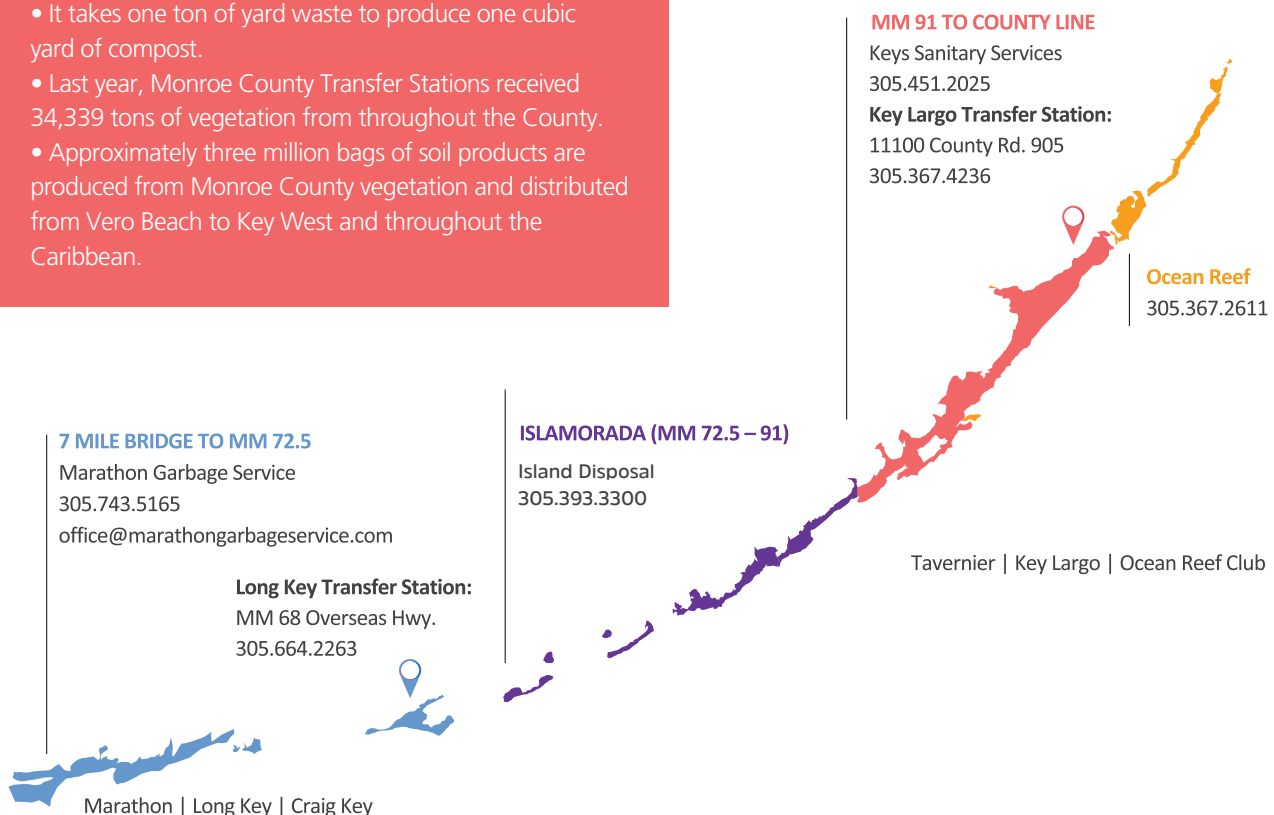
- It takes one ton of yard waste to produce one cubic yard of compost.
- Last year, Monroe County Transfer Stations received 34,339 tons of vegetation from throughout the County.
- Approximately three million bags of soil products are produced from Monroe County vegetation and distributed from Vero Beach to Key West and throughout the Caribbean.

LOOKING FOR FREE COMPOST?

Monroe County and Monroe County’s yard waste contractor offer free compost (nutrient-rich black dirt) to unincorporated Monroe County residents and cities of Marathon, Key Colony Beach, Islamorada, and Layton residents at the County’s three transfer stations on the first Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. or until it is gone. Compost is now available in bags to residents. Residents are allowed up to 6 bags of compost for their personal property use. Proof of residency is required by a driver’s license, utility bill, tax bill, etc. Residents are limited to one pick-up per household per month. You must be able to load the bags on your own or bring someone to assist you.

“This program has been incredibly popular with our residents. This is a great way to spruce up your backyard with compost generated here in Monroe County.” — Cheryl Sullivan, Director

The compost is vegetation picked up on yard waste day throughout Monroe County and brought to the mainland. On the mainland, the vegetation goes through a breakdown process to make the compost given away at the transfer stations.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/strategicplanning



As a part of the strategic planning process, Matthews speaks with community groups throughout the Florida Keys. Results of the process continue to show that Traffic and Safety on U.S. 1 is a primary priority. Issues involving public transportation ranked high in all the feedback.

The Office of Strategic Planning develops plans and initiatives for greater government accountability, organizational efficiency, and continuous improvement.

The office manages the County's strategic and tactical planning processes and a performance-based measurement system. The long-range Strategic Plan details the BOCC's priorities for the challenges facing our community to deliberately shape our community's future, while the annual Tactical Plan aligns individual Departments' efforts with the County's strategic priorities and objectives. The county's performance measurement reporting creates a transparent, accountable, and meaningful process that will result in positive Community and organizational improvement.

Strategic Planning began the process of collecting countywide community feedback in the spring of 2022. The process included online surveys, social media feedback, facilitated town hall meetings, and community group presentations. In 2023, the feedback from the process will be incorporated into a refresh of the goals and objectives of the ongoing BOCC Strategic Plan and provide insight for the Tactical and Management Plans.



Senior Director

Kimberly Matthews
305.292.3595
Matthews-Kimberly@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 1
Budget: \$5.9 million

In March 2019, the Commission adopted the five-year 2020 Monroe County Strategic Plan, created using 18 months of intensive research and feedback from the community collected before and after Hurricane Irma in 2017. The Plan's priorities and direction for County services are turned into action in the FY2021 Tactical Plan and supported through the FY21 budget process. The plan outlines specific areas

of concern and priority in the three areas of Quality of Life, Economy, and Environment, which can be seen on page 6.

In the spring of 2021, Strategic Planning held five town hall meetings and gathered new community feedback. The results saw Transportation and Safety on U.S. 1 rise to the number one issue for those who responded. The BOCC reaffirmed the priorities outlined in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan in a special meeting in May, and those priorities were utilized in the County's budget preparation for FY22. This insight helped create a Transit department for the County to focus on traffic issues.

PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

www.keyslibraries.org

Tracing its roots back to 1853, the Monroe County Public Library is the oldest library system in South Florida.

In 2023, Monroe County Public Library patrons checked out physical and digital books and audiobooks, DVDs, streaming films, language learning, and other courses nearly 360,000 times. Circulation of e-books and eAudiobooks, using Overdrive via the Libby app, topped 100,000 with more than 4,000 unique users. This year, the library added digital magazines to its collection with more than 5,000 titles available.

The library provided programs covering all ages, from toddlers to senior citizens, meeting a broad base of interests, including story times, book clubs, musical presentations, author talks, specialty clubs, art workshops and displays, and programs featuring Florida Keys history, flora and fauna. Programming in 2023 included talks by renowned writers such as S.A. Cosby, Carl Hiaasen, Silas House and Lisa Unger. Each branch had a robust Summer Reading program to help kids stay on track when school is out.

The library collaborates with community partners such as AHEC, Cornerstone Resource Alliance, the Alzheimer's Association, the Monroe County Veterans Affairs Department, the Monroe County Solid Waste Department and Car-Free Key West to connect Keys residents with the information and services they need. All branches offer regular "tech tutor" sessions to help residents use their computers, tablets and smartphones, as well as offering free laptop use and affordable printing.

In 2023, the library began publishing monthly email newsletters for each branch, informing the public of events and services - as well as Island Chronicles, a new monthly feature from the Florida Keys History Center that illuminates little-known chapters of Keys history.

2023 Highlight: In June, the Big Pine Key branch received a floor-to-ceiling make-over, giving it a bright, clean, open and welcoming new look. This included new floors, bookshelves and paint, with a cozy section for kids and a community area for working on computers and playing games. The branch, at 213 Key Deer Boulevard, is conveniently close to the county's new Community Center, Building & Permits satellite office and the office of Commissioner Michelle Lincoln.



Senior Director

Kimberly Matthews
305.292.3595
Matthews-Kimberly@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 1
Budget: \$5.9 million

PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCHES


KEY WEST

Branch Manager: Kim Rinaldi
700 Fleming Street
305.292.3595
 / [keywestlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/keywestlibrary)


BIG PINE KEY

Branch Manager: Faith Price
213 Key Deer Blvd.
305.872.0992
 / [bigpinelibrary](https://www.facebook.com/bigpinelibrary)

MARATHON

Branch Manager: Rob Rinaldi
3251 Overseas Hwy
305.743.5156
 / [marathonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/marathonlibrary)

ISLAMORADA

Branch Manager: Naomi Trevino
81830 Overseas Hwy
305.664.4645
 / [islamoradalibrary](https://www.facebook.com/islamoradalibrary)

KEY LARGO

Branch Manager: Christina Teasley
101485 Overseas Hwy.
Tradewinds Shopping
Center 305.451.2396
 / [keylargolibary](https://www.facebook.com/keylargolibary)

**The only thing you need
is a library card.**

Florida Keys History Center image archive

www.flickr.com/keyslibraries
The library's online historical photo archive has over 45 million views of its 23,833 historical images. The collection includes some of the oldest images of South Florida.

SUSTAINABILITY

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/sustainability
www.keysroadsplan.com

Monroe County continues to experience the impacts of global climate change and rising sea levels. Along the low-lying chain of islands, neighborhood streets flood numerous times throughout the year from fall “king” tides. Rising seas now routinely affect many local roads, and have become more widespread with each passing year. The office prepares plans for the Florida Keys to be resilient to climate change and rising sea levels.

PREPARATIONS INCLUDE:

- Modeled the effects of sea-level rise on County roads and facilities and prepared a plan for raising 150 miles of roads to avoid the effects of sea-level rise at an estimated cost of \$3 billion.
- Collaborate with the Southeast Florida Climate Change Compact on sea-level rise projections and mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Collected elevation and other data to accurately measure potential inundation to County roads and infrastructure, and also municipal roads.



Chief Resilience Officer

Rhonda Haag
305.453.8774
Haag-Rhonda@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 2
Budget: \$12 million grant funds

RESILIENCE PROJECTS:

- Performed an updated Vulnerability Assessment of County infrastructure to determine the impacts of climate change and to meet the requirements of the new Resilience Florida Grant Program.
- Coordination with the 5 municipalities to assist in their road elevation planning work to evaluate the impacts of sea-level rise on more than 200 miles of municipal roads, helping the Keys become more resilient overall. The LiDAR gathering is complete and in early 2024 the county will undertake the road elevation planning for the four municipalities of Islamorada, Layton, Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

- Preparation of \$380 Million in road

adaptation grant applications for the State’s Resilience program.

- Received notice of award for three road adaptation projects: Conch Key, Big Coppit area and Key Largo Winston Waterways area.
- Resilient redesign for Harry Harris Park - funded by DEP
- Natural Resources Adaptation Plan - funded by DEP



MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDE:

- Energy management and reduction initiatives are listed in the GreenKeys Plan.
- Plans for a renewable energy study for County infrastructure.

The GreenKeys Plan contains specific projects for resilience preparation. www.GreenKeys.info

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

The Federal government signed into law authorization of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) \$2.6 billion Florida Keys Coastal Storm and Sea-level Rise infrastructure resiliency project. Appropriations for the project require annual approvals by Congress. The first appropriation of \$1 million was approved in the 2022 Federal omnibus spending bill, and funds Phase 1 of the planning, engineering, and design of six U.S. 1 roadway stabilization areas in the Florida Keys. The areas total 5,500 linear feet of roads at mile markers 79.5, 70, 70.9, 67, 37, and 34.5, identified as vulnerable to erosion and wave energy. Estimates for the completion of the construction phase of the U.S. 1 stabilization project are \$16 million. 65% is funded by federal funds, and 35% by other local or state sources.

Based on the development of a three-year USACE Florida Keys Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study, the approved Project plans for the economic, environmental, and social effects of coastal storms and sea-level rise and addresses the hardening of U.S. 1, dry floodproofing of critical infrastructure and commercial buildings, and elevating residential homes.

Agreements have been signed with the USACE and the Florida Department of Transportation at the end of 2023, so that this important work can begin in early 2024.

Future appropriations will allow for the voluntary elevations of up to 4,698 vulnerable residential homes and the dry floodproofing of 1,052 commercial and 53 critical government infrastructure buildings susceptible to storm surge damage throughout the Florida Keys. Dry floodproofing allows for essential services to resume more quickly after a storm surge event. All five municipalities were included in the Study and ultimate Project, and each has numerous elevations and floodproofings included.

CANAL RESTORATION

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/canals

Monroe County embarked on a canal restoration program in 2014 after a study showed that 311 of the 502 canals throughout the island chain did not meet the State's minimum water quality criteria and are a source of nutrients and other contaminants to nearshore waters. A Canal Management Master Plan was developed to list the canals needing restoration and recommended restoration technologies and estimated costs.

In June 2021, the Governor and Cabinet, sitting as the Administration Commission, adopted a new rule (Rule 28-20.140) amending the County's Comprehensive Plan to include a 10-year Canal Restoration Implementation Work Program. The Work Program contains a ranked list of 96 canals that do not meet state water quality standards in terms of levels of dissolved oxygen. The list totals \$538 million in restoration projects.

As part of the Florida Keys Stewardship Act, the Florida Keys received a direct appropriation for \$20 million for fiscal year 2022-2023 to address the issues recognized and identified as environmental priorities for the Florida Keys which include water quality projects. Unincorporated Monroe County's portion of the allocation is \$5.6 million and is used exclusively to restore canals.

Projects are implemented in the environmental restoration area that support the County's sustainability initiatives, such as the canal restoration projects and post-hurricane marine debris removal from the hundreds of canals located in the Keys. Sustainability is the quality of not harming the environment or depleting natural resources, thereby supporting long-term ecological balance. The County's goal is to continually employ new technologies to protect the environment and best serve the residents and visitors.

Canal restoration improves the overall health of nearshore waters.

2023 HIGHLIGHT:

Canals: Monroe County completed a \$1.6 million backfill for Canal 25 and a \$2.6 million backfill for Canal 28. 3,300 truckloads of fill were placed in these canals in 2023. These restorations will increase the amount of oxygen in the canals, in turn increasing health and marine life.

Canals 25 and 28 were all rated as poor water quality canals that did not meet the State's minimum thresholds for dissolved oxygen levels in the canals. The restoration projects were funded by Florida Department of Environmental Protection Florida Keys Stewardship grants. The County applied for \$12.5 Million in funding from the Federal

RESTORE act funds in October 2023 to fund the restoration of six canals on the Avenues area on Big Pine Key: Canals 293, 295, 297, 299, 300, and 315. By restoring the canals all at one time, the County anticipates to receive better bid pricing and the overall effect to the canal and near shore waters will be greater. Canal Restoration Technologies focus on improving the canal water quality conditions related to lack of flushing and nutrient buildup resulting in reduced dissolved oxygen. Canals impact nearshore waters. Improving canals would also improve regional water quality by increasing diversity of both the natural communities and benthic species that live in these waters.

Breakwaters / Living Shorelines: The County received a \$2.1 million federal grant to restore the Tavernier breakwater and a \$1.3 million federal grant to restore the Rock Harbor breakwater. Restoring the breakwaters will provide much-needed resilience to these oceanside communities and help improve water quality by reducing the amount of floating seagrass entering and clogging the canals behind the breakwaters. The projects are anticipated to begin in early 2024. Also received was a \$3.3 Million State grant to create a living shoreline / breakwater repair for Duck Key and a \$900,000 State grant for a living shoreline on Long Key. Both are under design and anticipated for construction in 2025.

Additional restoration projects for other poor and fair water quality canals in the Florida Keys will come forward as additional funding allows.



VETERANS AFFAIRS

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/va

Monroe County Veterans Affairs provides entitlement assistance for more than 7,000 full-time veterans, 2,500 seasonal veterans, active-duty military personnel, and their families in the Florida Keys. Each year the Veterans Affairs Department has more than 18,500 client interactions while providing a wide variety of services.

MONETARY COMPENSATION

- Service-related disabilities
- Non-service-connected pensions
- Burial benefits
- Survivor's benefits
- Educational and vocational rehabilitation benefits
- VA home loan eligibility assistance
- Appeals of any denied benefit
- Board of Veterans Appeals Virtual Hearing Representation

NONMONETARY BENEFITS

- Military service medal, decoration, and award issuance or replacement
- Military service records or document requisitions
- VA Healthcare application assistance
- Courtesy Veterans Transportation Program
- Documentation assistance with the Department of Veterans Affairs for Disabled Veterans license tags, property tax exemptions, and educational benefits
- Virtual Medical Examination and
- Virtual Office Appointment Services



Veterans Affairs Director

Cathy Crane
305.295.5150
Crane-Cathy@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 8
Budget: \$1,054,249

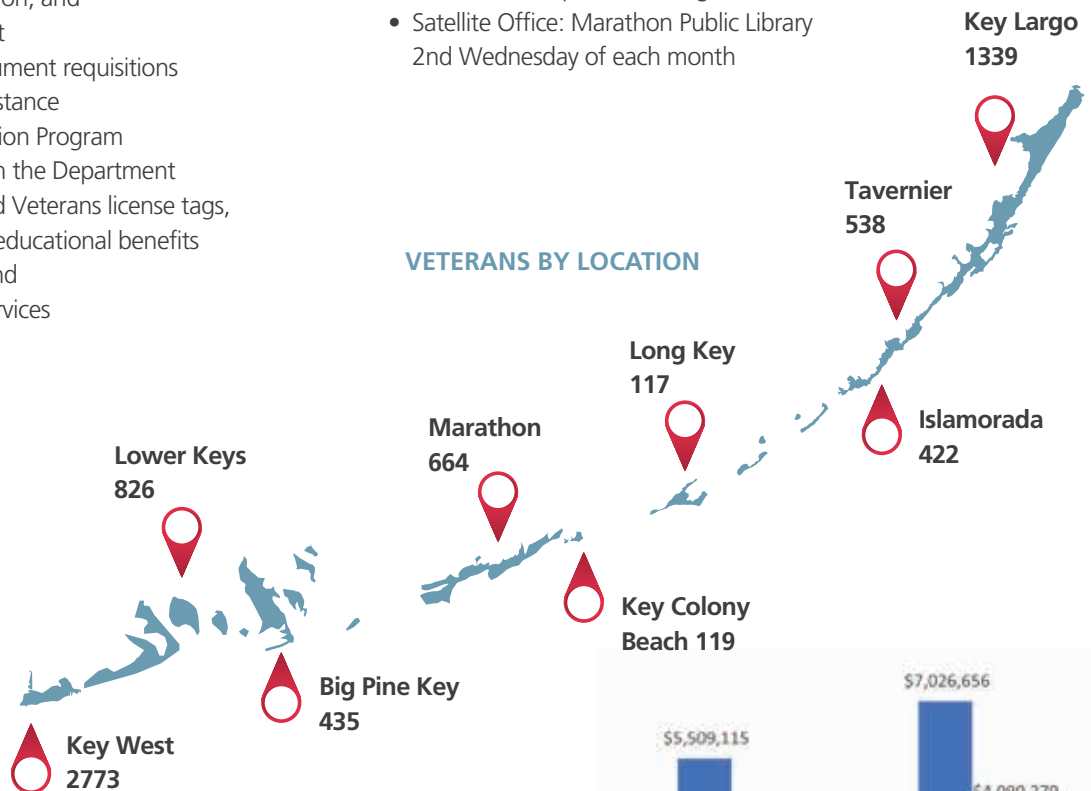
Eligible resident veterans with a VA-certified service-connected disability of 10 percent or greater are entitled to a tax deduction or exemption on their home assessment.



MONROE COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICES

- Nelson Government Center
305.453.8777 102050 Overseas Hwy, Suite 244, Key Largo
- Harvey Government Center
305.295.5150 1200 Truman Avenue, Suite 204, Key West
- Veterans Transportation Program: 305.295.5159
- Satellite Office: Marathon Public Library
2nd Wednesday of each month

VETERANS BY LOCATION



Monroe County Veteran Compensation and Pension



COUNTY ATTORNEY

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/countyattorney

The County Attorney's Office provides high-quality, cost-effective legal services to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator, the Senior Management Team, County departments, and County advisory boards. The legal staff provides counsel on virtually every major decision made by the BOCC and County staff. Staff lawyers handle topics ranging literally from A (airport law) to Z (zoning). The County Attorney's Office also serves as the County's Public Records Management Liaison Office (RMLO) and the Risk Management Office.

The County's 11 lawyers have over 240 years of experience practicing law and the expertise to handle most matters in-house. Seven of the County's lawyers are board-certified by the Florida Bar as experts in City, County, and Local Government law - a distinction only 308 of the more than 111,000 (0.2%) members of the Florida Bar have earned.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Negotiated purchase and finance agreements for 3 new Trauma Star helicopters.
- Negotiated acquisition of the Hawk Missile Site for the Key West International Airport.
- Negotiated the agreements to loan three senior County department heads to the Village of Islamorada to serve as interim village manager.
- County Attorney Bob Shillinger elected President of the Florida Association of County Attorneys.
- Started drafting a proposed County Charter.



BOCC AGENDAS

Staff attorneys review every contract, inter-agency agreement, bid solicitation, resolution, and ordinance considered by the commission.

During 2023, the County Attorney's Office processed and reviewed 690 resolutions, 56 ordinances, and 1391 other agenda items, that included contracts/agreements/grants and litigation items.

LITIGATION

Staff lawyers represented the County in more than a thousand cases in state and federal court and administrative hearings. These efforts fulfill the Board's directive to emphasize prosecuting Vacation Rental Ordinance violations and collecting outstanding code compliance fines and costs in the amount of \$1.18 million in FY23. Collected fines and costs are deposited in the County's general fund, reducing property taxes.

PUBLIC RECORDS

The RMLO coordinates the County's response to public records requests and ensures compliance with the Public Records Act and Records Retention regulations. The office processed 3,026 records requests in 2023.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Updated the County's Property, Liability and Casualty policies for 102 buildings and 601 vehicles.
- Implemented new tracking and billing software.
- Reviewed and approved 1,038 agenda items.
- Reviewed all tort claims made against the County and determined the appropriate response.



County Attorney

Bob Shillinger
305.292.3470
Shillinger-Bob
@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 11 lawyers,
3 support staff, 1.5 risk
management staff, 1.5 public
records staff
Budget: \$11 million (includes
insurance policies for all county
buildings & vehicles)

EXTENSION SERVICE

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/extensionservices

www.monroe.ifas.ufl.edu

www.fb.com/MonroeCountyExtension

In the Florida Keys, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF-IFAS) Monroe County Extension Service provides timely and relevant solutions to improve resident's lives. The Extension Service is dedicated to bringing current science-based answers to all local horticulture, climate change, energy, small business, and water quality questions. The Extension Service provides programs like Master Gardener, Climate Smart Floridians, Florida Keys Water Watch, Florida Master Naturalist, and other programs.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

HORTICULTURE AGENT MARIA QUIRICO - MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR

In plant clinics throughout the county, 47 active Master Gardener volunteers dedicated 3,016 hours, equivalent to a remarkable \$88,711 in value. Extension staff and volunteers planted and maintained four demonstration gardens for residents to learn about sustainable practices such as reduced fertilizer and pesticide use, appropriate plant selection, and successful vegetable gardening techniques through visual, hands-on learning.

Gardens are located at:

- J. Gilbert Reese Park, Islamorada
- Crane Point Hammock and Nature Center, Marathon
- Grimal Grove, Big Pine Key
- Historic Gato, Key West

SEA GRANT, MARINE AGENT SHELLY KRUEGER

- Teaches divers how to identify species of stony corals for monitoring.
- County's lead instructor for the Florida Master Naturalist program and developed a new course on Marine Habitat Restoration.
- County coordinator for the new Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch program.

DIRECTOR

ALICIA BETANCOURT

- Works with senior groups and the libraries to bring consumer and finance issues to residents, including online safety, and fraud.
- Leads the Climate Smart Floridians program that trains sustainability staff to offer local programs throughout the state. Authored the Handbook for Municipal Action on Climate Change.

EXTENSION COORDINATOR & PROGRAM SPECIALIST II, BRYNN MOREY

- Manages two websites, marketing, and a monthly Newsletter.
- Offers CPR and First Aid certification courses to the public and Monroe County Employees.
- Provides pesticide testing through the Department of Agriculture for Keys Residents.



Director

Alicia Betancourt
305.292.4501
Betancourt-Alicia@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 4
(3 UF and 1 Monroe)
Budget: \$261,250

GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/gal

The Florida Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office represents abused, abandoned, and neglected children in the courtroom and the community. Through the collaboration of a multi-disciplinary team that includes a GAL Attorney, a child welfare professional, and a trained volunteer, our team provides quality legal representation for the best interests of abused, neglected, and abandoned children while assisting the child in expressing their needs and wishes. Our unique approach allows us to support the whole child, addressing their physical, educational, mental, emotional, social, and legal needs.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

- **152** children served
- **59** volunteers
- **50%** less likely to return to foster care with an advocate
- **200** presents delivered to children during the holidays

CORE VALUES

- **Commitment to Children:** our most important priority.
- **Communication Built on Trust:** Being honest and straightforward with the children we represent in keeping with their age level and maturity.

- **Collective Empowerment:** implement the best decisions to meet the children's needs through volunteers, attorneys, and staff.
- **Collaboration:** develop relationships that promote the well-being of the whole child.
- **Courtesy:** ensure children are treated with respect and dignity.



Circuit Director

Alexa Leto
305.292.3485
Leto-Alexa@
monroecounty-fl.gov
Budget: \$293,000
Employees: 8 (3 County,
5 State)



TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (TDC)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/TDC

Visitor's website: www.fla-keys.com

Office Manager

Maxine Pacini
Maxine@fla-keys.com
305.296.1552

The Monroe County Tourist Development Council manages the tourism marketing efforts to assure long-term economic stability resulting from visitor-related revenues. The TDC pledges to benefit residents and visitors by

utilizing those financial contributions to improve the Florida Keys' environmental and community resources. The tourism council also prioritizes working to enhance residents' quality of life and minimize their property taxes by safeguarding the health of the county's primary industry.

The TDC has various advisory committees and board members comprised of 54 volunteers who represent all facets of the community. It is the legislative extension of the BOCC to appoint nine TDC members and five at-large District Advisory Committee seats. TDC revenues fund marketing efforts and infrastructure improvements like beach maintenance and bricks-and-mortar projects.

In fiscal year 2023, the TDC allocated \$10 million for capital-related projects that lessened tax burdens on residents and contributed to the resident's quality of life. The BOCC approves all TDC policies, funding, and expenditures.

The TDC continues to emphasize the many sustainability-focused "only in the Keys" activities that set us apart from other destinations. This year a webpage was created to address questions and answers relating to coral bleaching in the Keys due to the historically high water temperatures this year. A Lobster Season awareness campaign that included printed and digital brochures to be distributed as well as an informational video was shared on social media platforms.

FLORIDA KEYS COUNCIL OF THE ARTS

www.keysarts.com

The Florida Keys Council of the Arts is the designated Local Arts Agency by Florida Statute and is committed to its leadership role as the community's umbrella organization for arts and culture.



Executive Director

Elizabeth Young
305.295.4369
Director@keysarts.com
Employees:
3 full-time, 1 part-time
Budget: \$385,000

The Council promotes the destination for its vibrant arts community and diverse history through its ongoing partnership with the Tourist Development Council. To build audiences and raise awareness, the Council funds grants to visual and performing artists and arts organizations.

To enrich and enhance Monroe County for its residents and visitors, the Arts Council supports and administers the Art in Public Places 1% for Public Art program in all government buildings and many outdoor venues.

The Council focuses on maintaining and expanding its programming in a diverse, innovative, and equitable manner. It strives for results that strengthen the economy, promote active community engagement, and support arts education and advocacy. We advocate in a leadership role by gaining knowledge through our participation in Americans for the Arts, Florida Association of Local Arts Agencies (FALAA), and Florida Association of Public Art Professionals (FAPAP) initiatives.

Connecting the public to a sense of place and community through the Arts is ongoing with year-round programming and exhibits. The Arts Council's signature project, The Connections Project, was reimagined in 2024 to spotlight the many talented musicians working and living in the Keys, with a new title; Making Music in the Keys. Over 125 canvases created by Keys' visual artists will be displayed at the musical receptions from Key Largo to Key West. Each canvas, created in various genres, connect and demonstrate how the arts build community and how we inspire each other.

Additional programming includes Professional Development for artists, workshops on how to apply for grants and complete public art proposals, and Gather 'Round - a series of creative conversations.

"The commitment to the organization, and knowledge of the economic impact of the arts within the County, is essential to our advocacy efforts for continued growth and relevance."

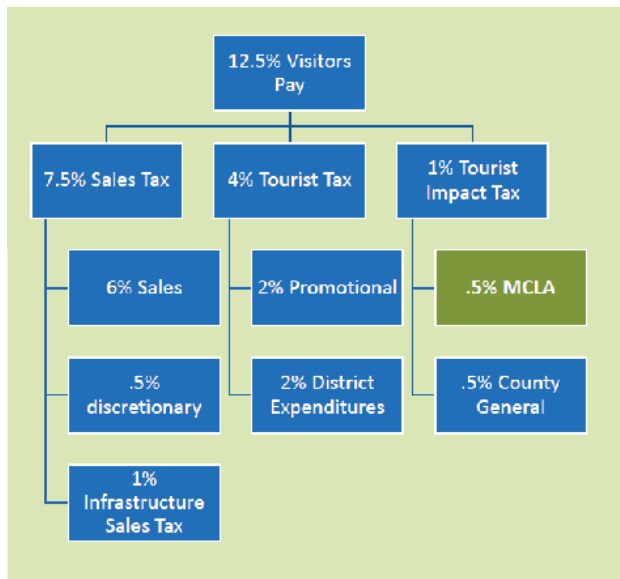
— Elizabeth Young

LAND AUTHORITY (MCLA)

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/landauthority

The Monroe County Board of County Commissioners created the Monroe County Land Authority (MCLA) in 1986 to purchase property in the Florida Keys for conservation, recreation, the protection of property rights (density reduction, resale program, and less than fee program), and affordable housing. Many of the properties bought were conservation lands consisting of tropical hardwood hammocks, pinelands, and wetlands that provide many environmental benefits, including habitat for endangered species and migrating birds, and lands that help protect water quality.

MCLA funding for land acquisition comes primarily from a half-cent tourist impact tax on lodging in the Florida Keys and a surcharge on admissions and overnight camping at state parks in unincorporated Monroe County. MCLA also re-sells land to the State of Florida for conservation, which leverages State funding and allows for the replenishment of local funds. Fiscal and budgetary information can be found on the website.



DENSITY REDUCTION

The Density Reduction Program's goal is to purchase lands that do not consist of significant habitat for the purpose of retiring the density (Transferable Development Rights) in order to prevent private property rights claims resulting from limitations imposed by the designation of an area of critical state concern. Since 2016, 25 parcels have been purchased. Email: Rosch-Mark@monroecounty-fl.Gov.

VOLUNTARY HOME BUYOUT PROGRAM

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in 2017, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity allocated \$15 million in grant funds to the Voluntary Home Buyout Program. These funds allow MCLA to purchase the property and the home of voluntary sellers who were impacted by the hurricane. The home will be demolished, and the land will serve as open space in perpetuity or for flood mitigation. Participating homeowners may decline to sell their home at any point prior to the closing. As of Jan. 15, 2024, 18 homes have been purchased for nearly \$9 million.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

MCLA oversees approximately 1,800 acres of conservation lands owned by MCLA, the County, or the State of Florida, including large tracts and individual lots within neighborhoods. Newly purchased

conservation land typically needs restoration to remove invasive exotic vegetation and to plant native vegetation. Conservation lands protect important wildlife areas and preserve the character of neighborhoods. Funding for land stewardship comes from County land clearing mitigation fees and also from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission funds.

Email: Bergh-Beth@monroecounty-fl.gov



Executive Director

Christine Hurley
305.295.5180
Hurley-Christine@monroecounty-fl.gov
Employees: 8
Budget:
\$35 million: MCLA
\$15 million:
CDBG-DR Grant
\$ 1 million:
County 304/316 Fund

All Projects By Type FY 1988 - FY 2023

Project Type	Transactions	Parcels	Acres	Units	MCLA Expenditures
Conservation	1,727	4,704	4,083	0	\$57,737,736
Density Reduction - FS	22	25	5	0	\$0
Density Reduction - LTF	67	83	11	0	\$0
Density Reduction - VHBP	16	18	4	0	\$0
Affordable Housing	78	168	111	1,317	\$57,788,286
Recreation	30	156	126	0	\$7,276,697
Solid Waste	1	4	74	0	\$2,212,500
Total	1,941	5,158	4,414	1,317	\$125,015,219

RESALE PROGRAM

When non-conservation, buildable lots are acquired under the Density Reduction Program, they may be resold to homeowners of contiguous properties or to Property Owner Associations, without the ability of the purchaser to ask for a Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO) allocation to build a residential unit with all density stripped from the land.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING

The MCLA provides funding to local governments or agencies for land acquisition to use as affordable housing or can contribute funding toward the construction of affordable housing at the request of a local government. MCLA funding may not be used to purchase environmentally sensitive land for affordable housing.

MCLA has spent more than \$57 million since 1988 and assisted in the provision of more than 1,317 affordable housing units.

FEMA FLOOD MITIGATION GRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HMGP & FMA)

The Flood Mitigation Grant programs are funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and administered by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). The primary purpose is to eliminate flood risk to ensure the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) remains solvent. These grants are offered to communities to provide a funding source for property owners who want to remove flood risk by:

- Elevating existing home that is below minimum required flood elevation
- Demolishing the existing home and reconstructing it above the minimum required flood elevation
- Selling the home so the area it is located can remain as open space MCLA is accepting fiscal year 2023 FMA grant program applications.

FLORIDA AREA OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FDEP FOR FLORIDA FOREVER ACQUISITIONS

For decades, the State and Federal governments have purchased conservation land in the Florida Keys. The BOCC partners with the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to purchase Florida Forever conservation land through the Florida Keys Stewardship Act signed in 2016. The Act enables the State to spend up to \$5 million annually toward the acquisition of land within the Florida Forever Program.

These areas include:

- North Key Largo Hammocks
- Coupon Bight / Key Deer
- The Florida Keys Ecosystem

The County and DEP have an agreement where MCLA assists with appraisals, surveys, and can contract with sellers and then resell to FDEP, speeding up the process. The County works with FDEP to identify ideal properties that would fit the mission, as well as eliminate potential takings liability.

Since 2016, the FDEP has spent \$9,842,931 retiring 148.4 development rights (as of November 2023).

The State's long-standing acquisition efforts in the Florida Keys are essential to reduce future liability. DEP should aggressively pursue land acquisition in the Florida Keys because over 3,500 privately-owned vacant, undeveloped parcels lie within the Florida Forever project boundaries.



LESS THAN FEE PROGRAM

A willing seller program allows homeowners to retain ownership of a contiguous, vacant lot and use it for legally allowed non-habitable, accessory uses like a pool, open yard, or garage in exchange for selling the right to build a home on that lot in perpetuity. Accessory structures must be permitted and comply with Land Use Regulations.

COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES & MUSEUMS

TAKE A STEP BACK IN TIME

Monroe County owns and maintains multiple historic properties, four of which have been developed into museums. Some of the historic properties maintained by the County include the 1890 Courthouse in Key West, the 1916 Gato Cigar Factory in Key West, the 1914 Truman School now serving the public as the Harvey Government Center in Key West, the 1892 Key West Sheriff Residence and Jail, and the 1936 Tavernier School. Museum locations include Pigeon Key, a small island two miles offshore of Marathon, the Key West Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters, and the East and West Martello Civil War Forts.

PIGEON KEY

www.pigeonkey.net

While Henry Flagler was building the Overseas Railway to Key West in the early 1900s, more than 400 workers lived in the railroad village on Pigeon Key, located in the path of the Old Seven Mile Bridge. Pigeon Key had a post office, commissary, and one-room school while the bridge was being built from 1908 to 1912.

When a hurricane destroyed the railway in 1935, Pigeon Key became the headquarters for the Florida Road and Toll Bridge District. Starting in 1968, the island served for 20 years as an environmental field station for international researchers studying tropical marine and island ecologies with the University of Miami. In 1993, the Pigeon Key Foundation assumed stewardship and began restoration efforts to turn it into a museum.

VISIT PIGEON KEY

Admission: \$25 per person, Veterans and Monroe County residents are \$23. Children and students \$20. Children under 3 are free. A 30-passenger tram takes visitors back and forth to Pigeon Key and is included in the ticket price.

THE OLD SEVEN MILE BRIDGE

A 2.2-mile section of the historic Old Seven Mile Bridge, paralleling the Florida Keys Overseas Highway, reopened in 2022 so residents and visitors can once again use it for cycling, walking, running, rollerblading, watching sunrises and sunsets, and accessing Pigeon Key.

The project was part of a 30-year agreement between Monroe County, the City of Marathon, and the Florida Department of Transportation to fund a restoration and maintenance program to ensure the landmark's preservation.

Nicknamed "Old Seven," the bridge was built as part of railroad magnate Henry Flagler's Florida Keys Overseas Railroad and was completed in January 1912, connecting the Keys with each other and mainland Florida for the first time. The span is the gateway to historic Pigeon Key, a tiny island nestled beneath the old bridge that was once home to about 400 workers constructing the railroad.

"The Old Seven Mile Bridge is very important to the Keys, the history of the Keys, and a viaduct to get to Pigeon Key, which in itself is beautiful, but the bridge itself is over 100 years old," said Roman Gastesi, the Monroe County Administrator. "It's something that we've been able to get together and collaborate with the city of Marathon, with the state of Florida, and get it rehabbed like it is, and it's been a great project."

Restoration work included structural steel and spalling and bridge joint system repairs; new decking, pedestrian and bicycle handrails; and other physical enhancements to make the span safer for recreational use.

In 1938, the original railroad bridge was converted to carry automobiles. In 1982, the new Seven Mile Bridge (actually 6.79 miles long and one of the world's longest segmental bridges) debuted alongside the historic one, and the old bridge's steel swing span, which had facilitated marine traffic, was removed.

Although vehicular traffic on the restored bridge is prohibited, an adjacent parking lot has been modified to accommodate up to 35 parked vehicles. The City of Marathon, with the help of Monroe County, also purchased a property adjacent to the bridge that will be retrofitted for additional parking a short walk from the entrance of the bridge.





EAST AND WEST MARTELLO CIVIL WAR FORTS

In 1822, the U.S. Navy surveyed sites for a fort to command the harbor in Key West. In 1836, the U.S. Army and a French military engineer drew up plans for a set of nine forts to command Key West harbor. The high cost led to revising the plan to just Fort Zachary Taylor and two Martello Towers.

The two towers built in the mid-1860s on what is now South Roosevelt Boulevard were never armed or involved in a battle. They were used during the Spanish-American War in 1898 for quartering troops, and from 1914-44, they were used for radio stations and an anti-aircraft battery on the beach.

In 1947, the Army-owned towers became the property of Monroe County. The West Tower had become an eyesore to the shoreline with pressure in 1949 to demolish it and put in a new beach area. County Commissioner Joe Allen convinced the County Commission to stop the demolition.

The Key West Garden Club entered into a land-lease agreement with the County. The West Tower was declared a National Historic Site by the State of Florida in 1976 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Key West Art & Historical Society restored the East Tower and opened Fort East Martello Museum in 1950 as the first museum in the Keys. In 1972, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. The museum now houses the imaginative metal sculptures of Stanley Papio and Robert the Doll, a supposedly haunted doll belonging to the late artist Robert Eugene Otto.

In the past few years, the County restored the historic brick at both the East and West Martello. The towers also continue to receive Monroe County Tourist Development Council funding for drainage upgrades, road and parking repairs, new roofing, and a re-vamped grass area - perfect for concerts and festivals.

Admission for the Fort East Martello Museum is \$16 for adults, \$8 for children (7 and up), children under 7 are free, \$12 for students with ID, and for Monroe County residents and seniors 62 and older. Active military is free. www.kwahs.org.

Admission to Fort West Martello is free. Donations to the Key West Garden Club are accepted at the door. www.key-westgardenclub.com.

A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE KEY WEST JAIL

The 1892 jail had been specifically designed to mimic the Monroe County Courthouse, built just two years earlier. Both the jail and courthouse were considered impressive civic accomplishments, and symbols of Monroe County's position as the most populous city in Florida at that time, with the U.S. Census showing more than 18,000 citizens in Key West.

The 1892 jail was the fifth jail built at the historic Jackson Square. In 1907, a 10-foot high concrete wall was built around the jail, and in 1910 the jail was expanded to increase capacity with a two-story concrete cell block.

In 1952, the front of the old jail was demolished and replaced with a new jail and office for the Monroe County Sheriff.

In 1965, the sheriff's office was replaced with a courthouse annex. This annex was expanded in the 1980s. At that time, the north section of the 1907 wall was removed. Today, only the rear portion of the 1892 building remains, along with the entire 1910 addition and the 1910 cell block.

KEY WEST LIGHTHOUSE AND KEEPERS' QUARTERS MUSEUM

938 Whitehead Street
www.kwahs.org

After the first Key West Lighthouse was destroyed in the 1846 hurricane, a new lighthouse that stood 50 feet tall was constructed.

In 1894, the growth of trees and taller buildings in Key West led to it being raised so the light was about 100 feet above sea level.

Admission to the Lighthouse is \$17 for adults, \$8 for children (7+), children under 7 are free, \$12 for students with ID, Monroe County residents, and seniors 62 and older. Active military is free.

The Coast Guard decommissioned the Key West Lighthouse in 1969, and it was turned over to Monroe County. The County leases it to the Key West Art & Historical Society as a museum.

One item on display is the first-order Fresnel lens from Sombrero Key Lighthouse. Future plans include restoring the Oil House into an exhibition space, and displaying how the lighthouse was fueled.

CITIZEN BOARDS & COMMITTEES

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/boardsandcommittees

Monroe County's citizen boards and committees contribute to the government in various ways; some serve as advisory groups to the Board of County Commissioners, while others work on issues and projects in the community.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Works on affordable housing opportunities for residents and workforce and fulfills Florida Statute requirements regarding the Local Housing Assistance Plan.

Contact: Cheryl Cioffari

305.289.2562

Cioffari-Cheryl@monroecounty-fl.gov

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

The five-person BOCC-appointed committee reviews and recommends proposals for commissioned permanent public art. Projects are funded by the "1% for Art" ordinance created in 2001. It strives to promote and support the vibrant arts community by enhancing public buildings throughout Monroe County.

Contact: Elizabeth Young

305.295.4369

Director@keysarts.com

CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makes recommendations to the BOCC regarding appropriate mitigation and adaptation policies needed to address climate change issues.

Contact: Alicia Betancourt

305.453.8774

Betancourt-Alicia@monroecounty-fl.gov

CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS

Hears discrepancies in interpretations of the current County building codes.

Contact: Maria Partington

305.289.2583

Partington-Maria@monroecounty-fl.gov

CONTRACTORS EXAMINING BOARD

Interprets and makes rules and regulations, hears public complaints, and unlicensed contracting violations. Hears contractor complaints and concerns during the Industry Input section at each meeting.

Contact: Maria Partington

305.289.2583

Partington-Maria@monroecounty-fl.gov



FLORIDA KEYS TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COMMITTEE

The BOCC approved a resolution in July 2019 to create a committee to study and research traffic issues and create formal recommendations for the governing bodies of the five municipalities and the BOCC.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Review applications for development approval and review applications for amendments to the text of the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and map amendments.

Contact: Ilze Aquila

305.289.2529

Aguila-Ilze@monroecounty-fl.gov

DUCK KEY SECURITY DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

Provides security services for the residential areas of Duck Key.

Contact: Rick Sherman

dksabchair@gmail.com

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/duckkey

FLORIDA KEYS COUNCIL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Implements special projects that advocate for residents and visitors with disabilities and their families.

Contact: Anna Haskins

305.292.4591

Haskins-Anna@monroecounty-fl.gov

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Designates and regulates historical properties within the unincorporated area of the County.

Contact: Diane E. Silvia

305.292.6718

hfkf@bellsouth.net



Contact: Janene Sclafani, Transportation Planner
305.289.2545
Sclafani-Janene@monroecounty-fl.gov

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

Reviews funding requests from non-profit human services agencies and makes recommendations to the BOCC.

Contact: Janet Gunderson
305.292.4470
Gunderson-Janet@monroecounty-fl.gov

KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AD HOC COMMITTEE ON NOISE

Acts as a conduit for information to and from their constituents on issues related to airport and aircraft noise.

Contact: Deborah Lagos
305.294.9595
deborah.murphy.lagos@gmail.com

LAND AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makes recommendations to BOCC on matters related to Land Authority property acquisitions.

Contact: Dina Gambuzza
305.295.5180
Gambuzza-Dina@monroecounty-fl.gov

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

Provides the BOCC with information and counsel concerning all matters relating to the libraries.

Contact: Ann Rice
305-292-3594
Rice-Ann@monroecounty-fl.gov

OLDER AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD

Makes recommendations to BOCC regarding services or programs that would benefit older American citizens of the County.

Contact: Pam Martin
305.853.0907
pmflkeys@aol.com

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

The 5-person BOCC-appointed board reviews existing facilities, programs, expenditures, and revenues and recommends improvements, additional facilities, and programs.

Contact: Erika Nodal
305.289.2569
Nodal-Erika@monroecounty-fl.gov

PLANNING COMMISSION

The 5-person BOCC-appointed board serves as the local planning agency. Review proposed development amendments to the text of the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and map amendments, and provide recommendations to the BOCC.

Contact: Ilze Aquila
305.289.2529
Aquila-Ilze@monroecounty-fl.gov

SHARED ASSET FORFEITURE FUND ADVISORY BOARD

Recommends grant funding to private, non-profit organizations using money from the Sheriff's Office's forfeitures and seized assets.

Contact: Michelle Quad
305.292.7090
mquad@keysso.net

SUBSTANCE ABUSE ADVISORY BOARD

Reviews and recommends applications for funding under the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program and the Clerk's Drug Abuse Trust Fund. This board also serves as the County's Planning Council for the Florida Department of Children and Families Office of Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse.

Contact: Janet Gunderson
305.292.4470
Gunderson-Janet@monroecounty-fl.gov

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Sets an overall direction for the Monroe County tourism marketing effort to assure long-term sustained growth in tourism revenues and sustainability of resources.

Contact: Katrina Cool
305.296.1552
officeasst@fla-keys.com

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

There are seven Constitutional Officers in the Florida Keys. They are elected by voters in the entire county. They are Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, State Attorney, and Public Defender. The Constitutional Officers report to the people. Each has different responsibilities mandated by state law.



SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

www.keyselections.org

Joyce Griffin
305.292.3416
Employees: 9

The Supervisor of Elections oversees all elections in Monroe County. On the website, residents can register to vote, request Vote-By-Mail ballots, check voting status, check where to vote, request signature and address changes, and change party affiliation. Residents also can find information on candidates running for office, or learn how to become a candidate for county elections.

Supervisor of Elections offices:

Key West: 5200 College Road, Stock Island

Marathon: 10015 Overseas Hwy.

Key Largo: 102050 Overseas Hwy., #137

As of January 11, 2024, there are 51,948 active registered voters in the County.
14,985 Democrats | 23,447 Republicans
13,516 Others

Election results are available starting from 1932, sample ballots can be viewed starting from 1987, and total voters who came out to vote in any of the elections starting in 1958, when Monroe County only had 11,544 registered voters.

TAX COLLECTOR

www.monroetaxcollector.com



Sam Steele
305.295.5000
Employees: 61

The tax collector is an agent to collect state and government revenue and public funding. The tax collector is responsible for the collection of ad valorem taxes, non-ad valorem taxes, motor vehicle, and vessel registration, title applications, collection of vehicle and vessel sales tax, issuance of hunting and fishing licenses,



CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER

www.monroe-clerk.com

Kevin Madok, CPA
305.292.3550
Employees: 88

The Clerk of Court serves as the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the County and is the ex-officio Clerk to the BOCC.

The Clerk is the custodian of all official records and is in charge of all records relating to the Circuit and County criminal, civil, juvenile, probate, and traffic departments, including traffic citations and other court-related payments. The Clerk also serves as the County Auditor and County Recorder.

Key West Traffic/Criminal

500 Whitehead St | 305.292.3545

Key West Civil/Recording/Records

530 Whitehead St | 305.292.3540

Marathon Office

3117 Overseas Hwy | 305.289.6027

Plantation Key Office

88770 Overseas Hwy, Ste. 2 | 305.852.7145

driver's license services, concealed weapons, local business tax, issuance of hurricane re-entry stickers for Monroe County residents, United States Passport services, and collection of tourist development taxes.

The tax collector works with information provided by the Property Appraiser's Office for the tax roll, which consists of real estate taxes, tangible taxes, and assessments, like fire, solid waste, and sewer.

Main Key West Office

1200 Truman Ave., Suite 101
305.295.5000



PROPERTY APPRAISER

www.mcpafl.org

Scott Russell
305.292.3420
Employees: 37

The Monroe County Property Appraiser is responsible for identifying, locating, and fairly valuing all property within the County for tax purposes. Determining fair equitable value for your property is the only role of this office. The property appraiser does not create value; the value is made by buying and selling real estate in the marketplace. The property appraiser has the legal responsibility to study those transactions and appraise your property accordingly.

Main Key West Office

305.292.3420

500 Whitehead Street (rear of building)

Marathon Satellite Office

305.289.2550

MM 48, 2798 Overseas Hwy, Suite 310

Upper Keys Satellite Office

305.852.7130

MM 88.7, 88700 Overseas Hwy, Islamorada

Marathon Branch

3015 Overseas Highway | 305.289.6034

Plantation Key Branch

Annex Building, 88800 Overseas Hwy
305.852.7150

Key Largo Branch

Tradewinds Shopping Center
101487 Overseas Hwy | 305.853.3562

Key West Driver License Office

3304 N. Roosevelt Blvd.
305.293.6338

Big Pine Key Branch

247 Key Deer Blvd. | 305.872.4751
(Tues-Thurs 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.)



SHERIFF

www.keyssso.net

Rick Ramsay

Dial 911 for emergencies, 305.292.7000 for the non-emergency

r Ramsay@keyssso.net

Employees: 600

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office is the primary law enforcement agency serving the residents and visitors of the Florida Keys from Key Largo to Key West. Law enforcement duties include traditional road patrol, the operation of county detention facilities, and the service of civil papers.

On the Sheriff's website, users can find information about arrest data, active warrant information, victim resources, and more.

ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS

305.292.7000

5525 College Road, Key West

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE ANIMAL FARM:
free of charge, the second and fourth Sunday
of the month from 1 to 3 p.m.

Freeman Substation

20950 Overseas Hwy,
Cudjoe Key

Marathon Substation

3103 Overseas Highway

Islamorada Substation

86800 Overseas Highway

Roth Building

50 High Point Road, Islamorada

Key Largo Substation

102050 Overseas Highway

JUSTICE SYSTEM

16TH JUDICIAL

CIRCUIT COURT

www.keyscourts.net

Chief Judge: Bonnie Helms

Trial Court Administrator:

Holly Elomina 305.292.3423

Freeman Justice Center

302 Fleming Street, Key West

Marathon Courthouse

3117 Overseas Highway

Plantation Key

Government Center

88820 Overseas Hwy, Tavernier



STATE ATTORNEY

www.keyssao.org

Dennis Ward

305.292.3400



PUBLIC DEFENDER

www.pd16.org

Robert Lockwood

305.294.2501

MEDICAL EXAMINER

www.monroecounty-fl.gov/medicalexaminer



Dist. 16 Medical Examiner

Dr. Michael R. Steckbauer

305.743.9011

MEO@monroecounty-fl.gov

Employees: 2

Monroe County built a state-of-the-art Medical Examiners facility on Grassy Key in 2008 to store records and perform examinations and testing in the morgue. The Medical Examiners Act was enacted in 1970 to establish minimum and uniform standards in death investigations. Florida's 67 counties are served by 25 Medical Examiner Districts appointed by the governor in 3-year terms.

By statute, the Medical Examiner determines the cause and manner of death of a human being under the following circumstances: criminal violence, accidents, suicides, the sudden unexplained death of an otherwise healthy person, unattended by a practicing physician or other recognized practitioner, in a prison or penal institution, in police custody, suspicious or unusual circumstances, criminal abortion, poisoning, diseases that threaten public health, and employment-related diseases, injuries, or toxic agent.

The medical examiner also determines the cause and manner of death when a dead body is brought into the state without proper medical certification; when the body is to be cremated, dissected, or buried at sea; and when requested by the State Attorney.

The medical examiner's primary tool is an autopsy, which is a post-mortem examination. During an autopsy, everything is documented in a "case file," with photographs taken at all process stages. When an investigation is complete, a death certificate listing the cause and manner of death is filed with the Department of Vital Records for the State of Florida.

Monroe County participates in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). The system helps find unclaimed persons who have been identified, but the family has not been found to be notified by Local Law Enforcement. Anyone can search the NamUs database at www.namus.gov or call 855.626.7600. They offer help to families in search of a missing family member.

To request a copy of an autopsy report, the request form is available at www.monroecounty-fl.gov/medicalexaminer. The form can be emailed to meo@monroecounty-fl.gov, or mailed to the Medical Examiner's Office, 56639 Overseas Highway, Marathon, FL 33050.

MUNICIPALITIES

There are five municipalities in the Keys. Each has its own elected mayor, council and government for the operations of their city. The rest of Monroe County is known as “unincorporated Monroe County,” and it is governed by the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners.

ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS

www.islamorada.fl.us

86800 Overseas Highway, Islamorada
305.664.6400

Mayor: Buddy Pinder

City Manager: Open Until Filled

Public Information Officer: Evie Engelmeyer
hr@islamorada.fl.us

CITY OF KEY COLONY BEACH

www.keycolonybeach.net

305.289.1212

Mayor: Joey Raspe

cityadministrator@keycolonybeach.net

CITY OF KEY WEST

www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov

1300 White St., Key West

305.809.3700

Mayor: Teri Johnston

City Manager: Albert Childress

Public Information Officer: Alyson Crean
acrean@cityofkeywest-fl.gov

CITY OF LAYTON

www.cityoflayton.com

68260 Overseas Highway, Long Key

305.664.4667

Mayor: Bruce Halle

cityhall@cityoflayton.com

Administrative Assistant: Mimi Young

myoung@cityoflayton.com

CITY OF MARATHON

www.ci.marathon.fl.us

9805 Overseas Highway

305.743.0033

Mayor: Robyn Still

City Manager: George Garrett

garrettg@ci.marathon.fl.us

Public Information Officer: Sara Matthis

matthiss@ci.marathon.fl.us

FEDERAL AGENCIES IN MONROE COUNTY

NAVAL AIR STATION KEY WEST

www.cnic.navy.mil

Monroe County and Naval Air Station Key West have a long history of cooperation and mutual partnership. This collaboration has contributed economic, public safety, and environmental benefits for the community at large, and has also enhanced operational and readiness requirements for the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, National Guard units, federal agencies, and allied forces supported by Naval Air Station Key West.

Public Information: Danette Baso Silvers
danette.basosilvers@navy.mil

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

The Coast Guard has stations in Islamorada and Marathon. It also operates Sector Key West, which is responsible for 55,000 square miles, including Cuba and the Bahamas. The Coast Guard protects the maritime border, environment, and marine commerce. They conduct search and rescue and law enforcement operations, and in the event of a disaster, the Coast Guard works with Monroe County Emergency Management.

Station Islamorada: 305.664.8077

Station Marathon: 305.743.1991

Sector Key West: 305.292.8713

NOAA

www.floridakeys.noaa.gov

NOAA also is responsible for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, which protects 2,900 nautical miles of Florida Keys coastal and ocean waters.

Public Information: Scott Atwell

scott.atwell@noaa.gov

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE KEY WEST

www.floridakeys.noaa.gov

www.weather.gov/key

For all things weather-related, the County entrusts the experts at NWS for updated forecasts and other expertise. Daily forecasts can be found on the NWS website and during a hurricane event, like Hurricane Irma in 2017 and Tropical Storm Ian in 2022.

Public Information: Jon Rizzo
jonathan.rizzo@noaa.gov

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

www.cbp.gov

In the event of an emergency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents become a part of Monroe County's Emergency Management team. The agency is also responsible for border security and detaining

illegal immigrants, preventing human trafficking, and checking people in and out at the Key West Port of Entry located at 301 Simonton St, Room 105, Key West; 877.227.5511.

FEDERAL PARKS IN THE KEYS

• DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK

70 Miles West of Key West

www.nps.gov; 305-242-7700

• GREAT WHITE HERON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, KEY WEST

• KEY WEST NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

• NATIONAL KEY DEER REFUGE VISITOR CENTER

179 Key Deer Blvd, Big Pine Key

www.Fws.gov; 305.872.0774

CEMETERIES IN THE KEYS

• KEY WEST CEMETERY

701 Pauline St, Key West

• SOUTHERN KEYS CEMETERY

258 Ave A, Big Coppitt Key

• AFRICAN REFUGEE CEMETERY

Higgs Beach, Key West

• MEMORIAL GARDENS OF THE KEYS

31211 Ave. A, Big Pine Key

• PIONEER CEMETERY

81801 Overseas Hwy, Islamorada

STATE AGENCIES IN MONROE COUNTY

In Monroe County, many branches of government at the federal, state, and local levels work in the Keys - some directly serve the local residents, and some have bigger missions to serve Florida or the country. Monroe County BOCC works with other government entities at all levels for the good of the County and its citizens.

STATE PARKS IN THE KEYS

www.floridastateparks.org

Bahia Honda

36850 Overseas Hwy, Bahia Honda
305.872.2353

Curry Hammock

56200 Overseas Hwy, Marathon
305.289.2690

Dagny Johnson Hammock

County Road 905, MM 106, Key Largo
305.676.3777

Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail

90 linear miles of trail: Key Largo to Key West; 305.853.3571

Fort Zachary Taylor

601 Howard England Way, Key West
305.292.6713

Indian Key

Offshore Islamorada, 305.664.2540

John Pennekamp Coral Reef

MM 102.5, Key Largo
www.Pennekamppark.com, 305.664.3777

Lignumvitae Key Botanical

77200 Overseas Hwy, Islamorada,
305.664.2540

Long Key

67400 Overseas Hwy, Long Key
305.664.4815

San Pedro Underwater Archaeological Preserve

Remains of a Dutch-built ship off Indian Key
305.664.2540

Windley Key Fossil Reef Geological State Park

84900 Overseas Hwy, Islamorada,
305-664-2540

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (FWC)

www.myfwc.com

FWC has many entities in the Keys, including law enforcement, licenses and permitting, conservation, and research. On the law enforcement side, the FWC officers overlap with Monroe County Sheriff's Office on the water and near coastal communities to respond as backup or primary on water-related issues and public safety. The agency also brings in supplemental officers and equipment to support Emergency Management. On the research side of FWC, the agency keeps track of economically stimulating fisheries like lobster and stone crab, which is important not only for the County but also for the State. It also helps create awareness about invasive species, like lionfish, and is the State agency tasked with testing antibiotics for the coral disease outbreak.

Public Information: David Dipre
david.dipre@fwc.com

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - MONROE COUNTY

Monroe.floridahealth.gov

dohmonroe@flhealth.gov

305.293.7500

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County's (DOH-Monroe) mission is to protect, promote, and improve the health of residents and visitors in the Florida Keys through state, county, and community efforts. Programs and services include environmental public health, immunizations, HIV prevention and care, refugee health screenings, Healthy Start, WIC, family planning, epidemiology, STD testing, tuberculosis control and prevention, school health, dental sealants, vital statistics, and tobacco prevention. DOH-Monroe facilitates the development and implementation of the Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan. DOH-Monroe is also a partner for special needs care during emergency evacuations and helped Monroe County in the past with issues like Mpox and mosquito-related incidents.

Administrator and Health Officer:

Dr. Carla Fry, PhD, MSN, RN

1100 Simonton St, Gato Building, Key West
Public Information Officer: Jennifer Lefelar
Jennifer.lefelar@flhealth.gov

Health Care Centers

1100 Simonton St, Key West
3333 Overseas Hwy, Marathon
50 High Point Rd, Tavernier

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

www.FloridaDEP.gov

The DEP is the State's lead agency for environmental management and stewardship, divided into three areas: land and recreation, regulatory, and ecosystem restoration. In Monroe County, DEP has been an integral agency for the County's canal restoration, stormwater, and sustainability projects.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

www.flsmv.gov

305.289.2600

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL

www.flhsmv.gov

The state law enforcement agencies have officers who are stationed in the Keys to provide a variety of functions, often working collaboratively with local law enforcement.
850.617.2000

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT)

www.fdotmonroe.com

QUICK REFERENCES

FLORIDA KEYS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Key Largo Chamber of Commerce

www.keylargochamber.org
106000 Overseas Hwy, 305.451.1414
info@keyslargochamber.org

Marathon Chamber of Commerce

www.floridakeysmarathon.com
1222 Overseas Hwy, 305.743.5417
info@floridakeysmarathon.com

Islamorada Chamber of Commerce

www.islamoradachamber.com
87100 Overseas Hwy, 305.664.4503
info@islamoradachamber.com

Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce

www.lowerkeyschamber.com
31020 Overseas Hwy, Big Pine Key
info@lowerkeyschamber.com 305.872.0752

Key West Business Guild

808 Duval St, 305.294.4603
www.gaykeywestfl.com

Key West Chamber of Commerce

www.keywestchamber.org
510 Greene St, 305.294.2587
info@keywestchamber.org

Florida Keys Mosquito Control District

www.keysmosquito.org
Five board members are elected county-wide to represent their district. The mission is to control mosquitoes efficiently in an environmentally sensitive manner while protecting the public from health threats and nuisance issues that could impact the local economy.

Director: Andrea Leal, 305.292.7190

Public Information: Chad Huff
305.292.7190 x 131
chuff@keysmosquito.org

Comcast Service Center

1010 Kennedy Dr, Suite 200, Key West 300
800.266.2278

AT&T and U-Verse

1113 Key Plaza, Key West
5109 Overseas Hwy, Marathon
305.296.5007; 855.293.7676

Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority

www.fkaa.com
1100 Kennedy Dr, Key West
305.296.2454
Five board members represent the entire County and are appointed by Florida's governor.
Public Information: Krystal Waldner kwaldner@fkaa.com, 305.295.2150

Florida Keys Electric Cooperative

www.fkec.com
91630 Overseas Hwy., Tavernier,
305.852.2431
The nine-person elected electric company board represents four districts in the Middle and Upper Keys from the 7 Mile Bridge to Ocean Reef, and to the County line on the 18-Mile Stretch.

Keys Energy Services

www.keysenergy.com
1001 James St., Key West,
305.295.1000
The five-seat elected governing board for the Lower Keys electric company represents the 7-Mile Bridge to Key West.
Communications: Julio Torrado Julio.Torrado@keysenergy.com, 305.295.1023

Monroe County School District

www.keysschools.com
Five board members are elected countywide to represent their respective districts.
Superintendent: Theresa Axford
305.293.1400,
Theresa.Axford@keysschools.com

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 8,851

School Board Members:

District 1: Darren Horan, 305.923.9331 darren.horan@keysschools.com

District 2: Andy Griffiths, 305.296.2639 andy.griffiths@keysschools.com

District 3: Mindy Conn 305.293.1400 x53323, mindy.conn@keysschools.com

District 4: John Dick, 305.395.0657, john.dick@keysschools.com

District 5: Sue Woltanski,
305.240.1565,
sue.woltanski@keysschools.com

ANIMAL CONTROL

The three animal shelters are community resources for pet owners and lovers. Animal Control is responsible for enforcing regulations, protecting the public from the dangers and nuisances of uncontrolled, dangerous, or feral animals, and protecting animals from cruelty, abuse, and abandonment. They are also responsible for spaying, neutering, and adopting animals in their care. Animal Control conducts investigations, issues citations, and attends court proceedings related to alleged violations.

KEY WEST AND THE LOWER KEYS

MM 0 through MM 16.5
Florida Keys SPCA
5711 College Rd., Key West
305.294.4857
After-Hours: 305.304.5964
www.fkspca.org

BIG PINE KEY AND THE MIDDLE KEYS

MM 16.5 through MM 70
Florida Keys SPCA
10550 Aviation Blvd., Marathon
305.743.4800
After-Hours: 305.394.7806

KEY LARGO AND THE UPPER KEYS

MM 70 through MM 112
Humane Animal Care Coalition
105951 Overseas Hwy, Key Largo
305.451.0088
www.humaneanimalcoalition.com

In 2023, the Florida Keys SPCA sheltered 533 dogs, 750 cats, 30 birds, 36 reptiles, 4 ferrets, 13 guinea pigs, 37 hamsters, 1 pig, 35 rabbits, and 3 domestic rats.

716 were adopted, 456 were reunited with their families, and 62 were transferred to rescue partners. 37 pets were sheltered through the safe haven program and reunited with their families.

Florida Keys SPCA spayed or neutered 1,315 dogs and cats and provided wellness exams for 952 pets.

The Upper Keys shelter handled 447 animal intakes, 399 spays and neuters, adoptions of 110 dogs and cats, 68 lost and found matches, and 386 road calls.

Since 2000, the Upper Keys shelter also completed 11,892 spays and neuters -- all free of charge to Upper Keys residents through donations from Humane Animal Care Coalition and private citizens.

FLORIDA KEYS' 200TH 'BIRTHDAY' FEATURES WORLD'S LARGEST KEY LIME PIE



The Florida Keys' bicentennial was celebrated July 3, 2023 during a 200th "birthday party" featuring the creation of what is believed to be the world's largest Key lime pie.

The once-in-a-lifetime festivities saluted the 200th anniversary of the Florida Territorial Legislature's establishment of Monroe County, which encompasses the entire Keys island chain, on July 3, 1823.

Exactly 200 years later, the preparation of the Key lime pie — measuring a whopping 13.14 feet in diameter — highlighted Monday night's patriotic bicentennial gathering at Big Pine Community Park.

Key West chefs Kermit Carpenter, Paul Menta, and David Sloan spearheaded the creation of the pie, a gargantuan version of the Keys' signature dessert, and spread the creamy filling over a traditional graham-cracker crust.

The giant pie required more than 16 gallons of Key lime juice, almost 100 gallons of sweetened condensed milk and some 125 pounds of graham crackers.

After its diameter was measured and confirmed, officials served the pie to attendees and intend to have it recognized as the world's largest.

Key lime pie has long been identified with the Keys island chain and its heritage. Believed to have originated in Key West in the late 1800s, it was designated Florida's official pie in 2006 by the state legislature.

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK HOLLY MERRILL RASCHEIN

As mayor of Monroe County, I encourage all of us to embrace the changes taking place in our fabulous Florida Keys. Many critical issues and amazing opportunities are on the horizon for us in 2024, notably our hurricane evacuation modeling, allowing us to map our destiny as a community. As a mother to a 12-year-old Keys kid, our future means a great deal to me, as well as my fellow commissioners, and I look forward to thoughtful and collaborative conversations. While we may all live on separate islands and have different ways of life, we are all connected by our love of the Florida Keys.

In addition to our growth and traffic challenges, we must remain vigilant stewards of our incredibly beautiful and sensitive ecosystem. From constructing a billion-dollar sewer system to investing millions of dollars in canal restoration, our community has made significant strides in improving water quality in recent years. This past summer, herculean efforts during the unprecedented heat wave saved our coral reefs from complete devastation so they can be restored for future generations. And lastly, we will continue to gain ground on solutions to our workforce housing crisis, ensuring our residents have safe and affordable home options.



2023 was a year to celebrate milestones, like our bicentennial anniversary as a county. This year, we look forward to the next 200 years as we pave the way for a future as bright as the sunsets over the 7 Mile Bridge. We will continue working alongside our local, state, and federal partners to protect the quality of life for our families, friends, visitors, and businesses.

I am thankful to my fellow commissioners for entrusting me as mayor, and I'm grateful to the County's devoted staff for their commitment and dedication. I'm excited and ready to take action this year for what we love most -- our Florida Keys -- and I hope you are too.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Holly Merrill Raschein". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Holly Merrill Raschein
Monroe County Mayor

