

Administrator's Update for 12/24/14
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) has been approved at the Department of Interior through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The HCP was our final step in acquiring a permit that allows for the conservation of species through mitigation of their habitats, and at the same time allows for development to take place. Without the permit, owners of scrub-jay identified land would pay higher fees to be able to develop the land. Obtaining approval of the HCP has been a long process and I'd like to thank staff for their hard work in this complicated endeavor. The 30-year permit that the HCP made possible will allow for the streamlining of residential and commercial development and help owners of scrub-jay identified land to develop it without paying excessive fees.

Candy Land

Port Charlotte Beach Park recently hosted the 2014 Santa's Candy Land event. The annual fun day included lots of games, prizes, and of course candy, and opportunities to get a picture with Santa. Over 280 children enjoyed the day with their families, bringing the total attendees to more than 600. It is wonderful to see the community come out and enjoy family time at the holidays in Charlotte County.

Getting ready

Preparations have begun at the Charlotte Sports Park in anticipation of the 2015 spring training season. Our facilities construction and maintenance department is working on dugout bench repairs and other maintenance tasks to ready the facility for the Tampa Bay Rays. The team arrives in late February and spring training kicks off March 5 here in Port Charlotte, voted Best Spring Training City in USA Today's 2014 "10Best Reader's Choice" contest.

Landscaping and maintenance

Landscaping and maintenance is ongoing around Charlotte County to stay ahead of growth and maintain upkeep. Among the recent work done is some basic landscape maintenance at Charlotte Harbor Gateway and Melbourne Street bridge approaches, the U.S. 41 Revitalization area between West Tarpon and Port Charlotte Boulevards, Manasota Key, Grove City Park and South Gulf Cove. Palm pruning, via the county's annual contract, began along U.S. 41 and at other main corridor locations throughout the county. Vertical hedging moved into the Greater Port Charlotte Area and will be trimming there over the next several weeks. Mowing of the medians and various locations is currently taking place in the south county area.

CCU Tours

Charlotte County Utilities (CCU) is offering educational tours of the Rotonda Water Reclamation Facility on Jan. 15, and West Port Reclamation Facility on Feb. 11. Tour participants will learn about the wastewater reclamation process, observe treatment plant operators in action and learn about the transport, processing and disposal of bio solids. Tours will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. and size is limited—reservations are required in advance. Please call 941.764.4304 for more information or to sign up.

Best Wishes and Thanks

I want take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues that support the Board of County Commissioners and extend my warm wishes for Christmas and New Year to all of our Charlotte County Government team and their family members. We all work hard and the tremendous improvements around the county are credited to the attention of staff to the county and citizen's interests. We would not have achieved the successes and completed so many projects this year without staff's support and dedication. Thank you once again for the achievements we had last year. Merry Christmas and happy holidays to everyone.