

Hi Everyone,

We hope everyone is well. It has been another busy week. Things we have been doing and things we have learned more about;

1. The potential impact on our aquifer and how this could economically impact the area. This will be at the bottom of this email but was also added to our website under potential harm.
2. Working on emailing/letters submissions to Joanna Coutu Director of the Land Development Division joanna.Coutu@citrusbocc.com Please be sure to send any of your emails to Joanna before the June 27th quasi judicial hearing 1pm at 3600 W Sovereign Path, Room #166 Lecanto, Florida 34442 Please be sure to look under the How U Can help tab on our website.
3. We have created two flyers that can be printed by people and shared. We are trying to get these up on the website.
4. We had members that printed flyers to hand out at Crystal River First Friday and they will be at Publix's today. We want to really thank everyone who has participated in this and taken it upon themselves to get out there and do this!
5. Please continue to **share our website**;
<https://stopthesandminecc.wixsite.com/stopthesandmine/how-2-help>

And our [change.org](https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-sand-mine?recruiter=1287868778&recruited_by_id=4a568d00-731f-11ed-b169-877545fe0256&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=starter_onboarding_share_personal&utm_medium=copylink) petition; https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-sand-mine?recruiter=1287868778&recruited_by_id=4a568d00-731f-11ed-b169-877545fe0256&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=starter_onboarding_share_personal&utm_medium=copylink

Here is some of our new information;

Crystal River/Kings Bay system is a first-magnitude spring group and an Outstanding Florida Spring (OFS), designated under the Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act ([F.S. 373.801](#)). It is a critical ecological and economic asset, supporting manatee habitats and a tourism-driven economy in Citrus County. The Crystal River/Kings Bay Basin Management Action BMAP, developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), aims to reduce nitrogen pollution and restore water quality, as outlined in the [Crystal River/Kings Bay Basin Management Action Plan](#).

Currently there is a request that has been submitted to Citrus County “to change approximately 336 acres from (AGR) Agricultural, to EXT, Extractive, for a new sand mine at 3856 N Brookshire Pt in Crystal River.” This request will be undergoing a special master review on June 27, 2025 1pm at 3600 W. Sovereign Path Room #166 Lecanto, FL 34442.

Attorney Darryl Johnston, on behalf of George Southworth, Trustee, has requested a Comprehensive Plan Amendment/Atlas Amendment/Planned Unit Development (CPA/AA/PUD2025-00001)

We know FDOT would like to remove 4.5 million cubic yards of sand. The application for the above request appears to plan on mining 150 acres. If 150 acres was mined it would require a uniform pit dug to a depth of 18.6 feet. As of 5/23/25 it was stated that the property requesting this land use change from AGR to EXT “can provide all of the sand needed for the project and still comply with the Citrus County land use regulations, including the 500' setback.”

We feel placing a sand mine in the middle of a residential area would be irresponsible. Sand mining should not be allowed at this proposed site, 3856 N Brookshire Pt in Crystal River nor should it be allowed in every land use district within 5 miles of the Suncoast highway on the future land use map. It violates Florida statute 163.3213 which says that land development code has to be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

In Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co., the Supreme Court established the legal precedent for zoning ordinances in the United States. The Court, in a 6-3 decision, upheld the ordinance, ruling that municipalities have the authority to regulate land use through zoning, as long as it's not arbitrary or unreasonable and bears a substantial relation to public health, safety, morals, or general welfare.

The Land Development Code, intent and purpose states, the Citrus County Board is responsible for; “protecting, promoting and improving the public health and safety...” “...protecting landowners from adverse impacts of adjoining developments.” “Protecting and where necessary, preserving our valuable natural resources including,...ecologically significant land and water resources...”

In Florida, where water resources are critical, sand mining can contaminate aquifers and springs, impacting drinking water quality and agricultural irrigation. The **Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act** was put in place for these

reasons. Crystal River(CR) is part of the Springs Coast Watershed and Crystal River/Kings Bay spring group is listed as one of the major five springs. Our local CR Springs were named Outstanding by Florida the Legislature and is a designated priority water body or considered a Priority Focus Area! (PFA) “A PFA is defined as the area(s) of a basin where **the Floridan aquifer is generally and most vulnerable to pollutant inputs and where there is a known connectivity between groundwater pathways and an outstanding Florida spring. The PFA provides a guide for focusing strategies where science suggests these efforts will best benefit the spring.**”² This information is directly from Citrus County. Our Citrus County board members are responsible stakeholders along with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as stated in the Basin Management Action Plan.(BMAP)

The applicant states “ground water quality will not be impacted by mining operations” How does Citrus County verify this as true? What testing was done, where are those reports, who did this testing if any was done? Has due diligence been done by Citrus County to ensure the safety of one of our greatest resources in the area? Is there a limit on how deep they can dig?

Crystal River and the broader Springs Coast watershed are Karst sensitive. A Karst landscape is dominant throughout the Crystal River area and it is directly connected to the Floridan Aquifer. This makes the aquifer very vulnerable to surface activities like development, agriculture and pollution. These activities can lead to rapid infiltration of contaminants into the aquifer, impacting water quality and the health of the springs here in Crystal River. The Karst features that dominate the Crystal River area are, the Springs, underground drainage systems and sinkholes that extend throughout the Crystal River area, including the area of the proposed sand mine. (See Maps)

The case of the 3RT Sand Mine in neighboring Levy County, as discussed by the WWALS Watershed Coalition, illustrates the many risks of sand mining. The mine’s location in the Rainbow Springs spring shed raised concerns about its impact on water flow and quality, with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) criticized for inadequate consideration in its Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) ([Sand Mining](#)). Similar concerns apply to Citrus County, where mining could threaten local water bodies and exacerbate existing environmental stresses. The Levy County sand mine is not currently open because a judge stopped the mine from operating citing the Levy County Commissioners’ failure to follow proper procedures. We have high expectations our Citrus County board will do their do diligence to protect, promote, improve, public health and

safety, while protecting landowners from the adverse impacts of an adjoining development, protecting the character/stability of our residential area and our natural and valuable resources as stated directly as the primary purpose of the Land Developments Code of the Comprehensive Plan.

Concerning Environmental/Economic Impacts

The Office of Economic and Demographic Research (OEDR)'s 2024 Annual Assessment of Water Resources in Florida, highlights a potential water supply shortage by 2025, expected to increase through 2040, driven by rapid population growth and economic expansion. An extractive process like sand mining has the potential to lower water tables and affect aquifers, exacerbating water scarcity issues. This could increase water costs for residents and businesses or lead to restrictions on water use, negatively impacting agriculture, industry, and residential areas. Given Citrus County's reliance on the Floridan aquifer, any disruption could have significant economic consequences, potentially costing millions in increased water infrastructure investments.

https://edr.state.fl.us/content/natural-resources/2024_AnnualAssessmentWaterResources_Chapter3.pdf

Lee County is a prime example of the economic impact as they experienced a significant economic losses due to declining water quality, from events like harmful algal blooms and other water quality issues. The estimated losses from another harmful algal bloom was an estimated total of \$195 million in recreational and commercial fishing revenues and expenditures. The potential jobs lost in one year is estimated to be 24,808, and the loss in output is estimated to be \$3 billion. The loss of water quality would impact everyone here in this area.

Dec 20, 2023

<https://conservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Impacts-of-Water-Quality-on-SW-Florida-Economy-Executive-Summary.pdf>

A sand mine next to our neighborhoods has the potential to affect property values and tourism. Citrus County is known for its natural beauty and outdoor activities, it relies heavily on tourism which contributes significantly to local revenue. Environmental degradation from sand mining could deter tourists, reducing revenue for local business and the broader economy. A decline in tourism could lead to lost income for hotels, restaurants, and recreational services, potentially costing the county millions annually. Please let's kindly encourage our Citrus County Board to look more closely at the requested land use change from AGR to

EXT as it does not align with the overall comprehensive plan for our area. It is the water and our beautiful Springs that drive the economy in this area. The PFA provides a guide for focusing strategies where science suggests these efforts will best benefit the spring.