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Contact

Sarah Bascom, sarah@bascomllc.com, 850.294.6636
Lyndsey Brzozowski, lyndsey@bascomllc.com, 850.524.5006

More Landowners Take Action to Protect Property Rights

*570 Total Interventions by Beachfront Property Owners in Case Filed by Walton County
County Mails More Than 1,200 Notices in Second Attempt to Notice all Owners*

Tallahassee, Fla. – Florida Coastal Property Rights (FlaCPR), a coalition created by and consisting of Walton County beachfront property owners, today released updated numbers on filed interventions by beachfront property owners in Walton County’s case to affirm the existence of recreational customary use on all private property. **The owners of 570 beachfront parcels (of the 1,194 parcels sued by the county), which includes individuals, associations and condominiums, have now intervened in the case. This represents an increase of more than 200 from February 18, 2019.**

“The number of interventions grows daily, and we expect them to continue to increase for some time as Walton County notices hundreds of owners who have not yet been officially noticed,” said Tammy Alford, president of FlaCPR. “This is clearly not just a few vocal locals as has been suggested by local customary use advocates; this is a broad-based response by more than 550 beachfront property owners who wish to preserve their property rights in the face of Walton County’s lawsuit.”

In fact, based upon Walton County’s publicly available records, the number of owners who own or have right of use of the 1,194 parcels and have intervened directly or through condos and associations now exceeds 3,500 owners.

“Thousands of property owners and Walton County taxpayers are being negatively impacted by this lawsuit,” continued Alford.

“The county usurped the judicial branch’s function when it declared private beach property subject to public use,” said former federal prosecutor Arthur Kahn, a member of Seaside Town Council. “I don’t think I’m different from most Americans, including customary use advocates, in believing that if my private property isn’t going to be treated like private property anymore, then I’m entitled to hear that in a fair and impartial judicial process, not from a county commission subject to politics and public pressure.”

“We all need judicial closure so that we can reassure the thousands of tourists who’ve enjoyed our private beaches that the same experience awaits them. Most importantly, we need to begin to remember that all who own property in Walton County share many values and we can all live

(MORE)

peaceably together by sharing what we want to share from the goodness of our hearts and not by the wrongful taking of private property,” said Kahn.

“Since affirmation of customary use erodes my property rights by removing my ability to exclude unruly or disrespectful people who use my deeded property, I decided to intervene,” said John Boushy, a landowner. “The false narrative that beachfront property owners are not willing to share the beach is inconsistent with history until Walton County legislated restrictions that impacted owners’ property rights. I look forward to this judgment being made by the court system, rather than in the court of public opinion and social media, which is having only negative impacts on the community.”

Many additional interventions are expected. The court has granted the county until April 19, 2019, to provide notice to any beachfront property owner that has not yet received notice or has not intervened. Recently, the county sent more than 1,200 notices, including notices to the owners of approximately 260 parcel owners who were not previously effectively noticed.

If Walton County is successful in affirming customary use on all private beachfront property in the county, the action will remove private property owners’ legal rights to decide who can use their property and provides Walton County the right to decide who can use the dry sand portion of all privately owned beachfront property.

The court docket in the case, *Affirming Existence of Recreational Customary Use on 1,194 Private Properties Located in Walton County, Florida*, can be accessed at <https://www.civitekflorida.com/ocrs/county/66/disclaimer.xhtml>. (Year 2018, Court Type CA, Sequence# 547).

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FlaCPR is an independent, not-for-profit corporation, operated by a coalition of Walton County beachfront property owners, who are committed to preserving their property rights. FlaCPR is dedicated to providing beachfront property owners with accurate and timely information about actions impacting their property rights and the actions they can take to protect those rights. FlaCPR is neither affiliated with nor endorsed by any law firm. To learn more about FlaCPR, visit flacpr.com.