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## Organizations Ensuring Resilience: A Case Study of Cortez, Florida

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Organizations Ensuring Resilience: A Case Study of Cortez, Florida

by

Karla Ariel Maddox

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition  
Department of English  
College of Arts and Sciences  
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## **List of Abbreviations**

### **Abbreviations**

### **Definitions**

FISH	Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage
CVHS	Cortez Village Historical Society
FMM	Florida Maritime Museum
CEC	Community-Ecosystem-Cultures
OFF	Organized Fisherman of Florida
DWD	Diverse Women for Diversity
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
CSVA	Coastal Storm Vulnerability Area
CEA	Coastal Evacuation Area
FRR	Feminist Rhetorical Resilience
ADAPT	Communication website for resilience, now Jaxonville Today
CR	Community Resilience
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection

## **Abstract**

“Resilience” has often been defined by examining case studies in resilience failures. In contrast, this case study utilizes the oldest, still functional fishing village in Cortez, Florida to rhetorically analyze how organizational communicative practices have worked to ensure its resilience. Situating this conversation within Rhetoric proves valuable since so many attempts to define and utilize “resilience” seek to capitalize on its positive connotation but distort resilience definitions and practice. This dissertation explores three research questions: 1. “What systems and/or structures made our continued existence possible and what ideologies or goals drove their creation?” 2. “What ideologies, perceptions, and/or goals inspired the creation of sustaining organizations in Cortez such as FISH and how do these beliefs influence organizational rhetoric and public communication?” 3. “Through the use the resilience heuristic (i.e., intrinsic value, preservation work, and attuning to space/place and beyond), what advice might Cortez hold as a case study for other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures (CECs), especially within Florida?” The qualitative research records and highlights local knowledge by collecting interviews from female activists within three organizations (FISH, CVHS, and FMM), analyzing existing interviews and organizational communications, proving rhetorical awareness of our own vulnerability, keen insight to the ecosystem benefits Cortezians rely upon using space and place theory within New Materialism, and documenting responsive attitudes and institutions. By exploring these existing documents, contributing helpful concepts to the field such as the networks created by shared Community-Ecosystem-Cultures (CECs), a heuristic for other vulnerable CECs to follow, this research proves that resilience practices ought to grow and be

accessed by all vulnerable communities. This dissertation uncovers thinking, communicating, and organizing practices that move “resilience” forward, revealing how vulnerable communities have enacted it.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

As a child, my father would regularly take me to visit his mother in Cortez on the weekends; these memories hold so much color and love in my mind for the celebration it was to be with her and go there – to her space and place, a large fenced-in four-lot yard that was overgrown with azalea, hibiscus and magnolia flowers, fruit trees, and a changing variety of roaming animals: dogs, cats, geese, raccoons, and parrots. Her space was one completely dissimilar to any comparison either now or then. She relished any and all of my childhood whims, encouraging my art - propping me up at a worn wooden stool at the extended corner-counter of her old kitchen. I remember her stringing a line of twine between the sunroom and the kitchen through the afternoon light that shone in through the dusty windows because we'd both discovered in the midst of dying Easter Eggs that the food coloring on the napkins was more beautiful than the eggs themselves. So, we abandoned the eggs to make decorative napkins, hanging them up to dry. I also recall sleeping over as a child in my grandmother's upstairs bedroom of that old house that, like many of the time, had no air-conditioning to speak of. Through open windows we'd hear the night sounds of crickets and the hum of tires passing over the metal grates of our old drawbridge through open windows; those noises mixing with the bedside table wind-up alarm clock, as she lay in bed reading next to me and an overweight cat named "Sister." I could smell magnolia blooms on the sweet bay breeze, mixed with brine, earth, and old wood.

I lived with my grandmother off and on during the summers after I graduated high school in the early to mid 2000s, sometimes waitressing on Anna Maria Island, and sometimes roaming

around with her to matinees, meetings, and lunches. After a relationship went sour, I moved into the upstairs apartment of her 1889 house permanently in 2010 while also attending graduate school. She has always cared deeply about freedom and rights, avidly reading the newspaper, volunteering for the Women's Democratic club, clipping articles, investigating the so-called "public accesses" in Cortez that were hidden by trees, behind chain fences labeled "private," or as she discovered, outright given away to the powerful, rich, or otherwise influential locals. Additionally, Sue Turner Maddox volunteered in myriad ways for as a Guardian Ad Litem and attending local meetings and events in Cortez. She also took art classes at the community center, making stained glass, pottery and clay sculptures, weaving baskets, painting watercolors, and in her later years, playing the baby grand piano I purchased her at auction so she wouldn't have to practice on a keyboard any longer. She confided in me the details of her life about which no one else knows – the hardships and comic ridiculousness that come with being a woman. For instance, she recounted needing her ex-husband's permission to get a loan for the old house in Cortez after their divorce, and I remember her saying firmly "I'd rather be alone than be with the wrong man."

This was such a sweet time, and my grandmother was a vociferous reader, so we would both take a book into the garden, mine for school and hers for pleasure, just to be in each other's company. Neither of us would get much reading done because we'd always end up talking. My grandmother passed away in 2013, and I feel so fortunate to have spent those years with her, and I continued living in Cortez full time until 2020. She always took the time to explain to me which houses our relatives lived in, and I remember visiting Ella across the street when she was alive. My grandmother would also explain familial relationship to our distant relatives, which accesses to Sarasota Bay had been given away and which ones were still designated for use – not

that they were marked. She was also the one who recommended books to me about Cortez, lending me her personal, signed copies, and describing the circumstances and politics at play during their publication. This history and my grandmother's initial love of this place has led me here.

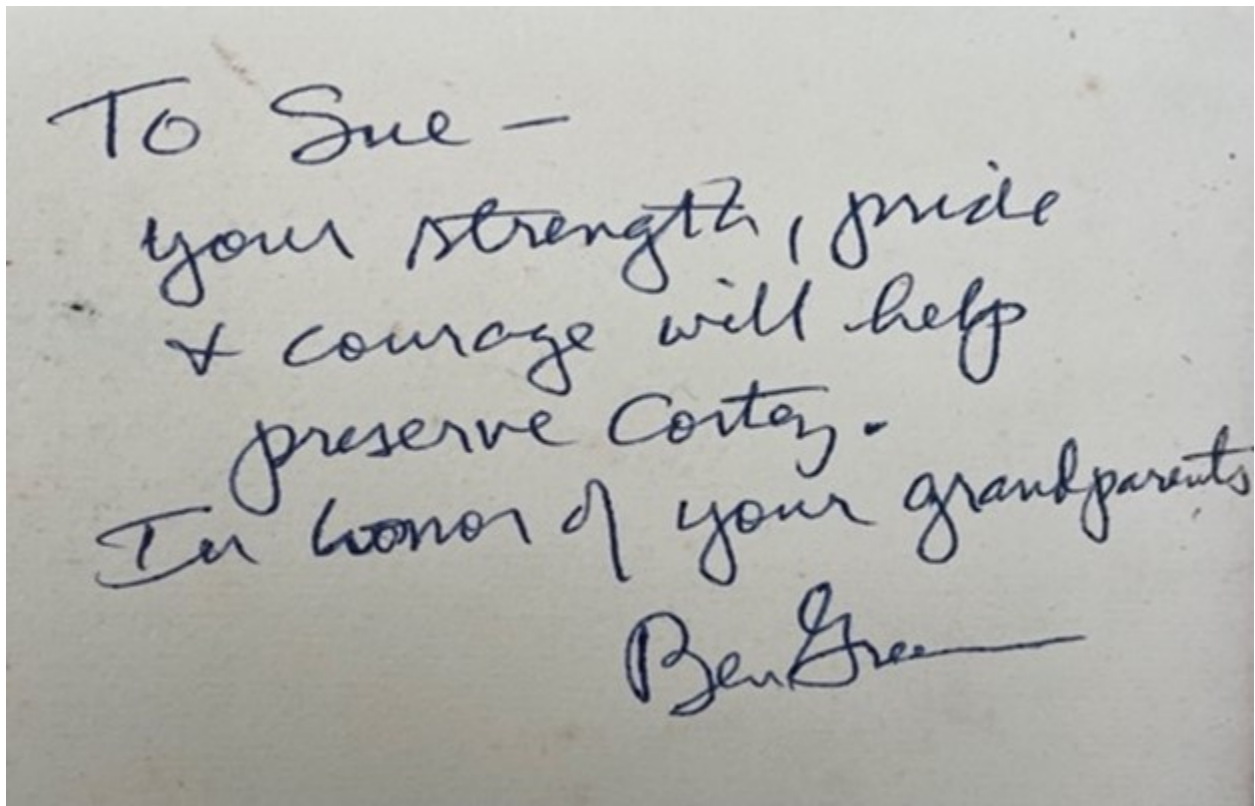


Figure 1. Inscription inside the cover of *The Finest Kind*, which Ben Green wrote to my grandmother.

The inscription above is written on the inside of my grandmother's copy of Ben Green's *The Finest Kind*, and like so many things in Cortez, it is both sweet and comical; comical because we're all distantly related. I grew up hearing from my grandmother about all the meetings, videos, protests, organizing, and the general controversy surrounding this little fishing village. With these memories in mind, and through this research process, I have grown to appreciate and respect how much care and concern that the communication and activism demonstrates, providing innumerable benefits for the people and places lucky enough to be

protected through their labor. To understand these motivations, circumstances, and resultant communications more clearly, these central questions drive my exploration of Cortez as an on-going resilient community-ecosystem-culture:

1. What systems and/or structures made our continued existence possible and what ideologies or goals drove their creation?
2. What ideologies, perceptions, and/or goals inspired the creation of sustaining organizations in Cortez such as FISH and how do these beliefs influence organizational rhetoric and public communication?
3. Through the use the resilience heuristic (i.e., intrinsic value, preservation work, and attuning to space/place and beyond), what advice might Cortez hold as a case study for other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures (CECs), especially within Florida?

This dissertation will begin by tracing the circumstances that drove the creation of the organizations, revealing the onus for the organizations, as well as how those organizations were able, and continue, to provide the structure to better protect Cortez, answering the first question. However, before that can happen, a brief history of Cortez is necessary. The three organizations which I analyze will help to better understand productive communication practices that result in resilient Community-Ecosystem-Cultures (CEC).

### **History of Cortez**

The small fishing village of Cortez is little more than five square miles of historical single-family homes, many of which were constructed by the original settlers who came to Cortez from Carteret County in North Carolina to escape treacherous hurricanes and find better



fishing grounds. The village is designated a “historic place” on the national register, and it is located about an hour south of Tampa. Cortez Fishing Village remains one of the last functional fishing villages Florida has left; its 140-year history is a precarious one, having weathered the unnamed hurricane of 1921 among others, net bans, drug smuggling, and an influx of norther migration, all while avoiding becoming Manatee County’s next condo development or a tacky tourist strip mall. In fact, it is the oldest, still functional fishing village in Florida; the rest have all but disappeared (Green and Molto). Saying that Cortez *feels* different hardly does justice to the experience of living there. To experience the *real* Cortez, one must participate in the traditions, tell the stories, and communicate with neighbors about the latest functions, scandals, and stories in our small village in order to experience an authentic perspective.

Cortez village’s shared undertaking to retain our land, culture, and the ecosystem on which our identity is based has been an ongoing struggle. Since the founding of Hunter’s Point, now known as Cortez, the unnamed hurricane of 1921, to the families who lost members at sea, as well as the men lost in the world wars, all comingled with an onslaught of various ecological problems, which I’ll discuss at length later, Cortez has been bombarded with a barrage of threats, and yet, it survives as a *functioning* fishing village to this day. Exploring Cortez’s survival will prove illuminating for the resilience of other threatened communities in Florida, and to begin this exploration of the last remaining and still functional fishing village in Florida a brief history is necessary because our past, present, and future all highlight the fact that the struggle continues. The foundation for these claims lies in the previous research, storytelling and record keeping on which I intend to build. For instance, Susan Eacker’s dissertation founds her discussion of the women of Cortez and their contribution to the work of the village by providing an extensive history of the roles of women in coastal communities additionally aiming to “document the lives

of white, working-class Southern women” (22). However, many of the stories currently published about Cortez Fishing Village recount dangerous storms and drug smuggling schemes, overwhelmingly focusing on the efforts of men. Furthermore, our statues depict fishermen with nets, and our signs capture net camps frequented by men in hats. Surrounded by these depictions of history, many might assume that the men did the bulk of the work in protecting this special place. However, these depictions are far from accurate in encompassing us all, and I aim to highlight women’s work that has thus far gone largely unacknowledged.

Much has been written about the unique cultural characteristics of Cortez. Ben Greene’s *The Finest Kind*, heralds our unique history, documenting not only the migration families made in the 1880s to this exact spot, but also pays homage to the daily lives, grit, folklore, families, humor, and language practices of our village. *Cortez Then and Now*, co-authored by Green’s mother, Mary Fulford Green, and local artist, Linda Molto, traces the architectural novelty and changing structures that occupy an odd tideland of historic buildings as well as “off the grid” structures in terms of building regulations. The literature of the past is essential in establishing the early years, and much has been done to document the lives of our ancestors and the village’s founders. However, many of these documents feel fragmented, unfinished, and incomplete for their inability to tell full stories and capture all the proponents and supporters of Cortez’s CECs, especially women and their organizing efforts. Ben Green devotes a chapter, and some anthropological texts acknowledge the unique circumstances of Cortezian women and their situational independence in a village whose men were all out at sea, but more recent acknowledgements of the organizational activism performed by the women of the village is necessary. The continued resilience of Cortez is due at least in part to the women with the foresight to protect the ecosystems on which our fishermen and our future directly depend. A

couple of the most resilient networks are the ones between what the land provides, and inhabitants use, namely all endeavors preserving a healthy fishing ecosystem, what Ben Greene describes as a pristine environment, situated perfectly for the needs of fishermen and their families and those which honor our heritage. Cortez often faces conflict with its disparate surroundings while simultaneously struggling to retain its unique identity. There have always been pressures, but the stakes are continuing to rise, and pressures are continuing to mount. Cortez's home-grown resilience efforts of our small village will hardly be able to contend with the global threats we all face if we fail to pivot once again. Commercial fishing in Cortez has a contentious history filled with uncertainties and disagreements. In the early 1920s the fishermen went on strike because the price per pound of mullet was down to one cent. To combat this, there were attempts to unionize, but these were largely unsuccessful. In the 1960s the newest threat to the fishing industry in Florida were tourists and politicians looking to win their favor. Blue Fulford, a native Cortezian and fishermen recounts the trouble beginning for the commercial fishing industry in 1967:

That was the year that a group of developers, politicians, and some neighborhood associations tried to do away with commercial fishing altogether.” These groups proposed local legislation to ban all net fishing in Manatee County within 1,700 yards of shore. There are few places in the country that are not within 1,700 yards – almost a mile – of shoreline. Similar to anti-netting laws were proposed in other counties. (Green 198)

These new restrictions were aggressive, and they had drastic impacts on families' ability to survive. Turning a lawful way of earning a living into a criminal offence did not sit well with many fisherfolk, and knowledge and ability shifted to other ways one may support a family.

This shift in legislation and income meant that much of the work done to protect our citizens, culture, and land was done informally, through neighborhood connections, and by word of mouth. However, some fisherman responded in other free-thinking ways, and as a result of the tightening pressure on the fishing industry and the net ban, they “found they could earn more in a day offloading a mother ship full of pot than they could in a year of backbreaking honest labor” (Zimmerman 85). <sup>1</sup>This caused fear, resentment, and strife among neighbors and family for a number of years. My grandmother was an activist that spoke out on this problem when others, including law enforcement, simply looked the other way. To take a case in point, I remember my grandmother telling me about a particularly frightening incident, as well as how her response to it was handled – that the whole neighborhood knew their own neighbors and relatives were making money by smuggling and selling drugs, and that they’d made no attempt to conceal it. She told me about renting the sign pictured below, that sat in front of her house, the first one built in Cortez, and that the sign didn’t even last through the night because someone set it on fire. In her 1993 interview by Michael Jepson she said that she had anticipated it being vandalized, but she thought maybe some kids would throw some rocks at the sign. I remember asking her if she’d been worried, and she replied, “I’ve never been so scared in my whole life!” What follows is her picture with her sign, a sign that only stood for one day. Sue Turner Maddox, granddaughter of Captain Nathan Fulford, has always been an activist and conservationist against myriad threats to Cortezians’ way of life, whatever the cost. In addition to renting the

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<sup>1</sup> Stan Zimmerman, an expert on smuggling and author of *A History of Smuggling in Florida*, confirms that the location is suasive in lending itself to smuggling, both historically and today. He uses The National Drug Threat Assessment of 2005 to highlight the fact that “The South Florida area remains a primary entry point for foreign-produced marijuana smuggled through the Caribbean and is emerging as a regional source of supply for domestic marijuana” (91). This is an issue which persists – one which is even mocked by both residents and law enforcement in my personal experience as a resident. For instance, some of our local restaurants placed decoy “flat grouper” in the bushes at their entry; “flat grouper” is what locals called plastic wrapped bails of marijuana that were smuggled by boat.

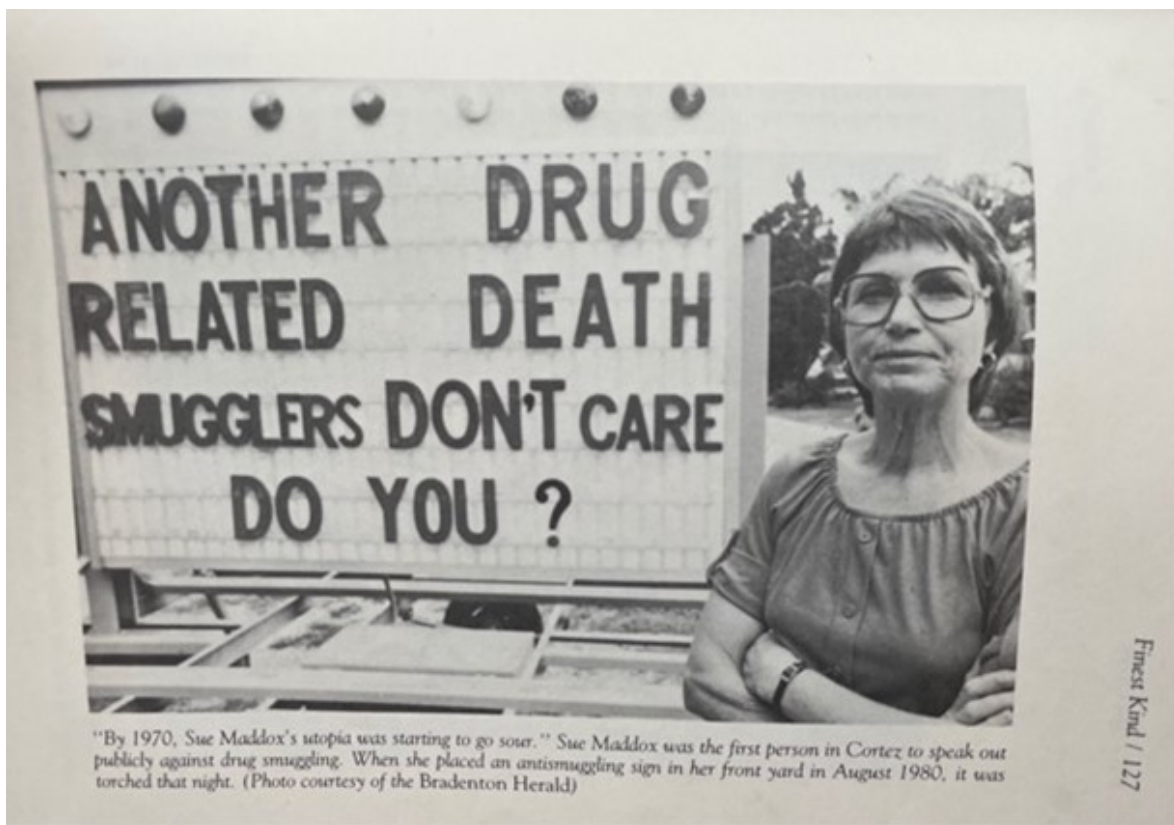
sign, my grandmother organized with some local women in the village; Mary Green was one of them, and they went to Cortez Road with their anti-smuggling signs to raise awareness about the problem. I believe her frustration and determination are both visible in this photograph (see Figure 2). Sue Turner Maddox, granddaughter of Captain Nathan Fulford, has always been an activist and conservationist against myriad threats to Cortezians' way of life, whatever the cost. In addition to renting the sign, my grandmother organized with some local women in the village; Mary Green was one of them, and they went to Cortez Road with their anti-smuggling signs to raise awareness about the problem. I believe her frustration and determination are both visible in Figure 2.

Interestingly, how outsiders experience Cortez as a tourist is drastically different than residing there full-time. To take a case in point, Robin Draper describes Cortez as a destination for those looking to discover the "real" Florida, and her writing reveals some interesting descriptions of both what Cortez is, as well as what it isn't. It isn't the new construction high-rises that accommodate a large number of tourists with copious parking and dredged sand that you'll find just over the bridge on Anna Maria Island. Draper describes it as:

just little cottages and homes and businesses lining narrow neighborhood streets. Locals proudly build and refurbish boats in their front yards where towering rows of crab traps are stacked ready for the next fishing trip. Little has changed since last century. In fact, not much has changed since the village was first settled in the 1880s. Cortez Village is firmly ensconced in the National Register of Historic Places and the people here are dedicated to preserving its legacy. A rarity for sure, Cortez continues to exist as an off-the-beaten-path outpost, anchored by a nearby 95-acre wildlife preserve, a local historical

museum dedicated to preserving its cultural heritage and some of Florida's best, and freshest, "dock to table" seafood restaurants.

What makes this description both illuminating and ironic is the fact that Cortez attracts tourist attention for avoiding becoming a tourist destination. The stark contrast between our village and surrounding developments, namely the mobile home park located just east of The FISH Preserve is obvious. What is less obvious is the dedication, work, and communication of local, mostly female activists, who were working long before the 1990s to make it happen.



**Figure 2. Sue Turner Maddox standing next to the sign she rented and displayed in front of her house in protest of the drug smuggling and drug related deaths in Cortez.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> The photo originally ran *The Bradenton Herald*, and it was also duplicated in Ben Green's book on page 127.

Cortez hasn't always been the idyllic place Draper describes though; much of our history has been fairly rough and controversial, but our survival can be traced to a few women with enough grit, gumption, and determination to take a stand. The historical threats these organizations and women have fought against are numerous, and the interviews with women from those organizations suggest that there is no end in sight. Some of these threats include increasing commercialism, tourism, and traffic, all tied to the influx of people moving to Florida. Other threats have been political, though also related to tourism, like the net ban. And then there was also some infamous drug smuggling that ran through Cortez.

In contrast to Draper's relatively recent description of Cortez are the historical hard times a rough circumstance that many fishing families faced as Florida enacted drastic restrictions on an already precarious way of life. An understanding of the material conditions of living in Cortez, principally the nature of the fishing industry, its indeterminate income, and lack of other opportunities is necessary before it is possible to glimpse contributing influences and limited reactions to local crime. By exploring the historical limitations for those fishermen-turned-smugglers such as purposeful and growing legislation on the types and location of fishing that could be done legally, we may seek to understand both the limited options available for working-class people, as well as the extremely limited support networks available to protect citizens and the larger community.

Considering and extending my grandmother's work is why I focus on community work in Cortez as analyzed through a feminist rhetorical approach, which the next section points to. While our goals are similar, my scope is much more concerned in the particulars of our experience and whether those preserving acts are extractable for other cultures and ecosystems in jeopardy. Again, there is no way to bifurcate our material existence from who we are; it is with

good reason that the FISH mission statement covers it all: “dedicated to the promotion, education and preservation of Cortez and Florida’s commercial fishing and other traditional maritime cultures including the environment upon which these communities depend.” It is with my grandmother’s courage in mind, the lineage she passed on, and the land she loved so deeply that my motivation emerges to understand how organizations were founded, the continuous labor the women founders exerted, and to see what tenets there may be for preserving other ecosystems and cultures.

### **Resilience**

I became interested in the concept of resilience as I first grappled with differences in meaning and application, noticing that Florida had recently hired a “Chief Resiliency Officer,” and that various state organizations and websites often use the term incongruously; consequently, many approaches that deal with “resilience” are ill-equipped and fragmented. More alarming is that fact that the positive connotation of “resilience” is valuable, and so this disposes the term to being misused further, a problem with serious implications. It was under these pretenses that I came to research the term’s origin and modern use, as well as to think through how it was that Cortez has been able to survive, despite the onslaught of continuous stressors. Exploring Cortez’s survival will prove illuminating for the resilience of other threatened communities in Florida.

The most specific, useful, and lucid ways of conceiving of “resilience” come from Ecology and Land Management, and Walker and Salt’s definition through case studies define resilient systems and their inherent connectivity with the goal of helping stakeholders traverse ecosystem thresholds and understand connectivity for a wide range of systems (i.e., coral reefs,



farms, fisheries, etc.). What they add to the conversation is an overt explanation of thresholds and cascading collapse. Their goal “is to identify possible thresholds beyond which the system will take on a new identity. In managing the system, you want to prevent it from crossing these thresholds, by controlling the state of the system or by influencing the position of the threshold (consider the example in case study 1). In doing so, you are working on the capacity of the system to deal with a specified threat. You are therefore attempting to increase its specified resilience” (18). When I use the term “resilience,” I am utilizing the concept within the ecological land management field to mean the capacity of a social-ecological system to absorb or withstand perturbations and other stressors such that the system remains within the same regime, essentially maintaining its structure and functions. It describes the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization, learning, and adapting (Holling, Walker and Salt).

It is only through case studies that resilience can be specifically discussed and achieved, and so having the insight provided by Cortez may make approaches and communication about resilience more transparent. Rhetorical insight can benefit ecological definitions as well as protect against misuse of the term by those attempting to benefit from its positive connotations. The most helpful ecological definitions ought to address thresholds and regime changes that lead to changed identities. I will begin tracing this term as it is currently being used in rhetorical studies and then describe ways in which resilience should be used through an example from my own research. In this dissertation I will trace existing rhetorical conceptions of resilience, establishing it as a social construction with implications that *matter* tremendously, particularly in rhetorical studies.

## **Resilience in Rhetorical Studies**

“Resilience” is gaining momentum in our common day usage; however, the fact that conversations are proliferating does not necessarily equate to progress on the concept; and while the conversational overlap between ecology and rhetoric persists, the problem is compounded by scale, scope, fields, and application. The details for how human beings interpret, define, and enact “resilience” ought to matter deeply to rhetoricians for the implications it holds both within the field, as well as for land management, especially in Florida. While rhetoricians and environmentalists search for guidelines that do not “foreclose other ways we might respond” (Peterson, Pezzullo, Russill), we should also be careful to avoid the “binaries that maintain ‘social’ as distinct from ‘ecological’ and that oppose resilience and vulnerability reinforce anthropocentric modes of control,” lest we fall victim to what Latour would call the “two world problem” (Milstein). These ordering strategies promote responses that may simultaneously obscure and reinscribe dominant and unsustainable systems of power (Bean et al.).

Another approach that rhetorical studies has taken regarding “resilience” has been to interrogate the connotations of “resilience,” highlighting New Materialist connections to our environment, and Bridie McGreavy takes this course of action in a number of her articles, emphasizing that material particularities are agential. McGreavy takes a unique approach, using field sciences, rhetorical methods, and some new materialist underpinnings throughout her contributions to the field. By working through her contributions, we may trace the rhetorical nature of “resilience” in her work. Holling also creates nuance by pairing “resilience” in contrast to Ecological Systems’ “stability,” noting that the more stable an ecological system behaves, the less capacity for resilience has evolved within said system (18). What Holling hints at, McGreavy systematically discusses which is the discursive nature of the terms we use and their

changing function, stating “discursivity matters because resilience’s definitions and other ordering strategies influence how we become resilient. Coping, resistance, and bounce back are normative responses” (105). Not only does the language we use to describe “resilience” matter, but in doing so, we even further concretize meaning.

While the use of the term is indeed growing more prolific in the field of Rhetoric, one can see that agreement on the definition, as well as what procedures and implementations of “resilience” qualifies as such is difficult to say the least. There is not one general rule, and the fact that many use this term to pertain to people, places, identities, and practices promises to complicate the discussion further, but I also believe that the stakes are too high to abstain. It is in our collective interest to “stay with the trouble,” as Donna Haraway would urge us, in continuing to (re)define “resilience” in ways that are clear, purposeful, and help us live well within the world.

### **Resilience in Feminist Rhetorical Studies**

Even this highly specific field acknowledges “resilience” as a central concern for more and more fields such as “queer studies, social work, literary studies, education, urban studies, environmental studies, business, nursing and health studies, psychology, counseling, and Holocaust studies” (Flynn et. al 5). Feminist rhetorical studies (FRS) is both important and helpful for moving beyond definitions of individual conceptions of resilience and toward ones “more relational and community oriented,” emphasizing “relationality, mutuality, and an ethic of connection” (6 & 11). Like much of McGreavy’s work, Judith Jordan’s “resilience” rallies against “illusions of self-sufficiency and denial of vulnerability [rather, advocating for] mutual

empathic involvement [and] relational confidence” (11). This insight rings more clear after all the grasping at our collective “resilience” done throughout the recent pandemic.

While I understand feminist needs to expand the definition of “resilience” to extend beyond borders and systematized ways of thinking and existing in our world, an ecological perspective that is reined in is necessary for specific goals and actions within land management. Feminist Rhetorical Resilience takes as one of its goals to decenter, disrupt, and interrogate systems of power. The dangers of too loose of a definition of “resilience” as it pertains to land management has yet to be discussed in our field, but my fear is the positive connotations, important sounding job titles such as “Chief Resiliency Officer,” and moving imagery may falsely persuade audiences to buy into unfounded, so-called “environmental” policies.” Situating “resilience” within rhetoric to describe a wide variety of desirable traits pertaining to human beings, land, and nature is helpful for empowering identities, but using it with intention and specificity is especially important when discussing land management and resiliency efforts in the ecological realm. While I agree that defining it as an ability to “bounce back” is insufficient, I would contend that the most persuasive ecological definitions, capable of having measurable impacts ought to address thresholds and regime changes that, once crossed, cannot be returned to (Walker and Salt). Add the various fields that pick it up, and at best we’ve created an additional impediment for actionable change. As McGreavy’s studies often highlight, “resilience” remains vulnerable as a discursive construct. If there is disagreement amongst like-minded people within the same field, how precarious are our futures with the term amongst different stakeholders?

### **Resilience in Cortez**

Cortez’s approach to creating a resilient community that continues to exist as a functional

fishing village has been successful and unique, making it an insightful case study. Furthermore, that it has been able to achieve its resilience without formal land management strategies lends itself to deeper understandings of this term. Through an analysis of the communication practices such as The Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage (FISH), Cortez Village Historical Society (CVHS), and The Florida Maritime Museum (FMM), I hope to continue the tradition of documenting and preserving Cortez culture while simultaneously looking for constructive ways to help salvage a disappearing way of life, thereby working toward an understanding of the relationships and networks that have created its resilience. Better understanding the work, rhetoric, and inventive processes by which Cortez has not only avoided obliteration but has also managed to engage in conscious acts of preserving our ecosystem benefits of its unique space and place also protects our linked fishing culture. By extension, it may also be possible to extract wisdom for preserving other precious threatened communities. The issues addressed here are integral to understanding Florida's changing landscape on a much larger scale; by understanding the growing threats to Florida, as well as the historic and modern qualities that have made Cortez resilient when compared to other fishing communities, may potentially yield the communication practices of the organizations and activists protecting this unique place, culture, and way of life. Many fishing communities in Florida have ceased to function. Merely look to Boca Grande and Placida to see what Cortez's fate could have easily become.

To speak about the connections, ties, and networks at play within Cortez, it is necessary to think with Donna Haraway. Haraway devotes an entire chapter to "Tentacular Thinking," chapter two, in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, in which she describes our unique connections to matter as "bounded individuals plus contexts, when organisms plus environments, or genes plus whatever they need no longer sustain the overflowing richness

biological knowledges, if they ever did?” emphasizing collective thinking and “material-semiotic composting, returning again to “string figures” and that tentacular thinking is “both open and knotted in some ways and not others (31). This is helpful for my project in seeing the overlaps not only of the organizations, but also between the networks of Cortez’s collective work, vulnerability, and *deep* ties to the land and environment. Tentacular networks in Cortez have existed for over 140 years, further making it a distinctive and curious insight for understanding how practical instantiations of resilience function. Here, Latour provides insight in his discussion of the thoughtfulness that architects enact in building a lecture hall, so too would I underscore the skilled knowledge with which my great, great grandfather and his company chose to settle. They too were specialists, using their prior knowledge and experience to look for what Latour would call a natural and reliable “network of relations” (195). Not only did they require a harbor for their boats that provided protection from nor’wester gales, but they also needed a place to mend and dry nets, process, and sell fish, as well as build houses that would protect their families from the hurricanes with which they’ve had previous experience in North Carolina. It took time, trial, and error, but the fisher folk eventually found what they were looking for. Green describes it thusly, “Just beyond Anna Maria with easy access through Longboat Pass lay the Gulf of Mexico, which had huge schools of mullet running along its beaches during roe season and, in the spring, a wealth of mackerel and kingfish. [. . .] The Beautiful pristine environment must have looked like heaven [. . .]” (47-8). The land would need to be both sheltered and generative; preserving its Edenic beauty, and the ecosystem’s ability to provide is both perceptible and paramount (Herndl and Zarlego 42). This intra-action was and is both meaningful for an ongoing relationship that Haraway would term “Sympoiesis;” as these skilled fishermen chose a physical place, the protection of that place becomes informative in non-linear

trajectories (Haraway 58-61). Just as the tides have suasive power over clam harvesters in Stormer and McGreavy's piece, so too does the health of local estuaries have suasive power over the fishermen in Cortez.

The interaction between these men and the land was not, nor could it ever be, unidirectional and always harmonious, nor are all the actors/actants ideal or equal, as Karen Barad suggests, but the assemblage of material components certainly *matter*. What I mean is that the land informs the habits, knowledge, and livelihood of its inhabitants as they continue to shape each other. This relationship is what Bruno Latour would say is a hybrid network; attempting to bifurcate the two is not helpful, nor is it possible (11). This link between human and nature is as true today as it ever was. Here, Karen Barad's conception of intra-actions are inherent for the human experience, but I argue this concept is relevant for the nature of fishing as it is Barad's notion of "intra-action," especially for the material exchanges between all the actors that create a sustainable existence for residents and fishermen in the fishing village of Cortez that enables our continued mattering (150). It is their reliance upon the tides, estuaries, breeding seasons of species, weather, and the overall health of this environmental system that constitutes their livelihood as well. Barad stresses this "mattering" doesn't originate outside of particular actions; matter for Cortezians is real, dynamic, and productive through a course of their work and closeness with their system. Any thorough interrogation of a term, ought to begin by understanding the origin, development, and current use of that term. It is with this thinking in mind, that I have examined a broad understanding of "resilience," its history, and the most practical approaches considering the threats outlined throughout this chapter.

This chapter has traced my personal connection to Cortez through my familial relationships and stakeholder as a landowner and resident. There has been continued academic

interest that permeates Cortez's history, and these endeavors provide deeper appreciation and prescience for my own, reviewing some descriptions and projects that have accounted for our historical founding and plight. Tracing the selection and settling of Cortez has revealed to a small degree the continued suasiveness of both the land itself, so too does the historical and keen insight of working-class people being able to attune to their surroundings bear exploration. Furthermore, it is both necessary and insightful to comprehend the long and continuous history of threats and the resultant activism, instrumental in securing the resilience explored therein.

In chapter two, the literature review, rhetorical feminism, activism, and resistance are explored since they are necessary for this dissertation, with special attention tracing the history of identity and experience being utilized as knowledge. It is necessary to interrogate the practices which record dominant narratives, recognizing that they rarely account for *all* contributions, and so these thinkers are integrated. Moreover, a survey of the practices of feminist rhetorics broadens what counts as "rhetoric" *far beyond* dominance and persuasion, a move necessary to see and understand the rhetorical communications of the organizations within this dissertation. Additionally, this chapter explores the history and origin of the term "resilience," generally and within specific fields, highlighting rhetoric's insights and Bridie McGreavy's contribution to the field, citing that "resilience" is a social construction. An exploration of New Materialist thinking within Rhetoric is also necessary in order to account for the connections to our networks, providing access for those attuned to them. The literature review also highlights a need for more prescriptive approaches within the fields of Land Management and Rhetoric if Rhetoric is to intervene in meaningful ways instead of just highlighting New Materialist connections.

Chapter three details my positionality, method, and methodological approach of the dissertation which involve archival research, positing Cortez as a unique space for an insightful



case study because the organizations have secured a resilient existence through activism and organizing. It also explores feminist rhetorics as a tradition of disruption aimed at widening the canon of whose voices are worthy of being heard, what experience counts, ways of knowing, and a wide range of experience and identities, leaning on thinkers like Anzaldua, Glenn, Willey, and Takayoshi. It also explores literature on activism as a form of resistance.

Chapter four develops the three pillars of the resilience heuristic; these communication practices include intrinsic value, preservation, and attuning to space and place, utilizing New Materialist thinking and scholarship. Each of these pillars permeates the communications of the organizations being analyzed: FISH, CVHS, and FMM. This analysis reveals an approach that could serve other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures (CECs) as an approach to securing their resilience.

Chapter five is the discussion of these implications, providing insight to the time-consuming and arduous nature of securing Cortez's resilience. This study reveals that activist residents have been attuning to the community-ecosystem-culture throughout their history, revealing rhetorically savvy approaches that have worked to ensure resilience. FISH, CVHS, and FMM have partnered with like-minded, parallel-motivated groups to work toward common goals. It also discloses the organizations and thinking that predated modern iterations, and these modes of thinking and acting have a way of living on.

Chapter six calls for a review of our practices and language in Rhetoric and Land Management for the sake of practitioners; accessible language and thinking needs to be available for all threatened CECs, as we live and think through our values and in order to provide access and equity to other threatened CECs, thinking through other areas and threats such as Hurricane

Katrina's impact on New Orleans. Disparate language and incongruent approaches further inhibit accessibility for resilience in communities that have and can add value to Florida.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Rhetorical Feminism

Feminism has been integral to reframing what rhetoric is, who is included in these conversations, both as rhetors as well as interpreters of rhetoric, and what the field can and should do in the world. The inclusion of women as both rhetors, as well as being skilled and adept in creating, understanding, wielding, and interpreting rhetoric, is where many scholars begin discussing “Feminist Rhetoric.” This use typically starts with Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s 1973 essay *The Rhetoric of Women’s Liberation: An Oxymoron* (Meyer 1). Reclaiming women’s voices is vital, and Michaela Meyer defines rhetorical feminism as “a commitment to reflexive analysis and critique of any kind of symbol use that orients people in relation to other people, places, and practices on the basis of gendered realities or gendered cultural assumptions” (3). Foss and Foss contend that viewing women as rhetors capable of creating rhetorical artifacts has significantly expanded Rhetoric as a field over the last 50 years; yet “Even now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, women’s status as full citizens, public rhetors, and political leaders remains abridged, contested” (Glenn 6). Many of these early pieces used historical writings of women to argue retroactively that women’s work is rhetorical, and that women have always been capable, and thus ought to be considered and included in communicating, interpreting, and creating rhetorically savvy messages. Now that I have discussed what Rhetorical Feminism is and the contributions made to Rhetoric writ large, I will outline some of the differences Rhetorical Feminists have.

Although disagreements within Rhetorical Feminism continue to prevail, many scholars will agree that increasingly hopeful iterations are certainly more inclusive (Ratcliffe, Enoch, hooks, Anzaldua, Martinez, Olson). I explore these scholars and notions with the goal of making Cortezan history more inclusive of the work women have done to secure our resilience. Who speaks and for whom can be hotly debated. As an illustration, Alcoff argues that “speaking for others – even for other women – is arrogant, vain, unethical, and politically illegitimate” (qtd in Glenn 29). Therefore, there is agreement that intersectional identities must be included and must have the agency to speak for themselves. The divide separating the approaches to making feminist rhetoric more inclusive propt two categories exist for the methodological approach to feminist rhetoric: Either “write women in” to rhetorical canons in order to increase the visibility of women as communicators or revise our conceptions of inclusive rhetoric, examining “how rhetoric as a *discipline* oppresses women in conjunction with the ways various social systems contribute to women’s oppression” (Meyer 3 & 5). Specifically, Daly and Lorde contest that it is possible to be united within the feminist movement without acknowledging the material and agential differences that reside within class and color identities, but we may agree, as Glenn espouses, that “rhetorical feminism values emotions and experience as authentic sources of knowledge, as features of rational argument” (35). Though agreement can be difficult to garner about creating a feminist rhetoric that is inclusive, debating whether what “rhetoric” is ought to be reimagined in ways that are not dominating, patriarchal, or exclusive, or whether it is possible to “write in” concepts and identities that have been historically excluded, a close examination will demonstrate that this debate is still ongoing.

Regardless of any disagreement within Feminist Rhetoric, feminist rhetoricians would agree their approaches are insightful, innovative, and helpful in approaches to communication

problems. The deeper motivations of many pieces in this vein of thinking seek to discover whether or not conventional thoughts and beliefs about the *nature* of rhetoric as “persuasion” is valid, inclusive, and/or helpful for women as rhetors. For thinkers who have responded to the previous thought with a resounding “no,” Meyers offers both synopsis and critique of movements within feminist rhetoric with the ultimate goal ending the contemporary marginalization of both women as communicators and women’s work (9). Rather than dominate, persuade, or convince – all the traditional motivations of rhetoric – feminist rhetoric is more generally aimed at inclusive communication to *educate* (Glenn 76). I believe that rhetorical feminism is necessary and integral for my work in establishing that our place in the world has always been vulnerable, but that women have been working smartly and diligently, regardless of whether they receive recognition or not, to make it better by making it more inclusive through the process of education. Glenn further contends that “by calling on the infinite energy that is plural, collaborative, cooperative, synergistic power (rather than anyone’s limited singular power), by calling on the tactic of rhetorical feminism, practitioners of peaceful, nonviolent, persuasion offer hope. Rhetorical feminists moor their hope on the belief that a better future is rooted in vision and dependent on our heroic and sustained actions to realize such a future” (76). Here Glenn would say that rhetorical feminism is a field “of hope, where rhetorical recognition and appreciate take into consideration the place, culture, ethnicity, class, ability, movements, and orientations of human beings throughout time,” and considering Cortez through the hope Glenn describes enables education and inclusivity, both of which are instantiations of invitational rhetoric. Foss and Griffin work to create a more inclusive rhetoric less focused on “persuasion,” with its connotations of domination, coercion, and other masculine uses of force, instead creating a more feminine alternative, “invitational rhetoric.” Considering Cortez through the hope Glenn

describes enables more holistic representation of all voices and efforts that have worked to ensure our resilience, and these inclusive stories about Cortez, its history of preservations, and the women's labor inherent in such are vital for a number of reasons.

Rhetorical Feminism is necessary and helpful for my project for its ability to include and liberate voices that have yet to be acknowledged, namely voices of women and others, advocating for their inherent value and the lack in knowledge demonstrative of their exclusion (Anzaldua, hooks, Daly). The rest of this chapter will trace larger strands of thinking throughout rhetorical feminism, highlighting the ways in which I intend to utilize some main tenets including identity, experience, activism, and inclusion through education. Identity, activism, knowledge, and inclusion are threads within Rhetorical Feminism that I draw on directly; what follows are notions from Rhetorical Feminism that are essential for answering the research questions of this dissertation.

### **Identity and Experience as Knowledge**

Glenn is helpful when considering Burke's notions of how we identify ourselves and how others identify us; Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectionality, and Gayatri Spivak's strategic essentialism further advance Burke's thinking to advance more inclusive practices, expanding who can speak, be heard, and whose notions are seriously considered (25-6) because "all identities carry with them experiential knowledge, which rhetorical feminists acknowledge and respect, along with such tactics as emotion, the vernacular, and alternative means of delivery (among others)" (25). These identities are certainly intersectional with regard to gender identities, the type of work and space those identities were allowed access to, the power and agency granted to them, and many identities are still oppressed based on those intersections

between class and gender in the village today, as class continues to play a role in the types of identities that are granted a platform and agency, though I would contend that our organizations are working to counteract these injustices, rhetorical feminism continues to both value their insight and fight for their inclusion. Now that I have shown how identity and experience as knowledge add value, I will be exploring a short history of this conversation.

The myriad conversations about whom can speak and whether that speaker is taken seriously draws on a deep rhetorical history of agency and its' relationship to identity.<sup>3</sup> This conversation relies heavily on Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in which he classifies women, differently abled people, and members of cultural/ethnic/racial/religious groups as all sharing to different degrees the rhetorical *dis*advantage of the subaltern. Part of what Rhetorical feminism

[ . . . ] Offers [are] ways to disidentify with hegemonic rhetoric with the dominant rhetorical histories, theories, and practices articulated in Western culture. As a tactic then, rhetorical feminism enacts goals that are dialogic and transactional rather than monologic and reactional and attends to (provisionally) marginalized audiences that may or may not have the power to address or resolve the exigence. Rhetorical feminism employs and respects vernaculars and experiences, recognizing them as sources of knowledge. (Glenn 4)

So not only does Rhetorical Feminism make conversations more complete and more inclusive, but it also serves to be more inclusive about what experiences count, and Glenn would put it thusly: "For rhetorical feminists, experience is a source of epistemic knowledge, as are emotions, both of them freighted with ethos and pathos, with the politicized internalized" (43).

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<sup>3</sup> The work on agency is vast, and due to space limitations, I will only focus here on identity.

Accordingly, working within problematic circumstances, both historically and in modern times, requires that rhetorical feminists think and act with intention to enact their agency and reach their communicative goals. Kathleen Ryan, Nancy Myers, and Rebecca Jones remind us that “ethos is neither solitary or fixed. Rather, ethos is negotiated and renegotiated, embodied, and communal, co-constructed and thoroughly implicated in shifting power dynamics” (11). Consequently, ethos is an integral part of how rhetorical feminism relates power, agency, and identities, including the ongoing activism that links our members of Cortez.

Kendall advances the thoughts of Ratcliffe and Foss, and Foss and Griffin by arguing for the inclusion of more contexts and forums that constitute “rhetoric,” advocating for “dialogic, transactional rhetorical exchanges among equals who speak with invitation and listen with consideration” (Glenn 45). It is with Glenn’s inclusive thoughts in mind that the community of Cortez partakes in on-going dialogic transactions of concerned citizens and community members – that is exactly the method through which our community organizations continue to function and enact their agency, which is why I find thinking with these authors insightful. Furthermore, it is through our shared hope for a better future, one in which our space, ecosystems, culture, and history are preserved and valued that motivates activists to continue to participate; these goals align with many of those promoted by Rhetorical Feminism: “Rhetorical feminism’s principals of hope, dialogism, and respect of vernaculars, marginalization, and experience could constitute the common ground necessary for identification for bridging division, and for moving forward” (Glenn 37). The offerings of rhetorical feminism are both method and methodology, and one of the most powerful of its facets is its ability to not only imbue its believers with hope, but that hope is an impetus for action and activism. Now that I have thoroughly discussed the benefits offered by Rhetorical Feminism in being inclusive and valuing experience as knowledge, I will



demonstrate the ways these beliefs are put to use in community action through activism and resistance.

### **Activism and Resistance**

“Rhetorical feminism is a conceptional action, a trope that can be used to help negotiate cross-boundary mis/understandings and reconciliations; illuminate rhetorical theories; advance feminist rhetorical research methods and methodologies; energize feminist teaching, mentoring, and administration; and secure our hope for the future. In these ways, rhetorical feminism works in the service of and to advance feminist rhetoric. After all, the stubborn belief to which rhetoricians seem to hold fast is that rhetorical practices should do something, that rhetorical inquiry should make a difference in the world”

(Glenn 4).

Activism and enacting the tenets of rhetorical feminism is motivated by hope, and by extension seeking to move toward systems of equity and inclusion. For these reasons, activism is an integral component to those who believe that they are meaningful creators and interpreters of rhetoric, capable of communing with intention. Glenn and others stress the power of activism, stating “[ . . . ] women activists (Sister Rhetors, no less) enter and work to transform that public sphere by chronicling their own history, capturing their own present, revising effective rhetorical participation, and working to legislate a future of equal protection and opportunity – the future they want to inhabit and the one they want for future generations” (6). These different ways of thinking about rhetorical action and what it will take to make a more equal future are necessary precepts for enacting change, and rhetorical feminism is one way to reach this goal. In fact, “Feminist theorizing itself is an act of resistance, a way to uncover and discover the sites of

oppression and repression, but it also maps until-now unmarked strengths and contributions – all the while creating an inventional space for women in all their intersectionalities. Writing this theory fulfills the need to continue the struggle to be heard, and this writing enables theorists to rethink and create new approaches – rhetorical feminism, for instance – for disidentifying and dismantling antagonism, competitiveness, and domination, too often the features of so-called traditional rhetoric” (Glenn 50). Equally important is the feminist rhetoric of bell hooks for the goal of resistance it advances; Glenn surmises that her goals of “dismantling ‘white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,’ a phrase that appears repeatedly throughout her work. Resisting and overthrowing domination is the through-line of her writings and the core of her feminist rhetorical theory” (58). These theorists and activists are foundational as feminists continue to reimagine their own role in the change they want to see and enact. Consequently, I must review the history of the term “resilience,” its connotations and interpretations, the contributions already made by rhetoric and composition to the term, as well as the specificity with which we ought to be using it if I am to discover how Cortez has managed to retain it resilience.

### **Resilience**

As a native Floridian, I have been interested in the variety of ways that Florida in particular has (mis)managed its natural resources and splendor, despite being heavily reliant upon them for the tourism they bring. In antithesis to this, I have also been captivated with the term “resilience” as it relates to Cortez. This term—resilience—resonated with me, and I kept returning to it because I am fascinated with Cortez’s historic and current ability to adapt, respond, and maintain identity, in drastic resistance to the extreme development that surrounds it. Not only is the term “resilience” gaining momentum in common day usage, as a discursive

construct the implications of the dispersal of the term matter deeply to rhetoricians for the implications it holds both within the field, as well as for land management, especially in Florida. For example, some scholars in rhetorical studies have started to use resilience as a key term in understanding the discursive formations of place. Thus, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the term “resilience” if we are to ever deconstruct the ways that it is created, sustained, or destroyed. By tracing the etymology, common usage, and historical conversation of the term to demonstrate its continued controversial nature. I will trace this term as it is currently being used in rhetorical studies and then end the essay by arguing ways in which resilience should be used through an example from my own research. I will trace existing rhetorical conceptions of resilience, establishing it as a discursive construction with implications that *matter* tremendously.

### **Resilience in the Macrocosm**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first known use of “resilience” came from Francis Bacon in 1626, although the usage ascribed to it then is now obsolete. The modern-day usage is given as “The quality or fact of being able to recover quickly or easily from, or resist being affected by, a misfortune, shock, illness, etc.; robustness; adaptability,” and this usage can be traced back to J. F. Smith & W. Howitt in 1857. New and helpful ways of conceiving of “resilience” come from Ecology and land management. Walker and Salt define resilient systems and their inherent connectivity with the goal of helping stakeholders traverse ecosystem thresholds and understand connectivity for a wide range of systems (i.e., coral reefs, farms, fisheries, etc.). What they add to the conversation is an overt explanation of thresholds and cascading collapse. Their goal “is to identify possible thresholds beyond which the system

will take on a new identity. In managing the system, you want to prevent it from crossing these thresholds, by controlling the state of the system or by influencing the position of the threshold [ . . . ]. In doing so, you are working on the capacity of the system to deal with a specified threat. You are therefore attempting to increase its specified resilience” (18). I will continue the call to action that interrogates uses and abuses of the term, differentiating feminist rhetorical resilience from instantiations of ecological resilience, calling for a prescriptivist definition where needed to maintain the identity of threatened Community-Ecosystem-Cultures.

This is a new term for rhetorical history coming out of environmental rhetoric, resource management, and the Anthropocene. In *Rhetoric*, Bridie McGreavy traces the term to 1973 to C.S. Holling for his insights to the inverse relationship between ecological system stability versus system resilience, following the ways that previous theories of land management were not only insufficient, but also catastrophic, warning that “if this perspective is used as the exclusive guide to the management activities of man, exactly the reverse behavior and result can be produced than is expected” (15). The conversation and overlap between ecology and rhetoric persists, and this problem is compounded by scale, scope, fields, and application. At once calling it both a “slippery concept” as well as an “undoubtedly agreeable as ‘motherhood and apple-pie’ notion,” White and O’Hare interrogate “resilience” for its dubious use in The United Kingdom, uncovering “fundamental issues connected with its contested conceptual understanding, variable political positioning, and resultant application [that] need to be addressed” (936). Additionally, many academics pick up the term in discussion of Environmental Rhetoric writ large, as does Peter Goggin in the collection of essays, *Environmental Rhetoric and Ecologies of Place*. Pezzullo argues that “resilience should not just be concerned with bouncing back, but also learning our limits and avoiding precarious futures when possible” (19). While rhetoricians and

environmentalists search for guidelines that do not “foreclose other ways we might respond” (Peterson, Pezzullo, Russill), we should also be careful to avoid the “binaries that maintain ‘social’ as distinct from ‘ecological’ and that oppose resilience and vulnerability reinforce anthropocentric modes of control,” lest we fall victim to what Latour would call the “two world problem” (Milstein). These ordering strategies promote responses that may simultaneously obscure and reinscribe dominant and unsustainable systems of power (Bean et al.). While the use of the term is indeed growing more prolific, you can see that agreement on the definition, as well as what procedures and implementations of “resilience” qualifies as such, continue to be extraordinarily problematic through a variety of fields. There is not one general rule, and the fact that we can use this term to pertain to people, places, identities, and practices promises to complicate the discussion further, but I also believe that the stakes are too high to abstain. It is in our collective interest to “stay with the trouble,” as Haraway would urge us, in continuing to (re)define “resilience” in ways that are clear, purposeful, and help us live well within the world. Now I will turn to resilience as it has come to be defined in rhetorical scholarship.

### **McGreavy: Resilience is a discursive concept**

Bridie McGreavy is foundational to my understanding of resilience as a discursive construct because an underlying theme in her work is to understand whether our rhetorical message, and especially the language we use, is effective in helping us achieve our environmental goals. She employs field sciences, rhetorical methods, and some new materialist underpinnings throughout her contributions to the field of Rhetoric. By working through her contributions, we may trace the rhetorically discursive nature of “resilience” in her work. In “Resilience as Discourse” McGreavy conceives of “resilience” as a discursive construct

relegated to our discussion of it. She argues that the concept of resilience is growing in popularity and funding, and I certainly agree. Consequently, by unraveling it, she traces how the definition has been cemented overtime, pinning its current origin to 1973. She posits that resilience ought to be reconceived in less rigid ways, stretching beyond just “bouncing back.” Using a Foucauldian archeological approach by addressing the term itself – how regularities, contradictions, and transformations in the term emerge out of a power struggle, tracing the term back through ecological communication to C.S. Holling, who defines “resilience” as “a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables” (14). Holling also creates nuance by pairing “resilience” in contrast to ecological systems’ “stability,” noting that the more stable an ecological system behaves, the less capacity for resilience has evolved within said system (18). What Holling hints at, McGreavy clearly articulates, which is the discursive nature of the terms we use and their changing function, stating “discursivity matters because resilience’s definitions and other ordering strategies influence how we become resilient. Coping, resistance, and bounce back are normative responses” (105). As resilience efforts grow in discussion, McGreavy’s point about its inherent discursive nature becomes increasingly essential if these efforts are going to be insightful and beneficial to socio-ecological systems. I will discuss these concepts in detail using Walker and Salt later within this chapter. McGreavy elaborates further on concepts of resilience in her other works.

In “‘It’s just a cycle’: Resilience, poetics, and intimate disruptions” McGreavy demonstrates that an inability to agree on causal concepts impedes cooperation despite participants’ shared goals. She employs new materialist perspectives to move into notions of multiplicity to prove that resilience is discursively produced in multifaceted ways in most helpful

cases; it is singularly produced in least helpful cases. McGreavy's findings prove that the phrase "it's just a cycle" undermines the discussion of climate change and consequently resilience efforts. Moreover, in "Citizen Science and Natural Resource Governance: Program Design for Vernal Pool Policy Innovation" McGreavy et. al they compose a retrospective case study of a sixteen-year-old project studying vernal pools in Maine which analyzes available information and policy regarding vernal pools in an effort to fill in missing information and correct harmful (mis)information. Their method tracks three components: "(1) our resilience goal of maintaining healthy vernal pool ecosystems and human communities; (2) how citizen science advances this goal by building adaptive capacities through knowledge, networks, and leadership; and (3) how these adaptive capacities can support the transformation of policies that constrain adaptive forms of governance." Additionally, the method/ology McGreavy et. al employ lends credence to their message in working toward shared goals.

Further establishing connections between humans and their environments and what we collectively stand to lose in their article "Thinking Ecologically About Rhetoric's Ontology: Capacity, Vulnerability, and Resilience," Stormer and McGreavy make a new materialist, ecological argument to view agency as not just a human/speaker phenomenon, but rather one that includes any number of environmental material factors. They trace a foundation that demonstrates rhetoric is always in a Deluzian state of becoming, beginning with R. L. Scott in 1973, but argue that more recent scholars have opened the field further, saying that "Rhetoric teems with ecologically inclined thoughts. Sharing this inclination, we discuss three conceptual shifts that follow from understanding rhetoric as an emergent, materially diverse phenomenon: from agency to capacity, from violence to vulnerability, and from recalcitrance to resilience. Rather than propose a model, we revise commonplaces of theory to support ecological

considerations of ontology” (2). This is a call for stabilizing a continuous and adaptive need for rhetoric’s ability to shed light on evolving situations through complex and evolving material relationships. Understanding resilience as a responsive, rhetorical concept highlights ways we are connected with our material world. This section traces rhetoric as coercion and force, whether it is physical, emotional, or persuasive force and reimagines this dilemma in more positive terms; additionally, they prove this oppressor/oppressed dichotomy of violence in terms of rhetoric (convincer/convicted) is too simplistic to be helpful. Instead, a wider view demonstrates that multiple entities are yielding (and interacting) to create any given phenomenon. McGreavy’s contributions about what Rhetoric has to offer concepts of resilience has been both necessary and insightful to my work for tracing the history of the concept, highlighting the interactions between materials, a concept I will speak about at length in the New Materialist section of this chapter, as well as proving the power of Rhetoric, calling for the field’s continuing involvement, since “resilience” is a concept that will, for better or worse, remain discursive. Hence, Rhetoricians ought to continue activism in this field.

### **“Resilience” requires borders**

While I understand feminist needs to expand the definition of “resilience” to extend beyond borders and systematized ways of thinking and existing in our world while discussing the term for humans and identities, an ecological perspective that is reined in is necessary for specific goals and actions within land management, such as maintaining a healthy fishery in the case of Cortez. Moving in this direction would more generally ease the conflict and deter misuse that the term is plagued with and about which many scholars take issue, including McTighe and Haywood, and I address these concerns later in the chapter. Feminist Rhetorical Resilience takes



as one of its goals to decenter, disrupt, and interrogate systems of power. For instance, Diverse Women for Diversity (DWD) established by Dr. Vandana Shiva, employs localized methods and a “network of networks” to create positive change while defying the typical tactics of global organizations (Schell 37).

The Resilience Alliance, an international, multidisciplinary research organization that investigates social-ecological systems established in 1999, works “across disciplines to advance the understanding and practical application of resilience, adaptive capacity, and transformation of societies and ecosystems in order to cope with change and support human well-being” ([www.resalliance.org](http://www.resalliance.org)). It is my belief that this organization is headed in a helpful direction by promoting nine specific tenets. If we acknowledge our limited understanding of all the ecosystem benefits upon which we rely and those we reap from the diversity of healthy ecosystems, one of our main goals *ought to be* not just maintaining identity (though much of it would be imperceptible to us anyway), but we must also advocate for preservation. If we agree with Barnett and Boyle, that rhetoric ought “to constitute ways of being and ways of being-with-others-in-the-world,” so too must we not only acknowledge our links as many new materialist thinkers do, but we must also admit that our systems of measuring, predicting, and knowing are mediated, convenient, and distorted.

### ***Firm Borders Are Troubled***

In a 2019 review of the term “resilience,” Rachel Haggard, Anne Cafer, and John Green tally 87 articles to evaluate whether or not they are following the 4 factors of community resilience as defined by United States Agency for International Development (USAID): malnutrition, food security, economic, ecological. As it turns out only 20% of the articles mentioned all four categories, so it is clear that confusion persists on what “resilience” means

and how it is calculated. The article also notes that a large subset of articles investigates resilience as recovering from a natural disaster, but ultimately highlights that preparedness for disasters is more helpful.

Walker and Salt provide the urgency to reach meaningful conclusions on what resilience is and how best to enact it because “the capacity of our communities, ecosystems, and landscapes to provide the goods and services that sustain our well-being” (xiiv). They describe at length in the preface and introduction of *Resilience Thinking*, and they are not the only ones, about the broad confusion and an inability to pin down what “resilience” is. So out of necessity, and as a work around for being able to discuss it holistically, they can only reach meaningful conclusions using case studies of particular landscapes and regime/identity changes. For instance, they discuss the extreme mismanagement of The Florida Everglades, its consequent regime change that is now dominated by cattails, forever altering this ecosystem, and usually resulting in undesirable and catastrophic changes (15-27). Additionally, they use the examples The Gouburn-Broken Catchment in Australia, coral reefs of the Caribbean, and The Northern Highlands Lake District in Wisconsin. Their case studies demonstrate that resilience is “the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure” (xiiv). Once they have investigated a number of historical examples of resilience *failures* – instances in which an undesirable regime change took place, having irreversible consequences on the natural environment, then Walker and Salt move to nine “tenets of resilience,” definitively forward progress.

Walker and Salt define resilient systems and their inherent connectivity with the goal of helping stakeholders traverse thresholds and understand connectivity for a wide range of systems (i.e. coral reefs, farms, fisheries, etc). What they add to the conversation is overt explanation of

thresholds and cascading collapse. Their goal “is to identify possible thresholds beyond which the system will take on a new identity. In managing the system, you want to prevent it from crossing these thresholds, by controlling the state of the system or by influencing the position of the threshold (consider the example in case study 1). In doing so, you are working on the capacity of the system to deal with a specified threat. You are therefore attempting to increase its specified resilience” (18).

### ***It Is Complicated***

To make an already complicated issue even more so, each and every environmental system is different, operating on different, unpredictable scales. Those scales are further complicated by the interactions inherent within the “panarchy,” the dynamic character of interactions between human and natural systems. Walker and Salt use a cycle to describe the different states of an adaptive cycle as rapid growth, conservation, reorganization, and release (74-95). These processes are complex for the sheer number of influences on any given socio-ecological system, that is the relationships and interactions between humans and the environment. Walker and Salt reiterate this point time and again: “[ . . . ] the complex nature of how an ecosystem shifts over time, and how these shifts are driven by processes that work at different scales in time and place. The vegetation structures represent the most rapidly changing variable, with plant turnover times on the order of five to ten years” (23). Natural disasters like fire, floods droughts, and freezes further collaborate to make systems unique, unwieldy, and unpredictable. What’s more is that even the illustrations intended to simplify the adaptive cycles linking social/environmental systems emphasize that they are even unreliable given the number of contributing factors to any individual ecosystem. Hence, Walker and Salt must “reemphasize

that the adaptive cycle is not an absolute; it is not a fixed cycle, and many variations exist in human and natural systems” (82).

Bergström and Dekker further prove the complications of managing systems with infinite influences in “Bridging the Macro and the Micro by Considering the Meso: Reflections on the Fractal Nature of Resilience.” The article troubles “resilience” from any hierarchical structure (i.e. Micro: human resilience and Macro: societal resilience) and rather advocates for understanding all instances of “resilience” in the middle (i.e. meso resilient organizations). The piece highlights epistemological pluralism, and It also uses complexity theory to argue that scale is fundamental to any discussion of resilience; an individual can be resilient and so can a nation. “resilience is a system property, emerging from interactions and relations at local levels” (21). The piece also explores safety science to understand how instances of resilience emerge after disasters. e.g., aviation, nuclear power, shipping, mining, and off-shore drilling, Safety Science is dedicated to understanding how accidents emerge from organizational processes at different levels, i.e., operator behavior, team performance, management decisions, and organizational culture. An important insight Bergstrom and Dekker posit is that no single actor guarantees the emergent resilience of the whole, but all actors influence the resilience of the whole through their local actions, relations, and interactions.

The dangers of too loose of a definition of “resilience” as it pertains to land management has yet to be discussed in our field, but my fear is the positive connotations, important sounding job titles such as “Chief Resiliency Officer,” and moving imagery may falsely persuade audiences to buy into unfounded and ultimately detrimental “environmental” policies,” resulting in regime changes that cannot be reversed. While I concur that Resilience is a discursive construct, and I certainly think rhetoricians ought to continue being involved in the discussion of

defining and defending it; however, I do not see the benefits in conceiving of ecological “resilience” in less rigid ways. In fact, Salt and Walker describe the onus for their books in an inability to define resilience adequately – just ecological resilience. It is only through the process of examining case studies of failed resilience that they get there, cementing their goal to “identify possible thresholds beyond which the system will take on a new identity, [. . . as] to prevent it from crossing these thresholds [. . .] In doing so, you are working on the capacity of the system to deal with a specified threat. You are therefore attempting to increase its specified resilience” (18). I would additionally advocate to preserve and protect ecosystems, rather than simply optimizing the environment for human expansion and consumption. The tentacular networks, as Harraway would say, that function so seamlessly, can be inextricably altered once crossing a threshold, leaving us wanting for ecosystem benefits that we previously took for granted. As McGreavy’s studies often highlight, “resilience” remains vulnerable as a social construct. If there is disagreement amongst like-minded people within the same field, how precarious are our futures with the term amongst different stakeholders? I posit that within the field of environmental rhetoric and land management, a more prescriptivist perspective ought to curate validity and accountability. These borders are intrinsically necessary so that we can make progress together, retaining attentiveness to Holling’s predictions so as to avoid “less a meaningful reality than a perceptual convenience” (1).

### ***Resilience as Protection to Vulnerable Places***

Situating “resilience” within Rhetorical Studies to describe a wide variety of desirable traits pertaining to human beings, land, and nature is helpful for empowering identities, but using it with intention and specificity is especially important when discussing land management and resiliency efforts for our natural environment. Rhetorical insight can benefit socio-environmental

definitions, as well as protect against misuse of the term by those attempting to benefit from its positive connotations. I contend that the most helpful ecological definitions ought to address thresholds and regime changes that lead to changed identities. And while I agree that defining “resilience” broadly as an ability to “bounce back” is insufficient, the most persuasive land management definitions, capable of having measurable and protective impacts ought to address thresholds and regime changes that, once crossed, cannot be returned to. Add the various fields that pick it up, and at best we have created an additional impediment for actionable change, as well intentioned as it may have been. My definition acknowledges identity as an integral part of realizing resilience, and I concede doing so may be arduous since thresholds are being crossed all the time, often ones we do not know about and cannot/should not regulate. Resultant new regimes often occur without our knowing and also without an ability to return to previous states.

### **New Materialism**

New Materialism is foundational to understanding not only the history of the founding of Hunter’s Point, now called Cortez, as a dynamic place, with the sought-after physical qualities of being an ideal fishing port, and new materialism continues to be a relevant lens through which to understand the ongoing tentacular, as Donna Haraway would say, ways that Cortez has maintained and continues to maintain its resilience through supporting organizations and ideas of conservation and difference. The ways that Cortez is spoken of through both residents and tourists solidifies the fact that it is a rarity. In support of its unique nature, countless publications document Cortez as reminiscent of “Old Florida” nostalgia, that has all but disappeared among myriad domineering new builds, sprawling parking lots, chain restaurants, and tacky giftshops. Our organizations have worked tireless to document, preserve, legitimize, and fund, through

county, state, and federal agencies – in addition to our own fundraising, the historical value of both our space, place, and the sensitive ecology on which other systems depend.

Space and Place theories as located within New Materialism is the context for my work.<sup>4</sup> It is useful to think about New Materialism's vast role in continuing to establish Cortez and reify the networks needed throughout its undulating existence from its founding in the 1880s to present day. Despite the fallout of the net ban, as well as our reduced number of founding families currently living here, Cortez as a place continues to be suasive. A couple of the most resilient assemblages are the ones between the benefits that the land provides, and inhabitants use, namely all things preserving a healthy fishing ecosystem, what Ben Green describes as a pristine environment, situated perfectly for the needs of fishermen and their families as well as those which honor our heritage. This chapter will review literature that discusses theories of Space and Place from a New Materialist perspective and those theories inform my understanding of the creation of Cortez, Florida, and the challenges it faces.

### ***Grounded History***

Space and Place theories reorient and make visible the connections between people, history, culture, and our collective reliance on the ecosystem services provided in Cortez and surrounding areas. The benefits provided by our space and place literally create and sustain our village's cultural history and material existence. Rickert builds upon the previous ideas of Heidegger, Latour, and Casey about the ways our environment has rhetorical capabilities, or agency, saying "rhetoric is thereby the emergent result of many complexly interacting agents dynamically attuned and exposed to one another, an attunement that may be as competitive as it

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<sup>4</sup> Note: since there is not enough writing space here to provide an exhaustive history of the theory, my efforts will be devoted to providing context to ground my argument in New Materialism, which leaves out a vast number of thinkers that may be familiar to those in rhetoric and composition.

is cooperative as long as it maintains an ecological relation or connectedness to the world round-about” (34). As “co-respondents who dwell collectively,” the history of Cortezian culture, the way memory shapes landscapes (both past and present), along with the impacts of our evolving networks and organizations continue to protect ecosystems and resources, and the tight ecological feedback loops between us all in this particular place continue to inform the actions Cortezian take to preserve their home. For instance, it is our collective memory of tight feedback loops, as well as the fickle nature of seasonal catches, that enable further protection of our shared resource, “The Kitchen,” a shallow area nestled in mangrove roots and oyster beds where fish mature, thereby sustaining Cortez’s title as the oldest, functional fishing village in Florida. “The Kitchen” is a critical component of our identity since the fishermen know that it is where young fish grow and mature.

The sustaining practices of our still functional fishing village are made visible through an ecological approach to material rhetoric, which “stems from the fact that rhetoric has multiple ontologies, meaning that “rhetoric” is a collective noun whose diverse members arise from material environments (Graham and Herndl; Mol 53–85). Stormer and McGreavy extend this argument by adding that “What rhetoric ‘is’ is [also] emergent and changeable, ‘becoming’ different again and again. The challenge, then, is how to study what enlivens and sustains its ontological multiplicity in an ecological fashion” (3), which is central to the necessity for using space and place to understand how the land has always been suasive, and why that suasiveness has helped to create assemblages that continue to protect our land and culture, both historically and currently.

The persuasive nature of these can be traced by starting with the physical location for what is now Cortez Fishing Village which took place about 140 years ago; this was in and of



itself an on-going and arduous endeavor. However, this struggle ultimately demonstrates the suasive qualities of the land at work within an assemblage of skillful fishermen. The dynamic between experienced fishermen and the land is a complex one using what Karen Barad would call “intra-action.” Finding a suitable place required experimentation, time, patience, and consensus amongst skilled workers with prior fishing experience. From its inception to its current day practices, a New Materialist rhetoric that is attuned to the agency of not only people, but also the material environment, is appropriate and helpful for understanding the ways in which Cortez emerged as more than a viable *space*, but rather a *place* to fish, live, and raise a family for settlers in the 1880s. Early assemblages and relations of “becoming with” the land, as Donna Haraway would phrase it, continue to undulate through the small fishing village of Cortez in unique and unexpected ways that have created a community in response to acknowledging our environmentally vulnerable position. Haraway might add that “This rhetoricity cannot be innate because it cannot *not* be relational: without an other, a trace of differentiation, there is no need or possibility for self-reference. The I, posing itself in its ‘living presence,’ is already an effect of what we might call this rhetoricity of the living, a specter born each time in an underivable and extrahuman rhetorical relation” (550).

As Stormer and McGreavy employed Barad to argue, the elements that create a good harbor “become ‘articulate’ when they collaboratively order a space of address by linking and separating elements into shifting arrangements of things that discourse (flow) into other things for which that flow may matter (Barad 375–77)” (8). To this end, Bruno Latour asks of agentive space “Why not take literally what it means for an interaction to *frame*, to *structure*, or to *localize* another” (194)? Here he stresses the immense influence our surroundings always have on us as human beings. Latour further stresses that “Locals are *localized*. Places are *placed*.” It is

not possible for us to operate or attune to anything larger than where we are; however, he stresses that we are all too capable of forgetting or ignoring prior efforts that inform our material environment. Furthermore, I would add to these scholars that what enlivens and strengthens Cortez as a community is both the suaveness of the land itself as well as the heritage of its residents and family; like rhetoric itself, the land and the residents and families of Cortez are in a constant state of becoming.

This sense of community can also be found in the work of Donna Haraway who writes overtly about “living well together,” and so she is especially pertinent in understanding the functionality of the numerous grassroots organizations our community has established. A number of Cortezians have become active in preserving the unique assemblage of place, culture, and unique way of “becoming with” the land, as Haraway would describe it; however, the resilience of our small fishing village cannot be attributed to the founders of the organizations, or even the organizations themselves. The place and land itself matter as an integral part of how we attune, as Rickert would say, or “world in our world,” as Haraway would say. Additionally, Haraway compounds art and science to create “art science worldings as sympoietic practices for living on a damaged planet” with the ultimate goal of thinking and acting (67) so that we may “reworld, reimagine, relive, and reconnect with each other in multispecies well-being” (51). To “become capable;” “to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well;” “learn[ing] to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or Edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configuration of places, times, matters, meanings” (1). Haraway incorporates the ways in which critters “become-with” in Biology and Microbiology as an example of the ways that we must understand our connection to and with the world.

## *Space and Place Theory*

The landscape continues to be materially suasive to current residents, many of whom have turned activist, including my late grandmother, Sue Turner Maddox. For fishermen, attuning to the system of which they are a part is a prerequisite for success. Advocacy in preserving the healthy “intra-action” for future seasons, family members, and children seems the logical next step in protecting what Stormer and McGreavy would argue, and I’d agree, is a vulnerable network. Memorials, museums, statues, and signs fill this small village, while also working to reify the relationship with the land. Our lived experience and ongoing tentacular network with the land is a testament to Barad’s argument that “matter and meaning are mutually articulated” (152). For our family’s existence and the continuation of our village, our residents are aware of the way their work, fishing, and their intimate relationship with land has suasive power on their very identity. Often times this identity has become troubled by tourists and other outside perspectives because of the class identity inherent within it, but that issue remains outside of the scope of this paper. Karen Barad demonstrates the intermingled nature of identities and rhetors, stating “Matter, like meaning, is not an individually articulated or static entity. It is not little bits of nature, or a blank slate, surface, or site passively awaiting signification [ . . . ]. Matter is not immutable or passive. Nor is it a fixed support, location, referent, or source of sustainability for discourse. It does not require the mark of an external force like culture or history to complete it. Matter is always already an ongoing historicity” (Barad 151). My motive here is to stress a couple points: not only are livelihoods at stake, but very identities, who we *are*, is at stake within the delicate assemblage that continues to protect a vulnerable place. Jenny Edbauer asserts that rhetorical ecologies are always materially in-process, making former tools for thinking and speaking about rhetoric inadequate, namely the “rhetorical situation” since

rhetorical situations continue to evolve, echo, interact, and reflect back on themselves (her example is “weird Austin” movement). Sites, contexts, audiences, rhetor, exigence, and message are all variable depending upon new iterations and adaptations. Edbauer calls for new implications for rhetorical pedagogy, one that actively engages in the on-going act of research. Not “learning by doing,” but “thinking by doing.” Or, better yet, thinking/doing - with a razor thin slash mark barely keeping the two terms from bleeding into each other. This is a rethinking of the “in order to later” model, where students learn methods, skills, and research in order to later produce at other sites. This one-way flow can be radically revised in everyday settings, where rhetorical ecologies are already spatially, affectively, and conceptually in practice. As Eberly puts it, “[r]hetoric matters because rhetoric - which demands engagement with the living - is the process through which texts are not only produced but also understood to matter” (296). This “mattering” is not fully explained only by a text’s elemental properties, but also in the sense of material effects and processes. When we approach a rhetoric that does indeed engage with the living, hooking into the processes that are already in play, then we find ourselves theorizing rhetorical publicness. We find ourselves engaging a public rhetoric whose power is not circumscribed or delimited. We encounter rhetoric. (23)

The process and interactions described above are apparent in multiple facets throughout Cortez. Attuning to the historical buildings, preserved land and fisheries, familial documents (i.e. *The Finest Kind* and *Cortez Then and Now*), and local organizations will reveal the way in which Cortez’s plight has always been one of material vulnerability, as Coole and Frost describe, with enough support systems to contribute to its ongoing resilience. Furthermore, there is a continued need in (re)establishing Cortez; this role is vast, and the networks required for its on-going existence are continuously changing and adapting. Despite the fallout of the net ban or our

reduced number of founding families currently living within the village, Cortez as a place continues to be suasive. A couple of the most resilient tentacular networks are the ones between what the land provides, and inhabitants use, namely all structures, systems, and organizations preserving a healthy fishing ecosystem. These are what Ben Greene describes as a pristine environment, situated perfectly for the needs of fishermen and their families and those which honor our heritage.

The protective systems within Cortez were never accidental. Just as Latour discusses the thoughtfulness that architects enact in building a lecture hall, so too would I argue for the skilled knowledge with which my great, great grandfather and his company chose to settle. They too were skilled workers, using their prior knowledge and experience to look for what Latour would call a natural and reliable “network of relations” (195). Not only did they require a harbor for their boats that provided protection from nor’wester gales, but they also needed a place to mend and dry nets, process and sell fish, as well as build houses that would protect their families from the hurricanes with which they’ve had previous experience in North Carolina. It took time, trial, and error, but the men eventually found what they were looking for. Green describes it thusly, “Just beyond Anna Maria with easy access through Longboat Pass lay the Gulf of Mexico, which had huge schools of mullet running along its beaches during roe season and, in the spring, a wealth of mackerel and kingfish. [. . .] The Beautiful pristine environment must have looked like heaven [. . .]” (47-8). The land would need to be both sheltered and generative; preserving its Edenic beauty and its ability to provide is both perceptible and paramount (Herndl and Zarlego 42). This intra-action was and is both meaningful for an ongoing relationship that Haraway would term “Sympoiesis;” as these men chose a physical place, the protection of that place becomes informative in non-linear trajectories (Haraway 58-61). Just as the tides have suasive

power over clam harvesters in Stormer and McGreavy's piece, so too does the health of local estuaries have suasive power over the fishermen and village residents in Cortez.

The interaction between these men and the land was not, nor could it ever be, unidirectional and always harmonious, nor are all the actors/actants ideal or equal, as Karen Barad suggests, but the assemblage of material components certainly *matter*. What I mean is that the land informs the habits, knowledge, and livelihood of its inhabitants as they continue to shape each other. This relationship is what Bruno Latour would say is a hybrid network; attempting to bifurcate the two is not helpful, nor is it possible (11). This link between human and nature is as true today as it ever was. In the same way, Karen Barad's conception of intra-actions are inherent for the human experience, but this concept is relevant for the nature of fishing as it is Barad's notion of "intra-action," especially for the material exchanges between all the actors that create a sustainable existence for residents and fishermen in the fishing village of Cortez that enables our continued mattering (150). It is fisher folx reliance upon the tides, estuaries, breeding seasons of species, weather, and the overall health of this environmental system that constitutes their livelihood as well. Barad stresses this "mattering" doesn't originate outside of particular actions; matter for Cortezians is real, dynamic, and productive through the course of their work and closeness within their system. Below is a picture of the property purchased by The Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage; it is extraordinarily meaningful and dynamic since it demonstrates how Cortezians consciously assembled to protect the estuaries that enable their fishing assemblage to remain functional. Without it there would be no fish, and our community would lose its identity, history, and land.

Space and place theories are insightful for illuminating our connections and vulnerabilities in our inherent ties to the material. I have also demonstrated the continued need

for a material assemblage to be protected because the value of the assemblage, especially the last viable fishing village in Florida, *matters* in all senses of the term, as Barad suggests. Part of the resilience of Cortez can also be traced through a number of protective entities that have been established to preserve wildlife, livelihood, and culture due in part to the knowledge of their own vulnerability. Members of the village rely upon the fish, and the fish need a healthy estuary to reproduce. The New Materialist approach in rhetorical studies as exhibited through Space and Place theory is poignant and illuminating for understanding the plight of Cortez because our past, present, and future are all issues of matter and *mattering*. By building upon the literature of the past, as well as participating in local conservation groups such as The Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage (FISH), Cortez Cultural Center, and The Florida Maritime Museum, I hope to continue the tradition of documenting and preserving Cortez culture while simultaneously looking for constructive ways to help salvage a disappearing way of life, thereby working toward an understanding of the assemblages that have created its resilience.

### **Conclusion**

Feminist Rhetoric, and the contributions made by it to Rhetoric writ large, are integral to my project for a variety of reasons: Rhetorical Feminism works toward amending an incomplete history, and I believe the typical accounts of Cortez's history and accolades is incomplete at best. Feminist Rhetoric seeks to give credit to people, sources, organizations, and voices that may otherwise go unheard and/or undervalued; moreover, it widens the scope of who and what counts, lending credence to structures beyond patriarchal systems and narratives. Rhetorical Feminism also taps into the value that is the richness of knowledge based in varying intersectional identities, and this system of *mattering* speaks to many of the class identities

already at play in valuing Cortez, but I certainly hope it can also work toward amending the pervasive sexism at play within the fishing culture. Since “resilience” is a discursive construct, and disagreements and confusion persist, McGreavy and other Rhetoricians ought to continue to be involved as practioners and definitions of resilience grow. New Materialism, specifically Space and Place theory, will continue to be meaningful in moving toward understanding, interpreting, and extracting the specific qualities that have created Cortez as a resilient community, cherishing not only the knowledge, but also the network in and of itself.



### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

“No narrative of history is unbiased, and no material object comes forth from a space or process anesthetized of the cultural identities of its creators or modern practitioners” (Ozment 165).

“There exist in feminist new materialist thought resources for destabilizing this project from within by proliferating incommensurate narratives about life” (Willey 1000).

This chapter will discuss both the methodology and methods for the study of organizations and the related activism that have worked incessantly, both past and present, to create the current resilience that Cortez enjoys as one of the last functional fishing villages on the West Coast of Florida. As both a unique space and place, as well as a rare occurrence in Florida to have waterfront homes and heritage dating back to the original settlers, using Cortez as a case study of existing resilience will provide unique insight to grassroots resilience efforts, women’s largely unacknowledged foundational and continuing contributions to these efforts, as well as the thought processes involved.

So, it is through Cortez’s boundaries, “located on the tip of a long narrow peninsula approximately 2.5 miles long and less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide, traditionally known as Hunter’s Point,” that I bind this case study (Green and Molto 3). My research study design matches my method/ology for answering my three qualitative research questions surrounding the creation, onus, and functioning of organizations within Cortez, and Yin would further add that this case study of resilience in Cortez “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful

characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries.”

Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack add that they “afford researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources [ . . . which can be helpful] to develop theory, evaluate programs, and develop interventions because of its flexibility and rigor.” Choosing the correct approach depends on your research question(s) and your epistemological orientation, and so it is with this relationship in mind that I set forth.

Furthermore, it is only through this method/ology that it is possible to answer the questions that drive this dissertation. The ongoing nature of maintaining and recreating meaningfulness that the women of our village have historically done and continue to do drives my research questions:

1. What systems/structures made our continued existence possible and what ideologies or goals drove their creation?
2. What ideologies, perceptions, and/or goals inspired the creation of sustaining organizations in Cortez such as FISH and how do these beliefs influence organizational rhetoric and public communication?
3. Through the use the resilience heuristic (i.e. intrinsic value, preservation work, and attuning to space/place and beyond), what advice might Cortez hold as a case study for other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures (CECs), especially within Florida?

### **Positionality and Feminist Methodology**

Our family house, the first built in Cortez in 1889, is set on four lots and surrounded by lush greenery. She donated family artifacts to our local museum, The Florida Heritage Museum,

and she was a continuous voice of advocacy for preservation in the village, at times voicing concerns that others didn't dare to. To say I admired and appreciate my grandmother is an understatement. My heritage can be traced back to the founders of Hunters Point, now called Cortez. As the great, great granddaughter of Captain Nathan Fulford, and a landowner in Cortez, thanks to the wishes of my grandmother, I have cultural, lineal, and logistical ties and interests that align with those of the village, and so these ties uniquely situate me to know and understand our history more intimately than nonresidents.

Since I was a little girl, I could *feel* the difference when visiting my grandmother and this place, her home in Cortez. I already know Cortez is special, and I can trace this feeling back to my grandmother and my childhood trips to go visit her there. Her garden and quirky old house felt mystical and free. Her yard was overgrown with punk trees, strangler figs, African tulips, Norfolk Island Pines, magnolias, hibiscus, azaleas, cherries, and every variety of palm tree, just to name a few. She would humor any desire I could think of usually, but one of my favorites was making bouquets out of these assorted plants, which she would gladly display in a vase on her pale yellow, kitchen island. I readily admit that my research interest is comingled with love and nostalgia. However, Broad writes that “research projects we *can love* are also those on behalf of which we can be the most eloquent and persuasive with our audiences. We are strongest as researchers when we combine our methodological passions and strategies” (207; emphasis mine). Broad is fitting here for how I feel about understanding the organizations that have helped to secure Cortez's resilience.

The need to acknowledge and honor the real knowledge, foresight, and all modes of effort stemming from the women in Cortez Fishing Village became apparent to me in accessing the documents, letters, books, grants, and other overall labor. Their work *created* running

systems of protection, and the symbiotic nature of our work will help stakeholders yet to come. These systems are fully functional, grassroots activism that operate in serving and protecting ways that rely on generational and ongoing emotional and physical labor, despite the lack of acknowledgement and merit granted to them. Thinking back to Willey's endeavor to clarify the objectives of New Materialist Feminist Practices, finding agreement among what prominent thinkers such as Harding, Haraway, and Barad agree on, that we must "acknowledge our agency and our role as knowledge producers in shaping the course of knowledge." With this in mind, I believe it is necessary to acknowledge my interest in this topic through my heritage, as well as my limitations and motivations for better understanding the protective work of women within our village (1008).

Positionality and ethics should drive the research study upfront by also being included in the research design.<sup>5</sup> My identity and positionality as a landowner and original descendent of a founding member of Cortez, Captain Nathan Fulford, grants me access to insider knowledge and access to the "tentacular" ways of knowing Cortez, as Haraway would term it. I believe that it is only through this identity that I am able to "attune," as Rickert would say, to what has made our culture sustainable. Much of Dr. Susan Eacker's work also functions in this same vein to better document historical efforts and feminine contributions the Village's work force, but her work was completed in 1994 and focused on the economics of labor and gender roles through an anthropological perspective.

I want to participate in a radical tradition of disruption known as feminist rhetorics by widening the canon of whose voices are worthy of being heard, what experience counts, how and

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<sup>5</sup> I have read all published works on the founding history, architecture, lineage, and fishing practices of Cortez, as well as some dissertations coming from History and Anthropology Departments. In other questions I address my personal relationships and vested interest in the research I pursue.

that we honor different identities, ways of knowing, and ranges of experience (Anzaldua, Glenn, Willey, and Takayoshi). Many feminists have advocated for the need to interrogate current institutional practices with the goals of uncovering identities and labor that has gone historically unacknowledged (Enoch, Willey, Reinharz, Royster and Kirsch). Literary studies would trace this practice back to those of New Journalism such as James Agee and Walker Evans, who lived with, and documented the lives of, subsistence farmers with the goal of documenting their humanity. Bernadette Longo would urge us to be mindful of our writing practices in our awareness of “*Whose Knowledge is Powerful?*” (162-8). Again, these thinkers and writers remind us to be aware of how historic practices and patriarchies have influenced the recording and valuation of knowledge making and story telling in Cortez.

What the literature review helped me see, especially within New Materialist thinking and practice, is that coastal communities like Cortez face myriad threats. Part of their work to secure a future first began by recognizing their connections to, and direct dependence upon, their immediate surroundings, like “The Kitchen.” Consequently, Cortezians have worked to protect those resources, an endeavor FISH takes up explicitly in every iteration of their mission statement. It is both the work of individuals, the suaveness of the space and place itself, and the collective attuning of resident activists that has enabled each of the others to continue to exist. For these indelible connections, I lean on Donna Haraway’s concept of sympoiesis. Haraway partly defines sympoiesis as the antithesis of autopoietic systems, systems that are “self-producing” autonomous units “with self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries that tend to be centrally controlled, homeostatic, and predictable” (33). Haraway had leaned on her conception of the term from M. Beth Dempster’s thesis, borrowing her definition of sympoiesis as “collectively producing systems that do not have self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries.

Information and control are distributed among components. The systems are evolutionary and have the potential for surprising change” (33). Further, Haraway hypothesizes that most systems are sympoietic rather than autopoietic, but that people don’t recognize this, and I think she is right.

Cortezians are aware of the connections between a healthy bay ecosystem and the fishing it enables within our functioning fishing village; further, they are aware of the need to continue to proliferate the stories, heritage, knowledge, and know-how of fisher people in order to keep the historical and current culture alive. And so, with these connections in mind, I propose the concept of Cortezian’s linked Community-Ecosystem-Culture as a particular sympoietic system that is utterly intertwined. It is like a stool with three supporting legs; take one away, and the stool falls over. The concept of the CEC as a mutually sustaining sympoietic system has also led me to the heuristic that I develop in chapter four, providing both insight and understanding of the communication practices of organizations and their history. While concepts such as new materialism and resilience are important from a theoretical understanding of the forces at work in Cortez, I needed a better way to think through and approach the practice of research within the community. In other words, as positionality notes, I wanted to find a way to discuss with interview participants and to organize my own thinking what would best serve Cortez.

With Clare Hemmings in mind, I believe we must be mindful of their responsibility as a knowledge producer, which corresponds to the feminist tradition, and I hope illustrate ways that honor and trace women’s labor in ensuring cultural-ecological-community resilience, arguing that these are examples of the need to keep “resilience” within the realm of Rhetoric. Stemming from my interest in feminist rhetorics, it occurs to me that many of the tenets promoted explicitly and by name in this movement have always been at play in the organizations and structures that

serve to protect Cortez. Flynn, Sotirin, and Brady provide a detailed definition of ways in which feminist rhetorical resilience may be enacted; that it is “neither static nor goal oriented; it is pragmatic, situational, and kinetic. Rhetorical resilience is about recognizing and seizing opportunities even in the most oppressive situations by mobiliz[ing] the power of imagination and reflexive meaning making in order to continually reinvent selves and possibilities and to precipitate change” (8). Flynn, Sotirin, and Brady are particularly insightful for thinking about how the women have continued to use organizations to adapt and mobilize in response to issues that threatened Cortez.

### **Methods<sup>6</sup>**

My method is intimately tied to my postcolonial feminist new materialist methodology. Smagorinsky illustrates an urgent need for “greater attention to the relational nature of research [which] explain[s] more about the context of the investigation: the social and cultural experiences of the participants; the physical, social, and political setting of the research; the assumptions at work in the environment; [as well as] the researcher’s relationships and interactions with the participants [...]” (392). Not only do I agree with Smagorinsky, but I contend that access to foundational structures, ways of knowing, and informational channels would be inaccessible to outsiders (Anzaldúa). Additionally, Jessica Enoch provides insight to the ways that hierarchical structures of dominant discourses can reinscribe power if our research practices are not mindful. It is through these activist and reflexive lens that my grandmother demonstrated her boldness and ability to resist dominant discourses of idyllic versions of Cortez.

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<sup>6</sup> The IRB study is number 004573; it can be found at <https://irb.research.usf.edu>. The department location to the Local Research Locations section of the BullsIRB is 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165/ Tampa, FL 33612-4977. See also: Appendix A: IRB Approval Email.

Since my goal is to highlight the ways that women's work has been, and continues to be, integral in securing Cortez's future, documenting their own conceptions, motivations, and understandings of the work they do using their language via collecting interviews will prove the multifaceted nature of our village's resilience. These practices and communications may serve to expand our "thought resources," as Willey terms them, "for destabilizing [singular, patriarchal views] from within by proliferating incommensurate narratives about life". One of my goals has been to consider Cortez as a case study for creating organizations that preserve both ecosystems and the cultural assemblage created therein. Additionally, I intend to explore how grassroots organizations, founded and run by largely women, continue to function in protecting Cortezian ecosystems and culture, thus ensuring the village's resilience. Knowing how these organizations were created, along with how their ongoing efforts that continue to sustain Cortez, will yield guidelines to salvage other threatened communities, ecosystems, and cultures. I also expect that my interviews will yield individual and organizational instantiations of feminist rhetorical resilience. The following section will consist of a review of case study methodology and a proposed case study of resilience in Cortez through continued activism, as well as guidelines for selecting organizational documents and artifacts. Lastly, I will end with a rationale for selecting semi-structured interviews as a method, questions asked of participants, and analysis of transcripts. The overall goal of the section that follows is to explain my methodological approach to conducting research about organizations that protect our village and the women who founded, contribute, and continue to labor within them.



## **Case study**

Bedrettin Yazan describes a case study as a research approach growing and widely contested within the social sciences that covers many areas. Their parameters must be bounded in some way by time, location, and thus mine will be bound by the village of Cortez and relegated to organizations advocating for the preservation of our community, ecosystems, and culture (CEC). It is necessary to delineate the difference between method and methodology in rhetorical studies and move towards how case studies function, rhetorically, while considering Cortez as a research site. Melonçon and St. Amant define “method” as “the approach used to gather research data. Method then is not methodology, which we take to mean the ideological or disciplinary approach to the broad practice of the work of research. Method then is also not practice, which we take to mean the actual work and implementation of methods and methodology in the process of performing research” (131). To this end, and in relationship to the above quote, the best research practices stem from intentional research design because their motivations, questions, and methods can all work together to create intentionality. I have overtly been taught that research is not a linear process, and I believe a case study is the best approach for the type of answers I desire.

Additionally, Yin adds that case studies “allow investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries.” Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack add that case studies “afford researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources [ . . . which can be helpful] to develop theory, evaluate programs, and develop interventions because of its flexibility and rigor.” Furthermore, the case is defined by Miles and Huberman as, “a

phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is, “in effect, your unit of analysis” (25). Generally, they can answer how, what, or why questions. They can also be quantitative and qualitative (in the case of Yin and workplace case studies), although most concentrate on qualitative. Lastly, Yin details what counts as evidence within the case study by providing a list of items: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (83).

Accordingly case study is the best fit for understanding how organizations focused on conservation function because Cortez is a unique research situation for a variety of reasons, namely it is the oldest surviving fishing village on Florida’s west coast that is still functional. Therefore, I will examine the structures ensuring its historic and continued survival is the best approach to ensure that the lessons and skills gained in establishing organizations to preserve resilience are shared with other spaces and places. By conducting interviews, attending meetings, and using documents produced by the organization, specifically FISH, The Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage, I hope to gain some insight to their ideology, mission statements, functions, and on-going organizational practices. Ultimately, I am hoping to create an heuristic for preserving land, culture, and communities while also looking to avoid the scripts set forth by idyllic versions of tourism, village life, or women’s’ work. In capturing a more equitable view of all the contributing members of our village, I am hoping to “refigure and revise,” as Enoch would put it, what it means to be a contributing and valued member and how those roles were achieved. I believe that many of the founding and sustaining members of FISH would view ecofeminism as Vandana Shiva does: “a new term for an ancient wisdom that grew out of various social movements – the feminist, peace, and ecology movements [. . .]” (Schell 38-9). I hypothesize that resilience is an on-going formation of material agencies that have tied, and

continue to bind, our small community in enduring past and present attempts to dissolve us. This grit is the land itself, heritage, and story.

### **Organizations in Cortez**

In addition to the kairotic circumstances that solidified these organizations as a continued and regimented practices with particular places for action, examining mission statements and goals of individual organizations will clarify not only historical needs, as these have evolved over the years and in response to various threats, but will also reveal deeper illumination of the values of Cortez Village inhabitants and descendants, self-identifying why the need for preservation is so great, ultimately tied to the village's unique identity, historical significance, and acknowledged vulnerability. The mission statement of each of the three organizations help to *do* and *communicate* important initial motivations for the organizations' foundings, distill the continuing motivations of the organization, unite members and visitors under shared values, and establish ideas on best practices. So, a key component of my analysis will be to differentiate organizations' symbolic practices based on the audience intended for the message.

In contrast to the mission statements and goals of an organization that drive communication inward to the practitioners of the organization's goals, their public documents, advertisements, and visual representations of events direct communication toward an outside audience. Since the village hosts a fundraising event every year in February, The FISH Festival, it also creates annual advertisements and art that represent that particular year's theme, thus making the evolution of both the organization's mission and communication practices traceable. Not only do I foresee that these artifacts will help document Cortez's rhetorical awareness of their own identity, but many of the images also document the close relationship between our

Community-Ecosystem-Cultures, as well as the mission statements and historical motivations for that particular year. Each year FISH produces new artwork to advertise and use in promotion of The FISH Festival on display in newspapers. By better understanding the kairoitic situation, documenting, and sharing it, we may see how women's work and the power of organizations to unite for common causes may continue to preserve vulnerable CECs. By examining mission statements and other communication practices with the public such as public announcements, brochures, advertisements, and art I will work to answer question one of my dissertation.

It is first necessary to acknowledge individual organizations that continue to serve our community-ecosystem-culture, and in doing so, it will also become clear that the motivation and mission of our village organizations overlap. By better understanding individual organizations, the onus for their creation, and the on-going reliance on women laboring to preserve and protect Cortez, we can better trace, analyze, and document these efforts. What follows is a synopsis three main organizations that still function in these endeavors today: FISH, The Florida Maritime Museum, and The Cortez Village Historical Society, whose contents and headquarters is now located at The Cortez Cultural Center. These three organizations have originated out of historical organizations, also aimed at protecting our village and ecosystem benefits. I have chosen these three since they are the most visible, active, and prominent organizations that can demonstrate both a historic and on-going activist role.

### ***FISH***

FISH stands for "Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage," and this non-profit, grassroots organization was founded in 1991. FISH is important because the foundation is integral for salvaging and continuing to protect the identity and continued prosperity of Cortez Fishing Village. The mission of FISH is:

Dedicated to the promotion, education and preservation of Cortez and Florida's commercial fishing and other traditional maritime cultures including the environment upon which these communities depend. Its mission is diverse: to assist in the operation of a museum site within the historic village of Cortez, Florida; to conduct research and assist in collecting, preserving, and interpreting the culture and folk-life of Florida's traditional Gulf Coast maritime communities and the commercial fisheries of Florida; to promote public awareness and support for protection of the marine resources and fisheries industry of Florida, and to preserve traditional maritime skills and values.

By tracing the circumstances under which FISH was founded, the preserve was purchased, and continuing efforts to educate and engage the public demonstrate the village's awareness of its own vulnerability, and thus contributing to its resilience. By recording these efforts by conducting interviews with founding members and current leaders, highlighting the ongoing nature of women's work within this organization, I hope to honor and trace those acts more thoroughly. I also hope to extract a useful heuristic for other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures.

One of the most powerful and meaningful achievements FISH has secured was the purchasing and restoration of the now over 100 acres of estuary bordering our village, as pictured below. This is an ongoing endeavor because the organization continues to add more land to the preserve, and they also work to maintain the land by removing invasive species and restoring estuaries. Below is a picture of the property purchased by The Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage; it is meaningful because it shows how Cortezians consciously assembled to protect the estuaries that enable their fishing assemblage to remain functional. Without it there would be no fish, and our community would lose its identity.

### ***The FISH Preserve***

Each year to support our Preserve, Cortez Fishing Village hosts a FISH Festival, and the proceeds of the festival have been used to purchase and now maintain the land pictured above. In recent years, FISH had added to the amount of land, removed invasive species, and held clean-up projects to remove waste and otherwise maintain the land. By establishing this system, along with grant money and donations, our village has managed to salvage an estuary on which our fishing and community rely. It is an overwhelming awareness of our own vulnerability that behooves these organizations, without which fishing wouldn't exist in our bays.

### ***Florida Maritime Museum***

The Florida Maritime Museum (see Figure 3) is directly connected to the mission statement promoted by FISH, and FISH was integral in preserving the physical schoolhouse attended by our collective ancestors by purchasing it in 1991. Using grants from National Trust for Historic Preservation and fundraising, FISH leadership renovated it and secured the paperwork to cement its historical significance. The time, effort, money, and coordination involved was no small feat, and local newspapers documented the details: "The building was renovated using funds raised by FISH, the Florida Department of State, Department of Historic Resources Special Category grant, CVHS, Manatee County Board of County Commissioners, Manatee County Clerk of the Circuit Courts, and a private donation from Peter and Eva Thurell's Item Co. (Ltd)" (Anna Maria Sun). In 2006 The Florida Maritime Museum opened its doors, and my family continue to donate family artifacts and heirlooms that belonged to our founding ancestors. The building that houses the museum has significance to the village in and of itself because it was the schoolhouse for Cortezian children. Furthermore, I have strong connections to

this building, and I have a picture of my great grandmother, Myrtle Turner, as a schoolgirl in a class picture taken in front of the building.

### ***The Cortez Village Historical Society***

The Cortez Village Historical Society actively works to preserve village history, artifacts, and trace the lineage of founding families in Cortez. Their website attests that the organization “focuses on preserving ‘old Florida’ history and stories of founding families in Cortez. Starting with the Guthrie and Fulford families in 1880, visitors can travel through war times with Cortez women, who went to work while their husbands were at war and read about boats bringing visitors to the Albion Inn.” As an illustration of this preservation work, they display photo documentation of fishing practices, as well as photos that depict founding families and documentation of labor practices related to fishing, net mending and boat mending in the village. The function of the relatively new, small building, located on Preserve property, is to house the museum of artifacts and history of Cortez Village’s lineage.

Additionally, CVHS aggregates links on its website, using the state archives of Florida, Manatee County’s Historical Collection, The Historical Records Library of Bradenton, and also links visitors to a public family tree of Cortezian Families through Ancestry.com. The website is inclusive and interactive to promote public involvement regardless of ties to village; all are welcome.



**Figure 3. The 1912 Cortez Rural School House is now The Florida Maritime Museum.**

This organization continues to hold monthly meetings and organize special events, one of which is the yearly village picnic held on our public dock; additionally, they host a historical walking tour in which my house is a part. CVHS has been instrumental in securing historical standing of 97 original structures of the village through The National Register of Historic Places. There have been a few self-proclaimed village historians and village matriarchs who continued to remain aggressively involved in the preservation of their own history, and consequently the village's, and they are important to mention because this work is theirs'. Doris "Toodle" Green and Dr. Mary Frances Fulford Green held strongly to the work of preservation, undertaking whatever means necessary, no matter the turmoil, method, or mode required. For instance, Dr. Green was known to dress as her mother to reenact the circumstances and difficulties for women settlers of



the village. It is through this organization that many female leaders received grant funding to continue their preservation efforts and publish book about Cortez.

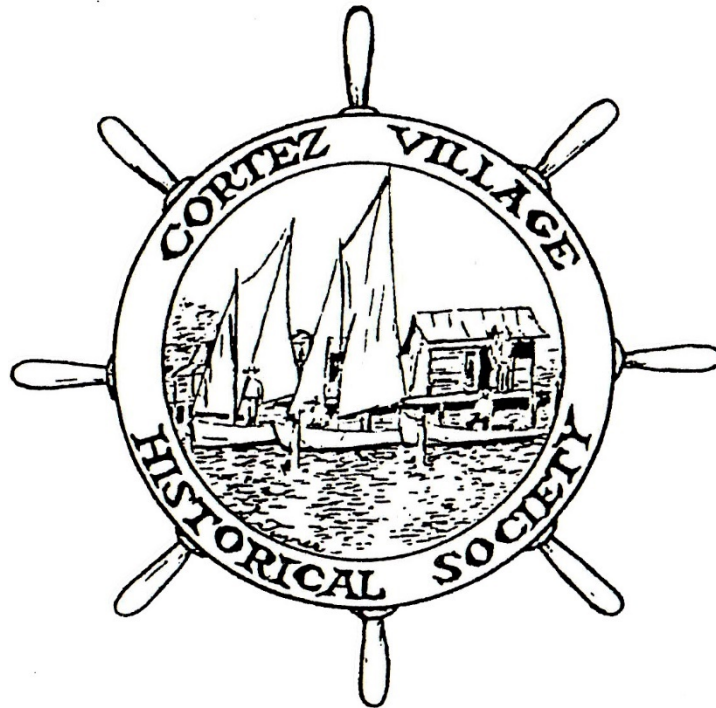


Figure 4. The logo depicts the Cortez waterfront with a net drying camp above the bay as well as boats and fishermen.<sup>7</sup>

*Cortez Then and Now* falls into this category, and it was coauthored by two strong female activists, Dr. Mary Green and artist Linda Molto. The organizations themselves are an excellent aggregate of artifacts because the women dedicating their time, know-how, and other labor are already activists for preservation. Additionally, they are vehicles for both organizing activities and fundraising to support the organization's mission.

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<sup>7</sup> This logo, representing CVHS, is present on their website and newsletters.

## **Textual Materials**

Before Mary Green passed away in 2022, I had been in contact with her monthly or so about my ideas about a “resilient Cortez” and the “resilient women” in Cortez, and she liked to tell me about all our collective relatives who either boarded fishermen in their house for extra money and/or “took in washing” or any other number of odd jobs available to women 50 years ago. I’ve been in contact with Mary for some time, especially after my grandmother passed away, and it was both enlightening and reassuring to hear their stories of traveling and activism together. I’ve heard the same joke from the both of them, told years apart, of a road trip they took to the Grand Canyon in which the “Check Engine” light came on. Apparently, my grandmother got out of the car, lifted the hood, and said “Yep! The engine’s still there!” So, over the past few years, while I’d talk on the phone to Mary, she’d tell me some books that I ought to read and would send them along to me or tell me to come pick them up off of her porch since her house was just three houses away from mine/my grandmother’s in Cortez. When my baby was born, she sent along Susan Eacker’s bound dissertation along with a copy of Mary’s book, *Cortez Then and Now*; included in this cardboard box was a mint green baby blanket that she’d knitted for my newborn son. During these calls with Mary, most of which lasted a minimum of an hour, I’d take notes and jot down the names of people or incidents that Mary discussed.

### ***Public Artifacts***

A variety of the materials that I have gathered for this dissertation are public, such as online current mission statements and information for each organization that can be found on their public websites: <http://www.cortez-fish.org>; <https://fishsblog.wordpress.com>; <https://www.cortezvillagehistoricalsociety.org>; <https://www.floridamaritimemuseum.org/visit>

## *Archival Materials*

After Dr. Mary Green passed away, I saw a number of my distant cousins at her funeral and grave side service. I also spoke with Ben Green, Mary's son, about how Mary had been discussing these ideas with me, and he arranged to get me access to her personal files in her locked house after her passing. Inside Mary's house were three tall filing cabinets, and I resigned my search to include only labeled files that explicitly dealt with communications in Cortez and/or the organizations I would be analyzing: CVHS, FISH, and The Florida Maritime Museum. I left Mary's house with two large, 32-gallon sized plastic containers in my trunk, and these included her CVHS newsletters, a few pictures albums of photographs of The FISH Preserve clean-up efforts, grants, and organizational letters that communicated both within the organization and to others from the organizations. Access to this information has been integral and insightful for understanding the overwhelming amount of continuous labor involved by Mary in particular, but also the ongoing communication and activism at play in our humble fishing village.

Of the resources afforded to me, I have only analyzed the successful endeavors secured through the three organizations which I have chosen for their longevity. The sheer amount of toil and care that was given to other preservation endeavors that were ultimately unsuccessful is painful to bear witness to. Of these numerous incidents, the loss of The Albion Inn structure and property stands out as particularly laborious. There are entire file folders with letters written primarily by Mary Green and Linda Molto to numerous organizations that would be interesting for other projects to pursue that I simply did not utilize since those projects did not come to fruition. The documents located within these file folders span a few decades and include communications with news outlets.

As my focus turned to the work of organizations in Cortez's resilience, I began looking at the modern communications of the goals of these organizations using their websites, and I also sought to understand the relationships between the organizations, since many of them have overlap in leaders, activists, locations, goals, and timelines. As I began conducting interviews with organizational leaders, board members, and volunteers each one offered me additional resources, suggestions, and documents that would help me better understand the history of the organization, the relationships between them, as well as the work performed by each one. To take a case in point, the Supervisor of The Florida Maritime Museum, Tori Chasey has access to these archives and so in speaking with her on the phone I was able to explain my interest in the historical establishment of FMM as well as any current operating documents that she may have. Chasey was incredibly helpful and interested in my project, and so she sent me about 20 different managerial documents via email in mid 2022, and she even agreed to be interviewed for this dissertation. For files that were too large to be sent via email, she and Jenni Laforge granted me access to archival materials saved to FMM's computer as well as some archival materials located in their private office. So, to access these I came in person and downloaded materials associated with the history, ideology, function, and preservation work of FMM, as well as anything they had on the two other organizations, and I copied and photographed what was not available digitally.

While our village organizations function well to preserve historical buildings, ecosystems, and preserve family history, they have been somewhat lacking in *preserving their own history* and the more immediate onus from which their creation sprang. Part of what keeps the village closely knit and deeply tied are familial relations and informal modes of communicating through neighbors and relatives. This comes from intimate and private

knowledge and individual judgement about who and what belongs versus who and what does not. Therefore, it is first necessary to discern the historical underpinning and the kairotic situation for the establishment of organizations of interest: FISH, The Maritime Museum, and The Cortez Village Historical Society. 1991 was an important year for Cortez because a couple monumental achievements for our preservation took place that year. FISH was able to purchase 95 acres of The Preserve at that time, although The Preserve has now grown to over 100 acres, and The Florida Maritime Museum found funding and a home in the historical 1912 schoolhouse, also a funding/logistics issue.

### **Interviews**

Making sure my research design is culturally appropriate with those being surveyed/researched is paramount to my work. In particular, I'd like to highlight the work of Dr Vandana Shiva, cofounder of Diverse Women for Diversity, disposition to both her research rhetorics and methodologies in the goal of DWD is "to do research in a participatory mode with people, not on them – and to do research with an interdisciplinary approach – reflecting the interconnections in the web of life, not teaching them apart with reductionist violence" (Schell 37). This perspective is helpful for both her methodology of insisting she serves the community involved in her research, from the ground up and not the top down. It is also inspiring to see examples of the ways that organizations can function as disruptors to other environmental injustices and continued threats to ecosystems and our way of life.

Bay would also contribute to the symbiotic nature with which research ought to function as both "emergent from and responsive to community needs." Senda-Cook et. al would add that documenting and analyzing *in situ* rhetoric enables rhetoricians to capture "vernacular voices

that are often undocumented [and] rhetoric that resists dominant structures” (5). Furthermore, researcher positionality is particularly useful in rhetorical studies that function *in situ* or through direct participation and observation in the community that one researches, and I would further add that it is only through this positionality that my research is even possible as an already trusted member and descendent of Cortezian founder (Endres et al.). Not only that, but community work ought to be reciprocal. Having a collection of interviews from women dedicated to preserving our culture-ecosystem-community will aid our ongoing process of preservation and perhaps serve as a guide for other communities looking to strengthen their resilience.

By speaking to and with women who have been integral to the establishment and functioning of these organizations, my own interviews will help to supplement the story of our on-going resilience endeavors as well as more clearly explicate the womens’ thinking about how these organizations function currently and historically. Much of the historical efforts already at play in our village intend to document and preserve our culture and history with respect to our peculiarities; regardless of the media, be it audio, visual, or text in what Ben Green calls “living histories” (4). To further explore the questions which drive my inquiry, I plan to conduct interviews with women holding positions within the Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage and other key organizations. I’m taking my examples from ethical research practices, stressing the symbiotic and on-going relationships as well as the shared goals of both the researcher and participants.

In order to facilitate data from Cortez and its relationship to feminist rhetorics and my intended dissertation, I plan on interviewing founding members of Cortez and current citizen activists such as Jane Von Hahmann, Linda Molto, etc. Interviews, which are the second most

used primary method in empirical research, but they are also the method that has “the most agreement, as well as the least problematic use” (Melonçon & St. Amant 142-3). While interviews generally include a smaller number of participants, and can vary in length, the depth of data gathered is the main focus. As Saldaña stated, “qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns and meanings of human experience” (10). Interviews also offer an in-depth look at the experiences of the founders of the Cortez organizations, and they provide a data point to read alongside the textual artifacts. The goal of conducting interviews in this study is to further contextualize the history and mission of women’s participation in the activist organizations in Cortez. Not only will this strengthen the understanding of feminist participation, but it will also allow for greater triangulation between methods. The interviews will be semi-structured, which allows for greater communication between the interviewer and interviewee. As Smagorinsky notes, “Interviews [. . .] are not benign but rather involve interaction effects” (395). Furthermore, his method allows me to adjust, adapt, honor, and participate in the shared goals of FISH, our village, and our continued mattering. Additionally, having the language and insight of the women participating in the work themselves will best frame their own rationale and motivation for their activism without being filtered through any patriarchal or idealized lenses. Many of the stories and conversations *about* organizing women, *even those intending to honor and preserve a woman’s legacy*, still use patriarchal tropes and insults to refer to such women as “stubborn, persistent, and annoying,” often laughing about the fact that she “talks too much.” Lastly, I have chosen interviews because not only are they much more accurate and autonomous way to grant women their own agency and voices for better understanding the motivation for their continued service and involvement, but also the last recorded and published interviews that I’ve had access to happened nearly 30

years ago, and so it is necessary to continue the preservation work of unique voices, individuals, and perspectives.

Dr. Mary Fulford Green	CVHS newsletter editor and long-time activist  grant writer  CoAuthor of <i>Cortez: Then and Now</i> and <i>My Family is Who I AM</i>
Ben Green	Professor Emeritus at FSU; Son of Dr. Mary Green; Author of four non-fiction books: <i>Finest Kind</i> , <i>The Soldier of Fortune Murders</i> , <i>Before His Time</i> , and <i>Spinning the Globe</i>
Jane Von Hamman	Current FISH Treasurer  Board member since 2009  Longtime activist, volunteer and Cortezian
Tori Chasey	Florida Maritime Museum Supervisor
Jenni Laforge	Florida Maritime Museum Registrar & Collections Specialist
Karen Bell	Descendent from Bell family and owner of A.P. Bell Fish Company, as well as many properties and businesses in Cortez
Karen Carpenter	New resident and board member of FISH

I have long been in contact with Mary Green both casually and then for this project. She has been an extraordinarily powerful activist and voice in support of protecting Cortez. She passed away before I had the opportunity to formally interview her, but I do have our notes and her recommendations from our numerous phone calls over the last ten years. Ben Green is author of *The Finest Kind*, and he aided me in accessing Mary's files as well as answering questions regarding the function and timing of many of the archive to which he granted me access as the



executor to Mary's estate. He was also instrumental in the activating of many protective measures in support of Cortez in the 1980s and 1990s. Jane Von Hammen has lived within, operated her business, and raised a family in Cortez; she has also served in local government prior to serving as the treasurer for FISH, though other interviewees assured me her work for FISH far outweighs any title. Tori Chasey and Jenni Laforge both work at The Florida Maritime Museum, and both have museum and preservation training. They were instrumental in helping me access relevant archival materials housed within FMM. Karen Bell is a descendant of The Bell Family who has owned and operated A.P. Bell Fish company, a staple in Cortez's history; she is also an activist and advocate for preserving the fishing industry and educating consumers about local seafood. Karen Carpenter is a new member of the FISH Board, and her voice demonstrates the ongoing efforts of our organizations to recruit new members, creating a unique perspective.

### **Method of Analysis**

In this section I will describe what I mean by rhetorical analysis and what my approach will be to analyzing the mission statements, public documents, other artifacts, such as images, and interviews. I will also describe what I mean by rhetorical analysis and connect that to concepts of feminist methodology. Employing a meaning-oriented content analysis approach, my analysis will differentiate between inward and outward communication practices of preserving organizations in Cortez Fishing Village, highlighting individual versus collective engagement, as well as delineating between public discourse and documents versus insider discourse and documents on what the village is, what it represents, who is included from such statements and events and who is excluded.

In describing my process of rhetorical analysis, I will be thinking with Sonja Foss. Foss defines rhetorical analysis as “a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (6). Foss contends that a primary function of rhetoric is communication through symbols intended to persuade – “encourag[ing] others to change in some way. In other instances, rhetoric is an invitation to understanding – we offer our perspectives and invite others to enter our worlds so they can understand us and our perspectives better” (5). I intend to explore the rhetorical practices of three main organizations in Cortez, and I anticipate that this exploration will demonstrate rhetorical prowess in their messages directed toward audiences of tourists and visitors as well as inward, differentiating between familial relationships, residents, and outsiders. Additionally, my analysis will shed light upon a continually increasing awareness of our individual and collective vulnerability to a growing number of threats. I believe my analysis will demonstrate that residents of the village have an increased awareness of their ties to each other (familial), the precarious nature of the work (vulnerability), and their reliance upon strong systems of preservation – organizational, ecological, and human. So while many documents shared amongst each other will work to strengthen our familial relationships, public documents will work to preserve space and place in other ways.

Rhetorically analyzing the language of mission statements, the kairotic situation under which organizations were founded, their overlap and shared purposes, as well as tracing changes within the organizations public statements and art will trace the responsiveness and astute awareness of organizations defending the resilience of our village. Additionally, analyzing the content of art and photo documentation created in advertising will reveal insights on Cortez’s identity and our relationship with nature. I anticipate finding evidence of Enoch’s ideas of

knowing – that these women and the organizations in which they participate will reveal homegrown knowledge and instances of resilience. the demonstrate rhetorical awareness of space, place, resilience, and identity. Key concepts of discursive Feminist perspectives and work to be included. Different discursive components depending on purpose, audience, and speaker.

By examining the intrinsic awareness of organizers of The Village, present in mission statements, interviews, art, and public documents, we can see communication efforts are directed through audience awareness that utilize rhetorical strategies that are sharply aware of diametrically opposed visions and versions of Cortez. I believe my methods of analysis will reveal an increased use of rhetorical strategies that work to recruit and maintain preservation efforts that can coexist with mitigated versions of how outsiders may view The Village. Using rhetorical analysis will prove fruitful in recording local knowledge, proving rhetorical awareness of our own vulnerability, and documenting responsive attitudes and institutions. By exploring these existing documents, and creating evidence of the on-going nature of women's work, not only can this project work with all three organizations to continue to document our collective history, highlighting formerly glossed-over areas, but my analysis and exploration will also generate an answer to question three: What knowledge, heuristic, or advice might Cortez hold as a case study for other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures (CECs), especially within Florida?

Intrinsic Value	Intrinsic value is present in every iteration and genre of communication from the organizations analyzed, and it is the foundational category upon which every other category and communication practice rests.
Preservation	Each organization also participates in preservation practices that range from purchasing and protecting individual artifacts whether it be photographs, buildings, spaces, or cultural practices.
Attuning to Space and Place	This category is the most complicated, and it rests on the other two categories as an avenue to preserve and protect moving into the future since current activists and practices must be transferred to new and growing audiences.

After analyzing mission statements, communications aimed at inviting the public, and various attempts to attune additional stakeholders to the necessity of protecting our threatened CEC, I surmised that these categories were present throughout these endeavors. Intrinsic value is the first necessary component before the other two are even possible. The CEC must have both confidence and evidence that intrinsic value exists and can be communicated to others. It is also important to recognize that these portrayals and communicative practices that highlight the intrinsic value of Cortezian individuals, families, cultures, and maritime practices are communicated both outward to new audiences and inward to reify the belief and practice.

Preservation is an obvious next step in the heuristic since acknowledging the value of the culture is the first step, preservation will help to ensure that it can be advanced to new audiences and that others can bear witness to the item in the future. Here preservation largely functions in

our village in historical ways, preserving land, access, building, pictures, but also cultural practices such as music, boat building, net mending, fishing, etc.

Attuning to Space and Place has been a tactic that Cortezians use both outward and inward to reify *both* the historical significance and the modern-day beauty and significance of the place in which we all reside. These communication practices conjure the founding of the place, the work, dedication, foresight, and turmoil present in the labor of constructing the space and place, as well as the imaginative experience that we may journey through in remembering those endeavors. These experiences are multifaceted and seek to educate the audience beyond the first hand account of their own senses into a historical account of what used to be. These experiences include The Boat Works projects which teach obsolete boat construction practices, educational demonstrations at The FISH Festival such as “Dock Talks” and “Fishing for Freedom – demonstrations and interactive displays,” as well as access to the historic buildings in which The Florida Maritime Museum is housed and the self-guided walking tour of historic buildings and spaces in Cortez.

### **Conclusion**

By conducting interviews with the female activists of our preservation organizations, active organizers, and continuing service with the goal of understanding motivating causes to initiate the organization, as well as the various reasons and efforts that ongoing engagement continue to be meaningful, I aspire to answer the questions above in ways that are both ethical and historically congruent with Cortezian Culture. My interviews with activist women involved in the sustaining endeavors of organizations such as F.I.S.H., The Florida Maritime Museum, and The Cortez Village Historical Society, follow the method of interview that has been

historically used to preserve voices previously, though some of the last published ones occurred in 1993; this also aligns my research with a communal awareness of The Village's intrinsic value. This has been the method used by both Ben Green for *Finest Kind* and Dr. Susan Eacker's dissertation entitled "Mullet, Mangoes, and Midwives: Gender and Community in a West Coast Fishing Village." Where my project differs is to demonstrate insightful local knowledge that is rhetorically communicated with different accommodations for various audiences; my tracing of the evolution of preserving communications proves that female activists have continued to enact "pragmatic, situational, and kinetic" that Flynn, Sotirin, and Brady would use to define feminist resilience, and are responsive to a wide variety of threats, inherently acknowledging our vulnerability while fiercely defending The *entire* Village's resilience. Following this chapter is an examination of the common features that emerged through an analysis of the organizations FISH, CVHS, and The Florida Maritime Museum. It is through the analysis of communication efforts throughout decades that a heuristic for understanding resilient communication practices of these organizations emerged. Chapter four will also answer the first question of the dissertation.

## **Chapter Four: Goals and Structures**

My method of gathering artifacts from FISH, The Florida Maritime Museum, and Cortez Village Historic Society, as well as speaking to modern female activists via interviews about their activism within the organization, yields an analysis of their communication of their goals as well as a deeper understanding of the purpose, history, and connections of their work. This chapter explicitly answers my first driving question of the dissertation:

1. What systems/structures made our continued existence possible and what ideologies or goals drove their creation?

A wide-ranging system of networks, organizations, systems, and groups preceded the organizations that I analyze in this chapter; these predecessors included The Organized Fisherman of Florida (OFF), many women's clubs including The Women's Auxiliary, religious affiliations such as The Church of Christ, and the familial ties of the village, who trace themselves back to a few founding families, namely the Fulfords, Taylors, Culbreaths, and Gutheries. Many of the prior organizations have ceased to exist and/or are no longer functional, but it is important to acknowledge their contribution to our collective efforts for uniting villagers and family members to the processes of activism, providing insight for collective bargaining, experiencing organizing activities, and providing practical knowledge of the talents, attributes, and values of individual activists and resources. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have limited my analysis to three organizations that are currently active in establishing our on-going efforts to protect our Community-Ecosystem-Culture, and thereby our resilience. Those organizations are FISH, CVHS, and The Florida Maritime Museum.

The women of the village, whether through familial ties or ideological ones, are invaluable to the organizing work within these organizations, helping to establish our resilience and enabling foresight and insight required to operate these organizations. Tracing their overlapping preservation work, efforts, thought processes, motivations, and undulating structures through their historical communication about themselves, about their causes, both to the public as well as to themselves, has made it possible to answer the question above, and it reveals some trends that extend backwards through history and forward to our future. Moving through defining the four pillar heuristic for CEC resilience: intrinsic value, preservation, attuning to space and place, and feminist resistance, I will trace the organizational communications that are exemplary in demonstrating each of the four pillars that comprise the heuristic. The order of establishment of these pillars is meaningful because without acknowledging the intrinsic value of the CEC, the rest simply cannot follow, and so I begin there.

### **Intrinsic Value**

The processes for intrinsic value are iterative and reiterative. Acts of valuing the culture and history of the space, place, people, culture, and ecosystem permeate each organization as well as the lives of the individuals. When I use the term “intrinsic value” I mean that people, places, and culture are valued for exactly what they are; I am thinking here with the new journalists James Agee and Walker Evans who looked to capture *dignity* in the photographs they took and stories they told because to them all human beings are “literally sacred souls” (VII). Much of what is written about Cortez, especially when the intended audience is tourists, hints at and even directly describes Cortez as insight, or even “a taste of” the *real* Florida which is ironic in many ways since what is real often does not meet the expectations of what tourists have in



mind. The multiple acts of tracing and honoring our village and the people that live there is seen throughout the course of this chapter, but it is a necessary first step in the heuristic because it is foundational to the other pillars. That our family and connections are worth knowing and remembering can be traced through the lives, habits, and communications of individuals and the organizations that they established which continue to be preserved *because they are valuable*.

This value is not of any monetary sort, but rather intrinsic value is far more meaningful than capitalistic systems of value could ever be since these items and artifacts can never be replaced, and serve as links to our relatives, heritage, and culture. Saving artifacts, discussing them with loved ones, sharing them and calling on others to donate, share, and view those artifacts are all acts that reify Cortez Village's intrinsic value. There are a number of artifacts that record, honor, and display with pride the unique colloquialisms, habits, relationships, and practices of village folks, the majority of whom are working-class people. I will discuss some of the history of these types of communications as well as some of the organizations that continue to preserve, aggregate, compose anew, and redistribute these messages.

The dynamic of how Cortezians view themselves versus how they are viewed by outsiders has persisted as long as the village has. Green also encapsulates our vulnerable position, one we've apparently felt for at least a half a century, by emphasizing that "If the village dies, a great deal more perishes as well – a history and a way of life that are the closest thing this state has left to a native tradition, other than the Seminole Indians. In its place will be something far cheaper, shallower, and more mundane. A hundred years hence, no books will be written celebrating a culture built on shopping malls and condos" (3). Granted, Green is not objective either; we're both related to the founding Fulford brothers of the village. But he is absolutely correct, and he does much throughout the book to honor our collective culture, people,

and the intrinsic value of the village's authentic fishermen and lifestyle. In the documentary on Cortez, and our historic response to threats, Sylvia Bailey recalls the doubt that everyone felt in fighting "big bucks and big corporations," surmising in comparisons that villagers "were just a few little people," but that the value is there both within the space, people, and our right to be there shows faith in our own value; she concludes "We *can* keep Cortez" (15:15).

### ***FISH (intrinsic value)***

FISH was incorporated in May of 1991, and it was originally sponsored and supported by CVHS (Cortez Village Historical Society) as well as the Cortez Chapter of Organized Fishermen of Florida (OFF). These two organizations each provided 500 dollars toward the establishment of the 501 (C)(3) designation by the IRS. FISH is responsible for a number of the triumphs in the village such as purchasing and restoring over 100 acres of vulnerable mangroves and marshland, known as The Preserve, as well as throwing the annual FISH Festival, the first of which occurred in 1983, as a fundraiser to both support their work in growing and managing the preserve by connecting distorted waterways, removing invasive species, and raise awareness about the function of the preserve to the village's livelihood. FISH has worked in tandem with these organizations to create, bridge, and sustain partnerships within the village to secure a future for Cortez in a variety of ways.

FISH has remained one of our most active and engaging organizations within the village that works to secure our resilience. FISH is also responsible for organizing fundraisers that involve the public. Moreover, this organization has been highly successful in their ability to communicate effectively about the concerns and threats to the village, turning those communication efforts into successful fundraising. The programs and initiatives that originally developed did so under our common heuristic, and while the names, mission, specific activity,

scope, and funding have all had many undulating versions, their purpose of protecting the village for the founding families has remained constant. Ultimately FISH continues to protect our culture through the small, localized fishing industry, preserve the land and ecosystem upon which fishing relies, and doing all this with the hindsight of our relatives and the foresight of our grandchildren, still continues to persist.

The thought-processes, research, and restoration work undertaken by the organizations I examine is in direct opposition to how land developers would treat this land, and so the preservation work also transcends into the resistance category as well. Though it would make the writing and thinking much cleaner, the three pillars of the resilience heuristic tend to bleed into one another at times. For instance, intrinsic value extends to the people themselves, in listening to the interviews conducted by Ben Green in *Down a Lonesome Road*, Sylvia Bailey discusses how overwhelming the battle was of large corporations against “little people.” Two sides of the same coin in valuing access and people’s rights; preservation works both ways. The yearly fish festival serves a variety of logistical purposes, namely fundraising for the preservation efforts, but also uses rhetoric of attunement to welcome tourists and visitors in ways that are sustainable and that also help them accomplish their mission. With that being said, I will do my very best to establish parameters.

FISH’s founding mission is tied to their belief in the intrinsic value of fisher people and their culture as evidenced in their origin, as well as every single iteration of their mission statement as it has undergone revision over the course of the years. FISH is “Dedicated to the promotion, education, and preservation of Cortez and Florida’s commercial fishing and other traditional maritime cultures including the environment upon which these communities depend.” The intrinsic value of the community-ecosystem-culture is evident in every iteration of the

documents produced by FISH, and the most recent one is no exception. The ByLaws for FISH were updated in 2021, and analyzing the nine objectives lettered “A” through “I” of this organizations reveals and highlights the intrinsic value of the fishing practices and culture and the ongoing logistics needed to sustain that fishing culture. These include objective “B”: “To acquire and support appropriate Maritime Cultural sites within the historical fishing village of Cortez” and Objective “F”: “To provide a forum and space for the ongoing cultural and historical activities of the Cortez community.” Both of these objectives stress the need for continued support of our “maritime cultural” practices and sites, as well as acknowledging the logistics of the physical space and support to foster such objectives. The events that continue to be produced through FISH and other organizations attest to these continued priorities. These efforts can be seen in the ways that Fisherman’s Hall is utilized for community functions; it can also be seen in the organizing events like the Native’s Picnic, fostering togetherness and our intrinsic value.

In demonstration of these values, FISH obtained a 2<sup>nd</sup> Humanities Council grant in 2005 for “In Their Own Words” an anthropological photojournalism project that makes comparisons between Cedar Key and Cortez as examples of Fishing Communities that have survived the negative impacts of the Net Ban. It is apparent through the methods, goals, and depictions of fisher folks through this project and many others, that the honest experience, culture, and use of their own language, hence the name “in their own words,” that the culture and people depicted deserve respect, honor, and preservation of their culture.

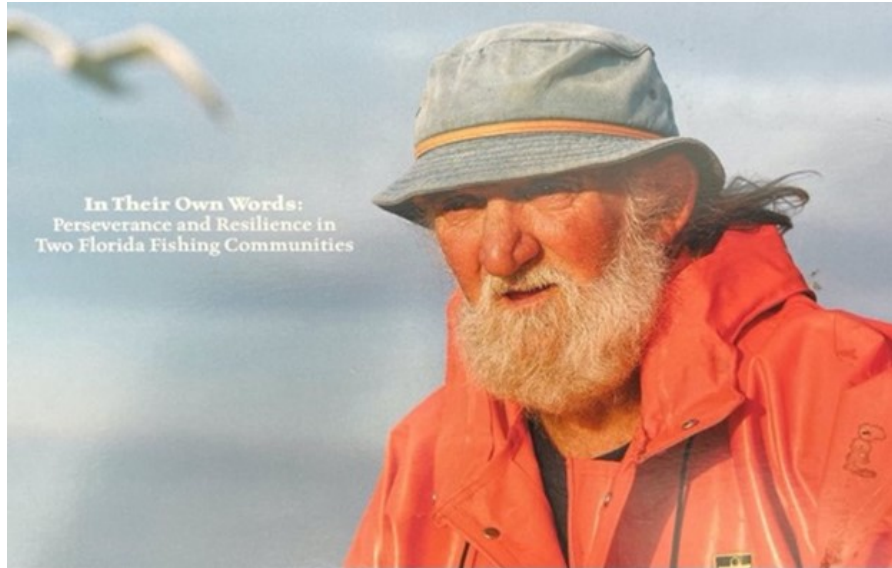


Figure 5. The “In Their Own Words: Perseverance and Resilience in Two Florida Fishing Communities” project postcard is gloss and double-sided, and it could be either distributed in person or mailed.<sup>8</sup>

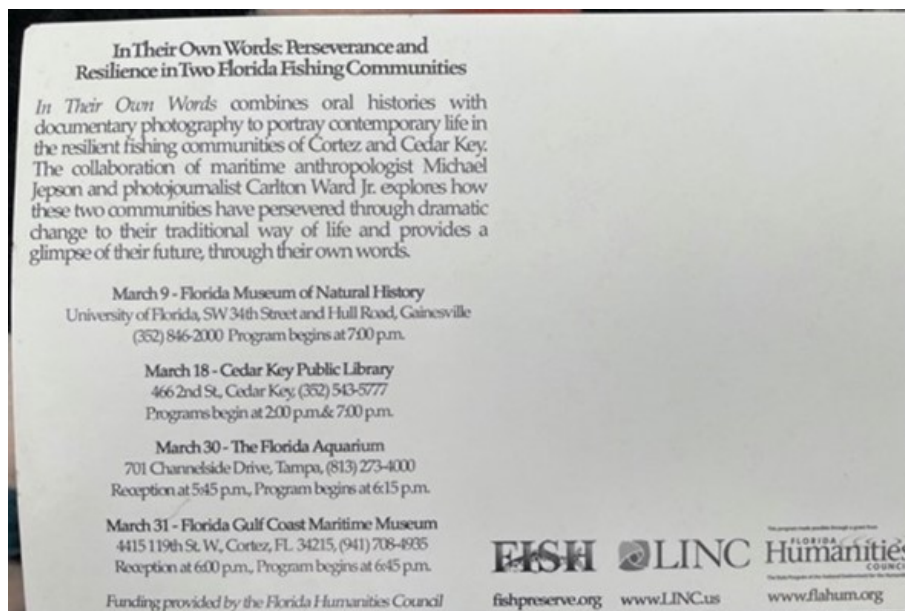


Figure 6. The back of the postcard depicts a description of the project along with the dates and locations for the four shows.

<sup>8</sup> This traveling presentation demonstrates intrinsic value, and the final showing took place at the 1912 schoolhouse, now “The Florida Maritime Museum,” but then referred to as “Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Museum.”



Figure 7. Each of these four photographs depict the attending school children in front of the 1912 schoolhouse.



Figure 8. Each of these historic photographs depict an element of maritime culture.



Figure 9. Each of these four pictures depicts a prominent figure and ancestor of the families in Cortez.

This traveling presentation demonstrates intrinsic value, and the final showing took place at the 1912 schoolhouse, now “The Florida Maritime Museum,” but then referred to as “Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Museum.” The postcard sized advertisement of this production is duplicated below. Pay close attention to the description of the project, along with the choice of photograph of a dignified fisherman in his outdoor environment with a pelican in flight in the background. FIS.H.’s website, [www.cortez-fish.org](http://www.cortez-fish.org), works to also honor the people and culture of Cortez, both past and present. Under the website’s “projects” tab is extensive work to aggregate photographic histories of the founders of Cortez as well as everyday Cortezians participating in family life, work life, or their hobby of choice. The page currently has 10



separate links of material organized by category, and these thousands of pictures span the founding to modern occupation of Cortez, and yet all work to reify our collective intrinsic value.

### ***CVHS (intrinsic value)***

The Cortez Village Historical Society is the oldest functional organization of the ones I analyze, and their work has been foundational to our preservation and resilience. Many of the activities that Cortez Village Historical Society partakes in were being conducted by individuals with a vision, and those missions obviously existed prior to the official establishment of the organization. CVHS, as well as the Maritime Museum, has aggregated a historical list of residents, along with their corresponding nicknames (some people have more than one). Photography of both people and places, as seen in Green and Molto's *Cortez Then and Now* of buildings, boatyards, and docks. Local flavors preserved in family recipes and traditions, again – not fancy, but authentic, real, and unique. Intrinsic value is a pillar that emerges out of the communications within village organizations as well. By examining some of the particular projects, it is clear to see that intrinsic value is at work throughout the communications of CVHS, even predating the formalized organization itself.

For instance, Dr. Mary Fulford Green and her son, Ben Green, wrote and received a grant from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities to produce a Community Portrait. This project is meaningful in demonstrating intrinsic value for its ability to speak to, with, and for community members as they solicited and collected family photographs, duplicated, and preserved them into a carousel slideshow, for which Ben Green wrote the script. Here is a typed invitation to a Community Forum to discuss the project, along with a request to “bring family pictures, mementoes, and documents.” It also prompts the village to consider the following questions near the bottom of the page:



“Who are we?”

“Where do we come from???”

“What do we value?????”

“What is the future of our Cortez Village?????”

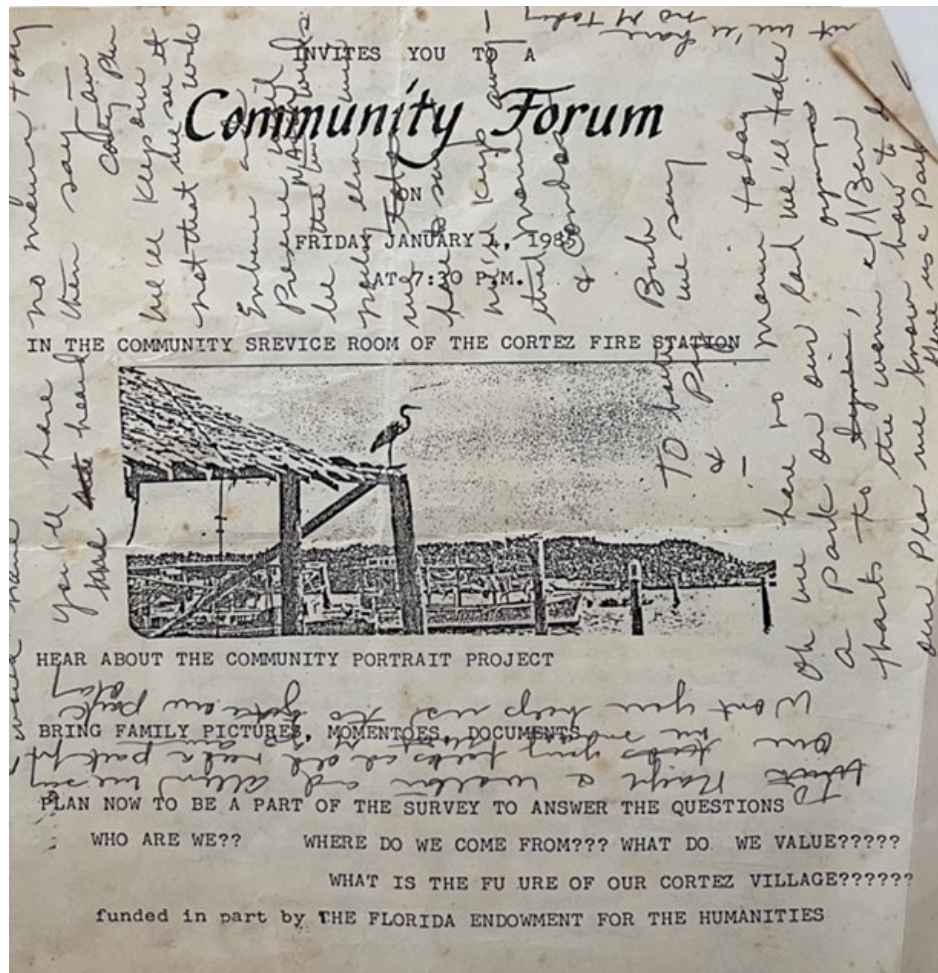


Figure 10. This flyer came from Dr. Mary Green's personal collection.<sup>9</sup>

This flyer and invitation predate the formal organization of CVHS, but the organizers, mission, and dedication to consensus and participation remain steadfast as pillars of ways to engage with the community. Moreover, what is consistent through the work of CVHS, as well as this

<sup>9</sup> This flyer invites Cortez residents and families to participate in the Community Portrait Project, asking them to both bring artifacts as well as reflect upon the questions at the bottom of the page.

slideshow presentation, is the emphasis placed on the insight and intrinsic value provided by the voices of the community. In fact, the slideshow both begins and ends by highlighting the cognizance of the villagers themselves, literally inserting their voices and reflections on the village. The excerpt below comes from the beginning of the Ben Green's presentation produced in 1985:

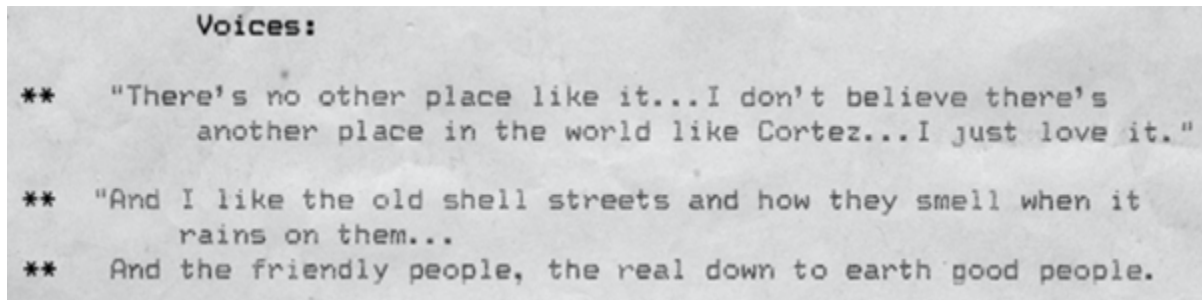


Figure 11. This excerpt came to me from Ben Green.<sup>10</sup>

That voices of actual residents bookend the entire presentation shows unity amongst the village because each voice reaffirms, corroborates, and celebrates the intrinsic value of the rarity of the space in which they inhabit. Part of the love for the space is its distinctive character; as one voice highlights “there’s no other place like it”! Accordingly, what also builds the space’s unrepeatable status is also the people themselves, “real down to earth good people.” This communicative example is particularly elucidating for the ways that intrinsic value is capable of reduplicating, in a fashion similar to that of a mobius strip, being not only reaffirmed through the villagers themselves, but also being communicated to new recipients. Highlighting the intrinsic value of the space, place, and the humanity of the people who inhabit it, intrinsic value is consistently and prominently communicated again and again through CVHS’s work.

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<sup>10</sup> It is part of the script for the audio and slideshow Community Portrait Project presentation that was given both at the FISH Festival as well as played for residents and others at the Community Fire Station. Voices of residents bookend the presentation, highlighting their intrinsic value and our collective work to honor them and the space and place.

*Cortez Then and Now* was written and published through CVHS in 1997, composed through the joint effort of two incredibly active members and Cortezian activists, Dr. Mary Fulford Green, and artist/photographer, Linda Molto. The chapters of the book detail many elements of the work in orchestrating the historic district; however, the introduction and chapter five, entitled “And who Lived in This House,” speak explicitly to the intrinsic value of the people and culture of Cortez.

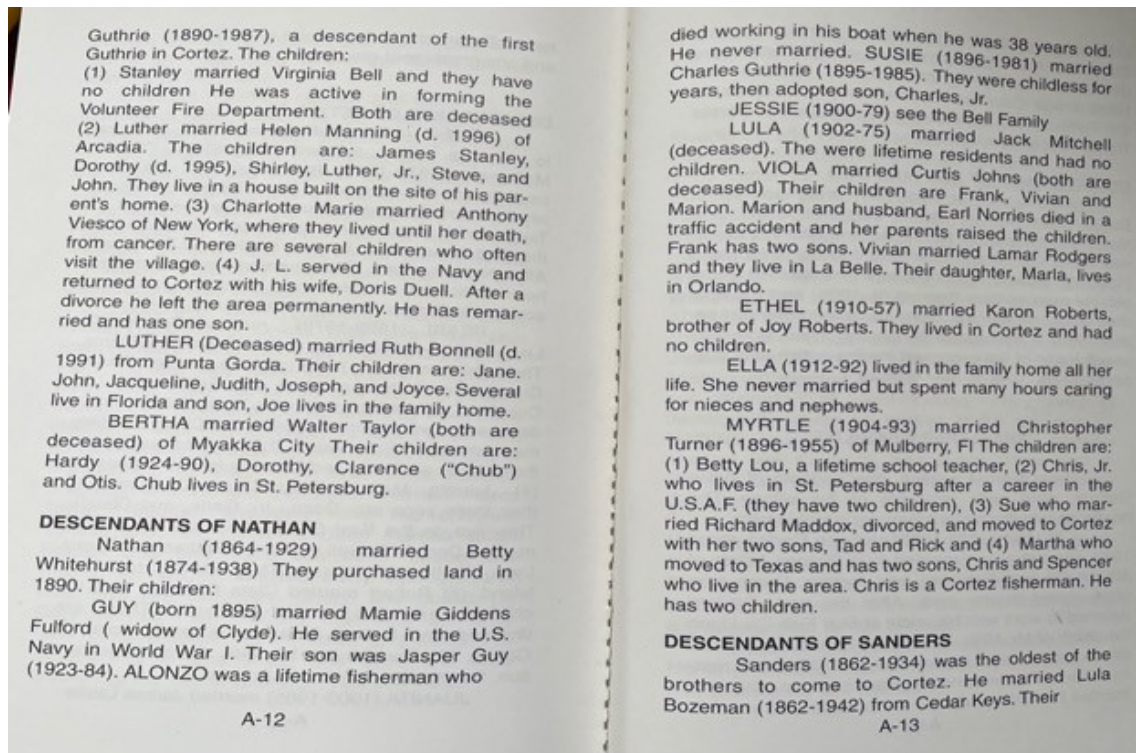


Figure 12. This excerpt shows each family structure and architectural structure is accounted for in great detail.<sup>11</sup>

This means that each one of the houses within the historic district designation was photographed by Linda Molto, researched, and the history of the families that built the house, the architectural elements and influences traced and described, who was born and died in the house was recorded, and all this was organized for each historic house in the village. Additionally, each of the

<sup>11</sup> This excerpt from *Cortez Then and Now* is exemplary of the dedication and thoughtful demonstrated throughout the text. Each family structure and architectural structure is account for in great detail.



foundings family trees has been traced and duplicated in the book, all accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication of the book, speaking to the effort to honor and value our ancestors,

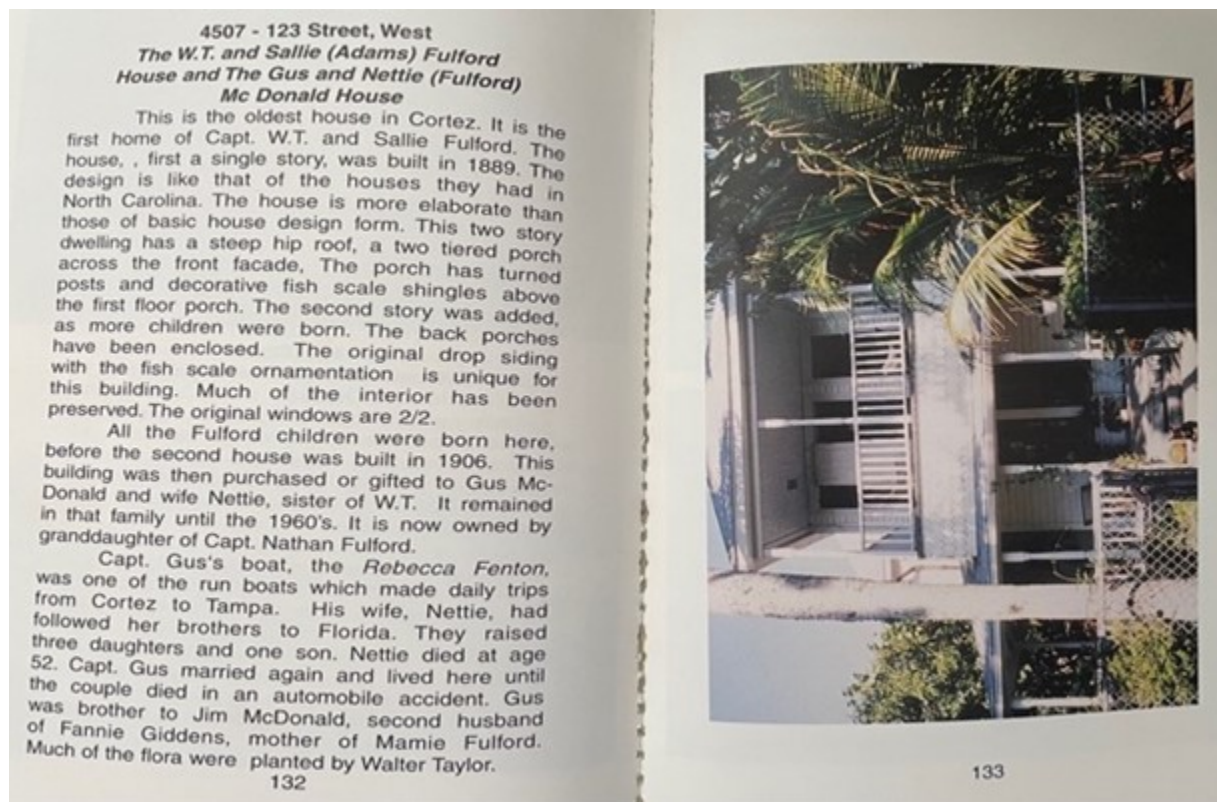


Figure 13. This particular entry is for my grandmother's house as well as the entry for my father's side of the family.<sup>12</sup> as well as trace the lineage of modern day fisherman, my family included. These four pages (see Figures 12 and 13) come directly from *Cortez Then and Now*, serving as an example of the detail that has been paid to every house and every family's lineage. Although CVHS hasn't had a print publication in quite some time, their website continues to aggregate photos of fisher folks throughout the years in Cortez.

I have chosen Figures 14 and 15, which are linked on CVHS's webpage, as being representative of the original stakeholders of the village, their work, their working-class demeanor, and their dignity. Theirs was difficult, tiresome, yet highly skilled work. That they

<sup>12</sup> The entry also traces our heritage to one of the three founding brothers of Hunter's Point, now Cortez.

pose in this picture in their boat, as they are demonstrating their pride and intrinsic value. That the photo was taken and saved demonstrates this value, a necessary predecessor for the work



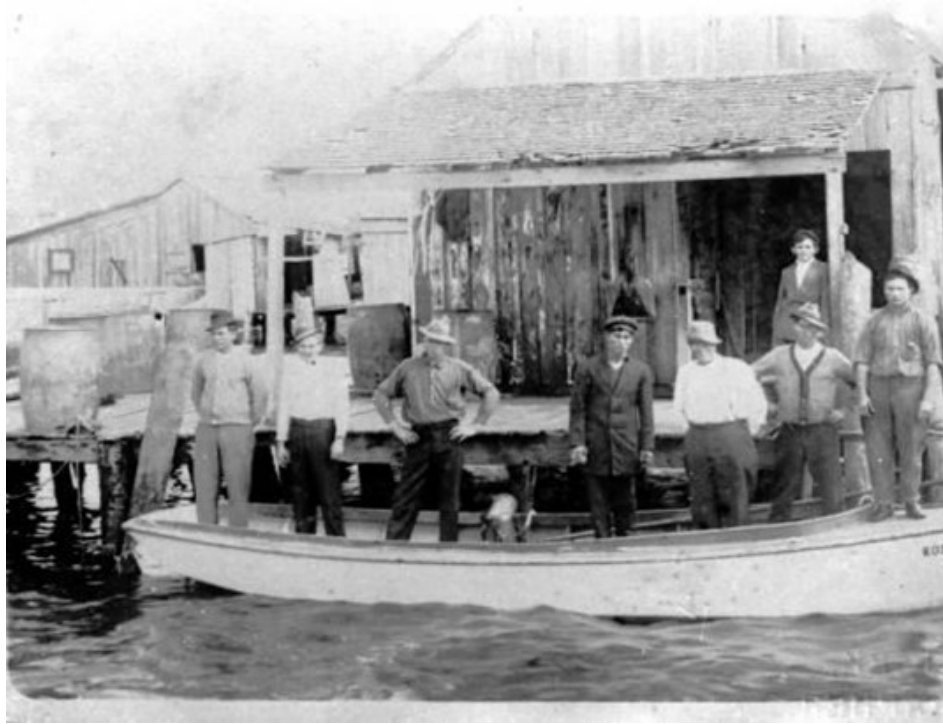
**Figure 14. The photo above, circa 1904, depicts fishermen in Cortez drying their nets.** <sup>13</sup>

of the later organizations. That the documentation, collection, and preservation of these efforts exists and precedes the organizations I discuss is important in demonstrating that intrinsic value is a predecessor that the other pillars (i.e. preservation work and attuning) rely. These artifacts were originally obtained through friends and family, and many were preserved by the Manatee Country Library before they began being supplemented by the efforts of CVHS. The naming of the kitchen (see Figure 16) speaks to number four because it demonstrates that we must attune to

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<sup>13</sup> This was an arduous process to preserve the cotton fishing nets, as it was obviously a working-class, or even working-poor, occupation.

where the food is coming from and that it has a chance to continue to exist. I think this also speaks to number two because of the value of the place within the system of relations as well.



**Figure 15.** These eight men are photographed on a boat within the Cortez Waterfront.



**Figure 16.** “The Kitchen” photographed in 1985.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This space and place is known for its health, bounty, and beauty. It is a shallow area surrounded by mangroves, nestled against The FISH Preserve.

# In Loving Memory

We have certainly gathered together many times since the last newsletter. we have said goodbye to so many members of the community. This has made me realize that of all the people who lived in Cortez when I was a teenager many more have left than remain. There is not a family which has not been touched by a loss during 1992-93. Since last we sent out the newsletter we have grieved the loss of so many.

## MAX HARRIS

The Harris family was one of the first to build along the shore. Right there where he could see the bay every day was where Max lived. He was very respected by all who knew him, a quiet man....hard- working...faithful member of the Church of God. Max was a devoted husband and father. He is survived by wife, ETHA and daughters, LOIS, LINDA & LORETTA and many grandchildren.

## PETE MOORE

The untimely death of Pete ( or Petey as we called him) saddened all his family and friends. It is especially hard for those who are still grieving the loss of his mother, Mama Sally. The restaurant stands as a memorial to his hard work and vision. He is survived by wife, Mary and children and grandchildren.

## JACK MORA

At our last picnic we tried to express the feelings of all toward Jackie. He was much loved by all who knew him. At the funeral someone said it didn't seem right for his note saying "What is the magic word?" His tragic accident robbed him of much that others had BUT the village of Cortez profited from the remarkable person. His will power - remember when he decided to stop smoking. His love of work and his delight in a job well done. His politeness and respect for all. He was blessed by a large family who loved him. The last years were spent in a nursing home where he suffered much. When Jack decided to become a Christian he showed his devotion. Prayers of many were answered when Jackie was called home. We will not forget him. He is grieved by all including brother, CHARLIE, and sisters RUTH, POLLY AND BESSIE LOU. and many nephews and nieces.

## STANLEY " SMILEY" GUTHRIE

While Smiley had battled cancer for years, and we knew that, we were not prepared for his untimely death. From the many interviews by newspapers and TV we know how much living in Cortez meant to him. And also we know how much he meant to the people of the village. He was the grandson of the first Guthrie ( Capt, Jim Guthrie) to arrive in Cortez. He loved fishing, other people, his wife (JENNY) his church and the village. The only time he was away was the years he was in the Navy. We are glad he came home again and for the many memories we have of him. In addition to his wife he is survived by two brothers, Luther and J.L. another-in law Tony and many neices , nephews, and cousins.

## INEZ BENNETT TAYLOR

I am remembering that at the last picnic Inez was early and wanted to help set up the tables. Willingness to work was one of the memories we have of her. She was raised in Ft. Florida - came to the village as bride of Paul. Her brothers were frequent visitors - much to the delight of the girls. Seemed that she always had a smile. She was very special to so many. She enjoyed life as devoted wife, mother and grandmother. Their loss is shared by all of us.

## ELLA FULFORD

Few people today are born- live- and die in the same house. Ella Fulford, youngest daughter of Capt. Nate and Betty Fulford, did. She may have been one who lived in a house by the side of the road and watched all the world go by. But somehow she was part of the lives of all who passed by. Perhaps her greatest joy was when she was

Figure 17. This is a page from the CVHS Newsletter circa 1993.



Dr. Mary Fulford Green, editor of a newsletter entitled “The Cortezian” which was produced through C.V.H.S., worked tirelessly in communicating the intrinsic value of Cortez, its history, and our familial ties in ways that reify our value, often times highlighting the voice of residents themselves. This typically single page, double-sided newsletter (see Figure 17) details logistical happenings of all three organizations, calls to action to donate, protest, and/or volunteer in local Cortez Film Festival, a “Mullet Invitational,” “Florida Gulf Coast Small Craft Festival,” Cortez Fishing Hall of Fame, numerous art festivals and fish fries, FISH news, The dedication and opening of Florida’s Maritime Museum in Cortez in 2007, Heritage Days, educational boat tours like “Mullet, Mangoes, and Music” and others (Green 1993).

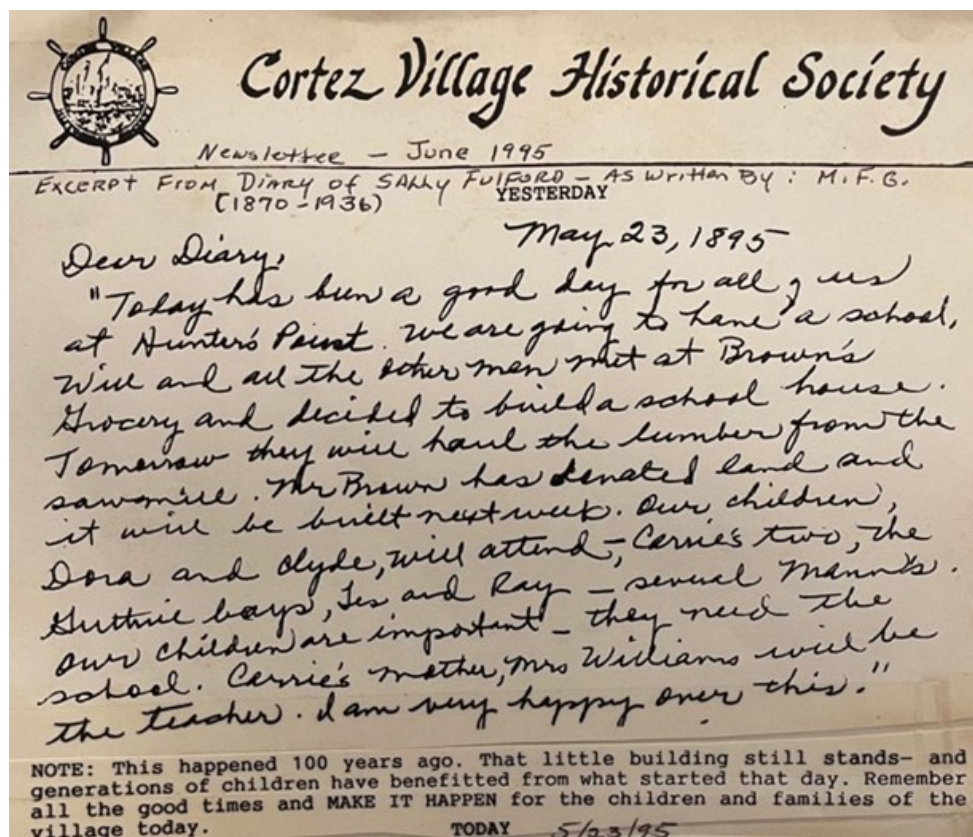


Figure 18. Handwritten diary entry that Dr. Mary Green created in 1995 and shared via the CVHS Newsletter to emphasize the importance of our collective history, space, and place.



The Cortezian also provides news on the health and welfare of villagers: those who are sick, those in need of aid, and those who have passed away. Recurring sections of the newsletter are “What’s Happening,” “Village News,” “In Loving Memory,” “Calendar of Events,” “People News,” and a CVHS Membership Application.<sup>15</sup> This work has been continuous and on-going in communicating and reifying the intrinsic value of both our past and present. I have included a section of “The Cortezian” from 1994 that is exemplary of the care, dedication, love, and intrinsic value that Dr. Green and CVHS as an organization hold for their fellow villagers. This newsletter is regularly delivered to about 350 recipients, and it details their family ties, nickname(s), and reminds all villagers of our connections. Further, the act of aggregating, remember, writing, duplicating, and mailing speaks to the time and effort devoted by both Dr. Green and CVHS to do this work, communicating our intrinsic value to each other and to ourselves. What is notable for each of these entries is the drive to honor and remember the individual for their unique character, personality, and relationship within the community and family.

Historical events have been reimagined to reify both our historical value as well as our modern-day value as a unique space of heritage. Intrinsic value is about the culture of Cortez. Founding member’s value, culture, history, and voice are important for communicating to and with (see Figure 18). Dr. Green communicated regularly with her kinfolk and fellow villagers in ways that extend the values of our ancestors into modern times. She draws a clear line that what was important to our ancestors ought to still be important to us today, clearly conveying ways that help the audience understand and reaffirm not only their value, but also the merit of the place they inhabit, extending both backward and forward. This communication through the

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<sup>15</sup> What is noteworthy of each entry is the detail, care, and concern in depicting each person, their relationships, and their intrinsic value to and within the village.

CVHS Newsletter, now known as “The Cortezian,” clearly traces connections between intrinsic value and the need for historic preservation, highlighting that the *most* significant endeavor is to “save the histories of our people.” It is evident through examining and analyzing hundreds of these documents that intrinsic value of Cortezians as people who have value and add value is at the very heart of all of our organizations; hence, it is absolutely essential to begin there.

**Historic Preservation.** Saving our structures is one thing but more significant are the histories of our people. Were you involved in the **Cortez Volunteer Fire Department**? Verbal histories of the many years of action are being recorded. You may get a call from a Museum Volunteer or you can just call the museum to give us your story. Be thinking about your memories. Who were the first organizers? What were the worst fires? What were your jobs? Who were the Chiefs? How did you fund the Department?

Please call the Museum at 941-708-6121 to share your story about the Cortez Fire Department.

**Florida Maritime Museum @ Cortez hours:**  
**Tues. – Sat. 8:30 – 4:30**

Figure 19. This image comes from *The Cortezian Newsletter*, produced under C.V.H.S., Volume 28: Issue 1, February 2010.

Yet another way that C.V.H.S helps to speak to Cortezians about their intrinsic value comes from excerpt entitled “Cortez: a tie to the Past” from 5 April 1991, located within a newsletter edited by Mary Fulford Green, a section entitled “VALUE OF CORTEZ” details the stakes for inactivism, disregard, and apathy for those not attuning to the intrinsic value of the fishing village:

Once, hundreds of fishing communities like Cortez dotted the eastern seaboard. Most have been wiped out by development and foreign fishing interests. Those that remain are shadows of the communities they once were. Among them, Cortez stands out as a survivor. That callous disregard paves the way for massive alteration and urbanization that disrupts families and rips the soul out of communities. Sadly, it’s happening up and down the eastern seaboard. On the razed ruins of tight-knit fishing communities are rising plastic recreations of what was torn down: Disneyland wharves where local legends are sold for a handsome price to tourists who dine on seafood flown in from foreign seas and displaced residences drive sightseeing trolleys instead of following the fish and their old ways.

Depicting the failures of so many others to successfully fight, along with the potential fate for individuals who fail to recognize the stakes, demonstrates a heightened awareness, and need to attune not just residents, but also create other allies and systems to ensure resilience. This same yellow newsletter also details how “insensitivity” was ultimately to blame in our collective inability to protect The Albion Inn, a historic building on the Sarasota Bay, that was ultimately bought, altered, and then demolished by The Coast Guard, despite The preservation Act of 1966, using it as a harbinger for what is to come if we are not able to successfully communicate and activate residents, families, visitors, tourists, and others.

### ***Florida Maritime Museum (Intrinsic Value)***

All versions of the Florida Maritime Museum’s mission statements, from its inception to the most current version, demonstrate a variety of the ideologies I discuss, but first and foremost is the intrinsic value of the maritime culture and families. This is traceable throughout their documents, communication, and displays because it has been at the forefront of their ongoing missions. The first iteration of it was “The Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Museum at Cortez is a partnership of Manatee County Clerk of Circuit Courts, Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage, and the Cortez Village Historical Society. Its mission is to gather, preserve and interpret Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Heritage, with special emphasis on the historic fishing village of Cortez as a traditional maritime community within the greater context of Florida’s maritime history, maritime history in general, and the natural world.” This mission includes stakeholders and influential relationships since the legal documents did not yet exist to specifically allocate land management, legal responsibility and other integral components that still needed to be sorted out. That all three missions highlight the goals of preservation with a distinct effort on Cortez as a traditional maritime community remains consistent. The updated mission of 2014 highlights “cultural artifacts” and “personal stories,” -- “The Florida Maritime Museum Collects, preserves, and effectively utilizes traditional knowledge, cultural artifacts and personal stories specific to Florida in order to create accessible and engaging educational programming and interpretive exhibits that encourage the pursuit and study of maritime interests and responsible interaction with aquatic resources.” The move between this mission and the newest mission eliminates “effectively utilizes” since the Boat Works program has grown less active. This also demonstrates some shifts from key leadership shifts. This shift in language indicates the purposeful work in the takeover to succinctly provide a goal in one sentence: “The

Florida Maritime Museum collects, preserves, and shares traditional knowledge, cultural artifacts, and personal stories specific to Florida's fishing and maritime heritage". This statement emphasizes most succinctly the preservation work, founded on intrinsic value of the village, along with personal stories of fisher people. For instance, there are multiple collections of the working nicknames employed in the village, and many organizations conduct the work of saving these records with pride, humor, and love. For instance, The Maritime Museum currently aggregates the nicknames of 106 villagers, some of which are "Snook," "Gator," "Soupy," "Tink," "Toodles," "Catfish," "Blue," and "Bubba." The Maritime Museum also tracks and stores a variety of lists of captains and boat names as Excel files, some of which include the "Miss Cortez," "Sexy Lady," "Miss Virginia," "Best Bet," "High Roller," and "Miss Brenda." Ben Green honors these idiosyncrasies by duplicating colloquialisms, one of which his book is named after: "*Finest Kind*," a phrase spoken in Cortez in response to nearly any query, such as "How's the weather?" or "How was fish'n today?"

The value of the artifacts in and of themselves function as a portal to different ways of being and interacting with the environment as fishing village. This valuing system extends backwards and forward in time in listening to Tori Chasey discuss what the museum means to modern day fishermen and the importance of people to be proud of who they *are*, who we *were*, and being united in an organizational process about who *we will become*. Many interviews, my own, as well as the historic ones conducted by Michael Jepson, to which I had access, trace the intrinsic value of the place, space, and culture for what it *is*, partly in response to what outsiders might judge *it is not*.

This preservation extends to the historical building in which the museum is housed, the 1912 Schoolhouse, as well as historical artifacts, cultural processes, and cultural knowledge. Not

only is it evident in the mission statements, but speaking with the women who run the museum, Tori Chasey, and Jenni LaForge, it is clear that the museum encompasses all four pillars of the heuristic, but here she highlights intrinsic value in the stories collected and people inspired through the museum. In her interview with me Tori Chasey, the current supervisor of the Maritime Museum, made some insightful points about the ways she sees preservation work functioning to maintain intrinsic value in Cortez's fishing culture:

Stories are powerful, and I've had some commercial fishermen come in recently. He's like [ . . . ] "I was told that I just checked out the Maritime Museum. I haven't been here yet!" So he came in for like 20 minutes, and then left and 20 minutes later brought a friend back with him. [ . . . ] "You see this! Look at this exhibit; this is talking about what we do!" I would like for anybody to feel that. You know whether you live here still, [or] whether you actually work in your fishing in the industry today, whether you just have some of that family connection that you feel like you're one of these people. I want them to feel that we are showing them off in a way that they can be proud of - that they could come in and say "Our way of life is worth being proud of and worth saving and worth showing off to other people who don't know about it" [ . . . ].

Chasey's insight is exemplary of how preservation work is inherently combined with intrinsic value; it also demonstrates the ways that attuning to educational materials about heritage and culture can serve to reify the connections and values of current stakeholders. Consistently present is the motivation to preserve. I also believe that the mission encompasses intrinsic value, for looking to preserve the cultural and maritime heritage of present and past artifacts, elevating their worth by doing so. Preservation work is a recursive process, and involvement for the future depends on educational efforts today. through the process of education and by reorienting

visitors, residents, and supporters or would-be supporters to a different way of experiencing their *space* they may attune to the local and historical community-ecosystem-culture of Cortez. As you can see, preservation and intrinsic value are corresponding efforts that are continuously present.

### ***Key Elements***

Intrinsic value is inherently tied to the identity, culture, and dignity of our working-class heritage. These connections have been familial, and certainly seeing the humanity of your relatives, and loving them for who they are makes the work easier. As time goes on, and relations become increasingly distant, honoring working-class people for their knowledge, know-how, passion, and famed idiosyncrasies becomes more challenging. The nicknames become forgotten, the landscapes shift, the practice of fishing is altered through legislation and advancements in technology and materials. Yet I have witnessed the dedication and grit of those connected through family heritage, cultural appreciation, and historical preservation work who persist anyway.

### **Preservation**

Systems of preservation overlap certainly overlap; much of the onus to preserve the Culture-Ecosystem-Community are deeply tied to the intrinsic values of those items, and so it makes logical sense to address the preservation work conducted by these organizations next.

### ***FISH (preservation)***

FISH's most recent mission statement, that it "is dedicated to the promotion, education and preservation of Cortez and Florida's commercial fishing and other traditional maritime cultures including the environment upon which these communities depend" outright declares that

preservation is a prime concern. Furthermore, many objectives, located in article 3 section 1 on their by-laws document, further details the ongoing endeavors and funds needed to carry out their mission. A-I By-Laws demonstrate the need for preservation by name as evidenced in section 1, objective C of the 2021 revised by-laws: “To identify, research, collect, preserve and interpret the artifacts, documents and material culture of Cortez and Florida’s maritime heritage” (1). Additionally, objective “E” – “To build public awareness and support for the protection of the marine resources of Florida” and “H” – “To seek the financial resources necessary to achieve the organization’s objectives.” FISH has continuously been active in raising funds, raising awareness, and working to preserve the ecosystem on which fisher folks and our CEC relies. Purpose of the preserve 1) preserve, protect and restore environmentally sensitive wetlands; 2) protect endangered and threatened species that inhabit the property and an adjacent Audubon bird rookery (Cortez Key); 3) protect and preserve a historic structure, the 1912 Schoolhouse; 4) protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens living in Manatee County by redirecting development away from the Coastal Storm Vulnerability Area (CSVA) and Coastal Evacuation Area (CEA); 5) avoid potential negative impacts to the water quality in Sarasota Bay and 6) provide for passive recreational and resource based educational opportunities for residents and visitors (35).

The most meaningful and impactful accomplishment to date that the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage has done is to procure, protect, manage, and restore over 100 acres of sensitive ecosystem that would have otherwise been developed. This endeavor is one that has literally taken decades, as more contiguous lots and lands have been procured from private individuals, cleaned, and restored. This work is on-going as The Preserve expands and the land is managed in ways that restore it to its pristine nature, looking to its original state for inspiration.



Land management documents disclose which invasive species are to be removed, which are to be reintroduced and fostered, and how the land ought to be scaped to restore ecosystems on which our culture relies.

The previous photo within this dissertation, on page 5, comes from FISH's website, and this depiction is certainly helpful for seeing the stark dichotomy between the developed land that borders the preserve, a trailer park jam-packed with residents on dredged canals, to the preserve which has not only been saved from development but is also actively being restored by removing invasive species and reconnecting waterways to foster native species of wildlife, fish, and vegetation. The road to fostering the preservation of this environmentally sensitive land, has been long and has involved many organizations, volunteers, and individuals. A Message from FISH's president, Kim McVey, was produced in a booklet produced by FISH entitled "It Takes a Fishing Village." This message is helpful for understanding the scope, purpose, and ongoing endeavor of how the preserve functions in our community:

In 2000, FISH purchased 93 acres of land and shoreline just east of the village. This shore- line is of significant environmental value to the fishermen and industry (commercial fishing) on which this village was founded. Over the years, FISH has restored small sections of the property. In 2014, the first phase of total restoration began, thanks to a \$250,000 Southwest Florida Water Management District grant, in partnership with Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and Manatee County. Phase two was completed in July of 2015. We look forward to partnering again with Sarasota Bay Estuary Program to complete the Preserve restoration. Legal support: Thanks to the enthusiastic support of our membership, FISH intervened in two environmentally important court challenges to

protect sensitive shorelines from destruction, recognizing that these are the very areas on which the livelihoods of our residents depend.

The agreement between Manatee County and FISH during the process of acquisition in 2012 is insightful for its explicit motivation for the land (see Figure 20).

**The purpose of the acquisition of the Cortez Preserve property is to: 1) preserve, protect and restore environmentally sensitive wetlands; 2) protect endangered and threatened species that inhabit the property and an adjacent Audubon bird rookery (Cortez Key); 3) protect and preserve a historic structure, the 1912 Schoolhouse; 4) protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens living in Manatee County by redirecting development away from the Coastal Storm Vulnerability Area (CSVA) and Coastal Evacuation Area (CEA); 5) avoid potential negative impacts to the water quality in Sarasota Bay and 6) provide for passive recreational and resource based educational opportunities for residents and visitors.**

**Figure 20. This excerpt is from the Management Plan FISH Preserve, which was prepared by FISH, the Manatee Board of County Commissioners, and the Manatee County Clerk of Circuit Court.**

While this land is now entirely possessed by FISH, the above statement is helpful for understanding the rationale behind procuring the land. I was fortunate to interview Jane Von Hamman about her role as Treasurer of FISH, and her extensive activism and ongoing involvement in Cortez has been invaluable for our continued preservation, resilience, and resistance. In our discussion of the evolving relationships between organizations and the management of the preserve, she provided the insight of current FISH board members to protect the land and ecosystem permanently. Jane explained to me the ways that FISH has worked tirelessly to create protection for The Preserve, the conservation land owned and managed by FISH, setting up legal bindings so that the work can never be undone, sold, leased, or otherwise used, stating:

The Preserve is wholly and completely owned and deeded to Florida Institute for Saltwater heritage and that initial purchase happened in 2000. Fish has also purchased

interior lots [. . .]. The only thing that Manatee County holds is we did request when we did the first large phase restoration phase, [. . . and] we asked the county as an organization in order to protect the property itself to place an easement over the property in which now the county does have a vested easement. The county has conservation easement interest in the property, but they do not have any ability to sell to do anything like that, because it is wholly owned by man by FISH. The other thing is, we did this just a year and a half ago two months ago, we request from Manatee County stating that they want to change the land use to conservation over that entire piece of property in the update to the land development code and comprehensive plan. So the future land use maps will all now read that that land is zoned conservation. So then anyone who would - even if FISH decided to try to sell the property, which they couldn't do without county approval, because that's the other piece was with a changing board we wanted to protect the property from those types of things. We didn't want any future [FISH] board to say "Oh, but look, we can sell off just like this piece or that piece!" So we did not want that to happen. So that was really the reasoning behind getting the conservation easement. And now by getting this change of land use on the maps that will further protect the property.

Von Hammen's insight and expertise shine through in her response! I can hear in her voice her belief in the goals of the organization, and her ability to predict future threats against the ecosystem and property further demonstrate her awareness. In speaking with members who have served on the board of FISH, it became clear to me that there were a variety of disagreements on management styles, purposes, and goals. Von Hammen's decades of service, paired with the foresight to protect the property, even from future iterations of a changing FISH board, speaks to

the thoroughness and thoughtfulness she offers her community in the preservation work she does. The preserve is a dynamic space and place that requires ongoing activism, management, and communication with the public. This instance of communication is multifaceted since it uses maps, authority, and art as tools for reattuning. A variety of the public statements utilize invitational rhetoric as a persuasive tactic that aims at educating visitors, tourists, and activists to reattune to the environment for its intrinsic value, the ecosystem benefits provided, as well as educate them about the fishing practices, sustainability, and cultural attributes of Cortez.

### ***CVHS (preservation)***

Tracking preservation work has made it clear that our onus to secure our placement as an historic place worthy of preservation was a path of continuous labor. In 1994 CVHS first had Cortez recognized as an “Historic Neighborhood” in Manatee County’s comprehensive plan. After this taste of success, the next goal in sight was to be placed on the national register of historic places, a response that was initiated as a protective measure to many and continuous threats. Official listing took place on March 16, 1995. There was a statement relayed to local villagers in the Cortez Village Historical Society’s newsletter that year (see Figure 21).

The first community center and organizational space that was also used for C.V.H.S., and organization that worked to secure the 1912 schoolhouse, took place in this physical space, but tracing the procurement of these physical spaces reveals the insights, motivations, arduous endeavors, and extreme persistence of the women who founded the organizations, and the organizational goals and values live on through the work of these women.

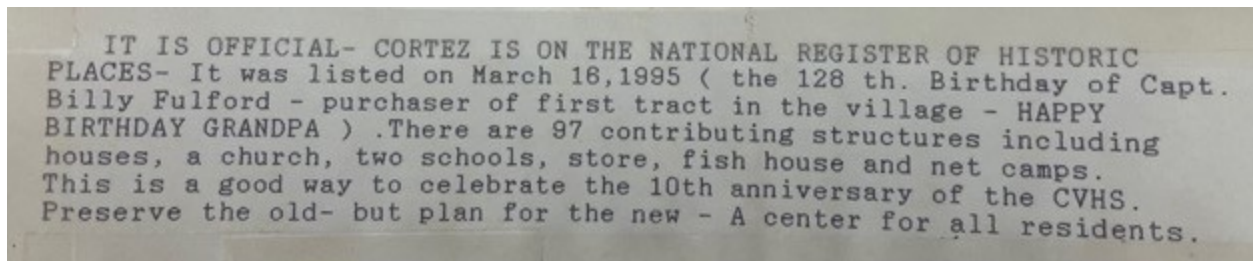


Figure 21. This announcement was printed in the CVHS Newsletter that came from Dr. Mary Green's personal archive.

Tracing these documents uncovers this work. The Cortez Village Historical Society was paramount in creating and securing the ideas and visions that other networks would help to secure. It is only through tracing and analyzing the historical documents that this work becomes visible to outsiders. Though the spaces, organizational names, and residents involved shift overtime, the heuristic reveals their rhetorically savvy communication, shifting depending on whether they are communicating between villagers, residents, donors, and volunteers as depicted in the newsletter "The Cortezian," whether they are using efforts to solicit funding through grants or appealing to local governments, and they are particularly aware of how Cortez is perceived generally by the public and potential tourists. Those efforts placate a tourist's desire to have a drink on the water, consume local seafood, and purchase a novelty or knick-knack.

CVHS fought many battles to purchase and preserve historic buildings from destruction in Cortez, and quite a few of these endeavors have been successful. Although CVHS could not save the entirety of the Albion Inn, an historic hotel on the waterfront, they were successful in saving a portion of it, raising over twelve thousand dollars to save the east wing of the building, The Bratton Store, and relocating it to The Preserve Property (CVHS Highlights).

### ***Maritime Museum (preservation)***

Activists who are present and operational in Cortez recognized the need to secure and preserve a historical structure that was not being valued or preserved in our village. I trace these efforts to demonstrate my resilience heuristic at work. Part of the work of preservation was to

apply and be granted status as given by the National Register of Historic Places, and this step was taken immediately after the schoolhouse was reclaimed as a community resource instead of a private residence. This incident was meaningful for the community because it served as an example of what can happen to our history without activism. What follows is the description of the building itself as described on the Florida Maritime Museum's website: "The 1912 Cortez Schoolhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Cortez Historic District, designated in 1995. Cortez Village retains the original sense of community that has sustained the village for almost 150 years. Villagers have survived hurricanes, economic depressions, and threats to their livelihood from a reduction in fishing grounds and regulations on the fishing industry. Residents of the community are passionate about preserving the past and the fishing industry and ensuring that current and future residents and visitors to Manatee County understand the significance of Historic Cortez Village." The schoolhouse had been purchased by Robert Sailor, and he made changes to the structure to accommodate his residency there. The use of grant money to purchase, restore, fund, and operate it as a tool of preservation for the FMM is significant here in a number of ways – both as an example of what can happen to historical buildings as well as what ought to be done to preserve history and culture. It is now a space of education and attunement.

The Florida Maritime Museum came about through village interest and a few strong women, namely Sue Maddox, Mary Green, and some others, who believed that the 1912 schoolhouse building ought to be preserved for its historical and cultural value. My grandmother was proud to show me a black and white picture in Ben Green's book, *The Finest Kind*, of elementary students where she's placed a sticky note denoting "Nanny," her mother (and my great grandmother), Myrtle Fulford Turner. The building itself sat vacant, unused, and

deteriorating for many years until it was purchased by a private individual, Robert Sailors, who as a private owner, was free to make changes to the structure as he wished. This incident served as an example of failure of the village to intervene and preserve their precious history, but the structure was eventually purchased by FISH. Many of my documents demonstrate on-going years of debate, controversy, and logistical land-management struggle as entities worked to develop and redevelop a destination that would have the support of local residents, the organizations examined here, and draw tourists to the fishing village of Cortez as a location in and of itself.

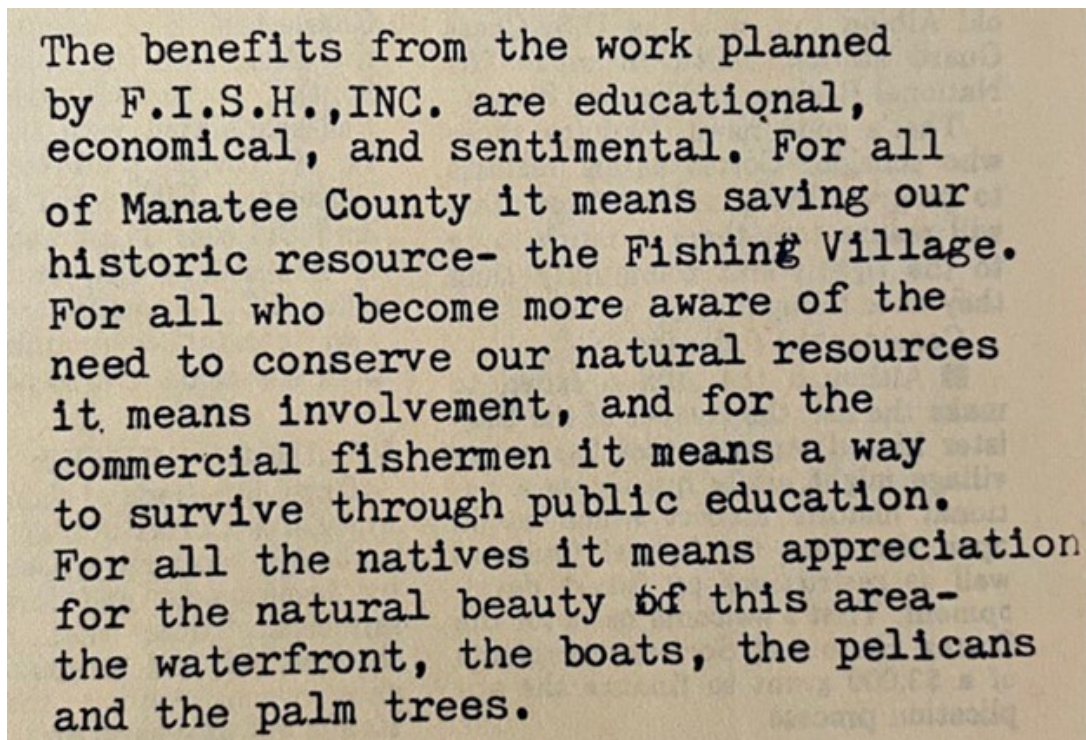
### ***Key Elements (preservation)***

Prior to the current structure that stands, a one room schoolhouse that was constructed in 1895 had previously stood in its place. The current building that stands is one of six built by the Manatee County School Board in 1912, all of which had the same “T-Plan building housed two large classrooms and a small office, with a large outhouse in the rear” (Green and Molto 76). In 1933 a large auditorium was added as part of a Public Works Project (76). In addition to serving as a school the room also hosted political rallies, holiday festivals, and other community functions until it was closed in 1961 (76). After the school closed, it sat vacant for years, causing many activists to investigate, rally, and solicit avenues to put the structure to good use for the village. It is interesting to trace the origins of the organizations themselves because what is revealed is evident in the pillars.

### **Attunement to Space and Place**

Ways of attuning others to our space, place, and the intrinsic values of the people, families, history and culture can be seen throughout each of the organizations’ mission

statements as well as the historical and current events that each organization advertises and hosts. Many of these events are annual ones that are keyed during the optimal time of the year, namely tourist season which has historically been from Thanksgiving to Easter, but nowadays is growing much wider. These events address both a tourist audience, but these events also invite village stakeholders and families, depending on the purpose. the Annual FISH Festival walking tour, date with a fisherman, posters, statues, books, websites, open access meetings. These activities and documents foster understanding and inclusion, *inviting* the audience to share in cultural practices, festivities, and bounty.



The benefits from the work planned by F.I.S.H., INC. are educational, economical, and sentimental. For all of Manatee County it means saving our historic resource- the Fishing Village. For all who become more aware of the need to conserve our natural resources it means involvement, and for the commercial fishermen it means a way to survive through public education. For all the natives it means appreciation for the natural beauty of this area- the waterfront, the boats, the pelicans and the palm trees.

Figure 22. This description of the goals and motivations of FISH was duplicated in the CVHS Newsletter, "The Cortezian."

Invitational rhetoric is useful for getting others to attune to different ways of thinking, being, and experiencing their surroundings. How does the invitation extend to ideas of space and place? The yearly art is an on-going and recursive act of attunement that traces the efforts of the



organization as well as our collective responsiveness. The goals and objectives promoted by FISH. consistently speak to the need to *educate the public* and better attune consumers to the efforts required to sustain ideal fishing through *appreciation for our surroundings* (see Figure 22).

### **FISH (space and place)**

The FISH Preserve itself provides a variety of opportunities for visitors to attune to the environment, ecosystem, and the connections between natural resources and culture. Each year since 1983, FISH has hosted a Fishing Festival that serves a variety of logistical purposes, but attuning outsiders and visitors to Cortez as a destination *with* intrinsic value *that ought to be preserved* is the aspect on which I will focus here.



helps attune those who might otherwise not know where and how their food is gathered and processed, and so the location of the festival happening on Sarasota Bay, overlooking “The Kitchen,” functions in a variety of ways that all help attune attendees to our unique and valuable space and place. The “Map of Grounds” (see Figure 23) highlights the proximity of the spaces as easy, free, and accessible ways of attuning festival attendees into potential stakeholders in our community, ecosystem, and culture.

Additionally, many spaces are occupied by experts in their field who are able to provide insight to the process of fishing, such as the Dock Talks, the arduous labor of commercial fishing, and the sights, smells, and sounds of the processes and storing of fish in the commercial fish house. The “touch tank and environmental displays” are physically located within the mangroves, next to the net camp on Sarasota Bay, or what Cortezians call “The Kitchen” for its fostering of the food we eat. These experiences are included with admission, and visitors are invited to them for free: “Take time to join John Stevely for Dock Talks beginning at 11 AM at Cortez Bait and Seafood on the loading dock. Also stop by the Boat Works, The Cortez Cultural Center, and Maritime Museum. Admission is FREE.” Of course, there are typical activities that take place at all the local festivals, including beer and music, but the food, art, and educational experiences are all completely local, fresh, and authentic.

In addition to the yearly opportunities to attend talks and exhibits in person over the course of the two-day FISH festival, the FISH Board also chooses a theme and representative artwork to convey that theme to attendees of the festival. Since this is an annual event, it is also an annual opportunity to educate attendees to our collective causes such as advocating for the preservation of the environment on which we depend, informing attendees on ethical and *local* seafood processes and prices, as opposed to buying inferior quality, intentionally mislabeled, or

imported/frozen products. Historic messages have dealt with a variety of concerns and threats to the village, initially speaking out about misconceptions and false communication concerning the net ban, making some of these messages inherently political. A fairly recent depiction from 2019 (see Figure 24), demonstrates the myriad threats to our community using an illustration of Florida entangled in the tentacles of an octopus – the octopus's eight tentacles are each holding a sign depicting a threat that has a direct and negative impact on Cortez, and a scream for “HELP” is depicted in red coming from Cortez in response.



**Figure 24.** This piece of art was created as the logo for the 2019 FISH Festival, and it depicts the variety of threats impacting Cortez and Florida at large.



Figure 25. This sampling demonstrates some of the representative art created for each of the annual FISH Festivals.

Figure 25 is a sampling of some of the annual themes and representative artwork created for each fishing festival, used in the public advertisement of the festival as well as duplicated on flyers, T-shirts, and other items offered for sale, the proceeds of which go to benefit FISH. Some art offers light-hearted self-satire, but all of it serves to attune the viewer to the causes of the time. An historic one featured from the 90s set on our picturesque bay reads “Our past *IS* our future.”<sup>17</sup>

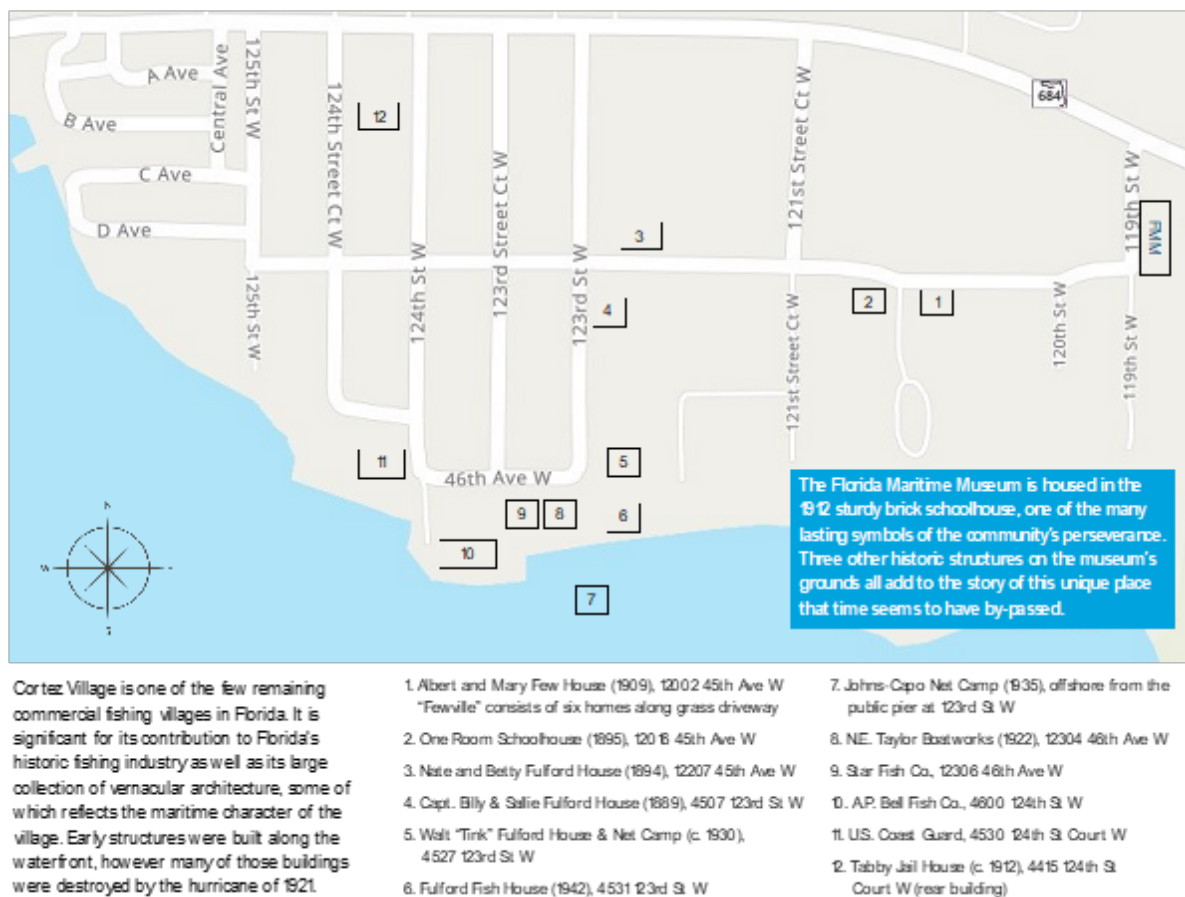
### **Cortez Village Historical Society (CVHS) (space and place)**

Annual meetings are open to the public, and CVHS has a consistent history of invitational rhetoric. For instance, now housed in the Cortez Cultural Center, located on preserve land owned and maintained by FISH, the modern day invitation to meetings and events still stands: “CVHS will hold their annual meeting November 8, 2022, at 4:00 The Cultural Center is

<sup>17</sup> This year will be the 42 annual FISH Festival, and more information can be found here: <http://www.cortez-fish.org/fishing-festival.html>



11655 Cortez Rd. All members are encouraged to attend, and the public is invited to visit” (cortezvillagehistoricalsociety.org). This is also consistent within the FISH organization. Language from the FCT grant specifies that “The Project Site shall be managed only for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of natural and historical resources and for passive, natural resource-based public outdoor recreation which is compatible with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the Project Site, along with other related uses necessary for the accomplishment of this purpose.”



**Figure 26.** This map appears on page one of the brochure for the Cortez Walking Tour, and leads visitors through the historic elements, spaces, and places of Cortez Fishing Village.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This brochure and event precedes The Florida Maritime Museum, but the digital copy now resides there.

All the preserving organizations use invitational rhetoric paired with the process of attunement in order to persuade visitors and tourists to the intrinsic value of our fishing village. The Cortez Walking tour brochure is currently housed on The Florida Maritime Museum's website, and there have been many iterations of this brochure, and the earliest version depict my grandmother's old house on the front cover surrounded by hedges of Azaleas. The tour features 12 sites of historical significance, my grandmother's house included, that participants may view after leaving the Maritime Museum and walking into the village itself. There are a number of outreach programs produced within the organizations that I have analyzed that are too numerous to describe in full, but that these efforts are on-going continues to invite newcomers to experience a place that is unique, authentic, and the last of its kind. Here is yet another example that comes from a C.V.H.S newsletter by President Harry Howey circa 1995:

Look out over Sarasota Bay at the blue sky and the pelicans roosting on a deserted piling. Watch the fisherman tying up his boat for the night and gazing out to the left at the small islands covered with green mangroves dotted with thousands of white birds. Feel the breeze and hear it rustle through the fronds of the nearby sabal palms. You are in Cortez, the one-hundred-year-old fishing village on Florida's West Coast. Close your eyes now and go back into time to many thousands of years before the white man arrived. Native Americans in habituated this Sarasota Bay region. The Aye, Tequestie, Timucans and Coloosa Indians farmed the lands and fished the bays. These proud people also looked out over Sarasota Bay, gathered scallops and clams, and fished for mullet, trout and mackerel. They watched the pelicans soar above and felt the breeze as it rustled the palm fronds. This was their homeland and they loved and cherished their way of life as do the residents who live here today. [. . .]

This special message was an exhibit about the first inhabitants of the land now called “Cortez,” and it is noteworthy for its use of rhetoric of attunement, imploring the reader to use their senses to keenly attune to the views, breeze, and sounds of the place now in order to imagine the historical significance. The ultimate goal of the piece is to demonstrate that these sensations, both physical and emotional, can help us all better realize how and why Cortez has always been *and will always be* loved.

### ***Florida Maritime Museum (space and place)***

The foresight for using the 1912 schoolhouse as the location for a Cortez Community function predates the site selection study by literally decades. Sue Maddox wished to use the schoolhouse as a community center for the children of Cortez in the 1970s, and as it turns out, the community did make that happen in a different building; the museum had also been an idea that was explored for decades prior to any initial action, and the site selection study reveals the careful consideration of competing attractions, feasibility, accessibility, benefits to the community, among others, reaching the conclusion that the 1912 schoolhouse is an “*ideal*” space and place for a maritime museum. This document provides evidence to suggest that the knowledge, foresight, and keen awareness of their value and attunement has been right for decades. It also provides some insight about the function of maritime museum as an opportunity for outsiders to access knowledge that is otherwise unobtainable, citing an “old Chinese proverb” on the ability to help people “learn and enjoy” by summarizing “‘I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand.’ Museums help us to understand.” This document is helpful in tracing the foresight of preservationists and activists, detailing the competing museums of the time, examining the logistics of creating a maritime museum, and reaching the conclusion that it would be “ideal” for our particular place and space shows foresight and attunement of our own.



DRAFT  
CORTEZ MUSEUM CONCEPT AND SITE SELECTION STUDY  
by  
Eshelman & Associates  
3/29/91

At the request of the Organized Fishermen of Florida, Cortez Chapter, and the Cortez Historical Society, and with the support of a matching planning grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Ralph Eshelman visited the historic fishing village of Cortez, Florida from 3/23/91-3/27/91. It was the purpose of this visit to assess the feasibility of creating a commercial fisheries museum, help in formulating its concept and ascertain possible sites for its implementation. On the final night of my visit we culminated our preliminary planning with a "town meeting" to gain additional thoughts and direction from the community. I have had the pleasure of visiting many commercial fishing villages throughout my career and I can honestly say that Cortez is one of those places that is not just a shadow of its former self or a restored version of its former self but a true working fisheries village. This is an ideal location for a Florida based fisheries heritage museum. Below are the major conclusions and points of action initiated from this process.

Figure 27. This comes from a multipage document that investigates the feasibility of the space, place, location and logistics of creating a maritime museum in Cortez.

***Key Elements (space and place attuning)***

All the organizations demonstrate their keen awareness in attuning stakeholders within and outside the boundaries of our small fishing village to our CEC, noting the intrinsic value and the linkages between those values and the ecosystem on which it inherently relies. That the landscape is beautiful goes without saying, and this fact has worked both to our detriment and benefit. Many people speak about this in roundabout ways because it is so obvious to any visitor with eyes to see the waterfront or any duplication whether painted, drawn, photographed, or otherwise reproduced artfully or technologically.

## **Conclusion**

In order to answer the first question this dissertation seeks to understand, “What systems and/or structures have made our continued existence possible and what ideologies or goals drove their creation?” it has been necessary to analyze the historical communications produced through those organizations that are still operative, ones that have a long running history of working to preserve and protect the last functional fishing village on the Suncoast. I have also interviewed women who are currently active in those organizations to understand their motivations; listening to and reading through archival materials of FISH, CVHS, and the FMM has provided a variety of insights on the overlap between historical and modern-day threats, as well as the responses available to us as activists, individuals, and through organizational structures. All of these organizations have overlapped, and all have worked in symbiotic ways in order to survive, achieve objectives, and support our uniting causes. Along the same lines, many of the activists within these organizations *transcend* the function of any one organization, or even the title given to them therein. This has been true of every person with whom I had the pleasure of speaking. It is through researching the communication practices of these three organizations, *and the organizations that fostered their existence*, that the pillars for the heuristic evolved that will protect our community-ecosystem-culture. Additionally, it is my hope that these insights may prove fruitful to other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures, as overpopulation continues to grow worse without the protections to the environment, infrastructure, and ecosystem that this growing population will undoubtedly infringe upon. The heuristic I have created consists of three pillars: intrinsic value, preservation, and attuning to space and place, providing insight for what successful communicative practices within organizations that are capable of protecting CECs.

### ***Intrinsic Value***

Intrinsic value is a necessary first step in protecting a CEC; without the threatened community acknowledging and promoting that value, making it possible for new stakeholders to be brought in, there is no uniting factor to connect them and there is no sense by others that anything *meaningful* is being lost. This step has been and continues to be a necessary and reiterative communication effort that extends both outward and inward for all the organizations examined. It is necessary to connect villagers to each other's plights, and it is necessary to continue to communicate to new and growing tourists and threats that our CEC has value to both us and them for a variety of reasons, be it logistical with the ecosystem benefits created by The Preserve for sport fishing or the production of fresh seafood, or whether it be sentimental feelings like nostalgia or belonging.

For Cortezians in particular, this value is inherently tied to the identity, culture, and dignity of our working-class heritage. Many of the people with whom I spoke have described this demeanor as "stubborn" or "defiant," and I would add that this trait of indignation has been necessary in response to outside perspectives, as well as being a practical element in getting a logistical job done. It is even further warranted when those outside perspectives come to your home, neighborhood, and place of work, and disrespect you there. This relationship between working class person with access to paradise versus the wealth of outsiders who would seek to literally remove them from their home, "cleaning up" the place, imposing their views on others, putting up gates, and enacting all the modes and methods of gentrification continues to be a consistent struggle that organizations have historically recognized and actively defied. This dynamic is not unique to Cortez; it is happening in Miami and every other waterfront community. It happens next to any resource that is desirable, creating "*opportunities*" to charge

for access, flip properties, or otherwise commodify the area and experience. Our space and place has always been undesirable to locals, but more and more this type of “progress” is untenable, ultimately resulting in the degradation of our environment, leading to the eventual loss of the entire CEC, hence my interest in resilience and how ours has predated many of the more recent discussions of it.

Since our connections are historically familial, and certainly seeing the humanity of your relatives, loving them for who they are, makes our connections strong and our resistance easier. This is bittersweet since it is not a connection that is easily replicated, or at least not our *version* of it. Intrinsic value of people, places, culture, and ecosystems exist – period; but part of the explicit work that activists within Cortez have been successful at is *convincing others* of that intrinsic value. As time goes on, and relations become increasingly distant, honoring working-class people for their knowledge, know-how, passion, and famed idiosyncrasies becomes more challenging. The nicknames become forgotten, the landscapes shift, the practice of fishing is altered through legislation and advancements in technology and materials. Yet I have witnessed the dedication and grit of those connected through family heritage, cultural appreciation, and historical preservation work, and they persist anyway – be it grit, spitefulness, indignation, or determination.

### ***Preservation***

Preservation is the next step after acknowledging the CEC is valuable; this makes logical sense to seek to preserve what can never be recreated. Having never read Salt and Walker, shared cultural knowledge and experience gave founders and villagers insight in *choosing* a location for their harbor and then *protecting* it. One of the most important preservation efforts that has enable our CEC to persist is the designation as a historic district, being placed on the national register of

historic places dashed any future ability of developers to buy up and bulldoze our homes to put in the next multibillion dollar Aqua by the Bay or Margaritaville Condominiums, for any transplant lacking imagination who dreams of new builds, chlorinated water, and sugary drinks.

Although preservation may seem self-explanatory, the processes and protections required to enact long-term preservation have proven quite complicated and time consuming in thinking about protecting The Preserve, the village, and our ability to remain a *functioning* fishing village. Examining the processes, documents, communication efforts, and bridged support through grants, agreements, and outside resources, it is clear that these endeavors must be united through a common cause; for our little fishing village I have heard again and again that the identity we must protect is one of a *functional and operative* fishing village, so protecting all the systems on which we rely. That any artifacts exist prior to the unnamed hurricane of 1921 is a miracle, and then our collection and dispersing, interpretation, and continued valuing of voices, artifacts, photos, art, and the like has been integral to keeping intrinsic value alive. Preservation efforts for family and personal history have extended throughout the life of Cortez, nestled under intrinsic value, as we love and cherish our predecessors and kin. What has been unexpected, yet systematic are the intentional and on-going effort of each of the three organizations explored to continuously communicate to and with villagers to solicit any and all, mementoes, noting their historic value as well as finite resources which connect villagers, and many of these communications exist within all three organizations, although CVHS has been the most systematic and long-standing example of this.

### ***Attuning to Space and Place***

Ways of attuning others to our space, place, and the intrinsic values of the culture, which means people, families, and their histories and ways of life can be seen throughout each of the

organizations' mission statements as well as the historical and current events that each organization advertises and hosts. Many of these events are annual ones that are keyed during the optimal time of the year, namely tourist season which has historically been from Thanksgiving to Easter, but nowadays is growing much wider. These events address both a tourist audience, but these events also invite village stakeholders and families, depending on the purpose(s). the Annual FISH Festival walking tour, date with a fisherman, posters, statues, books, websites, open access meetings. Attuning to space and place requires engagement with the space and place in ways that incite responsive feelings in an effort to solicit ties, regardless of the individual feeling rendered, be it nostalgia, appreciation, respect, care, or a simple appeal to experience fresh seafood in an authentic place. Attempts to solicit attunement through processes of education are an integral part of the process, but it is not always the first step.

All three of the organizations continue to feature consistent opportunities for outsiders, tourists, and visitors to become stakeholders in the perseverance of Cortez by first acknowledging its intrinsic value. Many of these in-person opportunities are a chance to engage with the unique flora and fauna of the place itself through the vistas, plant and animal species, and the location of Cortez in relation to our function within the fishing ecosystem, "The Kitchen" and dock docks given there for example. This current experience is natural, man-made, historical, and unique. Many attempts of historical attuning ask the potential stakeholder in our CEC to imagine the immense emotional and physical journey of our predecessors, the stakes they took and the faith they had to hop on a train and make a multi-day journey from the Carolinas to Florida, taking trains, wagons, and boats to get to a place that was not yet settled, with little or nothing to their names. Dr. Mary Green dressing as her mother, giving talks and writing diary entries are examples of this type of attuning. The practices of attuning are

multifaceted and even more diverse through the use of websites and social media, and each of the organizations now uses these practices as well to reach a wider audience.

The yearly art is an on-going and recursive act of attunement that traces the efforts of the organization as well as our collective responsiveness. The goals and objectives promoted by FISH consistently speak to the need to *educate the public* and better attune consumers to the efforts required to sustain ideal fishing through *appreciation for our surroundings*: All the organizations demonstrate their keen awareness in attuning stakeholders within and outside the boundaries of our small fishing village to our CEC, noting the intrinsic value and the linkages between those values and the ecosystem on which it inherently relies. That the landscape is beautiful goes without saying, and this fact has worked both to our detriment and benefit. Many people speak about this in roundabout ways because it is so obvious to any visitor with eyes to see the waterfront or any duplication whether painted, drawn, photographed, or otherwise reproduced artfully or technologically.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

In addition to the heuristic that emerged as I spoke with activist women in Cortez, especially as I examined the historical documents from Dr. Mary Green's collection, further elucidation about the historical work and the protection for our CEC's future and insights for other threatened CECs emerged. Practitioners can be anyone whose goals align with those of the heuristic in chapter 4, and we should honor and value practitioners as having insights and practical knowledge. Working toward common goals inclines the organizations that I have examined, but it has also enabled them to partner with countless others that share common goals. For instance, one of the recent partnerships aiding FISH in their preserve goals is Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program (SBNEP). This knowledge aligns with the expertise with which Cortez, then "Hunter's Point," was founded as a harbor with both protection and also access to deep water. Scales and relationships between functional ecosystems, the identity we look to protect and value as it interacts to larger relationships and environs. The threats that CECs will encounter in the future are growing in size and scale, and so our current course will prove untenable in the future. The goal of this chapter is to return to Cortez as a case study that holds practical knowledge in protecting other threatened CECs, enacting tenets of resilience, answering question 2: Through the use the heuristic explained in the previous chapter, what advice might Cortez hold as a case study for other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures (CECs), especially within Florida?

Like so many conclusions in life, this one is bittersweet. Some knowledge is extractable and transferable from Cortez, and some simply is not. Familial bonds and the founding of Cortez



paired with the unique blend of traits that comes from our collective heritage, reliance upon one another, and grit from the jobs that sustained the fishing industry is not transferable. Working class people, namely fisher people and locals-turned-activists, have been aware of the tentacular ways that our community's livelihood and culture are utterly reliant upon the wealth and health of a functioning ecosystem, and so they've constructed organizations and processes to protect them. However, some belief systems, tactics of organizing, the use of organizational ethe and communication practices, as well as a perspicacious sense of our connection to, and reliance on, the ecosystem benefits bestowed upon us, as well as the need to maintain the health of that ecosystem against various and evolving threats, both present and future, is transferable to other threatened community-ecosystem-cultures, especially the growingly dwindling ones in Florida.

The organizations and activists that have transcended any title or superficial divide of organizations have proven invaluable in ensuring Cortez's resilience, and they have done so in a way that seeks to protect not just the space and place itself, but also a way of life. This has created a heightened awareness, and this helps to account for some meaningful engagement with the implications for the future of "resilience" discussions and implementations. Here it is helpful to think with Jenny Edbauer because she provides insight into the ways that rhetorical ecologies are always materially in-process, making former tools for thinking and speaking about rhetoric inadequate, namely the "rhetorical situation" since rhetorical situations continue to evolve, echo, interact, and reflect back on themselves.<sup>19</sup> She contends that sites, contexts, audiences, rhetor, exigence, and message are all variable depending upon new iterations and adaptations. She calls for new implications for rhetorical pedagogy, one that actively engages in the on-going act of research by claiming "Not 'learning by doing,' but 'thinking by doing.' Or, better yet,

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<sup>19</sup> Edbauer's running example to prove this point is the reflexivity and building on the "Weird Austin" movement.

thinking/doing - with a razor thin slash mark barely keeping the two terms from bleeding into each other” (23). This “thinking/doing” is insightful in a couple ways; it helps to better understand how organizations and activists continue to function within Cortez in establishing a resilient fishing village that is still functional, *and* it also provides clarity for the only way that resilience endeavors can be studied – in the unique ways that they come to be in play in widely and dramatically differing scenarios, a concept that Walker and Salt return to in all their case studies. In the previous chapter I traced and analyzed some of the ways that activists and organizations worked together to rhetorically communicate their CEC’s intrinsic value, preservation efforts, and opportunities to welcome new stakeholders in our CEC by attuning them to our unique space and place, creating a heuristic. In this chapter, I will discuss how Cortez as a case study of resilience can be informative for other threatened CECs. Cortez has been meaningful and fruitful as a case study in thinking about how grassroots movements, activists, and organizations have worked toward the resilience of an extraordinary space and place.

### **Environment**

Resilience is a framework through which many outsiders can grow to appreciate Cortez, even if they were previously unaware of its existence; this revelation is intrinsically tied to our particular environment, though the extractions about resilience practices do have clear implications for understanding thresholds and regime change in any environment, *if and only if you are attuned to them*. Many of the fishing villages, as well as other shoreside, working-class communities have ceased to exist in Florida, and so Cortez proves to be a rare example of resilience for our CEC. Additionally, or resilience practices acknowledge our ties to our

environment and that inherent vulnerability with the ebb and flow of the fishing industry, both natural, political, and ecological. Therefore, it is necessary to rely upon Salt and Walker's definition of resilience as specified in their book of case studies on resilience, *Resilience Thinking*, because it defines it in direct relation to what Cortezians, and other resilience practitioners, are trying to avoid: regime change.

In *Resilience Practice*, Walker and Salt define regime change, saying “that once a threshold has been crossed, all the variables in the system are likely to undergo significant change. But [ . . . ] discovering where thresholds might lie is not easy” (6). Walker and Salt define resilient systems and their inherent connectivity with the goal of helping stakeholders traverse thresholds and understand connectivity for a wide range of systems (i.e. coral reefs, farms, fisheries, etc). What Walker and Salt contribute to the conversation of resilience is *an overt explanation of thresholds and cascading collapse*. Their goal “is to identify possible thresholds beyond which the system will take on a new identity. In managing the system, you want to prevent it from crossing these thresholds, by controlling the state of the system or by influencing the position of the threshold. In doing so, you are working on the capacity of the system to deal with a specified threat. You are therefore attempting to increase its specified resilience” (18). In speaking with Cortezian activists and organizational leaders, it is clear that their goals align precisely with Salt and Walker's discussion of the definitions of resilience. Time and time again activists echoed that our fishing village needs to *remain functional*, tying this explicitly to Cortez's identity, and that to do so we must work to sustain the estuaries, a place where fish grow, and maintain a functional ecosystem. Cortez has proven that land has always been, and continues to be, suasive for a community that is attuned to its ecology for their own protection, livelihood, and the continued existence of fish and wildlife in a symbiotic balance – or that seeks

to be. That the relationship exists, and that we should be both attuned to our impact on it and its impact on us is an extraction that should prove valuable, though the scales and relationships between ecosystems, benefits, and stressors cannot be accurately predicted. Here Salt and Walker add clarity, reminding us that “variables that do have thresholds, it’s important to know about them because they cause regime shifts. This means that once a threshold has been crossed, all the variables in the system are likely to undergo significant change” (Resilience Practice 6). That we are quickly approaching our thresholds as a state is an extreme understatement, and more should be done to foster our remaining ecosystems before we cannot return.

Furthermore, we are all reliant upon the ecosystem benefits of our natural environments regardless of the level of awareness we have regarding it, and this take away comes explicitly from a variety of New Materialist thinkers. If we take away no other knowledge from the pandemic we’ve endured for the past three years, hopefully some more of us have had a revelation about the fragility of our supply chain and the unpredictability of the items we may demand, and the fluctuating price based on that demand.

### ***Environments are Rhetorical; Rhetoric ought to aid Resilience***

The protections that are the most suasive and functional are the ones that are explicitly described, detailed, and clear. For example, a clear goal that FISH has had for over the last thirty years has been to purchase adjacent land, clean up the pollutants and invasive species, and restore the function of the land to an estuary that sustains fishing populations. This is explicitly communicated again and again in their mission, meetings, minutes, advertisements, events, and land management documents and practices. For instance, FISH communicates detailed goals for the most recent preserve management document:

- 1) preserve, protect, and restore environmentally sensitive wetlands

- 2) protect endangered and threatened species that inhabit the property and an adjacent Audubon bird rookery (Cortez Key)
- 3) protect and preserve a historic structure, the 1912 Schoolhouse
- 4) protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens living in Manatee County by redirecting development away from the Coastal Storm Vulnerability Area (CSVA) and Coastal Evacuation Area (CEA)
- 5) avoid potential negative impacts to the water quality in Sarasota Bay and
- 6) provide for passive recreational and resource based educational opportunities for residents and visitors. (35)

This ideology predates the formal creation of the FISH organization, and it infiltrates a variety of the communications that I've analyzed from CVHS, Florida Maritime Museum, and other founding organizations like OFF. This is probable since Cortezians have had to interrogate which practices have actually been detrimental versus restorative to fish populations and the environment due to their coveted space, place, and access. This process was endured through the net ban and various other misleading attempts to communicate with the public to undermine working class peoples' access to their own environment. Tori Chasey, the Supervisor of the Maritime Museum, had a variety of insights regarding how Cortez's locale continues to have sway with both positive and negative implications for our resilience:

Some [threats] are like geographical. We're in paradise; you know, it is in some ways that brings more threat because other people want this paradise. [It is] that close connection to, especially to the water if you're making your money off of it that being close by is one of the assets that the village has right here with the sheltering barrier island. [. . .] People once again in Cortez care, and the FISH preserve is right there. The fact that we've got all

those mangroves saved, and our fish nurseries really have made it so that our local waters are still plentiful enough that you can make something of a living off of it. So that right there geographically are natural aspects of it.

Stormer and McGreavy make a New Materialist, Ecological move in the way that they view agency as not just a human/speaker phenomenon, but rather one that includes any number of environmental factors in their 2017 article, “Thinking Ecologically About Rhetoric's Ontology: Capacity, Vulnerability, and Resilience.” They trace a foundation for believing that rhetoric is always in a Deleuzian state of becoming, beginning with R. L. Scott in 1973, but argue that more recent scholars have opened the field further by stating that “Rhetoric teems with ecologically inclined thoughts. Sharing this inclination, we discuss three conceptual shifts that follow from understanding rhetoric as an emergent, materially diverse phenomenon: from agency to capacity, from violence to vulnerability, and from recalcitrance to resilience. Rather than propose a model, we revise commonplaces of theory to support ecological considerations of ontology” (2). These moves situate rhetoric itself in more positive and *resilient* terms, thus stabilizing a continuous and adaptive need for rhetoric’s ability to shed light on evolving situations through complex and evolving material relationships. Understanding resilience and its responsive potential highlights ways we are connected with our material world. This section traces the history of rhetoric as typically relegated to tactics of coercion and force, whether it is physical, emotional, or persuasive force and reimagines this dilemma in more positive terms, literally. Additionally, Stormer and McGreavy argue that this oppressor/oppressed dichotomy of violence in terms of rhetoric (convincer/convicted) is too simplistic to be helpful. Instead a wider lens view demonstrates that multiple entities are yielding (and interacting) in order to create any given phenomenon – their example is “swirl” that creates clams in mud. Here the

authors connect physical violence and “persuasion”/speech and language to conceive of rhetoric. Again, this perspective is limited and less than helpful if the resilience at play concerns land management and avoiding regime change. An example is Butler discussing “words that wound.” Rhetoric ought to stay nimble, capable, and involved in the conversations which discuss “resilience” if for no other reason than to reiterate McGreavy’s notion that “resilience” is a discursive construction. Though she and others see this as a way to invert concepts like “vulnerability,” emphasizing the positive implications of our connection to the material world, I think the vast implications of our connection and vulnerability more often than not result in undesirable regime change. Granted, I too marvel at nature; it is fascinatingly beautiful and complex! And I certainly appreciate and respect McGreavy’s contribution; further, I believe that she is *right* to celebrate the ways that humans and their environments are interconnected in deep, intimate, and meaningful ways.

Like much of McGreavy’s work, Judith Jordan’s “resilience” rallies against “illusions of self-sufficiency and denial of vulnerability [rather, advocating for] mutual empathic involvement [and] relational confidence” (11). That our vulnerability helps us connect to our material existence is something that certainly has been instrumental in all of our efforts to preserve and ensure our own resilience, and certainly these organizations working together reinforce similar notions of what Bridie McGreavy would call “swirl.” It is also fantastic to both describe and invite others to experience this way of being and thinking with the world. However, Cortezians have known for over 130 years the deep connections and intimate relationships between their community-ecosystem-culture; granted, I know there are cultures who have known this for hundreds, if not thousands of years, but in terms of Florida’s history this is a long time. I do not

think that it inherently follows that we must *celebrate vulnerability* though – celebrate the connection, yes.

Therefore, it will become both illuminating and clarifying to see ways that activism and community knowledge has continued to ensure a fishing village's continued resilience as a case study of activism done right and regime change avoided. Even this highly specific field acknowledges "resilience" as a central concern for more and more fields such as "queer studies, social work, literary studies, education, urban studies, environmental studies, business, nursing and health studies, psychology, counseling, and Holocaust studies" (Flynn et. al 5). FRR is both important and helpful moving beyond definitions of individual conceptions of resilience and toward ones "more relational and community oriented," emphasizing "relationality, mutuality, and an ethic of connection" (6 & 11). What is transferable is that rhetoric is powerful and being attuned to our local CECs can only help, but it also makes each situation vulnerable for being small. Some tactics and advice that may port over to other vulnerable CECs is the need for activism, and that activism can follow the heuristic of the previous chapter.

The regime changes we are on the cusp of will be catastrophic for all stakeholders, so having preservation and resilience must be made a higher priority, especially in the state of Florida. Cortez as an example has fought to save buildings and landmarks one-by-one, communicating to and with people whose lives would be inextricably altered should one company come or go, but the developments on the horizon pose much larger threats: we're no longer talking about one condo building. We're talking about hundreds of acres as a time being rezoned, dredged, and altered, with little to no foresight being given to the impact on the overall ecosystem. Being privy to the work and dedication required to ensure our resilience has made me more fearful for Florida, not less. The rate of new construction and the significant increase in the



number of people moving within the United States to Florida is at an all-time high, paired with the current legislation that seeks to undermine public interests increases my anxiety. Public servants interested in the truth have been raided and attacked, and so the stakes for engaging in activism of any kind also seem higher than ever.

### ***Dangers of Unspecified Terms***

Florida's rhetoric for ADAPT advertised through their website, [floridaadapt.org](http://floridaadapt.org), conceives of the terms in many of the ways White and O'Hare caution against because they capitalize on the positive connotations of resilience and their rollout is uneven and undefined. Their goals center around new building codes and surviving the impacts of sea level rise and other implications of climate change, all while *ignoring* contributing factors. McCreavy and others show the ways that disagreement and vague notions perform a disservice to a variety of stakeholders: the term itself as well as ecosystems and places worth preserving that are intentionally misleading. If federal, state, and local entities cannot agree what "resilience" means; adding to the discord is the fact that each report must begin with a list of terms and acronyms.

Working in symbiotic and measurable ways ought to first begin with an agreement on terms and how success is to be measured. Some examples of this discord include NOAA and FDEP moving from "adaptation guides" to "resilience assessments." Storrer and McCreavy conceive of broadening definitions of "resilience," to highlight the connectivity of materials, bolstering that vulnerability to influence is a benefit and not a detriment, but advocating for this approach is increasingly risky, especially considering how closely we're approaching catastrophic regime change and also considering how broadly and *disparately defined* "resilience" already is. For example, Haggard, Cafer and Green composed a literature review of the term

“resilience” in 2019, tallying 87 articles aiming evaluate whether or not the articles are in compliance with the 4 factors of *community resilience* as defined by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These categories are malnutrition, food security, economic, and egological factors. Only 20% of the articles mentioned all four categories, and this shows a lack of agreement. 86 out of 87 articles address economics as part of community resilience, but this should be expected from systems that notoriously use money as a hallmark of success. It also notes that a large subset of articles investigates resilience as recovering from a natural disaster, but ultimately highlights that preparedness for disasters is more helpful. This relatively recent literature review aggregates the discord surrounding the term “resilience,” and this discord is increasingly problematic if we are collectively looking to avoid irreversible regime change.

While I understand the positive connotations that Stormer and McGreavy see in being tied to and influenced by our environment – yes isn’t New Materialism wonderful - redefining how resilience is figured and discussed, noting the capacity for the field of rhetoric as well as the importance of specific terminology and their connotations (i.e. agency to capacity, from violence to vulnerability, and from recalcitrance to resilience). It also could be helpful for discussing a new materialist perspective because it insists that all four components of CR (community resilience) are interrelated; Barad would say they all matter. Stormer and McGreavy might argue that they are part of the same “swirl,” but the varying ways that each institution, governmental or otherwise, conceive of “resilience” is still disparate. This problem should be concerning since the adoption of the term by state and federal actors in regard to coastal communities and the effects of climate change, namely sea level rise and extreme weather events, ought to leave us all skeptical because the adept management of our climate crisis requires precise language and precise action.

Front porch revolution is critical of the ways “resilience” is used to discuss a troubled place and space, namely New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on it, and then a string of racist, sexist, classist policies continue gentrifying the remaking of New Orleans. McTighe and Haywood concede that “the dubious slogan of resilience” has been previously interrogated, stating that “WWAV leaders are not alone in their critique of the often-individualized focus on strength at the exclusion of attention to the conditions that force people to have to be strong,” responding by demonstrating intervention strategies (26). This piece is helpful for discussing the ways the positive connotation of “resilience” is capable of being used and abused to support oppressive systems, lumped in with notions of “progress.” Part of the resistance that McTighe and Haywood enact is to both question the ways that the term “resilience is wielded and “to document how the fantasy of a new, resilient New Orleans is being built through the evisceration of black women” (27). Hurricane Katrina is an example of systems of oppression working concurrently to rid a space and place of identities the system deems as undesirable. Using natural disasters as a catalyst is a technique that “Naomi Klein dubbed “the shock doctrine”: that is, the exploitation of disaster to achieve what would be impossible through the normal public process, which also signals that the new New Orleans was not really all that new” (McTighe & Haywood 35). Tactics of linking economic sustainability with ecosystem sustainability, industry sustainability, and cultural identity and familial history. The sustainability of our fishing village is much more complex, persistent, and resilient than the literature I’ve read can cover, describe, or begin to analyze, but it began with individual beliefs of worth and collective organizing, on which our survival depended.

## **Invitational Rhetoric**

These activities and documents foster understanding and inclusion, *inviting* the audience to share in cultural practices, festivities, and bounty. Invitational rhetoric is useful for getting others to attune to different ways of thinking, being, and experiencing their surroundings. The newest iterations of efforts to both invite and educate are certainly continuing, and they are continuing to be rhetorically savvy in their endeavors. The brochure utilizes all of the categories for continuing to create resilience in Cortez, starting with the preservation and restoration of history through historical artifacts like the 1912 schoolhouse itself, within which the viewers will find the collection. The brochure also highlights the ways in which the art and culture of building and restoring boats has been preserved through its practice at Boatworks. All of the organizations I have analyzed use invitational rhetoric as an avenue for individuals to witness the intrinsic value of the space(s) and place(s) they wish to observe, and this act permeates the organizations' history, showing up in a number of locations. This one comes from their website: "At FMM, we strive to offer engaging educational programming and activities for all. From families of six to single adults, whether in-person at the museum or digitally from the comfort of your own home, our efforts are approachable, accessible, and fun for everyone." Florida Maritime Museum's brochure uses invitational rhetoric to help visitors attune to the practices of Cortez, twice repeating the phrase "join us for a voyage of discovery." Additionally, the brochure welcomes both visitors as well as "crew member[s]," beaconing anyone interested to also become a volunteer. Furthermore, the section entitled "The Voyage" extends the view of the audience beyond Cortez as a destination they've more than likely reached by car, to one that had historically been reached by sea, shifting the paradigm of the audience to the much broader, entire western coast of Florida, "stretch[ing] from Cedar Key to Key West."

An additional overt example is CVHS Newsletter literally invites citizens and readers to better attune to our collective resilience causes through the use of invitational rhetoric.

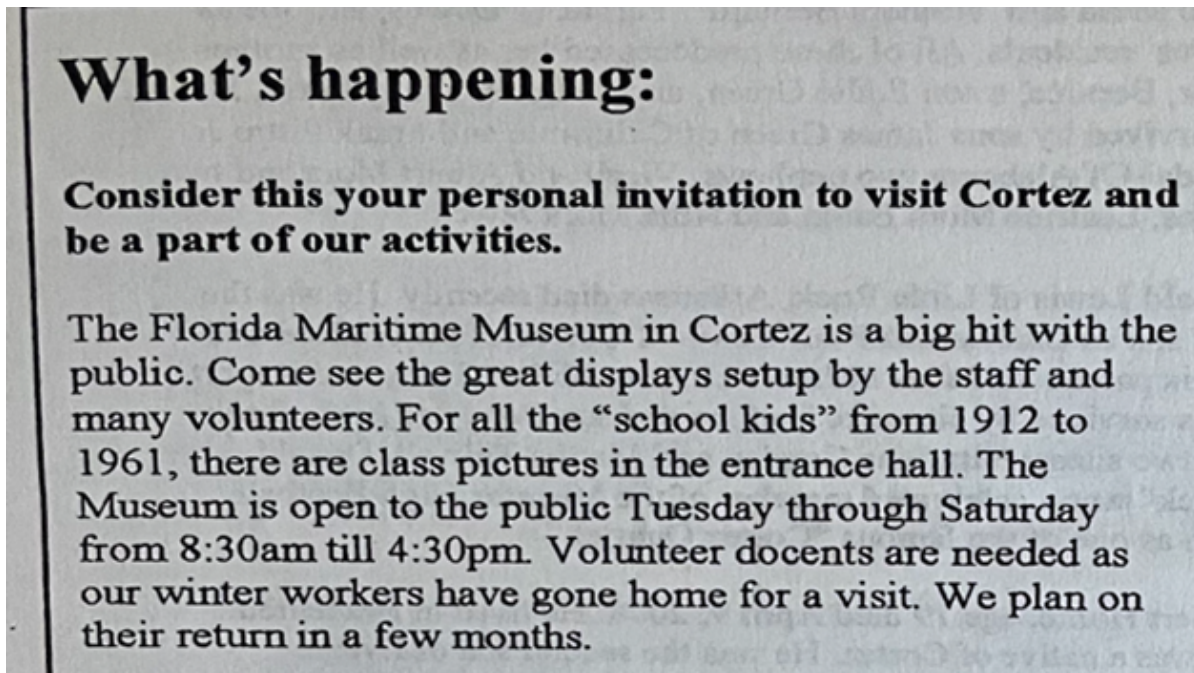


Figure 28. This selection comes from CVHS's newsletter, *The Cortezian*, and it invites its recipients to check out The Florida Maritime Museum.

This excerpt (See Figure 28) comes from Volume 26, Issue 2, and it invites the 300+ households who receive the newsletter to “come see the great displays setup by the staff and many volunteers” at The Florida Maritime Museum, even self-reflexively referring to the communication practice as “a personal invitation.”

### Scales

Bergström and Dekker trouble “resilience” from any hierarchical structure (i.e. Micro: human resilience and Macro: societal resilience) in favor for understanding all instances of “resilience” in the middle (i.e. meso resilient organizations). Their 2014 article, “Bridging the Macro and the Micro by Considering the Meso: Reflections on the Fractal Nature of Resilience,”

suggests epistemological pluralism, and also uses complexity theory to argue that scale is fundamental to any discussion of resilience; an individual can be resilient and so can a nation. They remind us that “resilience is a system property, emerging from interactions and relations at local levels, and they also explore safety science to better observe how instances of resilience emerge after disasters (e.g., aviation, nuclear power, shipping, mining, and offshore drilling) (21). Safety Science is dedicated to understanding how accidents emerge from organizational processes at different levels whether that be through operator behavior, team performance, management decisions, and/or organizational culture. The points of scale emphasized by Bergström and Dekker work reaffirm some of my points in at least three ways.

First, they corroborate my methodological approach to this study in analyzing organizational networks and their communications, since Bergström and Dekker extol that no single actor guarantees the emergent resilience of the whole, but all actors influence the resilience of the whole through their local actions, relations, and interactions (23). Additionally, their work further demonstrates one of the reoccurring frustrations in discussing “resilience,” which is the lack of consistent measurements, definitions, and terminology, and demonstrated in discussion of connotations and Stormer and McGreavy’s scholarship. Lastly, as the camera zooms out of focus on Cortez and pans to a wider scope of coastal region, we can begin to think about the limitations of these organizations to protect a space and place against larger scale threats, thinking through cross-scale relationships between individual(s) and community will increasingly necessary as we move forward.

## **Incessant Threats**

But the less that we protect, the less there will be to protect in the future. This has a number of implications, but the first thought that comes to mind is that our ties and connections are becoming fainter as tourism grows, and villagers are so drastically outnumbered. On the other hand, as more and more property and shorelines are “developed,” the more reliant our sea life is on the estuaries that remain, like the preserve. My fear about this is that it is not until we’ve already crossed over into an undesirable and irreversible regime change, that the public at large and public officials will care in any united way.

CECs are too vulnerable, and the threats are growing in severity, persistence, and power, especially in Florida. Cortez has survived because they have been aware and keenly attuned to the dynamics between villagers and outsiders for over a decade. This has ultimately been a benefit for this particular situation, but as Floridians, historians, citizens, and humans, do we agree that all of these efforts should be necessary to ensure an individual resilience for every vulnerable place and space?

What I have found so striking, evident, and reassuring is just how much dedication, devotion, effort, and *love* has gone into what Mary liked to call “the little fishing village that could and did,” and that this love was felt every single day, but also in many undulating versions. Sometimes this is triumphant, as is the case when an organization was able to protect a threatened building, ecosystem, or practice; but sometimes the people involved in these endeavors felt heart-crushing defeat. For instance, I have sifted through stacks of file folders all dedicated to saving the Albion Inn – letters and petitions and newspaper interviews and personal pictures, and this endeavor was for naught. The US Coast Guard demolished this historic building, knowingly in defiance of its protection, to build their new facility in its place.

All the villagers within Cortez are keenly aware of the historical treats and the ongoing threats to the village because those threats literally surround our space. Ben Green refers to those threats in *Down a Lonesome Road* as “a siege of condos and drug smuggling,” and today you need merely drive through Cortez to *see* and *feel* the drastic differences between the structures, people, and wealth of residences on the north side of Cortez Road, new build multimillion dollar condos and mansions versus the hundred-year-old wooden homes on cinderblocks with boats, crab traps, and cisterns still in the yard.

*We have* historic examples of what happens when we don’t fight. Cortezians have lost community treasures such as the Albion Inn, access to their own resources as access to the bay and public property is literally given away to the wealthy and corporations, and they have seen others lose their access too. Watching family treasures and estates sold off and “remodeled” into sometime unrecognizable hardly fazes Cortezians these days, but these threats are growing larger, more powerful, and they certainly are persistent.

Although Carlos Beruff, a commercial land developer, was unsuccessful in building a condo *within* Cortez Fishing Village, he has been successful in bulldozing over 500 acres of land, excavating 4-acres of earth to make a concrete “lagoon,” as well as building a seawall to protect the million dollar houses he is currently constructing on Sarasota Bay, environmental impacts be damned. In fact, Mr. Beruff has already been fined for ignoring mangrove protection laws, trimming (no doubt killing) some anyway. It tickled me months back to discover a 30 page print out of Beruff’s criminal background check and landownership that Dr. Green had acquired, but she certainly had cause to research Mr. Beruff. His new development exists only a couple of miles away from the preserve, and so the stress it will place on our ecosystem benefits is



immense. Below are his sales pitches to potential consumers with the means and desire to live in a gated community with simulated environment.



**Figure 29.** This screenshot comes from Carlos Beruff's current development project that exists just two miles east of Cortez



**Figure 30.** This landscape serves as an example of current “development,” and this multibillion-dollar development has been either unable or unwilling to respect mangrove protection laws.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ironically this serves as an advertisement on Aqua by the Bay's website: <https://medallionhome.com/communities/aqua/>

Even at the time that the FISH preserve was purchased, 78% of shorelines had been “altered,” meaning they have been dredged, canalled, sea walled, etc. Once there are no natural shorelines left, what will happen to the ecosystem benefits on which we depend? Isn’t it interesting that a community set to be constructed with access to the bay would then choose to build a 4-acre cement “lagoon” for their residents to use? Ben Green discusses the lack of access fishermen have when canals are dredged and laws are created to protect the interests of outsiders, tourists, and those who’ve relocated, and it is easy to see that those issues continue to be pressing. The same uncertainty encompassed areas of the preserve that are now purchased and protected by FISH.

In the previous chapter I discussed how each organization successfully employed tactics for attuning to space and place through experiences to solicit emotion and create connections with Cortez Fishing Village, regardless of what those individual and personal feelings and reasons may be because there certainly are a wide variety.

### **Resilience Requires Activism**

A common thread throughout my speaking with and listening to activists for the preservation of Cortez is the feeling of necessity. Many echo that if they didn’t do it – if they didn’t act, protest, write to state and local officials, and communicate on the behalf of current residents and future ones -- no one else would have. Susan Eacker’s extensive interviews and research reveal that so many of the activists happen to be women because the vast majority of the men were consumed with the uncommon hours required by fishing. Tori Chasey, the Supervisor of The Florida Maritime Museum, revealed in her interview with me in October of 2022 that “You know, just the work of preservation is constant.” She went on to reveal the myriad threats

ranging from logistical to existential, passed present and future, to which activists and organizations have continued to respond, ranging from the deterioration of buildings due to the caustic salt air, changing legislation and the way that it affects the way that people make their living, tourism, gentrification resulting in the inability for young families to buy a home in the village, and that these threats are building it ways that we may not be able to contend with as we did previously. For instances, she reveals:

It just there aren't very many people here left I feel like for them to pass the torch to; it's not that people don't still care. But it was different when those people who cared were blocks away, you know, it was easier to get together and gather and kind of do some of these grassroots movements that have saved us so many times.

Chasey is right that historically Cortez has been able to lean on grassroots movements through dependable organizations and activists, and that by utilizing these benefits, we have been able to defeat so many potential threats.

Further, I contend that these women were savvy at navigating when their individual voices held sway as were they capable of deciding when to lean on the merit of the collective organization(s). Navigating ethos, when to speak as an individual versus when to utilize the agency of an organization, and even when to formally organize stakeholders through signed petitions or community meetings has been a skill that has been passed down through familial activism. It is certainly evident through the Green family, and I have heard the stories from my grandmother about the successes, failures, and costs of participation with and amongst stakeholders for working class people – attacking their character, or capitalizing on their employment relations is not beyond government officials. In thinking about the ways that activist women navigated the rhetorical situation under which they were communicating, it is helpful to

bring in Ryan, Myers et al who help to underline the point that “Marginalized rhetors have a keen sense of the burdens of ethos negotiation” (3).

Feminist ecological ethe open up new ways of envisioning ethos to acknowledge the multiple, nonlinear relations operation among rhetors, audiences, things, and contexts (i.e., ideological situation as shifting and morphing in response to others (persons, places, things), generating a variety and plurality of ethos, or ethe. [ . . . This ethe] interrupt[s], advocate[s], and relate[s], offer broad descriptive categories for the kinds of ethe women adopt and the rhetorical strategies they employ, often in resistance to more static constructions of ethos privileged by normalizing expectations. (Ryan, Myers, et al 3)

These insights by Ryan, Myers, et al. are helpful in seeing how and why feminist activists communicated through multiple avenues depending on the desired immediate outcome. The organizations themselves, as well as the communication practices produced therein, are a savvy avenue for which women to communicate not only to and with each other, but to and with government officials, big business, or any other entity with preexisting authority or dominance that may not take an individual woman’s word seriously. The motivations for preservation can be traced to particular instances of foresight, empathy, and a perceptive understanding of interconnections between culture-ecosystem-communities established, interpreted, and efforts of activist women in Cortez, many of whose activism transcends the confines of any one organization, and some of which transcends all the organizations. Sifting through the historical evolution of three sustaining organizations has demonstrated foresight on the part of women activists that extends far beyond the reach of their own personal concerns, family, or livelihoods. What Feminist Rhetoric can contribute to that history serves to make it more complete, while perhaps no less nostalgic.

Feminist resistance has been necessary to the creation and implementation of the three other pillars. Without early and consistent feminist resistance, none of these efforts would exist. Many of the instances explored throughout this category predate and/or exceed the boundaries of any one organization. That is these women either got the ball moving in establishing the protective organizations themselves, enacted their individual agency, and/or are activists operating in multiple organizations, as is the case with Dr. Mary Green, Jane Von Hammen, and my grandmother, Sue Maddox. It is in thinking of the shared experience of our current familial ties, as well as the future for the village at large, that these women fought or fight. For instance, Jane Von Hammen has been active in Cortez since FISH's inception. She has been absolutely integral to a number of the achievements of FISH, and she accounted for her history with the organization when I interviewed her in October of 2022: "I've been involved as a citizen since FISH's inception, in the 90s with the festivals and stuff, but I didn't join the board until after leaving public office [in 2009] because I wasn't allowed by law to participate as a board member. And I'm presently serving my second time around as treasurer."

Jane has been integral to the function of FISH as an organization that ensures resilience, and her insights about the purpose and function of the FISH preserve are also illuminating. Jane Von Hamman is a native Floridian and resident of Cortez who has been integral to Cortez's resilience. She currently serves as FISH's Treasurer, but many of the women I spoke with during the course of my interviews attested to the fact that her efforts extend far beyond her title at FISH. In her own words she "get[s] very passionate when I talk about Cortez when I talk about the village because I was born and raised in the state. My mother and father were born and raised in the state. My husband is fifth generation, making my children sixth generation on one side, and I was born and raised in Orlando. So if there's anybody who knows what growth can do to where

you grew up, that would be me.” The foresight of Jane’s experience of being from Orlando, and growing up through the changes that have inexorably forever changed the experience of and use of the land there, has worked to our collective advantage in helping to protect Cortez. That she and the board of FISH have the circumspection to disallow even later renditions of the FISH board demonstrates insightful knowledge of how *valuable* the land is, both for us and for others. That the goals for FISH and the village at large are systematically different than how other communities have perceived of progress. For instance, Jane says that the village is looking to maintain and sustain – *not grow*:

unlike many other Florida waterfront communities that were looking to build some kind of economic engine in their areas. We said no, we are looking to preserve what we have. We're not looking to do those things that would bring in more housing or bring in more tourism over and above what we can already handle. And so so the preservation of the village and its historic fashion is the key is key to us. But in order to preserve the commercial fishing industry, that was the reasoning behind purchasing that preserve the Preserve, sometimes the preserve was purchased to provide that environment that is required by so many species that live in the Gulf of Mexico and then or coastal waterways. 86% of all those species spend some time of their life in a mangrove forest or in the upland areas, the you know, the new water channels that we have have established in the preserve. So that's that's really the reason for the preserve itself.

Von Hammen’s thinking, reasoning and communicating demonstrates her zeal for, and knowledge of, her surroundings and her resistance. Cortezians want to resist becoming an inauthentic tourist trap, resist being bought out by developers, and resist unfair restrictions of fishing practices that would change our way of life. In discussing The Preserve and the land

management agreements, Jane Von Hammen highlighted an interesting point concerning the use of the land as a park. Apparently, there are some disagreements amongst board members of FISH in the future use and experience of this land, but Jane passionately advanced the idea that this land *is not about us!* And so much of the preservation work attunes to a future which that individual will never experience, and yet they fight anyway.

There is no debate about the fact that the women of Cortez systematically initiated, organized, rallied, garnered local support, wrote uncounted letters, held meetings with the community and other stakeholders, wrote, administered, and interpreted surveys, and maintained both the physical spaces and the larger ideologies that those spaces represent through continuous and constant intervention and communication. Many of the women who did this work made a name for themselves in being difficult or problematic; my own grandmother risked her physical safety to do it because she believed in justice, access, and fairness so deeply. In her interview with Michael Jepson, she recalls the impetus to rent the sign when thinking about how to respond to the seventh or so drug-related death in Cortez. She says she had thought about sending flowers, but then reconsidered using that money to *prevent* more drug related deaths rather than just mourn another. Exploration of the artifacts and history of the organizational onus, evolution, and current workings can be traced to a few persistent women with the gumption, grit, and foresight to protect their vulnerable culture-ecosystem-community. The preservation work of all the spaces ought to be dedicated to them, and yet, I am unsurprised at the general lack of acknowledgement. However, none of these women were acting out of a need to receive recognition. They acted to protect and preserve a CEC like no other – one to which they have familial and nostalgic ties and for which they are willing to fight.

Ben Green and many others discuss the working conditions, material conditions, and the influence of those on cultural aspects of individual's daily lives, along with how to spot them. The Vanishing Culture Project was funded by Florida Humanities Council and aggregated on NOAA's Fishery Website. The Florida Maritime Museum also aggregates these histories too; many of these histories embody the four pillars I discuss, but my grandmother, Sue Maddox, uses her interview to speak to the organizing women.



Figure 31. This photograph circa the late 1980s pictures Betty Lou Turner and Sue Turner Maddox on the left, protesting the restaurant they believed to have been built and run with drug smuggling money.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Figure 31 serves as an example of the lengths to which some women went to protect their village.



She recounted in an interview with Michael Jepson that she and some other women had the idea of being able to utilize an untapped resource for the good of the community, the schoolhouse, in the 1970s:

I remember when the old school hadn't been used for a long, long time. The 1912 school. We thought, gosh, what a great place to have a community center and a place for kids to go. We thought sure we could get some ping pong tables and maybe a little library started. This must have been in '70s, the early '70s. [. . .] We all met together and tried to get the old school. But the School Board wouldn't let us use it and Judy and I explained that the land was given at a dollar an acre for the school and why not let it revert back to the community. And the fire department said they would be interested in using the facilities too. But they wanted it seems to me, about \$30,000. Well, that was just a lot of money, and we couldn't seem to get the fish companies to get interested in helping us acquire that. And there wasn't a whole lot of interest, I guess. But it was too bad. The community could have used it. Because this was just before the crazy drug days in Cortez.

The foresight of preservation, use value, and how existing features of the community could be best used as an asset to the community is evident in the logic of Sue Maddox's response. The preservation work of my grandmother in particular was based on equity, fairness, and access to resources for everyday working-class folks, showing her awareness of the intrinsic value of the people for whom she advocates through her activism (See Figure 31). These motivations and beliefs are traceable through the ongoing efforts of communication both rallying the community itself, echoing democratic beliefs, insisting that every voice counts to individual efforts to write, petition, and demand that entities with power and jurisdiction over our small community make

good on protecting both democratic values as well as attune them to what was desirable for *our* community. The instructions in Figure 32 were written by the editor of the Cortez Village Historical Society's Newsletter, "The Cortezian," Dr. Mary Fulford Green; this newsletter came from the October issue in 1994, preparing stakeholders to enact their agency. This instance of communications provides not only encouragement, but also provides explicit instructions to villagers concerning their personal responsibility to vote, as well as their responsibility to solicit likeminded voters for the November 8 election in 1994.

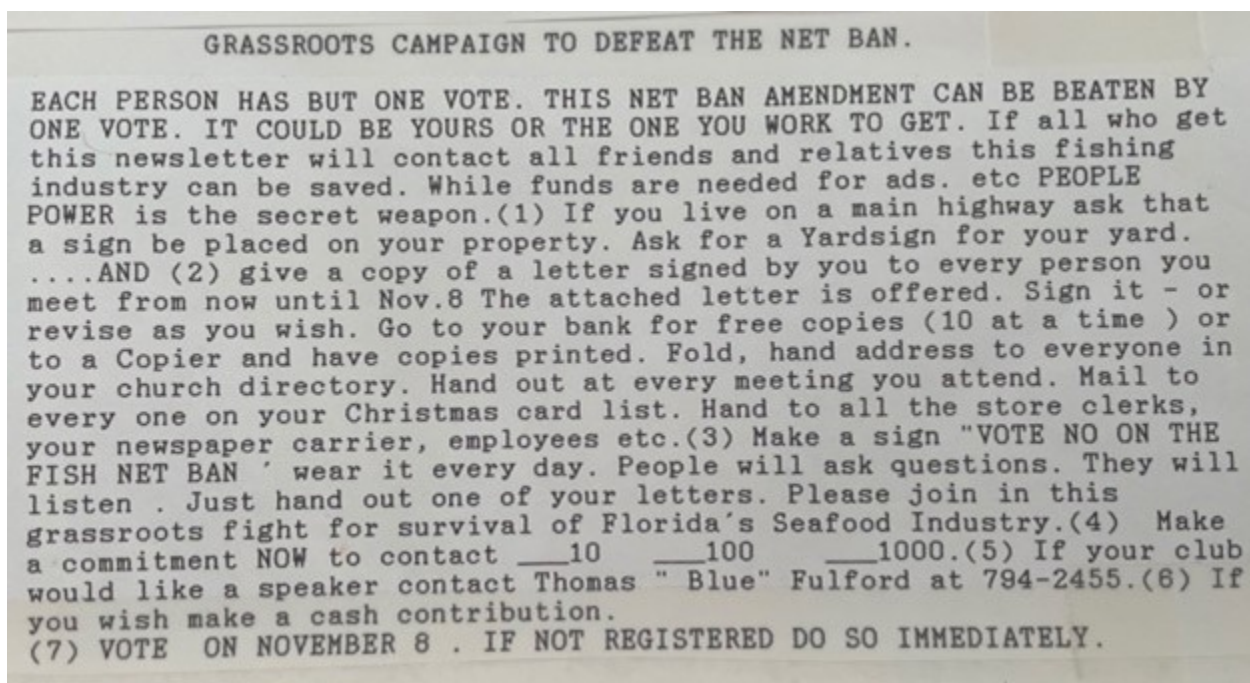


Figure 32. Selection from the 1985 CVHS Newsletter, *The Cortezian*, which urges its recipients to register to vote, vote "no" on the fish net ban, and make monetary donations to the cause.

Although the net ban did pass, this rallying endeavor still provides insight to the ways that Cortez has achieved its resilience. By 1995, the result of the net ban halved the number of fisher folks operating out of Cortez.

The idea and onus to save some vulnerable ecological spaces and historic buildings can be traced to the efforts of a few women who cared about the space and the people living there.

They, too, have/had fond memories of the place, and say so in their writings, efforts, and labor. My grandmother's intention to save the 1912 original schoolhouse came to fruition during her lifetime, but the in a different iteration. She had spoken out during the 1970s in an effort to turn the schoolhouse into a recreational center for the youth of Cortez, an effort that would have served the community in a variety of ways.

Like Dr. Green, my grandmother's involvement and defense of the village spanned decades, and permeated a number of persistent issues. One issue Sue Maddox took seriously was the rights of individuals to their own space and place, like public right of ways and accesses to public lands. In the late 1990s, she began researching accesses that were public on paper, but private in usage, blocked by gates, fences, or otherwise unacknowledged and unable to be used by the public. Through this process, she discovered that public lands and accesses had been given away; expectedly, she was outraged. What is evident from these correspondence for my analysis though is the self-described persistence, which animates her responsiveness as an activist and part of the feminist resistance in Cortez.

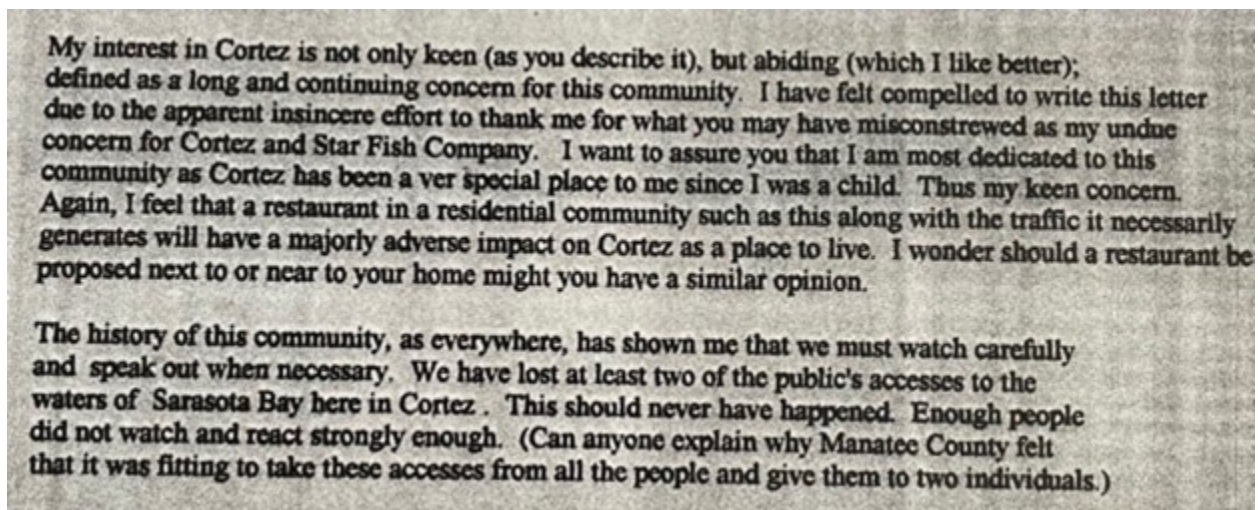


Figure 33. This letter was in my grandmother's collection of private files and archives; it demonstrates both her activism, grit, and motivation in serving the community.

My grandmother's correspondence with Robert Pederson first sought to understand how the decisions being made *about* Cortez by a few so unabashedly were harmful to the residents and that those decisions were not even accessible by the public. She did this work to not only protect her only quality of life, but in her own words, she did it because no one else was. In relation to the insight promoted by Ryan, Myers, and Jones, my grandmother's work *advocated* for access and understanding by stakeholders to the decisions that impact their everyday lives. Access, fairness, and justice were concepts that my grandmother and other activists in Cortez continue to enact in the arduous and on-going work through the organizations that establish their ethe. The deceit and corruption of a government that does not support its people continued to be a concern for which she fought as evidenced by her endeavor to preserve remaining access to the water for villagers as well as to better understand the *process* by which land and accesses were given away to some individuals and corporations. The historical and current threats faced by the Cortez Fishing Village are multifaceted, and so are actual responses and predictive responses.

### **Conclusion**

The tactics and small organizations structures are and have been meaningful for the particular resilience of Cortez as a functional fishing village and our unique CEC. As a case study of resilience, Cortez has provided a variety of insights by tracing the ways that organizations and key activists have been able to attune to and consequently communicate with others about our tentacular connections to our environment and its vulnerability given the incessant onslaught of threats to Florida's ecosystem. Many of the missions, goals, and people overlap showing the united nature of the village, as well as a variety of avenues and options at

our disposal for realizing our goals. Organizing based on similar goals is an excellent avenue to pursue.

As we better come to terms with the large-scale implications of climate change, as well as the understanding that the one third world's industrialization has had detrimental impacts for all, we must think through how to apply the lessons learned with more equity and cohesion to create meaningful impacts that can be accessed by other vulnerable communities using well defined terms based on our shared values. Cortez's shared value has been to remain an operational fishing village, granted one of the last on the west coast. While conceiving of our connections to the physical world and the ecosystems of which we are a part is a positive attribute, we must also use our capacity to communicate directly and specifically to protect the ecosystem benefits on which we all rely. These activists' ability to attune and communicate effectively about the shared goals needed to secure our protections reifies New Materialist conceptions of how space and place can be suasive. Not only have these activists been attuned to the vulnerabilities that exist now, but also the ones that will extend to the futures of our space and place, a concept I will discuss in the next chapter.

Furthermore, it has also been my intention to verify and extol the rhetorically savvy communication that the early female activists and resultant organizations have utilized to protect their community ecosystem culture. That the intentions of those past female activists rallying to protect the CEC in Cortez resonate clearly to the activists working hard today gives me cautious hope in our collective ability to:

thinking creatively, capaciously, pluralistically, and thus irreverently with respect to the rules of science and about the boundaries and meanings of matter, life, and  
“humanness”—something new materialisms arguably do— could be understood as a

central project for a postcolonial feminist science studies. This would necessitate both new storytelling practices and new forms of accountability for feminist materialism.

These new storytelling practices might provide avenues (as yet foreclosed for material feminisms) to destabilize, rather than reconsolidate Eurocentric stories about, the relationship between “materialism” and “Science” and enable scholars to participate in the work of recognizing and engaging a world of materialisms. (Willey 994)

These historical and present-day activists have not shied away from thinking creatively regarding securing Cortez’s resilience, securing our community - Ecosystem – Culture (CEC), but this work values not only preservation, but also addresses the *causes* that threatened to induce a regime change. This foresight is not always an inherent part of “resilience” conversations, but it should be. Tracing the arduous nature of these activists’ work inspires both pride and fear because a concept as important for our *collective survival* should not be as difficult to wield as “resilience” is. In the next chapter I will address my recommendations for land management practitioners, organizers, and activists.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

“I will argue instead not only that the world is one of meaning but that world-as-matter bears itself forward to the complementary gesture of symbolicity bearing itself toward matter. Meaning is fundamentally entangled in matter” (Rickert 160).

I have examined a wide range of scholarly articles which describe, trace, or purport to perform “resilience,” both in rhetorical studies as well as in land management, tracing it to Hollings’s first conception of it in 1973. This endeavor has helped me both grapple with and better understand our collective problems and approaches to resilience in Florida. Doing so has provided insight on tactics that are worth continuing versus tactics that are inhibiting conversations in and practice of “resilience.” Cortez has served as an insightful case study for its ability to retain its identity as a functioning fishing village through their ability to attune to our CEC, advocating, communicating, and educating other potential stakeholders through both their strong activism and strong organizational leadership. Past scholarly interest in and around various facets of Cortez as a space and place also reveal the ability of previous thinkers and authors to acknowledge and honor this unique CEC.

“Resilience” is a term that is growingly tossed around precisely at the kaotic moment when it is needed the most, leaving those attuned in a precarious position! Scholarship within rhetorical studies interrogates “resilience” in some meaningful ways, many of which demonstrate the power and insight provided by New Materialism in our broadest and yet most integral foundations to life - our material composition. McGreavy, Herndl, Barad, (and others – see

chapter two) highlight that we, as human beings, are intimately connected to our environment, ecosystem, and our bodies, and their processes *matter* in ways that certainly impact us all right now, and I am certain science will provide further insight to our material connections throughout our future. A literature review of “resilience” traces the origin of the term to 1973, and recent scholarship on the term is proliferating rapidly in a wide swath of fields. The necessary next step for these conversations to *matter in productive ways* that help mitigate the problems we are creating, enacting systems of protection which ultimately work toward our *collective* best interest by protecting the ecosystems and ecosystem benefits on which we rely, we must agree to some common terminology.

In their second book, *Resilience Practice*, Walker and Salt voice frustration with the term that I also share, stating that “everyone attempts to use the word for their own interests. Buzzwords tend to be all things to all people, and they frequently end up being of little value to anyone” (4). The power and connotation of this buzzword can still be reclaimed if we work together to speak with intention to solve land management problems that look to avoid regime change, and we can advocate for inclusion in practitioners with useful knowledge to add. We can all agree that regime change is at times unavoidable, but we have pushed our *capacity* to the maximum. Efforts in Cortez to restore an ecosystem which we acknowledge is fundamental to sustain the fishing industry is a perceptive first step that is indeed in the right direction, all without the technical concepts of “resilience” in mind, so this knowledge also speaks to new materialist ways of perceptive understandings of our own material environments and their innate connections. So much of my literature review reveals that “resilience” is indeed a buzzword in *many* conversations, but I contend that if we are going to make strides in securing resilience for threatened CECs, then we must speak and write with clarity and intention. “Resilience” has risen



to fame as a buzzword that is infiltrating a wide variety of fields ranging from business optimization, IT, and psychology. Rhetoric provides insight about the history of the term, the connections, and implications of the connotations of the term, as well as the dangers that will come if foresight to the *power of the term* is not realized.

Cortez stands out as a resilient space and place for its ability to not only *exist*, but also to retain its fundamental identity as a *functional fishing village* through activism, leadership, and the implementing of so many protections granted through the establishment of those organizations analyzed herein. So, it is this unique identity that makes Cortez the ideal place and space for a case study of resilience. This involved both the analysis of archival communication materials produced by three organizations within Cortez, FISH, CVHS, and The Florida Maritime Museum, as well as interviewing some key women who are activists within those organizations. Part of my intention has also been to document and understand the processes that activist women in Cortez have historically and currently undertake, bringing light to their dedication, talent, and labor. So, I have interviewed active women who currently hold positions within three of the foundational, long-running organizations that have ensured Cortez's resilience. These interviews provided insights into the values, motivations, beliefs, and organizational overlap that have united these organizations in protecting Cortez's Community-Ecosystem-Culture. Additionally, I have examined and analyzed archival documents created by those three organizations: FISH, CVHS, and The Florida Maritime Museum to create a heuristic that other threatened CEC's may look to as they work to secure their uncertain future in our quickly changing environment. This heuristic builds upward, and intrinsic value is the foundation on which the other two components rest. Preservation work encompasses the preservation of the culture, family history, nicknames, historical events, stories, photographs, films, interviews, and

practices. All three organizations participate in this work, and they have all been united in celebrating and preserving Cortez as a space and place for the ongoing practice of fishing. The last pillar of this heuristic is attuning to space and place, and I have demonstrated the long and systematic history of Cortezians' ability to attune others to the value of our fishing village, therefore rhetorically advocating for its preservation.

The vast majority of the work to document, advocate, honor, and secure the future of Cortez has been women's work. This includes the organizing of events for the organization, the arduous and unending communication practices, and the gathering of historical documents to bring our community together. Linda Molto, Dr. Mary Fulford Green, and Sue Maddox were all highly active in writing letters to state officials to advocate on behalf of the village, and many of these documents reveal the underestimation of our space, place, and people. The valuing of these women and this work has gone unexpressed in our written history, and so my approach has been a feminist one, dedicated to highlighting their keen insight and devotion, often to their own detriment at times.

What I have helped to prove is that CECs are capable of ensuring their own resilience by attuning to the ecosystems that sustain them, and that our CEC is particularly valuable for its insight because the place and space was chosen with the goal of being a functional fishing village from the onset. Not all places or people have this advantage, and so I acknowledge that as a limitation. But this is nothing new! It has existed and continues to exist beyond our speaking and writing of it, and is especially prevalent in the writings of Barad, Haraway, and McGreavy.

## **Implications**

For there to be any hope in obtaining resilience for other threatened CECs through land management, and for the purposes of practioners, being able to clearly communicate with and amongst each other, we must begin with a common form of communication. A practical start would be to come to agreement on what “resilience” means. Resilience is not just “adapting” to the threats at hand, but also acknowledging the ecosystem benefits we reap, and working to protect them. As evidenced by the number of practioners with and within Cortez, there can be accurate and constructive agreement in goals without any traditional land management training. This speaks to the power and truth of New Materialist endeavors. The ability of some strong activists and organizations to attune to the space and place of Cortez, what creates its identity, and how best to protect the Culture-Ecosystem-Community through their communication practices proves those connections carry weight and that attuning to them holds value. However, Cortez is also a special exception in many regards too; founders chose the space and place explicitly for its location and qualities to function for fishing – not only that, but many of the activists are intimately and personally tied to the place and each other through familial relationships. These have all been advantages to our longevity, and these also gave organizers a boost in recognizing their intrinsic value, much of which was not only relegated to culture, but was oftentimes also family. This fact, however, does not detract from the implications; it is vitally important that we speak clearly and with intentionality. Resilience terminology needs to be agreed upon within land management endeavors, and those need to be prioritized at the very least at the state level. Currently approaches are disparate, ill-prioritized, and ill-funded, a poor position for a state so heavily reliant on its own natural beauty and ecosystem benefits in attracting tourism.

Leaving each county to make decisions and enforce those decisions for themselves does not account for the scale and severity of our growing population and reduced health of our ecosystem benefits. Logistically it is incredibly problematic as well, and it is increasingly a problem that will grow more complicated, making equity for other threatened CECs unattainable when it comes to making sure resilience practices, knowledge, and funding can be accessed *by everyone*, not just activists with the time and the means. Nor are these problems of cascading regime change relegated to merely mangroves and estuaries; look also to the declining health of native species such as the Florida Panther and Manatee – look also to the declining quality of The Florida Springs – their flows dwindling and their environments deteriorating. Standardized terminology and agreed upon vernacular thresholds should work to secure very *real and vulnerable* environmental thresholds beyond the single one that I have explored. Moreover, the practitioners enacting efforts to support resilience and preservation are piecemeal compared to the machines for profit that seek to destroy vulnerable CECs.

For the sake of both clarity and access, we need to stand behind Salt and Walker’s definition of resilience as well as their guidelines. Widely agreed upon terms with common definitions and common evaluative systems. Practitioners within Rhetoric ought to interrogate the usage of “resilience” – the goals of Salt and Walker as well as the approach that they take to the study of resilience seeks to better understand and better explain how to both *think* and *practice* resilience endeavors in land management. This endeavor is a practical one because they understand the consequences of failure to practices as well as practicing in inefficient and/or impractical ways, for whatever reason. Our endeavors should seek plausible solutions for a growing kairotic problem which will be the global reckoning with climate change.

Resilience Alliance definition and Salt and Walker's work ought to be foundational for programs looking to foster existing ecosystems and/or restorative efforts. The definition reads that "[r]esilience is the capacity of a social-ecological system to absorb or withstand perturbations and other stressors such that the system remains within the same regime, essentially maintaining its structure and functions. It describes the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization, learning and adaptation" (<https://www.resalliance.org/resilience>). Theory is always present in our practice, whether we acknowledge it and are aware of it or not, and our current approach of segmenting places and spaces is unsustainable and incredibly labor-intensive. Thinking about theory and practice in being mindful about how the beliefs we have infiltrate the actions we take in the world. That it is helpful and worthwhile to highlight our connections to the physical world, for better or for worse. Thinking wholistically in how these extractions may prove insightful for other threatened CECs, scales matter tremendously, and the connections of individual clams for McGreavy, or the ability of a dragonfly to serve as a catalyst for connection need to transcend up the scales to the larger implications of resilience. However, we cannot discount the fact that connotations are both powerful and persuasive. For these reasons, it is absolutely necessary that rhetoricians continue to interrogate the connotation and denotation of "resilience" to ensure its proper use.

The conversations surrounding our emotion in *how we address* massive regime changes that are growingly encroaching upon our physical environment ought to make it their foremost priority to be productive in helping to affect positive change. So many conversations get sidetracked in arguing about whether Naomi Klein's approach in "We are the Wildfire": How to Fight the Climate Crisis is too alarmist, yielding more feel-good approaches such as Alice Chen and Vivek Murthy's *Should We Be More Optimistic about Fighting Climate change?* These are

conversations are not the most important ones; we need to prioritize clarity and action before we get carried away in the emotional experience of that communication. In the same vein, we can feel positively, negatively, or any range of emotions in between regarding New Materialist thinking, but that a village can utilize it to impact positive change demonstrates *it matters*. McGreavy and others feel inspired, and it shows in their thinking, writing, and activism, but we must put clarity first, lest we invite con artists and charlatans to misuse terminology, profiting on its positive connotation. and thinking positively about the connections between our vulnerable position as physical beings who are reliant upon a healthy environment for our own welfare and the welfare of the next generation.

Another implication that resounded as I better looked to understand the process of Cortez securing its own resilience is that it should never have been this difficult! The work to create a few organizations, recruit activists, secure funding, and communicate effectively within the organization to others has spanned decades. Wading through the grants, endeavors, lists, structures, and other files makes it apparent that it should not have to be this difficult moving forward! That these initiatives and decisions are left to the mismanagement and misunderstanding of local governments who are unaware of the history and who also do not communicate with each other is an injustice. We need more cohesive structures and scaffolding so that more communities, ones with unique and valuable CECs, can retain their identity and rights to their land and heritage. Demonstrate the viability of New Materialist connections between humans and their environment.

“Business as Usual” in terms of building codes, land management, capitalistic incentives for and so called “progress” and “development” are unsustainable in every logistical sense of the word. Poorly planned developments that dredge and destroy precious estuaries and fisheries will

destroy the ecosystem benefits of the bay, among others. Florida's infrastructure is ill equipped to continue dealing with the influx of migration as an afterthought. Our ecosystems cannot sustain the types of development that are in demand – new build homes, especially on man-made canals and seashores that are “trimmed” or destroyed for the views of the water they yield. Our inability to notice, value, and protect the ecosystems on which Florida depends is especially unsustainable given our close proximity to regime change, adding further stress and reliance on our remaining estuaries and waterways. Developments that further wish to ignore the problem and therefore contribute to it. Resilience endeavors that only respond by adapting to new regime changes – “adapt” is yet another fraught term – without addressing the underlying connections and causes of those changes, are inadequate.

Current practices that wealthy are using to cope with, avoid, or ignore our problems are not only inequitable and unsustainable, but they are also actively contributing the destruction of the ecosystems that they are paying to access, and a wide variety of the damage is caused in the environments they inhabit. A variety of these instantiations exist in which the wealthy curate their gated community surroundings, literally choosing and/or creating their ideal environments. This is seen in Beruff's 4-acre lagoon people who deal with the problem by further segmenting themselves from the reality of our failing environment – these people fish in the man-made ponds of their HOA's created neighborhood. This thinking lands people in gated communities with man-made “lagoons” that are impervious to red tide; however, this approach is untenable and delusional. It would behoove us all to support the CECs that sustain us.

## **Organizational Insights**

Acknowledge, trace, describe, track, honor, and attribute women's work, even though much of it may happen behind the scenes in order to communicate with others is important. Titles, positions, and finished product exhibits do not scratch the surface in terms of work that takes place behind the scenes. These women might remind you that *the work is not for them*, and Jane even stressed that The Preserve is not about any human experiences of it in the first place, but these activists matter and their work matters. Asking how the organizations came to be and the responsiveness of the people who work to protect CECs should be acknowledged and valued. I hope that my work has helped to reveal their work and dedication.

Align with groups who share similar goals even if their make-up or identity is different. For the overwhelming majority of events, Cortezian organizations can share resources, personnel, and work together toward the one common goal of keeping Cortez as a functional fishing village. The archives I explored included a variety of documents, people, and organizations that we like-minded, if only in one way. For instance, Dr. Mary Green had a variety of examples in communication of other historical societies, preservation work, ecological work, and so on; these served in a variety of ways, but it also helps to link our CEC to other tentacular networks, providing resources, insights, and *connections*.

## **Future Research**

“Transcendent Attunement” is an idea that I’d like to further explore in my future research. I was not able to pursue this here, but future research should because it is helpful for thinking about the work of activists who are attuned *beyond the present environment and circumstances and beyond themselves*. Rickert, Herndl, and other Rhetoricians discuss the ability



of an individual to rhetorically attune to their current environment, and this ability is certainly valid, useful, and integral to the human experience. For instance, Thomas Rickert summarizes his concept of “ambient rhetoric” thusly “*rhetoric is a responsive way of revealing the world for others, responding to and put forth through affective, symbolic, and material means, so as to (at least potentially) reattune or otherwise transform how others inhabit the world to an extent that calls for some action* (which can include, of course, steadfastness, refusal, or even apathy” (Rickert 162). Building upon Rickert’s concept, I have also noticed that for many activists who are keenly attuned to the community-ecosystem-culture of Cortez, those individuals are able to anticipate and prepare for threats of the future. This ability and dedication of a few individuals who have been forward thinking and predictive, can attune to the potential of a space and place beyond, and through this ability to transcendently attune yields offensive (versus defensive) tactics for community conservation. The capabilities for discussing, creating, and communicating with other threatened CECs is made more available through this new terminology; transcendent attuning in our toolbox since so much of what humans need to survive is not known to them. It is also really limiting for someone to dismiss the extinction of a species, place, or culture, simply because it did not matter to *their personal experience*.

However, time and time again in the communications stemming from Cortezian activists, they invoke our shared collective past and our shared collective future (look back to the inscription in my grandmother’s book for this located on page 2 that reminds her “In honor of your grandparents”). Time and time again, I have seen rhetorical appeals to action and activism that prompts the recipient to think of the children and grandchildren. This calls for a name to our rhetoric capable of transcending immediate and individual experience. Cortezians have been using transcendent rhetoric in our activism and discussion of The Preserve, dedications, and our

collective future. Future iterations of meaningful rhetoric ought to *resonate* beyond the individual experience to a collective regime change. Creating these types of communications without being dismissed or ignored – doing it positively is growing more difficult by the day as the need and reliance on dwindling systems approaches the ball in the basin of regime change. We shall see that rhetoric, and our ability to persuade consumers to perceive the world as meaningful beyond their personal experience of it, is integral for the resilience of the world and the survival of individual CECs, but within this century the future of the ways we engage with a declining environment. In other words, our current path is untenable, and we need to better communicate this to anyone who cares about tomorrow.

### **Conclusion**

The small fishing village of Cortez, Florida, known to some as “the little fishing village that could and did,” has weathered hurricanes, net bans, drug smuggling, and an influx of norther migration, all while avoiding becoming Manatee County’s next condo development or a tacky tourist strip mall despite the continual and multifaceted threats that continue to persist. In fact, it is the oldest, still functional fishing village in Florida; the rest have all but disappeared. By analyzing the communication practices that have ensured our collective resilience, speaking to modern women activists, as well as the ones who have passed, within organizations such as The Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage (FISH), The Cortez Villiage Historical Society, and The Florida Maritime Museum, I have sought to better understand the success of grassroots resilience efforts. This process has lead to a heuristic for understanding how organizations can communicate in support of resilience efforts, and this resilience heuristic traces intrinsic value, preservation, and attuning to space and place as approaches that all serve to solicit new

stakeholder and successfully communicate the value of our CEC. Additionally, I have sought to better understand the duty, labor, and exertion of women's work to preserve, much of which has historically happened behind the scenes. It has only been through women's organizational communications and by speaking to the women who run them that seeing the dedication, care, and zeal through which they have historically and currently operate. The communication efforts and activism of three organizations within Cortez has preserved Cortezian Culture. It has also simultaneously explored myriad approaches for salvaging a disappearing way of life, aiding our understanding of the tentacular networks and communication practices that have created Cortez's resilience.

Resilience can be restored or depleted based on our thinking, communication, and action. Our relationship to the material world renders us all vulnerable, our existence and the survival of our specific CECs to which we belong hold inexplicable value. That we ought to be able to agree on terms and develop cohesive state or federal plans needs to be a step worth considering, lest the individual space and places left with any authenticity are the ones who are become responsible for their own survival. I contend that current practices prove to be inaccessible and inherently difficult for some CECs to access, which predicts meaningful losses to us all as those who are not attuned stand to impact the "*development*" of what Florida is and what it may become if our thinking, communication, and action does not adapt.

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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix A: IRB Approval Email**

### **Notification of Approval**

**To:** Karla Maddox

**Link:** [STUDY004573](#)

**P.I.:** Karla Maddox

**Title:** Organizations Ensuring Resilience: Cortez, Florida

This submission has been approved. You can access the correspondence letter using the following link:

**Description:** [Study4573\\_Initial\\_10.18.22.pdf\(0.01\)](#)

To review additional details, click the link above to access the project workspace.



### **EXEMPT DETERMINATION**

October 18, 2022

Karla Maddox  
[Redacted]

Dear Mrs. Karla Maddox:

On 10/14/2022, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

Application Type:	Initial Study
IRB ID:	STUDY004573
Review Type:	Exempt 2
Title:	Organizations Ensuring Resilience: A Case Study of Cortez Fishing Village
Funding:	None
Protocol:	• Protocol Resilient Cortez KM4.docx; No Consents

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Please note, as per USF policy, once the exempt determination is made, the application is closed in BullsIRB. This does not limit your ability to conduct the research. Any proposed or anticipated change to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB oversight must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant a modification or new application.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

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### **Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance**

FWA No. 00001669

University of South Florida / 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165 / Tampa, FL 33612 / 813-974-5638

## **Appendix B: Interview Questions for Organizers and Activists in Cortez**

### **Cortez History:**

1. What were all historical threats facing the village that you can recall? In other words, I'd like to know what enabled us to remain and others to perish. Which ones were the most pressing, powerful, or threatening to our village and way of life?
2. What attributes do you believe make a community resilient?
3. What qualities have given Cortez Fishing Village staying power?
4. What has enabled Cortez to retain its strength, identity, sense of community and culture as compared to others in Florida?

### **Organization and Affiliation:**

1. What are the goals of the organization for which you hold office?
2. What is the position you hold at \_\_\_\_\_ organization, and what are the goals or objectives of that role?
3. What circumstances inspired the creation of this organization?
4. How do you see the organization working in favor of Cortez?
5. Can you point me to any art, artifacts, or representations of Cortez by the organization that you believe are meaningful?
6. What achievements or success have you seen the organization accomplish, and why are they meaningful?
7. When do you believe the work under this organization will be accomplished?

### **Women's Work:**

1. What made/makes the women of Cortez resilient? How did material conditions lend itself to resilient feminists in Cortez?
2. Is cultural, familial, and preservation work assumed to be feminine work here in Cortez? Or how do you see gender roles uniting or dividing labor/efforts here?
3. Do you have any examples or stories of female leadership/organizing in the village that you'd like to share or discuss?

### **The Future:**

1. What are the biggest issues or problems facing Cortez in your view? How have they changed and/or evolved over time?

2. How do you believe that \_\_\_\_\_ organization may function to help preserve Cortez against future threats?
3. Based on your own experiences and past history, what could be done now or in the future to make Cortez more resilient or less vulnerable to threats it either faces currently or will eventually face?

### **Ending Questions**

1. Is there anything else about Cortez which you'd like to share or discuss?
2. Lastly, do you have any questions for me?

### **Appendix C: Email for Solicitation of Interviews**

Dear Organization's Name Member,

My name is Karla Maddox, and I am a PhD candidate in Rhetoric and Composition at The University of South Florida. I am writing my dissertation on the preservation work that organizations within Cortez do. Eligible participants are current participants, volunteers, board members, and/or otherwise active with the organizations of F.I.S.H, The Florida Maritime Museum, and/or The Cortez Village Historical Society. Potential benefits to participation may include a better understanding of our collective work to preserve Cortez. If you decide to participate in an interview, your time commitment should range between 30 and 60 minutes.

Here's my phone number: 941.773.9846. Please let me know if you would be open to discussing your role and your insights. I'm happy to communicate with you about this research project over the phone, via Zoom, or in person depending on your availability and preference.

Kind regards,

Karla Maddox  
[kmaddox@usf.edu](mailto:kmaddox@usf.edu)  
The University of South Florida  
IRB Study 004573