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Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris announces new Valhalla Island oceanfront resort—to become the largest in the Florida Keys.

Noted conservationist shares plans for major nature-based fishing resort in the Sport Fishing Capital of the World!



Johnny Morris was joined by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis for the official announcement of the Valhalla Island Resort. Left to right: Florida DEO Sec. Dane Eagle, Morris, Gov. DeSantis, and Rep. Jim Mooney

Morris envisions Valhalla Island Resort as a new model for low-impact, sustainable design in the Florida Keys

MARATHON, Fla. – Johnny Morris presented plans for the oceanfront Valhalla Island Resort development before an audience that included Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and key leaders of the Florida Keys recreational fishing and conservation communities. **Valhalla Island is the largest resort property anywhere in the Florida Keys.** It includes more than 175 acres and more than a mile of breathtaking beachfront property, located just 15 minutes from the Marathon International Airport, a two-hour drive from Miami and just over an hour from Key West. Plans for the resort involve maintaining over 50% of the property's green space.



Johnny Morris was very inspired by the legendary Long Key Fishing Camp, which not only established the Florida Keys as world class sportfishing destination but served as inspiration for the Valhalla Island Resort.

His passion for fishing and high regard for the Historic Long Key Fishing Camp served as Johnny Morris' primary inspiration to develop Valhalla Island Resort



Ernest Hemingway with sailfish caught at Long Key Fishing Camp.

For over 30 years now, Morris has been assembling Valhalla Island. Much of Johnny's inspiration to develop the resort came from the legendary Long Key Fishing Camp. Founded in 1908 by Henry Flagler, the Long Key Fishing Camp was largely responsible for establishing the Florida Keys' position of prominence on the sportfishing landscape. Frequented by U.S. Presidents, A-listers from Hollywood's Golden Age, Ernest Hemingway, Zane Grey and many others, the Long Key Fishing Camp opened the eyes of the world to the wonderful, tropical paradise that is the Florida Keys. The heritage and history of this very special place is the inspiration for the Valhalla Island Resort.

Much like its legendary predecessor, the Valhalla Island Resort, with its deep water accessible, full-service marina and wonderfully appointed accommodations, makes available the one-of-a-kind combination of world class inshore and offshore fishing opportunities that await in the Florida Keys. Located minutes away from the deep blue waters of the Gulf Stream and adjacent to the



Legendary writer and angler Zane Grey was a frequent guest of the Long Key Fishing Camp.

world class flats fisheries of Florida Bay, the Valhalla Island Resort sits at Ground Zero for some the best sailfish, swordfish, tarpon, bonefish, permit and snook fishing in the world. Given the island's wonderful setting, it is fitting that Valhalla translates "fisherman's Heaven."

In the early spring, schools of giant bluefin tuna migrate through these waters. Anglers may encounter double-digit sailfish days during most parts of the year here. In terms of numbers and size, the Keys are recognized around the world as one of the best places to catch swordfish. Trophy mahi mahi abound in the spring and summer months. Tarpon, bonefish and permit inhabit the backcountry of Florida Bay in numbers and size not matched anywhere else in the United States.

The Valhalla Island Resort is the latest reinforcement in Johnny's continuing commitment to boosting the Florida Keys sportfishing community and promoting the region's tourism industry. Located just 25 miles southwest of World Wide Sportsman—Bass Pro Shops' saltwater store-- in Islamorada, the resort is the latest offering of Morris' and Bass Pro Shops' series of investments to amplify sportfishing, conservation and nature-based tourism within the Keys and the State of Florida.



The Lodge

Celebrating the Keys' fishing heritage

Set upon a remarkably unique island environment, the project is an extension of Johnny Morris' Signature Nature Resort experiences that help families connect to nature and each other. Natural beauty, quality craftsmanship, attention to detail and respect for the land are the hallmarks of every project Johnny pursues.



Johnny Morris with his daughter Megan with proof of the world class sportfishing opportunities within the waters surrounding Valhalla Island Resort.

To bring the vision to life, Morris and his daughter Megan have partnered with leading architecture firms Hart Howerton and Nunzio Marc DeSantis Architects. Using ecologically sensitive design techniques and working with the natural ecology of the Florida Keys, plans for the 110-unit nature resort call for an intimate setting that preserves 50 percent of green space throughout. Valhalla Island Resort will be vehicle free. All surfaces will be permeable surfaces.



Resort accommodations consist of a collection of one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom cottages, in addition to a master lodge and general store, all of which are nestled within lush, tropical landscaping and a sweeping beach shaded by hundreds of palm trees. Other amenities include restaurants, a spa, swimming pools, fishing marina and spaces designed for people to gather and connect with nature.

A new model for sustainability: Committed to preserving the community and promoting the sport of fishing

The development, previously approved by the city of Marathon, is designed to be carbon neutral with a minimal footprint and low impact to preserve the natural integrity of the land while leveraging the latest sustainable strategies.

Conservation-based practices inform all aspects of the resort's design and operation with a goal of enhancing the natural ecosystem. State-of-the-art sustainable design techniques will be utilized, including onsite renewable energy via solar and geothermal power, rainwater harvesting and storage, and

orienting buildings to enhance natural ventilation.

Morris and his team are working closely with area conservation partners and local community officials to ensure the resort not only meets but enhances the existing character of the community.

Beyond the footprint of the resort itself, plans call for an extensive transformation of nearby hotel properties acquired by Morris into fully renovated apartment buildings to comfortably accommodate workforce housing, with shuttle service reducing any potential congestion.

The team is partnering with local conservation officials to ensure elements enhance native habitat and wildlife. Key partners and agencies include Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, South Florida Water Management District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, South Atlantic-Gulf Unified Region, and Audubon Florida, among others. Conservation leaders in attendance to celebrate the announcement of Valhalla included Eric Eikenburg, CEO of the Florida Everglades Foundation, environmental consultant Dr. Phil Frank and scientist Rowena Garcia, and Allison Delashmit, Director of Regional Operations for Mote Marine Laboratory's Coral Research Facility, and community officials from Marathon and across the region.



Fishing legends gathered for the grand opening of World Wide Sportsman in 1997. From left to right: Billy Pate, Loren Grey (Zane Grey's son), George Hommell, Johnny Morris, Lefty Kreh, Mina Hemingway (granddaughter of Ernest). Seated: Curt Gowdy, Ted Williams, and Jimmy Albright.

Recipient of conservation's highest honors

Johnny Morris is an avid angler who has spent considerable time in the Keys. Morris' World Wide Sportsman flagship location in Islamorada — which includes a world class marina, retail location and restaurant — is a globally-recognized sportfishing landmark. Morris' longtime support of fisheries conservation in the Florida Keys resulted in his 2022 induction into the Bonefish & Tarpon Trust's prestigious Ring of Honor. In 2019, the National Audubon Society recognized Morris' leadership in conservation by awarding him its highest honor, the Audubon Medal. These honors underscore Johnny's reputation and lifetime of work in the conservation community.

For decades, Bass Pro Shops has made significant conservation investments across Florida. These include investments in the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and Florida Bay—working with our customers to ensure that resources are managed well today and into the future. The company's conservation impact extends, however, beyond the state of Florida. Working with

over 60 national conservation organizations, Bass Pro Shops creates partnerships to move the needle on some of the most important issues facing our country.

Supporting Florida's tourism industry

In addition to a commitment to conservation within the state that spans decades, Morris and the Bass Pro Shops family of outdoor companies provide thousands of American jobs across Florida. Morris and Bass Pro Shops operate 12 retail locations across the Sunshine State — from Destin to Islamorada. These operations provide thousands of jobs while supporting the state's multi-billion-dollar sportfishing and tourism industries. The company also works hand-in-hand with a network of dozens of independent boat dealers across the state to outfit anglers and boat owners in their pursuit to enjoy Florida's many waterways across fresh and saltwater.



Bass Pro Shops store managers gather for a recent fishing adventure on Valhalla Island.

The Valhalla Island Resort will be a boost to tourism within the Florida Keys, especially within the segments of sportfishing and

nature-based tourism. To this end, Morris and Bass Pro Shops plan to broadcast the wonderful fishing and leisure experiences available, promoting tourism in the Florida Keys through the broad reach of their passionate customer base around the world.

Construction of the Valhalla Island Resort is scheduled to be completed within the next two years. Morris and his team will continue to share updates as the process progresses.



The Market



[Click here for more on the inspiration behind the Valhalla Island Resort.](#)

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About Bass Pro Shops

Bass Pro Shops is North America's premier outdoor and conservation company. Founded in 1972 when avid young angler Johnny Morris began selling tackle out of his father's liquor store in Springfield, Missouri, today the company provides customers with unmatched offerings spanning premier destination retail, outdoor equipment manufacturing, world-class resort destinations and more. In 2017 Bass Pro Shops acquired Cabela's to create a "best-of-the-best" experience with superior products, dynamic locations and outstanding customer service. Bass Pro Shops also operates White River Marine Group, offering an unsurpassed collection of industry-leading boat brands, and Big Cedar Lodge, America's Premier Wilderness Resort. Under the visionary conservation leadership of Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops is a national leader in protecting habitat and introducing families to the outdoors and has been named by Forbes as "one of America's Best Employers."

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