

**APPENDIX G
HCP SHARE THE BEACH NEWSLETTER**

Share the Beach Newsletter



St. Augustine Beach

Beach Driving, Historical Conflict

Historically, public beach driving has occurred along the entire coastline of St. Johns County. In 1941 the beaches within St. Johns County seaward of the mean high water line were declared as a public highway under local jurisdiction and control to allow public use of the beach for bathing and recreation. Over time vehicular traffic has decreased in length due to jurisdictional changes and has become a target of controversy, especially for those who have grown up in this area.

Each year thousands of vehicles enter the beaches to enjoy the social, cultural, and economic benefits that so many depend on through vehicular beach access. However, on any given day one can see that beach driving has an impact on the beach. Vehicles on the beach have the potential to impact sea turtles, Anastasia Island beach mice, sand dunes, sensitive vegetation, and nesting shore birds. As long as vehicles continue to operate on St. Johns County beaches there will be a potential to impact these species. In an effort to reduce or eliminate these impacts while maintaining sustainability of the beaches, St. Johns County applied for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

The programs and policies of both the ITP and HCP will improve protected species management on County beaches relative to practices currently in place. A Conservation Zone (CZ) has been established to prevent encroachment into dune habitat. The CZ prohibits pedestrian and vehicular activities 15 feet seaward from the toe of the dune. Beach users cannot store personal property on the beach overnight or anytime in the CZ. In the past, beach access was authorized at extended hours. However, May 1 until October 31, beach driving hours are from 8:00 am to 7:30 pm. Vehicles left on the beach after hours are subject to towing and citations. Individuals wishing to drive north of Vilano beach, commercial fishermen, and horseback riders must obtain a permit by attending Protected Species Training.

The 2008 beach season officially starts on March 1 and extends until Labor Day weekend. During this time a minimal fee is required to park and drive on the beach. Fees are posted on page 2 of the Newsletter. There are 8 toll booths manned by toll booth operators 7 days a week throughout the beach season.

To learn more about HCP visit:

www.sjcfi.us/HCP/index.aspx



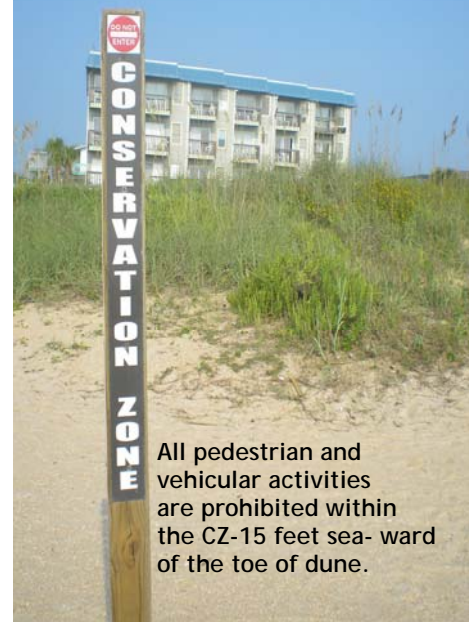
St. Johns County Beach Services is looking for some dedicated volunteers. If you are interested in one of the following programs please contact us:

*Sea Turtle Patrol (if available)
Sea Turtle Festival Committee
Sea Turtle Washback Program
Adopt-A-Beach
Habitat Conservation Office Duties*

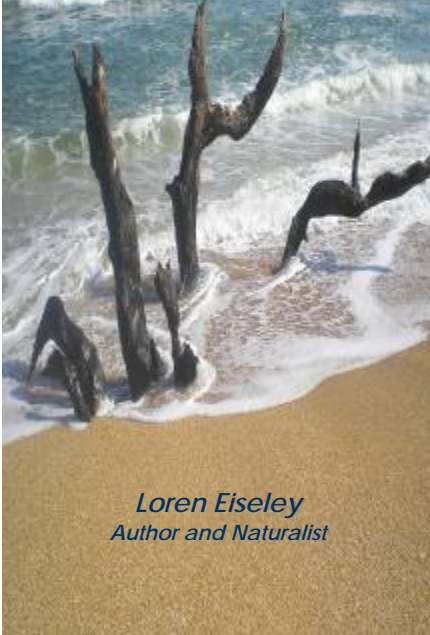
*Tara Dodson
Habitat Conservation Coordinator
904.209.3740*

KNOW THE ZONE

The Conservation Zone (CZ)
St. Johns County Beaches



*"If there is magic on
this planet, it is
contained in the
water."*



*Loren Eiseley
Author and Naturalist*

Beach Combing

Beyond the abundance of wildlife St. Johns County beaches offer some great beaches for beach combing. Most often one encounters the common species of shells where the identification possibilities become endless. The most desired are the conch and whelk shells that wash up on shore after a nor-easter storm. They come in many shapes, sizes, colors, and uniqueness. These shells house a number of species including the striped and giant red hermit crabs. You may also find the ever so curious mermaids purse that children love to hear about. These odd looking things are actually an egg case for the clearnose skate, (*Raja eglanteria*), which are related to sharks. They are plastic like black cases with four tendrils that house the developing embryo. Another cool beach find is the thorny starfish, (*Echinaster spinulosus*). This species

of starfish (pictured below) is not common in our area. We usually spot the lined sea star (*Luidia clathrata*) on our beaches. However, this particular one washed up after the series of nor-easters that hit our coast last fall. They typically live in sandy shallows or seagrass and are commonly found near the swash zone after storms and at low tide. Other beach finds you may come across are angel wings, (*Cyrtopleura costata*), sea cucumbers, and sand dollars. The possibilities are really endless. While beachcombing it is wise to bring along a book or laminated identification guide. A very good guide that offers wonderful information about all of Florida's coastal species is Florida's Living Beaches, A Guide For The Curious Beachcomber, by Blair and Dawn Witherington. You can find these guides at your local book store.

Beach Combing Essentials

- Check the weather and tides before heading to the beach
- Bring along sunscreen, hat and water
- Check your camera for batteries and film, place in weather proof holder
- Carry a trash bag to pick up any small debris you find on the beach
- Have cell phone and emergency numbers accessible in case of emergency
- Bring along a beach guide to identify your finds
- Take only photos, leave only footprints

Thorny starfish (*Echinaster spinulosus*)



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Recreation & Parks
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Featured Spotlight

The Whitney Laboratory is going to host the Florida Master Naturalist Program Coastal Systems Module on March 12th, 15th, 19th, 26th, and April 2nd, 2008. The mission of the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is to promote awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's natural world among Florida's citizens and visitors.

The Coastal Systems Module provides instruction on the general ecology, habitats, vegetation types, wildlife and conservation issues of coastal systems in Florida, coastal uplands, estuarine, and near shore marine environments. The program also addresses society's role in coastal areas, develops naturalist interpretation skills and discusses environmental ethics.

The total training consists of 40 contact hours including 4 instructional videos, 12 presentations and 3 field trips. The only requirements of students are enthusiasm, attendance and completion of group final projects.

Students receive detailed course manuals (1,173 pages), University of Florida certificates, patches, and pins.

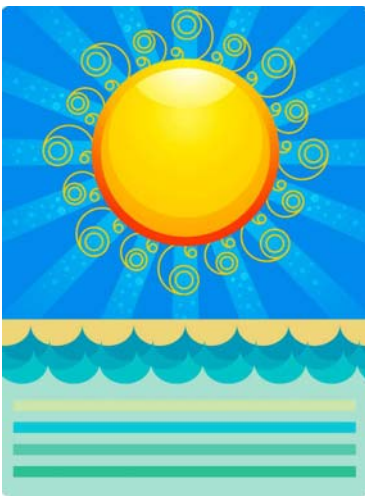
Instructor for the program will be Whitney Laboratory biologist Jose Nunez.
Cost: \$225

Please go to
<http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/>
for course schedules, more information and registration.

Registration closes March 4th, 2008
For more information please contact
Jose Nunez (904) 461-4042 or
jnunez@whitney.ufl.edu



Florida Sea Turtle Grants
Program
Caribbean Conservation
Corporation
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Phone: (352) 373-6441
Fax: (352) 375-2449
Email:
stgp@helpingseaturtles.org



Preseason Pass Fee

(County Pier and Tax
Collectors Office):

- County Resident - \$30.00
- Non-resident - 40.00

Season Pass Fee (Limit 1 per vehicle):

- County Resident - \$40.00
- Non-resident - \$50.00

Daily Fees:

- County Resident - \$6.00
- Non-Resident - \$7.00

For more information about
passes, please call **Beach
Services at (904) 209-0333.**