

Section 11

Beach Lighting Management Plan

Purpose

Reducing the probability of hatchling disorientation events from point-source beachfront lighting along the unincorporated beaches of St. Johns County and the municipal beaches of St. Augustine Beach will reduce one of the principal factors impacting sea turtles in St. Johns County.

Relevant ITP Condition - G.2.k.

- o. **Beach Lighting Management Plan.** “Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this permit, the Permittee shall develop and submit for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review and approval a comprehensive Beach Lighting Management Plan that unifies local and county codes regarding management of beach-front lighting in accordance with actions described in Chapter 7 of the HCP. Beginning May 1 during the first full nesting season following the issuance date of this Permit, the Permittee shall implement such Plan. The Permittee may amend the approved Beach Lighting Management Plan both prior to and after its implementation upon review and approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

HCP Performance During 2008

Implementation: In September 2006 the Beach Lighting Management Plan was submitted and approved through the USFWS. Prior to the start of the 2007 nesting season a Beach Lighting Officer was employed to implement and enforce the Beach Lighting Management Plan (BLMP). An annual letter was sent to all beachfront property owners, managers and representatives informing them of the sea turtle season. In May 2007 the City of St. Augustine Beach officially adopted County Ordinance 99-33 (Appendix I) allowing the Beach Lighting Officer to begin an education effort within the City limits and surveys of the area.

Community Education Effort

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| April | A letter (Appendix J) sent to all beachfront property owners, managers and representatives informing them that Sea Turtle Nesting Season begins on May 1 and extends through October 31. Methods to reduce lighting impacts are included in the letter (Appendix K). |
| April | Florida Power and Light (FPL) contacted regarding street lights that need to be brought into compliance by May 1. |

- April Public Service Announcements sent to Government TV and area Media Outlets regarding Sea Turtle Nesting Season and the Beach Lighting Management Plan.
- May to Beach Lighting Officer conducts nightly surveys of coastal properties.
October

Standards for New Construction

All properties must pass the nighttime lighting inspection prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy (CO). Beach Operations staff checks the Inspection Print Out provided by the Building Department daily for pending Building Inspections. The HCP Coordinator or Beach Lighting Officer contacts the contractor or property owner and schedules an inspection. Nighttime lighting inspections shall occur after sunset and from the surface of the beach. Should it be determined that the property is in compliance a CO is issued from the Building Department. Should it be determined that the property is not in compliance, the inspection is denied and the CO withheld until the property is re-inspected and in full compliance.

Standards for Existing Construction

The Beach Lighting Officer gathers information relative to non-compliant FPL Street Lights during the months of March and April each year. The HCP Coordinator ensures that nighttime lighting inspections begin each May and continue weekly during the sea turtle nesting season to determine compliance with the County Ordinance. Properties not in compliance with the ordinance shall be documented on an “Alert of Violation” (AOV). The AOV is posted at the property with instructions to turn off or disable all non compliant lights and contact Beach Services within 24 hours. Failure to comply within the time specified will result in a “Letter of Non-Compliance.” The Letter is sent to the property owner as Certified Return Receipt and includes a copy of the AOV. Failure to respond within the time specified results in a Written Warning sent to the property owner. Failure to correct the violation by the time specified results in a Uniform Code Citation pursuant to Sec. 162.21 F.S. Additional site inspections shall occur following each correspondence until the property is brought into compliance.

Complaint and Investigation Log

Potential violations received from the public are documented onto a complaint and investigation log and inspected within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint. All findings regarding compliance or non compliance are documented in the log and followed up with the complainant at their request. Any violations noted are addressed in the same manner as previously indicated.

Signage

Sea turtle signage (Appendix L) is posted and maintained at all beachfront parks and public walkovers throughout the County.

Brochure/Pamphlets

Brochures (Appendix E) specific to the HCP are distributed throughout the year. Contractor education packages hand delivered to construction sites throughout the coastal area of St. Johns County.

Internet

Information regarding the HCP, Endangered Species Protection Program, and the BLMP are available on the County Web Page at www.sjclf.us/HCP/index.

Formal Education Programs

During HCP and Protected Species Training the BLMP is briefly presented. The intent of the training is for individuals to leave with the understanding that light pollution can cause severe problems for sea turtle and beach mice activities. Education tables are set up throughout the year at various festivals including the annual sea turtle festival that provides recommendations to beach front property owners on how to limit light pollution on beaches throughout the year and specifically during sea turtle season. The display shows examples of compliant lights and list of modifications for coastal properties.

Assessment: Beachfront properties along County Beaches were evaluated for compliance with lighting regulations contained in County Ordinance 99-33. These regulations mimic those contained in the Florida's Model Lighting Ordinance for Sea Turtle Protection and apply to all County beaches, including within the City of St. Augustine Beach limits.

There are 183 days during sea turtle season, which produced a total of 190 AOVs issued to homeowners along St. Johns County. Refer to Map Figure 5 and 6 to identify locations of lighting violations. When issued an AOV the Beach Lighting Officer hand delivers it to the home in violation. Most of the time the offending property owner or manager will contact the Officer directly to report their property is in compliance. Other phone calls are made to the Officer requesting information regarding the BLMP and recommendations. No official warnings or citations were issued to homeowners. The St. Johns County BLMP has yet to issue a citation since its adoption in 1999.

St. Johns County beaches are broken into 8 zones by the FWC Imperiled Species Management Section for authorized sea turtle patrolling activities. Each permit holder is responsible for varying lengths of linear beach to patrol with different levels of density of homes. Table 9 and Object 10 below demonstrate the Percent Distribution of AOVs for each permit holder.

Object 8.

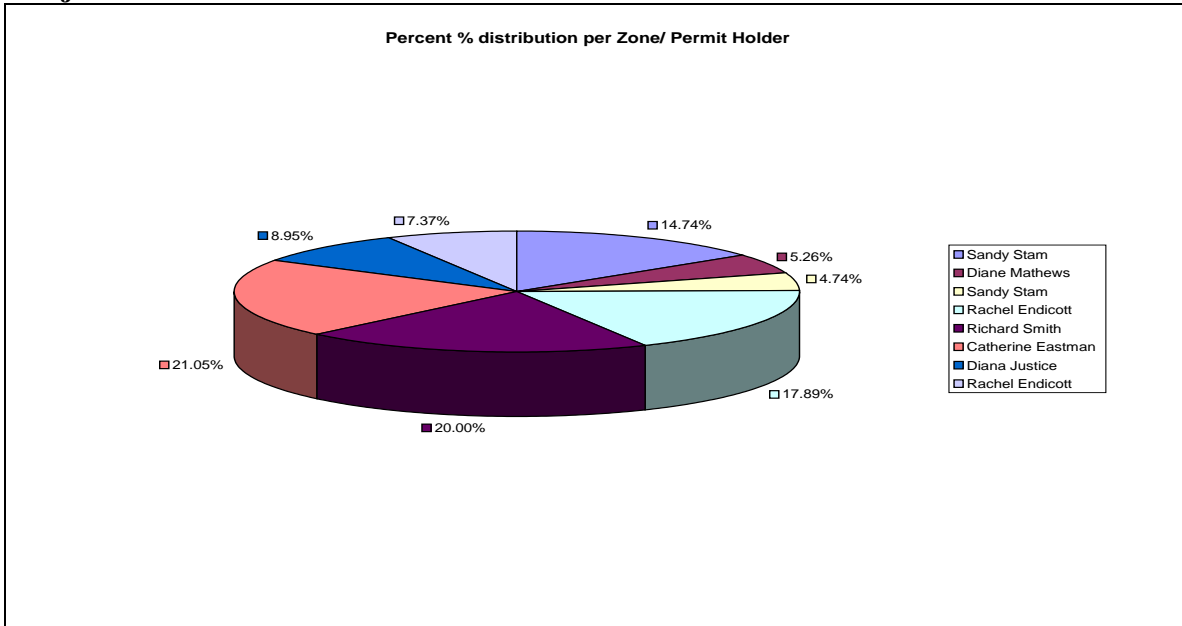


Table 9. 2008 Beach Lighting Zone Distribution

Zone	Beginning	End	Permit Holder	Km	# of Violations	%	Density
1	49 Ponte Vedra Blvd.	Sawgrass Beach club	Sandy Stam	2	28	14.737	14
2	Sawgrass Beach Club	Old Ponte Vedra Condos	Diane Mathews	2	10	5.263	5
3	Old Ponte Vedra Condos	GTMNERR	Sandy Stam	2	9	4.737	4.5
4	2343 South Ponte Vedra Blvd	2683 South Ponte Vedra Blvd	Rachel Endicott	2	34	17.9	17
5	2700 South Pont Vedra Blvd (gate station)	4100 Coastal Hwy (Reef)	Richard Smith	2	38	20.0	19
6	4100 Coastal Hwy (Reef)	2 Viejo Road (porpoise point)	Catherine Eastman	2	40	21.1	20
7	300 A1A Beach blvd	Crescent Beach Ramp	Diana Justice	2	17	8.9	8.5
8	CBR	9443 Old A1A	Rachel Endicott	2	14	7.4	7
Total						190	

Program Improvements: Better documentation of AOVs, complaints, and verbal contacts will be improved.