

Section 14**Emergency and Coastal Construction****Purpose**

Emergency and non-emergency coastal construction can affect sea turtle and Anastasia Island Beach mice survivorship. Coastal construction may decrease sea turtle nesting and/or nesting habitat, place an increased energy burden on nesting female sea turtles or reduce the survivorship of sea turtle eggs and hatchlings. Coastal construction also has the potential to directly affect the dune habitat of AIBM causing a reduction in plants available for foraging, impacting burrows and/or nest chambers or causing a fragmentation of habitat area. Ensuring that coastal construction contractors have an understanding of the HCP and ITP will affectively administer its over arching goals.

Relevant ITP Conditions - G.1.j. & G.1.k

- j. Coastal Construction.** “Between November 1 or the date on which the last sea turtle nest has hatched and April 30 or the date on which the first sea turtle nest is laid, the Permittee may authorize vehicle access, including within the Conservation Zone, for the purpose of non-emergency coastal construction provided any related construction activity, the resulting structure, and any environmental impacts, including potential incidental take of listed species, have been properly authorized by local, State, and/or Federal regulatory agencies. The Permittee shall ensure operators of vehicles accessing the beach for coastal construction complete training specified in Condition 11.G.2.o.”

- k. Emergency Coastal Construction.** “The Permittee may authorize vehicle access, including within the Conservation Zone, for emergency coastal construction projects throughout the year. The Permittee shall ensure operators of vehicles accessing the beach for emergency coastal construction complete training specified in Condition 11.G.2.o.”

HCP Performance During 2008

Implementation: St. Johns County Beach Services works closely with the County Engineering, Planning and Building Departments, as well as Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Bureau Beaches and Coastal Systems, to ensure that projects occurring on the coast comply with the HCP and ITP. When Property Owners and Contractors are in the process of applying for erosion protection for their homes (i.e. seawalls, sandbags, etc.) the above mentioned departments have the opportunity to comment or supply the conditions. These conditions state that contractors and their staff are required to attend HCP and Protected Species Training before conducting work and in order to gain access on County beaches.

Contractors are required to attend HCP and Protected Species Training at the Recreation and Parks office. They are required to provide a copy of their DEP issued permit, address of construction, type of equipment being used and dates of construction activity. They are required to inform the HCP Coordinator of the completion of activity. In addition they are required to remove ruts from beach leaving the beach in the condition in which it was found. Permits issued do not cover multiple construction projects.

Additionally structural coastal construction projects have the potential to affect the dune system. The County Environmental and Building Departments require that these projects seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) seek a permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Bureau Beaches and Coastal Systems to ensure that projects meet state requirements. The County provides an additional layer of review to address AIBM and other species of concern including gopher tortoise and shorebirds.

Assessment: A total of 110 DEP Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) permits (Table 10) were issued for St. Johns County beaches for various coastal construction activities. Only one (1) application for Sandbag Structures was permitted through an emergency submittal. A total of two (2) coastal construction vehicle access permits were issued to coastal construction contractors by St. Johns County Beach Services after completing HCP and Protected Species Training.

Table 10.

FDEP Project Application Summary		
Description	Amount	Emergency Applications
Bulkhead/Seawall	14	0
Revetment/Toe Scour Protection	1	0
Sandbag Structure	8	1
Dune Construction/Reconstruction	4	0
Sand Fencing	7	0
Construction (vehicle access)	1	0
Sand Removal or Relocation	2	0
Walkways, Walkover, Boardwalks	52	0
Vegetation, Native Salt Resistent for Dune Beach Stablization	9	0
Walls Sand Retaining	4	0
Lighting	8	0
Total	110	1
*Non-beach related permits are not included in this total (i.e. Landscaping, excavation, storage facilities, etc.)		

On Friday December 5, FWC was contacted regarding a coastal construction project occurring on Summer Haven beach. This illegal construction project was confirmed by the DEP just south of the Matanzas Inlet on a stretch of beach that is routinely inundated with tidal waters. The Sheriff's department responded by issuing a Ceased and Desist order to the contractor. Vehicles were not observed on the beach at the time in which the Sheriff's Department was on site, as a result no citation was issued. DEP confirmed that the project area extended over three properties. An official warning was issued at a later date by the DEP from Tallahassee.

Program Improvements: The County will continue to communicate with the County Engineering, Planning, Building Departments to obtain information regarding coastal projects.