

Section 5

Implementation Measures

Purpose

For the HCP to achieve its intended goals, St. Johns County must ensure that an effective administrative framework is in place and that adequate and appropriate resources have been allocated to implement HCP programs. Professional leadership and coordination among other County departments is needed for an effective HCP and ITP to take place.

Relevant ITP Conditions - G.1.f, G.2.e. & f., H.2

- 1.f. HCP Management Activities.** “Official vehicle access necessary to monitor and enforce the terms of this Permit and implementation of the conditions of the HCP is not limited, including access within the Conservation Zone.”
 - 2.e. Increased Enforcement Staffing.** “By May 1 of the first full nesting season following the issuance of this Permit, the Permittee shall provide funding for and fill no less than four (4) full time Beach Ranger positions and/or two (2) full-time Deputy Sheriffs, whose responsibilities will lie only in enforcement of beach-related local ordinances and codes and in lifesaving activities. The Permittee shall also provide funding for and fill one full-time (1) Beach Lighting Officer position whose responsibility shall be enforcement of the Beach Lighting Management Plan described in Condition 11.G.2k.”
 - 2.f. HCP Implementation Staff.** “By May 1 of the first full nesting season following the issuance date of this permit, the Permittee shall fund and fill one (1) full-time position dedicated entirely too ensuring effective implementation of the HCP and conditions of this Permit.”
- H.2. Implementation Measures.** The following measures will be employed by the Permittee to ensure that the terms and conditions of this Permit and provisions of the HCP are implemented.
- 1. Staffing.** The Permittee shall maintain staffing as described in Chapter 9 of the HCP to ensure implementation and enforcement of the terms of this Permit and the effective administration of the HCP.
 - 2. Data and Records Management.** The Permittee shall ensure that appropriate staff collect, analyze, maintain, and report data and records as defined and described in Chapter 9 of the HCP.
 - 3. Enforcement and Coordination of Enforcement.** The Permittee, by accepting this Permit agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of the Permit and agrees to sufficiently and adequately enforce and implement such terms and conditions to ensure that the performance standards listed in this Permit are implemented and the biological goals of the HCP are achieved.

HCP Performance During 2008

HCP Management Activities

Implementation: All personnel including Beach Maintenance, HCP Field Assistants and the Beach Lighting Officer who are involved in management of the HCP completed HCP and Protected Species Training and were made aware of the Conservation Zone (CZ) including access as needed.

Assessment: No problems occurred from management personnel regarding the CZ.

Program Improvements: No improvements are scheduled at this time.

Increased Enforcement Staffing

Implementation: The responsibility for enforcement of all beach driving policies and procedures within the unincorporated beaches of St. Johns County belongs to the St. Johns County Sheriff's Department. Coordination of enforcement and education of such policies is done so throughout the year by the Beach/PSA Coordinator and one full time deputy staffed at the Beach Patrol office located in Crescent Beach near the vehicular access ramp. Between March 1 and Labor Day weekend, the County provides four Deputy Sheriffs and up to four Public Service Assistants (PSAs) to physically patrol the 14.7 miles of public driving beaches and enforce beach driving policies. Additional enforcement is provided through the Sheriff's department by deputies seeking "over time" duties. During designated spring break periods and popular holidays such as Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day enforcement staff is increased any where from 4 to 19 deputies to aid in alleviating public safety issues that may arise. After Labor Day weekend through February, enforcement is the responsibility of the Beach/PSA Coordinator and one full time Deputy Sheriff assigned to patrol the beach and corresponding upland zone. The City of St. Augustine Beach Police Department enforces regulations on the beaches of St. Augustine Beach. During the summer season, the City of St. Augustine Beach currently provides on occasion 1 to 2 police officers to enforce beach driving policies on 1.8 miles of the City's drivable beaches.

In April of 2007 Beach Services employed a Beach Lighting Officer to enforce the Beach Lighting Management Plan. Implementation was achieved by nightly patrols of both the City of St. Augustine beach and County beaches. The Beach Lighting Officer was able to assist with lighting inspections and other Habitat Conservation related activities until the fall of 2008.

Assessment: The beaches of St. Johns County are extremely busy and hectic during the official beach season and especially on weekends, holidays and designated spring break periods. During these times additional enforcement of beach-related ordinances is achieved through long and dedicated hours of the above mentioned staff. An estimated 9,834 hours were dedicated to enforcement of the Beach Code and other County Ordinances. A total of 5,674 hours were solely dedicated to beach enforcement while the remaining 4,160 hours are hours spent on beaches, merchant patrol, traffic control and other duties as assigned to the Beach/PSA Coordinator and deputy by the Sheriff's Department. Law enforcement personnel are not scheduled to patrol the beaches beyond the time of gate closures. In addition, there are no deputies specifically

scheduled to cover and enforce county code on the northern beaches of the county where various levels of beach driving occur therefore complaints reported to Beach Services staff regarding CZ infractions, unauthorized beach access, the occasional vehicle left on beach after hours and other HCP related activities are addressed irregularly. The enforcement staff that exists today on County beaches has been responsible for beach policies and procedures as they were prior to the approval of the HCP/ITP. Although some of their duties include HCP enforcement there is no record of increased staffing due to the implementation of the HCP/ITP. Law enforcement personnel have several duties while patrolling the beaches and public safety maintains its priority in these busy times. Nonetheless, enforcement was attained through the issuance of citations as reported by the Beach/PSA Coordinator for the St. Johns County Sheriffs Department and the Chief of Police for the City of St. Augustine Beach.

Table 8. St. Johns County Beach Patrol Statistics

	2007			2008		
	St. Augustine Beach	St. Johns County Sheriff's	Total	St. Augustine Beach Police	St. Johns County Sheriff's Department	Total
Law Enforcement						
Reports	N/A	104	104	100	56	56
Arrests	N/A	143	143	2	98	98
Uniform Traffic Citation	N/A	409	409	42	579	579
County Citations	N/A	850	850	32	839	839
Warnings	N/A	720	720	218	999	999
Parking Tickets	N/A	221	221	3	100	100
Field Interrogations	N/A	22	22	7	15	15
HCP Warnings	N/A	84	84	0	168	168
Hours Worked	N/A	4233	4233	1893.5	4343	4343
PSA						
Reports	N/A	7	7	N/A	3	3
Arrests	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Uniform Traffic Citation	N/A	4	4	N/A	1	1
County Citations	N/A	105	105	N/A	109	109
Warnings	N/A	216	216	N/A	127	127
Parking Tickets	N/A	330	330	N/A	288	288
Field Interrogations	N/A	1	1	N/A	1	1
HCP Warnings	N/A			N/A	67	67
Hours Worked	N/A	1448	1448	N/A	1331	1331

*Beach gate infractions include only those reported by beach patrol deputies. Number does not include reports from the other Sheriffs Departments.

Law enforcement personnel did not attend Protected Species Training prior to the start of the 2008 nesting season. However, the Beach/PSA coordinator did present HCP and ITP conditions during the pre-season ATV training. In addition, deputies from the Sheriff's department received a laminated Beach Code card to be placed in their ticket books to be used as quick reference tool.

The Beach Lighting Officer maintained detailed data records regarding implementation of the Beach Lighting Management Plan and worked closely with Beach Services to maintain compliance.

Program Improvements: St. Johns County recognizes a need to increase enforcement in addition to the provided staff to achieve HCP and ITP compliance. Beach Services and the Environmental Division are currently seeking to obtain a committed funding source for the 2009 beach and nesting season. Increasing enforcement by the addition of 2 full time Deputies or 4 full time HCP enforcement officers (Natural Resource Officers) as required through the ITP and HCP will improve enforcement activities along county and city beaches. St. Johns County recognizes a need to review and improve enforcement to maintain HCP and ITP compliance. Beach Services and the Environmental Division are currently reviewing past enforcement practices to determine the sufficiency of existing funding sources and determine the necessity of revising funding for the 2009 nesting season. Possible revisions to improve enforcement may include the addition of Sheriffs Deputies or HCP enforcement officers (Natural Resource Officers).

Implementation Measures – Staffing

Implementation: The HCP Coordinator worked under the direction of both the Beach Manager of Recreation and Parks Department in Beach Services and the Director of the newly formed Environmental Division in Growth Management Department. The new Environmental Director provides administrative support for implementation of the HCP. The Manager of Beaches and Beach Services provides logistical and financial support. Sea turtle related activities and related conservation programs are managed and/or coordinated by the HCP Coordinator as well administering the ITP. The purpose of the HCP Coordinator is to provide professional leadership to all aspects of sea turtle and AIBM management of County's beaches.

Assessment: In the fall of 2008 there was a reorganization of County employees and departments resulting in the creation of the new Environmental Division in the Growth Management Department where the HCP Coordinator position was moved. The Department of Beach Services works under the Director of the Recreation and Parks. The staff that make up the Recreation and Parks department include the Beach Manager, Beach Lighting Officer, HCP Field Assistants, Beach Maintenance, and Toll Operations which all play an important role in implementation of the HCP. A large part of the daily implementation of the HCP depends on a positive and daily working relationship with the Beach Manager and staff. The Beach Lighting Officer and the HCP field assistants are still supervised under the direction of the HCP Coordinator.

Program Improvements: The HCP must maintain consistency across departments and staff to fully comply and not confuse the goal of the HCP. With the reorganization complete the County will reassess the system currently in place to determine areas to further improve the daily implementation of the HCP.

Implementation Measures – Data and Records Management

Implementation: The HCP Coordinator and Beach Lighting Officer maintained records documenting HCP activities and performance during 2008. This was done through daily log inputs, tracking of nesting data and lighting infractions through GPS coordinates and spreadsheets. Monitoring personnel reported often to the HCP Coordinator via phone and email regarding HCP infractions. The Sheriff's Department and City of St. Augustine Beach Police Department recorded and issued beach patrol statistics regarding HCP violations to the HCP Coordinator.

Assessment: Continual changes in management that provide both logistical and managerial direction in addition to the lack of knowledge regarding the HCP from other departments continues to pose challenges that would otherwise permit valid data and records management.

Program Improvements: Information and data management needs further improvement to properly evaluate daily and future implementation.

Implementation Measures - Enforcement and Coordination of Enforcement

Implementation: The HCP Coordinator works closely with the Sheriff's Department Beach/PSA Coordinator and supporting staff to achieve compliance with the HCP and ITP. Deputies are not assigned to the entire length of county beaches nor do they patrol before 10:00 a.m. or after 7:30 p.m. Therefore, the enforcement of HCP and beach code related infractions are not as comprehensive as desired.

Assessment: The enforcement of the HCP and ITP poses difficulties given the limited resources and knowledge regarding the intent of the HCP. The length of beach, volume of beach patrons and vehicles on the beach has proven to be challenging when attempting to document CZ infractions, unauthorized beach access including north beach access, the occasional vehicle left on beach after hours and other HCP related activities that may assist in making proper management decisions. Increased enforcement and a standard knowledge of the HCP/ITP from other agencies and departments involved with its implementation will further improve the County's implementation.

Program Improvements: The HCP Coordinator will continue to work with the Sheriff's Department and City Police to maintain compliance with the HCP and ITP. In addition, continuing to educate the public will help decrease infractions.