APPENDIX L
ANNUAL LIGHTING LETTER
April 20, 2010

Dear Property Owner, Manager or Representative:

This letter is to remind all beach front property owners and those in close proximity to the beach, that turtle nesting season extends from May 1 through October 31. As you may or may not know all species of marine turtles are Federally Listed as either Threatened or Endangered and are Federally Protected. At the local level, on May 3rd 1999, County Ordinance 99-33 was enacted establishing a Beach Lighting Management Plan, which currently encompasses the entire 41.1 miles of Coastal St. Johns County, for the protection of nesting marine turtles and their hatchlings.

During the months of May through October, from sun down to sun up, no artificial lighting shall illuminate the beach, either through direct or non-direct reflected lighting. Studies have found that artificial lighting can deter nesting turtles completely from coming ashore to lay their eggs. In addition, dark skies are essential for the emerging hatchlings. Sea turtle hatchlings are directed towards the water by the attraction of the natural lit moon. In the presence of brighter artificial light, these turtles can become disoriented and crawl away from the ocean and toward the artificial light. Consequentially, the prolonged, misdirected crawling often can result in death due to dehydration, predation or roadside traffic. A single light can result in the loss of as many as 100 hatchlings.

Sea Turtle populations have suffered significant losses in recent years. Their recovery depends largely upon our efforts in managing the effects of expanding human populations. One of these effects is light pollution which, fortunately, may be among the most easily managed. St. Johns County will engage stricter enforcement of lighting violations for the 2010 season to help minimize the impact of lights. For those who receive repeat Alert of Violations you will now receive an official Written Warning followed by a Lighting Citation. Please note the citation fine is $108 for first offense and $258 for repeat violations.

St. Johns County is in its fourth year of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services 20 year Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Please be mindful of the Conservation Zone (CZ) which prohibits pedestrian and vehicular activities 15' feet from the toe of the dune or permanent line of vegetation. Furthermore, all personal belongings must be removed from the beach when exiting the beach at night; so that the risk of entanglement to nesting sea turtles can be minimized. A list of tips for sharing the beach is included for you to display in an obvious location in your home, condo, or entry way. Many other programs and policies are in place and can be found at www.sjcfl.us/HCP/index.aspx.

We would appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you would like further technical information regarding lighting you can log onto www.sjcfl.us/HCP/Light_Management.aspx or contact our office at 904.209.0323.

Sincerely,

Jessie Miller
Beach Lighting Officer
SJC BEACH SERVICES