

Section 5 Implementation Measures

Purpose

For the HCP to achieve its intended goals of both effective beach management and effective conservation for protected species, 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.

Applicable ITP Conditions - G.1.f, G.2.e., G.2. 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 to 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 2012

HCP Management Activities

Implementation: Annually all personnel, including HCP support staff, Beach Maintenance, Marine Rescue, City of St. Augustine Beach Police Officers, and St. Johns County Sheriff's Deputies who are involved with implementation and coordination of the HCP participate in HCP and Protected Species Training. The workshop provides the framework in which the HCP is to be implemented, management of the beaches as a natural resource for the benefit of all user groups, and the need to demonstrate our efforts in a positive manner. The workshops also covered the need for County staff to participate in implementation by informing beach management of access after hours, entrance into non-driving zones, reporting of protected species daytime events and incidents as well as the benefit of constant communication between departments.

Assessment: Staff demonstrated their willingness to adjust and coordinate HCP and beach related activities through improved communication

Program Improvements: Annual trainings and improved communication to other county departments will continue to include updates as necessary.

Implementation Measures: 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 Office (SJSO). Coordination of enforcement deputies is done so throughout the year by the Beach Law Enforcement Coordinator and one full time year round Deputy who hold the position of Sergeant and Corporal respectively. In early 2010, St. Johns County Beach Services and the Habitat Conservation Section worked with the SJSO to reassign three deputies as Natural Resource Deputies (NRDs). Their sole responsibility is to implement, enforce, and educate individuals on the rules and regulations of the HCP. March 1st through Labor Day weekend full time deputies are augmented by a varied number of trained over time sheriff's deputies and up to two Beach Patrol Public Service Assistants. The standard for the combined full time and overtime deputies ranges from 3-6 deputies depending on the day of the week and crowd conditions due to holidays or spring break periods. Due to crowd conditions the Ponte Vedra area as accessed by Mickler's beach front park remains a focus as it has since 2010. A single full time deputy on weekends and necessary weekdays is assigned. During the week they remain on "routine patrol" by a designated full time deputy.

Additionally, St. Johns County provides funding to the City of St. Augustine Beach Police Department to enforce the County Beach Code Ordinance 2007-19, which was adopted by the City per this ITP. Prior to each season, the City of St. Augustine Beach Police Department identifies two officers to assist with implementation of the HCP and enforcement of the Beach Code. These officers completed HCP training along with the other law enforcement staff as mentioned above.

All law enforcement staff including the Beach Enforcement Coordinator, additional full time beach patrol Deputy, three NRDs, two City of St. Augustine Beach Police Officers, all overtime staff and PSAs are required to complete a standard Law Enforcement daily data sheet (Appendix D) at the end of each shift. This allows HCP implementation staff to summarize verbal warnings, written warnings, citation, HCP and wildlife emergencies, and location of such records. A summary of law enforcement activity is included below in Table 9. This information is used to evaluate when and where more enforcement should be positioned. Traditionally Law Enforcement staff had set schedules of 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. throughout the beach season. However, through this process schedules are now fluctuated to accommodate the needs and demands of activities on the beach. For example, if sea turtle patrol is recording multiple complaints regarding dogs off leashes then law enforcement will alter the schedule to enforce the beach code during the times when the violations are being observed.

In May of 2010, the Environmental Division employed a full time year round Environmental Technician whose duties include enforcement of the Beach Lighting Management Plan year round and as HCP support staff outside of the nesting season. Implementation of the Beach Lighting Management Plan was achieved by nightly patrols of the City of St. Augustine beach, the beaches of Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve and County beaches during nesting season as well as performing lighting inspections year round. A more detailed report of such activity can be found in Section 10 Beach Lighting.

Assessment: County Beach Patrol staff dedicated to the beach include two year round full time deputies, three full time year round Natural Resource Deputies (NRDs), Public Service Assistants (PSAs), and supplemental overtime personnel. Year round staff hours; 9,707.5 hours, supplemental overtime personnel; 4,024 hours, PSAs; 891 hours; combined totaling 14,622.5 hours dedicated to enforcement of the HCP, Beach Code and other County ordinances. These hours are exclusive of annual leave, sick time, special team training, in service training and off season patrol duties.

Law enforcement views the implementation of the rules and regulations as an opportunity to educate the public through verbal and written warnings. Repeat or blatant offenders were issued a citation or provided a date to appear in court. In 2009, prior to the initiation of NRDs and other committed law enforcement personnel 171 HCP violations were recorded from March 1 to October 31. Since then improvements have been made through committed law enforcement staff, year round coverage, daily entries of law enforcement activity, and more formal training of personnel. From January 1st to December 31st Beach Patrol recorded 2,775 verbal warnings, 1,530 written warnings and 561 citations with a grand total of 4,866 recorded violations. These numbers are further explained in Table 9 below.

HCP Field Assistants were solely responsible for gate closures Mondays-Thursdays. This was done by informing beach patrons that beach gates close by 7:30 p.m. each evening through either direct contact with owners of vehicles or by placing flyers on the vehicle. Beach patrons locked on the beach after the required time could contact Law Enforcement to exit. At this point Law Enforcement could decide if a verbal warning, written warning or citation would be issued. Between May 1st and October 31st 2012 HCP Field Assistants locked 75 vehicles on the beach.

All instances were reported to SJSO, and any issued citations are reflected in the law enforcement reports.

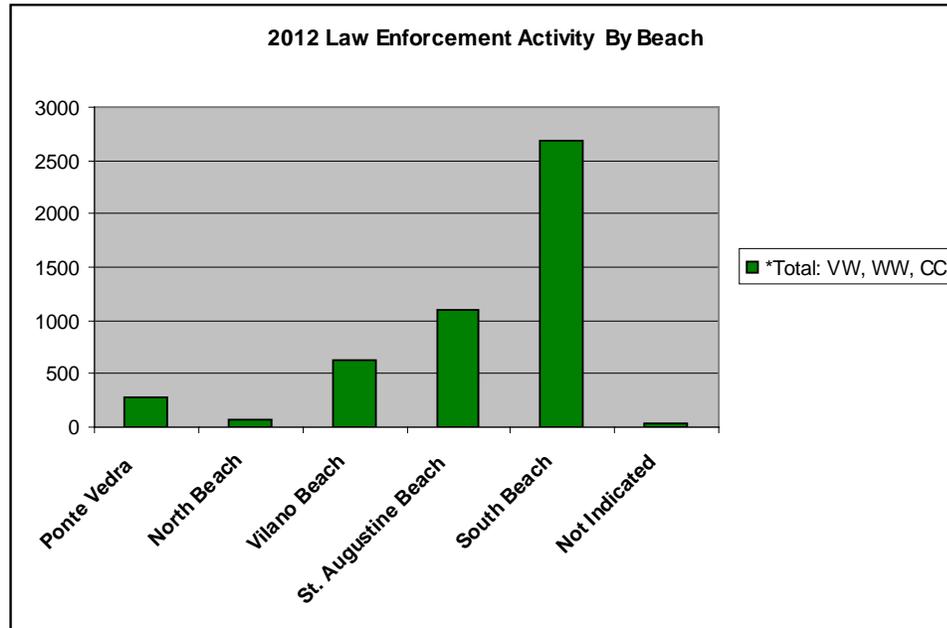
Table 9. St. Johns County Law Enforcement Statistics

HCP Violations			
Violation	VW	WW	CC
Horseback (HB) Riding w/o Permit Sec 3.02 (b)	1	0	1
Removal of Beach Sand/Coquina Sec 3.12	0	0	0
HB Riding South Surfside Sec 3.02 (b)	1	0	0
HB Riding South Beach Date restrictions Sec 3.01 (b)	1	0	0
Beach Special Events w/o Permit Sec. 4.02	2	1	0
Parking/Driving after hours Sec.5.03 (c); 5.05	2	10	24
Commercial Fishermen Sec.5.05	0	0	0
Conservation Zone Encroachment Sec. 7.01(b)	686	89	8
Disturbance/Removal of CZ Vegetation Sec. 7.01 (c)	0	0	0
Driving in restricted area Sec 5.02 (b)	0	0	0
Driving on North Beach with out Permit	1	2	0
Entering North Beach 4x4 permitted area Sec 5.02 (b)	2	0	4
Mickler's HB Riding Date Restrictions 2009-60 Sec1	0	1	0
Section Total	696	103	37
Beach Code Violations			
Violation	VW	WW	CC
Animals Sec.3.02(c)	0	0	0
Leash Law 2001-19 Sec.4.00	458	454	97
Litter Sec.3.09(a)	5	1	1
Tents, Chairs, Catamarans etc. Sec.3.09(b)	0	0	0
Fireworks/Explosives Sec.3.13	6	2	4
Statutes & Other Violations	1610	970	422
Section Total	2079	1427	524
Totals	2775	1530	561

As evidenced in Graph 9 and 10 below, the level of interaction with the public increases as the number of visitors increases throughout the spring and summer months. The months of March and April mark the periods in which spring break for surrounding counties and colleges takes place. Extra law enforcement personnel are brought in from these geographic regions to assist with crowd control and enforcement activity. In addition, throughout July and during the July 4th festivities the number of violations increase - principally the recorded number of fireworks and

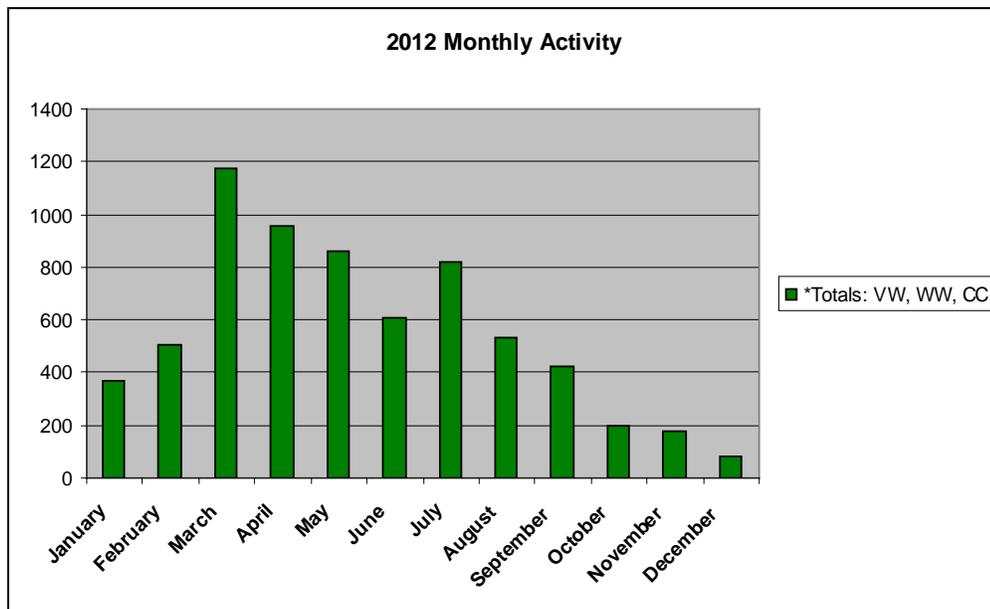
explosives violations. This time of year is also where our beaches see an increase in nesting. To gain a better understanding of sea turtle nesting activity refer to Section 3, Standard Sea Turtle Monitoring Protocol.

Graph 9. Monthly Law Enforcement Activity



*VW = Verbal Warning WW = Written Warning CC = County Citation

Graph 10. Law Enforcement Activity by Beach



*VW = Verbal Warning WW = Written Warning CC = County Citation

Daily recordings of violations are further broken down into geographic regions excluding the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve as this stretch of beach receives law enforcement on an as needed basis. The access at each beach varies from walking to horseback riding to driving access. Below is a break down of those accesses and beaches:

- ◆ **Ponte Vedra:** South from the Duval County line area includes South Ponte Vedra extending south to North Beach, has multiple beach access points with walking paths, walkovers, and horseback riding access at Mickler's Beachfront Park.
- ◆ **North Beach:** Stretch of beach includes multiple beach access points with walking paths, walkovers, horseback riding and North Beach 4x4 vehicle permit access at Surfside Beachfront Park.
- ◆ **Vilano Beach:** Located just south of North Beach, access can be obtained on Vilano Road and Genoa Road also known as Porpoise Point.
- ◆ **St. Augustine Beach:** Beach starts at Pope Road access extending south to Dondanville beach access ramps, multiple public accesses with walkovers and sand paths, beach driving begins at A Street.
- ◆ **South Beach:** Stretch of beach starts at Dondanville extends south to the Fort Matanzas National Monument and picks back up again south of the inlet, includes Summer Haven ending at Flagler County line in the Town of Marineland. Area includes multiple beach front parks, walkovers, beach driving access and horseback riding access at Crescent Beach.

Each beach has its share of use by multiple user groups and numerous recreational options. Therefore the level of use is increased when more options for beach accessibility are available. This is evident in the amount of citations for the geographic regions of the beach.

Program Improvements: St. Johns County recognizes the need to maintain an enforcement presence for the purpose of enforcing the rules and regulations, documenting and analyzing law enforcement activity. St. Johns County will continue to improve on the level of training for Beach Patrol personnel involved in HCP education and enforcement.

Implementation Measures: Staffing

Implementation: Under the supervision of the Environmental Coordinator, the Habitat Conservation Section is located within the framework the Environmental Division of St. Johns County. This Section also includes an Environmental Specialist II, Environmental Technician and two part time seasonal employees that serve as Assistant Volunteer Coordinator and Assistant Beach Lighting Officer. The Environmental Coordinator works under the direction of the Environmental Division Director and in conjunction with the Manager of Beach Services. The Environmental Division and its Director provides administrative and financial support while Beach Services, a division of the County Recreation and Parks Department, and its Manager provides administrative, logistical and financial support. The Environmental Coordinator is responsible for implementation and management of day to day operations of the HCP, overseeing data collection, coordinating County intra-departmental activities related to HCP implementation and acts a liaison between Federal, State and County officials. The Environmental Specialist II is responsible for data management of all sea turtle nesting activities,

HCP permitting (Horseback riding, 4x4 permits, commercial fishing), law enforcement activities, as well as daily support for HCP implementation. The Environmental Technician performs the duties of the Beach Lighting Officer throughout the sea turtle nesting season conducting nighttime inspections on new homes as well as providing daily support for HCP implementation outside of the nesting season. Two new part time seasonal positions, Assistant Beach Lighting Officer and Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, were added this year to supplement the HCP programs. The Assistant Beach Lighting Officer filled the same role as the Beach Lighting Officer but on a part time basis while performing inspections and beach surveys on the evening when the Beach Lighting Officer was off duty. This allowed the County to have seven full nights of surveying coverage. The Assistant Volunteer Coordinator provided support to the part time Beach Services Volunteer Coordinator. Both positions provided direction and support to the Volunteer Washback Program while also acting as Zone Captains as needed to perform the required washback surveys. In addition, Beach Services provides logistical support staff that includes the Beach Manager, Beach Enforcement Specialist, Beach Enforcement Technician, HCP Field Assistants, and Beach Maintenance. The Beach Manager provides management for day to day beach operations including but not limited to toll operations, grading of ramps, beach access points, maintenance, sign placement, and law enforcement activity. Under the direction of both the Environmental Coordinator and the Beach Manager the Beach Enforcement Specialist played an important role in management of HCP implementation with oversight and scheduling of HCP Field Assistants, beach gate closings and rut removal.

Assessment: The purpose of the Environmental Coordinator is to provide professional leadership to all aspects of sea turtle and AIBM management of County beaches. Since the inception of the HCP the amount of support staff has increased substantially. A large part of the daily implementation of the HCP depends on a positive and daily working relationship with staff. Effective communication is critical to the daily implementation. Improved communication has greatly increased the amount and the quality of the data.

Program Improvements: The HCP has reached a level of consistency that has improved the day to day operations. Program improvements include additional training for the implementation of the HCP as well as more precise record keeping.

Implementation Measures: Data and Records Management

Implementation: The Environmental Coordinator, Environmental Specialist II, Environmental Technician, Beach Enforcement Specialist, and Law Enforcement personnel collect data on daily log sheets that document HCP activities thus allowing the County to evaluate its HCP performance. PPHs and their volunteers record nesting data on daily nesting sheets as provided by the County and nesting activity is provided weekly via an online reporting program. Additionally, sea turtle patrol reports Beach Code and HCP violations via phone, text or email exchanges. This information is recorded in a daily log administered by the Environmental Coordinator.

Assessment: Modifications to data management is an ongoing activity. Each nesting season data are collected by multiple staff and volunteers. The Director of the Environmental Division and the Environmental Coordinator write, review and evaluate the information provided in the

Annual Report. As each season passes the continued evaluation and analysis of the data allows for modifications and improvements over each subsequent nesting season.

Program Improvements: The amount of data has increased therefore the management of such data is challenging but is manageable. As management of data continues to improve so will the response to management of beach and HCP related activities.

Implementation Measures: Enforcement and Coordination of Enforcement

Implementation: The Environmental Coordinator works closely with the Beach Manager and the Sheriff's Department Beach Law Enforcement Coordinator and supporting staff to achieve compliance with the HCP and ITP. Deputies were once only assigned to certain areas of the beach with a set schedule of 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. After further evaluation of scheduling and the need for improved geographical coverage further compliance is reached. Additionally supplemental staff such as the Beach Enforcement Specialist and Technician has provided an increase in the education and enforcement capabilities of the HCP and ITP. The Beach Enforcement Specialist and Technician make routine visits to problem areas where law enforcement are not available on a regular basis. If during these visits they could not improve compliance then law enforcement was requested to assist. This allowed Beach Patrol and the NRDs to focus on the beaches where the rate of visitors outnumbered these other beaches. This typically occurred on restricted and non-driving beaches.

Assessment: The enforcement of the HCP and ITP, although challenging due to the length of the beach and the volume of visitors, is increasing due to the increase in staff and better data management. Thus, allowing the Habitat Conservation Section to identify problem areas to target for additional education and enforcement.

Program Improvements: The Environmental Coordinator will continue to work with the Beach Manager and the Sheriff's Office to maintain compliance with the HCP and ITP. The increase in law enforcement presence will continue to improve the amount of information received in relation to the HCP and ITP.