

Section 16 Ramp Grading

Purpose

Sand accumulates on beach access vehicle ramps through a variety of processes including wind, erosion and wave action. Regular ramp maintenance is required to ensure safe and unimpeded vehicular beach access for the public and for emergency and public safety vehicles. Ramp grading has the potential to impact sea turtles nests, Anastasia Island Beach Mouse (AIBM) habitat or interfere with protected species monitoring activities.

Relevant ITP Condition - G.1.i.

- i. **Ramp Grading.** “From May 1 to October 31, each year, the Permittee may authorize access for ramp grading equipment only after completion of daily nesting surveys on beaches where ramps exist and until 8:00 p .m. From November 1 through April 30, each year, the Permittee may authorize access for ramp grading equipment at any time.”

HCP Performance During 2012

Implementation: Beach Services has one employee who conducts ramp grading for eight vehicular access ramps. The staff tasked with ramp grading duties completed HCP training prior to the 2012 nesting season, consisting of instruction on what to do in the event of a daytime sea turtle event as well as instructions on surveying the wrack line for stranded turtles prior to grading activities. Ramp grading is conducted every weekend on six south beach ramps and several times throughout the week in the afternoon hours. The northern beach access ramps located at Vilano Road and Genoa Road are done so very rarely throughout the year as they do not experience quite the erosion issue as the other ramps do. Ramp grading during sea turtle season occurs after 8:00 a.m. and is typically completed by early afternoon thus not posing a threat to unmarked sea turtle nests or interfering with rut removal. In addition, the ramp grader fills in large holes as he continues down the beach during grading activities.

Assessment: No reports regarding negative impacts by the ramp grader were reported during the 2012 nesting season.

Program Improvements: No formal changes to ramp grading are proposed for 2013.