



## 2021 PRE-SESSION OVERVIEW

by Pepper Uchino



As February wrapped, so did the fifth and final committee week of the pre-2021 Session. It was a start to the legislative season like no other. Not only were the economic impacts from COVID on everyone's minds,

but the physical impacts were everywhere too. The House and Senate released their pandemic protocols, which severely limited in-person attendance during committee weeks. In fact, the Senate closed all committee to the general public and all testimony given to the Senate was from the Leon County Civic Center. The Capitol building is currently closed to the general public. The House requires electronic registration to attend committees with that window closing three hours before the start. Legislators did not engage in regular meetings with lobbyists and concerned citizens. As expected, the chambers largely extended these protocols through Session, which will end April 30. No matter what happens, this will be a Session for the history books.

The COVID impacts are undeniable and certainly slowed the committee process this year. With fewer scheduled and conducted meetings during committee weeks, the pace was markedly hindered. However, in the environmental arena, one thing is clear: Climate change and resiliency are taking center stage. The session convenes on March 2.

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## The 2021/22 Appropriations Process

FSBPA's agenda for the 2021 Legislative Session is straightforward but actual implementation is going to be much different than in years past. We will have limited opportunities to interact with staff and legislators as we compete for virtual time like everyone else in what is shaping up to be a very tight budget year. Our governmental strategy will be adaptive and fluid as we navigate the COVID protocols to attain our goals. Fortunately for the statewide beach program, documentary stamp tax revenues are growing (more on this below in the "Budget" update). Our mutual objective and initial starting point is to maintain \$50M for the program in the base budget. If you recall from last year, the great news was that for the first time all \$50M came from a recurring source (LATF), which is used to build the base budget. However, we are taking nothing for granted this year and will continue to push for full funding until the budget is closed out.



## FY 2021/22 Budget Updates

On January 14, Amy Baker, the state's economist, gave a budget update to the (S) Appropriations Committee. The state's near-term budget outlook is grim but improving. You may know that the August Revenue Estimating Conference put the two-year budget shortfall at \$5.4B. After the summer numbers had been crunched, the December revenue estimating conference revised the shortfall to only \$3.3B over the next two years. While that number is still large, it takes the most austere budget cutting measures off the table, which means the base budget will likely be stable and not see major cuts. With tourism being the number one driver of the state's economy, we expected to see negative industry numbers, and that is in fact what has happened. Unfortunately, tourism will also be the last to recover with international travel lagging behind all other tourism categories. The COVID-19 pandemic is the sole reason for this. However, anecdotally from many of our members, when beaches reopened, people flocked to them by the millions.

As you are all keenly aware, our program is now fully funded from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF), a recurring source. One of the lone bright spots in the economy is the real estate market. Low interest rates have fueled booming real estate sales along with a spike in refinancing, which is reflected in growth of documentary stamp tax revenue of 8.4%. Much of this revenue stream is sequestered for specific purposes by Amendment 1 (2014) and cannot be swept into general revenue. Beaches, of course, are one of those enumerated purposes, so this is truly great news for beach funding.

The two Appropriations Chairs (Senate – Kelli Stargel and House Jay Trumbull) have indicated they will be more conservative than the governor's budget (relevant details below). Specifically, Rep. Trumbull stated that his committee will not be looking at non-recurring general revenue to fund recurring issues. Furthermore, he stressed the budget will not be relying on further federal pandemic funding to plug budget holes. Additionally, Sen. Stargel went a step further indicating that all spending, even recurring, will be carefully examined to make sure each dollar is working to the betterment of the people of Florida. Again, our position and message are strong, but we will continue to push for \$50M this year.

## **Governor's Budget**

Speaking of the governor's budget...on January 28, Governor DeSantis released his proposed 2021/22 budget. The \$96.6B budget has several bright spots related to beaches and coasts. The first is the continuation of \$50M in programmatic funding for the statewide beach program. In addition, the governor proposed launching an ambitious "Resilient Florida" program that will pump \$1B over four years into resilience funding. This year's budget calls for \$180M for regional adaptation projects, which takes the lion's share of proposed funding in the first year, and for the continuation of local government vulnerability assessments. Furthermore, the governor's budget continues funding for Florida's water resources, which includes funding directly linked to near-shore water quality projects. Our beach economies and environment will greatly benefit from such funding. Overall, the governor's proposed budget is quite advantageous to beaches.

## **Substantive Legislation**

FSBPA is continually updating its 2021 Tracking Matrix .There are two predominant bill subjects of interest impacting our 2021 governmental agenda. Those bills seeking direct statutory allocations of limited recurring LATF dollars, and new climate change/coastal resiliency initiatives. At this point it seems there is continued reluctance by the chambers to statutorily dedicate additional LATF dollars. At the top of our list of monitoring responsibilities, as always, will be tracking any filed legislation opening Chapter 161, F.S.— amendments to other bills that open Chapter 161 to unfriendly change—and legislation or amendments that substantially impact Chapter 120, F.S., pertaining to agency rule-making.

We look forward to again serving the needs of Florida's beaches this Session.

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## 2021 Tech Conference - Thank You for Participating

We appreciate everyone who participated in the 2021 National Tech Conference and all who helped to make this event possible, especially during this difficult pandemic. The conference was far from ordinary with attendees equally split between on-site and on-line forums, a media team onsite to navigate through the maze of presenters, and an untimely power outage on Anastasia Island that interrupted several discussions (oh my). Thankfully, the hours of expert discussion on beach and coastal management issues, technical presentations, and planning discussions are recorded and available for attendees – an email will be sent to attendees shortly on how to access the recordings. For the virtual attendees who saw blurry slides, the pdf's of the PowerPoint presentations for those speakers who gave permission to post will be available on the website soon, where you can view all of the fine details included on each slide. In case you did not hear the announcement during the Tech conference, the BMA presentation will be recorded in September at the annual policy conference, and that recording will be available to all Tech conference attendees.

Thanks again to the speakers and moderators, especially for your time and willingness to present in this hybrid format. Thank you to the conference sponsors for your extraordinarily generous support. Thank you Cathy Foerster with ATM for volunteering at the conference. Lastly, thank you to the Planning Committee for putting together an outstanding program. Each of you contributed greatly to the overall success of our 34<sup>th</sup> Tech Conference!

We were very fortunate to have the student scholarship program this year. Five bright students presented in Zoom before a panel of judges and attendees about their research and scholarship prizes were announced at the Conference. Congratulations Nick Brown, Florida Atlantic University; Elizabeth Royer, University of South Florida; Jyothirmayi Palaparathi, Florida Atlantic University; Francesca Toledo, University of South Florida; and Michael Priddy, Florida Atlantic University on a job well done. Elizabeth took the top prize this year. Learn a little more about her project on the next page.

### In case you missed it

You can still register for the full 2021 Tech Conference program. Three days of interesting and innovative discussions are available for PDHs. Please reach out to [FSBPA](#) for more information.



## Congratulations to our Student Scholarship Winner, Elizabeth Royer, University of South Florida

Currently, I am a second semester graduate student working in the Coastal Research Laboratory under Dr. Ping Wang at the University of South Florida, pursuing a master's degree in geology. I am from Columbus, Ohio, and graduated from Oberlin College in 2020 with a bachelor's degree, double majoring in geology and environmental studies. My thesis research is focused on the depth of closure and its controlling factors at various Florida beaches.

Depth of closure is defined as the most landward depth seaward of which there is no significant change in bottom elevation and no significant net sediment exchange between the nearshore and the offshore over a certain period of time, such as 5 to 20 years. This is an essential piece of information for coastal engineering, beach and shore protection, sediment management, and many other aspects of coastal studies. Taking advantage of

recent advancements in wave hindcast and bathymetry data collection, this study aims to develop a new and more comprehensive method to identify the depth of closure through field measurements, in order to evaluate and improve existing empirical formulas, and to examine the influences of storm surge, both positive and negative. We are currently in the preliminary phases of this two year study which is funded by the US Coastal Research Program.

I am extremely excited to be a part of a research project that has so many opportunities for application. My goal and focus going into graduate school was to produce a thesis that could be applied and positively impact the coastal community surrounding me. I would love to thank FSBPA and CEC for giving me the opportunity to learn from both my peers and the amazing professionals that I met and immensely respect at this conference. I look forward to attending it in the years to come!

Thank you,  
Elizabeth Royer



### Thank you to our Conference Sponsors



### Thank you to our Conference Exhibitors



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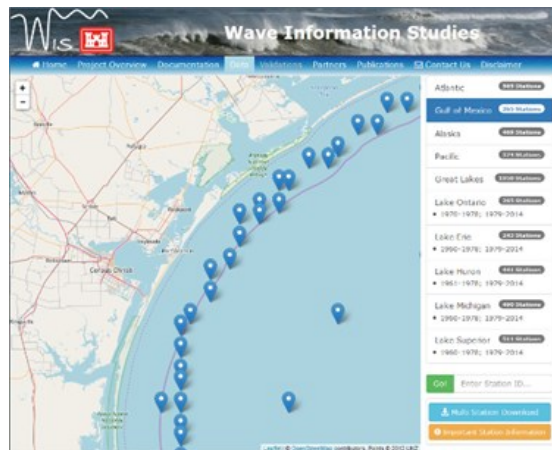


## SandSnap: Engaging Citizen Scientists to Crowdsource Beach Grain Size Data

By: David Young, Brian McFall, Shelley Whitmeyer, Dan Buscombe

### What is SandSnap:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has undertaken a project to build a nationwide database of high-fidelity beach grain size data generated by analyzing sediment imagery obtained from cell-phone equipped citizen scientists via web application. This project, coined “SandSnap,” uses a deep learning neural network model operating in a cloud environment to analyze the sediment imagery and determine the sediment gradation. Coastal science does not currently possess a database of grain size information of comparable scale to other coastal data (e.g., waves, bathymetry, beach survey data), either temporally or spatially.

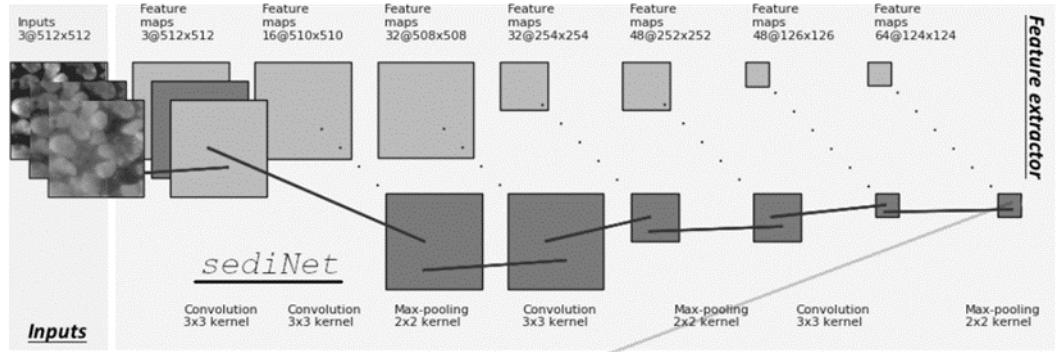


Therefore, this database will fill a critical need in coastal science research. For example, beach sediment size is a critical factor in all nearshore morphology models, including those widely implemented as decision tools across the USACE. However, this parameter is often the least well parameterized, particularly for large geographic scale studies, because it is unfeasible to collect beach grain size information on a large scale with traditional methods (e.g., sample collection and sieve analysis). As a result, the sediment size often has the largest uncertainty of the inputs for sediment transport modeling.

The rise in quality of cell phone cameras over the past decade has accelerated the concept of citizen science, with significant ramifications for a variety of fields. Building a nationwide database of beach sediment size, which seemed unachievable due to the impracticality of obtaining and sieving sediment samples from every U.S. coastline, is tractable with citizen-science. Sediment images from cell-phone equipped citizen-scientists will be aggregated into a single image database for optical granulometry analysis.

## How Does SandSnap Work:

A prospective citizen scientist will snap a cell-phone image of beach sand with a U.S. coin in the frame for scaling. Then the user will upload

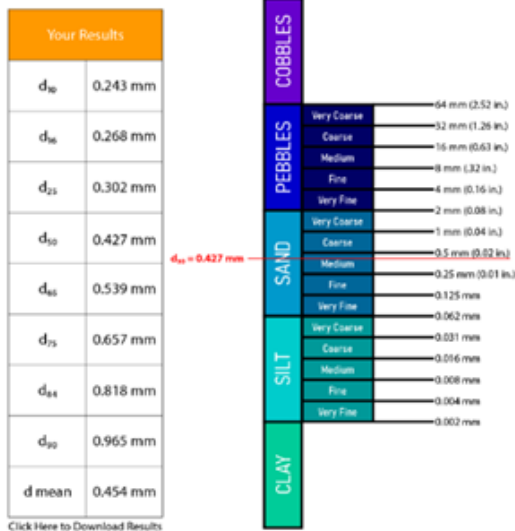


the image to our database and record the sampled location via the cell phone’s GPS. The SandSnap initiative is currently developing an interactive web application that is scheduled for completion in September 2021 – users will be able to use this to upload imagery. These images are processed by an open-source deep learning

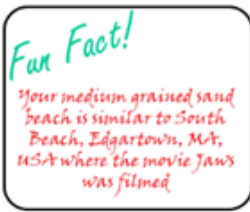
convolutional neural network trained to estimate beach grain size (SediNet). The outputs are stored on a cloud database for easy and open access. The results will also be returned as a report to the originator of the image along with a fun fact about a beach with similar grain size to incentivize further participation. The SediNet model has proven adept at estimating common grain size metrics for the training and testing data currently included (mean  $d_{50}$  error across all sites of 17%), and improved accuracy is expected with additional training data.

## Results

Thank you for helping us build our sediment database!  
Your efforts will help researchers and resource managers make better decisions and provide students with the opportunity to use authentic data in the classroom!



Your Image



Click Here for more info!

## How to Get Involved:

*Send us images next time you go to the beach!*

Once you are at the beach, scrape off the top layer of sand to remove any debris that may impede the view of the camera. Place a U.S. coin down on the sand, then snap a picture with the coin in the frame – with the coin in the frame but the sand in focus, and the camera close-to-parallel with the beach slope. The coin is used to scale the image.

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Share Your Results!

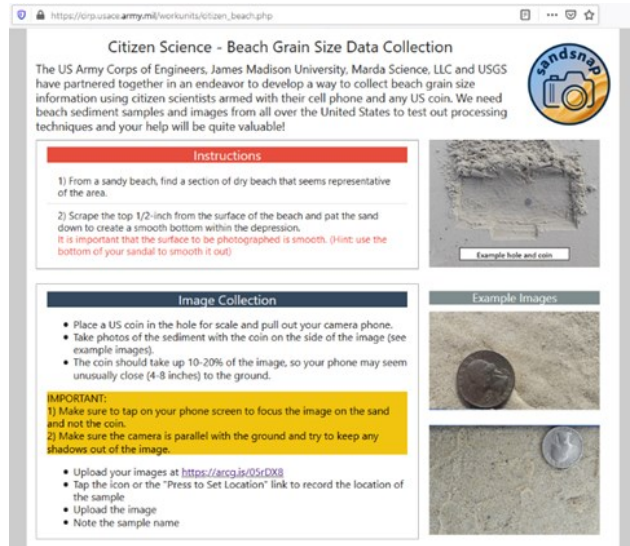


Save Report






You can still upload images while the interactive web application is being developed. The current image upload site is accessible in several ways. There are QR codes on water bottle stickers linked to the site, or you can reach it through the CIRP website (<https://CIRP.usace.army.mil>). In either case you will be directed to a site with instructions on how to take the images. The site directs you to the Survey123 app, where you upload your image and record your position with your phone’s GPS.



**Citizen Science!**

Grain size information is one element that is missing from large-scale beach global databases. We need help from the public to fill this need.

[Click here to find out more and how you can help.](#)



**Send us training data!**

In order to build the strongest, most robust machine learning model possible, training data from many diverse beaches are required. If this is something you would be interested in, please get in touch with us – we can send you a sample collection kit along with a pre-paid shipping label to mail the beach sand sample back to us. To train, the model requires the images of beach sand as well as a physical sample for us to sieve (to determine the actual grain size). Sample collection instructions are on the CIRP website (<https://CIRP.usace.army.mil>).

**Contact:**

We are always on the lookout for more sand samples and images to re-train our model and make it more robust. So, if you are interested and are at the beach one day please snap a few pictures and bag up some sand for us! Don’t hesitate to get in touch with us if you want to hear more – David Young ([david.l.young@usace.army.mil](mailto:david.l.young@usace.army.mil)), Brian McFall ([brian.c.mcfall@usace.army.mil](mailto:brian.c.mcfall@usace.army.mil)).

# USACE Awards Contract for Broward County Shore Protection Project Segment II & Segment III Construction



US Army Corps of Engineers®

The federally authorized Broward County Shore Protection Project (SPP) is comprised of three segments (Figure 1). Segment I stretches from the Palm Beach County line to Hillsboro Inlet, Segment II includes the area between Hillsboro Inlet and Port Everglades, and Segment III extends from Port Everglades to the Dade County line. Segment I has never been federally constructed, while Segment II was initially constructed in 1970 and Segment III was initially constructed in 1976.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District, awarded a contract to Eastman Aggregate Enterprises, LLC, of Lake Worth, Florida, for \$11,013,888.89, for the Broward County Segment II Shore Protection Project.

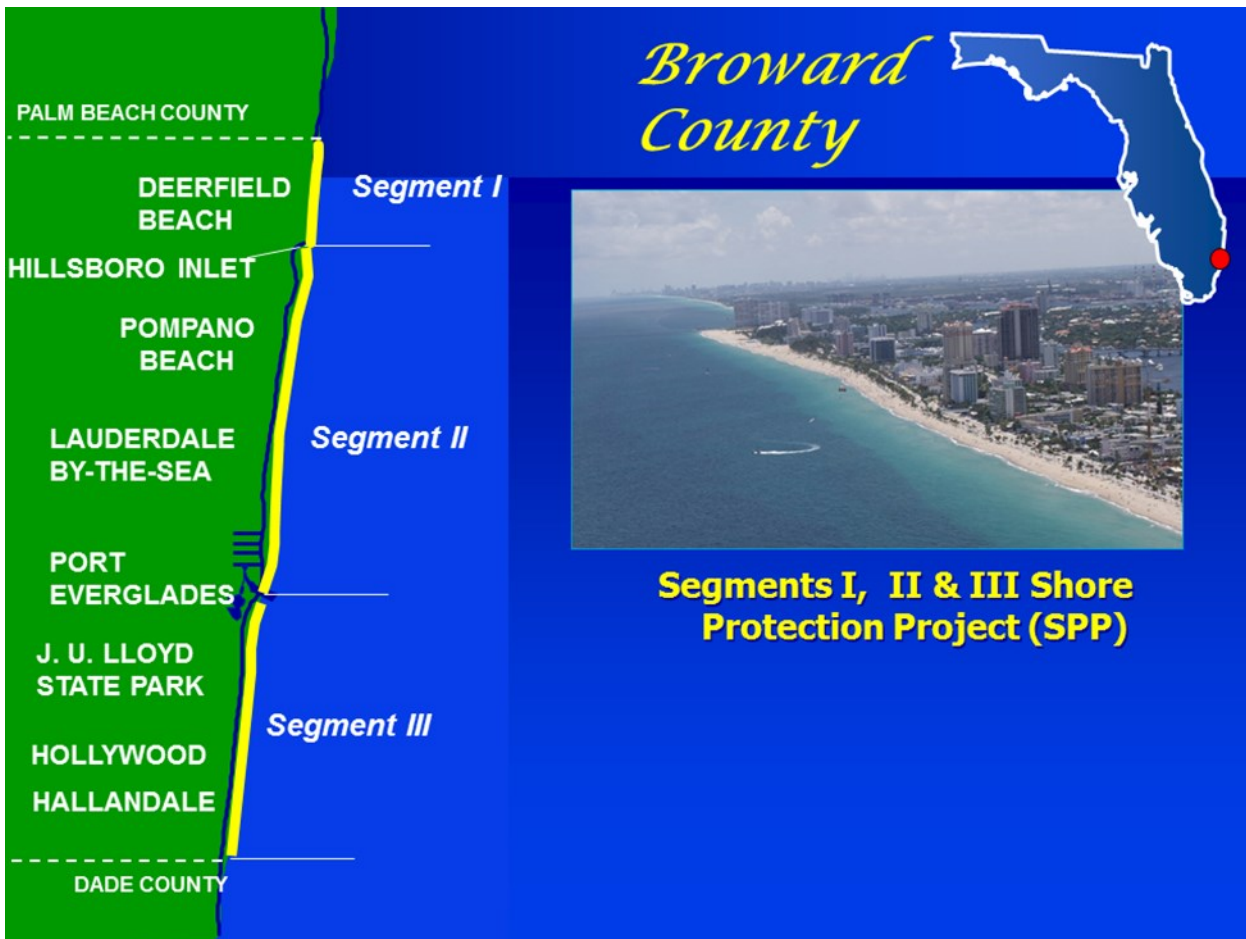


Figure 1: Broward County Shore Protection Project Segments

The contractor will place approximately 390,000 cubic yards of beach-quality sand from an upland mine along 8.9 miles of eroded Atlantic Ocean shoreline in central Broward County, between the Hillsboro Inlet and the Port Everglades Inlet, and includes the municipalities of Pompano Beach, Sea Ranch Lakes, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea and the northern portion of Fort Lauderdale, to the area approximately one half mile south of Sunrise Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale.

USACE, Jacksonville District also awarded a \$37,348,064 construction contract for the Broward County Segment III beach renourishment project to Continental Heavy Civil Corporation. This renourishment includes the placement of approximately 840,000 cubic yards of beach-quality sand from upland sand mine(s) and truck hauled to Dr. Von D. Mitzel-Eula Johnson State Park, Dania Beach, Hollywood and Hallandale beach. Dunes and coastal vegetation will also be constructed within the limits of the Park as a part of this construction contract.

Both beach renourishment projects are 100 percent federally funded via the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-123), which goes toward projects that will reduce risk to communities damaged by storm events.

Updates will be provided on the Jacksonville District Facebook site located here: <https://www.facebook.com/JacksonvilleDistrict>

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## FDEP Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection Updates



### Beach Management Funding Program – Status and Plans for the Long Range Budget Plan

Statutory changes to Chapter 161.161, F.S. updated the reporting required for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Beach Management Funding Assistance Program. Effective for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 legislative session, DEP's statewide, long-range budget plan must include the following two components:

1. A three-year work plan that identifies beach and inlet management projects viable for implementation during the next three fiscal years based on available funds, regulatory considerations and the ability of the project to proceed as scheduled. The projects for each fiscal year must be presented in priority order based on the applicable criteria in sections 161.101 and 161.143, F.S. The federal, state and local cost-share and funding needs for each phase must be identified, as well as the current development status.
2. A long-range plan that identifies beach and inlet management projects for inclusion in the fourth and fifth ensuing fiscal years. The projects may be presented by region and do not need to be presented in priority order. The federal, state and local cost-share and funding needs for each phase must be identified, as well as the current development status and any issues that may prevent the projects to progress into the three-year work plan.

Program staff requested a long-range budget plan from the local sponsors of all statewide beach and inlet management projects, regardless of whether funds were requested for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. By obtaining the current project funding cost-share estimates and project timelines, the department's long-range budget plan can provide a more accurate prediction of individual project development status and statewide program funding needs for the next five fiscal years.

To present the projects in priority order for the second and third years, staff identified the beach and inlet management projects requesting feasibility, design, construction and year-one, post-construction monitoring funds during those year. Staff then used the ranking criteria in sections 161.101 and 161.143, F.S. that could be determined for all projects at this time.

The criteria used for beach project rankings included the return on investment, economic impact, federal involvement (federal authorization, federal cost-share percentage and federal funds available), state involvement (previously funded phases, total amount of previous state funding and previous partial appropriation) and recreational benefits.

The criteria used for inlet project rankings included the volume of sand reaching the inlet, severity of erosion, balancing the sediment budget, Inlet Management Plans (existing, updated and new) and criteria in section

161.101(14), F.S. applicable to inlets. Lastly, beach and inlet management projects requesting years two and more post-construction monitoring funds during the second and third years were listed in alphabetical order for each of the fiscal years.

### **Turbidity Monitoring Improvements**

DEP's Beaches, Inlets and Ports Program has developed a standard fillable turbidity monitoring report form. This idea has been in development for several years; the goal is to provide a standard form to those who conduct turbidity monitoring for coastal construction projects. The form offers consistency to permittees, while giving the department the ability to automatically load data into a database, which allows an easier, expedited review while providing for easier synthesis and data retention. The department has developed a PowerPoint presentation and a guidance document that will accompany the form. Additionally, DEP staff are planning a series of webinars in early 2021 to release this document to the regulated community. The fillable turbidity monitoring report form is available on DEP's website.

### **Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards: Turbidity Criteria**

DEP's Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration is advancing the turbidity criteria for the protection of corals as part of the Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards. The 2021 workshop has not been scheduled yet, but details will be provided at least 30 days before the workshop date. The workshop will be virtual given the Covid-19 emergency. The public will be provided an opportunity to comment and suggest additional changes during both the workshop and a subsequent written comment period of approximately two weeks.

### **Model Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance Updates Adopted**

Updates to Florida's model sea turtle lighting ordinance concluded with the completion of the state's rulemaking process. Revisions to the model ordinance and Rule Chapter 62B-55 Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Model Lighting Ordinance for Marine Turtle Protection, were developed by DEP with assistance from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), University of Florida Law Clinic, sea turtle conservation organizations and local governments. The new rules – effective Dec. 15, 2020 – replace lighting guidelines established in 1993 at the direction of the Florida Legislature. The guidelines were designed to control potentially harmful effects of light pollution on nesting sea turtles and hatchlings from beachfront development. Drafts of the rule and model ordinance are available online.

The newly adopted guidelines reflect advances with sea turtle conservation and lighting technology developed over the last 27 years since the rule was established. New sets of definitions and guidelines for lighting in new coastal construction, guidelines for existing beachfront lighting, and recommended compliance and enforcement strategies for local governments now make up a complete Model Lighting Ordinance. The model is formatted to be easily drafted by local governments into their land development codes or ordinances. Building on Florida's three decades of experience controlling beachfront lighting, the "off-the-shelf" model ordinance is intended to reduce local government staff hours and resource needs for additional extensive research and policy development when updating existing or adopting new sea turtle lighting ordinances. FWC's Certified Wildlife Lighting and Florida Sea Turtle Lighting Guidelines, now

referenced in the rule, will continue to serve as information sources of best available technology and strategies for reducing beachfront light pollution.



*Rule updates reflect innovative lighting technologies such as these fully shielded, low-mounted, amber LED exterior lighting fixtures, which protect sea turtle nesting habitat and provide attractive lighting important for safety.*

### **Welcome New Staff to the Beaches Program**

New Coastal Geologist Sarah Lindeman obtained her bachelor's degree from Florida State University, and was previously employed by the Florida Geological Survey. She will assist in the geotechnical reviews for joint coastal permits and coastal control line permits, and help with the department's post-storm damage assessments.

Coastal Engineering Specialist Ty Amorosano recently completed the University of Southampton's graduate program, Engineering in the Coastal Environment, after obtaining his bachelor's degree from McGill University. Ty will assist in reviews of joint coastal permits and storm response and recovery activities.

Lindsay Brantley joined the Beaches, Inlets and Ports Program in the compliance section. Lindsay graduated with her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and Policy from the University of South Florida. She expects to complete her master's degree in Global Sustainability in May 2021 from the University of South Florida. Lindsay joins the BIP Program from the DEP Southwest Regulatory District.

Patricia (Patty) Wagner, now with the Beaches Funding section, is the new Project Manager for Dixie through Manatee counties and Indian River through Martin counties. She has a degree in Environmental Management and Planning from the University of West Florida and experience in a variety of DEP, water management and transportation positions.

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## Member Spotlight: GLDD Civilian Rescue in Kings Bay, FL

26 February, 2021

Survey Vessel Wolf River Supporting Dodge and Padre Island

The Wolf River went out to the Padre Island to transfer Chief Engineers. On their way back from the dredge, the boat captain, Wayne Marsten noticed what appeared to be some kayaks fishing. When he got closer, he noticed a bunch of items strewn into the ocean and then saw people in the water waving their arms at him. Wayne called the Padre on the radio, telling him to notify the inbound USCG Cutter and tell them that there was a capsized vessel and people in the water near Buoy 18.

Wayne then went out on the back deck of the Wolf River and began steering the boat towards the capsized boat and the deckhand, Randy Culpepper and Padre Chief Engineer, Oscar Palacios, sprang into action by keeping their eyes and fingers pointed at the people in the water and communicating with Wayne to get the Wolf into position. When the Wolf River got close to the capsized boat, they spotted the family of 6 in the water. Using two life rings and the Markus Man Overboard Rescue Net on the Wolf, they were able to bring everyone on board safely. The parents were given sweaters and the kids were brought inside to warm up with a space heater. A couple minutes later, the USCG vessel arrived and the people were transferred from the Wolf River to the USCG Cutter where they were treated.



The family was beginning to feel the effects of hypothermia. Their movement was slowed and their teeth were chattering. Without the sea net it would have been very difficult to get everyone out of the water. Fortunately the children were all wearing their PFD's properly and tragedy was avoided.

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- Write up by SE Cole Thomas after talking to Wayne and Randy

Chief Oscar who has been with GLDD for 16 years was amazed by the whole process. He said the constant safety training really paid off for this situation. *"We knew what to do. We knew what steps to take"*. Oscar said Wayne told him and the deckhand to get on the back deck, and told them to keep their eyes and hands pointed towards the victims so he could safely position the boat, and not lose track of anyone. The kids were screaming for help, so even more training came into play by telling them to calm down, *"We got you. You'll be safe"*. Lifesaving equipment was in place and ready to be used. The life ring and rescue ladder were deployed once in position.

Chief Oscar is very touched by the situation, and the look on the children's faces once they realized they were safe. Apparently the mother was completely exhausted, and ready to give up once the children were on board. Oscar and Randy assured her to give it one more try, and they would get her on deck. *"We saved 6 lives, and we owe it to Great Lakes training"*.

<https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2021/02/27/4-children-2-adults-rescued-after-boat-strikes-object-near-st-marys-jetties/>

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**Shoreline**

A monthly electronic publication of the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association.

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS****FSBPA Conferences**

**September 15-17, 2021**

**FSBPA Annual Conference**

**Opal Grand, Delray Beach, Florida**

**Other Dates of Interest**

**March 2 - April 30, 2021**

**2021 Legislative Session**

**March 23-25, 2021**

**ASBPA 2021 Coastal Summit**

**Online**

**April 6 - 7, 2021 (8:30 am - 4:30 pm CT)**

**Living Shorelines Training for Marine Contractors:**

**How to incorporate new practices into your business**

**<https://www.ppbep.org/livingshorelinecourse>**

**April 21, 2021 (12 noon - 1:30 pm)**

**Geosyntec Webinar: "Legal and Policy Issues Associated with Sea-Level Rise"**

**For more info [Nweeks@geosyntec.com](mailto:Nweeks@geosyntec.com)**

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