

# St. Johns and Flagler Shorebird Partnership Pre-season Meeting Agenda Notes

Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9AM – 12PM  
Alligator Farm, St. Augustine



## 9:00: Introductions – All

### Meeting Attendees:

Chris Farrell (Audubon Florida), Shea Armstrong (FWC, Florida Shorebird Alliance Coordinator), Anna Deyle (FWC), Alex Kropp (FWC), Sue Killeen (FWC and DEP volunteer), Jean Rolke (President of St. Johns Audubon), Greg Lepera (volunteer at Summer Haven), Lt Steve Zukowsky (FWC LE), FWC LE Officers Josh Greenier, Josh Lawrence, Megan Aswall, and Kurt Harris (his first shorebird meeting), Linda Avery (volunteer at Summer Haven), Jade O'Neill (formerly Jade Dupuis, St. Johns County), Tara Dodson (St. Johns County), Kevin Roberts (St Johns County Sheriff's Office Beach Patrol), Roger Barr (St Johns County Sheriff's Office Beach Patrol), Chris Angel (former FWC technician), Renee Market (DEP, Florida Park Service), Jason DePue (DEP, Florida Park Service), Peggy Cook (Audubon, Ft. Matanzas Volunteer), Kurt Foote (NPS, Ft. Matanzas), Karen Matulina (Audubon volunteer), Richard Cullen (St. Johns County Audubon)

Audubon Florida will have an Audubon Anchor Steward for NE Florida this year-20 hour per week position- to either be a steward and go where is stewarding needed on weekends or to recruit and get more stewards out, and help coordinate stewards. That person should be hired and on the ground by April. Position stretches from Georgia border down to St. Johns County.

FWC will be getting a northeast regional shorebird biologist position. This person will go into long term issues like habitat creation and management and policy issues. May also help with monitor training, and with monitoring as needed. Hopefully sometime mid to late summer will have that position on board. This grant is a 4 year grant, very well may get another 4 years after that.

Shea Armstrong- new FWC Florida Shorebird Alliance Coordinator

## 9:10: Area summaries by partners – All (5-10 minutes each)

- Discuss upcoming opportunities/issues/concerns for your area
- Sign up for routes and rooftops

- **GTMNERR: Lia Sansom, Diane Reed, Tara Dodson**

Tara: Sand will not go as far north as the GTMNERR for beach renourishment. Not enough sand to put up there because it's going to come from off shore.

Jade is down for the Mickler's Landing S. to GtMNERR N Boundary Route- Nathan Otter is SJC usually the lead for the Mickler's routes- Jade does the data entry side of things.

Email update from Diane Reed:

The GTM beaches are looking good. The south and middle parking lots are still closed to the public due to storm damage and the only lot open is at North Beach. The beach appears really wide due to the loss of dunes, so it will be an interesting season for us. I don't predict much in the way of changes as the season progresses.

Tara: The beach is wider but it's not dry sand. Nor'easters knocked down the escarpment there recently.

- **Porpoise Point: Tara Dodson, Sue Killeen**

Porpoise Point- lost all of its dunes- high tide going up to houses- one section looks promising- flattened out, has potential. Will post all dry sand to the east towards the jetty. Not a lot of vegetation. Last week of March or first week of April pre-posting. Looks like potential for nesting.

Sue will cover this year. People are always welcome to join her, new volunteers, to get experience with monitoring.

Tara- emotions are high- our beaches were decimated- a lot of people who didn't experience the storm want to go back to life the way it was and that's just not possible- people getting their cars stuck in soft sand at Porpoise Point.

Chris Farrell- everything is different on the beaches- sand is much softer- hasn't been packed yet- cars can get stuck easily.

- **ICW/Julia's Island: Jean Rolke, Alex Kropp, Chris Farrell**

Jean was there in November- there were two islands at high tide. Really flat- didn't look great- already vegetation growing- didn't look high enough for high tides to not wash over.

Jean south end a lot more vegetation-dune where it had been higher- grown up more with vegetation and dunes sloughed away.

Sue- a lot of new sand in the inlet and a lot of mud flats.

\*Jean will try to get back out there by the end of the month-need to figure out soon if we think it looks good for nesting and if we want to set up an MOU with the city again to have them shuttle stewards out there by boat.

We have an FWC oystercatcher crew checking that site again this year.

New full time St. Johns County Sheriff marine unit- on water every weekend. Trying to get 7 days a week covered- can go out and check Julia's Island. \*Any other places it would be beneficial for the marine unit to go out to and check let them know.

- **Anastasia State Park: Jason DePue, Sue Killeen**

South side escarpment knocked down- half knocked back with sea oats and vegetation remaining- doesn't look like a good LETE nesting area- WIPLs will probably continue to use it

Just north of beach access going up a little ways probably most suitable for LETE- but highest use by visitors- could be potential there

From there up to almost northern point- most of small dunes eliminated before large dunes- WIPL habitat reduced- may not have as many WIPLs as previous years- sometimes they nest up on the larger dune so you never know.

North point around the corner- hacked back quite a bit. Smoothed all out now- depending on next few months as the tides change- potential- LETE may try at north end- hasn't been washed over in a little while.

Some heavy equipment up on the beach to clear away decks, cement blocks and boats stuck on the jetty. Creating a lot of disturbance along that north area. Interesting to see if they try to flatten that back out again or let nature take its course.

USDA out there now trying to trap a coyote. Trapped two weeks ago- trapping again next Monday.

\*Need about 40 more FWC Do Not Enter signs, have more DEP signs on order.

Jason and Sue will cover monitoring- great to find some back up folks to go out with them and learn.

Posting probably mid-March to late March once get signs.

- **10 mile stretch between ASP and FMNM: Tara Dodson, Jade Dupuis**

St Johns Managed Beach 1- Jade- 8 street the little dunelets got knocked back by the storm. Lost 30-40 ft of dunes- sand fencing reemerged since 2004.

Some is wider, some is not. Depends on where it came in and where there were washouts. Naturally restoring itself.

- **Fort Matanzas FIND SITE (SJ-1 DMMA): Chris Farrell, Anna Deyle**

Has anyone been out there recently? FWC CWA tech will probably end up covering. FWC Officer Mike Graves- will be going out there in addition to Officer Lawshe.

- **Fort Matanzas NM and CWA: Kurt Foote, Peggy Cook**

May be a good year for the birds after the storm with dunes knocked down and beach flattened out. Kurt still has plenty of signs from previous years. 9am March 23<sup>rd</sup> they will start weekly surveys- that's the first count window.

Will hopefully get board walk and boat ramp fixed.

Peggy and Kurt will do again- with Linda Avery as backup.

44 WIPLs out there on one of the Audubon walks about a month ago.

- **Summer Haven/MSA 233 DMMA: Tara Dodson, Linda Avery, Alex Kropp**

The Summer Haven River Restoration Project has started- dredging the inlet- they have an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for take of LETE. 3 acre onsite back berm mitigation site at Summer

Haven. Just south of old A1A road where it dead ends at the rock wall. MSA 233 former DMMA- about a mile west of Summer Haven- offsite mitigation site. About 50 ft tall. In process of regrading that site so it drains properly (moved tortoises out of the way). 6-7 acres of habitat-vegetation management around outside of the island. Alex and Chris F and others going out there to check their work Tues next week.

April 1<sup>st</sup>- have to have electric fencing, bird broadcasting system, and decoys up. Have to go out twice a week for entire nesting season- have to hire a bird monitor to do that. For this season and for 2 years after. Permit conditions say they need to monitor the birds- Alex would like to get some of our folks out there to check on the monitoring, including partnership volunteers. Linda Avery and Greg Lepera can do that in Greg's double kayak.

May get USDA wildlife services contracted to do avian predator control. Mike Graves- will be going out there in addition to Officer Lawshe- probably FWC tech.

- **Nocatee Empty Lot on Crosswater Parkway: Anna Deyle**

Sue can check during count window- but she heard there is active construction going on there.

- **Flagler County Ground Sites and Routes: Frank Quinn**

Jason: Going to be problematic to survey because can't access the beach with ATVs right now because ramps got obliterated- walked sections could do foot access.

Email update from Frank Quinn:

I will do the surveys at Gamble Rogers and North Peninsular State Parks. Flagler beaches continue to be a non-productive area for the Least Terns. The hurricane did not help matters any. The dunes at Varn Park are being rebuilt. If that will help in the future is to be seen.

- **Flagler and St. Johns Rooftop Sites: Rooftop Monitors**

Flagler rooftops-Jean Rolke can do and find people for-Chris Farrell can send her the rooftops from the FSD. Frank Quinn is also checking with Flagler County Audubon folks to see if any of them can be rooftop monitors.

**St Johns Rooftop Sites:**

Amy Koch- watching site in Ponte Vedra- did last year

Sue- the jail and roof east of outlet mall on inman (Burkhardt)- has a camera might try to use on inman rooftop- pretty good relationship with maintenance person- old Audubon camera- he can monitor- Sue can set up on the roof and change camera cards. He calls Sue the first day he sees the birds.

Last year- tough for rooftop birds- so hot

\*See if can put up a few pallets as shade structures

Last year was the second highest on record- number of sea turtle hatchlings that died in the nest higher than they've ever seen before.

Old Winn Dixie- Anastasia Square (gym now- Betty Griffin)- Chris Angel monitored last year- they patched the roof and were talking about re-roofing it.

Jean and Chris Farrell-American Inn and Scottish Inn same site- roof hasn't been active in many years-Jean talked to owner he wasn't aware of any birds there at any time- didn't offer to go up

on the roof to see if any gravel still up there. Jean suspects no gravel on top of the roof- \*need to send someone up there to check it.

- **Law Enforcement Activities: County Natural Resource Deputies and FWC LE**

Lt Zukowsky- got several questions at the port meeting about shooting avian predators at the Summer Haven mitigation site-will talk to Alex about after the meeting.

St Johns Sheriff's Office any quick updates?- didn't have any. Jean thanked them for all of their great shorebird patrol work.

**10:20: BREAK**

Several people had to leave the meeting during the break- all of the FWC LE officers (Lt Zukowski stayed), St Johns County Sheriff Officers, Tara and Jade.

**10:30: Update on ISMP Approval/Rule Changes/Policies – Anna**

See PDF of the presentation.

**10:50: Update on new CWAs in the Northeast Region – Anna**

See PDF of the presentation.

**11:05: FSD 2015 Annual Report/New Custom Search Function in FSD– Alex**

See PDF of the presentation.

2 take home messages: 1) these reports exist 2) they are on [www.flshorebirdalliance.org](http://www.flshorebirdalliance.org) under the resources tab, then reports. Can see all annual reports from 2011-2015.

WIPLs pretty good coverage on our beaches- but think we are missing some other nesting sites- hoping to cover better with new grant funded shorebird positions.

Pretty good statewide coverage of colonial nesting shorebirds and seabirds.

LETE increased trend in smaller colonies with fewer nests

BLSK decline in smaller colonies, increases in colonies larger in size

30-40% of monitored rooftops statewide are reported active each year.

Alex went over the new custom search function in the FSD.

A new function to pull up data you or others have entered in the FSD. Under the Explore Data tab on the FSD, the Custom Search tab. Can search for data from a specific user or for a specific site for one or more years and can export just the data you want into an Excel file. No longer have to do a raw data download and download all data from a particular year into a giant Excel file and then search it for the data you want.

Can still do raw data download of all data from a given year if you want to, it is under Quick Exports on the FSD.

FSD will work much easier and faster in Google Chrome (much slower in Internet Explorer).

**Pre-season FSD Webinars:**

March 7, 1-2 pm: **FSD Webinar for new surveyors.** Learn the basics of the Breeding Bird Protocol and how to enter surveys in the database.

March 8, 1-2 pm: **FSD Webinar for returning surveyors.** This refresher includes 2017 updates to the database and protocol review.

March 9, 1-2 pm: **FSD Webinar for rooftop monitors.** Learn the basics of monitoring seabirds and shorebirds on rooftops.

All webinars were recorded and are posted under the Resources on the FSD website.

**11:35: Steward Training: How many trainings this year and when?**

1 at the beginning of the season. March 31<sup>st</sup> was our training last year.

Jean not in the country April 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Wk of the 17<sup>th</sup> would be good. So closer to actual stewarding time. 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of April. Will also be good to avoid conflicts with posting 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week in April.

Would be good to invite potential stewards to come along for posting.

**Updates on Summer Haven:**

Filled in new inlet- breach, south of Summer Haven

Don't know how going to park or access the beach at Summer Haven- talk to St. Johns County beach deputies about it.

Corporal Josh Underwood- full time St Johns County marine deputy- can help with Julia's Island and monitoring and if anything happens at FIND DMMA.

A little parking along old A1A at north end of Summer Haven- not much space to park- have to go over steep rocks to get to beach- either that or walk a mile and a half. Still a lot of debris that needs to be cleaned up there.

Best way would be to come from the south by Marineland- a long haul. Don't know what the beach driving is going to be- have to ask Tara Dodson with the County. Something for the County to decide.

\*A question for the county and how they will deal with beach access to the Summer Haven beach.

Officer Mike Graves has an ATV and can access the beach for patrols that way.

River started filling in with sand in August 2008

The dunes will be substantial.

Lt Zukowsky goes to port meetings every month so if he has any info to pass on, he'll pass it on to Alex.

MSA 233 DMMA (the offsite mitigation site)- has to be accessed by boat. Won't have to worry about ghost crab predation or over-wash. Not a great site to leave your boat because can't see the boat.

**11:45: Wrap-up/Action Items – Alex and Anna**