



## **Jekyll Island Environmental Assessment Procedure (EAP):**

**Report summarizing the findings of the EAP Committee considering the redevelopment of the future “Jekyll Island Club Ocean Suites” property, on the site formerly occupied by the JIA Beach Deck facilities and parking area**

**Date of EAP Committee meeting:** 9/1/2015

### **EAP Committee members**

Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation, JIA (chair, present)  
Kimberly Andrews, Research Coordinator, JIA (present)  
Cliff Gawron, Director of Landscape and Planning, JIA (present)  
Terry Norton, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, JIA (present)  
Jim Broadwell, Projects Manager, JIA (present)  
Aaron Carone, Jekyll Island Resident, CBRE Hotels / PKF Consulting (present)  
Alice Keyes, Associate Director, One Hundred Miles (present)  
Jason Lee, Program Manager, Nongame Conservation, DNR/WRD (not present)

### **Others in attendance**

John Marr, General Manager, Georgia Sea Turtle Center / JIA  
Yank Moore, Conservation Coordinator, JIA (note taker)

### **Project under consideration**

Jekyll Landmark Associates L.L.C., the ownership group associated with the Jekyll Island Club Hotel (JICH), will be developing 1.64 acres of land, already classified as developed, to include a 41-unit lodging facility and grounds that will be associated with and managed by the JICH. These site was previously occupied by the JIA “Beach Deck” facility and associated parking.

### **Assessment**

The Committee finds this project, as outlined in the plans submitted to us, to be compatible with the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan contingent upon the requirements detailed on the following pages. Recommendations are also provided that the Committee believes would be beneficial investments for the property and to enhance Jekyll Island’s reputation and attraction as an “eco-friendly” destination. As this project continues through the approval process according to the Jekyll Island Design Guidelines, the EAP Committee may provide further recommendations as additional information becomes available. The Director of Conservation, Ben Carswell, stands ready to consult with the project manager(s) and provide technical guidance in regards to any of the requirements or recommendations outlined below.



## Requirements

### 1. Sustainability certification

- The Jekyll Island Conservation Plan requires that all eligible redevelopment projects achieve a sustainability certification through LEED or an equivalent certification program. For hotels, there are many potential certification programs to choose from. The development group should provide the JIA with the certification program they choose to pursue and an explanation of why this program is the best fit for the property and will contribute to Jekyll Island's overall attraction, value, and image. If no certification is deemed achievable, written justification must be provided to the JIA. Simply stating that certification is not within the project budget will not be considered an acceptable justification. More info on "green hotel" certification is available at the links below:  
<http://www.meetings-conventions.com/News/Features/Making-Sense-of-Green-Hotel-Certifications/>  
[https://www.ecogreenhotel.com/ecogreen-newsletter/EGH\\_Jan/green\\_certifications.html](https://www.ecogreenhotel.com/ecogreen-newsletter/EGH_Jan/green_certifications.html)

### 2. Lighting

- The lighting plans must comply with the [Jekyll Island Beach Lighting Ordinance](#) (in effect May 1 – October 31 each year) and must be reviewed and approved by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, non-game conservation section.
- Construction-related lighting must also comply with this ordinance.
- No lighting above 45 feet will be approved.
- In addition to complying with the specific terms of the ordinance for all individual lighting elements, it is important to remember that the cumulative light produced on the property during sea-turtle nesting season must not illuminate the beach.

### 3. Waste management

- A wildlife-proof waste-management system is an essential measure that has been proven to reduce operational costs on Jekyll Island. Any outdoor trash and recycling containers and dumpsters must prevent access by raccoons, feral cats, or other animals. This measure will keep the property cleaner and safer for guests and staff, and eliminate wasted time/money spent cleaning up trash scattered by animals. JIA and other property managers on the island have been successful using trash and recycling containers with latching doors and heavy lids, however, outdoor trash disposal on the property should be limited to the minimum number of containers necessary.
- Compactors should be used because they are more secure than dumpsters. The Jekyll Island Convention Center, the Jekyll Island Club Hotel, and the Westin Hotel have successfully deterred wildlife from waste disposal areas by using compactors. Vertical



compactors can be accommodated in a smaller space, but the space currently indicated on the design-development drawings for the “dumpster enclosure” may be insufficient. Further input on the location and size of this area will be provided through the design review.

- The opportunity to recycle must be made available to guests and staff.

#### 4. Landscape elements

- With the exception of approved crossovers and paths, the land shoreward of the lease line may not be maintained for active use. If any demolition or construction activities impact this land, it must be restored a natural condition in coordination with the JIA. However, ecologically beneficial native landscaping for passive uses beyond the lease line, such as rain gardens / bioswales or dune-vegetation restoration are encouraged where appropriate provided that all regulatory requirements are met (see “recommendations” section below, item 1, second bullet). As a practical matter, any land between the lease boundary and the bike path on the shore side of the property should be planned to be responsibility of the hotel to maintain, but it must be maintained for only passive use, with only native plant species and varieties to be added.
- Requests to remove non-native plants (encouraged) or prune any native-plant material beyond the lease boundaries must be reviewed by the JIA Director of Landscape and Planning for consideration on a case-by-case basis.
- The integrity of the maritime live-oak hammock that lies between the Ocean Suites parcel and the Westin parcel must not be compromised due to its value for blocking light, providing a natural buffer between the properties, and as habitat for birds and other wildlife. To protect the root zone of this grove, utilities or other ground-disturbing activities must be designed around the feature. Any request to prune the trees growing in this feature or otherwise manage the vegetation growing within it must be reviewed and approved by the JIA Director of Landscape and Planning.
- Any new irrigation wells to be added to this parcel must be approved and permitted. If the well on the adjacent Westin property is to serve this property as well, the total ground water withdrawals must not exceed the allowable amount under the existing permit.

#### 5. On-lease storage for beach-services equipment

- Any storage-space requirements for equipment, supplies, or materials related to the operation of this building must be accounted for on the leased property or on a neighboring property by documented mutual agreement. Specifically, if this facility is to offer beach-chair services, storage space to support that operation must be provided for on leased property.



## 6. Construction-site cleanliness and cleanup

- If exterior insulation and finishing systems (EIFS) are to be installed during any phase of the project, the work must comply with the [Jekyll Island ordinance concerning EIFS](#).
- During construction, any debris that escapes the boundaries of the site (carried on the wind or in stormwater runoff) should be routinely cleaned up and must not remain beyond the completion of construction.
- Any stormwater conveyances leading off site must be left free of any debris or sediment following construction.
- Stormwater management and erosion control BMPs must be in place in accordance with all county and state regulatory requirements throughout the project.

## Recommendations

### 1. Landscape

- The current plantings called for in the landscape plan are excellent and the plan is to be commended. We'd highly recommend addition of some American beauty berry to the north side of the site near the existing grove and to-be-planted live oaks, to enhance the maritime-forest character and attract birds to the site. Also, the native upright variety of yaupon holly is recommended in place of or in addition to the planned dwarf yaupon and Palatka hollies.
- Bioswales/raingarden technology is highly advised to allow for retention of stormwater and to enhance the beauty and natural value of the site. If necessary to incorporate this component, the JIA would be agreeable to such features being located beyond the lease line, between the lease and the bike path, provided that all regulatory requirements (e.g. Shore Protection Act permit) are fully accounted for.

### 2. Stormwater management and irrigation

- The EAP committee encourages that to the greatest extent reasonably possible, storm water runoff should be retained on site through the use of bioswales, raingardens, or other retention/detention methods. These features should be designed to retain an amount equivalent to at least the first inch of rainfall that falls within the leased area during a rain event, allowing at least that much water to infiltrate into the ground through soils and permeable surfaces on site.
- Permeable surfaces are highly encouraged for all hardscape elements
- Rainwater cisterns should be considered to supply irrigation needs in supplement or instead of well water.



- All rainwater gutters from the roof should be routed to either bioswale features or irrigation cisterns, not to the storm drainage system.
- Voluntary compliance with the Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2010, which restricts outdoor watering to hours between 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. is strongly encouraged.

### 3. Alternative energy

- Opportunities for alternative energy use should be seriously considered for this project. Solar energy, including solar-powered water heating, and geothermal climate control are potential technologies that could be compatible with this site. The committee recommends that a consultant specializing in alternative energy be contracted to conduct an energy analysis, prepare recommendations on project scope and technologies, and identify incentives, such as tax rebates, that may provide financial returns. “[Solar Concierge](#)” and “[Hannah Solar](#)” are two companies that offer these services for solar. Hudson Heating and Air has installed geothermal systems in the Golden Isles.



## **Jekyll Island Environmental Assessment Procedure (EAP):**

### **Report summarizing the findings of the EAP Committee considering changes to the site and landscape design for the “Jekyll Island Club Ocean Suites”**

**Date of EAP Committee meeting:** 8/25/2016

#### **EAP Committee members present:**

Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation, JIA  
Cliff Gawron, Director of Landscape and Planning, JIA  
John Marr, General Manager, Georgia Sea Turtle Center / JIA  
Yank Moore, Conservation Coordinator, JIA (note taker)  
Aaron Carone, Jekyll Island Resident, CBRE Hotels / PKF Consulting  
Sheldon Leiker, Permit Coordinator, Georgia DNR, Coastal Resources Division

#### **Project under consideration**

The Jekyll Island Club Hotel (JICH), recently under new majority share ownership by Northview Hotel Group, is in the process of developing 1.64 acres of land, already classified as developed, to include a 41-unit lodging facility and grounds that will be associated with and managed by the JICH. This site was previously occupied by the JIA “Beach Deck” public facility and associated parking. An EAP process was previously carried out for this project, but the site and landscape design now proposed differ substantially from the previously approved plan, thus triggering

#### **Assessment**

The Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the previously reviewed plan and, while the project does remain compatible with the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan, the proposed changes do present some concerns that the committee wants to address. Thus, the support of the EAP Committee is contingent upon the *Requirements* detailed in this report. *Recommendations* are also provided that the Committee believes would be beneficial investments for the property and to enhance Jekyll Island’s reputation and attraction as an “eco-friendly” destination. As this project continues through the approval process according to the Jekyll Island Design Guidelines, the EAP Committee may provide further recommendations as additional information becomes available. The Director of Conservation, Ben Carswell, and other JIA staff stand ready to consult with the project manager(s) and provide technical guidance in regards to any of the requirements or recommendations outlined below. Note that this review does not relieve the development group of any other local, state, or federal regulatory requirements that may or may not be mentioned here.



## ***Requirements***

### 1. Green Space and Landscape Elements

- Increase green space to no less than 35% of the total leased area. The proposed changes decrease total green space on the property from almost 38% of the leased area to a little more than 31% of the leased area. This represents a substantial increase in the overall environmental footprint of the project from what was previously reviewed and approved. A 35% greenspace requirement is consistent with the overall balance across the beach village. Committee members noted several elements that could be redesigned to increase green space. Suggested changes to increase green space include:
  - Eliminate the second fire pit area and associated hardscape that was added to the lawn on the north side of the property. Fire pit use on other properties does not suggest that there would be sufficient demand on this property to justify two fire pits.
  - Remove the hardscape in the southeast corner of the pool area, between the game room and the bike path and replace with attractive, native plantings, perhaps low-growing flowering plants that would attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
  - Increase the width of the muhly grass strip between the bike path and the pool chairs.
- Red maple is not an advisable choice for tree plantings in this location. JIA staff has been unsuccessful in past attempts to establish maples in beachfront locations on Jekyll due to sensitivity to salt spray. They are also very susceptible to deer damage. Dahoon holly and sweetbay magnolia are two alternatives that should be considered – the former being the more salt-tolerant.
- The projecting northeast corner of the lawn area should be redesigned and filled in with dense native plantings, such as muhly grass or beauty berry, rather than turf grass, resulting in a more square-shaped perimeter to the north end of the lawn.
- Select native plant alternatives to turf grass in the bioswale feature that would create an appearance of a more natural landscape feature while still being aesthetically pleasing. This will also reduce the maintenance expense of frequent mowing. Bald cypress could be a possibility to consider in this location.
- All rainwater gutters from rooftops should be routed to either bioswale features or irrigation cisterns (see *recommendations*), not to the storm drainage system.
- Grading and drainage design should take maximum advantage of the bioswale feature before any stormwater is routed off site.
- Any new irrigation wells to be added to this parcel must be approved and permitted. If the well on the adjacent Westin property is to serve this property as well, the total ground water withdrawals must not exceed the allowable amount under the existing permit.



## 2. Lighting

- The lighting plans **must** comply with the [Jekyll Island Beach Lighting Ordinance](#) (in effect May 1 – October 31 each year) and **must** be reviewed and approved by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, non-game conservation section, prior to installation. DNR Wildlife Biologist [Mark Dodd](#), is the point of contact for this review, and the JIA should be copied on all communications. We advise addressing this requirement as soon as possible. This can be a challenging process that necessitates significant cross organization/company communication.
- Elevated exterior light sources can be particularly challenging and require additional design attention, including any rooftop spaces above the outbuildings, balcony lights, and interior lights that may be directly visible from the beach/dunes if guests leave their blinds/doors open.
- Any construction-related lighting must also comply with this ordinance.
- No lighting above 45 feet will be approved.
- In addition to complying with the specific terms of the ordinance for all individual lighting elements, it is important to remember that the cumulative light produced on the property during sea-turtle nesting season must not illuminate the beach.

## 3. Sustainability certification

- The Jekyll Island Conservation Plan requires that all eligible redevelopment projects achieve a sustainability certification through LEED or an equivalent third-party certification program. The development group should inform the JIA of the certification program (and certification level if applicable) that they choose to pursue and an explanation of why this program is the best fit for the property. Note that W.H. Gross Construction Company is a certified EarthCraft Builder. EarthCraft is a Georgia-based organization that is familiar with the unique considerations of building in our region.

## 3. Waste management

- Wildlife-proof waste-management components are an essential measure that has been proven to reduce operational costs on Jekyll Island. Any outdoor trash and recycling containers and compactors must prevent access by raccoons, feral cats, or other animals. This measure will keep the property cleaner and safer for guests and staff, and eliminate wasted time/money spent cleaning up trash scattered by animals. JIA and other property managers on the island have been successful using trash and recycling containers with latching doors and heavy lids, however, outdoor trash disposal on the property should be limited to the minimum number of containers necessary.
- The opportunity to recycle must be made available to guests and staff.



## 6. Construction-site cleanliness and cleanup

- During construction, any debris that escapes the boundaries of the site (carried on the wind or in stormwater runoff) should be routinely cleaned up and must not remain beyond the completion of construction.
- Any stormwater conveyances leading off site must be left free of any debris or sediment following construction.
- Stormwater management and erosion control BMPs must be in place in accordance with all county and state regulatory requirements throughout the project.

## *Recommendations*

### 1. Landscape

- The native upright variety of yaupon holly is recommended in place of or in addition to the planned dwarf yaupon and Palatka hollies.

### 2. Stormwater management and irrigation

- Rainwater cisterns should be considered to supply irrigation needs in supplement or instead of well water.
- Voluntary compliance with the Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2010, which restricts outdoor watering to hours between 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. is strongly encouraged.

### 3. Alternative energy

- Opportunities for alternative energy use should be seriously considered for this project. Solar energy, including solar-powered water heating, and geothermal climate control are potential technologies that could be compatible with this site. The committee recommends that a consultant specializing in alternative energy be contracted to conduct an energy analysis, prepare recommendations on project scope and technologies, and identify incentives, such as tax rebates, that may provide financial returns..