



Jekyll Island Environmental Assessment Procedure (EAP):

Report summarizing the findings of the EAP Committee considering the redevelopment of the future “Cottages at Jekyll Island” property, formerly the Oceanfront Resort

Date of EAP Committee meeting: 10/27/2014

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 (not present)
Alice Keyes, Associate Director, One Hundred Miles (present)
David Smith, Principal, Project Consulting Associates, LLC (present)
Karl Burgess, Program Manager, GADNR, Coastal Resources Div. (not present)

Project under consideration

The beachfront commercial property formerly known as the Oceanfront Resort is to be redeveloped within the boundaries of the existing leased property and, as proposed, will become a residential development to include 123, three-bedroom cottages.

Assessment

The members of the EAP Committee are excited about this project and believe that it offers substantial opportunities to capitalize on an improved environmental portfolio for the property. Investments in low-impact development, energy and water conservation, and environmentally conscientious design can generate a range of benefits including reduced operating costs. 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 following requirements. Recommendations are also provided that the Committee believes would be beneficial investments in the property. 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 EAP requires all eligible redevelopment projects to achieve certification through [LEED](#) or an equivalent certification program. [EarthCraft](#) is a Georgia-based certification program that may be well-suited to this project. If no certification is deemed feasible, written justification must be provided to the JIA.

2. Household-waste management

- A wildlife-proof waste-management system is an essential measure that will reduce operational costs on Jekyll Island. All outdoor trash and recycling containers and dumpsters should 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. Plans for these containers can be provided upon request.
- Compactors are strongly advised because they are more secure than dumpsters. The Jekyll Island Convention Center and the Jekyll Island Club Hotel have successfully deterred wildlife from waste disposal areas by using compactors provided and serviced by Waste Management. Compactors must be equipped with grease traps.
- Recycling disposal/pickup must be made available on site for residents.
- The homeowner's association must inform all residents and renters that feeding pets outdoors or feeding wildlife or feral cats under any circumstances is prohibited.

3. Landscape elements

- Included in the Jekyll Island Design Guidelines (2014 update) is a list of Invasive Plant Species. None of these plants may be included in landscape design plans and, if currently present on the site (e.g. Chinese tallow trees), must be removed. A complete list of all plants proposed to be used must be provided to the JIA during the design review process as per the Design Guidelines. Native plants tolerant of dry, sandy soils, and salty air, such as sweet grass (*muhlenbergia*) are strongly encouraged.
- 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.
- No native plants of any kind may be removed on the land beyond the lease boundaries. Requests to remove non-native plants or trim 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 native cane (*Arundinaria*) break that borders the south end of the property should be retained and incorporated into the landscape design plan to the greatest practical extent.
- A mulch (or other permeable surface) path, providing connectivity along the shore side of the lease will be allowed, but should not exceed 5 feet in width and must not extend beyond the lease boundary at any point.
- A rope-line with signage, dune-fencing, or other approved boundary marker that effectively limits foot-traffic from directly accessing the beach beyond the lease boundary via any route other than approved cross-overs, will be required.
- Beach crossover structures should be raised above grade and constructed of wood or composite lumber. These designs will be required to obtain a shore protection permit and recommended specifications will be provided by DNR Coastal Resources Division regulatory staff. These structures will also be required to be open to the public.

4. Construction-site cleanliness and cleanup

- If any exterior insulation and finishing systems (EIFS) are to be installed during any phase of the project. The work must comply with the new [Jekyll Island ordinance concerning EIFS](#).
- Complete compliance with all state and local erosion and sedimentation laws throughout the project is essential.
- 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.

Recommendations

1. Alternative energy

- Opportunities for alternative energy use should be thoroughly considered for this project. Solar energy and geothermal climate control were identified by the committee as 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 for home owners. “[Solar Concierge](#)” and “[Hannah Solar](#)” are two companies that offer these services for solar.



2. Lighting

- Because of the rock-revetment shoreline armoring adjacent to this property, the beach in its current state is not considered a sea turtle “nesting beach” for purposes of the Jekyll Island Beach Lighting ordinance and therefore compliance with the ordinance is not a requirement at this time. However, sea-turtle friendly lighting design is strongly encouraged because sea turtles use the waters immediately off shore from this site even though they are not currently able to nest on the adjacent beach
- The EAP committee strongly recommends that the development team submit lighting design plans to Mark Dodd, lead sea turtle biologist, with the Georgia Department of Natural resources for his recommendations, and implement these recommendations where possible.
- In general, exterior-lighting should not be notably brighter or more extensive than exterior lighting in the beach-front residential area to the south of the property or at the Villas by the Sea Property to the north.

3. Stormwater management and Bio-retention swales

- The EAP committee applauds the development team’s intentions to plan for a “low impact stormwater infrastructure plan that utilizes surface drainage for aquifer recharge. The committee further recommends that this infrastructure should prioritize on-site retention and incorporate bio-retention (rain garden) technology. This design approach will require less maintenance than turfed retention swales and will attract birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and other desirable wildlife to the property. The water feature identified near the central entrance to the property may be an ideal location to highlight the progressive stormwater management approach with a prominent and centrally located bio-swale feature.
- The EAP committee commends the development team’s plans to use permeable paving for some of the parking spaces and challenges the team to increase use of permeable hardscape materials by at least 10%. Permeable paving materials should be considered for all driveways, parking spaces, patio areas, and pool decks.
- The planned reduction to an 18-foot-wide circulation road throughout much of the design is likewise commendable. However, there are still some areas where the road is up to 24 feet wide. Analyses should be conducted to determine if these wider areas could be narrowed while still accommodating necessary traffic without congestion or compromising safety.

4. Irrigation

- The committee recommends that landscaping choices should encourage reduced irrigation demand. Rainwater cisterns should be considered for irrigation purposes.



Other important notes

Planning for shoreline stabilization and dune enhancement

- The committee echoes the warnings communicated elsewhere by the JIA that the shoreline adjacent to this property is highly erosional and can be expected to continue to be so unless shoreline armoring is improved.
- In the event that shoreline armoring is to be improved, Shore Protection Act permitting and further EAP review by the JIA will be involved. However, the development team should be aware that creation of a naturally vegetated dune, protected from trampling by beach users, would be component of the work that we expect to be very important to the JIA and any future EAP committee that may be called on to review such a project.