



Jekyll Island Environmental Assessment Procedure (EAP):

Initial report summarizing the findings of the EAP Committee considering renovation plans for the hotel property currently known as the Beachview Club Hotel.

Date of EAP Committee meeting: 3/29/2016

EAP Committee members present:

Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation, JIA

Cliff Gawron, Director of Landscape and Planning, JIA

Kimberly Andrews, Research Coordinator, JIA/Georgia Sea Turtle Center

Yank Moore, Conservation Coordinator, JIA

Jessica Brown, Stormwater Specialist, UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant

Project under consideration

The new owners of this property, Georgia Coast Holdings, plan to do a thorough interior and exterior renovation of the structures and landscape elements of the property, beginning with exterior landscaping elements as soon as possible. Given an urgent timeline for commencing this project, EAP Committee Chair Ben Carswell, brought the landscape renovation plans before an EAP committee that had already been assembled to review the adjacent Quality Inn project. This allowed us to provide the following feedback more expeditiously than would otherwise have been possible.

Assessment

The EAP Committee finds this that although this project conceptually poses no inherent conflicts with the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan the plans as reviewed will require significant modification to proceed with the support of this committee.

Conditions of the committee's favorable review follow. *Requirements* are not optional. *Recommendations* are also provided that the Committee believes would be beneficial investments in the property. Note that this review does not absolve or supersede any other regulatory, permitting, or mitigation requirements imposed by the JIA, Glynn County or the State of Georgia. JIA staff stand ready to consult with the project team regarding implementation of any points presented in this report. This committee may be convened again, should the evolution of the project result in additional environmental concerns.



Requirements

1. Landscape Elements

- The lessee of this property is not authorized to maintain active-use (e.g, mowed sod and crushed shell path) or purely ornamental landscaping (e.g. African iris) outside of the property's leased boundary. Landscaping that is determined by the JIA to be in the public benefit, may be approved on public (non-leased) land on a case by case basis accounting for the conservation value of the land, which is highly prioritized in this shoreline location. Examples of landscape elements that could be approved outside the leased boundary may include low-maintenance native grasses and bioswale features as appropriate. If the lessee wants to beautify the landscaping outside the leased boundary, plantings, design, and maintenance similar to that currently, in place along the shoreward boundary of the Holiday Inn lease - highlighted by significant *Muhlenbergia* (Sweet Grass or Muhly Grass) plantings, would likely be amenable. Note that the JIA intends to replace the trees outside the NE corner of the leased parcel where the three stumps remain.
- Within the lease, on the beach side of the property, the plan appears to call for the filling of a depression in the topography. This should not be carried out since the depression enhances natural infiltration of storm-water and therefore reduces runoff. If the depression creates a problem for the maintenance of turf grass, alternative plantings should be chosen for this location that will be compatible with a swale. Again, *Muhlenbergia*, would be appropriate and aesthetically pleasing choice that would be consistent with the landscape experience at the neighboring Holiday Inn property.
- The proposed sword-fern plantings are not approved as this species is among the Invasive Exotic Plants listed in the 2014 Jekyll Island Design Guidelines. The area proposed to be planted with sword fern receives significant stormwater runoff from the parking area. Thus "rain garden" type native plantings may be appropriate. The University of Georgia's app, available at the following link provides useful tools and guidance on rain garden design.

<http://gacoast.uga.edu/outreach/resources-outreach/rain-garden-app/>

- Practices used for stormwater management should be compliant with the Glynn County Water Resources Protection Ordinance and Glynn County NPDES permit, if applicable. Additional policy, criteria, and information, including specifications and standards are provided in the Glynn County *Local Design* Manual, available at

<https://www.glynncounty.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/109>



2. Lighting

- Lighting plans, including for the pool area, **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. The good news is that at last check in 2016 all of the exterior overhead lighting outside the guest room doors was in-compliance. However, the exterior lighting in the pool and jacuzzi area as well as the parking lot lighting is generally out of compliance.

3. Waste management

- Trash and recycling containment must be provided with compactors rather than dumpsters. Between the current Holiday Inn Property, the Beach House restaurant, and the Beachview Club property, there must be trash AND recycling compaction capacity sufficient to service all three properties.
- 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 bins must prevent access by raccoons 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.
- Ample opportunity to recycle must be made available to guests and staff.

6. Construction-site cleanliness and cleanup

- During renovation activities, any debris that escapes the boundaries of the site (carried by 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 renovation. All conveyances must comply with post-construction runoff standards.
- 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 elements

- In general, proposed plantings trend towards exotic rather than native species. Preferred “Native Plant Species with Ornamental Value” are listed in the 2014 Jekyll Island Design Guidelines and should be utilized.

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.