

# AGENCY COMMENTS

## Jekyll Island State Park Authority Strategic Plan FY 2023-2026

Agency Mission: As stewards of Jekyll Island's past, present, and future, we are dedicated to maintaining the delicate balance between nature and humankind.

Agency Vision: Through progressive stewardship and excellent customer service, Jekyll Island will be recognized as a sustainable conservation community that is the choice destination among all who experience its unique environment, service, and amenities.

Agency Core Values: (optional)

### Agency Head Comments on Strategic Plan

The most prominent challenge that the Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) faces during the next four years is capacity management. After more than ten years of successful revitalization efforts, the JIA faces the challenges of maintaining strong visitation while preventing over capacity, promoting a unique visitor experience, and maintaining balance between the natural and developed elements of Jekyll Island.

Visitors are attracted to the unique natural and undeveloped destination that is Jekyll Island. A destination that allows visitors to immerse themselves in nature and truly escape from their busy lives for a day, a week, or longer. A destination that aims to avoid the hustle and bustle of an overly developed beach town. Jekyll is a destination with a laidback character and no traffic lights. The Island must not become a disappointing destination. Even with easy public access, Jekyll Island should not become a remake of Charleston, St. Augustine, Savannah, Tybee Island, Hilton Head, or St. Simons. Instead, it should be inspired by destinations like Cumberland Island or Little St. Simons Island, rich in culture, history, and nature.

The influx of traveling has continued on Jekyll post pandemic through 2023, with current projected traffic counts to reach 1.5 million vehicles. This growing number of visitors has resulted in financial success for Jekyll Island over the past two years. Revenues for FY23 have exceeded budget expectations every month so far with the year-to-date variance being a favorable 18%. However, the rise in traffic numbers further shows the importance of managing capacity and has led the JIA to investigate how to further implement recommendations of the Jekyll Island Carrying Capacity & Infrastructure Assessment. The JIA will evaluate the best ways to implement dynamic pricing, critique island-wide events, and utilize data collection platforms to determine visitor interest. The JIA's goal is to develop an elevated visitor experience, to reduce participant numbers during events, and to provide more immersive encounters with a stronger focus on conservation, preservation, and education.

Agency Head  
Signature



Mark Williams, Executive Director

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Jekyll Island State Park Authority Strategic Plan FY 2023-2026			
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Agency Core Values: (optional)			
External Scan		Internal Scan	
Elastic Factors	Inelastic Factors	Strengths & Weaknesses	Workforce Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Island Capacity Balance &amp; Management</li> <li>- Convincing Georgians to experience Jekyll Island</li> <li>- Local &amp; State funding challenges</li> <li>- Adequate financial resources for needed capital improvements/deferred maintenance</li> <li>- Assuring memorable experiences for guests</li> <li>- Need for greater ADA accessibility throughout the Island at all facilities</li> <li>- Political Forces</li> <li>- Misunderstanding of Jekyll Issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hurricanes &amp; Tropical Storms</li> <li>- Sea Level Rise &amp; Coastal Erosion Controls</li> <li>- Threat of economic downturn:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supply Interruptions</li> <li>- Inflation Prices</li> <li>- Increasing Fuel Prices</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Continued rising costs for construction materials and equipment</li> <li>- Changing Development/Visitation Pressures</li> <li>- Increased competition for tourism dollars</li> <li>- Continued escalation in employee health care costs and retirement benefits</li> <li>- Lack of timely property evaluations completed by Glynn County Assessor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The JIA employee stewardship of Jekyll Island is a strength and transcends all generations, regardless of the type of work being done.</li> <li>- The employees who are successful and stay with the organization all want to be a part of something greater than themselves. We have the opportunity to improve our communication of this in our employer branding.</li> <li>- Stewardship is also prevalent in our JIA-wide culture, in the coming months and years we have the opportunity to examine individual department work cultures and provide guidance and training to ensure those work cultures support the mission of the Jekyll Island Authority.</li> <li>- Institutional knowledge among staff is another strength that we have recognized and continue to work towards a succession of staff and creating systems of knowledge for future employees.</li> <li>- JIA policies are consistently reviewed and updated accordingly when employment landscapes change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing difficulty hiring and retaining part-time employees that primarily work in customer service roles in amenities and gift shops.</li> <li>- The majority of JIA's turnover, 60 – 65%, is generated from part-time employees (non-seasonal).</li> <li>- Overall, employees are satisfied with the work they are performing in support of the stewardship of the island. The majority, 70% of our full-time workforce is currently Generation X and Millennials, it will be increasingly important to examine and adjust department work cultures to attract and retain Generation Z employees.</li> <li>- Recruitment varies depending on the position, JIA experiences the same challenges as other employers in the area, as the number of available workers in the immediate and surrounding areas is decreasing.</li> </ul>

## CRITICAL ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

<b>Jekyll Island State Park Authority Strategic Plan FY 2023-2026</b>		
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#	Critical Issue or Challenge	Description
1	Capacity Management	If capacity management on Jekyll Island is not consistently monitored and addressed through actions such as dynamic pricing, program revisions, and creative management, the guest experience will be negatively impacted and JIA resources could be at risk. To ensure Jekyll Island remains successful financially, we need to ensure visitors have a positive experience that brings them back to the island. We also must ensure that JIA resources, such as staff, and the island's natural resources are not abused and depleted. Jekyll's future needs to be just as much of a priority as its present.
2	Threat of economical downturn	Supply Interruptions and the continued rising costs for construction materials and equipment has delayed several JIA projects including the Public Safety Facility, the Campground expansion project, and the new Jekyll Island airport terminal. These factors result in a strain in Jekyll's resources and a significant delay in providing Jekyll residents and visitors with access to upgraded and desirable facilities.
3	Shortage of Part-Time Labor	In 2014, JIA averaged 148 part-time employees in these positions, in 2023, that number is 104. In addition to fewer available workers seeking part-time work, the majority of JIA's turnover, 60 – 65%, is generated from part-time employees (non-seasonal). JIA relies on part-time labor for the retail and amenity positions on Jekyll. Operating these locations has become increasingly difficult due the shortage of part-time labor. To ensure operational success and a positive guest experience, JIA Human Resources will need to evaluate how to shift some of the historically part-time positions to full-time positions.

**Note**

\* Three rows for Critical Issues are provided, but agencies are not required to utilize all three. Additionally, agencies may insert more rows if they identify more than three critical issues.

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

Jekyll Island State Park Authority Strategic Plan FY 2023-2026							
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Objective		Action Plan					
	#	Action Items/Tasks	Measurable Outcomes	Resources/Responsibilities	Associated Funding	Completion Dates	Progress Updates from Previous Year
1		Continue and Complete Island Revitalization					
	1a	Improve Public Safety on Jekyll Island through the construction of a combined public safety complex to house Jekyll Island Fire/EMS and Georgia State Patrol Post 35. Currently they are located in two separate locations, GSP Post being situated off Island. Colocation would foster improved public safety by reducing response times and availability while encouraging better cooperation by all public safety staff.	Decrease response time by 20% for public safety calls. Improve insurance rates on Jekyll Island by 10% and receive an ISO rating of Class 2.	JIA Deputy Executive Director is overseeing the construction and ensuring the project remains on schedule.	State FY22 Amended Budget approved in April of CY22 and State FY23 Amended Budget approved in April of CY23	August CY2024	Construction is underway
	1b	Design and build a new 2,400 SF airport terminal leveraging GDOT intermodal matching funds. Use JIA funding to perform site work allowing a public/private partnership to fund and build hangars. This would allow Jekyll Island Airport to once again reach the required 10 based aircraft to receive FAA annual funds of \$150,000.	Improve accessibility of airport terminal. Increase based aircraft from six to 10, allowing for the JIA to receive \$150,000 FAA funding per year.	JIA Deputy Executive Director is overseeing project. He continues to coordinate with the terminal design firm and GDOT to ensure funding remains allocated to this project.	JIA funding of 250,000 for site work at hangar location and GDOT matching funds of \$690,000 for construction of new terminal building.	Fiscal Year 2025	An ADA accessible airport terminal was designed and put out for bid in April 2023. However, due to higher than estimated costs submitted by bidders, the design will be modified and re-bid in CY2024 and built in FY25.
	1c	Oversee development of Former Buccaneer Site, which is the final original revitalization parcel. Due to development pressures resulting from successful revitalization, all proposals are required to be reviewed and fully vetted. Residential design was recommended through a JIA required Market Analysis/Strategic Development Study. Residential design should be better able to cater to site environmental concerns and restraints. Residential design should impact fewer trees and contribute to less overall human activity at the site as compared to a lodging facility which would be more heavily occupied and higher-density.	Limited number of new single family housing units. Completed original revitalization plans with low impact on parcel. Additional rental and service revenue for JIA operational budget.	LNWA Developers, LLC are responsible for developing the parcel. JIA Deputy Executive Director and the Design Review Committee will continue reviewing design development plans for the project.	Private Sector Development responsible for all site infrastructure improvements and housing units. Final costs yet to be determined.	Timeline is based on developer's schedule.	Concept design has been submitted and approved by DRG & JIA Board. Next step will be review of the Schematic Design.

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS**

2	Balance and Manage Island Resources	2a	<p>Continuing to implement the 2022 Golf Course Improvement Plan will be vital to sustainably operating the Jekyll Island Golf Course, ensuring positive experiences for guests. The overall condition of the golf courses on Jekyll Island has been declining for several years. To fully examine all issues and to recommend options, the JIA has retained various consultants over the past five years including the National Golf Foundation Consulting, Inc. Age, deferred maintenance, decline in golf rounds played, and overall number of holes are reasons major corrective actions are needed. The first phase of improvements will include irrigation enhancement and tree removal on the Pine Lakes Course. The next improvement phase will include the elimination of nine holes of golf from the Oleander Course. This acreage will become a natural/conservation area. Additional improvements and/ or redesigns will be made as a result of continued assessments of rounds played and financial conditions.</p>	<p>Improved course playing conditions. Additional revenues generated from Jekyll Island Golf Courses. Attraction of additional players/increased rounds of golf. Creation conservation corridor for wildlife and additional conservation areas for public enjoyment.</p>	<p>JIA Administration, Conservation Department, and Golf Course senior staff will continue to work together to ensure each recommended action item is completed as scheduled.</p>	<p>FY 23 &amp; FY24 Capital Budget along with Golf fees &amp; Tourism Improvement Fund. A bond is also being considered for funding. If a golf lodge, assisted living facility, and retail components are built, additional monies will be generated for golf course improvements.</p>	<p>Improvements to continue over the next four years. On going through FY23 to FY28.</p>	<p>Improvements to Pine Lakes Golf Course are underway. RFPs for Great Dunes/Oleander course consolidation design and an Ecological Consultant were awarded in June 2023.</p>
		2b	<p>Preserve the history of Jekyll Island through on-going maintenance and facility improvements to historic buildings, continue preservation work on the Chicota Ruins, implement the second phase of the Hollybourne Cottage project, continuation of Oral Histories Project, and further investigate options for collections/archives storage facility.</p>	<p>Understanding and appreciation of Jekyll's unique history will be nurtured and preserved.</p>	<p>JIA Historic Resources Department</p>	<p>JIA FY23 &amp; Capital Budget</p>	<p>On-going through CY23</p>	<p>Work is ongoing in various historic structures. Specifically in the previous year 3 structures received exterior painting, 1 received an interior refurbishment and deep cleaning was completed in 2 structures per schedule. The Chicota Ruins project is complete, the first phase of the Oral Histories Project is completed with the recollections of almost 30 individuals recorded. The second phase of the Hollybourne Cottage Project has been initiated and the firm H&amp;W Design is contracted to design the exhibits for this building.</p>

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

		<p>Continuing implementation of Capacity Management strategies which are guided by the Jekyll Island Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Assessment, we will develop and implement various principles and strategies that enhance the standard for an elevated visitor experience. We will assess the future of large island-wide events that are no longer aligning with the Authority's goals and maintain brand awareness without exceeding capacity thresholds. We will utilize analytics platforms to further understand visitor interest. Platforms will focus on visitor movement and behavior to better evaluate more appropriate marketing promotions that shift focus to reduced capacity days and to amenities and experiences with less visitor traffic during peak seasons. We will also consistently conduct internal analyses of the habits of visitors to determine if dynamic pricing is needed to influence behaviors and manage capacity. Staff will also plan for a Capacity Management Study update during FY2025</p>	<p>Principles will guide the development of a higher quality visitor experience, to include reduced participant numbers, more immersive experiences and a stronger focus on conservation, preservation, and education goals for future events on Jekyll Island. Availability of enhanced insights about visitor behavior and sentiment and evaluations of high-traffic days to determine how capacity may impact parking fees, event participation, fees for the future, and consideration of additional visitation limits.</p>	<p>JIA Administrative and Marketing Departments in with input from all JIA Departments</p>	<p>Most of these evaluations will be completed internally with JIA staff. However, funds are included in FY23 for data analytics platforms.</p>	<p>On-going FY24 &amp; Beyond</p>	<p>Dynamic Pricing was implemented during the 2023 Holly Jolly Jekyll Season, and a critique has already taken place to address capacity concerns for the season. The format of Shrimp &amp; Grits will be revised to address capacity and avoid overexerting Island resources. An assessment was completed to determine if the 4th of July fireworks should continue on Jekyll.</p>
3	Sustain and Highlight Natural Resources	<p>3a</p> <p>Continue reforestation and enhance the visual landscape throughout Jekyll Island through the development of landscape planting plans for Riverview Park, the new Campground entrance, the new Public Safety Facility, and Tortuga Jack's parking lot. Additionally, we will focus on reforestation on Captain Wyllly Lane as well as other miscellaneous locations across the Island.</p>	<p>Enhance natural resources for Jekyll Island Wildlife and elevate visual experience for guests.</p>	<p>JIA Landscaping Department</p>	<p>JIA FY24 Budget, Tree Fund, and Jekyll Island Foundation</p>	<p>Throughout FY24</p>	<p>Both Riverview Park and Tortuga Jacks Parking lot landscaping projects are complete. Reforestation on Captain Wyllly is complete and FY 2024 Reforestation efforts will focus on replacing numerous damaged live oaks near the Marina Parking Lot.</p>
		<p>3b</p> <p>Plan for enhanced shoreline resilience along Jekyll Island's northern beachfront. In collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), we will examine the effectiveness of the sand motor nourishment technique to deliver sediment to an erosive and degraded area of beach on Jekyll Island, adjoining the other end of the revetment that was recently repaired. JIA staff will actively engage in collaboration with the USACE and Georgia DNR Coastal Resources Division to build stakeholder support and Resource Agency support for implementable solutions.</p>	<p>When planning is complete, federal and state partners will have the benefit of a fully vetted design for a sand motor project to enhance shoreline resilience.</p>	<p>JIA Conservation Department</p>	<p>Federal, US Army Corps of Engineers, \$225,000</p>	<p>Throughout FY24</p>	<p>Collaboration is ongoing. Data analytics and model creation is underway. Partner agency collaboration discussions have been productive and are continuing.</p>
		<p>3c</p> <p>In collaboration with Georgia Audubon, we will restore the imperiled maritime grassland plant community across 3.5 acres of Conservation Priority Area bordering N. Beachview Road and Ocean Beach Park on Jekyll Island.</p>	<p>3.5 acres of iconic coastal back dune habitat will be restored with native grasses. This will allow the general public to be immersed in a rare ecosystem.</p>	<p>JIA Conservation Department</p>	<p>Georgia Audubon administering grant National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), \$50,000</p>	<p><b>FY23 3rd Quarter - Complete</b></p>	<p>This portion of the project has been completed and expanded beyond the original footprint. 7.28 acres of muhly grass have been planted. An additional 5.17 acres is to be planted in the beach prairie area</p>

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

		<p><b>3d</b> To aide in advancing the knowledge to improve and expand wildlife veterinary medicine regionally and globally, enhance conservation education, rehabilitation, and research programs, and assess all education initiatives, the JIA and GSTC will strengthen and expand the existing vet extern program to collaborate with accredited veterinary university, develop a wildlife veterinary technician program, advance the clinical medicine and quality care knowledge for wildlife rehabilitation in the medical community, further develop partnership with the Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Network with programing and outreach initiatives, and begin the capital campaign for the GSTC expansion.</p>	<p>Increase number of trained and mentored veterinary students as well as published advancements in the wildlife medical field and increase education and awareness of wildlife conservation and rehabilitation through Jekyll Island visitors and local youth.</p>	<p>Georgia Sea Turtle Center Staff in collaboration with the Jekyll Island Foundation</p>	<p>JIA FY24 Budget</p>	<p>Throughout FY24 and Capital Campaign will extend through CY26</p>	<p>Ongoing collaborations with Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Network(SERSTM): Established specimen loan program with SERSTM network, Development of outreach for the state of GA partnering with SERSTM. Several key staff attended 2023 SERSTM conference and presenting on the GSTC and our distance learning program. A new vet has been hired, and the GSTC Expansion plans have been developed to the 40% design stage.</p>
		<p><b>3e</b> Promote and prioritize native plant species on Jekyll Island. The JIA Conservation Department will lead the efforts to eradicate priority invasive species from priority habits and the Jekyll Island Causeway as well promoting the use of more native plants in JIA and lessee projects. This will include expanding the propagation of native specials by collecting local ecotypes from Jekyll and surrounding areas.</p>	<p>Improve the ecological health of Jekyll Island</p>	<p>JIA Conservation, Landscaping, &amp; Park Ranger staff.</p>	<p>JIA Budget</p>	<p>Throughout FY24 and onward.</p>	
<b>4</b>	Enhance Visitor Experience	<p><b>4a</b> Implement a more efficient system for sales and online booking web reservations.</p>	<p>Improve guest experience with online booking and easier use of in-store POS systems for employees.</p>	<p>JIA Accounting and Marketing Departments</p>	<p>JIA Capital Budget.</p>	<p>Implementation anticipated for February 2024</p>	<p>RFP was awarded to Vivaticket at November 2022 Board Meeting. Set up meetings and training have begun with Vivaticket, and the system is set to go live in February 2024</p>
		<p><b>4b</b> To continue bike path revitalization, JIA will continue making repairs to existing bike paths on Jekyll and continue working with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) consultants, participating in monthly meetings, as we work towards completion of the Jekyll Island Causeway Bike Path.</p>	<p>Improve transportation and recreational opportunities as well provide a safer community connectivity avenue for</p>	<p>JIA Administrative and Operations Department</p>	<p>\$386,000 included in JIA's FY23 budget. Additional funds supplied through GDOT grant.</p>	<p>FY24 through FY28</p>	<p>The majority of bike path renovation is complete. The causeway bike path is all that remains. The path from Jekyll to the Guest Information Center is under construction, and Task Order 2 for Preliminary Engineering with GDOT was approved at the January 2023 Board Meeting. This agreement will eventually lead to completion of the causeway bike path from Guest Information to HWY 17.</p>

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS**

		4c	JIA staff will collaborate between departments to develop high quality, high interest educational and entertainment programs that appeal to a wide variety of interests with the purpose of attracting and educating visitors.	Improve guest satisfaction and increase revenue by 10%.	JIA Historic Resource and Marketing Departments	JIA Budget	Throughout FY24 and onward.	Programming in Historic Resources has been both increased and improved to provide richer experiences for guests to include programs on Jekyll's music history, colonial era history and Club era history. Revenue for FY23 was the highest in history for guest experience activities compared to previous FYs.
		4d	The JIA Marketing team will take the lead on implementing digital kiosks in the Jekyll Island Beach Village, creating a biking-specific map for navigating around the island, and implementing cohesive wayfinding to replace inconsistent and unnecessary directional signage.	Improve the guest experience and increase guest knowledge of all Jekyll Island amenities and activities.	JIA Marketing Department	JIA Marketing Budget	FY24 through FY26	
5	Continue and Improve Sustainable Operation Practices	5a	To attract and retain qualified employees and improve employee safety, JIA will continue to monitor the employment market and employee compensation. We will implement more training to enhance employees' skills, with a focus on customer service. We will improve employees' knowledge of work environment and provide safety trainings, including active shooter and hurricane preparedness training.	Reduce employee turnover by 5%, reduce workers' compensation claims to or below DOAS assigned claim goal, and improve safety culture throughout each department.	JIA Human Resources and Public Safety Departments	JIA Budget (Personnel)	Throughout FY24 and onward.	Human Resources staff is constantly monitoring the employment market. Implementation and integration of Learning Management System is completed, onboarding employees with FY23 SHP training. Monthly safety trainings are on-going, and all employees participated in an active-shooter training course.
		5b	Complete audit of hotel partners and other lessees, evaluating capital reserves and verification of expenditures for our hotel partners to ensure JIA lessees are adequately planning for the sustainability and longevity of their properties	Hotels on Jekyll Island will be fiscally sustainable, with reserves that are cultivated, maintained, and used appropriately.	JIA Administrative Offices and Legal Counsel R.M. Woodworth & Associates	JIA Budget	On-going through December 2023	R.M. Woodworth & Associates have begun assessing hotel partners' reserve accounts.
		5c	Continuation of succession planning for director/manager positions. JIA will continue to hire and train individuals to learn from current directors the intricate operations of their department, and we will continuously update existing standard operating procedures across departments.	Professional leadership succession with an understanding and appreciation for preserving and enhancing the uniqueness of Jekyll Island, and assurance that every critical position is occupied by an employee with the right skills, experience, and institutional knowledge.	All JIA Departments	JIA Budget (Personnel)	Throughout FY24 and onward.	Succession planning actions have been executed in the Public Safety, Accounting, and Administration departments. Others will follow.



**OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS**

		<p><b>5d</b></p> <p>To assess hotel room inventory, JIA will partner with a consultant, to evaluate a new approach to managing future convention and meeting demand so that Jekyll Island can remain competitive in the broader convention marketplace, by determining how group business demand can be accommodated alongside a heightened leisure demand which drives higher average daily rates for hotel rooms.</p>	<p>Develop new operational procedures that will pre-determine new booking guidelines, rates and expectations with the Convention Center and island hotels to ensure that hotel partners and the Convention Center can cohesively serve both visitor bases successfully and remain activated effectively.</p>	<p>JIA Marketing Department, with support from the Jekyll Island Convention Center's operations contractor, ASM Global, and hotel partners.</p>	<p>JIA Budget</p>	<p>Assessment - 2nd Quarter Implementation - 4th Quarter of FY23 - <b>Assessment Complete and Execution will Continue</b></p>	<p>An assessment was completed by KB Advisory Group and Key Advisors and a task force of hoteliers has been established to execute the recommendations throughout FY24 and beyond.</p>
		<p><b>5e</b></p> <p>JIA will hire a consultant to revise the current Design Guidelines and update specific Design Review Group processes for development requests, creating a more streamline, comprehensive, and consistent guideline for both lessees and JIA staff to use.</p>	<p>Streamline the design review process to reduce excessive staff time needed to review proposed development plans by 10% and allow stakeholders to receive feedback in a more timely manner.</p>	<p>JIA Deputy Executive Director, Code Compliance Officer, and Legal Counsel</p>	<p>JIA Budget</p>	<p>FY24-26</p>	

**Notes**

\* Objectives and action plans should be based on the critical issues identified from the environmental scan.

\*\* Three action item rows are provided for each objective, but agencies are not required to use all three. Agencies may also insert more rows if an objective has more than three action items.