



**Florida Fish
and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission**

Commissioners

Brian Yablonski
Chairman
Tallahassee

Aliese P. "Liesa" Priddy
Vice Chairman
Immokalee

Ronald M. Bergeron
Fort Lauderdale

Richard Hanas
Oviedo

Bo Rivard
Panama City

Michael W. Sole
Tequesta

Robert A. Spottswood
Key West

Executive Staff

Nick Wiley
Executive Director

Eric Sutton
Assistant Executive Director

Jennifer Fitzwater
Chief of Staff

**Division of Habitat and
Species Conservation**
Thomas H. Eason, Ph.D.
Director

(850) 488-3831
(850) 921-7793 FAX

*Managing fish and wildlife
resources for their long-term
well-being and the benefit
of people.*

620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida
32399-1600
Voice: (850) 488-4676

Hearing/speech-impaired:
(800) 955-8771 (T)
(800) 955-8770 (V)

MyFWC.com

September 18, 2017

Mr. Tony D. McNeal, P.E., Administrator
Coastal Construction Control Line
Division of Water Resources Management
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
2600 Blairstone Road MS-3522
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Mr. McNeal:

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) offers the following guidance to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for Coastal Construction Control Line Permits (CCCL) issued for projects in St. Johns County prior to Landfall of Hurricane Irma (September 10, 2017). For those permits that included a condition that required waiting until after marine turtle nesting season (October 31) we recommend suspension of this requirement due to the extensive loss of beach and nesting habitat and because of the widespread damage caused by this hurricane. FWC recommends the conditions below be used for work during the remainder of the 2017 marine turtle nesting season. These activities include repair and replacement of existing structures, coastal armoring, dune and berm restoration, upland sand replacement onto the beach, and debris-removal. Provided the conditions below are implemented, further coordination with FWC for these types of activities is not needed if completed before the beginning of the 2018 nesting season on May 1st.

If there are no longer any nests remaining on the beach and there is insufficient remaining nesting habitat for future nesting, the recommendations below are not needed. The determination of the condition of the beach (whether existing nests survived, and/or new nesting is likely to still occur) needs to be verified by an FWC Marine Turtle Permit Holder (MTPH). If you need the name and contact information for the MTPH for your area, or if you are unable to contact them, or if there are questions about the recommendations below, please contact FWC at MarineTurtle@myfwc.com or call Kristen Sella at (850) 922-4330.

If there are existing nests remaining on the beach, or if sufficient nesting habitat remains for the possibility of future nesting activity, the following conditions should be followed.

- 1) A daily, early morning marine turtle nest survey must be conducted in the project area by an FWC MTPH prior to any construction activity on the beach. Activities on the beach can proceed once the MTPH has indicated that all nest have been marked (or re-marked).
- 2) The area within 10 feet of a marked marine turtle nest shall be avoided.
- 3) No sand shall be placed seaward of a marked marine turtle nest.

- 4) If heavy equipment must traverse the beach, (traveling parallel to the shoreline) it should be done on the wet sand as close to the water as possible, thus reducing the chances of crushing existing but unmarked nests.
- 5) If possible staging areas and nighttime storage for construction equipment or materials should be located off the beach. Work activities shall be confined to daylight hours.
- 6) All disturbances in the sand (deep tracks and ruts, or holes) that could trap nesting or hatchling sea turtles should be smoothed over as much as possible.
- 7) Activities in the wrack line should be avoided, due to the likely presence of marine turtle hatchlings as well as shorebirds and their chicks.
- 8) No temporary or permanent lighting is authorized.
- 9) Water discharge hoses and discharged water must not be allowed within 20 feet of a marked marine turtle nest.
- 10) Report any impacts to nests that may have inadvertently occurred during the authorized activity to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at MarineTurtle@myfwc.com.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the Department on this critical issue. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact me at 850-922-4330 or by email at Carol.Knox@myfwc.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol A. Knox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "y".

Carol A. Knox, Section Leader
Imperiled Species Management Section
Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

cc: Jay Harrington, USFWS