

Title:

S-124: Facilitate the creation of regional (inlet-to-inlet) beach management strategies, such as can be achieved through a Beach Management Agreement, which takes an ecosystem approach to projects such as beach nourishment and stormwater pipe removal to maintain beaches and protect resources.

Background:

- This recommended management action relates to nearshore hardbottom and seagrasses in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties.
- This recommended management action is being put forth because permits for beach management activities (including erosion control structures and nourishments) are issued on a project-by-project basis, which reduces the efficiency of permitting and regulatory actions. Additionally, Beach Management Agreements (BMAs) have a positive environmental benefit, this regional approach to beach management allows for a more holistic evaluation of environmental resources as opposed to the current project-by-project approach.

Objective:

- The intended outcome of this action is to have a regional, ecosystem-based approach to beach management, as well as improved regulation and streamlined application/ permitting process for beach nourishment. Regionally, ecosystem-based beach management can improve comprehensive coastal management (which includes better management of resources), generate cost efficient and efficient permitting process, which will reduce costs, time delays, and uncertain permitting. Additionally, BMAs are required to provide net ecosystem benefits to the environment.
- By having a BMA there is a required annual (public) review which allows for adaptive management.

Intended Benefits and/or Potential Adverse Effects:

- Benefits of implementation of this recommended management action include a streamlined permitting process resulting from regional, ecosystem-based beach management, increase efficiencies, reduced costs, and net ecosystem benefits. BMAs may result in a more holistic approach to resource management. By statutory requirement the implementation of a BMA-type agreement requires a net positive environmental benefit.
- Some possible issues that may arise with implementation of this recommended management action include: (1) creating a beach management agreement takes a considerable amount of time and some start-up costs should be expected, (2) the use of BMAs is a relatively novel approach to beach management, which will need to be refined and improved-upon over time using an iterative process based on lessons-learned from the current BMA, (3) it is uncertain at this time whether the BMA framework meets the intended results, and (4) upfront costs are higher - especially associated with regional monitoring – which may reduce the number of monitoring sites.
- Additional concerns include ensuring who the responsible party is in the event of impacts. If several municipalities or entities are co-project sponsors then they also need to agree to cost share project mitigation.
- The duration of the benefits of this recommended management action is expected to be long lasting. Nourishment projects are done at regular intervals and are likely to become increasingly necessary as sea levels are projected to rise and storm events are expected to become more severe and frequent. This recommended management action involves recurring

activities. Beach management agreements must be created and management will be on-going. Management should be adaptive and continually improve over time. To date, only one such agreement has been executed and it required a considerable effort by all parties. Maintenance of the current agreement is ongoing and requires a fair amount of effort

- If this recommended management action is not implemented then nourishment projects will continue to be permitted and regulated on a project-by-project basis, which is relatively inefficient for areas where projects often overlap and are handled by multiple permittees. This practice limits resource monitoring to the direct project area. Managing large areas can result in an economy-of-scale, therefore, continuing to manage projects on an individual level may result in additional costs to permittees, but this has yet to be verified.

Agencies/ Organizations:

- The lead agency for implementation of this recommended management action is the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- Other potential agencies or organizations who could be involved include local governments (counties, cities, towns), as well as Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and federal agencies (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service) would also be involved in the creation of regional beach management agreements. The BMA approach to beach management requires a high degree of coordination between multiple entities, including, but not limited to, regulatory agencies, permittees, agents, contractors, and monitoring firms
- The key stakeholders for this recommended management action would be local (city and county) and state governments, as well as others involved with beach nourishment projects such as contractors and environmental consultants. Local sponsors of beach projects may be most affected by the adoption of a BMA-approach to beach management.
- The legislative considerations to take into account include Florida State Statute 403.

Permitting/ Enforcement Requirements of RMA:

- Permitting requirements for this recommended management action include 403.0752 of Florida State Statutes which authorizes BMAs.
- There are no enforcement requirements for this recommended management action.
- A measurable way to show success with this recommended management action includes beach management agreements which would be developed for portions of the southeast Florida region, e.g. from one inlet to another inlet. Development of a region-wide BMA for the entire region is not advised, due to differences in the coastal dynamics and nearshore resources throughout this region. Moreover, BMAs should be developed in only those areas with political and public support. It may not be feasible to get stakeholders and local governments onboard with BMAs in all portions of the region, but this approach should be applied where practicable. The success can be measured in the cost required for projects. The time to process applications for beach projects could also be tracked. Additionally, developing a better understanding of resource management could be measured as a success. This would be measured through development of better resource management tactics and procedures.

Cost:

- The estimated direct cost of implementing this recommended management action is not certain. A summary of costs associated with the existing BMA for Palm Beach has not been

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conducted (yet). Developing the plan entails mostly staff time and meetings and such, most likely a relatively low cost.

- Potential funding may be acquired through state and local government agencies that are currently responsible for regulating beach nourishment, as well as the local sponsors like local municipalities and counties. Five additional points would be awarded in the ranking process for the state cost-share funding if a BMA is executed, i.e., if there were two or more projects and two or more eligible governments/sponsors.

Time Frame & Extent:

- The anticipated timeframe for implementation of this recommended management action is 0 - 2 years.

Miscellaneous Info:

- This recommended management action is linked to S-107 and S-120.
- An uncertainty or information gap with this recommended management action is that the current BMA has not been in place long enough to determine if this type of approach or method will produce the intended results.
- It is necessary to determine which portions of the South Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) region have sufficient support from local governments and stakeholders to develop BMAs.
- Supporting and relevant data include the fact that BMAs are allowed under Florida Statute 403.0752. The Town of Palm Beach BMA should be reviewed, as well as similar other projects and processes, in the development of these plans.
- Currently, a BMA has been in place in the Town of Palm Beach since 2013.
 - Some lessons learned have already been identified with the current BMA include:
 - The regional cell monitoring approach is a new concept and is still a year or two away from being fully implemented. After that, it takes a few years to see monitoring data that will allow management to base changes on.
 - Not all projects within the Town of Palm Beach BMA region were included in the BMA. Road/stormwater drainage was not included because it is under a completely different regulatory framework. On a case-by-case basis, FDEP Beaches does regulate structures if they are below mean high water and can include them in regional frameworks.
 - The agreement is limited only to those actions regulated under the Joint Coastal Permit process. Other activities may be relevant (for example upland stormwater) but these cannot be addressed through the BMA process.

Goals/ Objectives to be achieved:

Refer to the [SEFCRI Coral Reef Management Goals and Objectives Reference Guide](#)

- FL Priorities Goal A1.
- SEFCRI LAS MICCI Conservation Goal C / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal /SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal Obj. 1 /SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal Obj. 2 / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 2 Goal / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 2 Goal Obj. 1.