

Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative

Newsletter October 2022



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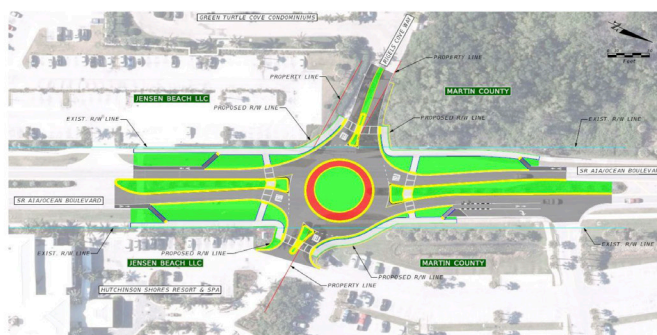
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FDOT PROPOSES CHANGES TO A1A ON HUTCHINSON ISLAND: NEW ROUNDABOUT & NEW STREETLIGHTS PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 19 at 6:00 PM AT BOCC CHAMBERS

Proposed Improvements

New single-lane Roundabout at SR A1A/Rigels Cove Way (Green Turtle Cove) intersection



Florida Department of Transportation

13

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) plans to repave A1A on Hutchinson Island in Martin County from NE Shore Village Terrace to the roundabout at Jensen Beach Causeway. The plan also calls for the addition of a roundabout 1500' south of the Jensen Beach roundabout at Hutchinson Shores Resort and Rigels Cove Way. The proposed roundabout will be 120' in diameter, larger than the 100' diameter Jensen Beach roundabout, with crosswalks from east to west. New streetlights will connect the existing roundabout with the new roundabout. This project is being proposed as a pedestrian and traffic safety installation. Construction is estimated to begin Spring 2025 and be completed Summer 2026. More details, including an overview of the of the project from FDOT, are posted on our website: <https://www.hipimartin.com/fdot-safety-study-2021>.

FDOT will hold a public meeting to discuss this project on October 19 at 6:00 p.m. at the Martin County Commission Chambers, 2401 SE Monterey Rd. We encourage every Martin County Hutchinson Island property owner to attend, in person or virtually.

The FDOT presentation will start at 6:00 p.m. followed by a question-and-answer session. The public meeting will have FDOT representatives available to answer questions. Project information will be available for public viewing. Questions and comments may be submitted prior to the meeting by emailing the Project Manager, Kris McKirdy at kris.mckirdy@dot.state.fl.us.

To participate in the virtual public meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone please register using this link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8918565847183961355>. Participants can also dial in using their phone: (213) 929-4221.

The HIPI Board of Directors voted not to take a position on this FDOT project until after the October 19 meeting.

Hutchinson Island Beautification

Category	Non-concurrency
Project Number	2028A
Location	Hutchinson Island
District	One
Project Limits	Beautification, traffic enhancements and safety improvements based on 2012 Master Plan and a Community Strategic Plan approved by the BOCC
Related Projects	
Lead Dept/Division	Public Works/Capital Projects
Year Project Initiated	2012



DESCRIPTION

The Hutchinson Island Coalition is a volunteer organization that consists of members from the Hutchinson Island community of homeowners.

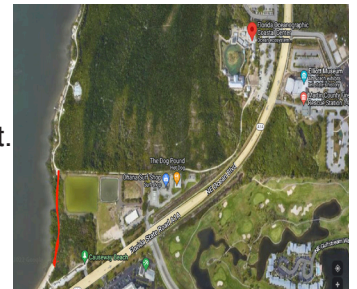
HUTCHINSON ISLAND MSTU--WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH OUR TAX DOLLARS?

Martin County Hutchinson Island property owners pay two Metropolitan Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) taxes: the first tax began in 1995 to collect local taxes to contribute to the cost of beach renourishment. The second tax was requested in 2011 by the Hutchinson Island Coalition (HIC) to fund island beautification, designated as Project 2028A in the Martin County Capital Improvement Plan. For the complete history of the Hutchinson Island MSTU, please visit our website: <https://www.hipimartin.com/hutchinson-island-mstu>.

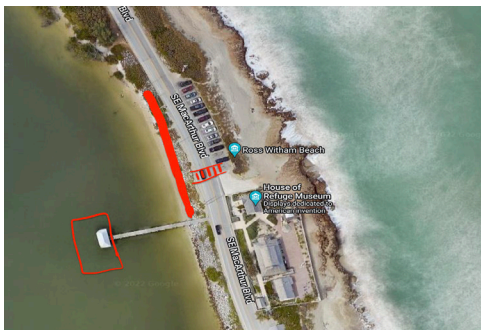
Even though the HIC no longer exists and the requested tax increase was supposed to end in 2017, Hutchinson Island property owners continue to contribute \$106,650 annually to fund the HIC's plans. As of March 30, 2022, the Project 2028A fund had a balance of \$418,000.

Members of the HIPI board of directors recently met with Martin County Director of Public Works, Jim Gorton, who offered two possible projects Hutchinson Island property owners could choose to fund with that \$418,000.

First, Mr. Gorton suggested a plan that would connect the Causeway Beach parking lot with the scenic walking trail that runs along the Indian River, behind Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center. Currently, that walking trail only can be accessed with admission to Florida Oceanographic. Historical monuments, art installations or other markers could be added to the trail, if Hutchinson Island property owners want. The estimated cost of that project, without any additional signage or art, is \$75,000.



The red lines in the aerial images show the approximate area for the proposed additions.



The second suggested project would include the addition of a marked crosswalk from the parking lot near the House of Refuge to a new boardwalk near the fishing pier in the Indian River, on the other side of MacArthur Boulevard. Crosswalks can be placed only if sidewalks or designated walking/parking areas are on both sides of the road, so a boardwalk would have to be built along the river. The area is too environmentally sensitive and narrow to build an actual sidewalk, so the additional of a boardwalk would allow the placement of a crosswalk, which would give those fishing a safe place to cross the road from the parking lot at the House of Refuge. The addition of the boardwalk would

include construction within or beyond the Coastal Construction Control Line, requiring additional permits, time, and costs. This project's approximate cost would be \$325,000, assuming no additions or changes are requested to the existing pier.

This winter, HIPI plans to hold public information sessions about these projects and solicit input from Hutchinson Island Property owners about other ideas for how best we should use our tax dollars. **THIS IS OUR MONEY**, so it's up to all property owners who contributed to this fund to tell the county how we want our money to be used. Look for more information in our next newsletter and on our website.

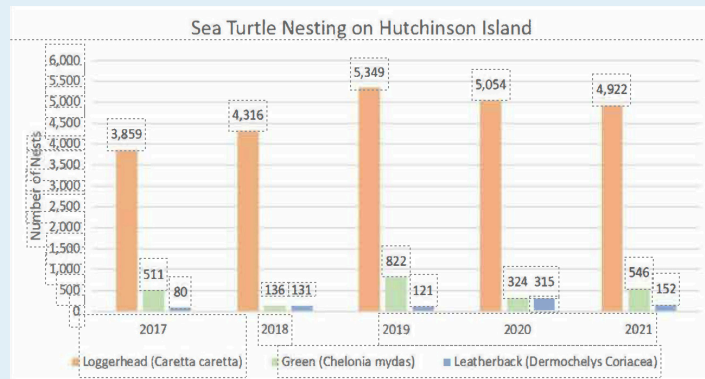
SEA TURTLE NESTING UPDATE

by Angela Ratinella

Hutchinson Island and neighboring counties have long been a destination for nesting sea turtles. Five species of sea turtles swim in Florida's waters, three of which can be found along Hutchinson Island: loggerhead (*Caretta Caretta*), green turtle (*Chelonia Mydas*), and leatherback (*Dermochelys Coriacea*). Nesting starts in March and ends in October. Annually they make between 40,000-84,000 nests along Florida's coast.

The EAI (Ecological Associates, Inc.) is an environmental consulting firm headquartered in Jensen Beach that focuses on species and ecosystem management, monitoring, and research. They survey approximately 50 miles of high-density sea turtle nesting beaches along Florida's east coast. Nine leatherback nests were documented in February by their staff conducting preseason surveys. On March 10, 2022 EAI documented the first loggerhead nest in the state of Florida for the 2022 nesting season.

During 2021, their team documented a total of 13,143 loggerhead nests, 3,430 green turtle nests, and 356 leatherback nests across all permitted survey areas. The first nest was a leatherback on 2/19/21 on Hutchinson Island in Martin County. This chart illustrates the nesting trends on Hutchinson Island over the past few years.

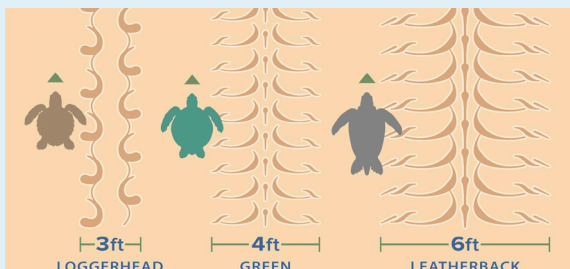


So far in 2022, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Palm Beach counties have had 11,413 turtle nests: 489 leatherback nests, 8,744 loggerhead nests and 2,180 green nests. More information is available on Facebook at [ecological_associates](https://www.facebook.com/ecological_associates).

Interesting Nesting Facts

Loggerhead nests contain an average of 100-126 eggs that incubate in about 60 days. Green turtles can lay as many as 10 clutches, with about 10 days in between each clutch. Each clutch has about 115 eggs. Leatherbacks lay about 80 fertilized eggs and then cover them with a layer of about 30 unfertilized eggs to protect the fertilized ones from predators.

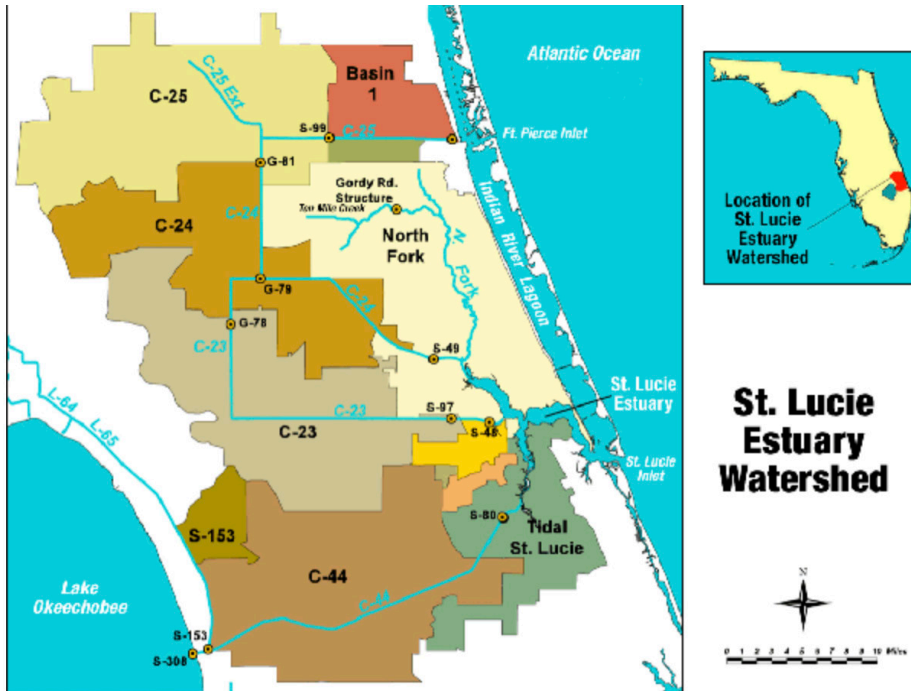
The markings on the stakes around the turtle nests indicate the kind of turtle that nested there (CC = loggerhead, DC = leatherback, CM = green) and the date the eggs were laid. The tracks left by the turtle tell researchers the kind of turtle that made the nest.



For comprehensive information about sea turtle nesting and monitoring throughout the state of Florida, please visit the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website: <https://myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles/nesting/>.

Update on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Lake Okeechobee

Paul Laura, HIPI Environmental Officer



SFWMD canal map, Martin & St Lucie Counties. Image : Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch from what "mother nature" plans.

A LOSOM (Lake Okeechobee System Operation Manual) update was given on August 17 at the Stuart City Hall by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE).

The USACOE is in the final stages of completing the revised LOSOM for Lake Okeechobee. The latest update would, according to the current model being considered, provide for reduced discharges as compared to the current LORS (Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule) 2008 model. The new model predicts scenarios for discharges into the St. Lucie River would not be required during most rain events or 76% of the time. The aforementioned prediction is based on computer models which can differ

The USACOE will continue their tour to present the LOSOM plan to all stakeholders, with a final report due in February 2023 before the LOSOM officially becomes operational later in the year.

The C44 Reservoir is now operational and would have the ability to take in some discharge waters from Lake Okeechobee via the C44 canal, which connects Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie River, should a rain event occur. The ability to divert Lake Okeechobee discharges into the C44 Reservoir will further reduce, but not completely eliminate, waters entering into the St. Lucie River.

REQUEST A SPEAKER

Does your group want to know more about the Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative?

Email hipi.stuart@gmail.com and one of our board members will be happy to attend your group's meeting and give a very brief presentation on HIPI's history and current work.

Is there a topic or issue you or your group would like to know more about?

Email hipi.stuart@gmail.com and let us know what topics you or your group are interested in. We want to bring speakers to the island to address the concerns of all island residents.





Hutchinson Island Presidents' Council of Martin County

John Hodge, HIPI Board Liaison to Presidents' Council

The Presidents Council met on August 17, 2022. As requested by council members, the meeting's focus was on the recently passed Senate Bill 4D, Building Safety including the Milestone Structural Inspection requirements and Structural Integrity Reserve Study and Reserve Funding Requirements. Jane Cornett, Esq., Board Certified Specialist, Condo and Planned Development Law, representing the law firm of Becker and Poliakoff, was the guest speaker. The presentation was informative and lots of great questions were asked by the group.

Ms. Cornett stated that although changes to the current law would probably happen during the next legislative session, the following requirements are unlikely to change:

Associations may not vote to waive reserve requirements.

Inspection reports will be required.

Documents generated after inspection must be provided to the association's owners and to the county.

If you could not attend the meeting, Becker attorneys, Donna DiMaggio Berger, Steven Mezer, and Robert Caves taped a panel discussion that addresses this new law and answers directors' and managers' questions, including:

- We had an engineering report performed in the last two years. Will this count as our milestone inspection?
- Can members still waive reserves for painting and paving?
- Can we no longer have pooled reserves?
- What if the reserve company we have doesn't have an engineer or architect on staff?
- We have a monetary cap in our governing documents on how much we can increase our budget. What now?
- What if all these costs increase our assessments by more than 15% of the prior year's assessments?
- What if our members simply cannot pay to fund these new reserves or the repairs outlined in the Milestone Inspection?
- What are the potential penalties under this 2022 law for being in breach of one's fiduciary duties?

Please use this link to view this video presentation on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLJ-FGHhaP0>.

Upcoming Martin County Commissioners Meetings and Martin MPO Meetings

10/11 9:00 BOCC
10/17 9:00 MPO
10/18 9:00 BOCC
11/5 9:00 BOCC

11/22 9:00 BOCC
12/6 9:00 BOCC
12/12 9:00 MPO
12/13 9:00 BOCC

All meetings will be held at the Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road,

Join HIPI!
There's strength in numbers! We need your help!

When developers tried to make changes to Hutchinson Island that threatened the four story, 40 foot height limit, or endangered our animals and waters, HIPI was instrumental in preventing those changes.

Our efforts stopped the 2018 project that would have installed hundreds of lights along A1A. Our questions and website and social media posts also prevented new construction on Hutchinson Island that would have included a 50+ ft tower. We were able to stop these changes to our beloved island because of the help of thousands of supporters who love Hutchinson Island and who publicly denounced these changes with us. When we speak together, our collective voices are loud and clear.

Your membership in HIPI allows us to show that you, too, care about preserving and protecting Hutchinson Island in Martin County. Your membership adds your contact information to our data base, so we can send you information about activities on the island that may affect Hutchinson Island. And, most importantly, you will be the first to know when we issue or endorse an urgent call to action. Dues are only \$20/per person/year and help pay for operational costs, facilities rental and other expenses.

If you're already a member of HIPI, THANK YOU! Please renew your membership and continue to help us preserve and protect Hutchinson Island in Martin County.

*First Name _____

*Last Name _____

*Email _____

*Membership Category _____

_____ HUTCHINSON ISLAND MARTIN COUNTY RESIDENT MEMBER

_____ MARTIN COUNTY ASSOCIATE MEMBER

_____ NON-RESIDENT ASSOCIATE MEMBER (INCLUDES SEASONAL RENTERS)

_____ HUTCHINSON ISLAND MARTIN COUNTY BUSINESS ASSOCIATE MEMBER

_____ BUSINESS ASSOCIATE MEMBER

*Name of HOA (or please type private residence) _____

Name of Business, if applicable _____

Address _____

Condo or Unit Number, if applicable _____

*City _____ *State _____ *Zip _____

*Member Opts in for Emails _____ Yes _____ No _____

Phone _____

Interested in Serving on Committee? _____ YES _____ NO _____

*Payment Type: CASH _____ CHECK # _____

*Name on check if different than member's name: _____

Please mail dues payments of \$20/member/year to
HIPI

P.O. Box 1354

Jensen Beach, FL 34958

or join or renew on our website: www.hipimartin.com