

Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative



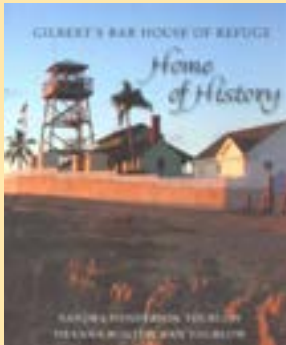
Newsletter February 2023

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HIPI TO HOST ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 22 AT 7:00 PM AT ELLIOTT MUSEUM

HIPI will host its 2023 Annual Meeting on March 22 at 7:00 p.m. at the Elliott Museum. Everyone is welcome. You may also attend the meeting via Zoom by registering in advance at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrf-yurzguEtR-0xvkvkkzvbM7mXDSideZ>

We are honored to announce that our featured speaker this year will be **Sandra Thurlow**, well-known Martin County historian and the author of four books about Martin County, including *Gilbert's Bar House of Refuge*, *Home of History*. Mrs. Thurlow will discuss the history of Hutchinson Island and the House of Refuge and the importance of both to the history of Stuart and Martin County. Mrs. Thurlow is a wealth of information and a dynamic storyteller. You won't want to miss the pleasure of hearing Mrs. Thurlow in person.

We also are grateful that Martin County Director of Public Works, Jim Gorton and Martin County Director of Coastal Management Jessica Garland will join us this year to discuss current and planned county projects on Hutchinson Island.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR HIPI OFFICERS

Any resident member of HIPI who has paid their annual \$20 dues by March 1 is eligible to hold office and vote for the officers of the Board of Directors of the Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative. The officers of the HIPI include the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer. Nominations from resident members will be accepted February 22-March 3. All nominations should be emailed to hipi.stuart@gmail.com. Ballots will be emailed to resident member after March 3. The new officers will be announced at the annual meeting on March 22.

JOIN HIPI OR RENEW YOUR HIPI MEMBERSHIP NOW!

Renew your membership now to continue to receive our newsletter and receive email updates on issues that may affect Hutchinson Island in Martin County.

Only resident members with paid memberships by March 1 are eligible to nominate, vote and hold office.

JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP HERE: <https://www.hipimartin.com/join>

FDOT A1A Roundabout and Resurfacing, Restoration Project

In May 2021, District 1 Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith contacted the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to request a safety study of State Road A1A on Hutchinson Island from the Jensen Beach North Roundabout to the Hutchinson Shores Resort and Spa to determine if lighting is justified in that area. A similar safety study was completed in 2017 by FDOT for the entire stretch of A1A on Hutchinson Island in Martin County. That study, which can be viewed [HERE](#), found that road lighting was not justified.

FDOT officials met with HIPI on October 6 to outline their preliminary findings. Recommendations are likely to include:

- increased and improved signage
- removal of trees in the median near the crosswalk
- installation of pavement warning graphics
- feedback signs with a reduction of speed to 25 mph as approaching the roundabout
- installation of pavement and/or median reflectors
- additional lighting on A1A from Hutchinson Shores Resort, north to the roundabout.

FDOT then hosted a public meeting on October 19. At this meeting, FDOT presented the improvement plans, including the addition of a new roundabout on A1A near Hutchinson Shores Resort and Green Turtle Cove Condominiums.

Resident concerns are many. First we were perplexed as to the rationale for the inclusion of another roundabout on A1A on the island, when the safety study does not recommend one. ([CLICK HERE TO READ THE 2022 SAFETY STUDY.](#)) We could not get a clear response from the FDOT reps as to why the roundabout had been added after the original plans for A1A were drafted and presented to HIPI.

Secondly, residents expressed concern that the addition of a roundabout will only increase traffic congestion during the season when so many of our seasonal renters face using a roundabout for the first time. Green Turtle Cove is concerned that traffic will accidentally spill into their small parking lot, as most roundabout access and egress points are from main roads, not from private property. Hutchinson Shores had no advance warning of the plan, their GM in attendance at the FDOT public meeting in October confirmed that the hotel is not in favor of the plan.

Lastly and most importantly for many the island residents is the aesthetics of so many light poles clustered in such a small area and the potential impact to our nesting turtles and their hatchlings by this concentration of light.

At the public meeting, FDOT heard over two hours of resident complaints, questions and concerns. (Please see [THIS LINK](#) for a video of the entire public meeting.)

FDOT now anticipates a project update to HIPI in March with a public meeting during the summer.



ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATES

from Paul Laura, our Environmental Officer

Lake O Discharges

On January 20, the US Army Corps of Engineers announced that discharges at an average rate of 323 million gallons per day would begin flowing through the St. Lucie Lock and Dam. Discharges could continue through June.

On Feb. 24, TCPalm reported, "The public should avoid contact with toxic algae in the canal that connects Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie River, according to a state health alert..."

The cyanobacteria, more commonly called "blue-green algae," contained the toxin microcystin measuring 0.62 parts per billion in water samples taken Feb. 22 in the C-44 Canal, also called the St. Lucie Canal, in Martin County. At 8 parts per billion, the toxin makes water too hazardous to touch, ingest or inhale for people, pets and wildlife, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The toxic algae can flow farther east toward Stuart and the St. Lucie River because the Army Corps of Engineers is discharging excess Lake O water through the canal. The agency has been doing so since Jan. 22 to slowly lower the lake level in preparation of the June 1 start of hurricane season.

The agency was not aware of the toxic algae and did not immediately answer TCPalm's question about whether it will continue or suspend discharges."



Army Corps of Engineers & S FL Water Management District Break Ground on EAA Reservoir

The groundbreaking for the long-awaited storage component of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir was celebrated February 22. The EAA Reservoir is a cornerstone of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. (CERP)

"Made up of a 10,500-acre storage reservoir and 6,500-acre Storage Treatment Area (STA), the project will significantly reduce harmful Lake Okeechobee discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers by storing and cleaning excess water from the lake before sending it south to the Everglades, where it once flowed naturally and where it's needed most." <https://captainsforcleanwater.org/aaa-reservoir-groundbreaking/>

Super Clams Being Used to Help Restore the Indian River Lagoon

Scientists may have found a natural way to clean the water in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL).

In September, around 55,000 clamor "super clams" in the Martin County section of the IRL. While they may look like ordinary clams, they have ability to filter feed even in the presence of the harmful blue-green algae that is killing the seagrass, the main source of food for native manatees.

A rebound in seagrass has already been noted in some areas of the lagoon, offering hope that these native clams could be a key component to cleaner water throughout the lagoon.

Read more about these super clams in the IRL: <https://cbs12.com/news/local/superclams-in-indian-river-lagoon-helping-to-clean-the-polluted-waters-helping-wildlife-october-11-2022>

LIGHTS OUT!
Sea Turtle Nesting Season Begins March 1



Leatherback, loggerhead and green sea turtles soon will be making their way to the beaches of Hutchinson Island to lay their eggs.

Ecological Associates in Jensen Beach, the organization tasked with monitoring sea turtle activity and sea turtle lighting compliance, reported 10,930 nests on the barrier islands of Martin County.

To protect nesting turtles and their hatchlings, from March 1 through Oct. 31, all oceanfront dwellings on Hutchinson Island must comply with Martin County Land Development Regulations

Sec 4.111, including 4.111.E.4: Standards for Beachfront Lighting. This provision states

1. Any and all light fixtures shall be designed or positioned such that they do not cause direct or indirect illumination of areas seaward of the primary dune and the source of light is not directly visible from the beach.
2. All lights on balconies shall be shielded from the beach.
3. The use of lighting for decorative or accent purposes, within line of sight of the beach, such as that emanating from spotlights or floodlights, is prohibited.
4. The use of lights for safety and security purposes shall be limited to the minimum number required to achieve their functional goals.
5. Lighting used in parking lots within line of sight of the beach shall be set in a base which raises the source of light to no higher than 48 inches off the ground and positioned or shielded such that the light is not visible from the beach.

Additionally, to prevent interior lights from illuminating the beach, either blackout draperies or screens or window tint with a shading coefficient of 0.37-0.45 should be used on beachfront windows in all single and multi-story buildings.

Sea grapes along beach provide a beneficial barrier to inhibit light from reaching the beach and disorienting the turtles. Disorientation occurs when artificial light on the beach causes turtles to move inland, instead of toward the ocean. Because of the protections sea grapes offer to nesting turtles and hatchlings, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Martin County regulations may limit how and when sea grapes can be trimmed.

Because of county lighting restrictions and resident compliance, Martin County rates of turtle disorientation have significantly declined over the last 10 years, giving Martin County a less than 2% disorientation rate, the lowest rate in the state.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the Martin County Land Development Regulations, Division 4: Barrier Islands and Sea Turtle Protection

[CLICK HERE](#) to read or download the one-page Martin County Sea Turtle Lighting Information Flyer

[CLICK HERE](#) to read or download the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's guidelines for Sea Grape Trimming and Sea Turtles.



Hutchinson Island Presidents' Council of Martin County
John Hodge, HIPI Board Liaison to Presidents' Council

The most pressing issue facing all condominiums on Hutchinson Island is Florida Senate Bill 4D, initially passed May 26, 2022 in response to the collapse of the Champlain Towers South condominium in Surfside. The bill aims to increase building safety measures and mitigate risk by requiring milestone structural inspections and fully funded reserve accounts to repair or replace as needed roofs, load-bearing walls or other primary structural members, floors, foundations, fireproofing and fire protection systems, plumbing, electrical systems, waterproofing and exterior painting, windows, and any other item that has a deferred maintenance expense or replacement cost that exceeds \$10,000.00 and the failure to replace or maintain such item that negatively affects the items listed above.

The Florida legislature will meet again March 7-May 5 and additional modifications to the Bill are anticipated.

HIPI will continue to monitor legislative action related to SB-4D and plans to announce the next meeting of the Presidents' Council when information on changes to SB-4D is available. If presidents' council representatives identify other issues they want to discuss, please email hipi.stuart@gmail.com, and we will be happy to schedule a meeting before SB-4D updates are available.

AFTER YOUR ANNUAL HOA MEETING, please email hipi.stuart@gmail.com and provide the name and email address of your 2023 HIPI delegate.

Upcoming Martin County Commissioners Meetings and Martin MPO Meetings

2/21 9:00 BOCC joint meeting with school board	4/17 9:00 MPO
2/27 9:00 MPO	4/18 9:00 BOCC
3/7 9:00 MPO	5/9 9:00 BOCC
3/21 9:00 BOCC	5/15 9:00 MPO
3/30 9:00 BOCC	5/30 9:00 BOCC
4/4 9:00 Capital Improvement Plan Workshop	6/6 9:00 BOCC
	6/15 9:00 BOCC

All meetings will be held at the Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, except the 3/30 & 6/15 joint meetings with the school board, which will be at the Blake Library.

Join HIPI!

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

When developers tried to make changes to Hutchinson Island that threaten the four story, 40 foot height limit, or endanger 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.

Visit our website, www.hipimartin.com, to pay online or mail the membership form below.

*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

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Jensen Beach, FL 34958