

## **Guidance for Post-Disaster Road Repair, Replacement, Reconstruction, and Cleanup in Coastal Areas with Federal and State Protected Species in Florida**

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Updated 2015**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) are providing this guidance to expedite the regulatory review process, reduce potential impacts to listed species, and efficiently restore transportation systems following tropical storms, hurricanes, and other catastrophic weather events. It applies only to the repair, replacement, reconstruction, and clean-up of existing roads to pre-storm conditions. This guidance is for coastal roadways within areas containing beach and coastal strand habitat suitable for beach mice, nesting sea turtles, piping plover, perforate reindeer lichen, and other state and/or federally protected terrestrial coastal species, in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and F.A.C. 68A-27.003 (SSC), F.A.C. 68A-27.004 (T), and F.A.C. 68A-27.005 (E).

#### **A. Emergency Consultation Procedures**

Under the Act, Federal agencies or their designees are required to consult with the FWS for projects that may affect listed species or critical habitat, and include provisions to avoid and minimize their effects. The Act continues to apply during disaster responses but provides emergency consultation procedures to accommodate the need to respond quickly *when human life and property are at risk*. During emergency consultation:

1. The FWS is notified as soon as possible of the emergency response action, usually by phone or email.
2. The emergency response action is initiated.
3. The FWS will provide written recommendations (usually by email within 48 hours) to minimize effects to listed species and critical habitat.
4. The recommendations will be implemented to the extent possible at the discretion of the emergency response agency. No approval under the Act is required.
5. Further information on emergency consultation procedures, including post-emergency follow up, is available at: [http://www.fws.gov/southeast/es/emergency\\_consult.html](http://www.fws.gov/southeast/es/emergency_consult.html)

#### **B. Phase I – Initial Road Clearing and Debris Removal after the Storm**

*By adhering to these measures, this phase of cleanup requires no further coordination with the FWS and FWC.*

1. Stay within or as close as possible to the footprint of the original road.
2. Sand and storm debris should be deposited as close to the roadway as safely possible.
3. For roadways adjacent to or within public lands with beach and dune habitat, high quality beach sand removed from the road should be stockpiled to the extent practicable as a source for future dune restoration. Stockpiled sand should be sifted prior to re-use and any contaminated materials should be disposed of as appropriate.
4. Staging/storage areas should be identified for work activities and located outside of natural beach and dune habitat, and public lands. Areas with paved, graveled, or other highly disturbed surfaces are preferred for staging. The FWS or FWC should be contacted immediately if there are questions regarding identification of appropriate staging areas.

5. Parking areas should be identified for work crews and located outside of natural beach and dune habitat, and public lands. Areas with paved, graveled, or other highly disturbed surfaces are preferred for parking. The FWS or FWC should be contacted immediately if there are questions regarding identification of appropriate parking areas.
6. Storm debris should be removed from the road right-of-way as soon as feasible.

### **C. Phase II – Permanent Road Repair/Replace/Reconstruct Actions**

Planning actions for long-term repair to damaged roads should be coordinated with both FWC and FWS to ensure that they do not adversely affect listed species and habitat. The following are general measures to protect coastal habitat and species that can be used during repairs, along with applicable Phase I measures. Additional measures may be needed to address site-specific species concerns within the project area.

1. No soil materials should be used in reconstruction of the road and its subgrade that are incompatible with, and may result in permanent discoloration of, white beach sand unless approved by the FWS or FWC. Examples of unsuitable materials are red and yellow clays.
2. No fill material should be deposited on or removed from natural beach and dune habitat. No fill material should be deposited into low lying washover areas, mudflats, or sandflats outside of the road corridor. The post-storm road elevation should not exceed its pre-storm value. Fill material and hay bales must be clean of noxious weeds. No fertilizer or lime should be applied. No hay bales should be used in dune habitats.
3. Materials used for road shoulder stabilization should be compatible with the coastal environment and minimize the risk of habitat damage from future storms. Some options for shoulder materials are white beach sand and native vegetation, with limited use of white Bahama rock. Gray aggregate rock should be avoided.
4. Stabilization of road shoulders with sand and native coastal vegetation is preferred. When plantings are needed to stabilize adjacent slope and limit erosion, only native coastal vegetation should be used. Non-native turf grass and/or sod should not be used. Low lying washover areas, mudflats, sandflats, and inlets should not be planted with any vegetation. Information on appropriate coastal plants and planting specifications are available from the FWS.
5. The use of aggregate material such as white Bahama rock should be minimized. Placement should be no further than 3 feet from the edge of paved shoulder to reduce habitat loss and minimize the risk of dispersal into adjacent coastal habitat.
6. All road-repair related trash should be disposed of properly in predator-proof trash receptacles.
7. Storm-related road debris (gravel, asphalt, old base) should be removed to the greatest extent practicable. Removal methods should minimize additional disturbance to the environment.
8. No road debris should be buried in place.

#### **Contact information:**

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