

Email sent by Gail Carmody, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to all Florida panhandle counties on September 24, 2004

Dear County and Regional Planning staff,

I know that this is a difficult and also hectic time for all of you.

I would like to offer the technical assistance of our biologists to help you in the areas of natural stream channel design, dune restoration, and protection of remaining threatened and endangered species habitat. If you are not the correct person in the County to receive this message, please forward.

We have documented that the endangered beach mice have survived the storm. I understand that there are ATV and some heavy construction activity related to debris removal in possible beach mouse habitat. Activities in any remaining habitat should be avoided at this time. If it is essential to access an area in beach mouse habitat, please call us to determine any needed permits.

Also, it would help if your building departments can encourage that all lighting in beach areas are replaced with sea turtle friendly lighting. The state requires such lighting around the coastal construction line, but since the dune heights have been reduced, spillover lighting from further inland is likely for several years and could cause hatchling mortalities. We recommend that these more interior areas also have sea turtle friendly lighting. We can provide additional information on light design and sources for purchase.

I understand from FEMA that it is acceptable to replace undersized culverts by 2 sizes without additional paperwork. They are also willing to work with us on addressing river and stream sediment reduction under their Hazard Mitigation program by the methods our Unpaved Roads Interagency Team has described. We can help you with any submissions you are considering for the areas with dirt roads. We also have preliminary GIS layers for all stream crossings in the panhandle that may be useful to you.

On Monday, after coordination with the State FWC, we will send you an official letter about work in areas that have been previously identified as habitat for one of the endangered beach mouse sub-species. We will also provide you with guidance on road repair in coastal areas with listed species. You can find additional information on listed species in your county on our web site:
<http://panamacity.fws.gov/resources/specieslist.html>

Let us know if there are ways we can help. There are emergency consultation procedures in place with all the federal agencies that result in our recommendations being completed in 24-48 hours. If you would like for us to make a determination prior to any requests for federal assistance, we would be glad to do this.

You can reach us at 850/769-0552 x0. For beach related assistance, ask for Janet Mizzi. For other areas, ask for Gail Carmody.

Gail Carmody
Project Leader

Janet Mizzi
Deputy Project Leader

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850/769-0552 x0 - have them find me so we don't play phone tag.