

RESOLUTION NO. 91-154

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF ST. JOHNS, STATE
OF FLORIDA SUPPORTING PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO
THE BEACH DRIVING RESTRICTIONS CURRENTLY PROPOSED
BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Natural Resources, on or about July 30, 1991, notified this Board and the residents of St. Johns County, Florida, that it intended to severely restrict beach driving and impose certain restrictions on fishing at the Anastasia State Recreation Area as of August 19, 1991;

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Natural Resources summarily announced its decision to impose the restrictions without giving this Board and the residents of St. Johns County an opportunity to hear the details of the beach driving restrictions or to offer input;

WHEREAS, after much public outcry against the imposition of the beach driving restrictions without public input, the Florida Department of Natural Resources set a public hearing on September 17, 1991 in the County Auditorium;

WHEREAS, at the public hearing on September 17, 1991, which was attended by approximately 250 people, including conservationists, biologists, handicapped persons, surfers, fishermen, swimmers, birdwatchers, elderly persons, and residents, the overwhelming majority of those present who spoke voiced opposition to the restrictions;

WHEREAS, this Board finds many of the reasons for the opposition well founded, including the following:

- (1) The beach driving restrictions are a prelude to a total ban on beach driving in the Anastasia State Recreation Area;

(2) The beach driving restrictions ignore the reality that many people use the beach areas responsibly and that protective measures for rare and endangered species are already in place;

(3) The restrictions change the nature of the beach from a park and recreation area to a state preserve or sanctuary, which is contrary to its intended use;

(4) The restrictions ignore the fact that tides, winds, storms, and other natural forces do not follow any time tables set by humans, and humans must adjust their activities to the natural forces;

(5) The restrictions will hinder access to much of the recreation area for the elderly, handicapped, weak, and families with small children;

(6) The restrictions are based on inadequate research and study of the affected area and are more restrictive than necessary to accomplish the stated goal; and

(7) The restrictions will have a chilling effect on tourism.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

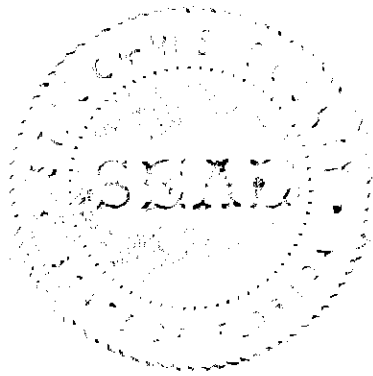
Section 1. The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners does not support the Florida Department of Natural Resources's proposed beach driving plan and further objects to the failure of the Department of Natural Resources to hold public hearings on the plan prior to announcing its implementation;

Section 2. No action should be taken by the Florida Department of Natural Resources to implement the proposed plan because adequate measures are already in place in the Anastasia State Recreation Area for protection of nesting sea turtles, the Anastasia beach mouse, nesting least terns, and other rare or endangered species.

Section 3. The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners supports the residents of St. Johns County in their opposition to and outcry against the beach driving restrictions; and

Section 4. The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners urges the Florida Department of Natural Resources to institute a policy requiring that proposals such as the beach driving restrictions be presented to the affected local governments for review and comment during formulation. This procedure would promote cooperation between the Department and local governments and Florida citizens; would inform the local governmental officials and Florida citizens of Department concerns; and would avoid or decrease opposition and friction with the public such as resulted here in St. Johns County when the Department of Natural Resources announced the beach driving restrictions without warning, unmindful of the gravity of this issue to the residents of St. Johns County.

Passed by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida this 24th day of September, 1991.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: Fred A. Brinkhoff
Vice-Chairman

ATTEST: Carl "Bud" Markel, Clerk

BY: Norma Carter
Deputy Clerk