

RESOLUTION NO. 2009-369

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENT AS A NATURAL RESOURCE AND ECONOMIC ASSET OF THE COUNTY; REQUESTING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT BEACH ACCESS AND BEACH DRIVING; AND REQUESTING OUR FEDERAL CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES INITIATE IMMEDIATE ACTIONS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, St. Johns County, Florida ("the County") desires to protect the natural and economic well-being of the Fort Matanzas National Monument; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Matanzas National Monument provides for endless activities including recreational activities, fishing, surfing, sunbathing, beach combing, ecotourism and beach driving all of which are in the best interest of the County, our citizens and our visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Matanzas National Monument was established by a Presidential Proclamation in 1924 consisting of only one acre on Rattlesnake Island; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1960s, approximately 300 acres of land on Anastasia Island was donated to the National Park Service and Fort Matanzas National Monument by private donors. This land included beachfront property where driving traditionally took place on the beach and continued to take place under the Monument ownership; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service has always in effect allowed beach driving on Fort Matanzas National Monument since this property was donated to the National Park Service in the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, beach driving and the other activities have been effectively managed so that this site has become the largest beach nesting colony for Least Terns on the east coast of Florida; and

WHEREAS, this site has been effectively managed so that other shore birds and marine turtle nesting habitat continues to flourish; and

WHEREAS, in October 2009 the National Park Service informed St. Johns County that the National Park Service's Solicitors office interpreted Federal Executive Order 11644 as prohibiting beach driving on the Ft. Matanzas National Monument property. Enforcement is expected to begin on January 1, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service is also in the process of preparing a General Management Plan for the Fort Matanzas National Monument which will include several potential management strategies for the Monument including beach driving. Completion of the Plan is expected in approximately two years; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to protect the environmental resources at the Fort Matanzas National Monument and to provide for the continuation of beach driving to ensure the long term recreational and economic benefit for the County, our citizens and future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, as follows:

Section 1. The above recitals are incorporated by reference into the body of this Resolution and such recitals are adopted as findings of fact.

Section 2. The Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County hereby supports the continuation of beach driving on the Fort Matanzas National Monument property in a manner that allows recreational and economic activity while protecting the environment.

Section 3. The Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County respectfully request that the Federal Congressional representatives for the citizens of St. Johns County initiate immediate actions to temporarily allow beach driving to continue until such time as the General Management Plan is complete and implemented.

Section 4. The Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County respectfully requests that National Park Service expedite the completion of the General Management Plan and as a part of that Plan to allow beach driving to continue on Monument property.

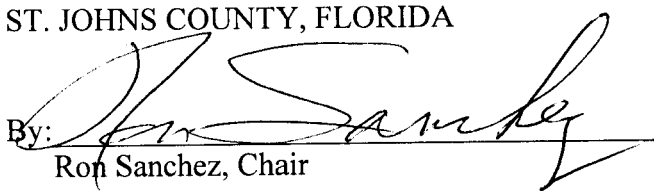
Section 5. The County Administrator, on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners for St. Johns County, shall immediately notify the National Park Service of this Resolution and shall provide a certified copy of the same to the Service.

Section 6. This Resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this 15th day of December, 2009.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By:


Ron Sanchez, Chair

RENDITION DATE 12/16/09

ATTEST: Cheryl Strickland, Clerk of Court

By: Pam Helteman
Deputy Clerk

Effective Date: December 15, 2009