

FACT SHEET: Siesta Beach Access # 7

Background:

Beach Access #7, located across from Beach Road and Calle de la Siesta, is one of 13 public beach access locations on Siesta Key. These beach access points provide public access to the world class beaches on Siesta Key. Beach Access #7 is centrally located approximately ¾-miles north of Siesta Beach and ¼-miles from the Siesta Key Village. In late 2007 and early 2009, the Sarasota County purchased two adjacent properties through the Neighborhood Parkland Acquisition Program, expanding Beach Access #7 an additional 3.7 acres.

Existing Conditions and Items to Consider:

- Beach Access #7 has approximately 12-15 parking spaces, trash/recycling containers, and informational signage.
- The recently acquired property (“Beach Access #7 Addition”) has been impacted by prior development on the landward portion of the site. A residential structure also is located on the landward portion of the property. The waterward portion of the Beach Access #7 Addition includes a vegetated dune system and an approximately 300 foot dune walkover.
- The site provides an opportunity to enhance public beach access and provide additional beach parking.
- Opportunities exist for dune enhancement (for example: nuisance and non-native invasive plant removal, native plantings) as well as educational opportunities to inform the public about beach nesting and coastal migratory birds, sea turtles, and coastal habitats and processes.
- The Gulf Beach Setback Line (GBSL), a coastal regulatory boundary, crosses the property.
- Beach nesting bird nesting season extends from February to August each year. Snowy plovers, an imperiled species, have nested on Siesta Key for many years with nesting occurring primarily between Beach Accesses #5 and #10. These birds are small, difficult to see, and the nests are easily overlooked and easily destroyed.
- Piping plovers are also an imperiled species and migrate south to spend the winter along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and specifically on Siesta Key where they forage in the beach wrack and near shore habitat.
- Sea turtle nesting season extends from May to October; sea turtles nest on all of Sarasota’s beaches. lighting / light pollution is one of the greatest threats to sea turtles that nest, and hatch, on our beaches.

Current Activities, Next Steps, and Contact Information:

- Parks and Recreation staff have been working on removal of trash and debris from the property, and have coordinated the removal of non-native invasive vegetation, from within the dune area. Parks staff continues to coordinate with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC) and Sarasota Audubon on this type of work.
- A public meeting is scheduled for Oct. 29, 2009, to ensure opportunity for community participation and input for future site improvements at Siesta Beach Access #7. Notification of this meeting will be provided to neighbors, interested citizens, and published in local newspaper publications.
- For questions regarding the planning process, please contact Jessica Ritter at 861-5000 or jritter@scgov.net.