

ANNUAL REPORT

JOE EDMISTEN EXPERIMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PARK
(JEEEP)

By:

Joe A. Edmisten
Conservation Manager

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I INTRODUCTION

A 4.49-acre tract of land on Perdido Island previously owned by Indigo, LLC has been abandoned with its building density transferred to the Indigo condominium project across the road to the south on the Gulf of Mexico. This 4.49-acre tract of land has been set aside for various environmental uses, which include a protected habitat for the endangered Perdido Key Beach Mouse (PKBM), and such experimental uses in keeping with the conservation objectives set out in Article IV of the Covenants of the JEEEP charter. This document is the annual report required under Article III-B-2.

II ACTIVITIES

The JEEEP site has been inspected twice in the 2004 year and a photographic record was established on April 30, 2004. These include:

- (a) The status of the Perdido Key Beach Mouse:
While no trapping was conducted during either of the site visits, the clean sandy soils of the site were carefully examined after a rain for the existence of PKBM. No PKBM tracks were detected.
- (b) The control of the house mouse:
No attempts were made to trap the house mouse, which can compete with the PKBM, the site's clean sandy soils were carefully inspected for tracks. No tracks known or suspected to be of the house mouse were found. It should be noted that numerous tracks of raccoons, opossums, dogs, foxes, coyotes, snakes, lizards, large wading birds, house cats, and humans were abundant on the site.
- (c) The control of House Cats:
While house cat tracks were found on the site, no attempts were made to trap or control such cats since no PKBM nor house mice were suspected to be on the site.
- (d) Garbage and refuse control:
One can see in the photograph below that some trash from workers accumulated on the southwest corner of the site. This trash was picked up on two occasions and the contractors who hired the construction workers responsible for the trash were asked to provide trash receptacles for the workers.



Picture of debris and garbage from nearby construction has been discarded on the JEEEP site.

(e) Educational and informational programs and signage:

Pages 102 and 103 (attached) of Volume I. Mammals, Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida by Ray E. Ashton, Jr. have been reproduced for distribution to the Indigo residents. Since these pages have been published, there has been an expansion of PKBM numbers and their ranges in the central parts of Perdido Key. Another source of information is from the Department of Zoology, Auburn University, (attached)

<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/~mwooten/main.html>.

Various developments on Perdido Key have been required to set aside critical habitat on their sites to provide for habitat for mice and corridors provided for their movement. No signs have been designed or placed on the JEEEP site.

(f) Integrity of the protected area:

The JEEEP area is essentially unchanged and could be a valued habitat for the PKBM if it was connected by critical habitat to undeveloped lands to the east or the west. We are currently working with biologists with Escambia County, the Federal Fish and Wildlife Services, and the Florida Freshwater Fish and Game Commission to find ways to connect the JEEEP site with known PKBM habitats.

- (g) Status and effectiveness of the lighting plan:
No changes have been made on lights around the JEEEP site. The tennis courts on the Indigo land near the JEEEP site are standard for tennis courts. If the JEEEP site is improved for the PKBM and connected to known PKBM sites, we will investigate the modification of any lights near the site to those systems which are more compatible with the known nocturnal habits of the PKBM.
- (h) Integrity of the critical habitat:
The JEEEP site could become an ideal site for the PKBM if it was not isolated and if it was planted with Sea Oats. These are goals for the 2005 year.
- (i) Status of this Declaration of Abandonment:
No changes have occurred.
- (j) We have made no collections from the owners of units on the Indigo development. There appears to be no mechanism for the Conservation Manager to conduct such a collection. We hereby request that the Head Company aid in the creation of such a collection mechanism.
- (k) No action has occurred in this area dealing with employee and/or contractor training.
- (l) Suggestions that would improve the efficacy of the plan:
1. During 2003 and 2004, numerous efforts were made to have the US Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies, and Escambia County to have the JEEEP site declared and used as critical habitat for the PKBM. These efforts were associated with Fish and Wildlife Service employees as more and more building projects to the west of JEEEP were required to conduct PKBM studies and as these projects were required to set aside parts of their site as critical habitat for the mouse. These new developers were also required to make substantial monetary contributions to funds allocated for such PKBM building projects such as dune restoration and pedestrian cross over of existing and new dunes in public access areas.

The reasons that these federal, state, and county agencies have not recognized the JEEEP site as a critical habitat for the PKBM is that it is isolated and has a vegetation consisting of essentially weeds such as Camphor weed.

2. It is suggested that we continue to monitor the JEEEP site and urge these three regulatory agencies to recognize the JEEEP site as a critical link-in-a-chain of refuges which would eventually link PKBM

accepted zones in the state park to the west and the Gulf Islands National Seashore lands to the east.

3. It is also suggested and requested that the Head Company establish a mechanism to collect assessments from the owners of units at Indigo to fund further monitoring and to possibly plant the JEEEP site with Sea Oats to make it more desirable for the PKBM.
4. It is suggested that either the Indigo unit owners and/or the Head Company duplicate the two PKBM articles for distribution.
5. It is suggested that the Conservation Manager along with representatives from the federal, state, and county agencies concerned with the PKBM issue, conduct a workshop for the unit owners of Indigo.

III SUMMARY

During 2003 and 2004 since the creation of JEEEP in December of 2002, the site has been monitored for PKBM. Attempts have been made to have the US Fish and Wildlife Service to recognize and utilize the site as an official critical PKBM site.

Construction workers have littered the site and disturbed the site in a small area near where they park while working on the Indigo Condominium. These incursions have been corrected.

The Conservation Manager offers to conduct a workshop for the unit owners of Indigo to discuss the JEEEP project. The Conservation Manager requests that a proper funding mechanism be initiated for improving and maintaining the site.



Near the east end showing remnant of dune off site to the north.



East central area. Note that the site has been leveled.



Note the culvert that connects to wetland in center of site.



Looking northwest across site. The trees and shrubs are in central wetland.



Showing weeds and central wetland.



Workers have parked on the south central part of the site.



Picture showing the cleared, level, weedy nature of the site.



Picture showing area that should be planted with Sea Oats.



Note the barren disturbed soils.