



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 20-845A, Version: 1

Subject:

Proposed ordinance to amend the Pinellas County Code relating to Vessel Exclusion Zones.

Recommended Action:

Conduct a public hearing regarding a proposed ordinance (Attachment A) amending Section 130-107 to modify the location and size of the previously established Vessel Exclusion Zones.

- The ordinance will amend the previously established swim zones along the North Beach of Fort De Soto Park.
- The existing swim zone will be expanded to the north to include the lagoon between Outback Key and the park shoreline.
- A new Vessel Exclusion Zone will be added to the lagoon area to prevent swimmer and boater interaction.
- An area to the south, previously established as North Beach East, will be repealed.

Strategic Plan:

Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship

3.2 Preserve and manage environmental lands, beaches, parks, and historical assets

3.3 Protect and improve the quality of our water, air and other natural resources

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

The proposed ordinance will amend the previously established swim zones along the North Beach of Fort De Soto Park. The existing swim zone will be expanded to the north as to include the lagoon between Outback Key and the park shoreline. A new Vessel Exclusion Zone will be added to the lagoon area to prevent swimmer and boater interaction. An area to the south, previously established as North Beach East, will be repealed as a result of changes to the coastline that deem it unnecessary.

Background Information:

Definitions: Vessel Exclusion Zones prohibit all vessels from entering. A swim zone is a type of Vessel Exclusion Zone. Combustion Motor Exclusion Zones permit vessels to enter as long as the fuel-powered motor is not running. For example, a boat can enter under electric power (trolling motor), sail, or by pole into the zone.

In 2008, Ordinance 08-66 (Attachment B) was adopted that established swim areas along the North

Beach of Fort De Soto Park. North Beach East was designated as a Combustion Motor Exclusion Zone and North Beach West was designated Vessel Exclusion Zone (Attachment C).

Through natural shifting of the shoreline, the designation for North Beach East (Attachment D) has become unnecessary and the proposed ordinance recommends that it be repealed.

Conversely, the changes to the shoreline along North Beach West predicate the expansion of the area to eliminate safety concerns between swimmers and boaters. A lagoon has formed between the northern tip of Fort De Soto and a large sandbar known as Outback Key. The proposed ordinance would combine the new Outback Key Lagoon and North Beach West into a single Vessel Exclusion Zone (Attachment E).

Fiscal Impact:

No Fiscal Impact.

Staff Member Responsible:

Paul Cozzie, Director, Parks and Conservation Resources

Partners:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Attachments:

Attachment A_Outback Key Vessel Exclusion Zone Ord Clean 050520

Attachment B_Ord 08-66

Attachment C_Ft De Soto Aquatic Regulatory Zones

Attachment D_Fort De Soto - Combustion Motor Exclusion Zone

Attachment E_Ft De Soto - North Beach Vessel Exclusion Zone