

Palm Beach County drops application to put breakwaters off Singer Island

By **WILLIAM KELLY**

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Updated: 12:25 p.m. Monday, April 5, 2010

Posted: 12:05 p.m. Monday, April 5, 2010

Palm Beach County has withdrawn its application seeking federal environmental permission to build a series of breakwaters offshore at Singer Island.

"After close to three years (of effort), we've sort of reached an impasse," Leanne Welch, the county's shoreline program supervisor, said Monday.

The county wanted to build the breakwaters to protect oceanfront properties from wave damage along an eroded area of beach.

But the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which issues the federal environmental permits, encouraged the county to drop its application because of concerns the breakwaters would interfere with nesting sea turtles, Welch said.

The application was dropped on Friday.

Welch said the county is looking at other alternatives as part of plans to redesign the project.

The decision does not affect the county's application for state and federal environmental permission to build a breakwater offshore at South Palm Beach and in the southernmost part of Reach 8 in Palm Beach, she said.

An environmental impact statement is being drafted to discern the affects of that breakwater, and a meeting to assess public opinion will soon be scheduled, Welch said.

Paul Brazil, Palm Beach's public works director, said the withdrawal of the Singer Island application doesn't necessarily mean that permits won't eventually be approved for the South Palm Beach breakwaters. That project calls for offshore boulders along South Palm Beach's 5/8-mile shoreline and along the nearly a half-mile of shoreline in Palm Beach.

The \$30 million Singer Island project called for 11 limestone and granite structures placed in 12 feet of water to protect condominiums from beach-eroding waves.

The Surfrider Foundation and sea-turtle advocates objected to the mile-long series of wave-breaking structures that would have been the largest of its kind in Florida.

Objections to the structures raised by the Palm Beach County chapter of the Surfrider Foundation included arguments that the breakwaters would impede sea turtle nesting and reduce the survival rate of sea turtle hatchlings; degrade the value of the beach for surfing, swimming and fishing; increase beach erosion south of the breakwaters; and create a nautical hazard for boaters.

Brazil said the Corps also determined the Singer Island breakwaters would hurt Palm Beach by interrupting the natural south-to-north drift of sand into an offshore sand catch basin beside the Palm Beach Inlet. The town relies on the catch basin to collect sand that it pumps beneath the inlet onto the town's northern shoreline.

Find this article at:

<http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/palm-beach-county-drops-application-to-put-breakwaters-525193.html>

[Print this page](#)

[Close](#)