

News and Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Q4 Board Meeting Held 07/06/2024

Dog Island Conservation District

P.O. Box 14288

Tallahassee, FL 32317-4288

<http://dogislandconservationdistrict.org>



DOG ISLAND
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Important Alerts and Notices

Annual meeting and Q1, 2025 Board meeting to be held August 31 at 10:30 AM at the Yacht Club

Initial budget hearing September 7 at noon at the Yacht Club

(Meetings are weather permitting.)

Live Generously

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” --Helen Keller

It has been said by longtime Dog Islanders that on any given quiet night, if you listen closely, you can hear our machinery, vehicles and LCM rusting away. As you all know so well, maintaining, improving and insuring structures, keeping boats and cars running, and getting professional help on the island is a never-ending and costly proposition. Believe me, the Dog Island Conservation District has this fiscal stress and balancing act problem in spades!! Storm preparation, state-mandated expensive audits, contractual obligations, an airfield, docks and buildings, heavy machinery, road maintenance and refuse removal, environmental and safety concerns, and numerous insurance policies are just some of our responsibilities needing balancing and full funding.

Now, imagine trying to accomplish all that and more, to a high standard, on a dedicated ad valorem tax annual revenue stream of \$120,000, plus “user fees” and DONATIONS. (Remember, on a typical Franklin County tax payment the District only receives about a quarter of the amount collected, i.e., a \$2000 property tax outlay on your part equates to about \$550 to the District as our total share.) The District’s aging infrastructure (the LCM was built in the 1940s, the old section of the harbor ferry dock in the 1950s) along with our escalating operating costs compel this request for your financial assistance. Would you consider sending your Dog Island Conservation District a tax-deductible donation? It can be for the hurricane preparedness/FEMA match fund, ongoing and future dock repair work, stewardship and environmental programs (like underwriting the Sheriff’s patrols on busy holidays), airport maintenance, capital improvements, or the less glamorous but still vital submerged land lease and audit and insurance payments. Whatever current or future concerns are of importance to you, please show your commitment by investing in our endeavors. So much can be taken for granted; it is so easy to let things slip. It is vital that we all attempt to keep this special and truly unique place viable, solvent and forever beautiful.

Many thanks to those individuals and families who have so generously supported the summer bird nesting protections, the renewal of the shop electrical system and our continuing attempt to fully subscribe the storm preparedness dedicated fund.

Send your tax-deductible DICD donation to: Dog Island Conservation District, PO Box 14288, Tallahassee FL 32317. On the memo line, if your donation is intended for the Hurricane Preparedness fund, please specify.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Special Reports

Shorebirds of Dog Island

Natasza Fontaine, Audubon Florida - Apalachicola Shorebird Biologist

Hello Dog Island,

From enjoying solitude, fishing, long undisturbed walks on the beach, and community, Dog Island is a special place for residents and visitors. But did you know how unique this fantastic location is to shorebirds? This year, the island had nesting American Oystercatchers, Wilson's Plovers, Snowy Plovers, and Least Terns. The breeding will end in mid-August with some successes and losses.

This season, quite a few Snowy Plovers were nesting on Dog Island. These birds, a state-designated threatened species, have found a safe haven on the island and adults work hard to protect their eggs and young from the elements. As stewards, we do our best to protect these birds during the breeding season, as their cryptic nests and eggs are incredibly challenging to see. These birds can be difficult to spot and accidentally stepping on eggs is a reality, which is why we ask all dogs to be on a leash and post specific areas around the island to protect these beautiful birds. Dog Island is one of the best places to raise their young—**let's work together to share the shore, and help these birds survive and thrive** on this important breeding ground.



Snowy Plover Nest



Adult Snowy Plover



Welcome to the world!



The American Oystercatcher, much larger than the Snowy Plover, is a great bird to watch from a distance. Dog Island had a few nests, and as with Snowy Plovers, the American Oystercatcher nests are cryptic and susceptible to being stepped on.

Another reason to keep your distance was to prevent predation. Often, when an adult is scared off a nest, Laughing Gulls and other predators swoop in and

take advantage of exposed eggs. Now that breeding season has ended **let's help them recover by giving them space to forage undisturbed on the shared shoreline.**



Now that nesting season has come to an end, what's next? It's the exciting cycle of migration. Shorebird wellness during migration and overwintering is equally as important as the success of the nesting season. Shorebirds travel thousands of miles to their wintering grounds and need healthy habitats to feed and rest while they fuel up for their long journey. **Dog Island is an important stopover and wintering site for many species**, including the threatened Piping Plover.



Piping Plover

As migration ramps up, you'll start to see many **rare to Florida species**, such as the American Golden- Plover. This long-distance migrant often uses the island as a stopover site, fattening up before heading to Central and South America. As with the breeding season, giving these birds space to rest and refuel is essential. Appreciating the birds from a distance and keeping your dogs on a leash is important. **Let's continue to work as a team on Dog Island and help these birds survive and thrive year-round!**



American Golden-Plover



Sanderling

If you would like to get involved in stewarding or to find out more information, please visit Audubon Florida's website: <https://fl.audubon.org/get-involved/coastal-bird-stewardship> or email Natasza Fontaine at natasza.fontaine@audubon.org or Alie MacVicar Alexandra.Macvicar@audubon.org.

Mangrove Communities on Dog Island

Rachel Biton, Graduate Research Student
Florida State University Coastal & Marine Laboratory

Over the past few decades, *Rhizophora mangle* and *Avicennia germinans* mangroves have expanded to northern range limits in Florida. While global-scale climate factors driving mangrove presence and absence are well-understood, there is a knowledge gap regarding the environmental variables that explain differences in mangrove distribution, abundance, and physical structure on a smaller scale within northern Florida's expanding range limits. This study is one of the first systematic efforts to document differences in the physical structure of mangroves across five sites in Franklin and Wakulla counties, covering approximately 0.5 degrees of latitude in the northern Gulf of Mexico. It also investigates two environmental factors, one being nutrient content and the other is the effects of winter freezing temperatures, both of which may influence the physical structure of mangroves in the region.

My research is conducted through Florida State University's Coastal and Marine Laboratory, under the advisement of Dr. Josh Breithaupt. One of my field sites is located at the Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve on the eastern edge of Dog Island. Air temperature loggers were initially deployed to test for spatial heterogeneity in winter temperatures. However, the unexpected occurrence of severe winter storm Elliot in December 2022, approximately nine days after logger deployment, provided an opportunity to analyze the spatial variability of freezing temperatures during the event. A total of four air temperature loggers were placed in mangroves and salt marsh vegetation to autonomously record air temperature. One logger was attached inside the mangrove canopy at the fringe or shoreline edge, and another in a mangrove located in the interior section of Dog Island. Two additional loggers were deployed on PVC poles: one at the *Spartina alterniflora* at the fringe and one in the *Juncus roemerianus* salt marsh vegetation in the interior section. The occurrence of a severe freeze event on December 24, 2022, allowed for the evaluation and comparison of mangrove freeze responses. Plot-level data were collected, including observations of leaf damage and mortality assessments of red and black mangroves on Dog Island (Figure 1).

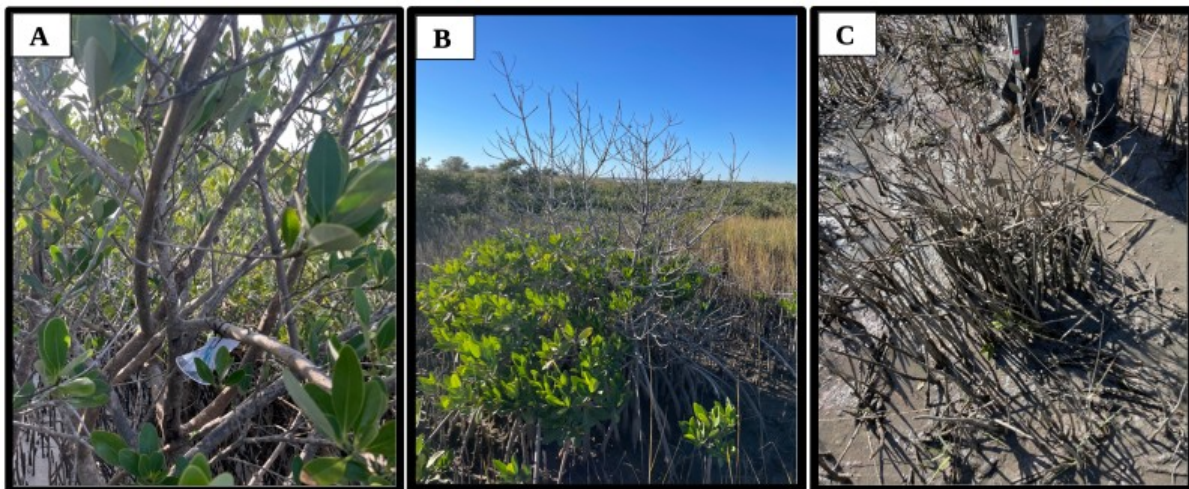


Figure 1. A) Air temperature logger placed inside a black mangrove located on the fringe edge of Dog Island. B) Red mangrove showing 100% freeze damage and mortality, surrounded by live saplings. C) Black mangrove displaying 100% freeze damage after the winter storm Elliot in December of 2022.

This research will be the first step in explaining differences in the physical structure of mangrove communities on Dog Island. The findings may be useful for resource managers and planners evaluating potential shoreline changes in this region over the coming decades as climate change continues. The goal of this project is to provide valuable information about mangrove populations to scientists and other community members. Understanding environmental drivers to mangrove expansion is increasingly important for predicting future expansion and establishment into other ecological habitats. Most importantly, this project aims to better inform local community members, researchers, homeowners, stakeholders, and resource management officials in the bay region of Dog Island. Results from this work may be a first step in addressing whether the mangrove distribution and structure in this region will resemble its current state or whether stakeholders should prepare for a landscape like mangrove forests in South Florida in 50 years from now.



Mangrove Freeze Damage



Figure 1: Mangrove Research

SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON IS HERE!



PHOTO BY RACHEL SMITH

Loggerhead, green and leatherback sea turtles nest on Florida's beaches from May 1 through October 31.

You can help to protect sea turtles!

Give Birds Space

Wintering grounds are critical for shorebird survival



Many birds flew a long way, and need this beach to rest and refuel

Minutes of the Q4 Board Meeting, July 6, 2024

Call to Order:

10:32 a.m. Board Members present: Mr. Stone, Mr. Will, Ms. Kellett, Mr. Brady, and Mr. Hudson.

Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Kellett motions approval, Mr. Hudson seconds, approved unanimously.

Approval of previous minutes:

Motion Mr. Brady, second Ms. Kellett, approved unanimously.

Chair Report:

The Chair reminded those present that we are still in the midst of sea/shorebird and turtle nesting season, and he asked everyone to adapt their behavior in response. Leashing dogs, staying well away from demarcated nesting sites, walking in wet sand away from nesting areas and giving them wide leeway to avoid disturbing them helps these threatened and endangered visiting shorebirds succeed in raising and fledging their young. Also, leaving nothing on the beach after dusk and turning out or shielding all lights when not actually needed for safe home access, having your children and visitors refrain from the use of flashlights at night on the beach, eliminating sky glow and keeping our skies dark allow turtles to successfully lay their eggs and the hatchlings to find their way to sea. Dog Island plays an important role in the success of these threatened animals, so let us all do our part this summer by doing these simple things. The Chair publicly thanked Audubon and the Nature Conservancy for their efforts and partnership and acknowledged TNC's underwriting of the services of the Sheriff's officers over the long July 4th holiday. The Chair also spoke of people who are inappropriately and unlawfully driving on the beach west of Cannonball. He emphasized that no road exists there. Private property extends from bay to beach, meaning that driving there is trespassing, and, since beach driving is a violation of Franklin County law, a criminal offense with consequences.



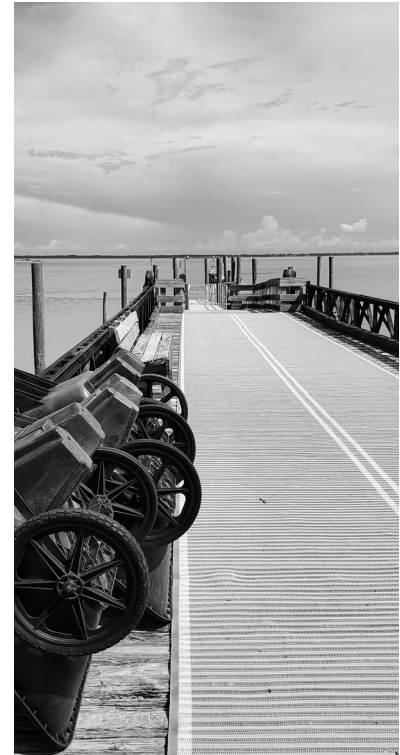
Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Brady distributed the most recent financial statements. He discussed the balance sheet and explained the FEMA/Hurricane Response segregated interest-bearing account as well as the current balances in our checking and SBA accounts. He then reviewed the income and expense statement, commenting on the shop repair and its cost. The current budget year ends September 30th, and as part of the preparations for next year's proposed budget, he learned from Franklin County that the taxable

values within the DICD have increased, resulting in a net increase to the District tax revenue stream of \$3800. Mr. Brady made a point of thanking the many people involved in the work of the island. Mr. Hudson motioned approval of the report, Mr. Will seconded, approved unanimously.

Island Manager Report:

Mr. Buckley talked about the recent shop repairs. The leaks have been dealt with, but rainwater continues to come in via the roll doors where they meet the slab. After some delay the electrical and lighting work there is now complete, and a very useful power outlet has been added to the Tyson Harbor LCM finger dock. The flatbed attachment for the hook truck has been completely repaired and painted and had new decking installed on it; however, the hook truck itself needs work to repair the attachment points where the hook mechanism attaches to the frame of the truck. He wanted to make the Board aware that the newer of the compactor receivers needs blasting and painting because it is blistering in many places due to oxidation. Solutions and time frames for this repair were discussed, and the Board advised Mr. Buckley to find a sandblaster/painter and an appropriate window of opportunity to have the work completed. Soon, a cell phone-attached credit card reader will allow the island manager to accept this form of payment in addition to cash and checks for services rendered. This should eliminate any nonpayment at point of service issues and be a convenience for island homeowners.



Volunteer Fire Department Committee Report:

The Fire Chief Mr. Cannon reminded everyone that the following day was the pancake breakfast beginning at 8 a.m., the Volunteer Fire Department's largest fundraiser. The restroom and A/C at the firehouse are working. They are awaiting the final Duke Energy decision on the placement of their proposed storage facility. Once built it should free up a bay of the firehouse, possibly to be used to house the SUV used for transport in medical emergencies. The larger of their two fire trucks, which had not been operational, is back up and running and has three times the water-carrying capacity of the smaller truck. The Fire Department is fiscally sound currently, but any large equipment replacement necessary would be extremely costly. They have acquired smaller firefighting hand tools recently. Mr. Cannon talked about the work of the fire department, noting that a large part of it is dedicated to emergency medical response. He thanked Mr. Sparrow for his work on their building's roof and talked about the WeatherSTEM station located at the District's shop area. Mr. Brady moved acceptance of the report, Ms. Kellett seconded, approved unanimously.

Airport Committee Report:

This committee remains in flux after the loss of Dr. Backerman, its longtime Chairman. After discussion as to how to proceed, and at the urging of the DICD Chair, Mr. Gronholm said that while a committee of interested Dog Island aviators was being assembled, he would serve as an interim Chairman. Mr. Gronholm has been contacting a list of pilots in an attempt to collect annual dues, Mr. Cannon is preparing the necessary report on the airstrip for the State of Florida, and they agreed to replace the landing fee collection box on the airfield.

Old Business

A. Shop Repair: A discussion was held regarding shop repair. Mr. Will stated that the shop repair was completed, including a new electrical panel and lighting, and the remaining leaks are around the roll doors. Sealing around the block knee wall was discussed, but no action was taken. Mr. Buckley was pleased with the progress at the shop, and Mr. Will was thanked for his efforts on behalf of the District.

B. Hurricane Preparation: Mr. Stone stated the need to expand the information transfer in that area. Mr. Will agreed to take on that responsibility. People need to be aware of the Island Emergency Management Plan, including contacts. After a storm, property owners need to move debris to the edge of the roadway as soon as possible. This should be done within a few weeks after the storm, so that the District can notify the State to initiate pickup. Ken Jones and a company called Aftermath are the contractors. Mr. Jones' contract is in place, but Aftermath's must be extended. Motion by Mr. Brady to extend the Aftermath contract with a cost adjustment as reflected in the Consumer Price Index from the U.S. government, second by Mr. Will, motion passed unanimously. Ms. Kellett reminded people to please contribute to the Hurricane Response fund for matching purposes.



C. Parking: The ferry landing parking lot in Carrabelle is small. However, many times more parking decals have been given out than there are available spaces. Mr. Stone suggested that the District create and distribute two hang-tag parking permits to each homeowner, tied to that home property, and numbered accordingly. This would also require a towing protocol and a process for replacing lost or stolen hang tags. A lengthy discussion ensued, concluding with a motion by Mr. Brady to install proper legal signage, monitor who is parking in the lot, and issue permits at no cost to homeowners according to the Franklin County Property Appraiser's database, second by Mr. Will, passed unanimously. **Beginning in January 2025, cars parked in the lot without a valid hang tag will be towed at the owner's expense.**

New Business

A. On-going or Board subjects: Chair brought up maintenance on the LCM gate, which requires attention. Treasurer has money budgeted for that and other maintenance. Motion by Mr. Hudson that the issue be tabled until the September meeting, second by Mr. Will, passed unanimously.

Chair noted that the support system for the railings on the Carrabelle dock was failing. Chair received a cost estimate of \$6600 maximum to make necessary repairs, including painting and disposal, subject to adjustment if more problems were found. Motion by Mr. Brady to move forward with the dock repair, second by Mr. Hudson, passed unanimously.

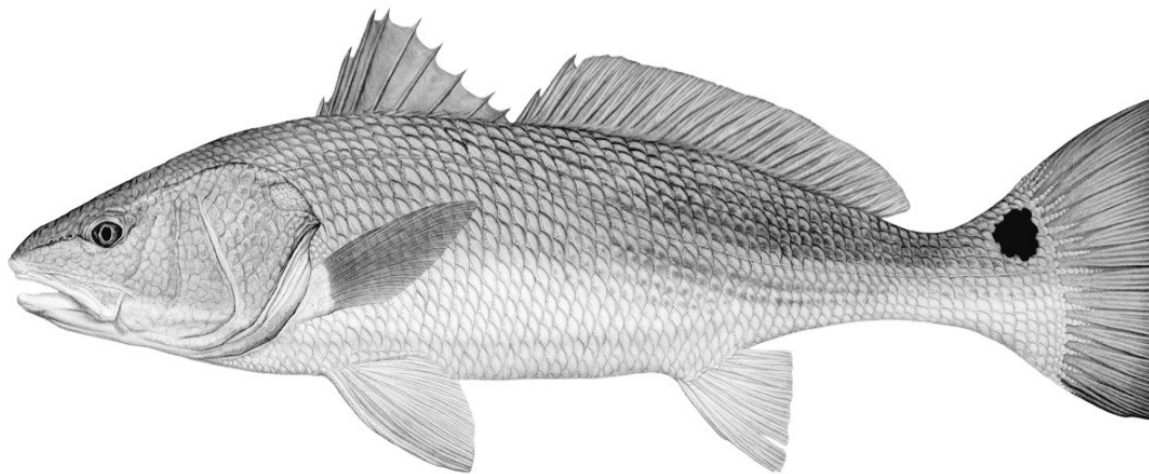
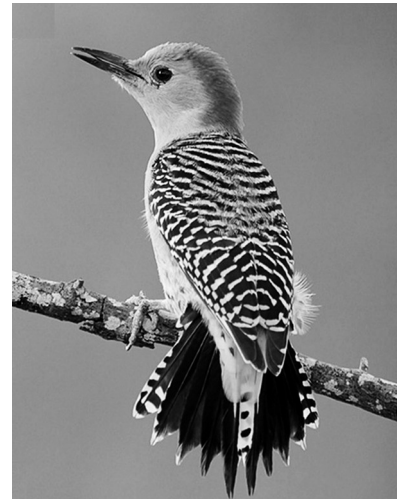
A discussion was held regarding the initial required annual budget hearing. This meeting normally takes place immediately after the required District Board meeting the Saturday before Labor Day, but this year will take place September 7 at noon at the Yacht Club.

Discussion by Ms. Kellett regarding the International Coastal Cleanup. The date is usually the third Saturday in September. It was agreed that Dog Island would participate this year in memory of Ada Long, longtime former local coordinator.

Mr. Will raised the issue of developing a plan for replacing the island ferry dock. Mr. Stone provided some historical perspective. Mr. Will will look into this further regarding engineering, cost and technical feasibility. Mr. Brady will look further into the insurance issue.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Kellett, second Mr. Brady, passed unanimously.



Please Help The Dog Island Conservation District Stay Beautiful!

To have derelict vehicles, golf carts, boat trailers, four wheelers, etc. removed at no charge, contact Mr. Greg Buckley, our Island Manager, during office hours and arrange for their removal.

To dispose of non-household kitchen/bath items such as lumber, appliances, furniture, roofing materials, large cardboard packaging/boxes, etc. please contact Mr. Buckley and arrange with him where and when to place such items and please pay the \$2.00/cubic foot cost. *Update: The District is now accepting credit cards!*

Remember—Household garbage (Kitchen/Bath) **ONLY** in our compactor **PLEASE!**

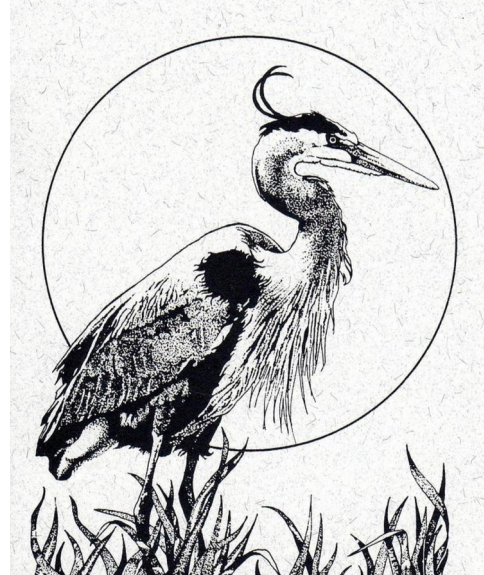
THANK YOU for your assistance! Greg Buckley (850) 943-0604



Next Up: Annual Meeting and Q1 2025 DICD Board Meeting: August 31, 2024 10:30am at DICD Yacht Club

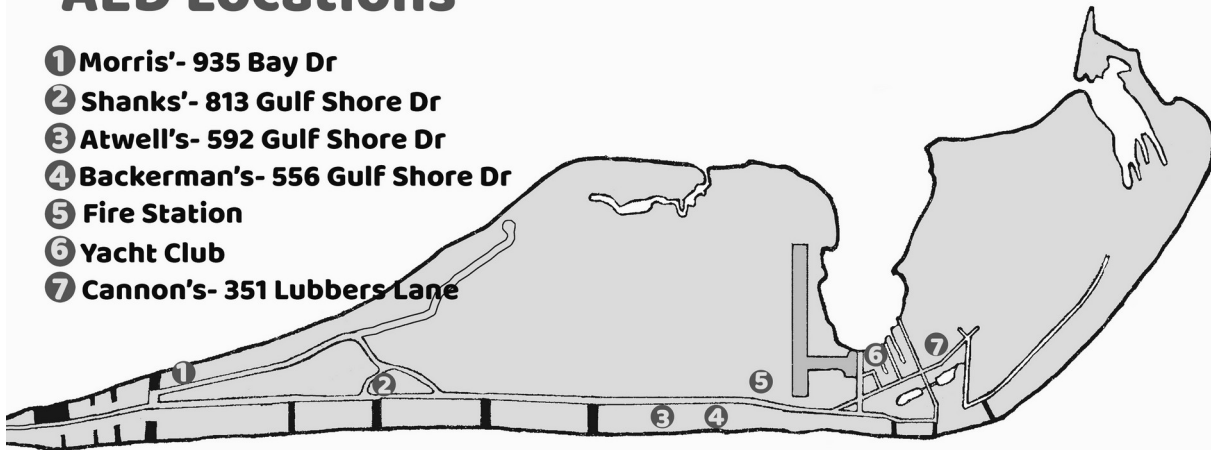
Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Chairman Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Island Manager Report
7. Volunteer Fire Department Report
8. Airport Committee Report
9. Old Business
 - A) Parking
 - B) Ferry Docks
 - C) LCM/Compactor Receivers
10. New Business
 - A) Seating of Board Members and Election of Officers
 - B) On-going or Board subjects
 - C) For the good of the order
11. Adjourn



AED Locations

- ① Morris'- 935 Bay Dr
- ② Shanks'- 813 Gulf Shore Dr
- ③ Atwell's- 592 Gulf Shore Dr
- ④ Backerman's- 556 Gulf Shore Dr
- ⑤ Fire Station
- ⑥ Yacht Club
- ⑦ Cannon's- 351 Lubbers Lane



Handy Reference Information

DICD Website: <http://dogislandconservationdistrict.org>. Includes legal descriptions, financial reports, board member contacts, newsletter archives, and more about the DICD.

The Dog Island Guide: <https://dogisland.net/dog-island-guide>. A project that is independent of the DICD and contains emergency contacts and other information about living on the island: owning and building, transportation, long-term living, hurricanes, and island wildlife.

REMEMBER!



**PLEASE
KEEP OFF
THE DUNES
AND
BEACH GRASS**

