



## Coastal Eco-Group, Inc.

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March 16, 2022

Mr. Robert Weber, Coastal Program Manager  
Town of Palm Beach Public Works Department  
951 Old Okeechobee Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**Re: Proposal for the 2022 regulatory hardbottom monitoring and report required by the Beach Management Agreement (BMA) for the 2020 Mid-Town Beach Nourishment Project and Palm Beach Harbor Disposal Project in Reach 2**

Dear Mr. Weber:

Coastal Eco-Group is pleased to provide the Town of Palm Beach with the following proposal for the 2022 regulatory monitoring required by the BMA for the 2020 Mid-Town Beach Nourishment Project and the Palm Beach Harbor Disposal Project in Reach 2. The specific scope of work to be implemented in 2022 is based on FDEP's revised Cell-Wide Monitoring and Mitigation Plans (Appendix B of the BMA) that will be finalized by FDEP in 2022. This proposal is being submitted to the Town on a Time and Materials–Not to Exceed basis for the services as described herein.

This scope covers the 2022 Year 2 post-construction regulatory monitoring for the 2020 Mid-Town Beach Nourishment Project and data analyses/report preparation of the 2022 annual report. The 2022 report will include evaluation of potential project-related effects of the 2020 Mid-Town Beach Nourishment Project relative to variability documented at the BMA transects (data/report to be provided by others) in the evaluation of project-related effects. The 2022 survey is the first survey with regulatory monitoring for the Palm Beach Harbor Disposal Project in Reach 2. Transect R-80.5 had been treated as natural variability transect in the original BMA monitoring plan. The 2022 survey is the first survey of this transect as a regulatory transect for the Palm Beach Harbor Disposal Project. Additionally, a new regulatory transect will be installed at R-82 and monitored for the first time during the 2022 field survey.

The specific scope of work to be implemented is based on the expected 2022 revisions to the BMA Cell-Wide Monitoring and Mitigation Plans. Methods repeated directly from the BMA cell-wide monitoring plan is shown in italics below.

### **Nearshore hardbottom edge survey**

The nearshore hardbottom edge adjacent to the Mid-Town project area (FDEP control monument R-87 south to R-105) will be mapped by divers. The nearshore hardbottom edge is defined as the western border of exposed hardbottom areas, or the position of the landward most visible border between sand and hardbottom defined by emergent biota. Survey mapping

methods are compliant with the BMA cell-wide monitoring plan for mapping of the nearshore hardbottom edge.

A two-person dive team (one scuba diver/one snorkeler) will follow the nearshore edge; one diver will follow the edge on the bottom and collect digital video documentation while the snorkeler on the surface pushes a float with a SP60 GNSS receiver directly above the diver on bottom. The SP60 GNSS Receiver transmits continuous, corrected positions to an XDL Rover 2 radio on the survey vessel. These positions are transmitted to a handheld tablet on the vessel via Bluetooth technology. This system allows the dive team to map the hardbottom edge untethered to the vessel. The positions are simultaneously viewed and stored as a shapefile in ArcPad on the tablet during the field survey.

The hardbottom video and relief characterization points will be georeferenced in the field. The video diver will take periodic relief measurements along the hardbottom edge. The snorkeler will signal to the vessel to record a GPS point at the location of each relief measurement, and each point will be assigned a number, which is then relayed back to the diver on bottom. Coordinates will also be taken to georeference the video record; the snorkeler will signal the boat at the beginning of each video segment, and a coordinate will be recorded. In the office, navigational data collected from the vessel-based mapping system will be imported into ArcGIS 10.7.1 and exported as a single line shapefile containing numerous line segments. Relief measurements will be exported as a separate point shapefile. The final video record will be georeferenced with the video reference points, and the video will be hyperlinked in the attribute table of the GIS point shapefile. An ArcMap document with video hyperlinks will be submitted to the FDEP and Town on an external hard drive.

### **Permanent Transects**

**Table 1** provides a list of the regulatory benthic and sediment transects in the Mid-Town Project monitoring area that will be monitored during the 2022 survey. The regulatory transects in the Mid-Town area have been shortened to a maximum length of 150 m. The updrift/downdrift transects at R-88 and R-103 and two former BMA transects within the Mid-Town Project area, R-94 and R-95 natural, have been re-classified as Mid-Town regulatory transects and will be used to evaluate project-related effects.

In Reach 2, the 150-m Transect R-80.5 will be monitored and a new 150-m transect will be installed and monitored at R-82. Permanent markers (e.g., nails, eye-bolts, pins) will be installed at 25-m intervals along the new transect and at all permanent quadrat locations. The permanent location of each transect (and marker points) shall be recorded (DGPS) and reported for the baseline monitoring event. All quadrats shall measure 0.5 m<sup>2</sup> (0.7 m x 0.7 m) in area and shall be employed at a ratio of 0.13 quadrats per meter of transect such that a total of 10 m<sup>2</sup> of area (N=20 quadrats) is sampled along the 150-m long transect

**Table 1. Town of Palm Beach Mid-Town Regulatory Benthic and Sediment Transects**

Transect	Length (m)	Date of Installation	Baseline Survey Date
R-88	150	10/30/2014	12/17/2014
R-90	150	10/20/2014	12/16/2014
T-14	150	10/3/2014	12/14/2014
T-13	150	10/2/2014	12/15/2014
R-91	150	10/3/2014	12/16/2014
R-92	150	10/17/2014	12/15/2014
R-93	150	10/17/2014	12/15/2014
R-94	150	10/29/2014	12/17/2014
Breakers Artificial Rockpile	185	10/22/2014	12/17/2014
R-95 (Breaker's Natural)	60	10/22/2014	12/17/2014
T-9	150	10/2/2014	12/14/2014
T-8	56	10/1/2014	12/14/2014
T-7	62	10/1/2014	12/13/2014
R-97	75.2	10/22/2014	12/15/2014
T-6	83	10/1/2014	12/13/2014
R-98	94	10/20/2014	12/15/2014
T-5	78	9/30/2014	12/13/2014
R-99	95	10/20/2014	12/16/2014
T-4	90	9/30/2014	12/13/2014
R-100	117	10/22/2014	12/16/2014
R-101	107.3	10/22/2014	12/16/2014
R-103	150	10/29/2014	12/17/2014

## **BMA ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING SURVEY METHODS**

### ***Transect Survey Methodology***

*During the monitoring event, the transect shall be set up (plotted) by a diver extending a measuring tape the distance of the transect, with each end secured to the end of the transect by a permanent pin. Sediment measurements shall be made, a video survey shall be conducted, and benthic quadrat sampling shall occur along the transect to measure the types and distribution of the benthic communities, as well as the relief and sedimentation features of the hardbottom. The sediment measurements shall be the first data collection event to occur following set up of the transect in order to have the least sediment disturbance. Video data and benthic quadrat surveys will follow sediment measurements. Transects include all data collections listed below, unless specified to be “sedimentation only” transects. If “sedimentation only” transects are specified, only that protocol shall be utilized.*

### **Sediment Measurements: Line Intercept and Sediment Depth Measurements.**

*In order to track changes in sediment cover over and across the hardbottom within the cell, line intercept and sediment depth measurements will be conducted along each transect. These surveys shall be conducted first, after the transect is set up, in order to measure undisturbed*

*sediments. These surveys provide documentation of sediment cover and movement over the hardbottom, as well as information about where sediment accumulation is occurring over hardbottom.*

- i. Interval sediment depth measurements document sediment movement and dynamics within each transect. Sediment depth shall be measured and recorded to the nearest centimeter, at every other meter mark (0m, 2m, 4m, etc.). For the measurement, a stainless-steel ruler, graduated in centimeters (0 cm to 30 cm), shall be pressed through the sediments until the ruler reaches surface of hard substrate or totally immersed in sand. Sand thickness of less than 0.5 cm will be recorded as 0, more than 0.5 cm but equal or less than 1 cm will be recorded as 1cm, etc. Measurements greater than 30 cm will be recorded as >30 cm. Measurements shall follow the entire length of the transect excluding sand patches over 0.5m that would be recorded in the line intercept survey, as described below. Measurements would be recorded in a table printed in waterproof paper, labeled in 2m increments with the transect number. For reporting purposes, results will be summarized in a Microsoft Excel format spreadsheet. Annual reports shall include average sediment depths for each transect, the entire monitoring area, and for zones 0-30m; 30m-60m; 60m- 100m; and 100m -150 (200) m, or more detailed if necessary.*
- ii. The line-intercept survey would be used to document larger areas of uninterrupted sand (patches and troughs over 0.5m measured width along the transect). Sediment dynamics within the monitoring area are characterized by changes in dimensions of such sand patches. The western and eastern edge of each sand patch/trough will be recorded during the line-intercept survey.*

*Sediment depth will be measured at one point, in the middle of the patch, if the patch is 0.5 m to 1.5 meters wide, and at three points if the patch width is over 1.5 m (0.5m from each edge into the patch and in the middle of the patch). For reporting purposes, patches will be graphically displayed in a bar graph of each transect for the comparison of their dynamics over time.*

#### *Video Surveys of Transects*

*The video survey of the transect serves as an archived data set for reference or resolution of unclear data from the quadrat and sediment surveys. As mentioned above and prior to the survey, a measuring tape should be extended along the length of the transect, in order to clearly mark the location along the transect in meters for accurate video reference. The video of hardbottom along each transect will be taken using a digital camera, with the videographer swimming at a rate no faster than five (5) meters per minute and holding the camera at a height of forty (40) centimeters above the hardbottom. A convergent laser guidance system shall be utilized to indicate the precise height of the camera at 40 cm from the bottom. Prior to commencement and at the end of each transect line documentation, an underwater display containing the transect number, depth, and date will be videotaped and integrated directly onto the digital video record; additionally, a 360° panoramic view will be recorded both at the beginning and at the end of each transect from the elevation of about 1m above bottom and at the angle about 30° to the horizon. Geographic Positioning System (GPS) navigational coordinates (Florida State Plane Coordinate System, East Zone NAD 83) of the video transect locations will be overlaid on recent aerial photography and included in the project monitoring reports.*

Quadrat Data Collection Along Transects

All quadrats measure 0.5 m<sup>2</sup> (0.7 m x 0.7 m) in area and shall be employed at a ratio of 0.13 quadrats per meter of transect such that a total of 10 m<sup>2</sup> of area (N=20 quadrats) is sampled along each 150-m long transect.

*The northeast corner of the quadrat will align with a particular meter mark of transect, and a nail will be installed to mark the location of this meter mark, in order to facilitate repeat sampling of the same quadrat in successive surveys.*

*Quadrat monitoring includes the following measurements:*

- i. Hardbottom relief measurements;*
- ii. Species documentation (this shall include functional groups including algae and benthic sessile organisms, % cover of these groups if >1%, and octocorals and stony coral specific measurements);*
- iii. Sediment depth; and*
- iv. Percent cover by sediments*

*Datasheets will have a standardized layout similar to that used in BEAMR (Baron and Lybolt, 2006), and will simplify data collection and entry for statistical treatment.*

*Visual estimates of percent cover of all sessile benthos shall be pooled to 15 major functional groups. Functional groups are: sediments\*, macroalgae\*\*, turf algae\*\*\*, encrusting red algae\*\*\*\*, sponges, hydroids, octocorals, scleractinian corals, tunicates, bare hard substrate, zoanthids, hydrocorals Millepora sp., sessile worms (including wormrock, Phragmatopoma spp.), bivalves, and bryozoans. Each functional group is given a percent cover value (0-100%, with a minimum of 1%; if less than 1%, the functional group or a species is simply listed) and the total cover of all functional groups is 100%. The macroalgae percent cover will be characterized by total cover, and percent cover by the dominant macroalgae (if a particular species/genus has >5% cover). All other macroalgae will be also identified at least to the genus level and listed. The quadrat in situ method is limited to organisms that can be visually recorded and identified in the field, similarly to all other non-invasive and non-consumptive methods of sampling.*

*Each colony of octocoral and scleractinian coral will be identified, as well as the maximum height for octocorals, and the width for scleractinian corals will be measured to the nearest centimeter. The smallest size recorded is one (1) centimeter; for colonies less than one (1) centimeter the record would be <1cm. Octocorals will be identified to at least the genus level, and scleractinian corals will be identified to the species level. Abnormal conditions of each colony will be recorded (e.g., bleaching, disease, predation, etc.).*

*In addition to the species being recorded within the quadrats, all species of benthic invertebrates (identified to at least genus level) will be recorded within a 1 meter belt.*

*\* Sediments characterized by circling of the descriptor, or giving short additional characterization (e.g., rubble, or circled descriptor sand and then + shell hash, etc.)*

*\*\* Macroalgae include fleshy macroalgae and geniculate calcareous algae, e.g. Halimeda); non-geniculate calcareous branching red algae write separately*

*\*\*\* Turf algae include all algae with thallium less than 10mm and forming dense cover*

*\*\*\*\* Encrusting red algae recorded separately for non-calcareous and calcareous (% + %)*

## Data Analyses and Report Development

Preparation of the 2022 survey data deliverables (Microsoft Access database of monitoring data, Excel summary sheets, and electronic library of raw monitoring data (scanned field datasheets), GIS shape files, photos and video will be conducted according to the requirements of the BMA cell-wide monitoring plan. The 2022 Mid-Town and Reach 2 regulatory data will be entered into the BMA Access database with two rounds of QA/QC review of all entered data. The 2022 Mid-Town data will be exported and summarized in individual Excel spreadsheets. The survey data deliverable shall be submitted to the FDEP and the Town on an external hard drive. Data analyses and statistical treatment will be conducted according to the below.

### Data Analysis and Product Development

*Quantitative data on the major benthic biological components, e.g., percent cover, abundance, distribution by size, and species lists as well as a statistical evaluation and comparison (paired or multiple) of the data collected along the permanent transects will help to determine the amount of the hardbottom type and ecological functions over time. This will determine if the ecological functions of the hardbottom habitat are impacted by a beach nourishment project. This database would facilitate efficient QA/QC operations, data management, and will also be filed to a uniform GIS database. The results of these analyses will be included in the yearly reports due to the Department. The following are required.*

- i. Multivariate Benthic Community Analyses and Univariate Analyses of Physical Habitat Data. *A table of hardbottom types (according to the classification system for the BMA) will be maintained annually to evaluate and track the changes in communities over time. It will be used to determine 1) if the amount of each type of hardbottom is being maintained over time and the natural variability of the fluctuations of that type; and 2) if a loss is due to a project. Unanticipated project induced impacts will initiate compliance and enforcement action. Once natural variation can be conclusively determined within the cell, this information could be utilized for better resource management in future regulatory actions.*
- ii. Statistical Tests. *The following includes a list of suggested statistical tests to be performed with each single survey dataset to compare between annual surveys as well as between annual survey and the Habitat Map of Hardbottom:*
  - a. Percent Cover - Benthic Functional Groups. *The simplest and one of the most effective statistical comparisons is provided by the estimations of % changes in cover, biodiversity, size class distribution, area of distribution, sediment cover, and sediment thickness. Changes expressed in percentages provide the clearest picture of the changes occurring in the hardbottom communities as a result of each nourishment or natural event. These results are to be presented in tabulated and graphical form. It is also important to understand that the statistical significance of change in the absolute value of a parameter or in %, does not necessarily reflect a critical threshold e.g. in sediment accumulation that can change the character of hardbottom community; such thresholds can be identified only experimentally.*
  - b. Similarity Analyses.

- i. *Non-Parametric Statistics using PRIMER-E (v6) (Clark and Gorley, 2006), such as the following listed below:*
  - a. *Similarity matrix – Bray-Curtis and/or Euclidean Distance similarity matrices display similarity between samples for further analysis. This should be calculated between every pair of samples.*
  - b. *Cluster analysis with Similarity Profile (SIMPROF) – Simple agglomerative, hierarchal clustering which creates a dendrogram from a similarity matrix to display significant differences.*
  - c. *MDS ordination – A complex numerical algorithm based on a similarity matrix among samples (transects). This constructs a “map” of the samples which attempts to satisfy all the conditions imposed by the rank similarity matrix.*
  - d. *Analysis of Similarity (ANOSIM) – Operate on a resemblance matrix and carry out an approximate analogue of the standard univariate 1- and 2-way ANOVA tests. Allows for the test of the null hypothesis that there are no assemblage differences between groups of samples specified by the factors. Generates a histogram and provides R-statistic and p-values.*
  - e. *Similarity of Percentage (SIMPER) – Looks at the role of individual taxa in contributing to the separation (dissimilarity) between two groups of samples (e.g., Artificial vs. Natural).*
  - f. *Second Stage Analysis (2STAGE) – Gives a succinct summary in a 2-d picture of the relationship between the multivariate sample patterns under various choices (e.g., a disturbance in the temporal patterns of controls vs. impact could be detected by a 2STAGE analysis). This includes resemblance, MDS and ANOSIM.*
- ii. *Parametric Statistics such as the following listed below:*
  - a. *T-test – used to determine significant differences based on average percent cover, density, richness, etc. Paired, homoscedastic, and heteroscedastic. Provides p-value to compare to pre-determined alpha.*
  - b. *ANOVA – A test of the statistical significance of the differences among the mean scores of two or more groups on one or more variables. In the event scores differ, non-parametric ANOVA or a generalized linear model may be utilized to account for the nature of this data.*
  - c. *Shannon Diversity Index ( $H'$ ) – Measures diversity in categorical data. It is simply the information entropy of the distribution, treating species as symbols and their relative population sizes as the probability.*
  - d. *Pielou's Evenness Index ( $J'$ ) – A measure of biodiversity which quantifies how equal the populations are numerically. Based on Shannon Diversity Index.*

**Mr. Robert Weber**  
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The 2022 report for the Mid-Town Beach Nourishment Project will include hardbottom distribution maps based on interpretation of 2022 aerial photography (GIS shape files provided by others) with the summer 2022 diver-mapped hardbottom edge survey as an overlay; sediment analyses including bar graphs depicting sediment patch data and average sediment depths of transects and cross-shore zones; benthic community analysis and change, and statistical analyses. All data treatment and statistical analyses will be conducted according to the revised BMA cell-wide monitoring plan. The final report presenting the 2022 Mid-Town and Reach 2 hardbottom survey regulatory results, interpretations, and comparison to the 2014/15 baseline survey data and 2022 BMA transect data (provided by others) in the evaluation of potential project-related effects will be submitted within 120 days of the completion of the 2022 survey. The final report will be submitted as a PDF file to the Town and FDEP.

The commencement dates of the surveys will be reported to the FDEP approximately 7 days prior to beginning the work effort. All raw data (including shape files, copies of field data sheets, video and still photos) shall be provided to the Department in electronic format upon completion of the survey.

The total estimated cost of this proposal is \$129,389 and is submitted on a Time & Materials – Not to Exceed basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Town of Palm Beach. Please contact me at 954-591-1219 or via email at [cmiller@coastaleco-group.com](mailto:cmiller@coastaleco-group.com) if you have any questions regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,



Cheryl L. Miller  
President, Principal Scientist  
Coastal Eco-Group, Inc.