



# Water Glades Property Owners Association

## Water Glades POA Seawall Project Update June 26, 2019

### PROTECT OUR SHORELINE & PROPERTY

Dear Property Owner,

The POA with representation from all three Towers have been holding meetings with City, County & State officials in an attempt to resolve our critical beach erosion issue for many years. Immediately after Hurricane Irma (two years ago) the POA Executive Board, represented by all three Towers, held numerous meetings in our clubhouse with City, County & State officials. The results of these meetings were discussed at many POA and Tower Board Meetings.

**1. IF THE COUNTY PROVIDES SAND AS NEEDED THEN WE WOULD NOT NEED A SEAWALL:** THE COUNTY HAS TOLD US AND PROVEN THEY WILL NOT PROVIDE SAND AS NEEDED. THEY SUGGESTED VERBALLY AT A PUBLIC MEETING THAT WATER GLADES SHOULD BUILD A SEAWALL

**2. IF THE STATE & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT & BUILD ALTERNATIVE PROTECTIVE DEVICES SUCH AS BREAKWATERS, GROIN/JETTY FIELDS OR PUMP SAND FROM SOUTH END OF ISLAND THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR SEAWALL:** THE COUNTY, STATE & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MADE IT CLEAR NONE OF THESE ALTERNATE PROTECTIVE DEVICES WILL EVER BE APPROVED OR BUILT.

**3. IF WATER GLADES WANTED TO TAKE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY & PAY THE COSTS OF REPLACING SAND AFTER EACH MAJOR STORM, IT WOULD COST AT LEAST \$600,000.00 PER EVENT:** THE COUNTY INFORMED US THEY PLACED APPROXIMATELY 6,000 CUBIC YARDS OF SAND ON THE BEACH & DUNE IN FRONT OF WATER GLADES. THIS SAND CAN ONLY BE PLACED ON THE BEACH BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1st & MARCH 1st DUE TO THE TURTLE NESTS. IT CAN ALSO TAKE MONTHS TO GET A PERMIT FOR OVER 800 CUBIC YARDS OF SAND. IN THE EARLY 2000's WATER GLADES WAS HIT BY THREE HURRICANES IN ONE YEAR. THIS WOULD BE A VERY EXPENSIVE RECURRING COST AND NOT VIABLE DUE TO THE LIMITED DATES THAT SAND MAY BE PLACED ON BEACH AS WELL AS THE TIME IT TAKES TO GET A PERMIT.

**4. IF THE FEDERAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM, THAT COVERS OUR PROPERTY, INSURED THE POOL DECK, ASPHALT DRIVEWAYS/PARKING AREAS, SIDEWALKS, LANDSCAPE BLOCK WALLS & LANDSCAPING WE WOULD NOT NEED A SEAWALL:** NO FLOOD INSURANCE POLICY COVERS THESE AREAS OF ANY PROPERTY. A MAJOR HURRICANE CAN CAUSE OVER A MILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGE TO OUR NON-INSURED PROPERTY. WE ARE CURRENTLY LOCATED IN THE WORST POSSIBLE FLOOD ZONE AND HAVE BEEN GRANDFATHERED INTO THE FEMA FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM. FEMA WILL LIKELY REQUIRE WATER GLADES TO INSTALL A SEAWALL, ESPECIALLY IF WE SUBMIT A CLAIM. THIS IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN MIAMI (SEE ATTACHED INSURANCE BROKER LETTER.)

In 2005 the Water Glades Property Owners Association entered into an easement agreement with Palm Beach County. This agreement required the county to maintain our dune sand, vegetation and beach sand, subject to the county having available funding. In return, the Water Glades was required to permit the county to have an equipment easement for access to the beach at the south end of our property. In addition, we had to allow the public to use our beach. The county did nourish the sand on our beaches & dune immediately after the execution of this agreement. Many hurricanes and storms hit Singer Island soon after the county work, leaving the Water Glades property vulnerable to a major storm surge. In 2008, the POA Board realized the county could not be depended upon for beach stabilization. They hired an engineer to prepare plans and apply for permitting to build a seawall. The Water Glades was successful in completing these plans and received a permit which was issued in 2009. Also, in order to get a permit issued, the applicant must prove need. It should be no surprise to any owner based on this action that Water Glades required & might eventually need to construct a seawall.

In 2009, the State and Army Corps of Engineers realized the north end of Singer Island was extremely vulnerable to substantial beach erosion and storm surge devastation. They decided to construct a "Breakwater" (rock walls offshore) in front of the Water Glades and other north end condominiums. Based on this proposed breakwater project and the agreement with the county many board members believed there was no need to build a seawall. The POA board let the seawall permit expire in 2012. Unfortunately, the State & the Army Corps of Engineers had major disagreements and let the breakwater project die.

Recently, the County & State have made it clear, at meetings with the Water Glades Executive Board and the City Waterfront Committee; that the breakwater project will not be revived. Water Glades representatives discussed other alternatives with the City, County and State officials. Groin/Jetty fields and dredging/pumping sand from offshore were turned down due to turtles and rock/reef water bottom environmental issues. Pumping sand north from the south end of the island is a violation of Federal law. The only other alternative to protecting our property from tropical storms and hurricanes is for the county to replenish sand on our dunes and beach immediately after major erosion or build a seawall.

Within a few months of the County beach nourishment project, Hurricane Irma eroded two thirds of our dune and we lost three feet or more in height of our beach according to the County. Luckily this project was completed before the hurricane hit. The Water Glades has been requesting sand nourishment to every government entity since Hurricane Irma hit. Keep in mind, Hurricane Irma actually made landfall on the west coast of Florida and though we were only on the fringe we still experienced major damage. With our urging, the County submitted a sand claim to FEMA. We are now going into our second hurricane season since Irma, without any sand nourishment from the County, State or Federal governments. We were advised the County Hurricane Irma claim is still being processed by FEMA and no sand nourishment project is approved as of yet.

The POA Executive Board met with our County Commissioner and his staff, in our clubhouse, to discuss getting beach sand as per our "easement agreement." As a result of our meeting, the County Board of Commissioners did approve the local funding match and applied to the State for five years of Singer Island sand nourishment.

State officials stated at many public meetings thereafter, that the county application would not be approved due to the State application rating criteria. The only way to rate high enough is to be a public beach with public parking.

In addition, we continued to request additional sand for our beach from the county as per our agreement on an emergency basis. The County response in a City Waterfront Committee meeting in the Riviera Beach City Manager's Office was Water Glades should build a seawall. They said they approved the seawall project previously and would do so again. They commented "Water Glades owns the beach and the county is only obligated to maintain our beach if they have funding."

In December, the condition of the beach and dune in front of Tower 300 was worsening by the day. The concrete wall had become exposed and the small amount of dune that remained was disappearing quickly. The POA board filed for an emergency permit to place 800 cubic yards of sand onto our beach at our cost of \$70,000.00. This was the maximum the State would permit. We really needed about 6,000 cubic yards (or more) of sand (\$600,000.00) to bring the beach back to pre-Hurricane Irma status. We all understand sand will disappear through erosion after each major storm or hurricane but this small amount of sand was the most the government would allow under an emergency permit. We are hoping for a calm summer hurricane season.

It should be noted that after Hurricane Sandy (2012), FEMA created new flood plain maps. The Water Glades is now located in a "VE" zone, the highest risk zone that exists. Though we are currently grandfathered for flood insurance, after a claim, FEMA can exclude us from being reinsured.

Flood Insurance does not cover our parking lots, asphalt areas, landscaping, fencing or sidewalks. Our insurance broker said he is currently going through similar situations in Miami

where buildings are being required to add seawalls and other protection just to be eligible to be reinsured by FEMA (see attached letter.)

ANOTHER MAJOR POINT is all the Tower mechanical rooms are located on the ground floor. Our FPL Transformers, which power each building, are also located on the ground floor. Almost all the older high-rise buildings located on the oceanfront in NY had their mechanical rooms and transformers totally destroyed in the storm surge of Hurricane Sandy. It took almost a full year for the majority of these buildings to replace their mechanicals and regain power. After Hurricane Sandy, the Army Corps of Engineers has spent over \$400 million dollars building groin/jetty fields, pumping sand from offshore sites to raise beach height over three feet and build new dunes and seawalls on the South Shore of Long Island. Almost all these communities were against this project prior to Hurricane Sandy. In fact, they stopped this shoreline protection project prior to Sandy. Now they are thankful the government moved forward. It took 100's of millions of dollars in damage and years of personal stress due to damage created by a storm they never dreamt could happen to gain their support.

All of the above was discussed at the POA Annual Meeting with the board and owners. The board said it would contact the original engineer and discuss the possibility of getting the expired permit re-issued. Additional research would also include costs and other information necessary to start the seawall project. Meetings were held with the previous engineer and we learned the material called for in the original plan could not be used because it split while being installed in other projects. We also learned that the previous POA Seawall committee and engineer lowered the height of the wall to street grade in the back of the north tennis court and return area. This left T-100 and T-200 vulnerable to a storm surge. The engineer admitted this was a mistake and needed to be redesigned. The State refused to re-issue the old permit or allow us to amend the plan. Too much time had passed, and therefore, we are required to resubmit new plans and pay a new application fee. We spoke with three engineering firms and received two engineering and design proposals.

The Water Glades Capital Improvement committee (represented by all three Towers) met and discussed project and proposals. They recommended J. Foster Engineering be hired by the POA Board to design a seawall and to submit the permit application. The POA Board met on June 19, 2019 and overwhelmingly approved contracting with J. Foster Engineering for the design, engineering and submitting of the permit application by a vote of 8 - YES and 1 - NO after lengthy discussion.

The Water Glades office contacted all the condominiums located on the north end of the Island to see if they have previously constructed seawalls. Ten condominiums responded yes. Ocean Edge, Corniche, Sea Winds, Condado, Sea Dunes, Aquarius, Connemara, Reaches, Capri & East Point 1 Condominiums all have seawalls. This is the north end of the island with the narrowest beach. Almost all of these condominiums ground floors are at a much higher sea level elevation than the Water Glades and they still built seawalls.

Water Glades was built in 1975. Newer buildings like the Ritz Carlton, Marriott Resort, Amrit, Vista Blue, One Singer and 5000 North Ocean condominiums are meeting the new FEMA construction code requirements. Their lobby and mechanicals are located on the second level with parking below. They do not need seawalls.

Based on information received from our engineer, other condominiums and seawall builders we can expect a 1,400 linear foot seawall to cost about \$2.5 million or \$10,000.00 per unit. The actual cost of a seawall cannot be known until the engineering/design is complete and the project goes out to bid. A seawall can only be constructed between November 1st and March 1st due to turtle season.

The optimum time to construct a seawall is prior to any sand nourishment project by the county (if any.) The seawall would likely be placed in the middle of the dune. The height would probably be at an elevation of 17 or 18 feet, which is one foot below the height of the clubhouse deck floor. This is the current height of dune. The seawall is expected to go about 25 to 30 feet below beach level. Therefore, the seawall will not be visible unless a major storm wipes out our sand dune.

A SEAWALL will stop ocean surges, in most major storms, from entering the property and causing millions of dollars worth of damage.

It will also decrease amount of time it will take to occupy buildings after Hurricanes!

Owners paid up to \$40,000.00 each to install impact glass doors and windows to protect their property during hurricanes. Isn't this much protection worth \$10,000.00 per unit to protect our mechanical rooms, lobbies, landscaping, roads and future flood insurance? It is clear no other common sense alternatives exist. Should we be Pro-active or Re-active? These are the questions our Tower Boards must discuss. Time is of the essence.

**WE ARE CURRENTLY EXTEREMEY VULNERABLE TO MAJOR DAMAGE IF A HURRICANE HITS PALM BEACH COUNTY. THE WATER GLADES POA HAS BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY ON PROTECTING OUR SHORELINE & PROPERTY FOR YEARS. NOW IT'S TIME TO ACT!**

The POA board will keep you updated as we advance this most important project. We will continue to do everything possible to "PROTECT OUR SHORELINE & PROPERTY.



Glen Spiritis, PhD  
POA President for the Board

Water Glades HOA  
Attn: Mr. Reisman  
5544 N. Ocean Drive  
Singer Island, FL 33404

June 18, 2019

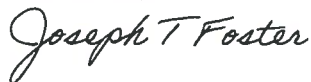
**RE: Critical Erosion Threating Private Development - Water Glades Condominium, FL Near  
FLDEP R-61**

Gentlemen:

The beaches in front of the referenced condominium are experiencing significant erosion issues to the point where this stretch of beach has been designated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as a critically eroded beach. The County has explored various shoreline stabilization methods (beach nourishment and offshore breakwaters) but due to various environmental concerns (nearshore hardbottom) they are not considered feasible at this time. In response to this there has been a significant effort in dune restoration which is helping to mitigate the situation, however it exposes your property to upland damage if a series of storms should hit the area or the funds for dune nourishment are exhausted. For these reasons it is recommend moving forward with the proposed seawall to protect the upland infrastructure.

If there are any questions, please call. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

Sincerely,



Joseph T. Foster, P.E

FL Lic No. 79708  
NJ Lic No. 24GE05181200

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**USI Insurance Services**

As discussed, the national flood program is continually changing. If an association has more than one flood and it's considered a high risk or if the area changes grades coverage can be denied or not offered through the National flood program. If the association is considering a protective seawall for the purpose of mitigating any potential flooding this would be a support to combat the NFIP in the event of an issue. The more protective measures an association takes to protect or mitigate damage the better it is from an insurance stand point.

Please let me know if you wish to discuss further.

Richard Rodriguez, CPA  
Senior Vice President