



*Advocating responsible decisions to sustain the
quality of life in coastal Georgia.*

221 Mallory Street, Suite B Saint Simons Island, Georgia 31522 Voice: 912.638.3612 Email: susdev@gate.net

www.sustainablecoast.org

Statement on the Jekyll Island Master Plan Update by David Kyler, Executive Director

Before establishing the Center for a Sustainable Coast in 1997, I spent much of my professional career reviewing and preparing master plans (or more precisely, “comprehensive plans”) for the cities and counties of coastal Georgia. For nearly 20 years I worked for the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and its predecessor, the Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission. During that time I helped shape not only local community plans, but the state planning standards that were adopted in the 1989 *Georgia Planning Act*. Throughout this experience, a prominent concept was the application of measurable management criteria to be used in evaluating the effectiveness of a plan’s implementation. Under the Planning Act, planning requirements incorporated such standards, and communities failing to apply them in their local comprehensive plans lost their eligibility for receiving critically important state grants and loans.

Unfortunately, such management objectives, standards, and evaluation procedures are conspicuously absent in the Jekyll Master Plan. While the Jekyll plan includes lists of intended projects and actions, and the term ‘management’ is used, there is utterly no procedure for evaluating the effects of such actions or for determining how to revise implementation steps to correct for deviations between objectives and outcomes. Like its predecessor, the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan, the Master Plan seems to aspire to be a management plan but lacks critical provisions and controls essential to achieving that important ambition.

Without the internal provisions needed to function as a management plan, the Jekyll Master Plan is little more than a list of projects and actions, with a few general parameters, such as limits on developed area. There are no data gathering requirements or special studies (such as use-capacity or visitor-experience research), no assessment of conditions relative to planning objectives, and no control devices for correcting problems inadequately addressed or unanticipated by proposed planning actions. Profoundly important questions about the relationship between budgeting issues and honoring the state park’s statutory purpose – pivotal to Jekyll’s management – also remain inadequately examined.

I strongly urge that the JIA reconsider the intended use of the Master Plan as a management tool and, if devised for the purposes of managing the island’s resources, that the plan be restructured accordingly. If the MP is intended to be used for management, appropriate revisions could be completed through a series of segmented but well-coordinated steps, each devoted to one of these key management tools:

- (1) Management objectives,
- (2) Data gathering procedures and schedule,



*Advocating responsible decisions to sustain the
quality of life in coastal Georgia.*

221 Mallory Street, Suite B Saint Simons Island, Georgia 31522 Voice: 912.638.3612 Email: susdev@gate.net

www.sustainablecoast.org

- (3) Data evaluation procedures and decision protocol/criteria
- (4) Procedures for plan revision and adaption in response to changing conditions and unpredicted outcomes, particularly those identified through step 3 above.

I would appreciate an explicit response indicating JIA's position on the issues raised in my comments. Please call or email if you have any questions about my remarks.

Thank you.

David Kyler, Executive Director
Center for a Sustainable Coast
(912) 506.5088 (mobile)