

Development limits set have been exceeded

I am troubled that the Jekyll Island Authority is proposing to include any portion of the tidal marsh as part of the calculated area of upland on Jekyll Island. Having over thirty years of experience in environmental analysis, planning, and advocacy in coastal Georgia, I speak with some authority on the topic.

Georgia's Coastal Marshlands Protection Act (CMPA) is quite specific in distinguishing between uplands and marshes. By virtue of that law, marshes are, in effect, conservation areas ineligible for development except for strictly limited purposes of water access, regulated by law.

To propose including tidal marshes of any kind as part of the tabulation of Jekyll Island's land area is misleading and scientifically unfounded. By unjustifiably attempting to add marshes to the island's land area, the JIA is taking an unwise step that misrepresents the physical and biological characteristics that make these tidal wetlands unique.

The effect of this wrong-headed proposal is to mask the truth, which reveals that well over 35%, the legally-established development limit of Jekyll Island, is already developed.

Calling any adjacent tidal marsh around Jekyll Island "upland" does not make it so, nor does it change the harsh truth that the development limits set by law already have been exceeded.

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