



Treasure Coast Chapter

Conservation • Activism • Research • Education
P.O. Box 1703
Port Salerno, FL 34992
Phone: 772-834-5858 / E-mail: tcsurfrider@yahoo.com

The Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of our world's oceans, waves and beaches. Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers, the Surfrider Foundation now maintains over 50,000 members and over 80 chapters across the United States and Puerto Rico, with international affiliates in Australia, Europe, Japan and Brazil.
www.surfrider.org

SCRIPPS TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS EDITORIAL

SUBJECT: TOWN OF JUPITER ISLAND BEACH RESTRICTIONS

AUTHOR: JUAN AYALA

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Don't allow the Town of Jupiter Island to draw another line in the sand

The Town of Jupiter Island has abused its authority once again by posting signs attempting to illegally close the Hobe Sound Public Beach Park a half-hour after sunset until a half-hour before sunrise. Needless to say, it's quite obvious that the town has no regard for night fishing, turtle watchers, lovers enjoying moonlight strolls, midnight mass, or heaven forbid, checking the waves in preparation for next day's surfing adventures.

Why did the town feel the need to impose these unpopular rules upon the good citizens of Martin County? Was it to solve that rash of robberies or those crazy pool-crashing kids that we have been reading about for so long? The last we heard of robberies on Jupiter Island was several years ago and investigators said it was professionals that were steadily moving up from Palm Beach Island. If the crime on Jupiter Island is so rampant, they must be doing an excellent job at keeping it hushed from the press. Leaving the beaches open at night is as much an invitation to crime as having the roads and sidewalks open throughout the county. Based on Jupiter Island's exaggerated claims, it would stand to reason that a county-wide curfew is now in order. We are fortunate to live in Martin County where crime is relatively low compared to other areas of the state and the country. We all have to live with each other and respect each others rights. Jupiter Island is failing to do this by enacting the night time beach closing ordinance.

When will the Town of Jupiter Island stop overstepping their boundaries? Hobe Sound Beach Park is owned, operated and maintained by Martin County, and like all county beaches, county law allows for 24-hour public access.

Recently a deal was made in which Martin County ceded right of first refusal to the Town of Jupiter Island to obtain ten acres of pristine beachfront known as Bon Air Beach from the U.S. Coast Guard – a piece of property which the county has sought since the mid 1970s. For decades, Jupiter Island illegally posted no trespassing signs at Bon Air Beach to discourage the public from enjoying it. Thanks to the efforts of the Surfrider Foundation and concerned citizens, these signs have finally come down, only to be replaced by new beach restrictions at the public beach a half mile to the south.

The Town of Jupiter Island has a long history of stepping on the rights of the citizens of Martin County. We can only hope that the Martin County Board of County Commissioners is prepared to use all legal resources available to overturn the nighttime beach closing ordinance. We urge every citizen of Martin County to attend the Jupiter Island Town Commission meeting at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, January 22 at Jupiter Island Town Hall to stand firmly in opposition of these restrictions on our liberty and pursuit of happiness.

Sincerely,

Juan Ayala
Hobe Sound resident and Treasure Coast Surfrider Foundation board member

