

Council Updated on Algae Management Permit

The current permit issued to the City of Sanibel by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to test mechanical equipment to remove algae from beaches expired on February 15 due to the start of bird nesting season.

However, as the Council was told at its February 5 meeting, the City is pursuing another permit to allow pilot testing. This permit would take effect Aug. 1 as the nesting season comes to an end.

The permit for pilot testing algae removal was prompted after an outbreak of red drift algae affected Sanibel beaches and caused the City to begin taking steps to avoid red drift algae buildups in the future. The City sent out requests for qualifications to several vendors who would remove the algae in case of an outbreak.

Since the FDEP issued the temporary permit, there have been no massive algae events. However, there was a somewhat minor accumulation on a Sanibel beach late last year that prompted the City to call the vendors to see if they would be able to mobilize to remove the algae. Although the algae was gone by the following morning with no removal necessary, it did give Sanibel a chance to speak with contractors to determine if the level of interest remained.