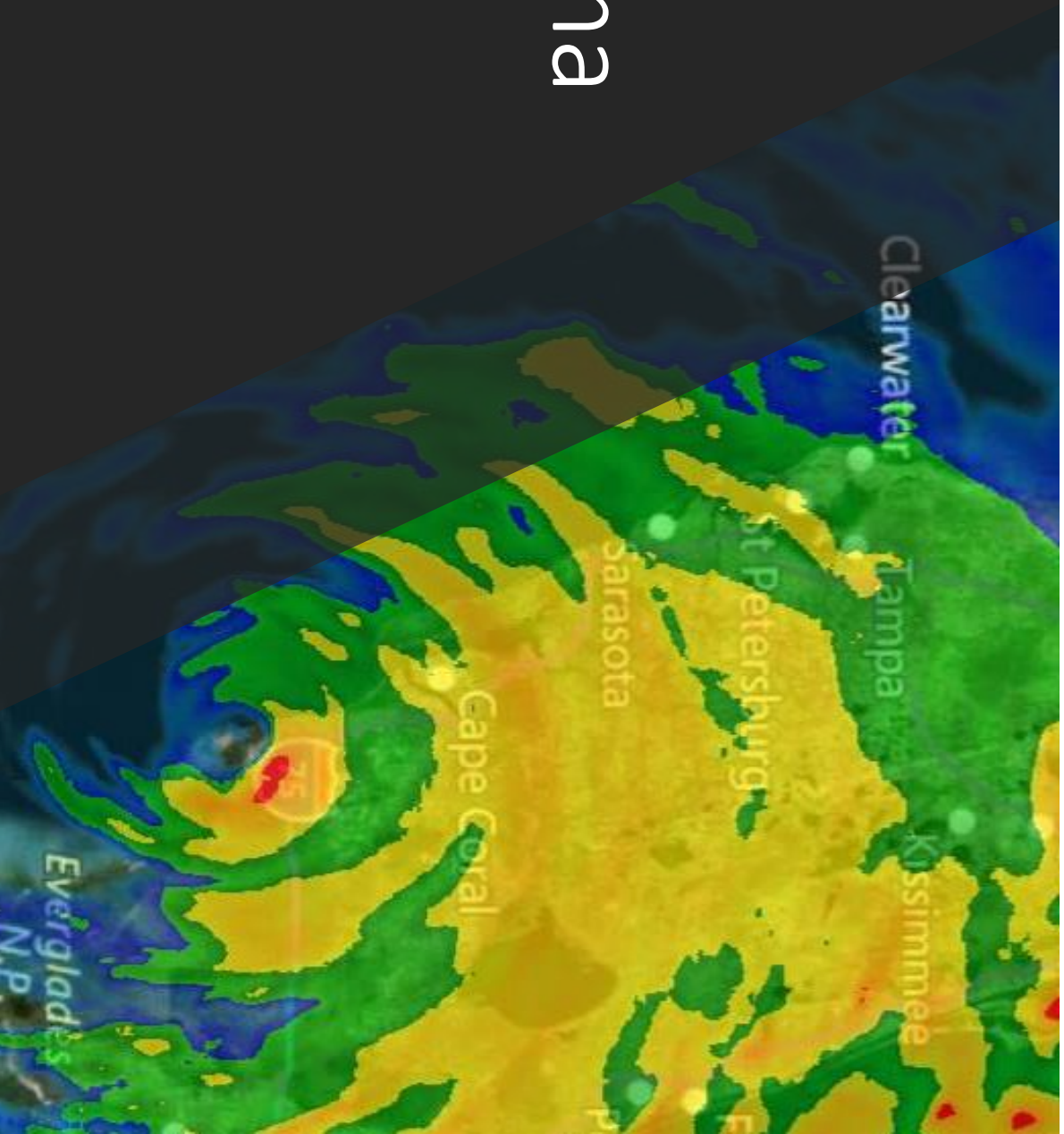


Little Gasparilla Island

# Hurricane Irma





Pre-Hurricane Irma



# *Hurricane Irma*

- Hurricane Irma was an extremely powerful and catastrophic Cape Verde type hurricane, the most intense observed in the Atlantic since Hurricane Dean in 2007
- Date: August 30, 2017 – September 12, 2017
- Affected areas: Bahamas, Caribbean, Cuba, Florida, and Georgia
- Category: Category 5 Hurricane (SSHWS), Category 4 Hurricane (SSHWS), Category 1 Hurricane (SSHWS)

## ***LGIFR Pre-event of Hurricane Irma***

- The on-duty firefighters began to assist islanders that needed assistance with hurricane shutters, plywood, securing light weight items around homes, removing debris to a safe place
- The on-duty firefighters began to go door to door to warn residents they needed to evacuate the island and documented anyone's that stated they were staying
- On Saturday, September 9, 2017, the on-duty firefighters evacuated the island and assisted Charlotte County Fire Rescue Station 14, converting Engine 14 from Basic Life Support into a Advanced Life Support apparatus

# *Damage Assessment*

- 8108 - Sand 2 feet above normal blocking front door access
- 8148 - Soffit damage
- 8152 -Soffit damage
- 8264 - Tree leaning on house
- 8448 - Pink House destroyed
- 8526 - Rear porch damage, large tree blocking street access
- 8612 - Tree down
- 8804 - Downed powerline and Soffit damage
- 8972 - Door screen damage

# ***Damage Assessment***

- 9102 - Soffit damage
- 9330 - Screens blown out
- 9334 - Screens and Soffit damage
- 9526 - Screens blown out
- 9608 - Soffit damage
- 9620 - Broken Satellite dish
- 9624 - Lattice and Soffit damage
- 9722 - Screens blown out
- 9724 - Tree leaning on powerline

# *Damage Assessment*

- 9822 - Lattice and Soffit damage
- Conrad's House - Soffit damage, North side
- Gulf Street - Access blocked by trees and Grand Avenue
- Hideaway - Various windows missing
- Powerlines down everywhere
- Preserve - Fence and Soffit damage in multiple locations
- South of Chapel - Large tree leaning across Grand Ave. Does not block access; however, it is an overhead crush hazard

# *Damage Assessment*

- Trees down over entire island
- We were unable to access homes beyond 9508 Privateer due to the depth of the water
- Entire island has no power





“Pink House” as known to many  
islanders Pre-Hurricane Irma and  
Post-Hurricane Irma



# Multiple Trees Twisted and Blocking Access Roads







Multiple Roads Flooded Deeper than the Polaris Could Transversers







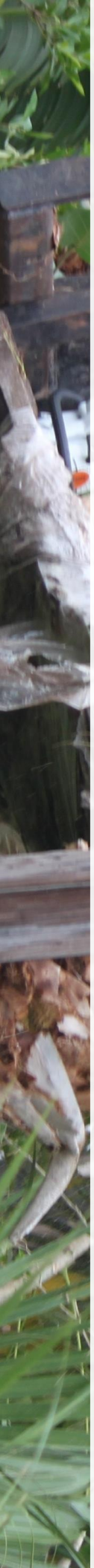
Multiple Austrian Pine Trees Uprooted







Three Days After Hurricane Irma Impacted the Island Workers  
Began Clearing Debris from Power Lines







Most Damage Noted was Siding and Soffit Damage





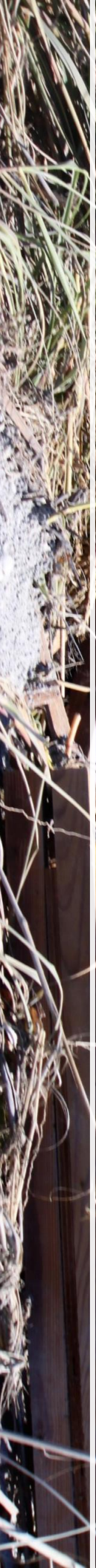


Debris from the Pink House was found over the entire Island and part of the bay





Debris from the Pink House in the Sand Dunes





## *Post-event of Hurricane Irma*

- The on-duty firefighters began to survey the island for damage and accessibility immediately after the storm diminished
- The on-duty firefighters began to remove food from refrigerators where owners gave permission to enter their home
- The on-duty firefighters obtained fuel from the marina for apparatus and the generator due to being out
- Local gas stations were only accepting cash in many areas



Privateer Road Impassable towards Bay

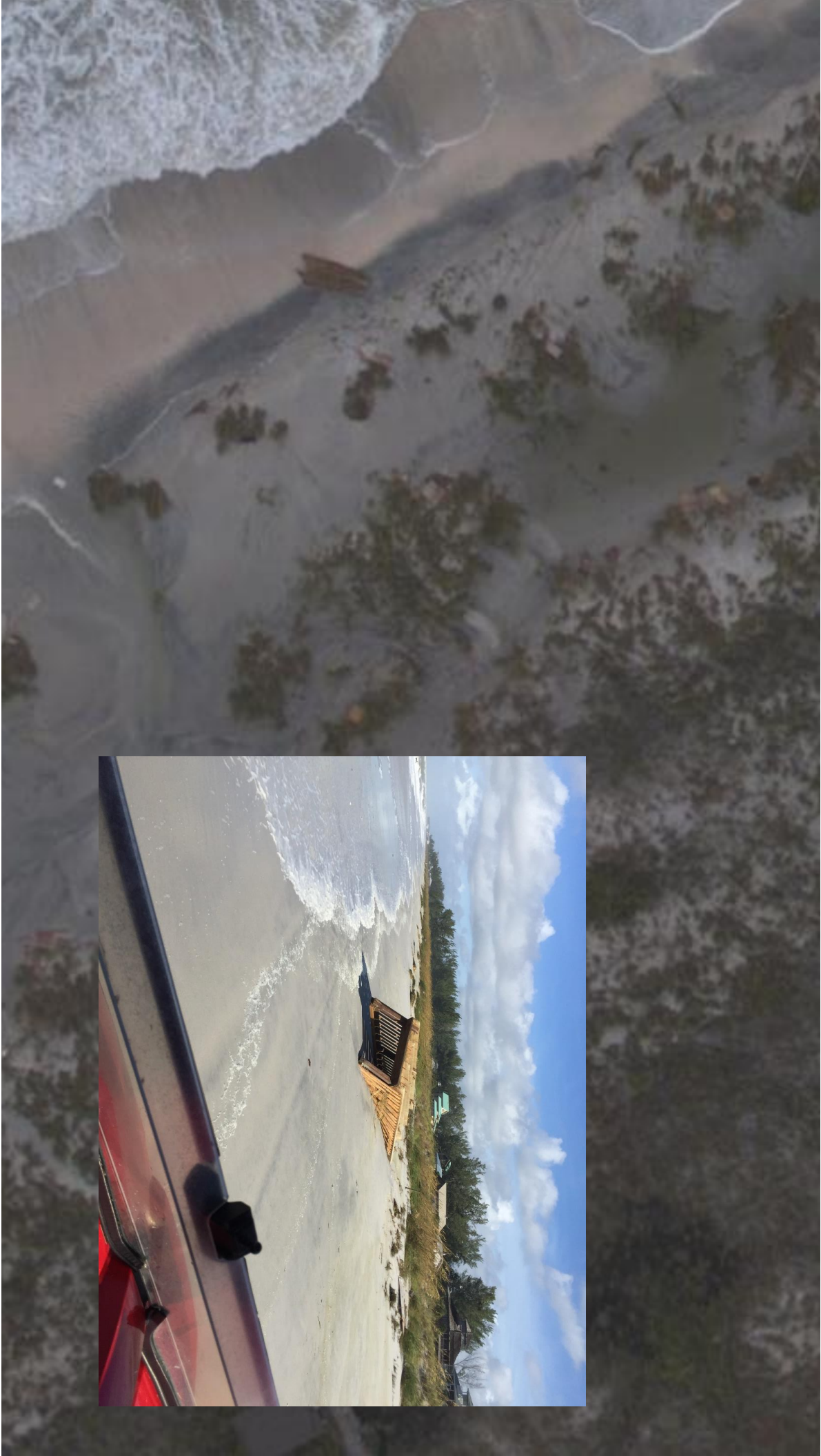






Privateer Road Impassable towards Bay









Drone View From Florida Power and Light



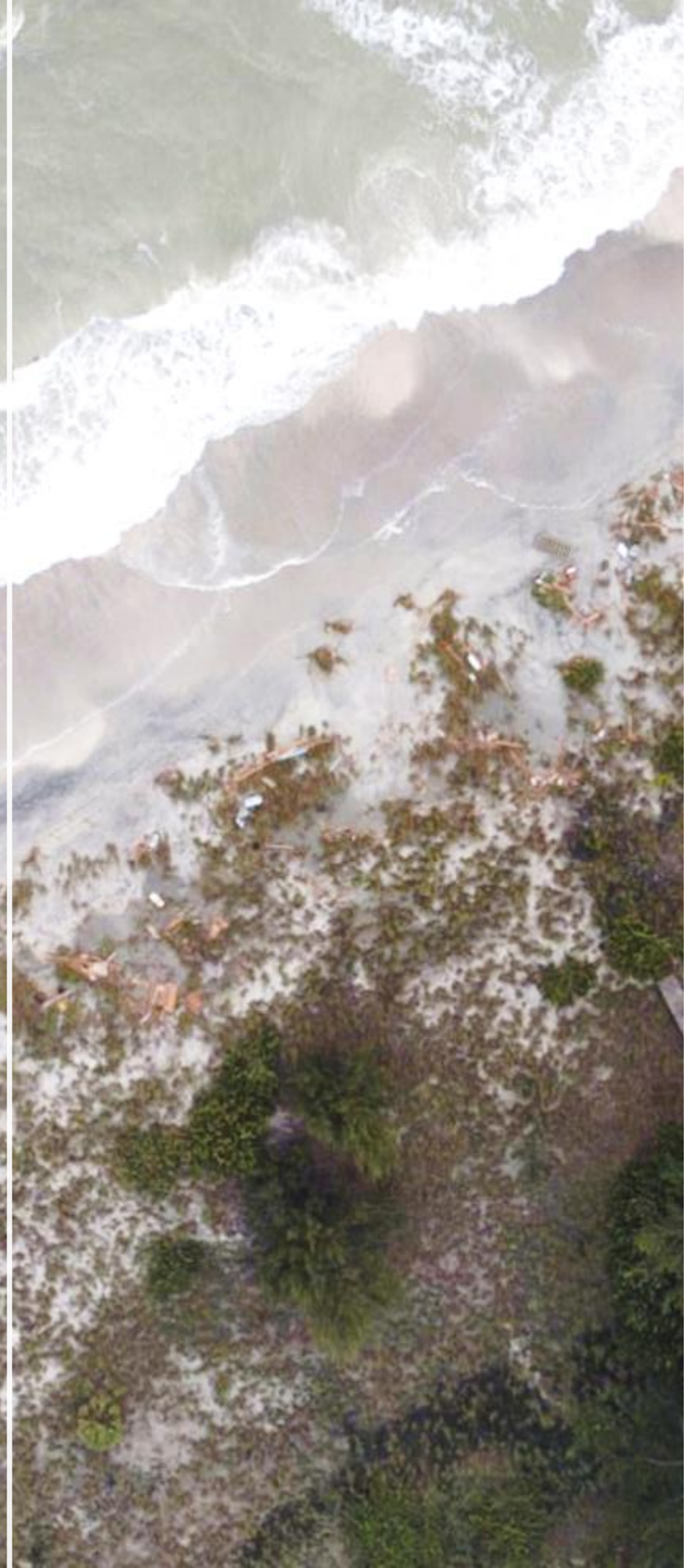




Debris From Pink House

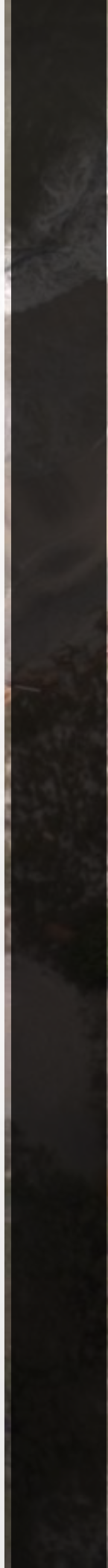






Debris from Pink House













Large Amounts of Sand Washed Up at 8114







8264 Grand Impassable by Polaris

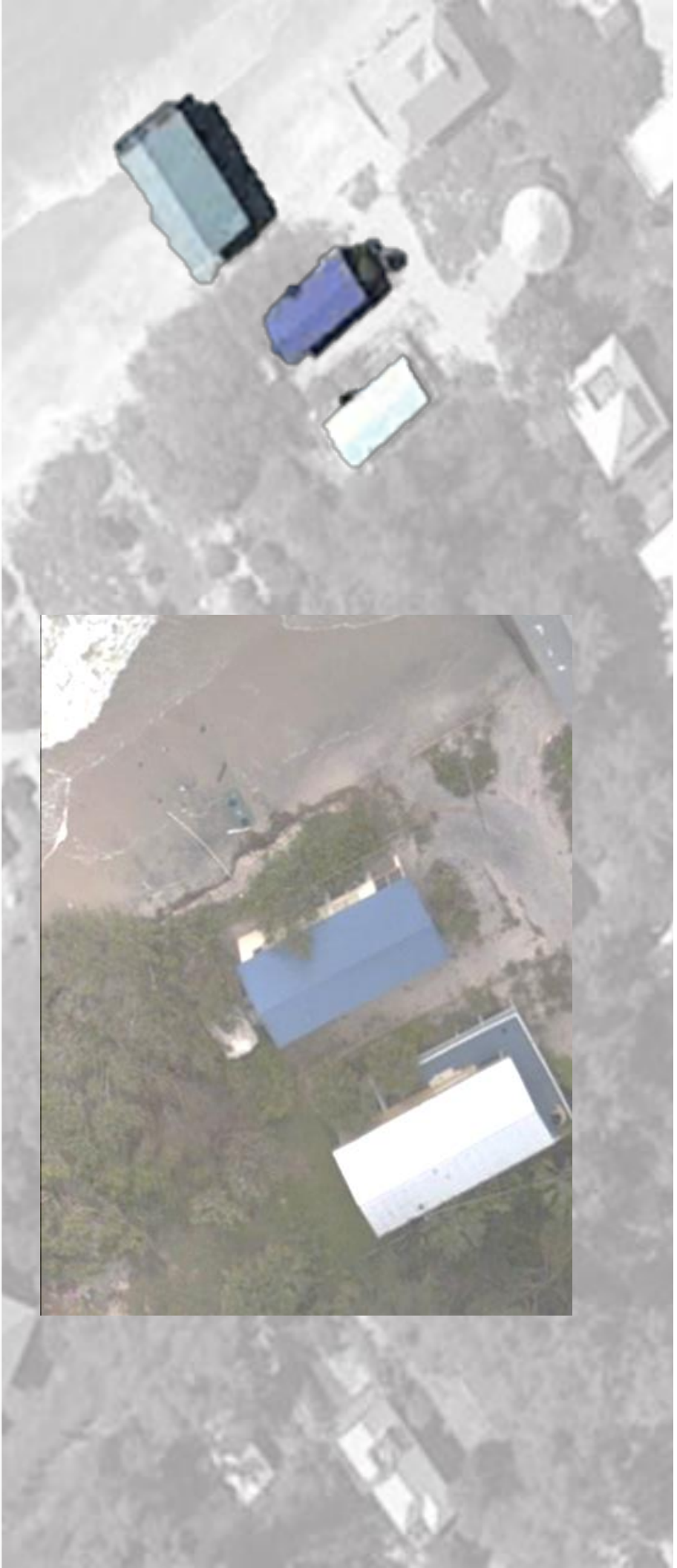






Pink House Washed Away





View Pre- and Post-Hurricane Irma



- Multiple trees in powerlines across island.





Aerial View of Palm Trees on Power Lines







Roadways flooded making access difficult







Entire area Flooded Limiting Access



# *Communications*

- Little Gasparilla Island Fire Rescue has to become the Chief Communicator during a disaster.
- Social media seemed to be the only means to communicate during Hurricane Irma and some false information was posted. This was the only way to give the islanders current information about the island. LGIFR needs access to freely post on a primary social media sites.
- The challenge is exacerbated as the scope of the hurricane undercuts normal communication channels and draws the attention of the media in areas that are easily accessible and not the bridgeless barrier islands. Facebook was the only means to communicate with some on the island or off island as they are concerned with damage or reliable information about their home.
- LGIFR needs to be prepared to balance the islander's demand for information and a sense of what to expect when returning to the island.
- Establish a detailed communication plan to be used during an emergency, including a clear definition to eliminate any errors and misinformation.

# *Debris Removal*

- State and local governments are normally responsible for debris removal. However, due to Little Gasparilla Island being a barrier island request made for some type of container for residents to start depositing of spoiled food from the lack of power caused officials to ponder and they unsure of how to provide immediate assists.
- Immediate assistances to the barrier island is unrealistic expectations due to debris removal having to go through a bid process.
- Several local residence that returned to the island immediately once winds died down began the removal of debris from roadways with chainsaws and front end loaders.

# *Items Needed*

- Apparatus that can go through deep water
- Apparatus that is diesel
- Need a front end wrench
- Need an ATV type of vehicle that carries limited equipment to rapidly deploy to limited access areas
- Larger generator for station to provide for the ability to cook meals for firefighters on-duty
- Chain saws / pole saw
- Larger fuel containers

## *Things to Think About*

- As we seen with many stores that were sold out of much needed supplies start preparing for your hurricane preparedness kit, consider getting many of those supplies together at the beginning of the hurricane season so you already have most of what you need on hand when the need arises

- There were a lot of weather-wannabees who started "projecting" Irma's landfall a week or more in advance
- It is important to remember that hurricane forecast errors five days in advance are large, let alone longer than that
- The island is an evacuation zone and when told to evacuate everyone needs to leave
- Some say things like "We made it through other hurricanes just fine, so I'll be fine with Irma"
- That logic cannot be more wrong with every hurricane having its own unique characteristics

We owe a great gratitude to many pre- and post-Hurricane Irma: sheriff officer, firefighters (LGIFR and Charlotte County FR), FP&L and many others who have sacrificed a great deal personally, forgoing their own personal situations in order to help islanders.

