



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Augustine Beach Re-Nourishment Project

Third cycle of the St. Augustine Beach renourishment project begins February 6, 2012

St. Augustine, FL – (February 1, 2012) – The third cycle of the St. Augustine Beach renourishment project will begin February 6, 2012. Renourishment of St. Augustine Beach is intended to offset the impacts caused by the St. Augustine Inlet to the adjacent beaches. The project is administered through the Army Corps of Engineers with funding consisting mostly of federal funds and some local Tourist Development Tax and state revenues. In general, the project involves dredging sands captured around the inlet that otherwise would have been carried by ocean currents to the south and mechanically placing this sand on beaches south of the inlet. Clearing navigational channels is also part of this project. The St. Augustine Beach renourishment project is planned as a 50 year project with renourishment cycles occurring every five to seven years for optimum performance. So far, the project is working as planned with this renourishment cycle requiring less sand due to portions of sand from previous cycles remaining in the immediate beach area. The timing of this project has been driven by permit appeals and the need to begin construction as soon as possible to secure the limited funding from being diverted to other national coastal projects.

Construction Description

This beach renourishment project will place approximately 2.1 million cubic yards of sand on 2.3 miles of St. Augustine Beach beginning at the southern limits of Anastasia State Park and extending south to approximately the Bermuda Run development. The width of the berm varies throughout the project, from about 95 feet to 485 feet. The active construction zone will move as the project progresses. For safety reasons, public access to areas within the construction perimeter will be strictly prohibited. This area will be clearly marked using orange fencing. Construction will begin at the northern boundary of the project limits and move south. Construction activity will occur 24 hours a day and seven days a week throughout the construction project.

The sand will come from three borrow sources at St. Augustine Inlet. The Vilano (Porpoise) Point area at the inlet will be dredged first to avoid the start of the shorebird nesting season. The navigation channel will be dredged next, followed by portions of the southern side of the ebb shoal as necessary to obtain the amount of sand needed. The dredge pipeline will come ashore within the Anastasia State Park and south of the County pier.

The cost of the project, including planning, design and construction, is approximately \$17 million. The Federal Government, through the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, provided approximately 80.5 percent of this amount. St. Johns County provided approximately 11 percent and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection provided approximately 8.5 percent.

Environmental Protection During Construction

The Contractor is required to obtain all necessary permits or licenses and meet all permit conditions as specified by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. A complete Environmental Protection Plan (EPP) is in place. Close monitoring and protection of cultural resources, water resources, fish and wildlife resources and endangered species is required. Specific requirements for manatees, sea turtles, dolphins, whales and the southeastern beach mouse are included in the project permits and will be strictly followed as required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Active sea turtle beach nest monitoring and protection, along with protection of nesting shorebirds will be active throughout the project to ensure that nests are not adversely affected by the construction activities.

Shoreline and Beach Access

Public beach access points will be affected intermittently throughout the limits of the project. The primary areas where impacts are anticipated are described below. Impacts to smaller areas may become necessary as the project progresses, and appropriate advance notice will be provided if and when that occurs.

1. The Pope Road access from A1A Beach Boulevard (CR A1A) to the Beach along with the parking lot and Pope Road Scenic Overlook will be closed to the public beginning Monday, February 6, 2012. This parking area is the only available space for staging the heavy equipment necessary to construct the project. The site will be restored to its pre-construction condition and re-opened to the public when the construction project is finished.
2. Portions of the beach driving area, from the Vilano inlet jetty to the northern limit of vehicle access to Porpoise Point at Genoa Road, will be closed to public access due to the nearby dredging activities. The area will be closed from approximately February 16, 2012 to mid-April 2012. Access at both the Vilano Road and Genoa Road (Porpoise Point) gates will remain open to vehicles and pedestrians with clearly marked restricted areas as described. For safety reasons, public access to areas within this marked construction perimeter will be strictly prohibited.
3. Intermittent closure of the 3rd Street beach access will occur throughout construction. The impacts of this closure will be infrequent and will primarily require closure of pedestrian access. Driving and driveway access will be maintained a majority of the time.

Pertinent Information

Project Start Date: February 6, 2012 Project End Date: Late June-early July 2012
Project Limits: Southern Portions of Anastasia State Park to areas near Bermuda Run.