



For Immediate Release

Contact: Kathy FitzPatrick
Martin County Coastal Engineer
772-288-5429
kfitzpat@martin.fl.us

Bathtub Beach Dune Restoration Set to Begin Construction

Stuart, Fla. (March 19, 2010) - Martin County's most beloved beach will get some much-needed attention when construction on the park's dune system begins on March 23, 2010. Bathtub Beach Park on south Hutchinson Island, famous for its worm-rock reef and protected waters, has been closed since October 2009 due to unsafe conditions caused by seasonal erosion, which has resulted in loss of parking, unsafe access and treacherous swimming conditions.

This isn't the first time Bathtub Beach has been inaccessible. The park has been closed intermittently since September 2007 due to severe and ongoing beach erosion that has damaged park infrastructure and threatened MacArthur Boulevard.

The park's dune system acts as a natural buffer to keep the surf away from the parking lot. The construction, which will be complete prior to May 1, 2010, will help protect the park's infrastructure and reinforce the protective dune system. While the restoration project will not widen the beach, the dune will increase the potential for sand to naturally accumulate so Bathtub Beach can once again accommodate and be enjoyed by beachgoers.

“Bathtub Beach is one of Martin County’s most popular beaches,” Martin County Coastal Engineer Kathy FitzPatrick said. “The dune restoration may not immediately bring back the Bathtub Beach most of us remember, but it is a starting point to allow residents and visitors to enjoy the beach once again. Our challenge is to strike a balance between providing the beach access we all enjoy while safeguarding the delicate and endangered worm-reef habitat.”

While the beach has been closed, many people continue to walk along the beach to get to and from the inlet. However, in order to protect public health and safety, this will not be possible during construction. The use of high pressure discharge lines make passage through the area unsafe. The County recognizes that this is a temporary inconvenience to the public but is encouraging residents to avoid walking across the area while construction is underway so that restoration efforts can be completed quickly.

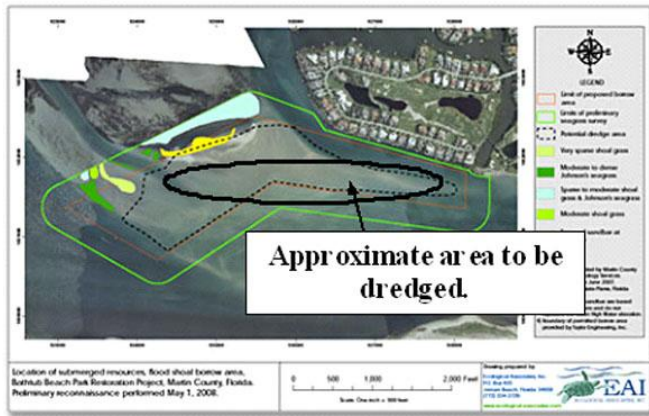
In addition to closing to all foot traffic, boaters who frequent the sand bar system adjacent to Sailfish Point should be careful around, and avoid, the barge and dredging equipment. Dredging will occur in the submerged areas on the south side of the sandbar west of Sailfish Point (see graphic below). The presence of good quality beach sand and lack of seagrasses make the area an ideal sand source for the dune restoration project. The material will then be transported to Bathtub Beach on the intracoastal side of Sailfish Point through Sailfish Point’s submerged pipe system that will deliver the sand onto the beach. No exposed sand areas will be dredged for this project.

Bathtub Beach Dune Restoration Project Details

The project consists of dredging more than 25,000 cubic yards of sand from the St. Lucie Inlet flood shoal and placing it along 1,324 linear feet of shoreline at Bathtub Beach. The sand will be removed utilizing a hydraulic cutterhead dredge and will then be transported through an existing pipeline that originates at the Indian River Lagoon, approximately 500 feet west of Bathtub Beach, and emerges at the southern end of the beach. The dredged material will be temporarily stored behind a longitudinal dike that, if needed, may be created from sand-filled geotextile tubes. If used, these tubes will be cut and removed by the end of the project. During construction,

a temporary submerged pipeline will be used to connect the shoal to the existing pipeline in order to convey the dredged slurry into the temporary beach impoundment area.

The contractor, Center Contracting Corporation, will begin construction on March 23, 2010 and the project will be complete by May 1, 2010 to avoid interfering with sea turtle nesting season which begins on May 1. During construction, Bathtub Beach Park will remain inaccessible to the public. For more information about the Bathtub Beach Park Dune Restoration, visit www.bathtubbeachproject.com.



The graphic identifies the approximate dredge area for the Bathtub Beach Dune Restoration Project.

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