

Proposed Beach Renourishment and Maintenance Easements on property south of the Coastal Construction Control Line

1. How many acres of beach will be added to Perdido Key during the Beach Renourishment?

The beach nourishment/dune restoration project will have a project footprint of approximately 195 acres. Of this, approximately 111 acres of upland private property. An additional 77 acres of beach will be created from Florida sovereign submerged lands (currently part of the Gulf of Mexico), and the footprint of the new dune feature in the State Park is about 7 acres. Over the first 12-18 months the project is expected to retain 65-75% of created beach as the project equilibrates.

2. When additional depth is added to gulf coast property during beach renourishment, will the additional property become part of the legal description of those parcels?

No – an Erosion Control Line (ECL) will be set at the existing mean high water elevation (+0.93 ft) as provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Since the state of Florida holds all lands below Mean High Water in public trust for all to use, the location of the ECL is based on the location of the mean high water elevation. Sand placed waterward of this location will be considered public as it is placed on sovereign submerged lands at public expense per Florida Statute 161. An informational meeting and public hearing will be scheduled in December 2007 or January 2008 to inform and receive public comment regarding the establishment of the ECL.

3. Will the property owners be required to pay Ad Valorem taxes on this additional square footage?

No – All property landward of the ECL privately held before the project will remain privately owned. Any new sand placed offshore (seaward of the ECL) will belong to the state since that offshore area is currently state owned.

Public Beach vs. Public Access

This project will result in the creation of “public” beach from sand deposited or accreted seaward of the ECL. There are no provisions in the easement to provide additional public access to this “public” beach. Public access and associated parking will remain at Sandy Key and the two Perdido Key Drive locations. The County is continuing to evaluate parcels for potential purchase to enhance public accessibility to the Gulf.

4. Can the additional property created south of the Coastal Construction Control Line be considered “beach mouse habitat” or habitat for the additional species?

Beach mouse – if the area vegetated at the end of this project projects further seaward than the “critical habitat” map for the beach mouse, then mouse habitat is created. If the vegetated portions of the project do not extend further than the “critical habitat” extent, then beach mouse habitat is restored (pre-Ivan dune field).

Additional species – For the first several years additional utilization by shorebirds and a decrease in sea turtle nesting is expected. As the project matures a return to historical utilization by these species is anticipated.

5. If so, will this property be included in the area-wide HCP?

This area likely will be included in the HCP, however, the area created seaward of the Erosion Control Line (ECL) will be considered state lands.

6. Can the additional acreage be negotiated as “avoided habitat” for the sake of mitigation with USFW and FWCC to offset impacted habitat on private property? Will Escambia County negotiate that for property owners?

Avoidance will be assessed on a parcel-by-parcel basis and will ultimately depend on the condition of the subject parcel at the time of application for permit. However, a County commitment to enhance and maintain a “healthy” beach and dune system may be a component of a successful mitigation strategy to obtain the desired Incidental Take permit for private property and SR 292 improvements.

7. Why must Escambia County require permanent easements when beach renourishment is a finite project and renewed for post hurricane maintenance by the BCC when needed?

The Board of County Commissioners revisited guidance to staff on September 27, 2007. The construction and maintenance easements will be revised to reflect a 15-year duration. Erosion from the project will generally be gradual with the exception of storm events. However, it is anticipated a supplemental project will be needed every 8-12 years to maintain the full protective value of the project (frequency dependant on tropical storm activity).

■ Q & A - Perdido Key Habitat Conservation Plan

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