

**Blind Pass Restoration
Project Update
April 11, 2008**

Acronyms:

Agencies of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

BBCS – Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems;

CHAP –Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve;

FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Federal Agencies:

USACE – United States Army Corps of Engineers

FWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NMFS – National Marine Fisheries (also part of NOAA)

Local Agencies:

CEPD – Captiva Erosion Prevention District

Other:

RAI – Request for Additional Information

BO – Biological Opinion (issued by FWS through USACE)

JCP – Joint Coastal Permit

Items Previously Completed:

Prior to the month of December the state and federal agencies had conceptually agreed to the maintenance dredging project and were awaiting the specific details of the proposed work and mitigation. The main concerns were as follows:

- (1) How to separate and handle the non-beach compatible material during the dredging event and
- (2) What type of mitigation efforts would clearly satisfy all concerns the project would be in the best interest of the environment and public.

In December the BBCS stated there concerns were addressed, allowing the federal process to begin. The first step was for FWS to provide a biological opinion (BO) addressing any potential impacts to federally listed endangered species. This included mangroves, manatee, eagles, and sawfish, and certain types of shorebirds and seagrasses.

Lee County and CEPD also completed some of the mitigative efforts required to construct the project, including removal of some exotic vegetation on Captiva Island.

Progress This Month:

The FWS completed the BO on March 21st and the BBCS noted the permit application as complete. This step formally documented that all concerns from the State agencies had

been addressed and satisfied. Florida Administrative Code (FAC) gives BBCS 90 days after the permit is deemed complete to take action. BBCS took 18 days (including weekends) to issue an Intent for the permit. The Intent is a formal notification that a permit will be issued unless someone from the public objects with reasonable concerns. If there are no objections a Final Order will be issued and the State permitting process is completed.

Outstanding Items:

The legal notice is schedule for publication on Friday, April 18th. The Final Order may be executed as early as May 5th due to legal notice requirements.

Now the focus turns to completing the contract documents, contractor selection and completion of preconstruction mitigation. This entails preparing the construction plans and specifications to send to potential bidders with all of the minute details required to construct the project.

Also included as required mitigation, Lee County must document the current condition of the seagrass resources in Blind Pass and Wulfert Flats. This must be done during peak growing season which does not begin until June.

The federal permit must also be obtained, but this is not anticipated to be a lengthy process. The outstanding issues include black and white permit drawings and a proposed channel marker plan for Wulfert Channel. These items should be completed in April.

The process is not yet complete, but the schedule is still positive to bid in the 2nd quarter of 2008 and construct in the 3rd quarter. Construction is expected to last 6 months.