

**Blind Pass Restoration
Project Update
June 17, 2008**

Acronyms:

Agencies of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

BBCS – Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems (State);
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
NWR – J. N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge

Other:

RAI – Request for Additional Information
BO – Biological Opinion (issued by FWS through USACE)
JCP – Joint Coastal Permit
NTP – Notice To Proceed

Items Previously Completed:

Prior to the month of June efforts were centered on obtaining the State and Federal Permits for construction. The major issues to resolve 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.

All issues on the State side were adequately addressed by Friday, April 18th. On the federal side the FWS completed the BO on March 21st, leaving only the NMFS to provide comments to USACE. Lee County was also required to furnish engineering drawings showing the proposed work before a permit could be issued.

Progress This Month:

State Permit

The State permit was issued on June 6, 2008.

Federal Permit

NMFS completed their review of the project on May 13, 2008 and the engineering drawings were submitted on May 23rd. This, in conjunction with the issuance of the State permit, completed the federal permitting process. However, on June 13 Lee County requested a modification to the BO. The modification would revise the turtle monitoring conditions of the BO to mirror the conditions of the State permit. The modification was conceptually agreed by FWS staff and is expected to be granted by the end of June.

No Motor Zone

The NWR and State continued work to complete a management plan and lease agreement, respectively, for the “No Motor Zone” in Wulfert Flats. Both must be completed prior to the BBCS issued NTP. The NTP is the BBCS’s final approval to begin construction and must come after a contractor is selected. Both agencies are on schedule to accomplish this in adequate time for September construction.

Outstanding Items:

Federal Permit

The County requested modification to the BO is anticipated to be completed in the month of June. USACE will include the modification in the federal permit, which is anticipated in the month of July.

No Motor Zone

Lee County must document the current condition of the seagrass resources in Blind Pass and Wulfert Flats to establish a “No Motor Zone”. This is anticipated to begin the week of June 23rd through aerial photography. Analysis of the data will take 1 month and will be completed in July. The “No Motor Zone” must be completed prior to the beginning of construction in September.

Bid Solicitation

Bids solicitations are expected to be completed by June 26th in order to facilitate construction beginning in September.

Funding

State funding for the project is expected to be secured in July. Anticipated costs have increased due to the sediments special handling requirements and rise in fuel costs.

The schedule continues to progress and is still positive for construction in September of 2008. The project is expected to last 6 months.