

BLIND PASS RESTORATION  
MONTHLY STATUS REPORT  
NOVEMBER 2011

Project Item

1. **Engineering, Design, and Permitting**

**Items Previously Completed:**

- **Permitting** – The State’s JCP permit was issued on June 6 and the USACE permit was received on August 18, 2008.
- **Permit Modification** (Post Construction)
  - Lee County submitted a modification request to DEP on October 25, 2010. The request entails the following:
    - Additional fill sites on Captiva and Sanibel Islands.
    - 50 ft wide sediment basin seaward of Blind Pass Bridge on the Captiva side of the template.
  - DEP provided a Request for Additional Information (RAI) on November 24, 2010; USACE provided a separate RAI on Nov 8, 2010.
  - Lee County responded to the USACE RAI on January 3, 2011 and to the DEP RAI on January 18, 2011. The option for a fill area on Captiva Island was removed from the modification request due to the State’s concerns the option was in conflict with their statewide strategic beach management plan.
  - DEP issued RAI #2 for Blind Pass indicating the only outstanding item is the Biological Opinion (BO) on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - USACE issued a public notice for the permit modification on January 21, 2011 and initiated formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on January 24, 2011. This action begins the Biological Opinion (BO) process expected to last 150 days, or approximately July 1, 2011.
  - FWS issued the Biological Opinion (BO) on July 29, 2011. The following authorizations are in the BO.
    - 1) Dredge an approximately 50-foot wide sediment basin area contiguous to the western edge of the channel dredge footprint to a maximum depth of - 11 feet NAVD (including overdredge).
    - 2) Place beach compatible dredge material along an additional section of shoreline between DEP reference monuments R-116 and R-118 on Sanibel Island.
    - 3) Conduct maintenance dredging events an advance of the 5-year interval outlined in the March 21, 2008, Biological Opinion. Specifically, the Applicant is requesting to conduct maintenance dredging events *on an as needed basis*. During each maintenance dredging event, sand placement will be rotated within the sand fill template such that no specific portion of shoreline receives sand more frequently than once every 4 years.
    - 4) DEP notified Lee County the permit modification request is considered complete on July 29. This is the last item required for the State to issue the permit modification . Issuance is expected in November 2011.

- **Communication**

- Lee County and the CEPD met on January 27, 2011 and resolved to enhance communication to the public regarding the status of Blind Pass. Specific resolutions include:
  - Lee County will post weekly updates on the project webpage (Linked from the County's main page at Lee-County.com).
  - CEPD will notify all Captiva citizen groups (Civic Association, Community Panel, Bayou residents) that the CEPD will be the conduit/point of contact for all project updates, questions, etc. related to the Blind Pass.
  - Lee County will not attend citizen group meetings relative to the Blind Pass. (Exception: 2/9 Bayou residents- unless requested by CEPD.)
  - Commissioner Manning will serve as the BOCC liaison and Mike Mullins will serve as the CEPD liaison.
  - Lee County will attend CEPD meetings when requested and as scheduling allows.
  - Lee County and CEPD will meet to discuss the outstanding invoices and cost share formulas for the Blind Pass project.
- Lee County presented at a public meeting organized by the Bayous Preservation Association on Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2011. The presentation focused on the status of Blind Pass and the progress forward.
- CEPD designated Kathy Rooker as their point of contact for Lee County communications on February 9, 2011.
  - **Interlocal Agreement** – Staff from City of Sanibel, CEPD, and Lee County discussed potential issues to be considered in drafting the new agreement for maintenance of Blind Pass on Monday, April 11, 2011. The main issues discussed include:
    - Project scope
    - Funding options
    - Stakeholder responsibilities

**Progress This Month:**

- **Permitting** – The DEP issued the Notice of Intent to Issue for the modification request on October 28, 2011. The notice was published in the local paper on or about Nov. 10, 2011. Final permit receipt is expected in January 2012.

**Outstanding Issues and Anticipated Completion Dates:**

- **Permit Modification** - The Joint Coastal Permit (JCP) modification is expected to be issued by February 2012. The State portion will be issued first with the federal portion following approximately 3 weeks behind.
- **Interlocal Agreement:** - Lee County staff will discuss funding options with the administration. Options will include managing the pass without CEPD participation. An amendment to the current ILA or a new ILA is anticipated prior to the next maintenance event.

## 2. Construction

### Items Previously Completed:

- **Construction** - The DEP's Notice to Proceed was issued on October 24, 2008 authorizing the removal of approximately 127,000 cyds from Blind Pass. Lee County and Energy Resources executed a construction contract with final payment totaling \$2,167,424. The project commenced on December 1, 2008 with a completion date of December 2009. Dredging operations concluded on Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup>. Approximately 148,038 cyds were removed from the pass. 136,950 cyds were placed on the beach or in the nearshore. The remaining 11,088 cyds were placed in an upland facility.

## 3. Mitigation and Monitoring

### Items Previously Completed

- **Seagrass Mitigation** - The County quantified the acreage of seagrass scarring in Wulfert Flats via aerial photography in August 2008. The total acreage is less than required by permit for mitigation. Lee County, DEP, and "Ding" Darling NWR held public meetings on the proposed Pole and Troll zone during January, 09. The Pole and Troll zone was marked by Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> with 4 signs and 8 buoys.

The preconstruction condition of seagrass near the channel was documented in December 2008. Future impacts or benefits will be quantified from these measurements. Seagrass monitoring is required for a minimum of 5 years after construction. The first year seagrass report quantifying secondary impacts and benefits near the channel was completed in April 2010. Findings indicate grass beds are migrating away from the work area and reducing in size and density. This may develop into a long term trend or impact as the system adjusts to the increased water flow, water clarity, water conditions, and changing sediment loading rates.

The second annual report documenting secondary impacts to seagrass adjacent to the Blind Pass channel was completed in January 27, 2011. Results show seagrass within 500 feet of the dredged channel are adjusting to increased flushing and improved water clarity. The fine to silty sediment located in the beds prior to construction is also being replaced by a heavier or coarser sediment structure. The available seagrass acreage has remained relatively constant (9.61 acres in 2010) in the monitoring area although the bed locations have generally moved away from the channel.

Lee County submitted the 2<sup>nd</sup> year monitoring report for the seagrass transplanted from the dredge cut to Dinkins Bayou and Sunset Bay on February 11, 2011. The results indicate bed expansion may exceed the 1.1 acre goal within the 5 year monitoring period. If this occurs, additional monitoring / mitigation will not be required. (The pole and troll zone in Wulfert Flats would count completely towards public interest. It would still be required as a permit condition, but prop scar repair and annual monitoring would not be required.)

- **Mangrove Mitigation** - Lee County planted the required 851 red mangroves in Clam Bayou on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bi-monthly monitoring must be conducted until the success criteria are verified. A monitoring report summarizing the activity was submitted in March 2010. Efforts showed approximately half of the mangroves did not survive.

Lee County, with assistance from SCCF, collected and planted an estimated 4,000 mangrove propagules on October 21, 2010. Preliminary indications of field

measurements to verify if mangrove habitat has established in Clam Bayou on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup> suggest approximately 20% of the propagules survived.

- **Sea Turtle Mitigation** – Lee County eradicated the Australian Pines along Sanibel Captiva Drive in the vicinity of Tween Waters prior to construction. Approximately 100 trees were removed. Follow-up events are required semi-annually until no trees exist for a 12 month period. Lee County conducted the 2010 follow-ups on March 4<sup>th</sup>, and October 29, 2010. A total of 11 and 18 seedlings were removed during each respective event.

CEPD and Lee County worked jointly with private property owners to remove Australian pines located adjacent to Alison Hagerup Beach Access and provide additional dune vegetation. These efforts were completed prior to construction.

- **Physical Monitoring**

- The six month survey and monitoring effort to document the pass stability was completed in February 2010. Approximately 37,900 cyds shoaled near the pass in the 6 months since construction; however 43,000 cyds scoured out from the pass entrance. The net material movement was a loss of approximately 5,000 cyds.

1<sup>st</sup> Year physical monitoring surveys and hydraulic measurements were conducted during October and November 2010. Results show a decrease in tidal velocities and additional channel migration patterns. A digital copy of the 1<sup>st</sup> year monitoring report is available on the County's website. (Follow Blind Pass links from [www.Lee-County.com](http://www.Lee-County.com))

- Lee County notified DEP and FWC the permit required tilling was not conducted for 2011 due to shorebird activity on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Progress This Month:**

- **Physical Monitoring** -Lee County continues to monitor and evaluate the issues related to the pass showing significant shoaling during the month of December and January 2010/2011. Cold fronts are believed to be the main contributor with decreased tidal velocities and increased bed friction supplementing the impacts.

Additional survey work to quantify the migration and shoreline change rate 2 years after construction began in October with a report expected by February.

#### **Outstanding Issues and Anticipated Completion Dates:**

- **Mangrove Mitigation** – The first annual mitigation report is anticipated in November 2011. The report will document if the required mangroves have established in Clam Bayou, or if additional mitigation / monitoring is required. Additional plantings are anticipated to be required.
- **SeaTurtle Mitigation** – Semiannual monitoring events to identify and remove Australian Pines along San-Cap road will continue in the spring and fall of each year until the success criteria is met.
- **Physical Monitoring** – Lee County continues to monitor the stability of Blind Pass by photo documentation. The monitoring will be used to justify a maintenance dredging event could occur at the earliest in the Spring of 2012.