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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County to receive third resiliency grant from FDEP for local, regional vulnerability assessments

February 16, 2023 – Flagler County has successfully applied for – and been awarded – its third Resilient Florida planning grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to complete and coordinate countywide and regional vulnerability assessments. These assessments will eventually weave into the state’s initiative to bolster the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan, which proposes funding for the highest ranked resilience and adaptation projects.

The FDEP on Monday (February 13) announced a total award of more than \$28 million that will be awarded in all 67 counties in Florida. Flagler County’s award of \$200,000 brings the total funding provided by the state to \$475,000. It was previously awarded \$75,000 for a countywide vulnerability assessment that will include Beverly Beach, Bunnell, Flagler Beach, Marineland, and Palm Coast, as well as a separate \$200,000 grant for a regional project to coordinate the vulnerability assessments of Baker, Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns counties in addition to Flagler.

“The goal with the regional coordination is to ensure that we are using standardized methodologies and reporting, and to improve communications among jurisdictions,” said Public Lands and Natural Resource Manager Michael Lagasse, who wrote all three grant applications. “We have a public partnership with the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) and they will implement a lot of the regional resiliency work.”

The work is slated to start this year, according to the FDEP release.

“Under the leadership of Governor (Ron) DeSantis, the state of Florida has become a national leader in resilience action,” said FDEP Secretary Shawn Hamilton in the release. “Hurricanes Ian and Nicole illustrate just how crucial this investment is and will continue to be. These identified projects announced today will ensure inland and coastal communities are prepared for the impacts of storm surge, hurricanes and flooding and allow us to continue our aggressive efforts to protect Florida’s natural resources and infrastructure.”

The assessments are to include the following: a critical and regionally significant asset inventory; topographic data; and, flood scenario-related data. Coastal areas will be required to provide a Sea Level Impact Projection (SLIP).

Andy Dance
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Leann Pennington
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

Public outreach is part of the grant requirement to get input on preferred methodologies, data for analyzing potential sea level rise impacts and (or) flooding, guiding factors to consider, and critical assets important to the community.

“These grants, and the work that is about to begin, is critical to Flagler County. These assessments will address everything from inland flooding to stormwater to anything related to sea-level rise,” said County Administrator Heidi Petito. “We have taken a pounding from these storms in recent years, and we need to make sure we are building up and building back our infrastructure – which includes the dunes.”

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