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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Learn about the dunes – know what to ‘Dodge’ to protect tons of emergency sand placed as hurricane recovery

March 20, 2023 – Flagler County in the past six months has been reinforcing its case to state and federal partners – including Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency – for tens of millions of dollars for emergency sand replacement in the aftermath of hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

As construction of the protective dunes is currently underway, officials are urging visitors and residents to stay off the newly placed sand as it is not “high beach.”

“We’ve seen pictures of families with their umbrellas and beach chairs staking out their place on our newly constructed dunes – some with children ‘sledding’ down the slope on their boogie boards,” said County Administrator Heidi Petito. “We don’t believe any of this is done maliciously, but rather out of a lack of true understanding about what is the dune and what is beach.”

Potential confusion is the result of the time lag between placing and shaping the sand, and when it can be planted.

“Most people think of the dunes as the vegetated, landward side of the beach, which isn’t wrong,” said Flagler County Coastal Engineering Administrator Ansley Wren-Key. “But especially when we are building and renourishing dunes, there are areas that may have no vegetation or only very sparse vegetation.”

Sand at an elevation – even a modest elevation – is likely dunes.

“It’s easy to find out online when it is low tide, and we urge beachgoers to plan their ocean visits during these times,” Wren-Key said. “We will be working with the contractor to provide pathways for easier access to the beach. Please look for the guidance we are providing to help you make your way to the beach in a way that doesn’t sacrifice the new dunes.”

Andy Dance
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Leann Pennington
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

In addition to the “Dodge the Dunes” signs – part of the educational campaign created by the Tourism Development Office, Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches – Flagler County will be installing signs that will highlight dunes vs. beaches.

“Please don’t trample the sprouts,” Wren-Key said. “The vegetation is there to stabilize the dune. It takes a minimum of one year before the vegetation really holds the dunes.”

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