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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County works with federal, state, local agencies for larger combined dunes project from Pier to Gamble Rogers

May 5, 2023 – Amid a solid handful of emergency dunes replenishment projects, Flagler County Engineering has been working with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to combine two projects to expedite restoration of a larger section of dunes south of the Pier in a more cost-effective manner. This work includes coordination with the City of Flagler Beach and related projects it has in the works.

“It will be a benefit to the taxpayers to combine and expand the 2.6-mile federal Army Corps of Engineers project with portions of two FDOT District 5 regional projects,” said County Engineer Faith Alkhatib, noting that the idea to combine the projects came from the joint work of the State Road A1A Resiliency Strike Team that includes the City of Flagler Beach, Volusia County, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in addition to the Army Corps and FDOT. “This will put 90 cubic yards of sand on a total of 3.5 miles, which is quite a lot of sand (6 cubic yards per foot is used in the areas where emergency sand is placed).”

The total cost estimate (prices of things like fuel fluctuate) of the combined project is \$36.57 million, of which there is a local (non-federal) match of \$16.78 million. Flagler County currently has \$14.31 million from FDOT allocated to the project – leaving a shortfall of \$2.47 million.

“We have a wonderful working relationship with FDOT, and they are trying to help us secure additional money for the remaining non-federal match,” Alkhatib said. “Combining these two projects is really the best approach, because the Army Corps project will be a dredging operation and most of the costs are associated with mobilizing the equipment. The difference in the cost per cubic yard of sand is \$22 for dredging compared with \$65-70 for a trucking operation.”

There is still work that needs to be done before the Army Corps will change the schedule from its current 2.6-mile project to the combined 3.5-mile project, said ACOE Jacksonville District Senior Project Manager Jason Harrah. The short list includes: getting a staging easement from the Pebble Beach Homeowners Association – something the county must do; additional permitting through the Department of Environmental Protection; and,

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notifying the public that more sand will be removed from the offshore borrow pit than anticipated – something the Army Corps must do.

The original project approved in the ACOE “Chiefs Report” that was signed in 2014 called for 330,000 cubic yards of sand to be taken from the borrow pit. The current project – slated for construction to begin in June 2024 – calls for 1.3 million cubic yards of sand.

“The construction of the dune will result in additional ‘towel space,’ a wider berm,” Harrah said. “...We’ve seen a million cubic yard increase in the amount of sand needed ... (in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole) It is a much more challenging project.”

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