

North Manasota Key Beach Renourishment

Issue

Charlotte County stakeholders, including residents and businesses brought to the attention of the County Commissioners, Administrators, and staff that their erosion problem has become so severe that their shoreline armoring is failing. As a result, the County embarked on a new Beach Erosion Study (Study) to update the 2001-03 study elements that pertain to the Charlotte County segment of Manasota Key. The final study has just been completed and released the week of March 7, 2016. To date, Charlotte County has provided five declaration of emergency's in support of property owners at their request since 2014 to help with permitting the state process of armoring their property.

Discussion

Two formal presentations have been given to the Manasota Key North stakeholders including the Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee meeting in October 2015 and the South Sandpiper Key Association meeting in January 2016. A formal presentation was also given to the Board of County Commissioners for both Sarasota and Charlotte Counties at their Joint Meeting in November 2015.

The presentations to the stakeholders included the study overview, historical perspective of the beach and inlet management activities, summary of the prior study, erosion analysis, and results of the hardbottom mapping to describe the current conditions on Manasota Key North. The conceptual plans, potential sand sources, construction budgets, and funding approaches were also presented in detail. The stakeholders were requested to provide input on whether they support beach nourishment to address the erosion issues, their willingness to execute a construction easement to provide access to the County and contractor to conduct the work, a preference on a restoration plan, and an expression of their willingness to pay their fair share of the costs. They were also asked to consider additional public parking and access points needed to improve the chances of receiving State cost sharing and at a higher percentage. Some of the concerns that citizens have are the severity of erosion, granting of construction easements, cost, establishment of the erosion control line, dunes, and property rights (see below). Many of these questions are listed in the final report from the study. Staff is currently working on developing responses to the questions that can be answered at this time; however, some will not be able to be answered until we are further along in the process. We are working on ways to ensure that information gets out to as many citizens as we can, in the best format available.

The study outlines a recommended strategy to address the critically eroding beaches of Manasota Key North by implementing a beach management program consisting of initial restoration and periodic beach nourishment. As the design and permitting process will take somewhere between two and a half to three years to complete, starting the project as soon as possible is critical. Staff is working on funding options to present to the Board of County Commissioners. As this is a large and expensive project, all options need to be thoroughly vetted to ensure that the Board is able to make an informed decision with all of the facts on hand.

Recommendations

The recommendation is to ask the Board to approve using BP settlement funds to complete the design and permitting of this project. The cost estimate to hire a consultant to do the design and permitting would be approximately \$1.5M. This could be used towards the County's proportional share of the county's owned portion of the beach. The reason for this is to ensure that the project moves forward while staff works on the funding options.