

## Administration

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Flagler County's dunes project finishes up under budget, ahead of schedule

**February 25, 2019** – All that remains of Flagler County's unique, in-house 11.4 mile dunes restoration project are the finishing touches: finalizing cleanup, reshaping some areas affected by high tides, and planting protective vegetation such as sea oats.

"We anticipate completing these details within the next four weeks," said County Engineer Faith Alkhatib. "Our original completion date was April 31 – one day before the start of sea turtle nesting season – so we are ahead of our schedule."

The dunes restoration project also came in well under budget. It was initially estimated at \$28.3 million, but the actual costs round up to about \$20 million.

The purpose of dunes restoration is to provide a buffer of sacrificial sand between beach properties and the ocean to protect Flagler County's coastal communities.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection permit obtained by Flagler County before it could undertake the project stipulates that the dunes are to be resurveyed annually. Compaction testing is required each year before sea turtle nesting season, and tilling will be required in areas where the dune compaction exceeds permit requirements.

The two departments under Alkhatib's direct supervision – Engineering and Road and Bridge – committed to tackle the multi-faceted project in house, which is a first in Florida.

No other local government within the state has completed such an expansive project, which included 19 reaches with different funding sources – most of which was covered by FEMA, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Flagler County. Three homeowners associations – Hammock Beach Club, Ocean Hammock, and Hammock Dunes – kicked in at least a third of the funding for the length of dunes in front of their individual properties.

**Charles Ericksen, Jr.**  
District 1

**Greg Hansen**  
District 2

**David Sullivan**  
District 3

**Joe Mullins**  
District 4

**Donald O'Brien, Jr.**  
District 5

While Flagler County staff completed the actual dune construction, subcontractors were hired for supporting services. These services include the following: construction engineering inspection (Eisman & Russo); dune planting (EarthBalance); gopher tortoise surveying and relocation activities (Atlantic Ecological Services); sea turtle surveying and relocation activities (Volusia/Flagler Turtle Patrol); off-road dump truck rental (Eastman Aggregate Enterprises); tracked dump truck rental; sand source (Vulcan Materials Company); and, survey services (ATS Land Surveying).

“This project is a testament to the capabilities and dedication of Flagler County staff to our residents,” said Commission Chair Donald O’Brien. “Members of these two departments worked long days and weekends throughout the restoration work to get this protective dune in place as quickly as possible.”

Plans are underway to recognize Engineering and Road Bridge staff at a reception at 4 p.m. April 15, immediately before the regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. Residents are encouraged to attend.

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