

Okaloosa Island Dune Restoration

General Information

Project Description:

Objective

The Condo Alliance of Okaloosa Island (CAOI) is requesting a grant to plant sea oats on the beach dune on the barrier island of Okaloosa Island (also known as Santa Rosa Island) to help restore the natural habitat. These salt tolerant native plants grow deep roots and tall stalks that catch and trap sand, and will help rebuild the dune naturally. Okaloosa Island has 9 public beach access ways. The restored habitat will be enjoyed by wildlife, tourists and residents.

Applicant

CAOI is the grant applicant on behalf of 34 beachfront owners associations which line Okaloosa Island beach. Each owners association represents property along the Gulf of Mexico. At each property one or more members of the board of directors, or the property manager acting on behalf of the board, has opted in to help restore the dune to its' native beauty. The properties, their linear frontage facing the Gulf, and their specific request for sea oats is outlined on the attached spreadsheet (Exhibit 1).

The properties span the entire inhabited beachfront area of Okaloosa Island. El Matador borders Eglin Air Force base on the west end of the island. Seaspray borders Beasley Park on the east of the island. The remaining 32 properties are in between.

The property owners represent 8,352 linear feet (1.58 miles) of Gulf of Mexico beach frontage. The beach is approximately 300 feet deep from structures to water; thus the project benefits a 57.5 acre environment.

Damage

Okaloosa Island was first noticeably impacted by the BP oil spill on June 16 (see attached oil product photos, Exhibit 2). BP clean-up crews worked 24 hours a day for a few weeks cleaning the beach. BP crews were stationed along the Okaloosa Island beach throughout the summer and fall (see attached crew and clean-up photos, Exhibit 3). SCAT teams are still active today as widely scattered tar balls and occasional tar patties wash ashore most days.

Clean-up crews initially staged tents near the dune every few hundred feet and worked with sand cleaning heavy duty equipment, removing large quantities of sand near the shore line. Then workers walked the shore and removed sand with shovels. Now they work from 4 x 4 vehicles and walk with nets, removing much less sand, yet still disturbing the environment. The oil-contaminated sand removed and disturbed dune constitutes the habitat for threatened and endangered species (see attached native bird photos, Exhibit 4) including the Choctawhatchee beach mouse, piping plover, and loggerhead, leatherback, green sea and hawksbill turtles (see attached photos of loggerhead turtle egg relocation due to the spill, Exhibit 5). The sea grass is a habitat for smaller creatures.

Mitigation

We are requesting a grant of \$34,452 to help restore beach and dune removed, contaminated, and disturbed, as a result of the BP oil spill. The Okaloosa Island dune is approximately 100 feet deep. This money will provide 10 rows approximately 10 feet apart landward to seaward, of small sea oat seedlings (40 cents each). This is 83,520 plants, spaced 1 foot apart east to west, along the 1.58 miles of Okaloosa Island dune. It will also provide a total of 835 mature sea oats (\$1.25 each), for one row with one plant every 10 feet, along the 1.58 miles. The total 84,355 plants can be purchased for \$34,452 from Land and Sea Native Plants of Duette, Florida.

We would welcome monetary assistance with planting labor. If such assistance is not available, our members are willing to plant the sea oats. The figure above is based on our members providing all labor. The application uses a \$15/hr labor rate and 30 sea oats planted per hour productivity, which values labor our members are willing to donate at \$42,177.50 or 55% of total project cost.

Our members will obtain all necessary FDEP field permits for the planting. All planting will be done outside turtle nesting season (May 1 - October 31), and in accordance with FDEP field permitting requirements.

Some of our members have installed irrigation to accelerate growth of the new plantings. Others are planning on installing systems if we are awarded this grant.

Organization Name: Condo Alliance of Okaloosa Island (CAOI)

Activity(s):

- Restoration
- Maintenance/Management
- Protection

Habitat(s):

- Beach/Dune

Status

Property/Resource Acquisition: Completed

Project Planning/Design: Completed

Project Permitting: In Progress

Time to Implementation: 0-3 months

Time to Project Completion: 0-3 months

Included in Regional Plan? No

Cost

Estimated Cost: US\$34,452.00

Funding Available: US\$42,177.50

Partners

Organization

CAOI includes 34 organizations listed in Exhibit 1

Geographic Information

State: FL

County/Parish: Okaloosa

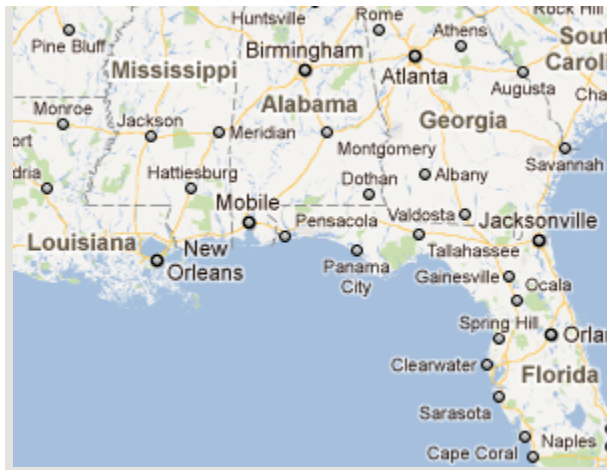
Watershed/Basin: unknown

Affected Area (acres): 57.5

Location Description: Okaloosa Island

Location Overview

(lat: 30.4202, long: -86.616728)



Detail Map

(size: 19.2 acres)