

GULF TRACE RESTORTION

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

THE BEACH

PLANNING

CONCLUSION

CLAIM ON DEP LIST W-24

GULF TRACE INTRODUCTION

GULF TRACE is an upscale community of approximately eighty-one (81) home sites. It is situated off Walton County Road 30A between the road and the Gulf of Mexico. It's quiet and solitude is owed in a large part to the fact it is surrounded on all four sides by Florida State Park and the Gulf of Mexico.

The real estate value of the homes and lots that comprise Gulf Trace is estimated to be in excess of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000). Its residents include attorneys, doctors, business executives and retirees.

In order to provide a wildlife friendly environment, the Homeowner's Association concluded last year a large scale effort that included installing Sea Turtle approved lighting on all fixtures facing the beach. Downward directed solar powered amber color lights replaced five (5) street lights. All of this labor and expense was to make Gulf Trace a turtle friendly community.

Many bird species inhabit Gulf Trace and surrounding Park including: ospreys, eagles, hawks, pelicans and sandpipers along with other wildlife including: Florida panther, wild deer, fox and bears. It is believed that BP foot and truck traffic was an intrusion upon the habitats of that wildlife as well as being an intrusion upon human beachgoers.

To further encourage Sea Turtle nesting, efforts are planned to build dunes in front of the beachside homes in order to create a nesting environment that is friendly and natural to the sea turtles.

The Beach At Gulf Trace

The pride of Gulf Trace and an important element in the real estate valuations and desirability as a rental property is the roughly quarter mile of pristine white sandy beach which is a section of the acclaimed beautiful Grayton Beach.

Gulf Trace is being certified as a “turtle friendly” community as part of the turtle friendly beach program through the Florida Sea Grant Program. Guidance, funding assistance, and approval were obtained by the Sea Turtle Conservancy and the local University of Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent. Please see attached copy of the awarded plaque. Gulf Trace plans to continue its efforts to insure a friendly and safe environment for nesting turtles and their hatched offspring.

The aforementioned is recounted to indicate the value and care bestowed on the beach at Gulf Trace. The Horizon oil spill and the ensuing beach invasion by BP truck and personnel traffic (illustrated in the included photograph) has impacted beach property values and community values.

The Horizon oil spill and the ensuing constant beach patrolling by BP personnel resulted in significant interruption and fear in our Gulf Trace Community and in vacationing visitors. Beachgoers were always aware of BP personnel traversing up and down our beach front. That seemed to indicate to beachgoers and vacationers that oil washing onto the beach was an expected or frequent occurrence. It was unnerving to be trying to relax on the beach while BP personnel patrolled in vehicles and on foot constantly. Renting vacationers and owners did not know if it was safe to be on our beach. Suspicion of oil on the beach or toxic chemicals continues to be a concern even today.

Owners that are on the beach daily believe that the BP traffic contributed to erosion of our beach.

RESTORATION PLANNING

The explosion of British Petroleum's "Deep Water Horizon" platform in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010 had a far-reaching and unfortunately lasting effect on the Emerald Coast of Northwest Florida and especially to the serenity of Gulf Trace. The damage done to our community was done by the actual three month spillage of oil and additionally by BP's clean up efforts. The fear of the Gulf depositing toxic chemicals on the beach still exists.

At times we would have ten different people parading up and down our beach and accompanying trucks would ferry the inspectors around, re-locate lavatory facilities, bring personnel luncheon arrangements ... hour after hour day after day For months churning up the sand. It is believed by some frequent beachgoers that the rutting and loosening of the sand by BP personnel and consequent storms eroded wide portions of our beach.

The attached photograph shows the resulting ruts caused by constant traffic on our beach; a significant portion of which is connected to trucks in conjunction with BP inspection efforts.

In an effort to repair collateral damage Gulf Trace plans to build eighteen (18) low dunes in front of beachside homes and provide fencing and sea oats to protect and build dune structure. The fencing during the non-nesting season will add sand to the dunes.

For all of these reasons we are asking for part of the funds provided by BP to be awarded for Gulf Trace restoration in the amount of \$400,000. This amount will allow for building sand dunes and other Gulf Trace restoration projects.

The award should be payable to Gulf Trace Homeowners' Association, P.O. Box 4807, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459-4807.

CONCLUSION

For the past two years the Gulf Trace Owners Association, (GTOA), has endeavored to create a more natural shoreline by reducing the artificial light and we now wish to attempt to restore the dune system. By creating a more natural beach we hope this will encourage higher sea turtle nesting numbers and a return of a healthy coastal habitat. Sea Turtles, it is presumed, will feel more natural and at ease preparing their nests in front of a dune rather than in front of an imposing man-made structure.

As part of the reclamation of our Sea Turtle hatching beach, it is our intent to replace and augment lost dunes, plant sea oats and utilize a network of sand fences during non-nesting season in order to build and maintain these dunes.

The Gulf Trace community has suffered setbacks as a result of the Horizon oil spill and ensuing beach patrolling by BP personnel.

GTOA requests \$400,000 to be used for improvement projects; the primary project being construction of sand dunes.