

Cortez Key Bird Sanctuary
No PID#

Fiscal Year: 2018	Rank: 7
Parcel Size: N/A	County: Manatee
Project Size: 0.49 acres	Landowner: State of Florida

Location: Sarasota Bay south of Cortez Fishing Village and the FISH Preserve, Manatee County

Owner/Contact Information: State of Florida Sovereign Submerged Lands; FDEP, (813) 632-7600 / Audubon Florida, (813) 623-6826

Existing Land Use Description

	FLUCFCS Type	Code	Acreage	Condition
Wetland	Bays and Estuaries	540	0.46	Natural
	Mangrove Swamps	612	0.03	Natural

Summary

The Cortez Key Bird Sanctuary island is approximately eight acres of sovereign submerged land owned by the State of Florida and managed by the Audubon Society. The project is in northern Sarasota Bay, east of the ICW, and south of the Cortez Fishing Village and the F.I.S.H. Preserve within an embayment locally referred to as “The Kitchen”. This is a natural mangrove island which is surrounded by seagrasses and oyster reefs. The island is an important roosting and nesting location for many protected bird species. The island’s northwestern edge currently shows signs of erosion from wave action generated in the ICW and is at further risk of land mass loss due to sea level rise. The proposed plan is to install a series of breakwater structures to dissipate wave action and to protect the island’s shore (see attached Figure – Potential Restoration Options).

The breakwater structure could be constructed of either oyster bags or pH-balanced artificial reef balls. Oyster bags are less expensive, easier to install, and easier to permit while reef balls more effectively dissipate wave energy and attract larger fish species. Both options occupy the same footprint which may include seagrass beds and will require appropriate permitting. Installation of the breakwater structure would not occur during the breeding season. These are both viable breakwater components which will bolster the vulnerable mangrove island shore while increasing EFH in the Bay.

**Project has not been designed or proposed by owner.*