



Department of Environmental Resources Management

November 2012 Project Status Report

South Cove Natural Area Grand Opening

The boardwalk was filled with over 120 supporters as Commissioner Taylor, Commissioner Burdick and dignitaries cut the ribbon to unveil the creation of mangrove islands in Lake Worth Lagoon off of the City of West Palm Beach.



The restored area is already active with fiddler crabs, fish, wading birds and manatees, which will become more abundant as the seagrass and mangrove systems mature.

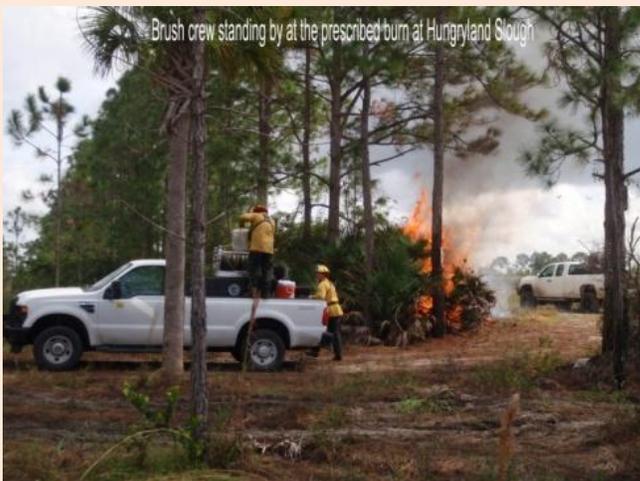
The Florida Inland Navigation District presented a \$1 million check to the County for the construction of the boardwalk

Acreage Pines Natural Area Grand Opening:



Commissioner Santamaria hosted a grand opening ceremony for the new public use facilities at Acreage Pines Natural Area. The trails, boardwalk and observation deck allow more opportunity for residents to enjoy passive recreational activities such as hiking, nature photography and bird watching in our community. Visit the ERM webpage at <http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/erm/natural/> for more information and directions to this natural area.

Hungryland Slough Natural Area: ERM was able to successfully burn approximately 50 of the 65 acres in the Hungryland Slough Natural Area before thunderstorms moved into the area and ended the burn.



Grassy Flats Restoration Project

The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) has awarded \$110,000 in Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) funding to the Grassy Flats project. This project will benefit reefs by capping muck and reducing the effects of land based sources of pollution. This is the first time CRCP funds have been used for an estuarine restoration project.



Winding Waters Natural Area:

Staff has been preparing a 20-acre area of the upland habitat for a seeding restoration project. A solid ground cover of native material will help ward off any encroachment of

non-native vegetation. The seeding will begin just prior to the spring wet season when cultivation conditions are optimum.

Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative Symposium

Proposals for the May 15, 2013 Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative Symposium are due by December 15th. Symposium themes include: habitat restoration and enhancement, water and sediment quality, and public use and outreach. Oral or poster presentations that highlight ongoing activities or recent projects in the Lagoon addressing one of the themes will be considered by the Planning Committee. For more information, please visit www.LWLI.org or contact Julie Mitchell at jmitchell@pbcgov.org or 561/233-2437.

A.G. Holley Natural Area: The County will soon be adding a new natural area to our list. The 32-acre AG Holley Scrub site will be turned over to the County from the State for management under a 50-year management lease agreement. Once the lease is finalized by the State, ERM will be able to begin the initial assessment and cleanup phase of management. Among the first tasks will be, fencing the property, trash removal and exotic vegetation removal.

Tugboat M/V POCAHONTAS:

A 110' Canadian tugboat currently docked along the Miami River will become the latest ship to be placed within a permitted artificial reef site. The contract is scheduled to go to the BCC for approval in December. \$12,000 in private donations have been received from the Danny McCauley Memorial Reef Foundation and the Lake Worth Inlet Dive Operators Association.



Dune Restoration:

Construction has begun at two sites severely impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Though the majority of coastline in the County was impacted, permits and funding were already in place for restoration at Coral Cove Park and at Singer Island. Though an initial request for emergency funding from FEMA was denied, an appeal is pending.



Dark Sky Events:

Over the next few months, ERM will be coordinating with local parks, nature centers and libraries to raise awareness of light pollution. The two photos above illustrate how something as simple as purchasing the proper light fixture or shielding a light can positively affect wildlife, improve the view of the night sky, and has even been linked to human health. Currently two *Dark Sky* events are scheduled.

March 9, 2013: Palm Beach County Dark Sky Star Party. Okeehelée Nature Center, West Palm Beach.

March 16, 2013: John D. MacArthur Park in Palm Beach Gardens Dark Sky Festival. The Festival will be held in conjunction with the park's annual Naturescaping Event.

Record Shattering Sea Turtle Nesting Season

When the final numbers are in, it is expected that loggerhead sea turtle nest counts in the County will be well over 20,000 or nearly 45% higher than the previous record set in 2010. Leatherback sea turtle nest counts are expected to exceed 500 nests which are well above the 10 year average but not a record. Green turtle nests should be over 2,000 which is average. These numbers are based on projections from 7 select beaches in which account for 50% of the nesting in the county. Our shoreline makes up only 5% of the nesting beaches in Florida but produce 22% of all the nests counted making Palm Beach County beaches crucial nesting habitat. This very high nesting density on heavily developed shorelines makes sea turtle conservation a challenge, but most residents and visitors seem to

South Lake Worth Inlet

FDEP issued a permit modification for maintenance dredging in the interior sand trap, the Boynton Boat Club Channel, and cut P-50 of the Intracoastal Waterway. An invitation for bids was advertised on November 18.

understand and support these efforts.

North Jupiter Flatwoods Natural Area: ERM staff has received good news that our permit applications to the Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District have been

reviewed and no further information will be required for the application.

Pine Glades Natural Area: The right-of-way permit application for the construction of a water control structure in the Pratt-Whitney right-of-way is in process as are elevation surveys of the roadway on both sides of the proposed structure.

Peanut Island:

Construction of the new opening into the SE Peanut reef system has provided increased tidal flushing. Additional rock will be placed to direct the tidal flow toward the inner reef. The new and fortified breakwaters provided shoreline protection ahead of Hurricane Sandy, but beach re-nourishment behind the breakwaters will be necessary to provide additional shoreline stability.

Snook Islands Wetland Restoration Work Underway:

The expanded Snook Islands Wetland Restoration project has received 25,000 cubic yards of sand trucked from Okeehelée Park. The Project consists of 13 acres of wetlands north of the Snook Islands Public Use Facility and 7 acres off of Bryant Park, in Lake Worth.

Reef Monitoring:

The Reef Research Team surveyed Lynn's Reef and the surrounding patch reefs. The patch reef supports a myriad of benthic invertebrate life but no staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) was observed. Photographs and a video of the reef were collected. Lynn's Reef is a beautiful natural reef just south of the South Lake Worth Inlet. It is in good shape with a diversity of fish and benthics. The sighting of a queen triggerfish was a highlight of this dive.

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