



For Immediate Release

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Manatee Pocket Project makes final preparations for dredging

Stuart, Fla.—November 9, 2009—The wheels are in motion for the Manatee Pocket dredging project in Port Salerno. The project, which was initiated in 2004 when a group of concerned citizens informed the Martin County Board of County Commissioners about the conditions in the Manatee Pocket and urged them to take action, is taking shape as final preparations are underway to begin dredging.

Later this month a pipeline will be constructed in Crooked Creek to transport the dredged material from the pocket to the material handing site off of US1.

Additionally, work began last week on preparing the staging/work area at Sandsprit Park. The staging area will include seven boat trailer parking spaces at the west end of the park, as well as approximately 16 boat trailer parking spaces in the westerly island. The area will be used to stage material and equipment and will serve as a work area for the project. The two westerly ramps will be used to launch pipe equipment and vessels.

"We are doing our best to minimize inconvenience to the public by occupying an area of the park that does not normally see heavy use," said Kathy FitzPatrick, Martin County coastal engineer.

Once the project is complete, all areas that were used in part of the Manatee Pocket Project will be restored, resulting in improvements to the areas. "In appreciation to the County for the use of the area, the Contractor will pave an additional portion of the boat trailer parking area, in the end, Sandsprit Park will see a net benefit," FitzPatrick added.

Dredging is expected to begin in early January once all final preparations are complete. "This project has been over five years in the making. We are all looking forward to getting underway so that Martin County citizens can begin to benefit from improved water quality within a navigable Manatee Pocket," FitzPatrick said.

About the Manatee Pocket Project

The Manatee Pocket Project is a dredging project that entails the removal of about 280,000 cubic yards of muck in the Manatee Pocket in Port Salerno. Once completed, the project will result in a clean, 100-foot-wide channel that will provide navigational, economic and environmental enhancements to the Manatee Pocket and its adjacent waterways.

The goals of the project are to:

- Increase the draft and size of vessels that will be able to access the Pocket
- Define a channel to minimize impacts to adjacent shallow water areas and benefit manatee protection
- Remove detrimental muck sediments
- Improve the ability of marine life to re-establish in the Pocket
- Improve the water quality in the Pocket

For more information visit www.manateepocketproject.com

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