



For Immediate Release

Contact: Kathy Fitzpatrick
Martin County Coastal Engineer
772-288-5429
kfitzpat@martin.fl.us

Richard E. Czapinski
Coastal Engineering – Tetra Tech EC
561.735.0482 Ext: 202
richard.czlapinski@tteci.com

Manatee Pocket Project Seeks Best Dredger

PORT SALERNO, March 19, 2009 – After years of planning and analysis, the Manatee Pocket Project is taking another step forward with today’s announcement of a request for proposals from companies for the dredging phase of the project. The **Manatee Pocket Project** was initiated in 2006 by a group of citizens known as the “Pocket Bunch” who were concerned about the accumulation of muck in the Manatee Pocket and its tributaries.

After proposals are received from dredging companies, representatives from the Martin County Coastal Engineering Department and other participating agencies will review and evaluate responses received from dredging contractors.

“Due in part to the downturn in the economy, we have already received inquiries from experienced contractors who may not have previously been interested in a project of this size and scope,” explained Martin County Coastal Engineer Kathy FitzPatrick. The County is hoping that the timing of the project will result in a lower cost than anticipated.

Cost is only one of the factors that will be considered when selecting a contractor, however. Other factors include the Contractor’s proposed work plan, project duration, Contractor’s proposed Environmental Compliance Plans, ability to reduce impact to residents and area infrastructure during the dredging process, and use of technology.

The bid package is also unique because it provides contractors with flexibility to select between two methods of removing the muck: hydraulic and mechanical. Hydraulic dredging uses pipelines and pumps to remove muck, while mechanical dredging requires a combination of excavators and barges.

- more -

. “We are considering both methods in an attempt to secure the best project overall project at the best price for the citizens of Martin County,” FitzPatrick explained. Video clips of the dredging methods can be viewed online at <http://www.manateepocketproject.com/faq>.

Several parks are already identified for potential use as staging areas to be used for equipment storage or as transfer stations moving muck from barges to dump trucks. “We have worked hard to develop creative solutions to minimize the impact to boat ramps and parking,” FitzPatrick said.

While cost remains a focal point, the County was able to capitalize on several matching grant opportunities through county, state and other sources, securing approximately \$10 million for the project. With a potential shortfall of about \$600,000, the County may require an assessment of waterfront property owners on the Pocket to make up deficit, but details have not been solidified and the assessment has not been approved by the Martin County Commission. Property owners included in any assessment receive advance notification of the proposed assessment and the date of the public workshop which is held prior to the meeting at which the Board takes final action. “We want citizens to be informed about the project and its benefits and will keep the community updated on the progress of the project,” Fitzpatrick said. Martin County citizens are invited to learn more about the **Manatee Pocket Project** at www.manateepocketproject.org.

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

###