



Media Contact:

Wayne Larson, St. Johns County Director of Public Affairs
Cell Phone: 904-426-2128
Office Phone: 904-209-0542
Email: wlarson@sjcfl.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Johns County Completes Butler Beach Reach Portion of FEMA Dune Enhancement Project

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Florida, September 22, 2023 – St. Johns County has completed the Butler Beach Reach portion of the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project, the first of several major fortifications for the County’s invaluable coastline. The Butler Beach Reach includes the shoreline from Ocean Hammock Park through Bryn Mawr Ocean Resort, in addition to a 1,500-foot section from Mary Street to the south. At the Sept. 19 St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, Emergency Management Director Joseph Giammanco [presented an update](#) to the Board on the status of the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project. As part of the Butler Beach Reach portion, St. Johns County placed more than 51,129 cubic yards – about 70,000 tons – of sand trucked in from Keystone Heights, Florida, and strategically planted about 148,500 sea oat units along the berm crest for dune stabilization. As the sea oats grow, the dune system will grow. St. Johns County requests beach visitors stay off the dune and sea oats to avoid damaging this delicate dune system. The County installed 7,200 feet of protective fencing to protect the dune system from foot traffic. [Watch the Butler Beach Restoration video here.](#)

“It’s really a big deal,” District 5 Commissioner Henry Dean said. “Our beaches are one of our most valuable assets, both from an environmental standpoint and an economic standpoint.”

The Butler Beach Reach portion is one of four beach restoration efforts included in the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project due to the impacts of Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. The other three efforts include Ponte Vedra Beach, South Ponte Vedra Beach, and Crescent Beach. St. Johns County will perform the restoration in phases to reduce public access restrictions and increase public safety, as well as the efficiency of its resources to complete this massive project.

“Following Hurricanes Ian and Nicole, we had significant damage along the Butler Beach area,” Giammanco said. “We were able to utilize FEMA funds to come in and restore portions of the dune that was lost during those storms.”

For the Butler Beach Reach portion of the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project, St. Johns County selected construction company Phillips & Jordan, Inc. as the lowest, most responsive, and most responsible bidder at a not-to-exceed bid price of \$4,173,498 with an additional \$700,000 for project delivery cost. St. Johns County will receive a FEMA grant reimbursement of \$3,655,124 and a State of Florida Department of Emergency Management grant reimbursement of \$609,187 after all phases

of the project are complete. The BOCC approved the transfer of \$609,187 from General Fund Reserves to pay for the remaining project cost.

For updates on the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project, visit sjcf.us/CoastalProjects/ or contact the Coastal Management team at 904-209-0260, or coastalprojects@sjcf.us. The public can also follow St. Johns County Beach Services on Facebook or Twitter (@SJCBeaches) or download the free Reach the Beach mobile app at m.appbuild.io/stjohnsc6.

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