

MEMORANDUM

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FROM: Nicole C. Kibert, MS Candidate, College of Natural Resources
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Richard Hamann, Center for Governmental Responsibility
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DATE: June 9, 2000

RE: Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Citizen Participation Review – Osprey, Fl

Pre-Workshop Comment Submittals

One written pre workshop comment was received by mail. This commentor expressed a concern in reference to the property owners' rights and the deed restrictions on Palmer Park and other properties in the area.

Introduction

The following report is a review of citizen input compiled from the last of a series of public workshops for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study ["Project"]. The Project includes Snake Island, Big Edward's Island, Bird Colony Island, Skier's Island, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, and Palmer Point Park.

This Public Workshop for the presentation of the preferred alternatives for each of the project islands was convened on Wednesday, May 17th, 2000, 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Pine View School, 1 Python Path, Osprey, Florida. Information on the Project and workshop specifics was posted at the Corps website prior to the Workshop.

Workshop Participation

The Public Workshop was convened at the time and location described above. Project team members in attendance were Mr. Alberto Gonzalez and Ms. Tiphannie Jinks of the Corps - Jacksonville District, Mr. Chuck Listowski of the West Coast Inland Navigation District, Eric Sutton, Project Scientist, Sarasota County Natural Resources, and Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, Jeannie Hunt, Lenora Hockley, Betsy Davis and Jesus Merly from HDR Engineering, Inc. The Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and Richard Hamann of the University of Florida, College of Law's Center for Governmental Responsibility, along with graduate student Nicole Kibert.

The Workshop Agenda was broken down into four sections; I) Introduction and Project History, II) Presentation of Each Alternative with the Analysis, the Preferred Alternatives, and Public Comments, III) Where We Go From Here, and IV) Final Public Comments. Aside from active participation in the workshop itself, forms were provided for written comments, and an open invitation was made for follow-up written comments to be sent directly to the Corps.

Section I of the Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and included a general introduction of the purpose of the Workshop, the parties involved with the Project and their representatives present at the meeting, and a brief overview of the Workshop format and proposed agenda. Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, of HDR Engineering, Inc. reviewed the project history and the history of public involvement.

Section II and III of the Workshop were presented by Mr. Hasbrouck. Mr. Hasbrouck's discussion covered the presentation of the alternative restoration concepts for each of the project locations addressed in three groups; 1) Big Edward's Island and Skier's Island, 2) Jim Neville Marine Preserve, and Palmer Point Park, and 3) Snake Island. Following the presentation for each group, public comments were taken from individuals who had signed up to speak on a specific island. Those comments are included below. Mr. Ankersen continued to facilitate the Workshop and direct the public comment period for each of the three project groups. Mr. Hasbrouck then outlined the calendar for the project following this workshop explaining where the project will go from this point.

Summary of Public Comment

After Mr. Hasbrouck's presentation under Sections II and III, Mr. Ankersen initiated Section IV of the Workshop by requesting those citizens who had provided a written request to participate in the public discussion portion of the Workshop. Mr. Hasbrouck, Mr. Listowski, Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Sutton responded to questions and actively participated in the discussion of the concerns and issues raised by the public commentors. Several citizens, who had requested to speak previously, declined as their questions or concerns had already been addressed. The following is a summary of the comments that were received.

A few commentors were concerned about the removal of vegetation and its affect on the visual buffers they currently created. Concerns over exotic vegetation maintenance and success of the restoration aspects of the Project were voiced by several other citizens. Several commentors indicated that if replanting is to take place then the emphasis should be on planting large trees stating that small trees are insufficient for wildlife, shade and storm protection. Several commentors expressed support for exotic vegetation removal and restoration of the islands and explained how efforts at exotic removal have been successful. One commentor repeatedly supported exotic removal and gave several examples as to why removal of exotics such as the Australian Pine would benefit property owners by providing greater protection in a storm. Reference was made to the problems encountered with Australian Pines at Dinner Key in Miami after Hurricane Andrew.

One commentor expressed concern about the limiting of discussion time. Another commentor stated that there was not enough notice about this Workshop, that mailings were not sent out to past participants, and that having this Workshop in Osprey prevented people from attending this Workshop as evidenced by the small number of Workshop participants present. Another commentor expressed concern that the mailings for the project were not received. One commentor stated that she had received a notice in the mail about the Workshop and stated that she wished that people had gotten involved earlier in the process so that they would understand how these concepts came about as a result of public input from earlier workshops. Ms. Jinks from the Corps of Engineers explained that notices had been sent to 150 persons who had attended previous meetings and that a press release had been sent by the Corps.

One commentor felt that Little Edwards Island should be included in the Project.

Several commentors were concerned as to how the Project would affect current flows and waterways and specifically, boater access to the surrounding areas. Another commentor expressed concern that while each island should be addressed separately, that they should also be viewed in their entirety for specific uses and

restoration goals. One commentor stated concern that management may be left to Parks and Recreation because they do not enforce the no-wake zones that are already in place.

In reference to the plan for Palmer Point Park, one commentor expressed that the preferred alternative Concept 3, all mangroves, is a good one. Another commentor felt that it should be possible to place a winding creek through the park, which would allow kayak access to the area.

One commentor reminded the participants that the goal of Jim Neville Marine Preserve is supposed to be for passive recreation only and that the preferred alternative should reflect that. Another commentor stated that they would like to see both an East-West and a North-South flow in the Jim Neville Marine Preserve to maximize water flow. This commentor further stated that salterns could be a potential mitigation for future projects. One commentor reminded the project team that the Preserve was subject to deed restrictions to maintain the preserve in its pristine state.

One commentor felt that Midnight Pass should be addressed by this project. Another commentor stated that the map regarding Snake Island was inaccurate, that beach goes all the way around the island and that basic data was missing. The same commentor expressed concern over the source of any sand that would be added to the island. This commentor further stated that Snake Island is already crowded with people and putting in marsh and mangrove areas would overcrowd the island.

One commentor stated that the plan for Bird Colony Islands sounds good. Another commentor felt that Bird Colony Islands was being treated as an afterthought and that it should be the project priority as it is rapidly eroding. Mr. Hasbrouck explained that Bird Colony Islands had not been overlooked and provided additional information on the site.

One commentor stated concern that we are going to spend \$6 million to fix something that isn't broken. Another commentor stated concern that non-local people were designing the concepts and that the Project Team was not being forthcoming with their plans.

One commentor stated that Section 1135 is for habitat preservation and restoration and that if Sarasota doesn't take advantage of this money, some other area will. The commentor feels it is in the public interest to restore these areas and the small loss in recreational access is outweighed by the benefits.

Post-Workshop Comment Submittals

Two post workshop written comments were submitted one by e-mail and one written. One commentor expressed concern that the preferred alternative for Snake Island was not the one agreed upon at a prior public workshop, as there was no mention of phased exotic removal. Another commentor referenced the comment at the workshop that property owners in the area may have some type of veto power over the project based on property covenants in the deed for the Jim Neville Marine Preserve. After review of the property transfer, the commentor maintains that this is inaccurate and that there is actually specific reference of the future potential use of the property regarding the maintenance, relocation and deepening of Midnight Pass.

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1000 South School Avenue
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Sarasota, FL 34242



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

March 31, 2000

Planning Division
Flood Control and Flood
Plain Management Section

Dear Interested Party:

This letter is to inform you of the scheduled public workshop for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Project Feasibility Study. This workshop is a follow-up to the October 28, 1999 public workshop held in Sarasota and the February 1-3, 2000 public workshops held in Venice and Osprey, Florida. Enclosed for your information is a summary of the February 1-3, 2000 workshops.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District has scheduled this workshop to discuss the preferred alternative for restoring the proposed spoil islands. Big Edwards Island, Bird Colony Islands, Skier's Island, Snake Island, Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park are the islands that will be discussed during this workshop. The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, May 17, 2000
7:00 p. m.

Pine View School
1 Python Path
Osprey, Florida

Please be advised that information on the Sarasota Bay project is located on the Corps of Engineers website at www.saj.usace.army.mil/restore/projects/sarasota.htm. The website will be updated with workshop specifics one week prior to the workshop.

If there are any questions, please contact Ms. Tiphonie C. Jinks at 904-232-3506.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James C. Duck".

JAMES C. DUCK
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosures

MEMORANDUM

TO: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
Alberto Gonzalez, Project Manager
Tiphonie Jinks, Study Manager

FROM: Christopher H. Pearce, AICP, J. D. Candidate
Mr. Tom Ankersen, UF Conservation Clinic Director
Richard Hamann, Center for Governmental Responsibility
UF College of Law

DATE: March 23, 2000

RE: Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Citizen Participation Review - Snake Island Workshop

Introduction

The following report is a review of citizen input compiled from one of a series of public workshops for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study ["Project"]. The Project includes Snake Island, Big Edwards Island, Bird Colony Island, Skier's Island, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, and Palmer Point Park.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers ["Corps"] in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District ["WCIND"] scheduled a series of public workshops to discuss proposed alternatives for restoring the subject spoil islands. These workshops are follow-ups to an initial meeting held at the Sarasota High School on October 28, 1999 in Sarasota, Florida.

The Snake Island Workshop was convened on Tuesday, February 1, 2000, 7:00 p.m.. The meeting was held at the Venice Community Center, 326 South Nokomis Avenue, Venice, Florida. Information on the Project and workshop specifics was posted on the Corps' website prior to the Workshop.

Workshop Participation

The Snake Island Workshop was convened at the time and location described above. In attendance were Mr. Alberto Gonzalez and Ms. Tiphonie Jinks of the Corps - Jacksonville District; Mr. Chuck Listowski of the WCIND; Eric Sutton, Project Scientist, Sarasota County Natural Resources and Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, Jeannie Hunt, and Jesus Merly from HDR Engineering, Inc.. The Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and Richard Hamann of the

University of Florida, College of Law's Center for Governmental Responsibility, along with graduate student Nicole Kibrick.

Public input from the workshop was provided in several formats. The Workshop Agenda was divided into eight sections; I) Welcome/Introduction, II) Status of the Project, III) Design Considerations, IV) Presentation of the Concepts, V) Public Discussion, VI) Break-out Groups, VII) Break-out Group Presentations and VIII) Review and Wrap-up. Aside from active participation in the workshop itself, available to citizen participants upon arrival to the Workshop were forms for general written comments and forms for comments on habitat restoration opportunities and objectives, and an open invitation for follow-up written comments to be sent directly to the Corps.

Section I of the Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and included a general introduction of the purpose of the Workshop, the parties involved with the Project and their representatives present at the meeting, and a brief overview of the Workshop format and proposed agenda.

Sections II, III, and IV of the Workshop were presented by Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, HDR Engineering, Inc.. Mr. Hasbrouck's discussion covered the status of the project, design considerations, and presentation of the alternative restoration concepts. During the presentation, Mr. Hasbrouck, Mr. Listowski and Mr. Sutton responded to citizen questions concerning the Project process, conceptual design assumptions and parameters, and HDR Engineering, Inc.'s team make-up and role in the Project. Mr. Ankersen continued to facilitate the Workshop and direct the question and answer process.

After Mr. Hasbrouck's presentation, Mr. Ankersen initiated Section V of the Workshop by requesting those citizens who provided a written request to participate in the public discussion portion of the Workshop. Mr. Ankersen, Mr. Hasbrouck, Mr. Listowski, Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Sutton responded to questions and actively participated in the discussion of the concerns and issues raised by the public commentators. Several citizens who requested to speak previously, declined as their questions or concerns had already been addressed. The following is a summary of the comments that were received.

Several commentators initially expressed the position that a large numbers of area citizens would like Snake Island to be left alone with no improvements or facility construction. The Venice Area Chamber of Commerce appears to support keeping Snake Island open to the public and maximizing its use without harming the environment. Likewise, several frequent visitors to the island voiced concern that the island now serves as a good recreational and wildlife resource and that any changes should be carefully evaluated prior to harming either of these functions. Also expressed was the feeling that the majority of those who used the island were good stewards and took care of the island. This was followed by two commentators who suggested that the local civic groups should consider playing a more active role in monitoring the island and its uses.

One commentor expressed concern that if the historic erosion patterns continued unabated Snake Island would shrink to the point of no longer being a valuable resource to the community.

Another commentor expressed concern over whether proposed dredging in a nearby channel could be incorporated into or would hinder the Snake Island restoration proposals.

After requests for any additional input, Mr. Ankersen explained the purpose and format of Section VI (Break-out Groups) of the Workshop. The break-out session was held with the different groups being given copies of the preliminary concept plans, additional paper, markers, etc. Each group was accompanied by a Project representative or Workshop facilitator. In approximately 45 minutes, Mr. Ankersen requested the groups come back, so that the Workshop could continue in full session. The break-out groups designated a member of their group as a reporter to convey the results of their session to the full group.

Group One (1) appeared concerned that any restoration activities may involve closing or reducing boat access, which was not preferable. Removal of exotics and replanting with native species was preferred with attention given to the possibility of creating additional boat access in areas of heavy infestation on the eastern shoreline. Also, stabilization of the north and south shorelines should be explored.

Group Two (2) expressed the opinion that the closing of Midnight Pass was the primary cause of erosion on the western side of Snake Island. Stabilization of the island and retaining its upland areas were preferred. Paramount to Group 2 was that the island be kept open to boaters and that there is no need for improvements or additional facilities that require government maintenance. Some concern was addressed that the habitat restoration may attract species listed as endangered or threatened and if so that boater access would then be limited.

Group Three (3) felt that different portions of the island should serve a large number of different sized boats equally well on any given day. Concern was expressed over existing "heron" nests and their fate with the undertaking of exotic removal. Scraping down of the island was seen as potentially creating the possibility for the island being destroyed by wave energy in the event of a major storm. Group 3 also want the island be kept open to boaters and no need improvements or additional facilities that require government maintenance.

Group Four (4) concluded that most of their ideas had been covered by Groups 1-3. Their main concerns were that no improvements or facilities that require government maintenance are needed on the island. Stabilization should be undertaken where necessary to preserve the island. A preference for a phased restoration plan that did not include completely devegetating the island at one time was expressed.

Group Five (5) again emphasized maintenance and stabilization of eroding areas, avoiding scrape down of the island, and a phased exotic removal and restoration plan. Group 5 agreed with Group 2 that the closing of Midnight Pass was the cause of the current erosion problems on

Snake Island.

At the close of the break-out group presentations, Mr. Ankersen opened up the floor for Section VII of the Workshop. The Review and Final Wrap primarily consisted primarily of the following comments. Once commentor suggested that any excess spoil matters should be evaluated for use on Siesta Key. Another commentor suggested that consensus had been reached in that all the groups were primarily concerned with restoring erosion areas and keeping the area open to boaters

Post-Workshop Comment Submittals

Several post workshop written comments were submitted by e-mail. The primary concern was inaccuracy of information on the website concerning the size of Snake Island and timely correction of these "mistakes."

Conclusion

Most, if not all workshop participants appear to have concluded that they desire little to no facilities or improvements be undertaken and that boater access to Snake Island be maintained or maximized. It appears that there is a substantial concern over erosion abatement, although the specific areas and proposed solutions differ somewhat amongst the individual commentors. Also, a phased exotic removal approach with upland areas preserved appears to be the most preferable restoration approach for existing areas of the island, with conservation of existing wildlife functions also being important.

MEMORANDUM

TO: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
Alberto Gonzalez, Project Manager
Tiphannie Jinks, Study Manager

FROM: Christopher H. Pearce, AICP, J. D. Candidate
Mr. Tom Ankersen, Director, UF Conservation Clinic Director
Richard Hamann, Center for Governmental Responsibility
UF College of Law

DATE: March 23, 2000

RE: Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Citizen Participation Review - Big Edward's Island, Bird Colony Island, and
Skier's Island Workshop

Introduction

The following report is a review of citizen input compiled from one of a series of public workshops for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study ["Project"]. The Project includes Snake Island, Big Edward's Island, Bird Colony Island, Skier's Island, Jim Neville Marine Reserve, and Palmer Point Park.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers ["Corps"] in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District ["WCIND"] scheduled a series of public workshops to discuss proposed alternatives for restoring the subject spoil islands. These workshops are follow-ups to an initial meeting held at the Sarasota High School on October 28, 1999 in Sarasota, Florida.

The Big Edwards Island, Bird Colony Island, and Skier's Island Workshop was convened on Wednesday, February 2, 2000, 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Pine View School, 1 Python Path, Osprey, Florida. Information on the Project and workshop specifics was posted at the Corps website prior to the Workshop.

Workshop Participation

The Big Edwards Island, Bird Colony Island, and Skier's Island Workshop was convened at the time and location described above. In attendance were Mr. Alberto Gonzalez and Ms. Tiphannie Jinks of the Corps - Jacksonville District; Mr. Chuck Listowski of WCIND; and Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, Jeannie Hunt, Jesus Merly, and Lenore Hockley from HDR Engineering, Inc. The Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and Richard Hamann of the University of Florida,

College of Law's Center for Governmental Responsibility, along with law student Jody Brooks.

Public input from the Workshops was provided in several formats. The Workshop itself was divided into eight sections; I) Welcome/Introduction, II) Status of the Project, III) Design Considerations, IV) Presentation of the Concepts, V) Public Discussion, VI) Break-out Groups, VII) Break-out Group Presentations and VIII) Review and Wrap-up. Aside from active participation in the workshop itself, available to citizen participants upon arrival to the Workshop were forms for general written comments and forms for comments on habitat restoration opportunities and objectives, and an open invitation for follow-up written comments to be sent directly to the Corps.

Section I of the Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and included a general introduction to the purpose of the Workshop, the parties involved with the Project and their representatives present at the meeting, and a brief overview of the Workshop format and proposed agenda.

Sections II, III, and IV of the Workshop were presented by Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, of HDR Engineering, Inc. Mr. Hasbrouck's discussion covered the status of the project, design considerations, and presentation of the alternative restoration concepts for each of the subject islands.

After Mr. Hasbrouck's presentation, Mr. Ankersen initiated Section V of the Workshop by requesting those citizens who had provided a written request to participate in the public discussion portion of the Workshop. Mr. Ankersen, Mr. Hasbrouck, Mr. Listowski, and Mr. Gonzalez responded to questions and actively participated in the discussion of the concerns and issues raised by the public commentators. Several citizens who had requested to speak previously, declined as their questions or concerns had already been addressed. The following is a summary of the comments that were received.

Several commentators expressed support for exotic vegetation removal and restoration of the islands. However, a significant number of commentators were equally concerned about the removal of vegetation and its affect on the visual buffers they currently created. Concerns over exotic vegetation maintenance and success of the restoration aspects of the Project were voiced by several other citizens.

Several commentators were concerned as to how the Project would affect current flows and waterways and specifically, boater access to the surrounding areas. Several others felt that Little Edwards Island should be included in the Project.

One commentator expressed the opinion that the government was not being forthcoming about the overall intentions relating to plans the islands in the area. Another commentator expressed concern that while each island should be addressed separately, that they should also be viewed in their entirety for specific uses and restoration goals. One commentator was concerned about how the Project would affect exiting bird nesting on Bird Colony Island.

After requests for any additional input, Mr. Ankersen explained the purpose and format of Section VI (Break-out Groups) of the Workshop. The break-out session was held with the different groups being given copies of the preliminary concept plans, additional paper, markers, etc. Each group was accompanied by a Project representative or Workshop facilitator. In approximately 45 minutes, Mr. Ankersen requested the groups come back, so that the Workshop could continue in full session. The break-out groups designated a member of their group as a reporter to convey the results of their session to the full group.

Group One (1) felt that the project may be best served by seeking to get the maximum potential use out of each individual island depending on its ability to support a particular use. Concept No. three (3) was preferred for Skier's Island and Big Edwards Island. It was stated that Little Edward's Island was a good candidate for inclusion as a restoration project. It was felt Skier's Island was an important resource areas for water skiers to the exclusion of some other uses. On Big Edwards Island it was suggested that linear open water features be created to enhance flows within the bay. A no-wake zone near Bird Colony Island was recommended.

Group Two (2) appeared to be concerned with maintaining the visual buffers that Big Edwards and Skiers Islands currently provide. Consideration was given to linking the Bird Colony Island[s] together by planting additional mangroves, etc. and thus enhancing the quality of the rookery for the bird populations that use the area. Group 2 perceived the cost and management of long term maintenance to be of primary concern for any restoration activities undertaken.

Group Three (3) felt that the Project needed to be viewed in the broadest perspective possible. Skier's Island was seen as being an area suited to more diverse, active uses. In contrast, Big Edwards and Bird Colony Island were seen as being better suited for passive recreation and education opportunities. It was expressed that members of the group felt that additional research was needed to identify any rare and unique areas that may need to be accounted for and protected by the Project.

Group Four (4) stressed the fact that Bird Colony Islands is a unique bird rookery in Sarasota Bay that supports numerous species of birds. It was felt that the west side of the island should be protected against erosion. A no-wake zone was again mentioned as needed to protect Bird Colony Islands. The inclusion of created marshy lagoons anywhere in the Project was seen as positives for the wading bird populations. Also stressed was the fact that Skier's island is a unique and historic area for water skiing activities. The concept of an elevated upland area as a wind break for the skiers was discussed. Concept 3 was preferred for Big Edwards Island, as modified for better boater access.

At the close of the break-out group presentations, Mr. Ankersen opened up the floor for Section VII of the Workshop. The Review and Final Wrap primarily consisted primarily of the following comments. Several commentors were concerned about the scope of the project and how the Islands were selected and being addressed by the Project. One commentor again stressed the need to look at the Project in its broadest terms and that by doing so, one could not ignore the effect of Midnight Pass on the entire system. Concern was again expressed over the removal of

Australian Pines. Support was expressed for a no-wake zone around Bird Colony Islands.

Post-Workshop Written Comment Submittals

A number of post workshop written comments were submitted by e-mail, comment forms provided and individually drafted letters. One commentor reinforced that Skier's Island is the "only" area for reasonable use by skiers, that the Australian Pines are windbreak creating calm waters, Bird Islands needs stabilizing, and creation of shallow water areas should be emphasized. One commentor expressed concern that many citizens did not attend the meeting as they signed a petition that was circulated that was presented to the County Commissioners. One Commentor expressed the need for stabilizing the islands, but without any further facility improvements.

Conclusion

Big Edwards Island was generally seen as being a good candidate for passive recreation and educational activities. Concept 3 was specifically preferred by several groups. It appears that a general consensus was reached by the community members attending the Workshop that Skiers Island is an important resource for recreational boating. Bird Colony Island was also seen as an invaluable natural resource for its benefit to the areas bird populations. Efforts to preserve bird islands such as stabilization and implementation of a no-wake zone were generally agreed upon by most. The removal of exotic vegetation and ongoing maintenance were of concern to several attendees, primarily due to visual buffer issues. A phased approach was preferred by some.

MEMORANDUM

TO: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
Alberto Gonzalez, Project Manager
Tiphonie Jinks, Study Manager

FROM: Christopher H. Pearce, AICP, J. D. Candidate
Mr. Tom Ankersen, Conservation Clinic Director
Richard Hamann, Center for Governmental Responsibility
UF College of Law

DATE: March 23, 2000

RE: Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Citizen Participation Review - Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point
Park Workshop

Introduction

The following report is a review of citizen input compiled from one of a series of public workshops for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study ["Project"]. The Project includes Snake Island, Big Edward's Island, Bird Colony Island, Skier's Island, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, and Palmer Point Park.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ["Corps"] in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District ["WCIND"] scheduled a series of public workshops to discuss proposed alternatives for restoring the subject spoil islands. These Workshops are follow-ups to an initial meeting held at the Sarasota High School on October 28, 1999 in Sarasota, Florida.

The Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park Workshop was convened on Thursday, February 3, 2000, 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Pine View School, 1 Python Path, Osprey, Florida. Information on the Project and workshop specifics was posted at the Corps of Engineers website prior to the Workshop.

Workshop Participation

The Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park Workshop was convened at the time and location described above. In attendance were Ms. Tiphonie Jinks of the Corps - Jacksonville District, Mr. Chuck Listowski of the WCIND, and Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, Jeanine Hunt, Betsy Davis, and Lenore Hockley from HDR Engineering, Inc. The Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen of the University of Florida, College of Law's Center for Governmental Responsibility,

along with law students Jody Brooks and Christopher H. Pearce.

Public input from the Workshops was provided in several formats. The Workshop itself was divided into eight sections; I) Welcome/Introduction, II) Status of the Project, III) Design Considerations, IV) Presentation of the Concepts, V) Public Discussion, VI) Break-out Groups, VII) Break-out Group Presentations and VIII) Review and Wrap-up. Aside from active participation in the workshop itself, available to citizen participants upon arrival to the Workshop were forms for general written comments and forms for comments on habitat restoration opportunities and objectives, and an open invitation for follow-up written comments to be sent directly to the Corps.

Section I of the Workshop was facilitated by Tom Ankersen and included a general introduction of the purpose of the Workshop, the parties involved with the Project and their representatives present at the meeting, and a brief overview of the Workshop format and proposed agenda.

Sections II, III, and IV of the Workshop were presented by Dr. Bruce Hasbrouck, of HDR Engineering, Inc. Mr. Hasbrouck's discussion covered the status of the project, design considerations, and presentation of the alternative restoration concepts for each of the subject sites.

After Mr. Hasbrouck's presentation, Mr. Ankersen initiated Section V of the Workshop by requesting those citizens who had provided a written request to participate in the public discussion portion of the Workshop. Mr. Ankersen, Mr. Hasbrouck, and Ms. Jinks responded to questions and participated in the discussion of the concerns and issues raised by the public commentors. Several citizens, who had requested to speak previously, declined as their questions or concerns had already been addressed. The following is a summary of the comments that were received.

Several commentors expressed concern about the potential re-opening of Midnight Pass and how it would affect the project. While Mr. Hasbrouck emphasized that the Project scope does not include Midnight Pass, he also indicated that he recognizes that the issues are perceived as interconnected, and any preferred alternative must be sensitive to this. It was also expressed by several commentors that all of the spoil site restoration efforts, and specifically Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park, are also interrelated. Several commentors were concerned about the maximum expenditures for the Project, how funds would be allotted to each site, design, construction, maintenance costs, and timing constraints, etc. Several commentors requested information on how citizen input would be quantified and weighted. Several commentors were concerned over reduced water flow in the adjacent bays and its affect on nutrient build-up and water stagnation and ways to increase these flows. Several commentors were concerned with the amount of spoil material on the islands and what use of the materials was planned.

One commentor expressed concern over the feasibility of the restoration efforts proposed. Another commentor noted that any design plans or changes would have to be approved by the

Palmer family Trust who donated the land to the County.

One commentor requested clarification on the definition of passive recreation and how it can be integrated into restoring an area to its pristine condition. Another commentor was expressed concern that any design implemented not create additional mosquito problems.

After requests for any additional input, Mr. Ankersen explained the purpose and format of Section VI (Break-out Groups) of the Workshop. The break-out session was held with the different groups being given copies of the preliminary concept plans, additional paper, markers, etc. Each group was accompanied by a Project representative or Workshop facilitator. In approximately 45 minutes, Mr. Ankersen requested the groups come back, so that the Workshop could continue in full session. The break-out groups designated a member of their group as a reporter to convey the results of their session to the full group.

Group One (1) felt that all the different habitats should be maximized where possible with minimal impacts from the restoration activities. Jim Neville Marine Preserve should be left to nature, but modified as in Concept 1 with increased lagoons areas and connecting canals for better water flow if possible. On Palmer Point Park, Concept 2 was preferred as being "more cost effective" than Concept 1.

Group Two (2) was primarily concerned with restoration of water quality and flows to enhance fish and wildlife habitats rather than creation of recreation areas. It was suggested that this would be best achieved by reducing ground elevations in Jim Neville Marine Preserve to facilitate increased water flows. It was felt that Palmer Point Park should be left alone regardless of whether Midnight Pass is re-opened or not.

Group Three (3) felt that maximizing mangrove habitat and its edge affect with channels should be the priority on Jim Neville Marine Preserve and thus minimize the amount of uplands due to maintenance concerns. This was perceived to be the most advantageous for increased water flow and quality also. It was suggested that any excess spoil removed may be used to back-fill on the "old" waterway to the east. No recreational enhancements were suggested, with the exception of perhaps a small viewing platform. For Palmer Point Park, maximizing the mangrove areas with created inlets was suggested. Also, any mosquito ditches onsite should be re-connected for better water flow

Group Four (4) liked Concept 1 for Jim Neville Marine Preserve as providing for increased sheetflow of water. The group was concerned with cost, but felt whatever can be done to increase water flow should be provided for in the concept plan. Like Group 3, lowering costs was a concern and improving the mosquito ditches was again proposed. Concern was expressed over the use of herbicides in treating exotics. However, the primary consensus of Group 4 was that The Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park projects should be put on hold until after Midnight Pass is re-opened.

Group Five (5) felt that removing or lowering a "hook-shaped" portion of the island off of

Palmer Point Park would greatly increase water flow in the bay. Exotic vegetation removal with upland restoration was considered a priority. It was suggested that north-south water flows be enhanced by either a narrow, deep channel or a wide, shallow tidal shoal-like cut through the Park. For the Jim Neville Marine Preserve, it was suggested that the entire area be leveled into a tidal shoal. In the alternative, a portion should be made into a shoal with north and south channels for increased flows.

At the close of the break-out group presentations, Mr. Ankersen opened up the floor for Section VII of the Workshop. The Review and Final Wrap primarily consisted primarily of the following comments. Several commentors were concerned about the scope of the project and how the Islands were selected and being addressed by the Project. One commentor again stressed the need to look at the Project in its broadest terms and that by doing so, one could not ignore the affect of Midnight Pass on the entire system. Concern was again expressed over the removal of Australian Pines. Additional support was expressed for a no-wake zone around Bird Colony Island.

Post-Workshop Written Comment Submittals

A number of post workshop written comments were submitted by e-mail, comment forms provided and individually drafted letters. Several commentors felt that the long term conditions of the area are driven by the status of Midnight Pass and that any restoration efforts should be focused or at least cognizant of this factor. Several commentors also addressed the connectivity of restoration efforts on each island and stressed the need for a "broader perspective." Several commentors desired maximum habitat restoration, but each differed in their approaches or desired results. Most of these commentors also stressed removal of exotics and historic model restoration goals. Several commentors suggested using any spoil sands removed for beach or island erosion abatement. One commentor wanted additional information on project specifics, such as, timeframe, money sources, and whether cost/benefit analysis is required. Another expressed that the website should be interactive with the ability to e-mail public input from the homepage.

Conclusion

Although dissimilar in approaches, the general consensus the community members attending appeared to reach was that increasing water flows/quality, restoration of historic conditions, and removal of exotics for enhanced fish and wildlife habitat is the primary concern. Increasing mangrove habitats and their fringe was mentioned by several groups, but the primary means of achieving better water flows and quality was perceived to be through the use of channels cuts and/or removing as much spoil from Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park as possible. There is an general impression that the scope of the Project is too narrow in focus. The opening of Midnight Pass and its effect on the proposed restoration projects was of concern to most participants.

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**SARASOTA BAY ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY
PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

**May 17, 2000
7:00pm**

**Pine View School
1 Python Path
Osprey, Florida**

**Presented by:
US Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
West Coast Inland Navigational District
HDR Engineering, Inc.**

AGENDA

- **Introduction and Project History**
- **Presentation of Preferred Alternatives and Public Comments**
 - **Big Edwards Island and Skiers' Island**
 - **Preferred Concepts and Public Comments**
 - **Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park**
 - **Preferred Concepts and Public Comments**
 - **Snake Island**
 - **Preferred Concept and Public Comments**
- **Final Public Comments**
- **Where We Go From Here**

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 1997, a Section 1135 Proposal for Ecosystem Restoration of spoil islands in Sarasota Bay was submitted to the US Army Corps. Funding for the Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Section 1135 Feasibility Study was approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters in 1998. The project includes Big Edwards Island, Skiers' Island, the Bird Colony Islands, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, Palmer Point Park, and Snake Island.

PROJECT TEAM

US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), Jacksonville District - Lead Agency

- Alberto Gonzalez, Project Manager
- Tiphonie Jinks, Study Manager

West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) - Local Sponsor

- Chuck Listowski, Executive Director

HDR Engineering, Inc. - Consultant Conducting the Study with the ACE

- Bruce Hasbrouck, Study Manager

Coordinating Agencies

- Sarasota County
- Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program

Public Workshop Facilitators

- Tom Ankersen and Richard Hamann
Center For Governmental Responsibility - University of Florida

Project Website

www.saj.usace.army.mil/restore/projects/sarasota.htm

PROJECT HISTORY

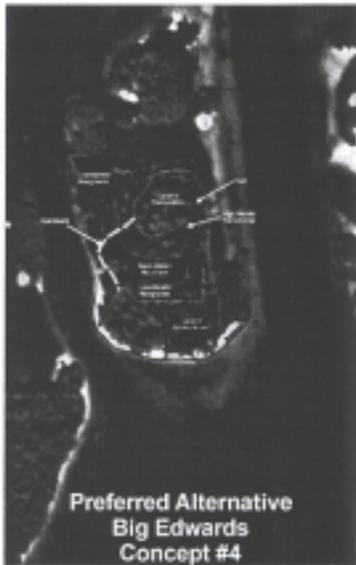
- **June 1999** - Project Kick-Off - Begin Data Collection
 - **October 1999** - Public Workshop - Project Introduction
 - **November 1999 - January 2000** - Data Collection and Development of Initial Restoration Concepts
 - **January 2000** - Development of Project Website
 - **February 2000** - Presentation of Initial Concepts to the Public at three Separate Workshops which included Break-out Brainstorming Sessions
 - **March 2000** - Development of New Concepts Derived from Public Input at the February 2000 Workshops
 - **April 2000** - Analysis of all Concepts and Selection of the Preferred Alternative for each Island
 - Meeting with Environmental Regulatory Agencies
 - **May 2000** - Public Workshop - Presentation of Preferred Alternatives to the Public
-

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

- **August 2000** - Environmental Assessment Availability and Public Review/Comment Period
- **September 2000** - Completion of Section 1135 Feasibility Study
- **Spring 2001** - Design Phase Begins
- **Summer/Fall 2002** - Construction
 - The order of Construction will be determined by the Local Sponsor, the WCIND

Big Edwards Island Concept #4

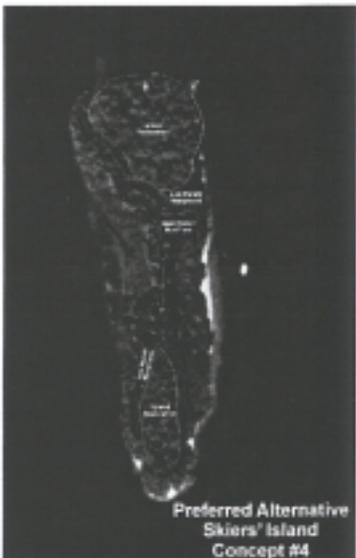
Selection as Preferred Alternative and Consideration of Public Input



- Provides improved/diverse fish and wildlife habitat
- Open water features maximize the “edge effect” with adjacent mangrove systems and provide flow through a portion of the island
- Removal of nuisance/exotic species
- Maintains public access and use of the island; and enhances public use with a proposed natural foot trail along the upland areas and boardwalk across the marsh and open water systems
- Potential for educational signage promoting and explaining these diverse habitats
- Maintains the existing upland area at the southern portion of the island for continued public access/use.
- Provides a visual buffer for nearby homeowners, particularly through retaining the eastern berm along the island
- A comprehensive approach considering a more ecological restoration concept on nearby Skiers’ Island

Skiers’ Island Concept #4

Selection as Preferred Alternative and Consideration of Public Input



- Provides improved/diverse fish and wildlife habitat
- Open water features maximize the “edge effect” with adjacent mangrove systems and provide north/south and east/west flow
- Removal of nuisance/exotic species
- Maintains ski-ability around the island; existing and future mature mangroves and upland areas provide an effective windbreak for skiers
- A comprehensive approach considering a more recreational concept for ecological restoration on nearby Big Edwards Island

Jim Neville Marine Preserve Concept #5

Selection as Preferred Alternative and Consideration of Public Input



- Provides improved/diverse fish and wildlife habitat
- Open water features maximize the “edge effect” with adjacent mangrove systems
- Minimizes potential impacts to existing salterns and mangroves
- Provides circulation between the northern and southern portions of the island and north/south flow through the island
- Provides for sheet flow across the island (east/west) during high tide through reducing a significant portion of the existing upland areas to wetland elevations
- Removal of nuisance/exotic species
- Reduced maintenance with reduced upland habitat
- Limited public access and recreation – consistent with preserve status
- Preferred concept will work with Midnight Pass either open or closed
- Allows for future design adjustments

Palmer Point Park Concept #3

Selection as Preferred Alternative and Consideration of Public Input



- Provides improved fish and wildlife habitat
- Elimination of water features (as shown in other concepts) reduces potential for stagnant water and mosquitoes
- Areas adjacent to the project area provide an opportunity for upland habitat
- Minimal maintenance
- Protects and preserves salterns
- Removal of nuisance/exotic species
- Existing and future mature mangroves provide visual buffer for adjacent homeowners

Snake Island Concept #4

Selection as Preferred Alternative and Consideration of Public Input



- Enhances/maintains public/boater access with no structural recreational facilities (i.e. boardwalks)
- Large upland enhancement area provides public access
- Provides additional acreage to the island by creating low marsh reclamation on the west side of the island
- “Soft shore stabilization” and adjacent mangroves help to reduce on-going erosion
- Maintains the unconsolidated shore on the southern end of the island and provides for the shore extension to the east side for public access and use
- Removal of nuisance/exotic species
- Provides improved/diverse fish and wildlife habitat

Bird Colony Islands

Proposed Action and Consideration of Public Input



- No earthwork is proposed
- Provides shoreline armoring to prevent further erosion
- Protects critical bird nesting habitat

From: PATRICK McCARTHY <patnok@gte.net> on 07/03/2000 12:17 PM
To: Tiphonie C Jinks/CESAJ/SAJ02@CESAJ, SHANNON STAUB
<sstaub@co.sarasota.fl.us> @SMTP@Exchange, WCIND <wcind@gate.net> @SMTP@Exchange, "ALLAN
H. HORTON" <ahhorton@yahoo.com> @SMTP@Exchange
cc:
Subject: SNAKE ISLAND

MS.JINKS,

At the last public workshop at Pineview school I spoke with Mr. Gonzalez about my concerns that this project is being railroaded thru without concern for the public's wishes. He said we could ask for another meeting on Snake to deal with the facts of this project. I feel that the facts have been misrepresented ie: no sand is to be added to the island, the island is to be stripped of trees and regraded to make it larger but a lower elevation. We lose our shade and our unrestricted access by boat. On behalf of the 1200 local citizens who signed our petition that states in part that NOTHING be done on snake island I request another "workshop" here in Venice. No sugar coating , no smoke and mirrors just facts. I look forward to your reply.

PATRICK MCCARTHY

From: PATRICK McCARTHY <patnok@gte.net> on 05/11/2000 10:09 PM
To: Tiphonie C Jinks/CESA]/SAJ02@CESA], SHANNON STAUB
<sstaub@co.sarasota.fl.us> @SMTP@Exchange
cc:
Subject: SNAKE ISLAND

GREETINGS

THANKS FOR UPDATING THE SITE. HOWEVER I AM VERY DISAPOINTED!
THIS IS NOT WHAT I EXPECTED! I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO PUT SAND ON THE
WEST SIDE AND DO A PHASED EXOTIC PLANT REMOVAL.

CREATING A MARSH AND PLANTING MANGROVES ????????????????

PLEASE . THIS ISLAND HAS BEACH ALL AROUND IT! BEACH WE USE
EVERY WEEKEND. YOU PEOPLE DID NOT EVEN GO TO THE ISLAND WHEN YOU WERE
HERE. YOU MIGHT WANT TO GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD OR YOU COULD COME
DOWN HERE AND TELL US YOU WILL "DO NOTHING" IT WILL BE A LONG NITE
WEDNESDAY BUT WE ARE IN FOR THE LONG HAUL!

REGARDS PATRICK MCCARTHY
NOKOMIS AREA CIVIC ASSOC.
SNAKE ISLAND REPUBLIC

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: All involved parties-

Question/comment: _____

The proposed Alternative you present for Snake Island
is not the ~~current~~ plan that ^{all} agreed upon at
the last workshop. Marsh + Mangroves ? ! ? ?
what happened to sand on the west side and
a phased approach to exotic removal

Name Patrick McCarthy

Mailing Address 211 Jessica St N

City, State Zip Code Noromis FLA 34275

The Corps will attempt to provide a written response to any questions not answered during the public meeting. You may return the card at the meeting or mail it to the address provided on the reverse side.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT
AUTHORITY: 42 USC 4321, 4331-4335

PRINCIPAL PURPOSES: Information on this card is used for organization and conduct of this meeting. It may be added to the mailing list for notification of future meetings on the topic and for addressing correspondence subsequent to the meeting.

ROUTINE USES: This information is a public record and may be disclosed to other Federal or local agencies for governmental purposes as well as to private individuals and organizations under the Freedom of Information Act.

MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE: Completion of this card is voluntary. However, failure to supply the information requested may result in your (or your agency's) omission from further notification regarding participation in the process.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

January 4, 2000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning Division
Flood Control and Flood
Plain Management Section

Dear Interested Party:

This letter is to inform you of the upcoming series of public workshops scheduled for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. These workshops are a follow-up to the October 28, 1999 public workshop held at Sarasota High School in Sarasota, Florida. Enclosed for your information is a summary of the October 28, 1999 workshop.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District has scheduled three workshops to discuss alternatives for restoring the proposed spoil islands. The schedules for the workshops are as follows:

Tuesday, February 1, 2000
7:00 p. m.

Venice Community Center
326 South Nokomis Avenue
Venice, Florida
Workshop for Snake Island

Wednesday, February 2, 2000
7:00 p. m.

Pine View School
1 Python Path
Osprey, Florida
Workshop for Big Edwards, Bird Colony
Island, and Skier's Island

Thursday, February 3, 2000
7:00 p. m.

Pine View School
1 Python Path
Osprey, Florida
Workshop for Jim Neville Marine Preserve
and Palmer Point Park

Please be advised that information on the Sarasota Bay project is located on the Corps of Engineers website at www.saj.usace.army.mil/restore/projects/sarasota.htm. The website will be updated with workshop specifics one week prior to the workshop.

If there are any questions, please contact Ms. Tiphonie C. Jinks at 904-232-3506.

Sincerely,

JAMES C. DUCK
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 4, 2000

To: Mr. Alberto Gonzalez
Ms. Tiphannie Jinks
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From: Tom Ankersen
Richard Hamann
Workshop Facilitators

Re: Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Summary of October 28th Public Workshop

On October 28th, 1999 the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) convened a public workshop at Sarasota High School in Sarasota, Florida to discuss the Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. The Study will consider the potential restoration of six spoil sites in Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet. The Corps was represented by Mr. Alberto Gonzalez and Ms. Tiphannie Jinks. Technical expertise was provided by the Corps consultants Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck and Ms. Jeannie Hunt from HDR Engineering, Inc., Mr. Carmen Vare from Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resource Management (DERM), who presented their work on a similar restoration projects, Mr. Charles Listowski from the West Coast Inland Navigation District, which serves as the project's local sponsor, and Mr. Eric Sutton from Sarasota County. The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Richard Hamann and Mr. Thomas T. Ankersen, with the assistance of students Jody Brooks and Ashley Murphy in the Conservation Clinic at the University of Florida College of Law.

The workshop convened with a description of the workshop format by the facilitators. Mr. Gonzalez then briefly summarized the background of the project, the Section 1135 funding mechanism, and the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act. Written materials were provided which detailed this process and the opportunities for public involvement in the process. Mr. Gonzalez indicated that there would be subsequent public workshops to consider and refine alternatives. At this point, Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck briefly reviewed the rationale for the project, which he described as habitat restoration of wetlands and uplands, water quality improvements, safety and navigation. The representative from Palm Beach County DERM then presented two spoil island restoration projects he has worked on in Lake Worth Lagoon, Peanut Island and Little Munyon Island, funded under the same Corps authorization process.

Mr. Hasbrouck concluded the panel presentation portion of the workshop with a description of the feasibility study process including public involvement, data collection, conceptual design, alternatives analysis and the Environmental Assessment. He indicated that a preferred alternative would be identified for each of the spoil islands. He described each of the six sites and briefly highlighted some preliminary issues associated with each. These include erosion and siltation,

exotic species infestation and water quality degradation. He indicated that surveyors would begin shooting planning level elevations, and geotechnicians would be doing soils analyses in the ensuing weeks. At the same time the consultants would be reviewing existing data and information. Based on this information, HDR Engineering, Inc. will develop conceptual designs which may include mangrove area restoration, planting of emergent vegetation to stabilize soils and upland habitat restoration with drought tolerant subtropical hardwood species. The designs will also include a review of water circulation patterns in order to consider inlets, outlets, and tidal ponds. Shoreline hardening to prevent erosion will also be considered. Finally, Mr. Hasbrouck indicated that consideration must be given to proper deposition of removed soils. He reemphasized that they will consider all alternatives. Mr. Hasbrouck concluded his presentation with a review of the preliminary project schedule. The data collection phase should terminate by the end of November. At that point they will move into alternatives analysis, considering public input. He stated that this would probably be provided through a series of three workshops that address the restoration sites in-groups of two each, based on the geographic proximity to one another. In early 2000 the consultants will move forward with the preliminary design of a preferred alternative, including conceptual design, followed by preparation of the Environmental Assessment. The draft assessment will be presented in a public workshop and to the various commenting agencies. He anticipates a final assessment and decision in late 2000.

At this point in the workshop opportunity was provided for public comment. Members of the public were asked to fill out cards indicating their interest in offering spoken comments. Forms for written comments were also provided. Written comments were received both during the meeting and in the ensuing weeks thereafter. Many of the written comments reflect more detailed reiteration of the verbal comments provided during the Workshop, often by the same individuals or interest groups. These comments are synthesized below.

One commentator expressed concern for the prior history of spoil island restoration efforts in Sarasota Bay while this commentator, and several others, thanked the Corps for involving the public at an early stage in this instance.

A commentator requested that the project be expanded to the North to include shoreline restoration along Whittaker Bayou and into Manatee County. Mr. Gonzalez responded by indicating that this would be beyond the scope of this Feasibility Study, and outlined the procedures for requesting Corps involvement in such activities.

Several commentators urged the Corps to consider the spoil site restoration effort in the context of the overall restoration of Sarasota Bay, and in particular, the effects the current study concerning the opening of Midnight Pass might have on restoration alternatives. One commentator queried whether the Corps has considered restoration targets for the entire Bay and whether this effort contributes to those targets. Another commentator suggested that the original dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) may have contributed to migration and closing of Midnight Pass. This commentator also expressed the belief that the Corps should consider inclusion flow channels across the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and the restoration of sheet flow into the Preserve.

Several commentors described concerns over how the restoration of Snake Island would be affected by activities in Shakett Creek and Cowpen Slough. These commentors indicated concern over turbidity levels and erosion resulting from Creek flows. Concern was also expressed over the effect changing the topography of Snake Island might have on a lower lying area behind it.

One commentor urged the Corps to consider the needs of boaters in the vicinity of the restoration sites while another urged the Corps to prioritize restoration over recreation. One commentor suggested the establishment of no wake zones around some of the islands, while another sought assurances that skiing would remain an allowable recreational activity around Skiers Island.

One commentor urged the Corps to reconsider including Little Edwards Island while another sought assurances that Little Edwards Island would not be a part of the Feasibility Study.

One commentor queried whether the assumption of long term maintenance responsibilities had been considered in the decision to undertake the feasibility study. The commentor suggested the extent of the maintenance commitment will dictate the design of alternatives.

Concern was expressed over the effect that survey and other activities might have on bird nesting in the Bird Colony Islands of Roberts Bay. This commentor noted that Great Blue Herons would have eggs and, in some cases, young in their nests by Thanksgiving. This concern was addressed by the Consultant's response during the workshop that no activities would be taking place on these islands.

The Workshop adjourned.

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Types of Habitat Restoration Opportunities

Creation of Saltern/Salt Flats

Functions: These areas experience short periods of tidal inundation that cause rapid algal blooms. This algae provides the base of the food chain via the grazing of the algal cells by organisms such as fiddler crabs, etc.

Creation of High and Low Marshes

Functions: Marshes are significant because they function as nursery grounds for many fish and shellfish. Marshes benefit water quality by helping to assimilate nutrients.

Creation of Mangroves

Functions: The mangrove community is especially important for shoreline protection and stabilization. Shoreline stabilization from mangroves helps to improve water quality. Mangroves also assimilate nutrients, which also benefits water quality. Mangroves are valuable as roosting and nesting sites for many wading birds (i.e. white ibis, roseate spoonbill, pelicans, egrets, and herons). Mangroves are also important nursery areas for fish and invertebrates.

Creation of Coastal Upland Habitats

Function: Coastal upland habitats provide resting and feeding areas for migratory birdlife. These areas also provide habitat for upland invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals. Native sub-tropical trees and shrubs support diverse habitats, which are now threatened by exotic plant species (i.e. Australian Pines, Brazilian Peppers, and Carrotwood). There are very few of these types of natural communities remaining in Sarasota Bay.

Snake Island

General Spoil Island Restoration Objectives

(Please check the restoration objectives important to you).

- Provide Creation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Provide Passive Recreation Opportunities
- Removal of Exotic Plant Species
- Improve Water Quality
- Other _____
- Not Important

Types of Recreation Opportunities

(Please check the recreation opportunities important to you).

- Public access for passive recreation to the island
- Trails
- Educational/Interpretive Signage
- Boat access
- Other _____
- No Recreation

Please provide additional comments regarding Snake Island on the back of this sheet.

Types of Habitat Restoration Opportunities

Creation of Saltern/Salt Flats

Functions: These areas experience short periods of tidal inundation that cause rapid algal blooms. This algae provides the base of the food chain via the grazing of the algal cells by organisms such as fiddler crabs, etc.

Creation of High and Low Marshes

Functions: Marshes are significant because they function as nursery grounds for many fish and shellfish. Marshes benefit water quality by helping to assimilate nutrients.

Creation of Mangroves

Functions: The mangrove community is especially important for shoreline protection and stabilization. Shoreline stabilization from mangroves helps to improve water quality. Mangroves also assimilate nutrients, which also benefits water quality. Mangroves are valuable as roosting and nesting sites for many wading birds (i.e. white ibis, roseate spoonbill, pelicans, egrets, and herons). Mangroves are also important nursery areas for fish and invertebrates.

Creation of Coastal Upland Habitats

Function: Coastal upland habitats provide resting and feeding areas for migratory birdlife. These areas also provide habitat for upland invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals. Native sub-tropical trees and shrubs support diverse habitats, which are now threatened by exotic plant species (i.e. Australian Pines, Brazilian Peppers, and Carrotwood). There are very few of these types of natural communities remaining in Sarasota Bay.

Palmer Point Park

General Spoil Island Restoration Objectives

(Please check the restoration objectives important to you).

- Provide Creation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Provide Passive Recreation Opportunities
- Removal of Exotic Plant Species
- Improve Water Quality
- Other _____
- Not Important

Types of Recreation Opportunities

(Please check the recreation opportunities important to you).

- Public access for passive recreation to the island
- Trails
- Educational/Interpretive Signage
- Boat access
- Other _____
- No Recreation

Please provide additional comments regarding Palmer Point Park on the back of this sheet.

Types of Habitat Restoration Opportunities

Creation of Saltern/Salt Flats

Functions: These areas experience short periods of tidal inundation that cause rapid algal blooms. This algae provides the base of the food chain via the grazing of the algal cells by organisms such as fiddler crabs, etc.

Creation of High and Low Marshes

Functions: Marshes are significant because they function as nursery grounds for many fish and shellfish. Marshes benefit water quality by helping to assimilate nutrients.

Creation of Mangroves

Functions: The mangrove community is especially important for shoreline protection and stabilization. Shoreline stabilization from mangroves helps to improve water quality. Mangroves also assimilate nutrients, which also benefits water quality. Mangroves are valuable as roosting and nesting sites for many wading birds (i.e. white ibis, roseate spoonbill, pelicans, egrets, and herons). Mangroves are also important nursery areas for fish and invertebrates.

Creation of Coastal Upland Habitats

Function: Coastal upland habitats provide resting and feeding areas for migratory birdlife. These areas also provide habitat for upland invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals. Native sub-tropical trees and shrubs support diverse habitats, which are now threatened by exotic plant species (i.e. Australian Pines, Brazilian Peppers, and Carrotwood). There are very few of these types of natural communities remaining in Sarasota Bay.

Jim Neville Marine Preserve

General Spoil Island Restoration Objectives

(Please check the restoration objectives important to you).

- Provide Creation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Provide Passive Recreation Opportunities
- Removal of Exotic Plant Species
- Improve Water Quality
- Other _____
- Not Important

Types of Recreation Opportunities

(Please check the recreation opportunities important to you).

- Public access for passive recreation to the island
- Trails
- Educational/Interpretive Signage
- Boat access
- Other _____
- No Recreation

Please provide additional comments regarding Jim Neville Marine Preserve on the back of this sheet.

Types of Habitat Restoration Opportunities

Creation of Saltern/Salt Flats

Functions: These areas experience short periods of tidal inundation that cause rapid algal blooms. This algae provides the base of the food chain via the grazing of the algal cells by organisms such as fiddler crabs, etc.

Creation of High and Low Marshes

Functions: Marshes are significant because they function as nursery grounds for many fish and shellfish. Marshes benefit water quality by helping to assimilate nutrients.

Creation of Mangroves

Functions: The mangrove community is especially important for shoreline protection and stabilization. Shoreline stabilization from mangroves helps to improve water quality. Mangroves also assimilate nutrients, which also benefits water quality. Mangroves are valuable as roosting and nesting sites for many wading birds (i.e. white ibis, roseate spoonbill, pelicans, egrets, and herons). Mangroves are also important nursery areas for fish and invertebrates.

Creation of Coastal Upland Habitats

Function: Coastal upland habitats provide resting and feeding areas for migratory birdlife. These areas also provide habitat for upland invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals. Native sub-tropical trees and shrubs support diverse habitats, which are now threatened by exotic plant species (i.e. Australian Pines, Brazilian Peppers, and Carrotwood). There are very few of these types of natural communities remaining in Sarasota Bay.

Skiers' Island

General Spoil Island Restoration Objectives

(Please check the restoration objectives important to you).

- Provide Creation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Provide Passive Recreation Opportunities
- Removal of Exotic Plant Species
- Improve Water Quality
- Other _____
- Not Important

Types of Recreation Opportunities

(Please check the recreation opportunities important to you).

- Public access for passive recreation to the island
- Trails
- Educational/Interpretive Signage
- Boat access
- Other _____
- No Recreation

Please provide additional comments regarding Skiers' Island on the back of this sheet.

Types of Habitat Restoration Opportunities

Creation of Saltern/Salt Flats

Functions: These areas experience short periods of tidal inundation that cause rapid algal blooms. This algae provides the base of the food chain via the grazing of the algal cells by organisms such as fiddler crabs, etc.

Creation of High and Low Marshes

Functions: Marshes are significant because they function as nursery grounds for many fish and shellfish. Marshes benefit water quality by helping to assimilate nutrients.

Creation of Mangroves

Functions: The mangrove community is especially important for shoreline protection and stabilization. Shoreline stabilization from mangroves helps to improve water quality. Mangroves also assimilate nutrients, which also benefits water quality. Mangroves are valuable as roosting and nesting sites for many wading birds (i.e. white ibis, roseate spoonbill, pelicans, egrets, and herons). Mangroves are also important nursery areas for fish and invertebrates.

Creation of Coastal Upland Habitats

Function: Coastal upland habitats provide resting and feeding areas for migratory birdlife. These areas also provide habitat for upland invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals. Native sub-tropical trees and shrubs support diverse habitats, which are now threatened by exotic plant species (i.e. Australian Pines, Brazilian Peppers, and Carrotwood). There are very few of these types of natural communities remaining in Sarasota Bay.

Big Edwards Island

General Spoil Island Restoration Objectives

(Please check the restoration objectives important to you).

- Provide Creation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Provide Passive Recreation Opportunities
- Removal of Exotic Plant Species
- Improve Water Quality
- Other _____
- Not Important

Types of Recreation Opportunities

(Please check the recreation opportunities important to you).

- Public access for passive recreation to the island
- Trails
- Educational/Interpretive Signage
- Boat access
- Other _____
- No Recreation

Please provide additional comments regarding Big Edwards Island on the back of this sheet.

1
2
3 U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PUBLIC WORKSHOP
4 Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration
5 Feasibility Study

6 Panel: Richard Hamann, University of Florida,
7 Center for Governmental
8 Responsibilities
9 Tom Ankerson, University of Florida,
10 Center for Governmental
11 Responsibilities
12 Alberto Gonzalez, U.S. Army Corps of
13 Engineers
14 Bruce Hasbrouck, HDR Engineering, Inc.
15 Charles Listowski, West Coast Inland
16 Navigation District
17 Tiphonie Jinks, U. S. Army Corps of
18 Engineers
19 Eric Sutton, Sarasota County

20
21 REPORTED BY: NANCY E. BRUIN PAULSEN
22 Registered Professional Reporter
23 Notary Public
24 State of Florida at Large

25 DATE: February 1, 2000
Commencing at 7:04 p.m.

PLACE: Venice Community Center
Nokomis Avenue
Venice, Florida

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1 MR. ANKERSON: Why don't we go ahead and get
 2 started, if we can.
 3 I want to remind you again that there are some
 4 forms that have been prepared for you to fill out. And
 5 one of the forms will be for those of you who wish to
 6 provide some comments this evening. And another form
 7 is a questionnaire that the consultants have provided
 8 to assist them in their process. And then a form in
 9 which you can put written comments down.
 10 And if you wish to receive further mailings and be
 11 on the general mailing list for the remainder of this
 12 effort, then put your name, and address, and so forth
 13 on that.
 14 My name is Tom Ankeron. I'm an attorney at the
 15 University of Florida at the College of Law. I direct
 16 a clinic there with some students we call our
 17 conservation clinic. And we've been assisting the
 18 Corps of Engineers with facilitating this process.
 19 My colleague, Richard Hamann here, also at the
 20 center, at the College of Law, and Nicole Kimbrick, one
 21 of our students, who will be assisting us as well.
 22 In terms of the design team and the various
 23 officials, I would like to introduce them just briefly.
 24 We have Mr. Alberto Gonzalez from the Corps of
 25 Engineers in the Jacksonville office. And Tiphonie

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1 Jinks, who may be outside.
 2 MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah.
 3 MR. ANKERSON: We've got -- and the Corps is the
 4 federal sponsor for this project.
 5 We've got Chuck Listowski from the West Coast
 6 Inland Navigation District, which would be the local
 7 sponsor for this effort.
 8 Eric Sunon from -- representing Sarasota County.
 9 And then a group of people from the consultants, H. D.
 10 R., who are assisting in the technical development, the
 11 geotechnical, environmental science behind the -- the
 12 effort.
 13 And Dr. Bruce Hasbeouck will be presenting on
 14 their behalf. We have Jeanie Contiers, environmental
 15 planner. I guess Deborah Nagle, a hydrogeologist. And
 16 Jesus is here or not? Jesus Merly as well? And they
 17 will be providing -- be able to provide technical
 18 information to you as we move further down the agenda.
 19 I think I've gotten all the talking heads, if you
 20 will.
 21 So the purpose of this meeting, let me just tell
 22 you what this is. This is a planning effort by the U.
 23 S. Army Corps of Engineers in conjunction with their
 24 local sponsor to address six spoil sites in Sarasota
 25 Bay and the potential for restoration of those sites.

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1 It comes from federal funds that are matched locally
 2 provided by the Corps of Engineers.
 3 This evening, we will be considering just one of
 4 those sites. Some of you may have been in attendance
 5 at a price meeting in Sarasota in which the general
 6 concept of all six sites was discussed and presented.
 7 But -- and there will be meetings tomorrow night
 8 and the following night, which you are welcome to come
 9 to as well, to talk about the other spoil sites. And
 10 there's probably some discussion of that or some
 11 description of those other sites in the packet that you
 12 have. So I won't belabor that. This spoil site here,
 13 of course, is Snake Island.
 14 I'll talk a little bit about the public input
 15 process which is being provided. And I want to
 16 emphasize this is not the only opportunity to comment
 17 on this effort. It is a process. It's not a product
 18 at this point.
 19 Tonight, we'll have, after some discussion of the
 20 technical matters to give you enough background to
 21 begin to consider the discussion, we'll have a -- what
 22 I would call a plenary discussion here with the whole
 23 group.
 24 We'll provide about a half hour to get your oral
 25 comments based on what you've heard today. I also want

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1 you to note that you'll see a court reporter here.
 2 She's taking down all of these comments, of course.
 3 And that will assist us as we summarize those for you.
 4 After we've had this discussion, we will break out
 5 into what we would call planning groups or design
 6 planning groups. And Bruce and his group have
 7 developed a set of concepts to aid that process. And
 8 we have some tables in the back. There's maps, there's
 9 material on which you can draw on.
 10 What we would like to do is break you into groups
 11 of -- it looks feasible of 10, 12 people, five separate
 12 groups, and let you sit down with pens and think about
 13 what you would like this island to look like with a
 14 completely open mind, completely as much imagination as
 15 you can master, because all of that that you --
 16 feedback that is provided will be incorporated into the
 17 process.
 18 And at that point, we'll also -- of course,
 19 there's a forum for written comments. You can, if you
 20 wish, if you don't wish to speak or if you want to
 21 speed up the process a little bit, because it could
 22 drag on, and we really would like to get into this
 23 designing effort, you can go to the court reporter when
 24 we go into the break-out group and directly provide
 25 comments to the court reporter.

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1 It will be our charge, my colleague Richard and
 2 the students that I work with, to summarize all of
 3 these comments and provide them back to the Corps of
 4 Engineers. They will post them up on their web site
 5 which they have devoted to this project.
 6 And I would encourage you all to go to that. I
 7 believe the site is also provided in the materials.
 8 All the concepts that have thus far been developed have
 9 been already posted there, along with a number of --
 10 considerable amount of other technical information.
 11 And that site will just keep building over time.
 12 So with that in mind, I want to turn it over to
 13 Bruce and -- well, actually, what I would like to do
 14 just --
 15 MS. LEOPOLD: What is -- I don't have that
 16 information. What is that web site?
 17 MS. HERGENDOL: It's not on the materials.
 18 MR. ANKERSON: It's not on the materials?
 19 MS. KIMBRICK: We'll put it on the --
 20 MR. ANKERSON: We'll put it up on one of the
 21 sheets here, and that will give you an opportunity to
 22 get it. I know it's a long -- I know it's a long one,
 23 that much I know.
 24 So take a look at your agenda just so we can see
 25 how the time goes. Number one is welcome,

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1 introduction. I'm almost done with that.
 2 At that point, Bruce is going to take over and his
 3 team. He'll describe what this project is in terms of
 4 the process, Section 1135, the funding mechanism, Corps
 5 of Engineers' involvement, so forth and so on, and
 6 where it stands right now, which is at a very, very
 7 preliminary stage, I would add.
 8 Then he'll talk about some of the considerations
 9 that went into the concepts that they have developed to
 10 date. And then we'll have you -- we'll solicit your
 11 input on those concepts and what your thoughts are.
 12 And we'll do that for 30 minutes.
 13 We'll come back, and I'll refresh your memory as
 14 to how we're going to run the break-out groups. And
 15 hopefully, we can -- we can work through that planning
 16 process, that designing process with you in about 30
 17 minutes.
 18 We'll have you come back. And one member of your
 19 group will present the discussions that went on and
 20 whatever design considerations you provided.
 21 Another member of your group will serve as a
 22 reporter and write -- write down as much as possible
 23 the flow of information that -- the discussion, as it
 24 went along.
 25 There will be a host, which will be one of us.

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1 And then there will be a technical professional to
2 guide your thinking, if there are technical issues that
3 come up.

4 If something is simply geotechnically impossible,
5 then Bruce will be able to tell you that. But beyond
6 that, it's going to be -- it's an opportunity for
7 citizens to assist in the design of this -- of this
8 restoration effort.

9 And that will be it. We'll do a review and a
10 wrap-up and talk about where the process is going from
11 here. And hopefully, with any luck, by 9:30, we'll
12 have you out of here.

13 Of course, if you want to leave at any time,
14 you're certainly welcome. But we would encourage you
15 to stick around. This is an interesting and a great
16 opportunity for you to participate in the planning.

17 So with that in mind, I'll turn it over to Bruce
18 and let him go over the project itself. Thank you.

19 MR. HASBROUCK: Thanks, Tom. While we're on the
20 site, there is the -- we'll write up that long address.

21 Okay, essentially, this is a public workshop for
22 the 1135 process for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.
23 What that is is that's a Congress-mandated process that
24 allows for ecological restoration.

25 And it has to follow the NEPA, which is the

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1 So you'll begin to see, once we get into
2 discussion of the different concepts, how we've really
3 lumped together a lot of the ecological issues for
4 those areas.

5 All right, existing conditions right now. North
6 is up. This is Snake Island. Essentially what it is
7 is it's an elevation of about seven on the western
8 side. This is where a majority of the erosion is
9 occurring right now along the face of the island.

10 There's a few mangroves around the edge. And then
11 it's covered with exotic species, including Brazil
12 pepper, Australian pine, and Carrotwood. There have
13 been a few plantings that somebody is doing in here,
14 some oaks, a couple things like that. But for the
15 majority of this island, it is covered with exotic
16 species.

17 Now, what exotic species do is essentially they
18 are non-native plants that have been imported into the
19 U. S. over the years. These plants are high seed
20 producing. They tend to be toxic. Their leaves, when
21 they fall on the ground, will poison the ground, and
22 other desirable native vegetation will not grow.

23 Furthermore, these species tend to be very little
24 food source, nesting source, or any other ecological
25 value for native species, especially things such as

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1 National Environmental Policy Act, of 1969 that
2 essentially says that anytime federal moneys are spent,
3 you have to assess the proposed project for its
4 impacts.

5 Those impacts include ecological impacts, include
6 cultural, threatened and endangered species, impacts to
7 people. There's a whole host of issues that are looked
8 at to make sure that any process is objectively
9 studied. And that's what this is, a part of the 1135
10 process, which includes public comment.

11 To date, we have, within the study, we have --
12 we're calling it five islands. There's actually Bird
13 Colony Islands, they're small, old mangrove stands that
14 have birds living on them. Those are up here.

15 We've got Big Edwards Island on the north, and
16 Skieers' Island, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, Palmer
17 Point Park, as well as Snake Island -- thank you, as
18 well as Snake Island, which, of course, is what we're
19 working on tonight.

20 This is an aerial photograph of the area right
21 now. And, of course, most of you are very familiar
22 with the influence of several fresh water rivers as
23 well as the Venice Inlet coming in.

24 If you've got questions along the way, feel free
25 to stop me, I'll be happy to answer them.

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1 nesting. Certainly, the mangroves and the desirable
2 species along the edge do have ecological benefits to
3 them.

4 We have surveyed the islands. We've gone out with
5 survey teams. They've cut cross-sections, as you see
6 in yellow, and collected data as far as actual
7 elevations on the ground.

8 Then we used a digital terrain model that created
9 the topographic effect, so that we know, for instance,
10 this contour is elevation three, this one's 3.5.

11 There's a little bit of triangulation involved. I
12 will not tell you that this is exact down to the finest
13 detail.

14 This is a planning study. And what we're looking
15 at is essentially identifying typical trends within
16 these areas so that we can do a feasibility of whether
17 or not -- for instance, if we wanted to go through and
18 scrape the whole island down, we would want to know how
19 much material would be involved, what would be the cost
20 of removing that. And that plays into the feasibility
21 of the study.

22 We have done geotechnical investigations. We have
23 had our geotechnical subs out. They have taken borings
24 at numerous locations throughout each of the islands.

25 And that does a multiple -- multiple approach for

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1 We are going to have, like I said, more meetings
2 on the other islands, but this is the opportunity
3 tonight for discussing Snake Island.

4 Okay. We've produced a graphic here to give you
5 an idea of really the terms that we're going to be
6 using. We'll use terms, certainly mangroves most
7 people understand, made up of the red, the black, and
8 the white mangroves.

9 This graphic doesn't show it, but it is on the web
10 page, we have used an area called low marsh, and that
11 is essentially your juncus marsh and spartina marsh
12 that is within the tidal range, frequently flooded,
13 infrequently exposed.

14 Then we're using what we call the high marsh.
15 These are the areas above high tide, but that will get
16 impacts from various storm surges as well as a lot of
17 salt sprays. So they are salt-tolerant species.

18 And then the term we're calling subtropical upland
19 hammock.

20 So you'll notice that we'll use these terms
21 repeatedly tonight. Keep in mind that where we are at
22 right now is concepts. Okay, we're not looking at
23 design drawings with four-to-one slopes and going from
24 elevation 1.5 to 4.3. We're not into that right now.
25 We're still talking concepts.

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1 us. One is it provides an opportunity for us to look
2 at, okay, if we did scrape it down, what would the
3 soils be suitable for, are they beach quality sands, is
4 it a lot of organics, is it a lot of clay, is it rock.
5 You know, we wanted to really look at what the material
6 is made of.

7 And it gives us an opportunity, when we're going
8 through the feasibility of it, to look at, you know, we
9 wouldn't want to say, well, we can pump this sand right
10 out onto Venice Beach and have it be clay or a lot of
11 rock and that not be feasible.

12 So that's an important aspect of the feasibility
13 of this is to look at what kind of material is out
14 there.

15 MR. McCARTHY: Question.

16 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes.

17 MR. McCARTHY: I've got to take issue with
18 something. I'm sorry.

19 My name is Patrick McCarthy. I'm the waterway
20 committee chairman for Nokomis Area Civic Association.
21 I've spent a lot of time on Snake Island.

22 You're showing a beach on the south of the
23 island, when in reality, the beach goes all the way
24 from the southeast corner of the island, all the way
25 around the west side, up around the north side, and

1 then back around.

2 And the only place that really isn't beach is the
3 southeast corner of the island, is the only place that
4 you cannot push your boat up onto a beach. That -- no,
5 I'm sorry.

6 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Not southeast. Right there.

7 MR. McCARTHY: This is mangroves. All of this,
8 for all intents and purposes, is beach. And it's not
9 represented properly.

10 MR. HASBROUCK: Okay. Well, we'll take that into
11 consideration.

12 MR. McCARTHY: And if anybody takes issue with
13 that --

14 MR. ANKERSON: It might be wise to take maybe one
15 or two questions, but we're going to have a period of
16 time for public discussion.

17 MR. McCARTHY: But if we're starting with a
18 baseline here, the baseline has to be correct.

19 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure. That's fine.

20 MR. ANKERSON: I understand. And that's fine.

21 MR. HASBROUCK: And in reality, I think --
22 hindsight, of course, probably the proper term we would
23 have used would have been an unconsolidated shore.
24 Technically, it's not a beach because it's not out on
25 the Gulf.

1 concepts that have minimal maintenance involved with
2 them.

3 And then the other consideration we came up with
4 was to reclaim some of the lost acreage of the island.
5 This island has eroded over the years. And there is
6 various aerial photography over time that you can look
7 at and see the size of the island is being reduced
8 through the wave energy.

9 Now, the take-home message from that is that the
10 sands that make up that island are either washing in
11 the inlet and restricting boater access, it's getting
12 into the water quality and reducing the -- getting into
13 the water, reducing water quality, as well as covering
14 up seagrasses and other viable habitat for marine
15 fisheries.

16 These are not in order. These are just as we came
17 up with them. And like I said, once we finish going
18 through this presentation and the options that we have
19 developed so far, we would like to get written comments
20 from you that list these.

21 So that as a whole, the audience can really get a
22 sense for what are some of the design considerations,
23 what would you like to see happen up there.

24 Now, if public speaking is not your bag, we do
25 have cards. You can write down what you want to see.

1 But anyway, your point is well taken.

2 MR. McCARTHY: Okay, thank you.

3 MR. HASBROUCK: And we'll certainly consider that.

4 All right, one of the things we did -- whoop.
5 Fast rewind.

6 One of the things we did was we had a team
7 workshop. And we utilized information, we utilized
8 professionals within other shop as well as participants
9 from each of the sponsors.

10 And we come through and identified in our mind
11 what are the potential, what are design considerations
12 that we want to address within this project.

13 And this is one of the things we want to do in the
14 -- in another part of this forum is to get input from
15 you. What is something that you would like to see
16 done. And we'll list them, and look at design
17 considerations. And what this does is it allows us to
18 come up with concepts that address these issues.

19 One is to enhance slash maintain the public slash
20 boater access.

21 The other is to stabilize the shoreline utilizing
22 soft shoreline stabilization techniques to restrict
23 additional erosion.

24 Okay, and keep in mind that this island is
25 eroding. And that within this process, do nothing is

1 We have the court reporter. And we have -- we'll have
2 an opportunity later on.

3 But we really want your input. This is a public
4 meeting. What we are here tonight is to show you what
5 we're doing, how we're doing it. And essentially the
6 concepts you see are going to be kind of a boost to get
7 things going. They are not all-encompassing.

8 Now, our scope with the U. S. Army Corps of
9 Engineers has a target. And that is essentially the
10 different types of habitat that they would like to see
11 us replace, a particular acreage of mangroves, acreage
12 of the high marsh, the low marsh, the upland habitat.

13 Those are only targets. What we did, then, was
14 develop a concept based on that. Then we looked at the
15 extremes. And that's one thing I like to look at
16 whenever we're doing kind of an alternative analysis,
17 look at the extremes. And you'll see, we've done that.

18 Now, if somebody has a more extreme idea, we're
19 more than welcome to listen to it. We will -- through
20 the process, we're going to come up with the
21 alternatives.

22 We will do an analysis to look at what each of
23 the alternatives impact. Whether they have a cost
24 impact, would it cost too much to do. Whether they
25 continue to, say, support nuisance species. Whether or

1 an alternative. Okay? No build is an alternative that
2 we will consider for all of these islands.

3 Yes, sir.

4 MR. GAUTHIER: Would you explain the term soft
5 shoreline stabilization?

6 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure. It would be utilizing
7 things such as native limestone. There is geotextiles.
8 There is tubes that are developed that you can fill
9 with sand that you place that prevent the waves from
10 continuing to erode, but it's not a seawall or some
11 other hardened shoreline.

12 MR. GAUTHIER: Does not include the mangrove?

13 MR. HASBROUCK: Some of them do. Some are
14 mangrove, some are -- for instance, there's the tubes
15 that they fill with sediment and you plant the
16 different grasses in them. And it provides a wave
17 break so the waves don't continue to erode the island,
18 but it also provides for some habitat.

19 Improve the quantity and quality of fish and
20 wildlife habitat.

21 Remove the nuisance and exotic species.

22 Provide a concept that -- how shall we say --
23 minimal maintenance. In other words, we don't want to
24 develop concepts that are going to cost \$100,000 a year
25 to keep it in place. You know, we want to look at

1 not there would be impact to water quality or impact to
2 fish and wildlife habitat.

3 Okay. Concept number one. We put a number just
4 so we could track them. But once again, they're in no
5 order.

6 And this would be essentially the -- probably the
7 most straightforward. Would be to scrape the entire
8 island down, get it down to an intertidal elevation
9 that would support both the low marsh, being the
10 spartina and juncus, as well as mangroves, recognizing
11 the fisheries habitat value for producing this type of
12 a system in the inlet.

13 And looking around, of course, you can see, we're
14 dealing with a majority of seawalls. I guess we'd
15 better show up here. We're dealing with a majority of
16 seawalls, a lot of the area, and there's very little
17 fisheries habitat inside this entire inlet.

18 MS. LEOPOLD: Excuse me.

19 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes.

20 MS. LEOPOLD: Would that option leave the
21 accessible beach or not?

22 MR. HASBROUCK: No, that option right there would
23 be purely ecological. There would be no -- no exposed
24 sand at high tide. There may be some associated sands
25 at low tide.

1 But, of course, like most areas, when you've got
2 mangroves and stuff, you're going to end up with a
3 little bit of sand around the edge of them.
4 But essentially this alternative would not allow
5 for public access. There would be nowhere for it, as
6 well as it would become a nesting habitat for many of
7 the birds that are not very -- you know, humans --
8 humans affect them.
9 Okay, drum roll. Concept number two. This is
10 more of the middle-of-the-road type of concept.
11 Essentially looking at scraping down these areas to the
12 east, and planting of low marsh and the mangrove,
13 allowing for a high marsh transitional area around the
14 outside of an upland enhancement area.
15 Essentially, you've got to be able to get from
16 point A to point B. And this ecologically is what --
17 you know, that's this area through here (indicating).
18 So you have -- like I said, you can't just do a
19 straight wall here and go to your upland habitat. So
20 that's the logic behind this.
21 And as you can see, each of these do incorporate
22 various aspects. Certainly, concept number one does
23 nothing to enhance the public access. But if we
24 eliminate erosion, then we are allowing at least some
25 boater access still within the inlet. Now, that's

1 worst case, of course.
2 Okay, moving on to concept number three.
3 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE 1: May I ask a question?
4 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE 2: Excuse me, is there any
5 hydrologic modeling done on any of these concepts to
6 see how it would affect the flow, the fresh water flow
7 out or the tidal flow?
8 MR. HASBROUCK: That will be done during the
9 design phase. This right now is conceptual phase.
10 What we use, as far as the hydrologic modeling and the
11 issues associated with flows is some of the -- just the
12 general industry stuff that --
13 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE 1: How much -- you talk
14 about reclaim some of the lost acreage. How much
15 acreage has been lost over the past 50 years?
16 MR. HASBROUCK: From what we've looked at right --
17 just briefly, going back to the late 1960s,
18 approximately about an acre and a half, or about 30
19 percent of the island.
20 Anybody else?
21 Okay. This is concept number three. Now, once
22 again, you'll begin to see that where these ideas are
23 vastly different from each other.
24 And that's what we want. We really want to look
25 at ideas that are -- you know, you may think it's kind

1 of crazy some of the things you come up with. That's
2 okay.
3 No idea is a bad idea until we look at feasibility
4 of incorporating that into a project, which would
5 include construction. You know, how are we going to
6 get equipment out here? You know, are we going to end
7 up blocking up one of the channels to get equipment.
8 All of that stuff comes into the feasibility analysis.
9 So once we develop these alternatives -- and I
10 can't stress this enough tonight, no idea is a bad
11 idea. Okay? So if you think you want to -- I don't
12 know, Chuck would sell you the island, you want to put
13 a house on it, then draw it up, we'll assess it.
14 Okay. Right?
15 MR. LISTOWSKI: (Nods head affirmatively.)
16 MR. HASBROUCK: Okay. This is essentially -- the
17 third concept utilizes the soft shore stabilization.
18 It would be some kind of mechanism around the outside
19 to prevent additional erosion.
20 Planting of low marsh within these areas. Just
21 essentially reclaim fisheries habitat, the emergent
22 marshes. Have a low marsh and mangroves with an
23 internal portion of it. And then the upland
24 enhancement area.
25 In this one, what we've done to the west is add a

1 cove, which would allow for boater access. We might
2 end up having to put mooring buoys or something like
3 that in there that would provide for anchoring the boat
4 without having to worry about anchors tearing up,
5 getting into the marshes and that kind of stuff, as
6 well as a boardwalk over to the upland enhancement to
7 provide access for the public.
8 So now with all three of these up here, I think
9 you can begin to see what we're looking for. And that
10 is, we started with a middle of the road. We looked at
11 one extreme. We've kind of gone to another extreme.
12 And when we break out at the -- into this tonight,
13 into this other room, we have five tables set up, we
14 would like for you to go to any table you want.
15 And basically we would like for -- be an orderly
16 process, and to have that table -- we've got vellum,
17 pieces of paper that you can lay over the top of this.
18 We've got all different kinds of markers, and pencils,
19 and pens. And we would like for the team that's
20 sitting around that table to develop concepts.
21 And if you do one concept that everybody agrees
22 with, great. If you end up with ten different
23 concepts, I don't know how you're going to do that in
24 30 minutes, but good luck to you, but we want the
25 input. We want to find out what you are interested in

1 doing.
2 This is not a closed-door process. This is very
3 open.
4 And like I said, one of the things we would like
5 to do before we break up is have public input from
6 people to see if we can identify what makes you tick.
7 I mean, what do you really want to see out there?
8 You know, if buying the island from Chuck and
9 building a house on it, so let's write it down. You
10 know, if it's something that you would like to see it
11 go to total mangroves. You know, scrape the thing down
12 and plant seagrasses in there.
13 Yes, sir.
14 MR. WAYNKIN: Is the entire island eroding equally
15 all the way around it?
16 MR. HASBROUCK: Oh, no, sir.
17 MR. WAYNKIN: Where is the most erosion?
18 MR. HASBROUCK: The majority of the erosion is on
19 the west side.
20 Where is Eric? Oh, thank you. Do you want to
21 show that graphic you worked up?
22 MR. SUTTON: Yeah, I can do that.
23 MR. HASBROUCK: Why don't you do that.
24 He's got a graphic. Essentially what he's done is
25 looked at four different eras of aerial photographs

1 that will show you exactly the way the island was
2 shaped and where the erosion has occurred, which would
3 directly address the question.
4 Keeping in mind, of course, when you're doing
5 these kind of things, tidal level has an effect. You
6 know, the photo could have been taken at a very high
7 tide or a very low tide.
8 So there is opportunity for error. But I think
9 with the method that Eric used, which is a
10 consistently-applied effort to each of the islands, you
11 can begin to see over time, I mean, essentially, if my
12 recollection serves me, there is a point here that has
13 eroded over time, and then this used to swing out more.
14 And -- now, they're a different size. They're a
15 little smaller. So it may be the kind of thing that
16 when you break out into your work groups, you may want
17 to look at, and kind of give you some ideas. A little
18 frame of reference about how you want to approach your
19 design alternative.
20 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce, one thing you might want to
21 do, I would say while we're waiting for Eric, but he's
22 here, is describe the process from here forward. That
23 is, the institutional process by which the decisions
24 are made and the additional opportunity to give public
25 input as we go down there.

1 MR. HASBROUCK: Okay, that's a good idea. We'll
2 do this one first.

3 This is 1967. And you can see -- let me think
4 here. That's west. Yes. And you can see the point I
5 was alluding to that worked out here. You can see this
6 pattern here is seagrasses. There were grasses that
7 were on the sands.

8 And then this probably is worse water quality and
9 higher tide, so you can't see that signature anymore,
10 to the point starting to erode away, and some of this.

11 1986, the point was gone. And a lot of the island
12 has shrunk.

13 1990, I'll go through the size in a minute. Once
14 again, shrinkage. And then 1998 more.

15 1996 we're showing 3.13 acres -- or, I'm sorry,
16 1967, 3.13. '72 is 3.07. '86 is 2.64. 1990, 2.53.

17 To 1998, to 1.99 acres. So as you can see, over time,
18 it has been decreasing in size.

19 Okay, the process. Once we get all of the
20 concepts worked up tonight, we take those back to our
21 shop and look at all of the drawings and try to pull
22 out really what are some of the salient points.

23 Certainly if 12 of them have a component of
24 mangroves in it, then we're going to, you know,
25 basically note that -- that fact. If recreation is

1 from private sources. And the answer is?

2 MR. LISTOWSKI: That's a little more difficult.
3 But possibly through some kind of agreement, I would
4 think that would be possible.

5 MR. McCARTHY: What kind of wildlife are we
6 talking about here?

7 MR. HASBROUCK: For which aspect?

8 MR. McCARTHY: For -- you're talking about
9 wildlife in the uplands. I'm just curious exactly what
10 kind of wildlife you're talking about.

11 MR. HASBROUCK: For the most part, birds. Birds.
12 Yes, sir.

13 MR. SHELDON: Is that called the 1135 process?

14 MR. HASBROUCK: The 1135 process.

15 MR. SHELDON: Whose process is it?

16 MR. HASBROUCK: That's a federal process.

17 MR. SHELDON: Have they declared or decreed that
18 this -- something must be done with this island? Has
19 it been stated that you have to do something to that?

20 MR. HASBROUCK: Well, no action certainly is an
21 alternative, do nothing. But the sponsor of this
22 project, the West Coast Inland Navigational District,
23 has, I guess, petitioned is the right word, Alberto?

24 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes.

25 MR. HASBROUCK: Petitioned the U. S. Army Corps of

1 important and a lot of the concepts have recreation in
2 it, we'll note that fact.

3 And we anticipate essentially putting together a
4 matrix. And what this matrix is going to do is going
5 to have different alternatives down one side of it.
6 And then we'll have the design considerations across
7 the top.

8 And we're going to look at how each of those
9 alternatives either impact what the goal is or support
10 the goal.

11 And you can see as we work through, our goal is to
12 identify a design consideration that reaches the goals,
13 the goal, some of them, of course, being the goals that
14 the 1135 process has set out, which is the ecological
15 restoration. Certainly recognizing that we don't want
16 to impact the human environment. So recreation may be
17 a component of that.

18 I do want to add, though, that in the 1135
19 process, only ten percent of the moneys can be spent
20 towards recreation. So that's something to keep in
21 mind.

22 Now, if it's passive recreation such as this,
23 where we want to allow for boater access -- or, you
24 know, pedestrian access, and the only thing that is
25 true recreation is the boardwalk, and we take the

1 Engineers to look at these islands for the potential
2 for ecological restoration, keeping in mind that
3 has come out of the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan
4 to look at ecological restoration as well as the
5 Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program has a component
6 in their master plan which includes the ecological
7 restoration.

8 MR. SHELDON: Could I continue for just a moment?
9 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure.

10 MR. SHELDON: I don't know why, but it reminds me
11 of wetland re-creation someplace else.

12 MR. ANKERSON: Just one question. Just one
13 question to the court reporter. Can you hear
14 everything up there?

15 THE COURT REPORTER: I can hear, but can they
16 identify themselves?

17 MR. ANKERSON: Maybe this is a good opportunity,
18 once this gentleman finishes, to go into our public
19 discussion. I've got people who signed cards, so they
20 should have a priority, then we'll go back into the
21 general question-and-answer session.

22 MR. SHELDON: Can you hear me now?

23 MR. HASBROUCK: Okay.

24 MR. SHELDON: The ecological restoration, the way
25 you have described it, reminds me of the wetland

1 upland area and we get rid of all the nuisance species
2 and plant it with a desirable upland hammock, the
3 recreation component is the boardwalk.

4 But don't -- you know, don't get overly encouraged
5 by this, because another aspect of upland restoration
6 provides wildlife habitat.

7 And if the wildlife habitat that is proposed for
8 this upland area would be impacted by human traffic,
9 then you could begin to see how our matrix starts to
10 look at each of these issues from an impact pros,
11 impact cons.

12 Yes, ma'am.

13 MS. LEOPOLD: Is this 1135 process documented in
14 the web site?

15 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes.

16 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE 3: Question.

17 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes.

18 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE 3: Can moneys come from
19 other sources to increase that ten percent?

20 MR. LISTOWSKI: Yes.

21 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE 3: Private sources?

22 Private sources?

23 MR. HASBROUCK: The question was can moneys come
24 from other sources to support the recreation. The
25 answer is yes. The second question was can it come

1 re-creation that we've been going through in Sarasota
2 County for a long time. Not always successful.

3 I'm wondering, is there any reason why an
4 experiment cannot be created with this island and leave
5 it as it is? Why you're going to scrape it down
6 hundreds or thousands of years of whatever is on top of
7 it and recreate something that might actually not be
8 there? What's there is what's natural.

9 MR. HASBROUCK: No, actually, these are all spoil
10 islands.

11 MR. SHELDON: Okay. They've just been dredged up,
12 right?

13 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, sir, they were -- when they
14 were dredging --

15 MR. OLSON: No. No. That island wasn't dredged
16 up.

17 MR. RYAN: No, that's not correct.

18 MR. OLSON: It was cut, --

19 MR. RYAN: It was cut off --

20 MR. OLSON: -- but that's always -- that's not
21 dredged right there.

22 MR. ANKERSON: Let's take them one at a time,
23 because our court reporter needs to be able to hear
24 these comments.

25 MR. SHELDON: I'll -- yeah, I'll pass now. But

1 that was my -- my real thought was why couldn't we
 2 leave it just the way it is and see what happens.
 3 MR. HASBROUCK: Well, I've got two comments on
 4 that. One is that there is documented erosion. And
 5 that that erosion is an environmental detriment. It is
 6 impacting the environment.
 7 The second I would like to address is that there
 8 is spoil on the island. We have documentation of the
 9 spoil being placed on the island.
 10 Now, it may have been part of a larger island.
 11 But when the dredging occurred, spoil was placed on
 12 that island.
 13 Let me -- before we open up to public comment, we
 14 do have an opportunity for that, let me just finish the
 15 process.
 16 Once we do the alternatives analysis on the
 17 different alternatives, we will come up with a
 18 preferred alternative. That preferred alternative will
 19 look at feasibility of whether or not we're proposing
 20 A, it can be done; B, has a least impact; and has some
 21 assessment into the cost.
 22 Once we come up with a preferred alternative, we
 23 will have another workshop, and we will present that
 24 proposed alternative to the public. You know, we'll do
 25 that, present it to the public.

1 And then we will produce what's called an
 2 environmental assessment. It's a document that
 3 documents all aspects of this project. It covers each
 4 of the alternatives, the assessment that went through,
 5 the analysis of the pros and cons of each of the
 6 alternatives, and then why the preferred alternative
 7 has been proposed.
 8 Any questions on the process?
 9 MR. McCARTHY: Then what happens?
 10 MR. HASBROUCK: Then once that -- the E. A. gets
 11 put out for public review, it will be on the web site,
 12 it will be in local libraries, probably right here,
 13 allow people to review it.
 14 There is a commenting period that allows people to
 15 submit public comments. As well as all the federal
 16 agencies have to review it, look at their -- whether or
 17 not the proposed action fits within their rules.
 18 We will have review by the U. S. Army Corps of
 19 Engineers' regulatory side to see if what we're
 20 proposing is permissible.
 21 And we'll have the Florida Department of
 22 Environmental Protection regulatory side look at it as
 23 well for permissibility, as well as any local and -- by
 24 local, the county and the city, to see if as well the
 25 preferred alternative fits within their regulations.

1 Question on the process?
 2 MR. GAUTHIER: Yes, sir. As part of the process,
 3 your company is part of this design deal. And I would
 4 ask how your company got the contract, do any of your
 5 people who worked -- your professionals, so-called,
 6 that you said put together this plan or these projected
 7 concepts, how many of those are local residents here?
 8 Are any of them even in Florida?
 9 And how long are you guys in the contract for?
 10 MR. HASBROUCK: We were selected through a
 11 competitive process for the U. S. Army Corps of
 12 Engineers with an indefinite services contract based on
 13 our experience, our corporate experience. The entire
 14 study team lives in Florida.
 15 What's your third part?
 16 MR. GAUTHIER: How many of you are in this area.
 17 And you have already answered, basically that you are
 18 here indefinitely until something is done with this
 19 island.
 20 MR. HASBROUCK: Well, we're here through the
 21 study. Our contract requires us to finalize the NEPA
 22 document, the environmental assessment, and get that
 23 approved by the federal agencies.
 24 If it goes into a design phase, in other words, if
 25 the public comment is supportive, the agencies say this

1 is a feasible alternative, then it would go into the
 2 design phase, we would do further survey, additional
 3 documentation of the geotechnical, there would be some
 4 modeling involved, and then we would develop a detailed
 5 construction plans, specifications, bid documents, then
 6 the project would be bid out, constructed, and
 7 maintained.
 8 MR. GAUTHIER: And your home office is where in
 9 Florida?
 10 MR. HASBROUCK: In Tampa.
 11 Yes, ma'am.
 12 WOMAN FROM AUDIENCE: You may have answered this,
 13 I came late, and so I apologize. Is this an either/or
 14 situation with each one of these various islands within
 15 this territory? In other words, if something is done
 16 to one of them, will similar action or comparable
 17 action be done to all of them?
 18 Or is it possible that one will be left alone, and
 19 the others will be altered?
 20 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, ma'am. All five of them are
 21 independent on their own. And just because one island
 22 is selected as a design consideration for it doesn't
 23 necessarily mean that will be applied to the other
 24 islands.
 25 MR. ANKERSON: I mean, obviously, we're just going

1 to continue with the process. We have here that people
 2 did fill out cards, and I think we need to respect
 3 their opportunity to speak. We're still ahead of time.
 4 There is a document here, somebody asked about the
 5 Section 1135 program, what is it and so forth. There
 6 is a brief brochure here that might help you. And I
 7 think there's enough to go around. So you could
 8 conceivably just pass them starting here.
 9 So what I will do is read the names. If you feel
 10 like your question's already been addressed, I would
 11 ask you to go ahead and defer. If somebody had a
 12 comment or a question, and then what you have to say is
 13 very similar to it, I would ask that either you make
 14 that remark or simply not address it.
 15 But you're certainly welcome to ratify the opinion
 16 of others but not amplify it. Keep your comments
 17 brief, to a minute or two if possible. Which all of
 18 you, obviously, are doing very well at it already.
 19 And at that point, when I finish with the cards,
 20 we'll just reopen it for questions. We're well ahead
 21 of schedule, which does have some benefits, since there
 22 is a group of maps there and some opportunity for some
 23 considerations in that regard.
 24 So with that in mind, I would call on Tom
 25 Cottrell. And I would ask if you wish to identify

1 yourself as a -- in terms of your institutional -- who
 2 you're representing and so forth, please feel free to
 3 do so.
 4 Tom Cottrell.
 5 MR. COTTRELL: I would just like to hold my
 6 comments till later. If I could hear some more input
 7 at this point in time.
 8 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you, Tom.
 9 Keith Island -- Keith Olson, Snake Island
 10 Republic.
 11 I don't know if you guys are cold, but that wasn't
 12 intended to chill your enthusiasm in any way.
 13 MR. OLSON: We obtained over 700 signature in less
 14 than a week. This is an issue of concern among the
 15 people of south Sarasota County.
 16 Basically, everyone would simply like the
 17 government to leave the island alone. It is not
 18 broken. Don't try to fix it.
 19 The island has lost approximately one third of
 20 its size since it was created in 1967. Aerial photos
 21 show that the greatest erosion occurred only after the
 22 closing of Midnight Pass and the hard freeze of the
 23 early '80s that killed the Australian pines on the
 24 western edge of the island.
 25 We have the navigational charts and the aerial

1 photographs that prove the original size of the island
2 was only 3.1 acres. Present size is about two.

3 Yes, erosion has occurred. But can everyone
4 here -- can anyone here name any coastal area in
5 Florida that has not experienced erosion over the past
6 30 years.

7 The public has to -- has had unrestricted use of
8 Snake Island since its creation. It is our desire that
9 this island simply remain as it is, a place where
10 families can beach their boots and enjoy the day.

11 We do not need public docks. We do not need park
12 facilities. In most cases, people come before
13 government bodies asking them to spend money or do
14 something. In this case, we are simply asking that
15 this island be left alone.

16 (Audience claps.)

17 MR. ANKERSON: Joseph Waynkln.

18 MR. WAYNKIN: That's all right, I decline.

19 MR. ANKERSON: John G. Ryan, Executive Director of
20 Venice Area Chamber of Commerce.

21 MR. RYAN: Thank you.

22 On behalf of our membership, our board of
23 directors recently discussed the potential closing of
24 Snake Island.

25 Although the Chamber has not yet formalized an

1 As far as taking it and scraping it like some of
2 these concepts say, I have spent time on the island. I
3 have seen nesting Herons there. I have seen Screech
4 Owls, which are a federally-protected species. I have
5 seen several other wildlife species who have made these
6 non-native trees their home.

7 I've spent a lot of time there. It's a beautiful
8 place. I think that before we go on with any concept
9 of scraping the island, or changing it, or putting up
10 barricades, or limiting public access, we should take a
11 look at what we have and leave it as is.

12 One of the things that we need to do there is to
13 take time, instead of rushing to judgment, and what we
14 the public wants, which is what this forum is for. For
15 that, I think those people in charge, the West Coast
16 Inland Navigation District, also the Army Corps of
17 Engineers, and also the development group, and those
18 from the University of Florida.

19 We certainly appreciate hearing our voices heard.
20 And so far at this meeting, I think you've heard one
21 voice, leave the island as it is, give the public
22 access, to those people who use it and take care of the
23 it, and we would appreciate it left that way.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. ANKERSON: Lenore Leopold.

1 official stance on this issue, it was apparent from the
2 discussion that our Chamber's leadership would
3 discourage any attempts to establish this recreational
4 haven as off limits to the general public.

5 The Venice Area Chamber of Commerce, through its
6 mission statement, is committed to maintaining and
7 improving the quality of life in the Venice area. We
8 believe strongly that recreational boating and the
9 pleasures it brings our residents and visitors is one
10 of the many quality of life advantages of this
11 community.

12 Snake Island, created by the dredging of the
13 Intracoastal Waterway in the 1960s, has become a
14 favorite stopping place for recreational boaters. It
15 is one of the few places that families can beach their
16 boat and picnic, swim, or even allow their dog to play
17 in the water along the Intracoastal.

18 We would encourage the Army Corps of Engineers and
19 the W. C. I. N. D. to seriously consider any options
20 that would allow for the maximum usage of Snake Island
21 for recreational purposes without significantly
22 changing its current environment.

23 We would also encourage those who use the island
24 to be responsible citizens and follow basic scouting
25 principles of leaving the area better than they found

1 MS. LEOPOLD: Hi. I'm going to ditto a lot of
2 what everybody else said. Just to add to them a little
3 bit, I also am a boater. Snake Island is one of the
4 few places that you can stop with a boat and just enjoy
5 the beach and what Florida is all about between
6 Sarasota and Englewood.

7 There really are no other places other than
8 possibly Edwards Island, which really isn't all that
9 great to stop with a boat, up on Lido, and then down at
10 Swamp Pass, is really the only place in between. And
11 there's a lot of boaters out there that enjoy it
12 tremendously.

13 And it's creating a lot of memories for little
14 ones like that (indicating), who spend an awful lot of
15 time at Snake Island, positively loves it.

16 I think the public has done a pretty good job so
17 far of policing themselves on Snake Island as far as
18 dealing with the responsibility and the liability
19 aspect of it.

20 You know, as Mark said, we spend an awful lot of
21 time over there, and we always take more off of the
22 island than what we bring there. You know, last time
23 we were over there, somebody had left a big grill and a
24 whole bunch of pieces of carpeting over there. And we
25 took that off the island. It's just no big deal. It's

1 it.

2 MR. ANKERSON: Captain Mark Gauthier. If I
3 mispronounce your name, feel free to correct me.

4 MR. GAUTHIER: It's pronounced Gauthier.

5 As a local charter fisherman working out of Dona
6 Bay, I pass the island almost every day. As well as
7 stopping there with many of my clients to take a lunch,
8 I also fish in that area. I see the island in many
9 stages, low tide, high tide, and over many years.

10 First of all, I have several questions that need
11 to be answered. When you talk about ecological
12 restoration, I haven't seen any photographs that don't
13 show the Australian pines and the pepper trees that
14 have been there for years.

15 We're talking about putting a hardwoods hammock up
16 in -- hammock there. I've never seen one in that area.
17 Since that island was cut from Turner Key and the spoil
18 was added, it's pretty much remained the same.

19 It is deteriorating. That is due to the influx of
20 water, the tidal flow that's created since there is no
21 place for the water to go from Big Pass to Venice
22 Inlet. Why? Because Midnight Pass has been closed.

23 Open Midnight Pass to increase the water flow, and
24 it will decrease the rate of deterioration of the
25 island.

1 just part of what you do if you spend time there.

2 And you know nobody else is out there taking care
3 of it as far as the park or any governmental
4 organizations, so you do it yourself. It's just part
5 of being a good boy scout, whoever said that, or girl
6 scout.

7 A couple of suggestions that I had. And I don't
8 know if this is the time of getting into them or not.
9 What is the possibilities of just doing mangrove
10 restoration on the west side of that island that's
11 eroding now, leaving the rest of the island the way
12 that it is, and just doing restoration on that problem
13 west side.

14 Another idea, there were a couple other islands
15 that -- a couple of which I have not been to, but I
16 have been to Everglades National Park that does a
17 pretty good job of policing itself and people
18 maintaining areas within the park. Also Caladesi
19 Island and Honeymoon Island, I believe, are the same
20 way, who also allowing camping on the island.

21 And I don't know how that exactly is maintained or
22 how it's handled, but that might be something to take a
23 look at and consider with Snake Island.

24 That's about it.

25 (Audience claps.)

1 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. And hopefully when you
2 have a chance to look at the map and so forth, you can
3 pursue some of those through that vehicle.

4 Patrick McCarthy, Nokomis Civic Association.
5 MR. McCARTHY: I'll decline. They've expressed
6 the views of the community, quite eloquently, I might
7 say.

8 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. Stephen Koskey.
9 MR. KOSKEY: I just briefly want to say as a
10 person who frequents Snake Island, and I also do some
11 historic studies on Snake Island, that I also see the
12 erosion of the island taking about -- since 1995, since
13 I've been going out there -- since 1986, since I've
14 been going out there, I've seen about three or four
15 meters of island on the north end erode away and I've
16 seen about five meters of the western side erode away.
17 And I have some photo documentation to demonstrate
18 this.

19 And I'm all for what everybody said. I mean, I go
20 to Snake Island. I visit Snake Island because it's a
21 beautiful place. And I agree with everybody's
22 comments.

23 I also see this as an opportunity to do some
24 stabilization on the island and perpetuate public
25 access. The navigation district isn't in the business

1 consensus, but it's just to brainstorm ideas, so.
2 Go ahead.

3 MS. HERGENDOL: Yes, I am Heather Hergendol. And
4 just to talk about the public taking care of the
5 island, we, as Nokomis residents for the last 30 years,
6 have taken great care of the islands.

7 The island across from it is called Stingray
8 Island, or used to be. We adopted that and clean that
9 four times a year. When we do that island, we go to
10 Snake Island, excuse me, to Snake Island and clean that
11 four times a year.

12 We get all the children involved. It's a boy
13 scout project for my son. And I just wanted to let
14 everyone know that.

15 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.

16 The lady in the back here?

17 MS. COLTS: I'm Lynsbob Colts, and I live right
18 across from Snake Island.

19 And I was wondering, I would like to ask you a
20 question about when is the waterway going to be
21 dredged? Is there any chance that some of that
22 dredging right between Snake Island and Nokomis, some
23 of that fill might be put on this western coast?

24 Right now, practically once a week a barge or a
25 tug gets stuck right in front of the south -- the

1 of recreation. And that is unfortunate, but it's a
2 fact.

3 And what we do have here is an opportunity to --
4 these designs aren't necessarily written in stone. And
5 certainly, they're giving us an opportunity for public
6 comment to make it as much of our project as it is
7 their project.

8 And I think that we should take into
9 consideration some of this federal money that could be
10 to our benefit to help perpetuate our access to the
11 island in perpetuity. Right now, I see the island
12 shrinking, and shrinking, and shrinking.

13 Hello.

14 So if an acre has gone in the last 30 years and
15 there's only three acre -- there's only two acres left,
16 in the next 5, 10, 15 years, or any 100-year storm,
17 there's going to be less than a half an acre.

18 So I would like to look at some of the
19 opportunities and see what we have going here. And I'm
20 going to take an opportunity to look at some of these
21 and put some of my own designs up on the table. And I
22 think it would benefit all of us in Venice.

23 We have an opportunity here. And I would hate to
24 get this conflict of interest between them against us.
25 I mean, try and work together and maybe we can get the

1 Nokomis western shore there and has a time getting
2 away.

3 A lot of that sand that has eroded from the west
4 side of the island has gone right across. And at low
5 tide, you can just see, you know, how much sand is
6 there.

7 If that is taken out, couldn't it possibly be put
8 on the western side with something done to hold it over
9 there, and do this without having to bring it in from
10 someplace else?

11 MR. ANKERSON: I'll direct that over to the
12 professionals and --

13 MR. LISTOWSKI: I feel a little awkward responding
14 for the Corps when I'm surrounded by Corps. But I
15 guess they don't know because they're in a different
16 department or something.

17 But a few years ago, there was a project that was
18 all drawn up for the dredging that would wrap around
19 the island as it is, take care of the shoaling that was
20 affecting the residents on that landward side. But it
21 got stuck in the permitting process with the State.

22 The most current information I have is that that
23 process is underway. And it looks like the material
24 would be first destined for the beach.

25 But I've been pushing for the longest time to have

1 best design for the island and the people.

2 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you, Stephen.

3 (Audience claps.)

4 MR. ANKERSON: Frank -- Frank Ray Peacock.

5 MR. PEACOCK: No, my questions have been answered.

6 MR. ANKERSON: That's all. Does anyone else have
7 any comments or questions?

8 Yes, sir. Go ahead and identify your name.

9 MR. SHELDON: I did fill out a card. My name is
10 Dick Sheldon. I second almost everything that's been
11 said about leaving the island alone.

12 I would suggest that the Venice Chamber of
13 Commerce and possibly the Nokomis Area Civic
14 Association would be happy to volunteer to police the
15 island the way that people adopt highways and so forth.
16 And I think that should solve that problem. And leave
17 it alone.

18 (Audience claps.)

19 MR. ANKERSON: Before we get back into another
20 round of people who have already had comments, let's
21 get the people who haven't made a comment.

22 And again, we want to give you the opportunity to
23 spend as much time at the maps, and then we'll come
24 back and do a session where you can discuss what went
25 forward. The purpose here is not to derive a

1 that material where it came from, which is the
2 sloughing off of the island, to be brought back up into
3 the island footprint.

4 Which people talk about how big the island was. I
5 looked in my file yesterday just to make sure. And I
6 found five different references to how big Snake Island
7 is.

8 We won't really know until we do an ownership and
9 encumbrance report, where it goes back in history, and
10 that first day when it was first isolated from
11 Rattlesnake Island, or Turner Key, or whatever you want
12 to call it.

13 MS. COLTS: Well, my family bought the property
14 there before the Intracoastal came in. And I have
15 pictures of my dad's that shows the island and how it
16 was, you know, separated there.

17 And as a resident across from Snake Island, we
18 enjoy seeing people come over there as long as they act
19 in a manner that is recreational and not too noisy.
20 But it's very nice to see boaters come there.

21 And I want people to know that the residents that
22 live across the way are not opposed to your using the
23 island.

24 (Audience claps.)

25 MR. ANKERSON: Just to return to your question,

1 because it was phrased as a question, and that was can
2 the dredge spoil be used in the restoration process.
3 And I think the answer is that as Bruce said,
4 everything is on the table.

5 And the way to make sure that that's on the table,
6 in addition to the way you just did, is to suggest that
7 in the charrette drawing process back there, maybe some
8 ideas about how to use that dredge spoil on the
9 island.

10 MR. HASBROUCK: And keep in mind that concept
11 three is essentially that concept. Now, it doesn't
12 return those areas back to suitable for recreation.

13 But what we looked at on that one was a
14 combination of allowing for recreation, preventing
15 additional erosion from the island, but also providing,
16 which did I say first, ecological, then providing for
17 uplands -- or, you know, providing for boats,
18 essentially.

19 MR. ANKERSON: Any further comments? Yes, sir.

20 MR. WIZEMAN: If I could pop two quick questions.

21 MR. ANKERSON: Your name and --

22 MR. WIZEMAN: My name is Burt Wizeman. And who is
23 the non-federal sponsor? Is that the County?

24 MR. LISTOWSKI: That would be W. C. I. N. D.

25 MR. ANKERSON: West Coast Inland Navigation

1 instead looking at more of your emergent grasses stuck
2 in intertidal zone.

3 And then we do have ample documentation that that
4 is a viable science.

5 MR. ANKERSON: Any other comments or questions?

6 Great. Well, let's just go back over what we're
7 going to do now. I guess what we're going to do is
8 open this room even further.

9 And we've looked at three -- several different
10 ways of doing this. And I've had experience at
11 several. And what we're going to ask you to do is
12 self-select a table.

13 And if one table looks too crowded because you see
14 all your friends are around, go to another table. All
15 these ideas that have come up will be put down on
16 paper, the idea of adopting the island, and all that
17 sort of thing. Just get it down on paper, get it down
18 on paper, and we'll do our best to recapture that and
19 send it back to you.

20 So let's plan on 30 minutes or, say, 40 minutes,
21 whichever is -- we're ahead of schedule, and then we'll
22 reconvene.

23 (Break-out session held at this time, then
24 resuming full session.)

25 MR. ANKERSON: Let's get started.

1 District.

2 MR. WIZEMAN: And secondly, when they speak of
3 restoring, does restoring mean restoring to its
4 original state, or does it mean adding new ecosystems
5 that didn't exist previously?

6 MR. ANKERSON: Alberto.

7 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, that's -- restoring is kind
8 of -- it's kind of hard to restore something to the
9 natural state. It's just trying to create some new
10 ecosystem in the area.

11 MR. ANKERSON: I guess maybe one answer to that is
12 restoring might mean that this island was not there at
13 some point; is that correct? And that's --

14 MR. HASBROUCK: Yeah. The true essence of
15 ecological restoration, the definition is to place it
16 back the way it was.

17 Now, in some areas, spoil island was placed on top
18 of seagrasses. We do not believe that the science of
19 creating seagrass area is refined well enough to
20 propose something like that. So it becomes an
21 unfeasible alternative, therefore, it's not even really
22 looked at.

23 I mean, we'll address it. But we'll also document
24 the fact that seagrass restoration is not a very well
25 refined science.

1 So I have assigned individual group numbers.

2 I'll call the group number and ask that the reporter
3 come up and present that as clearly and concisely as
4 possible, because the court reporter is going to take
5 it down.

6 And if there's additional notes and so forth,
7 just make sure we have them and they're identified as
8 from that group, and we'll try to make some sense out
9 of all of them in our summaries.

10 One request before we get started is everybody who
11 wants to and who has picked up a blue form, fill that
12 out and return that to Jeannie or to Nora in the back
13 there.

14 Is there anybody who hasn't turned in a blue form
15 that has filled one out? There seems to be fewer blue
16 forms than people.

17 MR. GAUTHIER: Oh, no, here. I'm sorry.

18 MR. ANKERSON: There we go. You can't present
19 your alternative until you have turned in the blue
20 form.

21 (Laughs.)

22 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, let's get started with group
23 one. Let's hear what they have to say.

24 MR. BANNER: The first consensus that we all
25 arrived at was that if nothing is done, probably the

1 MR. ANKERSON: Anyone else who hasn't spoken that
2 would like to speak?

3 MR. GAUTHIER: I just had a quick question. You
4 talked about restoration being part of wildlife and
5 fishery habitat. Fishing around that island, as I do
6 quite frequently, I note the quality of the fishery
7 there.

8 Have there been any studies by your department,
9 or by West Coast Inland Navigation or the Corps of
10 Engineers, to show me that the fishing has declined,
11 other than due to pressure and other factors, due to
12 the deterioration of this island?

13 Because I can take you right there right now and
14 we could catch fish. So, I mean, if we're going to
15 establish a fishery habitat, it's already there.

16 MR. HASBROUCK: As far as any studies, I'm not
17 aware of any specific studies on fish population. But
18 there is extensive literature about the benefits of a
19 fisheries habitat for both mangroves and emergent
20 grasses, mostly for the nursery aspect and not for the
21 mature.

22 MR. GAUTHIER: But we can't restore the emergent
23 grasses, as you just said. So that's --

24 MR. HASBROUCK: That's the seagrasses, that would
25 be submerged grasses like the thalassia and halodule,

1 island will wash away in the foreseeable future.

2 MS. JINKS: Sir, your name? Sir, your name?

3 MR. BANNER: My name is Jeff Banner, B-a-n-n-e-r.

4 And I think the -- one thing that surprised me, and
5 maybe the rest of the group, was the perception that
6 anything done with the island would need to eliminate
7 public access. And I don't think that's the case at
8 all.

9 And -- so that the plan we came up with is one
10 that combined removal of exotics with shoreline
11 stabilization and good boating access. I think one
12 that best describes that is --

13 MAN IN AUDIENCE 1: That's covered up with number
14 four on the end.

15 MR. BANNER: Is this it?

16 Again, if you're not aware, exotic species, or
17 Australian pines, Brazilian peppers, are not good
18 habitat for the wildlife we all enjoy and associate
19 with Florida.

20 MR. ANKERSON: Keep the mike right --

21 MR. BANNER: Herons, and owls, whenever you have
22 are going to do better in the native trees.

23 So this model with a berm and shore -- and
24 stabilization around the island would allow boats to,
25 in a sense -- or essentially park here, and then people

1 could walk up onto the island.

2 And that -- I don't know. Does that basically say
3 what we want to say? Mike.

4 MIKE: Well, we were also talking about on the
5 eastern side of the island -- on the eastern side of
6 the island, where it looks like it's probably lower
7 energy and less erosion occurring, that if that's all
8 exotics now, if there aren't mangroves in there that
9 would preclude making that an access point, then that
10 might be a good access point.

11 And then on those ends, like the north and the
12 south end, where most of the erosion is occurring, that
13 some mechanical means of stabilization along with
14 mangroves could be put in there to help preserve the
15 land mass.

16 And then the upland areas could be stabilized in
17 the hammock. And then we would still have as much or
18 more boating access, plus we would stabilize the
19 island.

20 And I think that's the concept. Along with
21 everything Jeff said.

22 MR. BANNER: Look further and see if there's
23 anything I -- I think that's it. Thank you.

24 (Audience claps.)

25 MR. ANKERSON: One thing I might mention in terms

1 of this perception of either/or, recreation or
2 restoration, I believe -- most of you weren't here when
3 we had the first workshop to discuss all six sites.

4 And at that time, we brought somebody over from
5 Palm Beach County, which has already gone through this
6 entire process and completed at least one project, and
7 those are Little Maryon and Peanut Island; is that
8 right?

9 MR. HASBROUCK: (Indicating two.)

10 MR. ANKERSON: And those, I think, are up on the
11 web site as well. I mean, aren't the designs for this?

12 MS. JINKS: They're links.

13 MR. HASBROUCK: They're links.

14 MS. JINKS: Links.

15 MR. ANKERSON: Yeah, they're links. So you can
16 get an idea. They, of course, put a considerable
17 amount of effort into one of those islands and did
18 quite a bit of both, restoration and recreation.

19 So that doesn't mean that you need to follow that
20 model in either way. But it's worth looking at to see
21 exactly where this has been done elsewhere.

22 Group number two.

23 MR. CLINCH: Hello. My name is Jim Clinch, and we
24 are group number two.

25 One of the things that ought to strike here in the

1 hearts of citizens of small communities anywhere is
2 when somebody shows up and says I'm from the government
3 and I'm here to help.

4 And if they show up with consultants from a major
5 university, you've really got to worry.

6 MR. HASBROUCK: Must be a Seminole.

7 MR. CLINCH: No.

8 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: But there are some here.

9 MR. CLINCH: Yeah, there is a Seminole or two
10 here.

11 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Oh, yeah.

12 MR. CLINCH: But let's cut right to the chase
13 here. First of all, we recognize that this particular
14 group does not have the ability to effect any change
15 whatsoever regarding the Midnight Pass situation.

16 But those of us who live here and who have lived
17 here for a long time, and I've been going to Snake
18 Island since it was created in 1967, realize that the
19 erosion only began in earnest in the 1980s, once
20 Midnight Pass was closed.

21 If you were to look at the aerial photographs and
22 actually chart the history of the erosion, you would
23 find that the majority of it started, in really in
24 earnest, in the 1980s when Midnight Pass closed.

25 Just makes sense. You've got millions of gallons

1 of water with nowhere to go. It's all coming right
2 down here on the west side of this island, and that's
3 what's eating this away.

4 So anything we do, short of fixing the actual
5 cause of the problem, is likely to be a band-aid
6 approach.

7 Now, stabilizing the western shore, we would go
8 along with that. We could take this portion of the
9 island here and extend it out with fill perhaps from
10 the channels, create some type of a stabilization
11 barricade to create something like that nursery
12 ecosystem in here that would help all of us who like to
13 fish. That's great.

14 You can't beach a boat on this side of the island,
15 anyway, it's too shallow. So that would be a good
16 place to do that.

17 Keep the island as an upland. This is not a
18 mangrove island. It has never been a mangrove island.
19 This island is three to seven feet above the mean sea
20 level.

21 You have some mangroves down here only because
22 this is a little low-lying area on the corner of the
23 island, there are some mangroves that managed to take
24 root.

25 So if you have to do something to the main body of

1 the island, and we're not really convinced you do, but
2 if you do want to do something to it, plant some upland
3 varieties, some species, whether they be sea grapes, or
4 cedars, or whatever.

5 The concern that we have, and this is our
6 principal and paramount concern, and, you know, you
7 want to talk about a consensus in the room, I think you
8 pretty much have one, is to maintain an unlimited
9 public access now and in the future to all of these
10 beaches around this side of the island and up along
11 here.

12 The question that we have is if we create an
13 upland habitat in the middle of the island, we plant
14 native species, birds begin to nest there, perhaps some
15 endangered species begin to nest there, how long before
16 somebody says, well, wait a minute, this is an
17 endangered species in this habitat, all you boaters go
18 away, you're bothering the birds.

19 So that's why I say we're not thoroughly convinced
20 that we want anything done to the island portion of the
21 island, unless there is some guarantee that public
22 access is going to be maintained throughout the rest of
23 this, and we're not going to have somebody say there's
24 an endangered sparrow nesting here, and so no boaters
25 can beach their boats anymore. That's something that

1 we're concerned about.

2 And finally, no facilities, no docks, no picnic
3 tables, nothing that requires state, county, local,
4 federal maintenance or dollars of any kind.

5 The people that go there go there because there's
6 none of that stuff there. If they wanted that stuff,
7 they would go to the many other parks in Sarasota
8 County where they can get those kind of facilities.

9 So I think that sums up our position. Anything I
10 left out, folks?

11 MR. OLSON: No. Good job.

12 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Good job, Mr. Clinch.

13 MR. ANKERSON: Group number three.

14 MS. LEOPOLD: Hi, my name is Lenore Leopold. And
15 we had a lot of the same concepts and ideas as
16 everybody has else has out there. I have a handy-dandy
17 little diagram here of the way we think the island
18 should be. If I can get it the right way.

19 Okay. We basically used this -- well -- our
20 picture was a little smaller. Basically used this
21 picture, and what we did with it was kept the idea of
22 keeping this side of the island completely the same
23 (indicating), and not doing anything to it.

24 One of the beauties of these sides of the island,
25 first of all, they're not broken, don't fix them.

1 Second of all, this is a deep water beach over here.
2 For people who go to the island and have bigger boats,
3 this is the side of the island that you can get a
4 30-foot boat beached on, you just run your bow line,
5 and you've got plenty of water behind you, so you're
6 not going to run your procs up into the sand, and can
7 get back off that island. That's the beauty of that
8 side.

9 This side of the island is a little bit shallower
10 where you couldn't get in a boat that big, but you
11 could still get in with a decent boat, with a decent
12 size vessel.

13 This side of the island, as Jim said, is very
14 shallow, you can't beach in here anyhow. If you've got
15 a small boat, you can anchor it there, you can get up
16 and walk around.

17 This side of the island also tends to be
18 relatively rocky on the bottom. These are both sand
19 beaches over here. I would kind of guess that this is
20 rocky spoil from the dredging that was placed onto the
21 island when it was cut.

22 So the idea we had was just to extend this island
23 this way. Not doing the cove. There's too much wave
24 action on that side of the island to safely get your
25 boat in there anyhow, because it tends to get rough,

1 boats over on this side of the island.

2 So there's a lot of people that use that boat on
3 any given weekend that the weather's decent. So
4 there's a lot of people that enjoy it just the way it
5 is.

6 Again, the concept is pretty much leave the island
7 alone. Possibly renourishing this point with some fill
8 from somewhere, from the dredging or from whatever.

9 Putting mangroves out here if we need to put them
10 out there, if that's going to help stabilize that and
11 keep the fill there.

12 But that's pretty much it. Anything I missed,
13 anybody in my group? That was it? Okay.

14 MR. ANKERSON: I would ask that if you're willing
15 to part with your notes, and your drawings, and so
16 forth, we would love to have them. And we would also
17 like to make sure they're marked by the group, so we
18 can -- in the event there's something -- you did not
19 articulate something verbally, then we can find it in
20 your written comments as well.

21 I think we're on group four now?

22 MR. WILSON: (Nods head affirmatively.)

23 I can just get up here and say ditto. I'm Bill
24 Wilson. I think there's a real consensus, if anybody is
25 listening in this room. We had the same idea.

1 when you can deal with -- you know, sometimes when it
2 starts blowing out of the west, you can get two to
3 three footers off the point of that island.

4 If you're going to make an anchorage for a boat,
5 make it safe to be there. So that's not a practical
6 place to do that. Plus if it's shoaling there and
7 getting shallow anyhow, what's going to maintain that.
8 I mean, then you're dealing with a maintenance problem.
9 Okay?

10 Some of the concerns that we had were the Heron
11 habitats in the pines that are there now. They are
12 nesting there.

13 The -- if -- these are in no particular order, by
14 the way.

15 If the island was scraped to provide some of these
16 low marsh areas and mangroves, what's to prevent the
17 island from completely washing away in the event of a
18 hurricane or a big storm.

19 I mean, if you take it down a couple feet, or
20 however many feet you would knock it down, and you
21 start getting huge waves coming through there, or huge
22 tidal floods or whatever, what's to prevent it from
23 just completely going away and all you're left with is
24 a little tiny upland enhancement.

25 Let's see. No real problem with trying to

1 Big thing we came up, and you've heard it before,
2 we don't want you to spend money on improvements. We
3 don't want benches, and boardwalks, and those types of
4 things. There are lots of other places we can go and
5 use those.

6 We do want to stabilize that side. There again,
7 over here, it's very shallow, it's very rocky. Anybody
8 who has been out there, you don't pull your boat up in
9 there unless you want to get out and scrape barnacles
10 off the bottom or something.

11 What we would like to do, Chuck, we would like to
12 help you with that -- getting that priority of taking
13 that sand. We spent 15 million dollars, we put sand
14 out on the beach, and it's a beautiful beach, now we
15 need to put it somewhere else.

16 We would love to support you in trying to reclaim

17 that sand and put it back up on the west side. That
18 would still allow for people to be able to sit there --
19 MR. LISTOWSKI: (Claps.)

20 MR. WILSON: -- and look out the pass and see the
21 sun go down and enjoy that.

22 But this doesn't have to be a boat area. There is
23 a marker right over here and there's a marker right
24 over here. And both sides of that marker is where the
25 deep water starts, and that's where we all pull our

1 maintain or create an upland area up there was our
2 general consensus. Specifically getting rid of the
3 pepper trees and try and do something with that area.

4 But I think it was basically just leaving that
5 island -- or leaving the rest of the island alone,
6 dealing with that upland area, if you want to try and
7 plant some native species up in that area, and leaving
8 the rest of it, and maybe doing it over time, or doing
9 it some sort of a phased approach with that.

10 Let's see, what else do we have.

11 Oh, one of our concerns also was when -- you've
12 got to worry when government says they're going to take
13 over maintenance of something. It pretty much means
14 people are not allowed anymore.

15 Another comment was absolutely no structures on
16 the island. And I think we would ditch the no picnic
17 tables, no nothing over there. That's the way the
18 people that go over there like it. You know, we bring
19 what we need and that's it.

20 There's a lot of boats on the island. You know,
21 we were coming up with estimates of, you know, on a
22 normal day, four to five boats over here, sometimes as
23 many as 15 on this point. You know, you'll end up with
24 15, 20, sometimes more boats out here on a really nice
25 day. And then anywhere from, you know, five to six

1 boats in. So from marker to marker, leave it alone,
2 let the boats go in there.

3 If you're going to replace any of the non-natives,
4 we didn't mind it being done, but we don't want you to
5 go in there and scrape the island off. There's no
6 point in doing that.

7 Do it in some kind of phases, plant a few at a
8 time, see how they go. When they get stabilized, put
9 some more in. Do it over a period of time.

10 There's no way to get out there and water it.
11 There's no way you've got to get out there and maintain
12 it if you go out and take it all off of there. It's
13 going to wash away, because there's nothing there to
14 preserve it. So do it over a period of time.

15 And what else did we have.

16 Yeah, don't scrape the island. Oh, and the last
17 thing, and we know you can't do it again, but let's
18 work all we can, I don't know if Shannon's gone, but
19 let's reopen Midnight Pass, because all of us who have
20 lived here all our lives, we saw it happen, we know
21 what happened, we don't have to spend two million
22 dollars to figure it out. We saw it happen.

23 So let's try to support reopening Midnight Pass,
24 and that will also help stabilize Snake Island. And
25 that's it.

1 (Audience claps.)
 2 MR. ANKERSON: Okay. One last group. And once
 3 this group is finished, I'll open -- give you an
 4 opportunity to have any comments on any of the groups'
 5 questions, and then we'll close by just reiterating
 6 what the schedule is from here and by reminding you
 7 that there is additional opportunities to comment.
 8 MR. McCARTHY: My name is Patrick McCarthy.
 9 Basically, again, ditto. Although we do have a couple
 10 things I'll add.
 11 Put the sand over here, obviously, where we've
 12 lost the sand. We need to do that.
 13 The large boats, between the markers to the
 14 west -- to the east of the markers, that half the
 15 island needs to be definitely left alone. If you want
 16 to put sand up there, it's a shallow area, it's a great
 17 spot in the summer. When the water's warm, you can
 18 wade up to the island, wade, you know, float around in
 19 the area. It's a great spot.
 20 Even if -- you can get canoes and kayaks up there.
 21 It's not a place for big boats. It would be great to
 22 have sand there. We don't want to see our island
 23 disappear, but we don't want radical changes.
 24 I basically said the same thing here, or my group,
 25 me and one other fellow. Don't strip the island. If

1 you're going to replace exotics, do it in stages.
 2 I don't see what the problem is with Australian
 3 pines, personally. I know that somebody around here is
 4 going around poisoning them. I think at New Pass, at
 5 the bait shop up there, all the Australian pines are
 6 dead now. We call them eco terrorists, I believe.
 7 I don't know what they're trying to accomplish.
 8 A lot of wildlife does live in those Australian pines.
 9 A lot of nesting birds. They provide a lot of shade.
 10 You can't put a 20-foot-tall tree up in six months. It
 11 takes a long time.
 12 So you've got to do this, as far as vegetation, it
 13 has to be done in stages. It's -- and a gradual
 14 process. And I know ya'll don't want to hear that.
 15 Okay. And I'm going to regenerate Midnight Pass.
 16 Midnight Pass closing has caused the erosion problem.
 17 If Midnight Pass was open, the island would erode like
 18 any other coastland does, it would gain sand, it would
 19 lose sand, depending on weather conditions. And in the
 20 long run, it's basically a stable thing.
 21 The photographic evidence is there. I wish we had
 22 more pictures year to year there, because it is an
 23 eight-year span between those pictures. But in the
 24 eight years is when Midnight Pass closed.
 25 Basically, recover the lost acreage and stabilize

1 the shoreline areas most susceptible to erosion while
 2 still maintaining boater and public access.
 3 And then somebody else that walked into the table,
 4 the big question about liability. Mr. Listowski here
 5 is not in the business of running public parks. Mr.
 6 Listowski is in the business of maintaining our
 7 waterways. Correct?
 8 MR. LISTOWSKI: Absolutely. Hallelujah.
 9 MR. McCARTHY: All right. Sarasota County has a
 10 very spectacular and fantastic parks and recreation
 11 department. And as far as they're concerned, liability
 12 is a non-issue. It's not an issue.
 13 It was said to me over the course of our
 14 discussions this past couple weeks, you know, if you're
 15 going to restore Snake Island, the only way to really
 16 do it is hook it back up to Rattlesnake Island. Now
 17 you've restored it to the way it was.
 18 Well, that's not practical. We've got the
 19 Intracoastal Waterway going right through the middle of
 20 them.
 21 But you can restore Snake Island to the ownership
 22 that it had prior. And let the County have it,
 23 maintain it as a low-impact environmental park, and do
 24 all these things we're asking for, which is basically
 25 we're not asking for anything.

1 We just want to be able to use the island the way
 2 we've used it for the last 31 years. Unfortunately,
 3 I've only been here for ten of those years. But, you
 4 know, I feel for these -- I know a lot of these people
 5 have been here all their lives.
 6 So that's the consensus of group number five.
 7 Thank you.
 8 (Audience claps.)
 9 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, just to remind you about the
 10 comment process, any additional written comments that
 11 you have, send them to the Corps of Engineers. The
 12 comment period from this workshop will be open for ten
 13 days before we begin the process of summarizing all of
 14 this information. And we'll provide that back to you
 15 in a summary form.
 16 Beyond that, you know, as Bruce explained earlier,
 17 there's a process that goes forward. That process will
 18 be fully participatory, and you will, by virtue of
 19 being here, be automatically noticed of public meetings
 20 that occur in the meantime.
 21 As information becomes available, it will go up on
 22 the web site. And that, to me, is a fantastic resource
 23 that I would encourage you to take advantage of.
 24 Does anyone want to have -- I see some hands going
 25 up. Does anyone want to comment on any of this I had

1 mentioned?
 2 MS. LEOPOLD: A quick question. As far as getting
 3 comments to the Corps -- as far as getting comments to
 4 the Corps of Engineers, is there an e-mail address? Do
 5 you have a web site?
 6 MS. JINKS: No, I can provide you with a card that
 7 gives my e-mail address, or you can either -- may I
 8 borrow this for just one second?
 9 This right here, if you write your comment on this
 10 paper here, you fold it in half, it has the address,
 11 and it's made to my attention, so I can --
 12 MS. LEOPOLD: Okay. Actually, I am a lot quicker
 13 in e-mail than I am when I actually write --
 14 MS. JINKS: Okay.
 15 MR. ANKERSON: That's something we have discussed
 16 doing, though, is linking comments directly from the
 17 web site.
 18 MS. LEOPOLD: One further -- just another
 19 different -- part of that.
 20 MR. ANKERSON: Sure.
 21 MS. LEOPOLD: Are there other people that we
 22 should send any correspondence or comments to other
 23 than the Corps of Engineers?
 24 MR. ANKERSON: To the extent that you want to, I
 25 suppose any of the people who are involved in the

1 process, W. C. I. N. D., Sarasota County, so forth.
 2 MS. LEOPOLD: All right, thank you.
 3 MR. ANKERSON: Yes, sir.
 4 MR. McCARTHY: Okay. Patrick McCarthy again. I
 5 would like to -- the web site's great. And one of the
 6 problems going into this meeting tonight was the web
 7 site was inaccurate. There are several inaccuracies
 8 there.
 9 Are we going to correct those inaccuracies on the
 10 web site? I'm specifically talking about the existing
 11 conditions and the alleged seven acres that Snake
 12 Island never was. It's probably right at the top of
 13 the page, and it's incorrect information.
 14 Is this going to be updated so that people don't
 15 freak out when they get on the web site?
 16 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes. The two that I've heard you
 17 say are the identification to the beach or the
 18 misidentification of that. I can tell you that we'll
 19 probably take that and call it unconsolidated sands,
 20 more accurate term.
 21 And the acreage, we will probably, if we don't
 22 include some kind of graphic of this, we will at least
 23 correct the seven-acre --
 24 MR. McCARTHY: Call it three and a half. Because
 25 that's -- I'm just speaking for my own personal self,

1 when I first looked at that web site, I was
 2 flabbergasted, because I knew the information wasn't
 3 correct. And everybody else is looking at it.
 4 And, you know, when you see something on the web
 5 from the Army Corps of Engineers, you have to know that
 6 it is accurate information and that you're seeing
 7 accurate information.
 8 And if you've got to straighten out -- I think
 9 it's a great web site. I mean, we looked at all kinds
 10 of stuff. Other than that, I think it's a great web
 11 site.
 12 MR. HASBROUCK: What we will do is we will place
 13 the acreage with respect to the date. Because if you
 14 look back in the historical, it was at one point hooked
 15 up to Rattlesnake.
 16 MR. OLSON: Right. But the erosion didn't take it
 17 away.
 18 MR. McCARTHY: Erosion didn't do that, a dredge
 19 did.
 20 MR. HASBROUCK: Right. That's what I'm saying, as
 21 long as we state the date and the acreage, and that's
 22 as accurate --
 23 MR. McCARTHY: Yeah, I think maybe that's where
 24 the confusion is. If you hooked -- if you just put a
 25 little -- a line through where you cut it off, which --

1 MR. GAUTHIER: Here's an accurate photograph of
 2 Rattlesnake Key before it was dredged. The top and
 3 then the bottom after the dredge, it shows the
 4 development of Snake Island. Turner Key comes --
 5 MR. LISTOWSKI: As we can see, I don't know that
 6 we're going to resolve the acreage issue completely.
 7 Because like I said before, I got five different
 8 references.
 9 And one of the things is that it's probably
 10 taking into account -- some of it is taking into
 11 account the dredge footprint as part of the island.
 12 But we really need to establish, you know, what it
 13 really was right after it was cut.
 14 MR. McCARTHY: Right.
 15 MR. LISTOWSKI: Because if we're going to try to
 16 reclaim any land, and it happens to be four acres
 17 instead of three and a half, we want to try to shoot
 18 for the four acres.
 19 MR. McCARTHY: You have to understand, when people
 20 saw this --
 21 MR. LISTOWSKI: Oh, yeah. Well, see, the county
 22 records show 7.1. So, see, everything has to be
 23 amended.
 24 MR. McCARTHY: Well, as long as it's all looked
 25 at, I think --

1 MR. LISTOWSKI: Yeah.
 2 MR. McCARTHY: -- everybody will be happy. It'll
 3 reflect the changes, I'll be a happy person.
 4 MR. ANKERSON: I guess the answer there is to
 5 provide the reference from which the acreage came from,
 6 and let it speak for itself.
 7 Yes, sir.
 8 MS. JENKS: I think this gentleman.
 9 MR. ANKERSON: Oh, I'm sorry.
 10 MR. SHELDON: I sort of get the impression that
 11 regardless of what the people say here, the process
 12 goes on, and on, and on: is that right?
 13 MR. HASBROUCK: No, I would not say regardless. I
 14 would say in coordination with. No, we've had good
 15 input tonight. I think we've reached a consensus of
 16 what this audience is looking for, and I think that
 17 will be a part of the process.
 18 And I would differ with you on the word
 19 regardless.
 20 MR. SHELDON: Repeat that. In other words, I see
 21 the process going on until -- the general consensus
 22 here is probably negate. Is that possible?
 23 MR. LISTOWSKI: No, I think the process goes on
 24 until the people that are charged with making policy
 25 make a decision.

1 MR. SHELDON: And who are those people? Those are
 2 the people we really need to get to; right? We get to
 3 it through you; right?
 4 MR. LISTOWSKI: Well, we have a few people sitting
 5 in the back row there.
 6 MR. ANKERSON: Let's move on. I think -- my
 7 colleague Richard just reminded me of something, and it
 8 was probably triggered by the fact that you were
 9 opening up an old magazine and showing pictures, is
 10 that if you have data, and data is loosely translated
 11 into any information that may be useful, please,
 12 provide it. Give us a reference or copies.
 13 I mean, if it's an aerial photo, you can scan it
 14 and get it up on the web, too. And there's all those
 15 opportunities. So there's anecdotal information about
 16 historical trends and so forth that can all be factored
 17 in usefully.
 18 MR. COTTRELL: Tom Cottrell. I am probably one of
 19 the shortest-term people here. I just moved down a few
 20 months ago. My wife and I purchased the Gadby Boat
 21 Club at Fisherman's Wharf.
 22 First of all, I would like to thank our panelists
 23 and everybody here for taking their time, for giving us
 24 this opportunity to at least let our thoughts be known.
 25 And do hope that you do take to heart all the input

1 that you have received. And I -- I want to believe
 2 that you will.
 3 I just wanted to make a comment, as far as like I
 4 said, I own a boat rental. And you've heard a lot of
 5 comments from people here, locals, that use the Snake
 6 Island and the facilities we have here.
 7 But I am in a position to hear from people from
 8 all over the country, and not only that, but all over
 9 the world. And many of them that rent my boats
 10 frequent Snake Island.
 11 And over, and over, and over again I hear comments
 12 about what a wonderful, natural, beautiful place it is,
 13 and how much they enjoy coming back year after year,
 14 and particularly to visit Snake Island for that very
 15 reason.
 16 (Phone rings.) My wife's calling.
 17 The only other thing I would take --
 18 MR. ANKERSON: Why don't you put her on.
 19 MR. COTTRELL: The only other thing I would take
 20 an issue is many of you guys talked about how you can't
 21 get a boat up on this side? Believe me, my renters
 22 have proved you can get a boat up there. And I've got
 23 the props to prove it.
 24 MR. HASBROUCK: The question is do they get them
 25 back off?

1 MR. COTTRELL: No.
 2 MR. ANKERSON: A couple more.
 3 MR. GAUTHIER: I just had one question in respect
 4 to what you said earlier. You said you would take into
 5 consideration the comments of this audience.
 6 How much weight do we carry, being the locals
 7 here, considering that this is a project for you that
 8 contains six islands, the next closest one being almost
 9 14 miles up in another part of the waterway?
 10 I just would like to say that the people that you
 11 have here concerning this one project and one part of
 12 this project, Snake Island, represent the voices of the
 13 people who live in the communities that surround this
 14 area and who probably are more important, and if we
 15 haven't made all of the meetings, it's because we want
 16 to focus our attention on our backyard. The people in
 17 Sarasota can focus their attention on Skiers' Island,
 18 that's their grounds.
 19 But please, when you do weigh the -- the -- the
 20 voices that you hear, know that this audience should
 21 weigh heavily on your decisions considering Snake
 22 Island and not those that you hear up in Sarasota that
 23 want to develop the islands or whatever they might want
 24 to do up there.
 25 These are the local voices. And we expect to

1 carry a little more weight concerning a project of
 2 Snake Island.
 3 MR. HASBROUCK: We will look at each one island by
 4 island. But I can assure each and every one here the
 5 reason we are here is for that very reason.
 6 MR. GAUTHIER: Thank you.
 7 MR. HASBROUCK: We didn't want to have it in
 8 Tampa. We didn't want to have it in Sarasota. This is
 9 a Venice issue, we felt like we should be in Venice and
 10 have this meeting.
 11 MR. GAUTHIER: And we appreciate that.
 12 (Audience claps.)
 13 MR. ANKERSON: Yes, ma'am.
 14 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: I would like to suggest to
 15 everyone here who is interested in Midnight Pass that
 16 they let the Nokomis Area Civic Association know of
 17 their interest. If we get enough people interested in
 18 doing this, NACA will stand behind you and make a
 19 campaign.
 20 I think the county commissioners are pretty much
 21 aware of what happens when NACA gets behind an
 22 activity. Most of the rest of you probably are, too.
 23 You know what we did about the jail situation and a few
 24 of the other things.
 25 The Midnight Pass thing has been just sloshing

1 STATE OF FLORIDA)
 2 COUNTY OF SARASOTA)
 3 I, NANCY E. PAULSEN, Registered Professional
 4 Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did
 5 stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that
 6 the transcript is a true and complete record of my
 7 stenographic notes.
 8 Dated this 14th day of February, 2000.
 9
 10
 11
 12 _____
 13 NANCY E. PAULSEN, RPR
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1 around in shallow water. We need to get something
 2 really going about this. We have a president at this
 3 time who is willing to make a concerted effort. Even
 4 if he doesn't have any particular personal interest in
 5 it, he goes -- he gets behind it 100 percent.
 6 If you're interested in Midnight Pass, let NACA
 7 know. Our post office box is 1458, or you can send it
 8 to me when you send in your dues. The dues notice is
 9 in every newsletter. You can get free newsletters at
 10 Captain Eddie's Restaurant and a few other places
 11 around town.
 12 So be sure you make your voice heard. Write a
 13 letter. For heaven sakes, write a letter. Here we
 14 have the Army Corps of Engineers' address right in our
 15 hand. Let them know also.
 16 Be sure you let the Nokomis Area Civic Association
 17 know if you have a project of that nature that really
 18 needs the community to stand behind it. And that's
 19 what we need for Midnight Pass.
 20 (Audience claps.)
 21 MR. McCARTHY: And again, my name is Patrick
 22 McCarthy, and I am the waterway committee chairman for
 23 NACA. So you can address your concerns to me.
 24 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, one last call for blue forms.
 25 Okay, thank you very much.

1 (Thereupon, this hearing was concluded at
 2 approximately 9:18 p.m.)
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3 U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PUBLIC WORKSHOP
4 Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration
5 Feasibility Study

6 Panel: Tom Ankerson, University of Florida,
7 Center for Governmental
8 Responsibilities
9 Alberto Gonzalez, U.S. Army Corps of
10 Engineers
11 Bruce Hasbrouck, HDR Engineering, Inc.
12 Tiphonie Jinks, U. S. Army Corps of
13 Engineers

14 Eric Sutton, Sarasota County
15 REPORTED BY: NANCY E. BRUIN PAULSEN
16 Registered Professional Reporter
17 Notary Public
18 State of Florida at Large

19 DATE: February 2, 2000
20 Commencing at 7:04 p.m.

21 PLACE: Pine View School
22 1 Python Place
23 Osprey, Florida
24
25

1 MR. ANKERSON: Why don't we get started so we can
2 get on to the fun part.

3 I want to go ahead and remind everybody about the
4 forms that we have available that we would like you to
5 fill out. And in this case, there are two forms, a
6 green one and a white one to reflect the different
7 spoil areas that we'll be discussing this evening. And
8 we appreciate your comments on those.

9 There is also a question/comment sheet which you
10 are -- can feel free to fill out if you would rather
11 not engage in public speaking opportunities this
12 evening. Those questions and comments will still be
13 considered and addressed regardless.

14 And then if you're interested in speaking this
15 evening, there are some cards there. And what we'll do
16 is once we're through with the presentations to orient
17 you to the project here, then I will take those cards
18 individually, one at a time, in order to give you an
19 opportunity to speak. And once everyone's had an
20 opportunity to speak, time permitting, we'll go ahead
21 and open the floor for some questions.

22 My name is Tom Ankeron, I'm from the University
23 of Florida, the Center for Governmental Responsibility.
24 It's a public policy and research institution
25 affiliated with the College of Law there.

1 This is my colleague, Richard Hamann, here. We're
2 acting as the facilitators for this process. This
3 process being an effort to examine the feasibility of
4 restoring six different spoil sites in Sarasota Bay.

5 We have with us Alberto Gonzalez with the U. S.
6 Army Corps of Engineers, which is the federal sponsor
7 for this project, or this feasibility study, I should
8 say.

9 Dr. Bruce Hasbrouck from H. D. R., the Corps'
10 consultant in the project. Then a number of other H.
11 D. R. folks here who I'll acknowledge. Jeannie
12 Costare, an environmental planner. Jesus Merly, who is
13 an environmental engineer. And Lenore Hockley, who is a
14 civil engineer. And they'll be working with us,
15 particularly as we get into the interactive portion of
16 this.

17 As you can see, there are some layout tables in
18 the back over in the corner there. And at the end of
19 the evening, we're going to ask you to help us, and
20 I'll work through this process, this design process, in
21 order to get you to look at the maps, to get you to
22 make some -- make -- tell us what you would like to see
23 these sites look like when and if they were restored.

24 Let me walk you through the agenda just so we'll
25 have an understanding of where we're going and you'll

1 understand the public participation process here.

2 Once I'm through with this part of the
3 introduction here, Bruce will go through the status of
4 the project for the spoil sites, which are Big Edwards
5 Island, Skiers' Island, and then Bird Colony Islands.

6 He'll provide you -- let you know where we are in
7 the process; that is, in this planning process; that
8 is, determining the feasibility of the restoration
9 project here.

10 And he will also describe for you some design
11 considerations that were taken into account in
12 developing some concepts. And we would emphasize the
13 word concepts here. Some concepts for you to take off
14 from, is the best way to say that.

15 These are not anything that is written in stone.
16 This is all a completely open process. And the idea is
17 just to provide a starting point to get some sense of
18 what you would like to see.

19 And again, the reminder, which Bruce will remind
20 you, is no action remains an alternative. I'll explain
21 the process by which decision making is made as we go
22 forward in this public process.

23 At that point, we'll open the floor for public
24 discussion. And we'll do that in the format that I
25 suggested, which means that I'll take these cards and

1 call your name, and you can feel free to speak.

2 We would ask you to keep your comments to a
3 reasonable time, two to three minutes. If somebody has
4 said something that echoes what you would say, if you
5 could, ratify that, repeat it, but not completely
6 repeat it, something like that, so that we can keep the
7 process moving along in that period of time. Once
8 that's over, we'll open for further questions and
9 discussion on a raising-of-the-hands basis.

10 We would like to leave, because we have a bit more
11 complicated than last night, for those of you who were
12 also here last night working with Snake Island, we
13 would like to leave a bit more time for this design
14 process at the end of the evening, because we have two
15 sets of islands to deal with.

16 And once that public discussion is over, we'll
17 break you out into these break-out groups, and we'll
18 spend 40 minutes, I think is probably a reasonable
19 amount of time, for you to sit around the table with
20 your colleagues there in the audience and pour over the
21 maps and provide the kind of input that's being sought
22 here.

23 And at that point, we'll ask you to articulate
24 those and articulate them with the help of the design
25 professionals, who will be the folks from H. D. R.,

1 will assist you with any of the engineering or any of
2 the ecological information that might be useful to you,
3 with the help of a host, who will be Richard Hamann and
4 myself, Jodi Brooks is one of our students who is here
5 helping out, and a couple others of us.

6 And we'll try and have you bring those ideas,
7 those concepts to a conclusion among the group. There
8 doesn't need to be a consensus, it's just a way of
9 brainstorming. If there is, that's fine.

10 And then we'll bring you all back for a final
11 plenary session, and each group will come forward and
12 present the ideas that were discussed, the design
13 concepts and so forth that were discussed during
14 that -- during the break-out sessions.

15 And then if there aren't any -- if there is
16 further comment, we'll take that. And then we'll call
17 it an evening and let you know where we're going from
18 here with that.

19 So that's the process. I'm going to turn it over
20 to Bruce now to go ahead and talk about the specifics
21 of the islands and so forth.

22 And again, I would ask that you wait until he's
23 finished talking, hold your questions, and when he's
24 done, we'll open it up for questions. So thank you
25 very much.

1 Again, there are some forms there. We would
2 really like to have you fill them out. We will get
3 those into consideration.

4 We'll be summarizing, my colleague Jodi, and
5 Richard, and myself will be summarizing this
6 information and feeding it back to you, assuming that
7 you've given us your name, and address, and phone
8 number, and are interested in receiving the summary,
9 we'll do that as well. And you'll get that shortly.

10 Basically the idea is that once this period is
11 over, there will be ten days to receive additional
12 comments, then we'll begin our summary process and give
13 you back that information. And Bruce will go over what
14 the process is from there forward.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Tom.

17 One other person I would like to introduce is
18 Tiphonie Jinks. She's trying to hide. She's the study
19 project manager with U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

20 MR. GONZALEZ: And Chuck.

21 MR. HASBROUCK: And Chuck Litowski is our
22 non-federal sponsor from the West Coast Inland
23 Navigational District, and he had another commitment
24 tonight and was not able to be here.

25 All right, status of the project. Essentially, we

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1 have completed the survey of the islands. We had the
2 survey team out there. Some of you people may have
3 seen where they were doing some cut lines to be able
4 to -- for line of sight, to be able to collect their
5 data.

6 We have developed topographic maps from those
7 survey data. And then we've had a geotechnical team
8 out doing soil borings to identify the types of
9 materials that are out on each island.

10 Now, keep in mind that this is a feasibility
11 study. And our target goal essentially is concepts.
12 This is not a design study. Should these islands be
13 shown feasible for work, the next phase would include
14 more details, data collection, as far as survey and the
15 geotechnical investigations.

16 The survey is essentially to help us understand
17 the elevations within these islands, whether or not we
18 have 18 feet of material on top of them or three feet
19 of material. And that helps us analyze the feasibility
20 from a cost perspective.

21 And if we were looking at grading these islands,
22 say, to a mangrove elevation, we would have an idea how
23 many cubic yards of material would need to be removed
24 and can place a cost consideration to that.

25 Also, of course, data collection has included a

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1 issues, water quality, wildlife, wetlands, threatened
2 and endangered species, human environment, navigation.
3 There is a whole list of things that we will assess the
4 alternatives for those impacts.

5 So what this document does is documents those,
6 then we go through the alternatives analysis in the
7 writing to identify in the preferred alternative why
8 that was selected.

9 This document will be prepared at the conclusion
10 of our public workshops tomorrow night. And probably
11 will be available for review early summer.

12 That has to go to the federal agencies that are
13 involved, as well as we will have a copy of that on the
14 web page and in the libraries. This is something you
15 can go look at to make sure that you're comfortable
16 with what we're proposing.

17 As that's going through the process of review and
18 we come up with a final alternative, we will have one
19 final workshop to present that preferred alternative
20 and to be able to collect feedback from the public on
21 that.

22 Okay, for those of you that don't know, and, of
23 course, for those that do, we are looking at five
24 islands, Big Edwards, Skiers' Island, Jim Neville
25 Preserve, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, Palmer Point,

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1 lot of existing information regarding water, both water
2 quality around the islands as well as circulation
3 patterns within the bay.

4 And then we have collected some data regarding
5 archeological issues, threatened and endangered
6 species, and then not included in threatened and
7 endangered -- well, they're part of threatened and
8 endangered, but we separated also the bird colonies and
9 identified how many nesting birds of what type are on
10 each island. And Audubon has been very gracious in
11 providing us that information.

12 I'll go ahead and give you a little bit of update
13 on the status as far as where we go from here. Once we
14 have these public workshops, we will take the different
15 design concepts that have been developed, both by our
16 design team as well as input we have gotten back from
17 the public.

18 We will do an alternative analysis on those
19 concepts. And we will look at various things such as
20 impacts to the environment, both the natural
21 environment and the human environment.

22 And all concepts we will at least analyze in the
23 beginning, and then probably pare that down to another
24 set, develop a matrix that will utilize a standard set
25 of analyses with that.

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1 and Snake Island.

2 We have also included the Bird Colony Islands that
3 are on the east side -- yes, the east side of the
4 channel, because those currently are eroding, and they
5 have been included into the study to look at
6 opportunities for preventing further impact to those
7 islands.

8 Tonight specifically we will be talking about Big
9 Edwards, Skiers' Island, and a little bit about Bird
10 Colony Islands.

11 Now, we will be using some terms tonight, and we
12 have created a graphic that provides a little bit of an
13 understanding for the community profile.

14 We use terms such as mangroves, which are the
15 reds, the blacks, and the whites. Seagrasses, which
16 are below mean low water, so very seldom exposed. This
17 graphic doesn't show it, but the one on the web page
18 does.

19 We have what's called low marsh in amongst the
20 mangroves. And typically, that is between low tide and
21 high tide and includes species such as juncus and
22 spartina.

23 Then we use the term high marsh. And that
24 includes a lot of your grasses that are above high tide
25 but are salt-tolerant grasses, and are, of course, all

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1 This is a 1135 process that is part of the U. S.
2 Army Corps of Engineers study that is funded and
3 mandated by the Congress. And it's a very well-defined
4 process.

5 If you're interested in it, I think we still have
6 some handouts on that, as well as in our web page you
7 can go and look in that, it spells out a little bit of
8 the 1135 process.

9 That is the address for the web page. For the U.
10 S. Army Corps of Engineers, the restoration projects,
11 and then specifically for the Sarasota Bay project.

12 After we do that, this is also a NEPA process, a
13 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, that
14 essentially says that for projects that are utilizing
15 federal funds, those projects need to be looked at on a
16 standard set of criteria.

17 Those criteria have to include the alternative
18 analysis, as well as public involvement. And it allows
19 us the opportunity to collect feedback from the public,
20 specific ideas so that we can incorporate those.

21 Once we have developed the alternative analysis,
22 our next step will be to write an environmental
23 assessment. That is a document that essentially will
24 address the existing conditions, and then how the
25 preferred alternative will impact all those different

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1 native grasses.

2 And then we're calling upland hammock, we use the
3 word subtropical. So it's not the true tropical
4 hardwood such as mahogany and things like that, but
5 it's -- these are what we would propose for the upland
6 restoration.

7 All right, we've got the existing conditions. And
8 essentially that looks at the contours. We've got on
9 these maps, and when we do the break-out session, the
10 contours are on there.

11 Skiers' Island runs from a high point of
12 approximately six -- I'm sorry, seven feet in this area
13 to about four feet on this end, we have -- with north
14 being up.

15 It's got two lobes and a low spot in the middle.
16 These outer edges are vegetated with mangroves, and
17 then the rest of the island is covered with miscane
18 species, such as Australian pine, Brazilian pepper and
19 Carroewood.

20 All right. What we did was we developed a
21 concept, essentially what we call our baseline concept.
22 And that looks at pretty much what our scope has asked
23 us to do, and that's restoration targets, as far as the
24 acreage of -- acreage of mangroves, the acreage of
25 emergent grasses, and looking at some of the targets of

1 acreages to create.
2 Then what we did was we took a secondary -- or not
3 a secondary. We took that concept and we considered
4 that basically the middle. Then we've looked at
5 extremes to both sides of that.

6 And that's to kind of give people an understanding
7 of what could be done. And it's not a feasibility.
8 See, keep that in mind, that really these concepts are
9 to get stuff on paper and to really, you know,
10 establish some of the thought process. So as I walk
11 through this on Skiers', you'll begin to see what I'm
12 talking about.

13 All right, this is number -- the concepts, of
14 course, are not in any kind of number situation. We
15 just had to number them so that we could keep them
16 straight.

17 Essentially, this concept allows for upland
18 restoration throughout longitudinal direction of the
19 island, leaving the mangrove fringe, and then creating
20 a low marsh mangrove fringe around the outside of the
21 upland restoration.

22 Concept number two essentially utilizes the two
23 upland island areas with an open water area that would
24 be exposed, probably during very low tide, so we call
25 them mud flats, and the low marsh and mangroves

1 brainstorming. No idea is a bad idea till, of course,
2 it's proven so.

3 Okay. One of the Skiers', of course, consider the
4 extent of the excavation. We felt like that is a
5 design consideration. A lot of that soil is rocky. It
6 has quite a bit of clays and some fairly fine material
7 in it.

8 We wanted to look at really the feasibility. And,
9 of course, that applies more to Big Edwards, because
10 Skiers' hasn't got quite as much material on it, but it
11 would still require quite a bit of excavation.

12 Then enhance/maintain public/boater access and
13 ski ability. That was something that during the first
14 workshop was very evident. People did not want us
15 going in here and filling in the open water areas
16 around the outside of the island and preventing them
17 from skiing.

18 Improve quantity and quality of fish and wildlife
19 habitat. Certainly that's the goal of the 1135 process
20 is ecological restoration, so certainly we thought that
21 that would be a worthy consideration.

22 Remove the nuisance and exotic species.

23 Minimal maintenance. That's something we believe
24 is a consideration that should be at least looked at
25 and assessed for feasibility. We don't want to design

1 surrounding the two upland restoration areas and tying
2 in with the existing mangroves.

3 Concept number three utilizes the open water mud
4 flat but bisects the island, which would allow for
5 water to flow during the tidal exchange between the two
6 sides of the bay, still keeping the upland restoration
7 on both ends of the island, and then low marsh around
8 the outside edges of those.

9 Now, you'll notice on two of them, we have
10 shown -- on both of these concepts, we have left upland
11 restoration to the edge of the island with the
12 anticipation that this would still allow for human
13 access for some recreation ability. So you can still
14 access the island, anchor your boat here, and walk up
15 onto the upland areas.

16 The concept number two would preclude that unless
17 you were willing to walk through the mangroves to get
18 to the upland areas.

19 So those are the concepts on Skiers' Island. Now,
20 Big Edwards. Big Edwards is a pretty interesting area.
21 I'm sure most of you are familiar with it.

22 But essentially, the topography is a berm, a
23 fairly rocky berm that appears to have been built in a
24 way to allow, during the dredging, to pump material
25 into the island, the center of the island, and to

1 something that's going to be intensive maintenance and
2 has an opportunity for failure because of not taking
3 that into consideration.

4 And then another thing we had picked up from some
5 of our meetings with individuals, as well as brought
6 up a little bit during the last workshop, was to
7 maintain slash recreate the visual buffer for nearby
8 homeowners.

9 And you can see, of course, I got it out of order,
10 but you can see how each of these concepts have taken
11 into consideration some of these design issues to make
12 sure that we've looked at those.

13 Okay, Big Edwards, you'll see a little bit of
14 consistency between these. Once again, improve the
15 quantity and quality of the fish and wildlife habitat.
16 Removal of nuisance and exotic species.

17 Enhance and maintain the public and boater access.
18 Of course, being islands, this is a little different
19 than, say, Palmer Point, because you can't really have
20 public access without a boat.

21 And then we looked at another thing on Big
22 Edwards, we talked about a real opportunity for public
23 education. And then because of these are islands that
24 are visited by the public, there may be opportunities
25 for putting interpretive signage on the islands and

1 preserve -- or to contain the spoil.

2 There is a couple small spots of mangroves. And
3 then the rest of the island is covered with Carrotwood,
4 Australian pine, and other exotic species.

5 And then there is an end on the south end that
6 appears to be fairly -- I wouldn't use the word
7 actively maintained, but it looks like somebody's
8 planted rye grass out there, and is doing a pretty good
9 job of keeping it clean.

10 Actually, let me back up here. Thank you, Gene.
11 What we did was we looked at consideration, we
12 call them restoration considerations, and we sat around
13 in a workshop with the study team to get started, and
14 we identified what are the important items, what are
15 the kind of things that we believe are something that
16 we should consider in the designs that would allow for
17 these different components.

18 And one of the things we want to do tonight, in
19 the -- after we finish going through these concepts, is
20 get the input back from the public. What are things
21 that you would like to see done out there.

22 You know, if you want to, I don't know, dig the
23 whole thing up and let seagrasses grow, then we put
24 that on there. If you want to buy the island and
25 build a house. I mean, we could -- this is

1 really letting people understand the specific cover
2 types and what are the benefits of those cover types.

3 Then we looked at the upland hammock enhancement
4 with some plantings on the southern portion of the
5 island. Once again, you know, we're looking at the
6 existing condition where already the public by default
7 has kind of indicated that that's what at least some
8 people are interested in, is providing that.

9 There's a good vista off of Big Edwards, and we
10 thought that that would be a design consideration that
11 we wanted to look at.

12 Again, maintain versus -- or recreate a visual
13 buffer for the nearby residences. And then as well as
14 consider the extent of the excavation. We've got to be
15 realistic about this, we've got to look at feasibility.

16 Okay. Now we look at concepts. Okay, concept
17 number one leaves the opportunity to leave quite a bit
18 of upland restoration enhancement, primarily taking
19 advantage of some of the existing conditions which
20 would reduce some of the costs.

21 But in the same sense, we would be looking at
22 possibly having a low marsh mangrove area, another area
23 of mangroves around the outside, and then a high marsh
24 transitional area. Kind of a middle-of-the-road
25 concept.

1 Concept number two probably -- well -- probably
2 has the most earth work involved. And what that would
3 be, once again, leaving two areas of upland
4 enhancement. Again leaving them where they're adjacent
5 to the water so that there's still access for public.

6 Excavating material in the center and allowing for
7 an open water area of mud flat, and then surrounding
8 that with low marsh and mangroves, as well as in this
9 one, have a portion of the upland -- upper -- upland
10 restoration with a high marsh transitional area around
11 these.

12 Now, some of these, for instance, and this
13 another example, if you look at this concept, keep in
14 mind it's really difficult to get from the upland
15 hammock down to the mangrove area without having
16 something in between.

17 Now, even though we don't show it, these may have
18 bands of 10 to 15 feet wide that would be that
19 transitional area from the upland hammock into the
20 mangrove area. And that kind of demonstrates that
21 that's a little bit of what we were thinking about
22 there.

23 Concept number three. This one is probably what
24 we would call the most recreational friendly, and also,
25 the educational aspect.

1 We looked at lowering the grade on the southern
2 end of the island, creating a low marsh mangrove, with
3 leaving the northern end of the island as the upland
4 enhancement, as well as along the edge of the berm.

5 When we thought about the idea of having a berm,
6 you'll see when you look at the area, that's what the
7 berm is, of essentially having a trail, with a
8 boardwalk in some areas, having an open water area in
9 the middle, with a high marsh transitional around it,
10 and then having an overlook to the north and an
11 overlook to the south.

12 And essentially what this would allow for is
13 better access in here to get up on the boardwalk as
14 well as coming in to the north and accessing the
15 island.

16 So what our goal is tonight is to, after we go
17 through and identify some more considerations from the
18 audience, is then allow for a break-out.

19 We have 11 by 17 drawings of each of the concepts.
20 And then we have a vellum, kind of a see-through paper.
21 And we would like for you to take this and set it on
22 top of it and draw what you think.

23 I mean, if you would like to see Big Edwards to
24 where a whole island is excavated down and created into
25 mangroves, if that's what you believe is beneficial,

1 then draw it.

2 If you believe that the ecological damage of
3 erosion is significant, and that there should be some
4 kind of consideration to minimize future erosion, such
5 as there is geotextiles we could use, there's a lot of
6 geotechnical considerations that we could look at that
7 would minimize the erosion, as well as riprap and some
8 of the things that are more frequently used.

9 Now, we did not draw it up because with the Bird
10 Colony Islands, we would not be proposing any kind of
11 excavation on those islands. The only thing we would
12 propose is some type of stabilization measures that
13 would prevent additional erosion of those islands.

14 And probably a fairly easy method of that, and
15 there's one of them, I believe, right here, would be
16 both Big Edwards and Skiers' have quite a bit of rocky
17 material on it.

18 And during the earth work, we envision the
19 potential of taking that earth, essentially removing
20 the rock from it, and then taking that rock and
21 bringing it around the Bird Colony Islands to minimize
22 any future erosion potentially.

23 MR. ANKERSON: Great. We're moving along real
24 smoothly. It was actually good, because I think you'll
25 find once you sit down at the table, that you want to

1 spend some time getting to know these islands
2 graphically, and then having at it.

3 So what I'll do is go through the people who have
4 requested to speak by virtue of filling out one of
5 these cards. Obviously, you are not obliged to speak.

6 But -- and those of you who would prefer and do
7 have comments, don't want to write them, we have a
8 court reporter here, and she'll be happy to stand by,
9 and you can just talk to her, and she can record you as
10 she's recording us now. Makes our job of reporting
11 back and making sure that everything, the information
12 that we get is accurate and complete as possible.

13 Jodi and Tiphonie will walk around, Tiphonie, with
14 the portable microphones and -- Tiphonie will walk
15 around with the portable microphones. Jodi will record
16 your comments here in an effort to clarify them, if
17 that's necessary.

18 So with that, I'll get started and ask if Alice
19 Biegel from the Bay Island Homeowners Association is
20 here and would like to speak.

21 MS. BIEGEL: Hi, I'm Alice Biegel from Bay Island
22 Homeowners Association. I'm one of the first people
23 who really found out that you guys were doing this
24 behind our backs. And that's a fact, when it started,
25 it was behind our backs.

1 And you told us that you were going to totally
2 destroy Little and Big Edward islands. And then we
3 found out you were going to destroy it because you had
4 a half million dollar contract to sell it to Manatee
5 because they really needed the fill over there.

6 And now you talk nothing about Little Edward
7 Island today, but yet Jon Thaxton, from the Coastal
8 Advisory, at his meetings, talked about you destroying
9 Little Edward Island. Which he was going to convince
10 you that Little Edward Island had to be part of this.

11 Tonight you said nothing about it. You said
12 nothing about it at Sarasota High School, either. At
13 the Coastal Advisory Committee, you talked all about
14 this.

15 If they're going to -- it is part of the whole
16 project. And they're pushing for this because of those
17 moneys.

18 And when I sat at that meeting and I said, "Hey,
19 guys, I'm here. Remember, Alice Biegel is hearing you
20 say this," Jon Thaxton said, "Oh, we know how to get
21 around that. We'll just write letters and sign it from
22 different homeowners that we back this 100 percent."

23 Now, I've got a petition here from 700 people who
24 say we want nothing done to these islands. And then
25 from the Army Corps of Engineer, it states that to get

1 a permit to do any of this stuff, the permits pull back
2 when the people don't want it who live around there.

3 I gave you this petition in July. I reminded you
4 and gave you another copy in October at Sarasota High
5 School. I have another copy sitting right here.

6 Why are you ignoring it? Why are you going behind
7 our backs and doing whatever you want? Here you sit
8 here and you say you're going to take the fill away
9 from all of this stuff, and you say, oh, I'm going to
10 put it around the birds.

11 Oh, yeah, the bird stuff, it needs it. What are
12 you going to do with the rest? What county is going to
13 give you money to buy that fill from us? Because
14 that's obviously the whole bottom line.

15 Now, you showed us some beautiful pictures at
16 Sarasota High School. And then we all walked out and
17 started talking and realized, hey, they took an island,
18 they can't -- didn't look too good.

19 Yeah, those aerial photos from way up high did
20 look pretty. But they took an island that you're able
21 to walk on, and now no one can walk on that island
22 again because you can't walk through mangroves.

23 And you can't walk through those real sharp
24 plants that you're putting in there that grow -- that
25 you look -- hey, look how cute they are, we planted

1 them three feet apart?

2 Yeah, but in a matter of a year, they've filled
3 in, you can't walk between them anymore, so no man
4 could walk on those islands anymore.

5 We're a little confused here on truthfulness. And
6 we want to believe you, but you've got to remember that
7 Sarasota and these people went through a year of lies,
8 a lot of lies. It wasn't from you people, you weren't
9 in the beginning days, that caused this petition.

10 Trees are dying on Little Edward Island.
11 Mysteriously, clumps of trees, you know, those nuisance
12 trees? Suddenly somebody is going on those islands and
13 destroying those trees. Why?

14 And when I called complaining, you know what they
15 did? They went to Bay Island Homeowners Park and they
16 cut down our trees. Our trees that were in that park
17 right next to that bridge going over to the island are
18 suddenly cut down to the ground.

19 They're retaliating against us, which I was told,
20 and we have it on tape of David Band standing right
21 next to Mayor Amourn saying go ahead, you do what you
22 want, Bay Islands, and we'll retaliate, get even with
23 you.

24 Now, I really would like to know what's really
25 going to happen, okay? These islands do need a little

1 As far as the concepts, essentially it's a
2 wide-open forum, and we are going to provide an
3 opportunity for everybody to draw what you believe is
4 something that you think is viable.

5 And if do nothing is a viable alternative, which
6 is part of the NEPA process, do nothing is viable, then
7 say that. If that's your belief, then say that.

8 As far as the concepts, you know, I mean, the only
9 reason I bring up the concept of buying the island and
10 putting a house on it is to help you understand that
11 this is brainstorming here. And we are looking at a
12 lot of different ideas.

13 And if you have an idea, and you're sitting here
14 thinking it's a crazy idea, you don't have to say it
15 publicly, draw it on a piece of paper, and we'll assess
16 it and we'll look at it.

17 But just, you know, as far as the details, you
18 know, talk about an area that's ten feet wide with
19 upland access, that's a concept. If you think that we
20 need the entire outer edge to be upland access, we're
21 all happy. Give us your ideas.

22 Were there any other points you wanted me to
23 address?

24 MS. BIEGEL: (Shakes head negatively.)

25 MR. HASBROUCK: Okay, thank you.

1 cleanup work, I'll agree with you.

2 Far away thousands of feet up in the air,
3 pictures do look pretty. What's really going to
4 happen? Because you keep saying mangroves, mangroves,
5 mangroves. You can't walk through mangroves.

6 And then you said oh, look, there's a little part
7 where you can put a boat, someone can come in on this
8 side of the island. Which would definitely be good.
9 But ten little feet to get on an island, and the rest
10 is circled with mangroves.

11 Can we get a little bit more specific with you
12 people so that we can believe you? Because, I mean,
13 I'm for this project, I really am, if I'm talking to
14 truthful people. I think that what you're doing, that
15 your pictures are beautiful. I'm sure everybody does,
16 too.

17 But anybody sitting at this meeting who has not
18 been sitting for one full year, and all of those awful
19 meetings that we sat through and they tried pulling the
20 wool over our eyes in the past, makes us a little
21 skeptical on what's going on.

22 And we really would like to know -- you know,
23 some of -- you made the comment about why don't we buy
24 the island and put a house.

25 I'll give you a court document about a man who

1 MR. ANKERSON: And again, I don't mean to cut you
2 off, I just wanted to give everyone who wanted to speak
3 a chance to speak. And then if you hold up your hand,
4 you'll be the first one to be called on after we're
5 done with that.

6 Rob Eiler.

7 MS. EILER: I'll bet that's r-o-z.

8 MR. ANKERSON: Oh, Rox, I'm sorry. I don't know
9 how I could have made that into a B, anyway.

10 MS. EILER: I live just right across on the
11 mainland from this whole thing. And I was involved in
12 a very early conversation -- or a meeting out at
13 Out-of-Door. And that was very interesting. That's a
14 polite way of putting it.

15 I'm interested in what these ideas will do to the
16 boating in the channels. Now, I kayak, so it doesn't
17 matter. I can go through six inches.

18 But I'm wondering, one of the aspects appeared to
19 be earlier that the dredging and the waterway was --
20 was an aspect that we wanted to look at, and erosion,
21 and whatever it was doing to the channels.

22 So I guess that's what I would like to hear some
23 comments about.

24 MR. HASBROUCK: Did you want to talk about how the
25 dredging is --

1 tried to put a house on Little Edward Island and Big
2 Edward Island. And the government turned around and
3 said you can't do that, we're condemning the land and
4 buying the land so that you can't put a house on
5 there.

6 And now you're making a joke there, hey, why
7 doesn't Sarasota buy that land from us and put a house
8 on it.

9 That's what we tried to do in the beginning, and
10 it caused Little Edward Island to just sit there with
11 the government not doing anything to fix the island.

12 So I'm a little confused here on the truthfulness.
13 I'm a little confused on what happened at Palmer Point,
14 and it looks like a war zone, the trees are just laying
15 there. Someday they'll float away. They took
16 forever --

17 MR. ANKERSON: Miss Biegel, I just wondered if we
18 could get the other comments in, and then we can come
19 back, if you want to continue.

20 You had some questions there, and I wondered if
21 anyone wanted to address them or anything.

22 MR. HASBROUCK: Yeah, as far as Little Edwards,
23 Little Edwards is not part of this study. It's not in
24 our scope, it never has been. It's not something that
25 we would be bringing in at the end.

1 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce, you want to address that?

2 MR. HASBROUCK: Yeah, generally, the dredging, any
3 type of dredging within the waterways is not part of
4 our study. There is a separate study that the Corps of
5 Engineers is undergoing to look at both -- or I guess
6 maintenance dredging throughout the entire Intracoastal
7 Waterway.

8 As far as preventing additional siltation,
9 absolutely, that is something we are considering,
10 because many of these areas are exposed to high wave
11 energy, and because of that, there's a lot of lost
12 sediment.

13 That sediment not only gets into the channels and
14 decreases the depth of the channels, but it also
15 suspends the sediment in the water column, which
16 eliminates the -- or reduces the ability of light to
17 transmit through the water column, which reduces the
18 ability of seagrasses to grow.

19 When you end up with a bay with no seagrasses in
20 it, you are not going to have very many fisheries
21 habitat.

22 So we are looking at the negative effects of
23 continued erosion on the environment.

24 MR. ANKERSON: Go ahead. You have a follow-up?

25 MS. EILER: Well, I'm -- sorry. I'm kind of

1 wondering how several of these concepts would change
2 some of these flows and patterns. I'm sure that will
3 come up. I mean, that would be an important aspect of
4 it.

5 And how closely can you work with the other study
6 that's going on, and, you know, like both hands knowing
7 what the other is doing?

8 MR. HASBROUCK: Well, we're certainly looking into
9 all the studies that are being done in the Sarasota Bay
10 area, and to make sure that if there are impacts,
11 direct impacts from those proposed projects, how they
12 would affect these proposed projects, and to look at
13 aspects of our projects that would potentially impact
14 those other projects.

15 MS. EILER: Well, what about those waterways?

16 MR. HASBROUCK: The waterways, I mean,
17 essentially, we're not talking something so drastic as,
18 say, dredging out holes that would affect the flow and
19 circulation patterns.

20 Typically, mangroves and the low marsh are between
21 the low and high water marks, low and high tide marks.
22 And those areas are very shallow and have minimal
23 effect on circulation and flow patterns.

24 MS. EILER: That came up very actively at the
25 Out-Of-Door meeting.

1 another Brazilian pepper. And, I mean, it's really --
2 it's a big problem. People don't appreciate it.

3 But, you know, the native birds don't roost in
4 exotic vegetation. And I think if we got the exotics
5 out of there and put the upland hammocks in, we could
6 still preserve the visual buffer and you would see a
7 lot more native birds that use that area.

8 One comment real briefly on the Bird Islands,
9 those, as I understand it, those have been on -- those
10 are natural islands, and they've been on navigational
11 charts going back to 1880 or so. And those are not
12 man-made, although they look like it.

13 If you do put some fill or something in there to
14 help the erosion of that area, I'd just like to be sure
15 that some of -- there are a lot of boating channels
16 right around these islands for people accessing either
17 side of the Intracoastal, and I would just like to see
18 those preserved, if we could.

19 And maybe it would be helpful if there was some --
20 this may be a little out of the scope of this, but some
21 signage somewhere along there reminding people that
22 that's a no-wake zone outside the Intracoastal. Which
23 a lot of people apparently can't read the little
24 pamphlet they get with their boating registration every
25 year that explains that.

1 MR. HASBROUCK: Okay. The other thing to keep in
2 mind, too, is remember that this is a feasibility
3 study, and we are dealing with concepts.

4 Should we further this process and come up with
5 preferred alternatives, then we would go into the
6 design stage, and at that time, do a detailed design,
7 which would include hydrologic aspects, hydrologic
8 modeling, and make sure that the proposed project
9 wasn't going to have a negative impact on the
10 circulation patterns of Sarasota Bay.

11 MR. ANKERSON: And to the extent that you have
12 ideas on how that could be adjusted to facilitate the
13 kind of boating that you do in proximity to these
14 islands, then by all means, once we get over there, you
15 know, draw your kayak trails or whatever it is. That's
16 all part of the process itself.

17 Brian M. Garby, M. D.

18 DR. GARBY: I live on Red Rock Lane, which is
19 directly across from Big Edwards. And I'm personally
20 all for the project in some form.

21 I grew up in St. Pete, and over the last -- well,
22 45 years, I've seen a huge increase in the number of
23 exotic species in this area. And you can get in your
24 car and drive down to Fort Myers and see solid
25 Melaleuca, you know, punk trees, Brazilian peppers,

1 That's about all I have to say.

2 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.

3 Bruce, do you want to address the question that he
4 had about the mangroves repopulating? I think that
5 affects the design.

6 MR. HASBROUCK: Yeah. Essentially, we can take
7 those areas and make sure that the grades are deep
8 enough that propagules would not be able to root. Once
9 you're below about minus one, you really eliminate
10 that.

11 It's a tough issue, because if you get deeper than
12 minus two, then you allow your predator fish or larger
13 snook to come in and feed on the nursery. So you're
14 kind of self-defeating the issue there. So it's a real
15 close area, but we've got quite a bit of experience in
16 creating areas like that.

17 On the upland issue, keep in mind maintenance is
18 an aspect of this. And what we would do, the long-term
19 maintenance of any of these proposals would be taken
20 into consideration, make sure that we do completely
21 remove nuisance species from an island.

22 And there's commitments from the owners of the
23 islands to make sure that they would not become
24 repopulated. It would be basically a waste of money if
25 we didn't follow through that last little ten percent.

1 Australian pines. And 20 years ago, that stuff didn't
2 even exist there. I mean, this is -- you know, in my
3 mind, it's like a cancer taking over the ecosystem.

4 And one thing that I did note, if you do something
5 with Big Edwards and Skiers', you're almost obligated
6 to look at Little Edwards. If you're removing exotic
7 vegetation, I think it's just going to reseed in a very
8 short period of time in that area.

9 I like the concept of preserving some uplands for
10 visual buffers between the mainland and Siesta Key. I
11 think that if you look at dredging out an intertidal
12 zone or some sort of a water access into Big Edwards or
13 Skiers' Island, those are going to be repopulated by
14 red mangroves in a very short period of time.

15 I think you're just wasting your money. I mean,
16 it's sort of a nice concept. But red mangroves are
17 pretty aggressive, and I think they'll just fill all
18 that in.

19 And so I think the minimal amount that you do to
20 the islands by moving the rock around is probably the
21 cheapest way to do it, probably going to last the
22 longest. But I'm all for -- I'm all in favor of
23 removing the exotics.

24 I mean, if anybody here does any yard work, they
25 know, you know, you go out every year and you yank

1 MR. ANKERSON: John A. Blaser?

2 MR. BLASER: Me. I live on Sarasota Bay, directly
3 east of all three islands, a little north of Skiers'
4 Island. I have been here for a good number of years.

5 Of course, I'm very concerned about the visual
6 buffer between us and Siesta Key, and have had concerns
7 about the renovations of these islands, which, of
8 course, included Little Edwards and Big Edwards, ever
9 since this came up several years back.

10 I'm very much interested in these various
11 concepts. I do have definite feelings about the
12 exotics. It seems that everybody feels that anything
13 came from out of the state of Florida should be
14 eliminated.

15 Well, if that were true, probably 95 percent of
16 the people who are here this evening wouldn't be here
17 very long, they having come from out of the state.

18 But anyway, the main thing that I am concerned
19 about, other than the visual effect that it might have,
20 is the Bird Islands. We've watched the birds build
21 their nest. They gather the lumber and stuff on the
22 mainland.

23 And those Bird Islands are suffering quite a bit,
24 particularly on their west side. And that's something
25 that should be taken care of immediately, because they

1 are being washed away. And I think that's a concept
2 should be really worked on very hard to take care of
3 that particular problem.

4 Because we do have a large number of pelicans that
5 nest there. We have Cormorants that nest there. Big
6 Blues that nest there, Little Blues, the Egrets. And
7 that's something I think needs to be taken care of.

8 Now, when we get down to the concepts, that could
9 be something that I think is maybe a little bit further
10 away, but, of course, I'm concerned the type of
11 vegetations you want to replace the material we have
12 there, what kind of program you put together to take
13 care of the -- what you call the exotics and how you
14 keep them off the islands.

15 You talked about the maintenance. The maintenance
16 is probably one of the most important things about
17 keeping a lot of these things down. Because Brazilian
18 peppers, I wonder how you're ever going to control them
19 if the birds are carrying the seeds all over the place.
20 And they seem to be very good carriers of that
21 particular plant.

22 Cold weather controls the Brazilian peppers. They
23 only go so far north from here before they freeze out.
24 To be able to eliminate them from this part of Florida
25 I think is going to be a very difficult problem.

1 Carrotwood was brought in here a number of years
2 ago by a nurseryman to use as a planting plant, in
3 addition to our landscape use, and they found out after
4 a period of time that the seed germinated very well, so
5 it's turned into an exotic species.

6 Well, we have pine trees, another set of plants
7 you could consider looking at the same way, because
8 they gather their seed around the same way, by birds or
9 other things.

10 So I think a lot of exotics need to be looked at
11 as to how you're going to control, how you're going to
12 control over a long period of time. And you just can't
13 get out there and say, well, I'm going to eradicate
14 everything. You just can't do that.

15 That's all.
16 MR. ANKERSON: Thanks.

17 Bruce, do you want to address that question of
18 the maintenance of exotics and native habitats?

19 MR. HASBROUCK: Essentially that the management
20 plan, the maintenance plan would make sure that there's
21 regular control, that it's not a one-time thing, that
22 the grades are done and somebody walks away from it.

23 It would have to be regular visits to basically
24 eliminate those species from the islands afterwards be
25 done.

1 MR. ANKERSON: Alberto.

2 MR. GONZALEZ: Let me -- as part of the program,
3 once we go with the sponsorship, in this case with the
4 West Coast Inland Navigation District, part of our
5 contract or the construction contract is a line item
6 that they are full responsibility for the maintenance.
7 And there will be a maintenance management plan.

8 And what we have done in some other areas that
9 have been successful, where our sponsors, is that
10 through their own forces and also volunteer work that
11 are done on some of those islands, that they have been
12 able to go and get some of the citizens out.

13 And it's been very -- some very active groups,
14 through -- in some cases, in Palm Beach County, they
15 use boaters, local citizens, youth groups, and they go
16 to those islands, and once in a while, not that
17 frequent, and they do it.

18 And so it's a combination with a commitment from
19 the sponsor and also from the citizens in that area,
20 and they get ownership of those islands, too.

21 MR. ANKERSON: I believe yesterday evening, when
22 we had this discussion with Snake Island, there was a
23 discussion about that, and the citizens group actually
24 volunteered to adopt the island. So that's a -- surely
25 a model that they recognize as potentially useful here.

1 Speaking of somebody who was here yesterday
2 evening, Patrick McCarthy.

3 MR. McCARTHY: I'll -- I have no comment.

4 MR. ANKERSON: Okay. Anybody else that was here
5 yesterday evening? I'm curious. If you would raise
6 your hands?

7 Great. Gluttons for punishment. Well, there's
8 one more tomorrow evening, so.

9 Robert Waechter, director of the Siesta Key
10 Association.

11 MR. WAECHTER: Thank you very much.

12 I'm enthusiastic about this. I believe it's a
13 tremendous opportunity for a restoration and an
14 environmental improvement to our area.

15 But I'm concerned that each of these is being
16 addressed as an entirety. We're looking at Big Edwards
17 Island as an entirety of the system. We're looking at
18 Skiers' Island as an entirety of the system unto
19 itself. The Bird Islands as a separate entirety.

20 And they are, they certainly are an entirety, but
21 they're all part of a larger entirety which encompasses
22 all of them. They each affect and are affected by the
23 other entities.

24 While we're looking at these, I would urge that
25 the different groups look at them as an entirety

1 themselves.

2 That possibly if Big Edwards Island is best suited
3 for the recreation aspects of the plan, then maybe
4 Skiers' Island is best suited for the restorative,
5 going back to the historical perspective, prior to the
6 deposition of the dredge materials, or the deposit of
7 the dredge materials.

8 The Bird Colony Islands, while the gentleman was
9 right, they do show up on the old charts, apparently
10 they were enlarged during the dredging of the
11 Intracoastal.

12 And it seems to me that they might lend
13 themselves to be a deposition spot for some of the
14 material that you might have to move, maybe by putting
15 some of those rocks, maybe enlarge them to replace what
16 has eroded.

17 So we do have an entire unit that can be addressed
18 as separate entities and one total entirety, but then
19 keep in mind also that that entirety is part of a
20 larger entirety. The entire bay system is also an
21 entirety. And what happens somewhere else affects what
22 happens here.

23 For example, the erosion on the Bird Colony
24 Islands is in no doubt connected to the Midnight Pass
25 blockage and the additional flow of water. Midnight

1 Pass is being addressed separately, I understand that.
2 But it's also a factor here. That we're seeing things
3 happen here that are caused miles away.

4 So just -- I don't even have a question. I'm just
5 asking everybody to treat this as one larger system.
6 Comprehensive is the word. It's an integrated,
7 interrelated system, and that's how we have to treat
8 it.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.

11 That's all for the comments that people have
12 specifically requested through the written pages. Does
13 anyone else have any question or comments, would you
14 like to raise your hand?

15 If we could, I would like to limit this portion
16 to about 10 to 15 more minutes, and then move into our
17 break-out groups, and we'll come back together.

18 Yes. If you would state your name, if you would
19 like to, and who you are affiliated with.

20 MR. LETCHWORTH: I'm Wallace Letchworth, I live on
21 the mainland right opposite Little Edwards and Big
22 Edwards Island, and can certainly see Skiers' Island
23 and the Little Bird Colony Islands, they're immediately
24 off our property.

25 My major concern is the vertical, what's going to

1 happen? These birds' eye views are fine, but I want to
2 know what it looks like from my back porch.

3 And the maintenance of this visual buffer I think
4 is a major item of concern. And I don't know really
5 what you mean by upland restoration. That, you know,
6 does it mean more growth, more trees, more something
7 that's going to give us more visual buffer? Are you
8 going to flatten it out and have mangroves and maybe
9 some other lower-growing vegetation?

10 We are very happen with the pine trees. I can
11 certainly understand the attitude about the Brazilian
12 peppers and other exotics. But the pine trees have
13 been in Florida a long, long time. I was born on the
14 east coast, and we had pine trees all over the place.
15 My feeling is you will never, never get rid of the pine
16 trees.

17 And I don't know whether you're really going to
18 have a maintenance program on these areas that will,
19 indeed, keep these exotics off.

20 So my concern is visual impact that it's going to
21 have from my backyard.

22 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce, do you want to address the
23 upland restoration concept a little bit?

24 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure. Some of the upland plants
25 we are looking at are the cedars, palm trees, possibly

1 And they hadn't had a hurricane in 40 years, and
2 they had all these big Australian pines. And something
3 like 90 percent went over during the hurricane. Well,
4 how many chain saws are there on the island of Bermuda.
5 And it just -- it proved to be a nightmare.

6 So that's one aspect of the remediation problem.

7 The other is when you talk about upland hammocks,
8 and let's say you can't -- you're worried about the
9 long-term care of them. And one of the ways you get
10 around things is to make a hammock as small as possible
11 and as high as possible.

12 Something like this has been done at Emerson Point
13 where they basically have what -- they made a model
14 Indian mound where there was no Indian mound. But they
15 did this as a place to get rid of all the soil that
16 they used in order to create more mangrove wetlands.
17 So this is a possibility as well.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.

20 Yes, ma'am. A couple more, and then I really
21 think you'll enjoy getting over and working at the
22 maps, so I would like to close down, unless you have
23 something really significant you would like to add in
24 the plenary that we couldn't talk about later or in the
25 groups.

1 looking at bringing in mature cabbage palms, which will
2 still maintain that type of visual buffer.

3 We are exploring a phased approach, and looking at
4 the possibility of doing this work in a manner that
5 allows some of the work to occur, but doesn't just go
6 in and completely eliminate all the vegetation from the
7 island in the very beginning, and then wait 10, 15, 20
8 years for everything to come back.

9 Like I say, we're exploring that, and that's
10 something we're going to continue to look at is a
11 phased approach.

12 Oaks. Some of these islands have enough room on
13 them, enough fresh water from the rainfall and enough
14 separation from the saltwater through the soil that
15 there would be a limited amount of saltwater intrusion,
16 which would allow for oaks.

17 You know, there are several other species that
18 we're exploring right now to look at that have been
19 used in other situations like this that have been
20 proven to be successful.

21 Sea grapes is another plant that comes to mind
22 that is fairly rapid growing. And that may become the
23 type of phased approach. While the sea grape doesn't
24 get 30, 40 feet tall, you can get a sea grape that's
25 within -- 10, 15 feet tall within five years, allow

1 Go ahead.

2 MS. EILER: This is really a quick comment. But
3 do we have any local sponsors already sort of signing
4 on the board? Because I really hear that that's a
5 major aspect of this.

6 MR. ANKERSON: Yeah, Alberto, you want to talk
7 to --

8 MR. GONZALEZ: What was the question? I'm sorry.

9 MR. ANKERSON: Is there a local sponsor that has
10 already signed on.

11 MR. GONZALEZ: To this project? It's the West
12 Coast Inland Navigation District.

13 MR. ANKERSON: And I think it's a 25/75, the
14 national share?

15 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes, they've got -- the coshare is
16 75 percent federal and 25 percent local sponsor.

17 MR. ANKERSON: So -- that's right.

18 Let's do this, let me explain kind of --
19 reexplain, I guess, what we're going to do, and we'll
20 send you over there with our -- our help here. The
21 idea is that there are, I think -- Jeannie, how many do
22 you want to do? Where is Jeannie?

23 MS. CONTUSE: I think four tables.

24 MR. ANKERSON: Four tables that are moved out.
25 We're going to have a table by default, but -- there

1 that to do a quick buffer while your slowing-growing,
2 larger trees have an opportunity to get established and
3 grow.

4 MR. ANKERSON: Yes, sir.

5 MR. BULLOCH: Pardon me not standing. My name is
6 David Bulloch I'm with the American Littoral Society.
7 And we have done restoration work on Palmer Point on
8 removing the exotics. And it can be done. And the
9 National Estuary Program has many examples of bay --
10 bay walk and so forth.

11 I would just hope that people keep in mind that a
12 red mangrove is worth one hell of a lot more than an
13 Australian pine. And an Australian pine, in quantity,
14 present boaters with a serious problem in this area.

15 And that is it's been a long, long while since
16 we've really had a serious hurricane. And those
17 Australian pines go over like teapins in hurricanes.
18 And those that get washed into the water are going to
19 act as -- they're going to create sandbars everywhere.

20 Now, the County isn't going to be prepared to
21 remove these. And -- first of all, because they would
22 be worried about something else. And something similar
23 just happened on the island of Bermuda, where
24 Australian pines were brought in to replace the Bermuda
25 cedar which died off.

1 are four tables over there. Those tables have the same
2 drawings that you see here.

3 And what we'll ask that you do is self-select,
4 that is, go to a table. If one of them is real full
5 and another isn't, maybe you could join that one.

6 And then there will be a representative from H.
7 D. R. at each table that could help you with a
8 technical question that you may have about their
9 concepts or a technical question you may have about the
10 feasibility of the ideas that you have.

11 There will be a host who will serve in kind of the
12 role that I've been serving here, as just to kind of
13 facilitate a discussion.

14 We would ask that you each as a group decide
15 among yourselves that there be -- or decide among
16 yourselves who will be a scribe, and that is taking
17 notes about what the group is saying, and then a second
18 person to be a reporter, who will come back in, let's
19 say, 40 minutes and report back to the full plenary
20 session that we have what the group's consensus was, or
21 what the ideas were, however it works for you folks.

22 There are two islands, obviously, there are two
23 island areas that we're discussing. And you may
24 choose, if you're particularly interested in just one
25 of them, you may choose to only work on that one, if

1 that's the group's desire, or you can do both. And the
2 host will help make sure that you manage your time
3 correctly.

4 And with that in mind, if everybody -- nobody has
5 any questions about that process, then we'll put you to
6 work. And enjoy, I think people found it very useful
7 and helpful last night, and there was some good ideas.

8 And I know that the folks have already been
9 incorporating those ideas into their redesign thinking.
10 So I think you'll find it a very interesting and useful
11 exercise.

12 So head on over.
13 (Break-out session held at this time, then
14 resuming full session.)

15 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, let's think about wrapping it
16 up now, so we don't start losing people. I see people
17 starting to walk out now. I would hate for them to
18 lose the benefit of all this great creativity.

19 When you're finished, go ahead and come and sit
20 back up here. And hopefully, you have identified
21 somebody who is going to present your discussion.

22 Let's go ahead and get back together, because
23 we're losing people faster than -- so we'll soon be
24 talking to ourselves.

25 What I would like to do is ask whoever the

1 restoration, and that could serve all these purposes.

2 Because it was felt that the actual use is not, in
3 terms of people actually accessing these islands, it's
4 not extensive right now. And certainly with some
5 access to Big Edwards Island, you could address that
6 user group.

7 There was also, in terms of Skiers' Island, is
8 one of the few areas of the bay where people can water
9 ski. There is somewhat more of an erosional effect
10 around the whole island from boat wakes. And it has
11 more of a rocky shoreline. So by restoring the
12 interior of the island, it would create habitat that
13 would not be subject to erosion.

14 The access wouldn't be as critical a feature,
15 because you have boats going around there all the time,
16 and it is not really a safe anchorage to keep boats
17 from pounding on the shoreline as the skiers go around.
18 So you would have some conflict in user groups that we
19 were trying to provide recreational access to the
20 Skiers' Island as well as continue to permit skiing.

21 Let's see, did I leave anything out?

22 Oh. One of the ideas was that maybe in design
23 concept with Big Edwards Island, there should be some
24 linear open water features which would conform to the
25 flows of water in the bay.

1 reporter is for group one to take a portable microphone
2 and talk about what you discussed.

3 I'm going to ask that you hold comments or
4 questions until we're finished with all five of them,
5 and then we'll have a general discussion until, you
6 know, the last person is standing, if you'd like.

7 Or after we're dismissed, we'll hang around some
8 more for those of you who want to stay around.

9 JIM: All right, my name is Jim. I'm with the
10 group one. And we went around a little bit over the
11 concepts of these things and eventually came to sort of
12 a consensus.

13 And one of the driving forces was, between the two
14 islands, why try to make all things for everyone at
15 both islands. Let's do something like take one island,
16 do -- or focus on the habitat restoration concept, get
17 the maximum out of that, and the other island take a
18 approach of providing recreational access to that
19 island as well.

20 So they initially start out, one of the concepts
21 was that there are very few places in Sarasota Bay
22 where you can have these restoration projects. And
23 Sarasota Bay doesn't look anything like it did a
24 hundred years ago.

25 If you look at this shoreline, it's all very

1 The modeling studies could show whether or not
2 this would be effective. It may only be very minimally
3 effective at the depths that they would be taking the
4 island down.

5 Typically, water flows are dominated in the bay by
6 the Intracoastal Waterway. It's a huge pipeline,
7 carries a lot of water. So little bit of design, it
8 might not have very much of an effect. But that could
9 be looked at.

10 Because right now, you have the constriction in
11 this part of the bay, you have this channel, this
12 channel, and some shallower water.

13 Back over here, with limiting flows or -- in the
14 basin, this could come at the constriction points. And
15 so wherever you have these narrow areas, that's what's
16 influencing the amount of water that circulates through
17 the bay.

18 So possibly increasing your limited flow through
19 here might augment somewhat the circulation of flows in
20 this portion of the bay.

21 Right. Yeah. And then these -- neither of these
22 concepts would eliminate the recreational use of the
23 skiing around this island. And it may -- may require
24 some shoreline stabilization to prevent erosional
25 effects, but the skiers would still have access to do

1 highly urbanized. It's all houses, seawalls, and
2 everything else.

3 The only place that you can do restoration
4 projects basically are the state or federally-owned
5 lands, the public areas, and these are the spoil
6 islands. The shoreline used to look like this a
7 hundred years ago. Everywhere, basically.

8 So what we more or less reached a consensus on was
9 items number -- or design number three for both
10 islands. And -- let's see. What happened to those.
11 Okay.

12 The Skiers' Island concept number three is
13 probably one that has the most habitat value in terms
14 of restoration, takes down a lot of the uplands, has
15 these intertidal mud flat areas, and the central part
16 for water circulation, fisheries habitat.

17 And concept number three for the Big Edwards
18 Island, okay, this one, this one also has the
19 recreational boardwalk trails and access features in
20 it. It's not strictly a restoration.

21 And there were also comments that at some point,
22 Little Edwards Island could become a restoration
23 project. And it was felt in this very small area of
24 the bay, which it's not that far a distance, you could
25 have both recreational opportunity as well as habitat

1 whatever they have done for a long time in that area.
2 And I have no other comments.

3 MS. BROOKS: Anybody else from group one have a
4 comment that we have left out?

5 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: We just spoke very briefly
6 at the end about possible no-wake zone down by the
7 rookery islands.

8 MR. McCARTHY: Where are those, the Bird Islands?

9 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: The Bird Islands.

10 MR. McCARTHY: What is it now?

11 GENTLEMAN 1: 25 in the waterway and slow speed
12 out --

13 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, group two.

14 MR. BLASER: My name is John. I live on Sarasota
15 Bay. How many people here live on Sarasota Bay and
16 have visibility of the islands?

17 Well, the major concern of the people who were at
18 our table, who all live on Sarasota Bay, was the --
19 these really two -- this one and this one really
20 combined.

21 But the main feeling was to leave Big Edwards and
22 Skiers' Island alone, because we were very concerned
23 about the visual buffering that we had on those islands
24 that have been there, that way, for at least 20 years.
25 The Australian pines started growing on the islands 30

1 years ago, just after they put all that fill up on the
2 two islands.

3 We discussed this particular item, which was the
4 Bird Islands, in great depth. And the concept amongst
5 our group was that a lot could be done with those three
6 islands by possibly joining them together, making them
7 a much larger bird island than what they are now, since
8 the birds apparently like that particular area, and put
9 some type of buffering material between the
10 Intracoastal Waterway and the islands themselves to
11 prevent all of that washing that they're having from
12 the boats that are going by.

13 True, you could probably put something there to
14 stop the speed of the boats, but you'll still always
15 have people just forget those signs and go through
16 there a lot faster than they should be going. So we
17 put some buffers in there to stop that.

18 Probably do a lot of planting of mangroves,
19 ecotera, to join those islands together. Instead of
20 getting maybe 50 to 75 pelicans off of there a year,
21 you might get 100, 125. Which I think would be a
22 benefit.

23 Another thing that we discussed quite a bit was
24 the maintenance of the project, which was the major
25 concern.

1 And you're talking about doing a lot of these
2 particular concepts. Maintaining and keeping these
3 exotics that everybody seems to have a big problem with
4 is a big problem to keep them off.

5 And it means that you have to take care of these
6 things year, after year, after year. Not
7 five years, not ten years, not 15 years, but for a
8 longer period of time, it has to be done every year.

9 And I have a big concern about that, because
10 people don't follow maintenance. They either run out
11 of money or run out of people. And that's a big
12 concern.

13 And I think that about sums over what we talked
14 about. Thank you.

15 MR. ANKERSON: Group number three.

16 MS. EILER: Unfortunately, some of our folks had
17 to leave.

18 We wanted to talk very briefly about the
19 importance of seeing -- about the importance of seeing
20 the huge package of the bay restoration potential.

21 And we think that a lot of people would be very
22 comfortable if they could see the broadest picture.
23 And that we think ought to be done perhaps even with a
24 scale model that could be kept at the library. I
25 thought about some students perhaps creating this kind

1 of model.

2 But if you could go in and look at this large,
3 total picture, it would be much easier, I think, to
4 visualize what you might want to do.

5 Now, our idea was that there was an important
6 concept that leaves the Skiers' Island to the more
7 natural and skied zones, and the other island as this
8 educational area.

9 And I don't see how you can separate the two
10 islands, quite honestly. And I know that this is not
11 the other one. But my thought was perhaps if we did
12 something with Big Edwards Island that develops the
13 educational resources, we could go then to the next
14 step and do something with Little Edwards.

15 And the concept here was that this island
16 originally was much more looped into this area of the
17 waterway, and it was cut to create the waterway. That
18 makes sense.

19 So what it might be very smart to do is, instead
20 of bringing it in from the side, where this is going to
21 be very hard rock, to follow it this way. And so we're
22 just kind of moving it slightly.

23 But we're thinking if you had a very active
24 educational program here with boardwalks and very, very
25 accommodating for use, then the next stage could be a

1 buffer, but an educational island here, and then the
2 third stage is Skiers' Island could be used a lot the
3 way it is, and be a completely wild environment. And
4 that seemed to offer some pretty logical approaches.

5 And we really liked some of these different
6 diagrams. We didn't have any agendas in looking at
7 those.

8 Other comments?

9 MS. JINKS: You may want to flip the page.

10 MS. EILER: Oh. Okay.

11 I put on here, shifting that, we had a no-wake
12 zone, which was an important aspect of it. And I think
13 somebody else already mentioned that. And then we
14 wanted to maintain the boat access to Skiers' Island,
15 because it had a lot of different kinds of uses.

16 So I think that covers us. Yes?

17 GENTLEMAN 2: There was a gentleman in our group
18 who I think had to leave who had a lot of experience up
19 at Emerson Point and some of these other areas that had
20 been restored.

21 And he was lamenting the loss of some real special
22 areas that had not been looked at and had been
23 excavated out and kind of removed in the course of
24 doing the work there.

25 And he felt concerned that not enough study of

1 the -- and the word he used was magical, the real
2 unique little features in there, we make sure that we
3 don't excavate out or destroy some nice features.

4 And he was concerned that while you've done your
5 survey and some other work there, you haven't looked at
6 it enough to find out where those areas are. He's
7 going to take a map and go out to the site and see if
8 he can find any of those magical areas.

9 But he had a real strong concern about that, that
10 we don't lose something nice trying to do the work.

11 MR. ANKERSON: Well, hopefully, he'll get those
12 maps and get them over to H. D. R.

13 MS. EILER: Really, our thought was when you
14 finally come up with your last approach, your last
15 concept, in a sense, people would actually go out and
16 walk the island and evaluate, and that's how he would
17 suggest we do that, walking the island and looking at
18 --

19 GENTLEMAN 2: Spending a lot of time there.

20 MS. EILER: Yes.

21 GENTLEMAN 2: I think what he was suggesting is it
22 takes more than one visit to become familiar with the
23 resources there. You know, there are little pockets of
24 mangroves here and there that, you know, that he was
25 thinking about.

1 MR. ANKERSON: I'm sure there are plenty of us who
2 would volunteer for that duty if it's available to us.

3 Group four. Last but not least.

4 MR. GINAVEN: Okay, my name is John Ginaven, and
5 I'm with Sarasota Audubon Society. And I was with
6 group four. And we were -- first of all, we thought
7 that the whole concept should be handled as one
8 complete comprehensive issue, that there was perhaps
9 something -- a bit for everybody involved in this plan.

10 The two major things. I might lead off by saying
11 I coordinate the monitoring of the bird colony, and I
12 get together as Sarasota Audubon with the Sarasota High
13 School students, honors class, and we go out once a
14 month to count the nests on there.

15 It is a very unique bird colony. I want to stress
16 that. Because there are over a thousand birds nest on
17 there, many of them inside where you can't see them,
18 the Snow Egrets and the Little Blue Herons. The rest
19 of them are visible. Of course, the bigger Egrets, and
20 pelicans, and Cormorants are on top.

21 It is unique. It's the largest bird colony
22 between Charlotte Harbor and Tampa Bay. And the reason
23 it is so unique is that it is predator free. The
24 raccoons do not swim out there. And also there is no
25 land there for the raccoons to survive.

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1 On other islands that look similar, with
2 mangroves and so on, are generally closer to the
3 mainland, raccoons can swim to them easily, and they
4 can also survive, because boaters stop and they leave
5 picnic drop -- you know, with areas, French fries and
6 stuff like that.

7 So raccoons tend to hang out there, and then would
8 be a threat to any Herons and pelicans, eating the
9 eggs, and the young, and things like that.

10 And so it's a very, very unique bird colony. And
11 I think there's no controversy I have heard tonight
12 about preserving that bird colony and protecting it.

13 And I -- and much of our discussion was addressed
14 to the bird colony, but also to an interesting boaters
15 and the skiing aspect of the Skiers' Island, which is
16 also a fairly unique area.

17 The other area for skiing being up around City
18 Island, where this Skier Roost or whatever were formed.
19 But there aren't that many good ski areas in the bay.

20 So those are the two aspects. I'm not sure we had
21 a consensus particularly, but I want to address what
22 the points we brought out.

23 The idea of preserving the bird colony, of shoring
24 up, as other groups have said, of shoring up the west
25 side, where you get the erosion from the boats coming

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1 And from the naturalist's point of view, if we can
2 move -- keep the skiers down at Skiers' Island, they
3 won't be eroding our Bird Islands with their wake. And
4 so that was another concept.

5 Also, I think at least some of us favored a
6 no-wake zone at least in that small area by the Bird
7 Islands. It didn't seem too much to give up that
8 section for something that's so unique in the whole
9 stretch of the coast between Tampa Bay and the
10 Charlotte Bay, Charlotte Harbor.

11 Is that a fair comment for the boaters? Wherever
12 you are?

13 MR. ANKERSON: Or to teach the birds how to ski,
14 one of the two.

15 Okay, at this point, does anybody have any
16 specific comments? Or see any additional opportunities
17 for common ground, might be another way to put it.

18 MR. WAECHTER: Thank you. I think it was
19 interesting that the diversion of groups, three of the
20 four came to basically the same conclusion, to treat
21 this as a comprehensive plan, inclusive of the entire
22 area, rather than looking at each specific little area
23 as an entirety.

24 It's interesting the gentleman just spoke before
25 me, though, didn't want to take it a little bit further

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1 through there.

2 I don't think there is any real effect from
3 Midnight Pass. As somebody had addressed, it's too far
4 away. It's really the wake from the boats,
5 particularly the big boats.

6 So adding some fill, some rock fill on that side.
7 Perhaps some piling on the east side. But not enough
8 to get it close to the mainland so the raccoons can
9 come over. There's a compromise there. You don't want
10 to mess it up and get the predators in.

11 Joining the islands, I'm not sure about that.
12 That was an interesting idea. That may also -- we
13 certainly don't want any upland, to build any upland
14 there, because that gives habitat for the raccoons to
15 survive it.

16 The stabilizing on the western side, possible
17 plantings on the eastern side. Then the other things
18 that we have talked about in terms of the other
19 islands, if we have marshy areas and lagoon areas, that
20 adds extra feeding areas for these nesting birds,
21 particularly the Herons and Egrets.

22 The pelicans and Cormorants, of course, feed out
23 in the open water, and they can find fish anywhere.
24 But Herons and Egrets tend to feed in shallow areas.

25 And adding the lagoons and things like that would

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1 and acknowledge that comprehensive means looking at all
2 aspects of it.

3 And the fact is that millions, and millions, and
4 millions of gallons, more water went through Midnight
5 Pass than went through Big Sarasota Pass in the '50s,
6 that's an established fact.

7 That water now has to go south to Venice, where
8 it's eroding Snake Island, and it has to go north
9 through Big Pass, where it is eroding these little Bird
10 Islands all up and down the Intracoastal, not just at
11 this location, but down by my house at Stickney Point,
12 further down by Pelican Cove. They're all being
13 undercut.

14 Nobody denies that boat wakes are partially
15 responsible. They certainly are. But if you talk to
16 the old-timers, the increased velocity of volume
17 through the Intracoastal is having a very, very decided
18 effect.

19 It's something that we do need to understand it.
20 We need to look at this as a comprehensive outlook -- a
21 comprehensive overview of the entire area, and don't
22 say that just because something is miles away, it's not
23 affecting us, the old adage of if a butterfly flaps
24 its wings in China.

25 Everything affects everything. The water flow

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1 put nearby, better nearby feeding areas, and closer --
2 the less energy they have to use to fly to get their
3 food, the better success rate of the nests will be, the
4 more young they can fledge.

5 So for Big Edwards Island, we liked the concept on
6 number three, modified for better boat access. We put
7 maybe a little more upland enhancement down here,
8 because this seemed, from the boaters' perspective,
9 this was probably the best place to approach the inlet.
10 So just a little modification in that one.

11 And then Skiers' Island, the naturalists in our
12 group gave the other -- the boaters Skiers' Island, so
13 we've given that away. A compromise.

14 The one concept that hadn't been brought up, I
15 think, by anybody here, was the idea of the wind break
16 from Skiers' Island, for the skiers. And I know that's
17 a historic skiing area. It's been used quite a bit.

18 They need tall trees. Not necessarily Australian
19 pine, but palms probably wouldn't be adequate for the
20 wind break.

21 And so I think the boater in the group favored,
22 where is it, number one, which isn't visible there, but
23 where they kept the whole island the highland, so that
24 the wind break didn't have any breaks in it for the
25 skiers.

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1 here certainly affects this environment.

2 MR. ANKERSON: Additional comments?
3 Patrick.

4 MR. McCARTHY: I'm Patrick McCarthy, with Nokomis
5 Area Civic Association. I was at this meeting last
6 night over Snake Island.

7 One of the issues we had down there is we don't
8 have any problem with Australian pines. If a hurricane
9 comes and blows the Australian pines around, we're
10 going to have a heck of a lot more to worry about than
11 the Australian pines.

12 The young lady left. She brought up the people
13 poisoning the Australian pines. And I read articles in
14 the paper. And I didn't know about the ones that she
15 specified tonight, but I know about the ones up in New
16 Pass.

17 Somebody is poisoning these trees. Somebody has
18 access to chemicals that can poison these trees
19 immediately. And this person needs to be found and
20 stopped. This is an eco terrorist. He's in our midst.

21 The birds love the Australian pines down in south
22 county. Maybe in north county birds don't like them.
23 The birds love our Australian pines.

24 I think a slow speed zone by the Bird Islands
25 there would be very appropriate. I don't think the

1 boaters could complain about a slowdown thing there.
2 Again, it's always boat speeds are an enforcement
3 problem. Our local marine police authorities, City of
4 Sarasota, City of Venice, Marine Patrol, they've got
5 their hands full. They are understaffed. They are
6 underfunded. They do a good job with what's available
7 to them, but they've got a lot of ground to cover.
8 They can't make everybody obey the rules.

9 So the islands would still have to be protected,
10 even if you put in a slowdown or even a no-wake.
11 Because you're still going to have the guy that's going
12 to blast through there.

13 So you're going to have to protect those islands,
14 I agree. This whole thing, though, is probably the
15 most important aspect of what you guys are looking at
16 here.

17 I like your phased approach. I think that's
18 important. People want their buffers.

19 And I believe that would be all of my comments.
20 I'm looking forward to tomorrow night.

21 MR. ANKERSON: Getting to be a pro.
22 Anything else?

23 MR. LETCHWORTH: I just wanted to say, and I said
24 to our group, that I don't understand --

25 MR. ANKERSON: Wait, let us get you the

1 MR. ALDERSON: The chairman of the county
2 commission, Wayne Derr, signed a letter to the Corps of
3 Engineers, and I can't remember the date of that
4 letter, but somewhere in the '95, '4 range, back in
5 1994 or '95, something like that. That's how we got
6 involved.

7 Okay?
8 MR. ANKERSON: Anyone else? People are starting
9 to look slightly weary.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: I was just going to -- yeah. Both
11 in a letter, but at that time, we didn't have somebody
12 coming forward we'll sponsor this.

13 Then later on, the West Coast Inland Navigation
14 District said you need a non-federal sponsor, somebody
15 that can later come up with funds to match the funds,
16 and they were kind enough to say we'll sponsor this
17 project, so.

18 MR. ANKERSON: Well, thanks. I'll just sum up
19 what I think I've heard real briefly. That there is
20 some areas of consensus that are particularly strong,
21 and there's others that are less strong.

22 The biggest concern appears to be this issue of
23 the visual buffer and how to maintain a visual buffer.
24 And the designers, the engineers, and the planners, and
25 the landscape architects, and those folks I think will

1 microphone.

2 MR. LETCHWORTH: Wallace Letchworth. I don't
3 understand why we talk to one group about Little
4 Edwards Island, and we talk to another group about Big
5 Edwards and Skiers' Island when all of these islands
6 are involved in the same process.

7 And I think we need to have some sort of
8 coordinated effort to deal with this whole project. So
9 that you don't pick out this island, and that island,
10 and leave this island out in trying to come up with a
11 solution to our problems.

12 MR. WAECHTER: Comprehensive. That's it.

13 MR. ANKERSON: Alberto, Bruce, you want to
14 readdress that? I think that's kind of a function of
15 the history. And I'm sure --

16 MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah, I guess we got involved
17 almost at the -- I want to say the tail end here, when
18 we got a letter requesting to do a study on Sarasota
19 Bay, or a section of it.

20 And the request came out to sponsor studies on
21 these islands in specific. Later on, Snake Island was
22 associated at the request of the sponsor, which is the
23 West Coast Inland Navigation District.

24 I don't have an answer for the Little Edward
25 Island. I know that people from the county here or

1 go back and try and make every effort to accommodate
2 that interest along with all the other interests.

3 Is that the intent, Bruce?

4 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes.

5 MR. ANKERSON: And it's possible that they could
6 satisfy that interest and come up with something that
7 would satisfy all of you. It's possible that it's not
8 technically feasible to do that as well. That's
9 something they will have to get into the technically or
10 financially feasible, I suppose.

11 But it sounds to me if that issue could be
12 sufficiently addressed, then there is some consensus
13 here to go forward on the other questions, clearly. So
14 that's my take on things.

15 Bruce, do you have any comments?

16 MR. HASBROUCK: No. I just -- I would like to
17 thank everybody that did make comments, and people that
18 showed the interest to come.

19 This is certainly an open process. And there are
20 more opportunities. If you think of other things,
21 for -- I guess we're going to leave comment period open
22 for ten days in this phase.

23 But keep in mind, once we come up with a
24 preferred alternative, that will also have a public
25 meeting involved, and we'll have a comment phase as

1 some people that have more history, that they know
2 probably the fact of why that was left out. There was
3 some strong decisions from the citizens. And that's
4 all I know.

5 Like somebody said, later on, we can do some of
6 this work and later on come out -- the program is very
7 flexible. Like we can always come back to, if that's
8 the desire of the community, to go back into Little
9 Edwards. If not, we'll just leave it alone.

10 Or like Bruce explained at the beginning, it's
11 like one is there will be no action. Don't do anything
12 on these islands, and do in the ones that have a
13 consensus.

14 So I don't know if that answers your question.
15 But the Corps of Engineers got involved on a request.
16 And that's why we got involved on these islands. That
17 was the original request to us.

18 MR. BLASER: Who made the original request?

19 MR. ANKERSON: The question was who made the
20 original request.

21 MR. GONZALEZ: I think it was -- Mark, maybe --

22 MR. ALDERSON: It was the chairman of the county
23 commission, Wayne Derr, had --

24 MR. ANKERSON: Could you speak a little louder or
25 use the microphone for purposes of the court reporter?

1 well.

2 So if you come back to our next meeting, and you
3 see, it's like, whoa, wait a minute, I never said that,
4 or this is way different than what we thought we heard,
5 then that's the opportunity. So tonight's not your
6 last chance.

7 I do thank you for coming. And I look forward to
8 talking with you in the future.

9 MR. ANKERSON: Just a reminder for those of you
10 who are interested, so I know you're ready to bolt out
11 of here, but tomorrow night, same time, same place,
12 we'll talk about the Jim Neville Preserve, Jim Neville
13 Marine Preserve, and the Palmer Point.

14 So look forward to those of you who come back and
15 appreciate those of you who were here and stayed to the
16 end.

17 Yeah, if anybody hasn't filled out a green
18 questionnaire or a white questionnaire, please do so
19 now. And anybody who took notes from the groups and
20 are walking out with your notes, please, bring them
21 back. We need those as well.

22 Thank you.

23 (Thereupon, this hearing was concluded at
24 approximately 9:15 p.m.)
25

1 STATE OF FLORIDA)
2 COUNTY OF SARASOTA)
3 I, NANCY E. PAULSEN, Registered Professional
4 Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did
5 stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that
6 the transcript is a true and complete record of my
7 stenographic notes.

8 Dated this 17th day of February, 2000.

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NANCY E. PAULSEN, RPR

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PUBLIC WORKSHOP
Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration
Feasibility Study

Panel: Richard Hamann, University of Florida,
Center for Governmental
Responsibilities
Tom Ankerson, University of Florida,
Center for Governmental
Responsibilities
Alberto Gonzalez, U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers
Bruce Hasbrouck, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Charles Listowski, West Coast Inland
Navigation District
Tiphonie Jinks, U. S. Army Corps of
Engineers
Eric Sutton, Sarasota County

REPORTED BY: NANCY E. BRUIN PAULSEN
Registered Professional Reporter
Notary Public
State of Florida at Large

DATE: February 3, 2000
Commencing at 7:02 p.m.

PLACE: Pine View School
1 Python Place
Osprey, Florida

Jeannie Hunt, HDR Engineering, Inc.

Page 2

1 MR. ANKERSON: If you will take your seat, we'll
 2 get underway here.
 3 Hopefully, everyone has been to the table and
 4 picked up several forms we have, one of which is a card
 5 in which to indicate whether or not you wanted to speak
 6 this evening. And when we open the floor for public
 7 discussion, we'll take your name in the order in which
 8 we received the cards. And then we'll open it for
 9 further discussion at that point.
 10 And again, there is two questionnaires, a green
 11 one and a white one, which we would urge you to fill
 12 out as well. In fact, we won't let you leave the room
 13 until you have filled those out.
 14 And then finally, if you are not interested in
 15 speaking before the crowd, would still like to provide
 16 comments to the design team here, then there is a
 17 written form by which you can do that. I'll go into a
 18 little bit of that in more detail.
 19 My name is Tom Ankeron, and I'm from the
 20 University of Florida's College of Law, Center for
 21 Governmental Responsibility, and we'll be acting as the
 22 facilitators for this meeting.
 23 I have two of my students with me, Chris Pierce
 24 here and Jodi Brooks, and they'll be helping out with
 25 the microphones, with recording some of the comments

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1 open it up for some questions and so forth based on the
 2 comment cards that you've filled out.
 3 If -- we ask that you limit your comments to two
 4 to three minutes, if possible. We would ask that you
 5 respect the opinions of others and their comments. We
 6 would ask that if your comment is substantially similar
 7 to someone else's, that you ratify that comment, if you
 8 will, for the record.
 9 We do have a court reporter here. And we're
 10 taking the notes of all of the discussion that goes on,
 11 and we will go back, summarize that, and provide that
 12 back to you.
 13 And then we would ask that you respect my role as
 14 a moderator. And so if I interrupt or something like
 15 that, defer briefly, because we want to get over to the
 16 tables over there and get you -- put you to work with
 17 pen and paper planning those spoil sites.
 18 So with that brief introduction, what I would like
 19 to do is turn it over to Bruce. And he's going to
 20 describe for you the status of the projects, the design
 21 considerations that went into the concepts that he'll
 22 present to you. And he will suggest, and I'll repeat,
 23 that those are just concepts. And then he'll present
 24 those concepts.
 25 The other thing I wanted to say, just -- a lot of

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1 that you have, and then assisting in the interactive
 2 forum with the maps that we'll have fairly shortly.
 3 Some of you have been to the prior two meetings we
 4 have had, and you are kind of familiar with the
 5 routine, almost like old friends at this point.
 6 The rest of the team that I'll introduce here is
 7 Bruce Hasbrouck from H. D. R., who is the consultant to
 8 the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which will
 9 be the federal sponsor for this project.
 10 And Tiphonie Jinks from the Corps of Engineers,
 11 which is the federal sponsor for this project. This
 12 project meaning a feasibility study to determine
 13 whether or not to restore six spoil sites in Sarasota
 14 Bay.
 15 And we've had a prior meeting on Snake Island in
 16 the Venice Inlet area, and then a meeting last night on
 17 Big Edwards, Skiers' Island, and Bird Colony Islands.
 18 This is the final of that set of meetings,
 19 addressing the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer
 20 Point. And that's the subject of our discussion today.
 21 Other members of Bruce's team that we have with us
 22 are Jeanine Hust, who is an environmental planner. She
 23 is in the back of the room back there. Lenore Hockley
 24 over here, a civil engineer. And Betsy Davis, who is
 25 an ecologist.

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1 you may be here and may be interested in what's going
 2 to happen to Midnight Pass. I realize that's a issue
 3 of considerable importance to everyone in Sarasota
 4 County.
 5 This is not a discussion about what is going to
 6 happen to Midnight Pass except as it relates to how the
 7 restoration of these spoil sites would be affected by
 8 what happens to Midnight Pass. And Bruce may elaborate
 9 on that a little bit more.
 10 But in order to get to the issue of how and
 11 whether to restore those sites, we would ask that you
 12 bear that in mind, that this is not a forum for the
 13 Midnight Pass study, if you will, which we know is
 14 ongoing.
 15 So with that in mind, Bruce.
 16 MR. HASBROUCK: Great. Thank you very much for
 17 coming tonight.
 18 First of all, we do want to give you a report
 19 about the status of the study. Currently, we are, of
 20 course, right now in the midst of the public
 21 involvement aspect.
 22 The reason we have this is part of the 1135
 23 process -- which, by the way, the 1135 process is
 24 something that is mandated by Congress. And what it is
 25 is it's for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to look

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1 So we have kind of the core team of the people
 2 who have been involved in the design that you'll be
 3 presented with in just a very few minutes.
 4 The purpose of this is to solicit your input into
 5 this process, as to whether and how to restore these
 6 spoil sites. And the idea is to get as much of your
 7 input as possible.
 8 In order to do that, we have put forth a number of
 9 maps that you'll see over on those tables over there.
 10 And once we get through the presentation and give you
 11 enough baseline information and have an opportunity for
 12 you to ask questions relevant to that baseline
 13 information, then we're going to ask you to move over
 14 to those tables and assist us -- assist the design team
 15 in doing this plan.
 16 And that means to -- brainstorming session with
 17 maps, with paper, with pens. And then we'll bring you
 18 all back and we'll present what each of these groups
 19 have described during that session.
 20 So that's the most interesting part of the
 21 evening, I think you'll find. It's certainly the most
 22 interactive. And we would like to leave as much time
 23 as possible.
 24 So in that vein, what I'm hoping is that once we
 25 have had this presentation by Bruce and his team, we'll

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1 at ecological restoration.
 2 That's a process, we have some handouts on that,
 3 if you have questions about it, as well as there is a
 4 little bit of information regarding the process on our
 5 web site.
 6 Now, part of that is it's a NEPA study, the
 7 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which
 8 essentially said that if you're going to spend federal
 9 dollars, you need to have consistent look at these
 10 projects through different federal agencies to look at
 11 the impacts of it both on the natural environment and
 12 the human environment.
 13 So part of NEPA involves the public involvement
 14 process to make sure that we get input from the public,
 15 and that this is not something that's done, say, behind
 16 closed doors.
 17 Data collection. We've had surveyors out on each
 18 of the spoil islands. And they've been out looking at
 19 the top -- collecting elevations to help us develop
 20 topographic maps.
 21 Now, this is a conceptual study. These are not
 22 design-level surveys. So they are conceptual. But
 23 it's given us a good chance to look at issues such as
 24 if we were going to create a tidal lagoon in an area,
 25 we want to know how much soil would be removed so that

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1 we could look at the feasibility of that work.
 2 Feasibility also includes cost. We don't want to
 3 propose something that has an extraordinary cost, and
 4 then, you know, have blinders on about that. So cost
 5 is a portion of feasibility.
 6 We've done geotechnical investigations. We've had
 7 a geotechnical firm out that has done borings on these
 8 islands to collect samples, to look at the makeup of
 9 the samples, to determine things such as is the quality
 10 of the sand that came from the spoil suitable for beach
 11 restoration.
 12 Are there such things as clays or fine particulate
 13 matter in there that would cause impacts from the
 14 resuspension of that. Or look at things such as is it
 15 rock. You know, is it unsuitable for beach material,
 16 is it unsuitable for other types of projects. So that's
 17 the geotechnical analysis.
 18 We have also collected the data as far as the
 19 cover type, the existing plants that are out there.
 20 The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be providing
 21 part of the study to us to look at threatened and
 22 endangered species.
 23 Also, a cultural and archeological resource
 24 assessment is being performed on these islands to
 25 determine if there's specific things out there we need

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1 going to look at things such as the existing conditions
 2 out there.
 3 The alternatives analysis, as we develop these
 4 different alternatives, then we're going to go back and
 5 analyze each alternative and look at the benefits and
 6 also the impacts to, like I said, the natural
 7 environment and then the human environment.
 8 After we have worked through the alternatives, we
 9 will come up with a preferred alternative that we
 10 believe has reasonable efforts towards the restoration
 11 goals, is consistent with what the public has
 12 recommended, and then we will assess the feasibility of
 13 that preferred alternative. We will come back one
 14 final workshop and present to you the preferred
 15 alternative.
 16 Now, the document that we prepare, the
 17 environmental assessment, or you'll hear people call it
 18 the E. A., is going to be available for public comment.
 19 We will place it in libraries. We'll have it on the
 20 web page. We want people to review it and give us
 21 comments back.
 22 Now, in addition to the public, there is also
 23 federal agencies that will review it, Coast Guard, U.
 24 S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U. S. Army Corps of
 25 Engineers.

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1 to be aware of.
 2 And then public input is part of data collection.
 3 We want to know from you, the public, what's important
 4 to you, what are the kind of issues, is it recreation,
 5 is it removal of exotic species, is it the creation of
 6 fish and wildlife habitat.
 7 We want that information. And this is the forum
 8 to provide that information.
 9 Now, like Tom said, there's various avenues for
 10 that. And if public speaking is not something you're
 11 comfortable with, please, fill out the comment forms
 12 and give us your input.
 13 We will be collecting that, we'll be looking at
 14 what type of information is coming back to us. And
 15 that gives us an understanding to make sure that we're
 16 not out there proposing something that's completely
 17 outside of the public interest.
 18 We've developed conceptual designs. You know, we
 19 will be presenting these to you in a few minutes and
 20 show you some of the things that we have developed from
 21 these conceptual designs.
 22 Essentially what we've done is we have tried to
 23 start the middle of the road. Now, there is a
 24 comprehensive plan that's been developed by not only
 25 the Sarasota County, but also the Sarasota Bay National

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1 There will be state agencies who look at it, the
 2 Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the
 3 State Historic Preservation Office, as well as looking
 4 at local, local -- the Sarasota County, and see if what
 5 we're proposing is consistent with each of those
 6 agencies' regulations, and policies, and things of that
 7 sort.
 8 So you can see how this is really a multi-faceted
 9 review process. This isn't a bunch of people sitting
 10 in the room, coming up with an idea, and saying here is
 11 what we're going to build.
 12 Instead, it's these are the alternatives. We have
 13 assessed them for these types of impacts. And here is
 14 what our preferred alternative is based on the public
 15 input, the feasibility of this project working.
 16 We're not going to propose something that's never
 17 been tried before. We're going to propose things that
 18 are restoration activities, that have been tried and
 19 true, and that we know are feasible to be created.
 20 Okay. Now, you'll hear -- whoa.
 21 You'll hear me use several terms throughout the
 22 night. So we've developed this showing the vegetative
 23 community profile.
 24 We'll be using terms such as mangroves, the red
 25 mangroves, the blacks, and the whites. Now, these

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1 Estuary Program.
 2 And that comprehensive plan has looked at a lot of
 3 different elements. It's gone through a lot of review
 4 processes. And this is just a portion of that plan.
 5 On the conceptual designs, kind of what I've
 6 called the middle-of-the-road plan that looks at
 7 restoration of several types of habitat, and looking at
 8 the acreage of, say, mangroves or emergent marshes,
 9 things of that sort, then we have looked at another
 10 example.
 11 We call them concepts. But that doesn't mean that
 12 concept number one is what we feel the strongest about.
 13 The numbering is just arbitrary so we can keep track of
 14 them.
 15 But these designs are out here to kind of
 16 stimulate your thoughts, to give you an idea of the
 17 types of things that are practical or that are
 18 potentials out there.
 19 And then we work through three designs tonight to
 20 show you kind of the middle of the road, one aspect,
 21 and then another aspect, and if there's any opportunity
 22 in between on those.
 23 Now, like I said, this is part of the NEPA
 24 process. And what we will be producing out of this
 25 will be an environmental assessment. The E. A. is

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1 exist within the intertidal zone between low and high
 2 tide.
 3 Now, within that area is a term we are going to
 4 call low marsh. And that is the spartina and the
 5 juncus. These are grasses, emergent grasses that grow
 6 between low and high tide, and have a very valuable
 7 fisheries habitat.
 8 Now, on your evaluation forms, you'll see that
 9 we've spelled out these communities and talked a little
 10 bit about the benefits of them.
 11 Don't confuse this high marsh grasses with
 12 seagrasses. Seagrasses are typically below low tide,
 13 and are well documented for the fisheries value of that
 14 habitat.
 15 We have used the term called high marsh. And that
 16 has a lot of the grasses that are generally above high
 17 tide mark. But they're salt-tolerant species.
 18 And then additionally, we'll use the final term,
 19 which is the upland tropical hammock, and that is the
 20 native species that typically grow adjacent to
 21 saltwater in estuarine systems and are native habitat.
 22 So when we go through the different concepts,
 23 we'll be using these terms, and I wanted to kind of
 24 give you the graphical representation of what we'll
 25 mean when we're using those terms.

1 Now, I'm sure most people are familiar where we
2 are, but just to cover the point, we are talking about
3 Palmer Point as well as Jim Neville Preserve. And
4 these are part of the entire study of Big Edwards
5 Island, the Bird Colony Islands, --

6 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Skiers'.

7 MR. HASBROUCK: Skiers' Island, thank you. And
8 then, of course, the two we are looking at tonight, and
9 on Tuesday night we covered Snake Island down in Venice
10 Inlet. This study will assess all of these islands.

11 We had a team meeting a couple weeks ago with our
12 team as well as the sponsors, the West Coast Inland
13 Navigation District, a representative from Sarasota
14 County, from the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program
15 and then the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as
16 our design team.

17 And we came up with some concepts. And we call
18 them restoration considerations. Now, one of the
19 things we would like to do tonight before you break up
20 over into the design session is to get feedback from
21 you. What are things that you would like to see,
22 specific things, such as no recreation.

23 Now, Palmer Point, even though existing access is
24 limited, there are recreation opportunities that exist
25 north of the area. So essentially this portion of the

1 But, like I said, one of the things we want to
2 make sure tonight is we get input back from the people,
3 from you, what are you interested in, and try to
4 specifically identify the key issues such as this.

5 All right. Now, within Jim Neville Marine
6 Preserve, we wanted to look at the issue, we can't
7 ignore the fact that Midnight Pass is out there. We
8 can't ignore the fact that that study is ongoing.

9 So we wanted to try to look at things that with
10 Midnight Pass either open or closed, that our design
11 considerations would not impact the Midnight Pass
12 decision.

13 We wanted to look at potentially providing
14 circulation between the northern portion and the
15 southern portions of Jim Neville Marine Preserve.

16 Once again, protect and preserve the existing
17 salterns.

18 Improve the quantity and quality of fish and
19 wildlife habitat.

20 Again, remove the nuisance species and the exotic
21 species from these islands.

22 Minimal maintenance.

23 And then consider the public access opportunities
24 that are consistent with the preserve status.

25 All right, now what I would like to do is go

1 park itself.

2 No permanent standing water. That typically has a
3 mosquito problem. So we want to make sure that we're
4 not going to create areas that have permanent standing
5 water and going to breed mosquitos.

6 Protect and preserve existing salterns. Within
7 these areas, there is a fairly unique habitat that is
8 created out here, and these are these light areas.

9 Now, what these are are areas between the
10 mangroves and the upland areas that get inundated on
11 very high tides. The water stays there. It can't --
12 it doesn't have any way to leave because it's slightly
13 impounded. As the water evaporates, it becomes a high
14 saline environment.

15 But there's particular algae that's very
16 opportunistic, and when the water is there, the algae
17 will grow quickly, and it becomes a very unique system
18 for fiddler crabs and really is the first part of the
19 bio chain -- bio -- food chain and has a good biomass
20 production ability in there.

21 So we felt like that one of the things is to
22 protect and preserve these existing salterns. We --
23 really the design aspect of that is we didn't want to
24 get in here and propose, say, cutting a channel through
25 here that would allow the water to escape and would

1 through each of our designs, our concepts. But I would
2 like to talk a little bit about the existing
3 conditions.

4 We're starting with Palmer Point. Essentially
5 what we have is an area, and this is the area that is
6 within our scope to look at for restoration, is an
7 island.

8 I believe that the highest point within it is
9 about 3.9 feet. So it's not very tall. There's not a
10 whole lot of spoil was placed in this area during the
11 dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway. Actually, the
12 Intracoastal is out about here.

13 There are salterns adjacent to it. And then there
14 is the mangroves around the outside of it with a few
15 Australian pines up against the residence. And then
16 additional Australian pines and exotic nuisance species
17 to the north.

18 All right. Concept number one. What we looked at
19 doing with this was to go in the area, cut an opening
20 to the waterway that would allow for exchange in water.
21 Create a tidal lagoon in the center of the island.

22 And then during very low tides, that would be
23 exposed and provide mud flats, which are real good
24 feeding opportunities for wading birds.

25 Surrounding that we would have the low marsh to

1 eliminate that condition.

2 We want to improve the quantity and quality of the
3 fish and wildlife habitat.

4 Create coastal hammocks, the uplands. There are
5 very few upland left in Sarasota Bay. So one of the
6 considerations we came up with is to make sure that we
7 do create these types of habitat.

8 Remove the nuisance and exotic species. It's very
9 well documented that many of the nuisance species that
10 are around have a negative effect on the natural
11 environment, including Brazilian pepper, Carrotwood,
12 Australian pines.

13 Minimal maintenance. We want to make sure that
14 we're not out creating something that's going to have a
15 high maintenance cost and that has a need for continued
16 maintenance -- high need for continued maintenance that
17 could have a detrimental effect if this maintenance did
18 not occur.

19 And then also we wanted to look at creating a
20 visual buffer for adjacent homeowners. Make sure that
21 what is enjoyed right now from the adjacent conditions,
22 that we're not going to just totally eliminate that.

23 Now, like I said, these are only considerations.
24 We're not going to promise that all of these issues are
25 going to be incorporated into a design.

1 the mangroves. And actually -- well, sorry.

2 The low marsh to the mangrove areas. So that you
3 can visualize this area would be in here. And you see
4 the cross-section would kind of run across just like
5 that.

6 So we would transition from the lagoon, through
7 the mangrove area, into a high marsh, that area, and
8 then with an upland restoration portion on the west
9 side of the area.

10 Concept number two, once again, we have looked at
11 connecting an open water area in the center to the
12 existing channel out here.

13 Go with the low marsh and the mangroves around the
14 outside edges of it. Preserving the salterns, or the
15 salt barrens or salt flats, another word for those.
16 And then have an upland restoration area in the center
17 of the island.

18 Concept number three, essentially regrade the
19 entire area, take it down to the intertidal zone, which
20 is below high tide, above low tide, and plant the
21 entire area with mangroves.

22 So those are the concepts for Palmer Point.

23 Now, Jim Neville. Jim Neville is a pretty unique
24 area that created some real opportunities or challenges
25 for design. Because essentially what we're dealing

1 with is two lobes, upland areas covered with Australian
2 pines, Brazilian pepper, Carrotwood, and many other
3 nuisance and exotic species. Southern area as well.

4 Now, you'll see that some areas on the northern
5 part that are a little more open. The canopy is a
6 little taller. And what's happened is as the
7 Australian pine has dropped its needles, they're toxic
8 to other plants. It does not allow for other plants to
9 grow underneath the canopy level. So you can see it
10 kind of gives it a little bit more of that open aspect.

11 There are salterns with salt flats around the
12 edge. And another really unique area is here that is
13 surrounded by mangroves that provides for that
14 impoundment, that whenever the tide goes back out, the
15 water evaporates, you end up with that highly-saline
16 environment.

17 Mangroves to the south, along the edges to the
18 west, and mangroves again to the north, with this being
19 the Intracoastal Waterway.

20 The grades in this area, a little over elevation
21 ten in this point. And down here I believe it goes to
22 about seven. So you can see these are basically two
23 mounds that whenever they dredged the Intracoastal
24 Waterway, they pumped the material up onto these two
25 mounds.

1 I guess when there's a lot of people are into it, the
2 servers can only provide so much information coming
3 out. But keep trying.

4 The other thing you can do is you need to start up
5 here and then work your way, the Corps has a whole
6 bunch of restoration projects, the restore, and then
7 they have several projects listed, and Sarasota is one
8 portion of that.

9 The advantage of this, though, is if you want to
10 see some of the other projects that the Corps is doing,
11 a restoration project, this web site provides quite a
12 bit of information.

13 On the site, we have each of these concepts. We
14 have the 1135 process. We have this graphic on there.
15 The study team is listed.

16 So really, it's a good opportunity, if you weren't
17 able to catch some of the concepts tonight, then you
18 can go in here and look at them. And I think a couple
19 people that I have talked to in the audience have
20 actually been able to print these concepts directly off
21 the web.

22 Now, we're going to leave the comment period open
23 for ten more days. So if you see something, and you
24 printed this up, and you think, well, you guys are
25 crazy, I would like to see something whatever, draw

1 Okay. Concept number one. Look at the design
2 consideration of connecting these two together and
3 allowing for a tidal flow essentially to come through,
4 work its way around, and either both go out here or
5 come here on the incoming tide.

6 Surrounding the areas with mangroves and the low
7 marsh, both areas. And then having small pockets of
8 upland restoration, all the while preserving the
9 existing mangrove fringe and not impacting the salt
10 flats.

11 Concept number two utilizes two existing
12 connections to create the tidal lagoons in the centers.
13 Fairly substantial amount of low marsh and mangroves
14 around the tidal lagoons. And then again, a couple
15 small areas of upland restoration.

16 Oh, and we also looked at -- back out along this
17 edge a couple areas of possibly doing some low marsh,
18 mangrove enhancement areas.

19 The third concept did not include any tidal
20 flat -- or -- yeah, any tidal lagoons or mud flats, but
21 essentially looked at center areas of upland
22 restoration. And this one possibly even something as
23 utilizing material that were removed from these areas
24 and creating more of a plateau or a mound on the
25 northern end.

1 Upland restoration, upland restoration. And then
2 a little bit more extensive high marsh, and then the
3 white mangroves or what some people call the green
4 mangrove or the buttonwood through these areas
5 surrounding the upland restoration. And then low
6 marsh, mangroves butting up against the existing
7 mangrove areas.

8 So those are the three concepts that we came up
9 with. And when we move over to the tables and start
10 doing the charrette, we have 11 by 17 drawings.

11 And what we would like for you to do is to work
12 with these. And if you believe that this is crazy, and
13 that we ought to get in here and build a lagoon in
14 here, draw that. That's what we want to see.

15 We want you the opportunity to utilize your ideas.
16 And some people work verbally, some people work
17 pictures. And this will give you the opportunity to
18 actually draw what you think.

19 Well, what we would like to do now is do the word
20 part and have an opportunity to specifically, from the
21 audience, tell us, what are you interested in?

22 Oh, yeah, by the way, that's the web site. I
23 know some people have been having a little bit of
24 trouble getting into it. All I can say is be patient,
25 keep trying. It's just like anything else on the web.

1 that up, send it in to us. We would like to hear what
2 you have to say.

3 MR. ANKERSON: Okay. At this time, what we would
4 like to do is give those people who turned in cards the
5 first opportunity to speak. And once we have gotten
6 through that, we'll do it on a hand-raising basis.

7 It's 7:30 now. So we can spend 25 minutes in this
8 session. And then we'll move over into the mapping
9 charrettes, as we call it, and ask for you guys to sit
10 around the table together and look at these designs and
11 provide your input and your alternatives.

12 And I'll describe in a little bit more detail how
13 we're going to go about doing that, and then
14 synthesizing that information and bringing you back for
15 that purpose.

16 So Jodi is going to try and capture the thoughts
17 that you have right now on paper. And Lenore and Chris
18 will walk around with the microphones and stand by you.
19 And if you go on too long, they'll start to pull it
20 away from you. That's when you know it's time to start
21 to close down your comments.

22 Jim Olson, Save Our Sand.

23 MR. WAECHTER: That's what happens when you come
24 last.

25 MR. OLSON: I was hoping I would be last.

1 I'm Jim Olson, the head of Save Our Sand.

2 MR. ANKERSON: We would like you to take a
3 microphone, because -- for all of us here as well as
4 others.

5 MR. OLSON: Okay.

6 MR. ANKERSON: And the court reporter doesn't
7 always hear, as well as others. And --

8 MS. BROOKS: And I'll write down whatever you want
9 me to write down.

10 MR. OLSON: Can I write?

11 MS. BROOKS: Sure.

12 MR. OLSON: I'm Jim Olson, with Save Our Sand.

13 You're familiar with Save Our Sand. And that's the
14 project that started a few years ago, to send sand out
15 of our area, and we raised up a lot of money and a lot
16 of stuff.

17 We feel that this is an integrated system. We
18 have -- first of all, we have Bird Key out here. We
19 also have Lido out here. Then we have Siesta. And
20 Siesta comes down here.

21 And what happened when Bird Key was built many
22 years ago, it forced the water -- this all used to be
23 flats out here. That forced the water to erode the
24 northern part of Siesta Key. Used to be a beach out
25 here. It's all gone.

1 This whole thing is an integrated system. We have
2 New Pass up here. We have Big Pass here. We used to
3 have Midnight Pass here. We have Venice Inlet down
4 here. This is an integrated system. It all works
5 together.

6 What's happening now, we have a -- we have a Jim
7 Neville Island that sits here. And we have a thin
8 strip here, going down to Casey Key. Now, more water
9 now goes through Venice Inlet and clear down. They're
10 not happy with that. More water goes through Big Pass
11 because of this closure here.

12 It used to be that this water came down like this,
13 went out. Also came down here. And this was all
14 blocked off here and here.

15 What's happening is on the northern part of where
16 this ends right up here along Sanderling, there is also
17 a body of water here. This body of water used to,
18 years ago, be the pass here, it came in here, came out,
19 went on down. This was closed up, opened here by
20 nature.

21 Now what's happening is this area now is eroding,
22 trying to force an inlet here, which is in the
23 Sanderling area. And those people are washing away
24 down there. They're deeply concerned.

25 Now, were this decreased, to go back to where it

1 the portion of the island, the round portion that we
2 did show. And that's based on the original petition or
3 request from the non-federal sponsor or the West Coast
4 Inland Navigational District.

5 MR. ANKERSON: Which doesn't preclude you from
6 including that in the mapping and the comments as well.
7 It may stir up some interest in the future. Or ask
8 that it be included as such. I believe it's still
9 available, is it not, Tiphonie?

10 Can ask for additional areas to be included? I
11 know we've had a discussion in the past.

12 MS. JINKS: Yes, there is an opportunity in the
13 future, if you would like for the other portion or --
14 not just including this island, but other islands along
15 Sarasota Bay, if you would like those to be included or
16 a study be done, to send it -- address it to our
17 district engineer, Colonel Miller, proposing what you
18 would like to have done.

19 MR. ANKERSON: Does that come from a citizen or
20 does that come from the local government?

21 MS. JINKS: Local government, which you would call
22 the non-federal sponsor.

23 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you, Jeffrey.

24 Fred Merlin -- Melin, I'm sorry. Or Melin.

25 MR. MELIN: Melin.

1 was, we're trying to put -- what we propose is go back
2 to where it was years ago. Have the water come in
3 here, go out here. We don't restore this. We have
4 this be flats again.

5 So the water can come all the way here, out to
6 here. We'll have less water here. We'll have less
7 water here. This whole thing will work better.

8 That's in essence the sum and substance of what
9 Save Our Sand feels to help restore and save this whole
10 area. Because these people don't want to lose their
11 homes, these people are washing away down here. Big
12 Pass has had to harden theirs with rocks.

13 And that's the short -- sum and substance of it.
14 I hope we can get this accomplished.

15 MR. ANKERSON: Thanks, Jim, and --

16 MR. OLSON: Yes, any questions?

17 MR. ANKERSON: That looks to me like a map --

18 MR. OLSON: You like my map?

19 MR. ANKERSON: Looks like a map we need to have
20 over there as well.

21 MR. OLSON: This is Siesta Key, Lido, Bird Key.
22 We have Casey. We call it Casey-Siesta now. And then
23 we have Midnight Pass, past tense. And this is Jim
24 Neville.

25 Spelling was not my -- I had to spend -- do second

1 MR. ANKERSON: Melin, I'm sorry.

2 MR. MELIN: Yeah, I don't have a comment.

3 MR. ANKERSON: You want to pass?

4 MR. MELIN: I'll pass for now.

5 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, sure.

6 Robert Waechter. One of these days I'll get it
7 right. You've been here every night and I still
8 haven't gotten it.

9 MR. WAECHTER: We have another four, you'll get
10 it.

11 Could you flip that back to where our conditions,
12 our givens are? The next page.

13 Okay, number one with Midnight Pass open or
14 closed, design considerations will not impact Midnight
15 Pass. I'm concerned, because every one of these
16 concepts violates that precept.

17 Historically, this island, before the Corps came
18 in and deposited their dredge spoils on it, was
19 basically a sheetflow of mangrove island, or at least
20 sheetflow during astronomical or storm-event tides.

21 Concept three simply prevents that under any set
22 of circumstances. The other two concepts make
23 provision for it maybe during very, very high tide
24 events, but certainly not during normal tide events.
25 Concept one seems to come closest if it were

1 grade twice because I couldn't spell. I also couldn't
2 write. I'm a pharmacist by trade. I was supposed to
3 be a doctor, that's why my writing is so bad.

4 But this is the Venice Inlet down here. Okay?

5 Thank you for your time.

6 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you very much.

7 MS. BROOKS: I can't spell, either, so I apologize
8 ahead of time.

9 MR. ANKERSON: Jeffrey Jones. Jeffrey, Lenore
10 right behind you has a microphone.

11 MR. OLSON: Excuse me, I didn't sign that.

12 MR. JONES: My only comment was would you be able
13 to create a coastal hammock in other parts of Palmer
14 Point, since right now you're just restoring the back
15 portion.

16 MR. ANKERSON: Do you want to repeat that? We had
17 a little difficulty here hearing that.

18 MR. JONES: I was wondering if you would be able
19 to create a coastal hammock in other parts of the
20 Palmer Point Park, since right now your plan is to
21 restore the back of it and not do anything else with it
22 in terms of the park.

23 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce, you want to address that?

24 MR. HASBROUCK: Yeah, I mean, basically that area
25 is not included in our scope, so we're only looking at

1 altered and those lagoons were turned into cross canals
2 without bothering the salt marsh. And I'm sure you
3 could address that with proper engineering.

4 But I realize there is an awful lot of deposition
5 spoils on these island and you need to have something
6 to do with them, someplace to put them, and on site is
7 certainly the easiest way to deal with them, but maybe
8 some provision can be made for parts of the site to be
9 built up to take what you need to move.

10 But right now, this does not come close to
11 replicating the historical conditions of this area.
12 And if the Midnight Pass study is positive, and if the
13 county commission decides to move forward with it, any
14 one of these proposals would be a negative to that
15 event ever taking place.

16 So I think you need to design these things so that
17 truly it will meet the conditions of number one, that
18 is either eventuality, that this will be a positive
19 factor and not a negative factor. So.

20 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you very much. And again,
21 that's something that you could address more
22 specifically on the maps themselves.

23 Jack Todd.

24 MR. TODD: I'm -- Bob Waechter said it much more
25 eloquently, but I would think that perhaps the -- if

1 the Midnight Pass were opened, what could we expect
2 from the Corps of Engineers for assistance in designing
3 the flow properly, as Bob described?

4 MR. ANKERSON: I guess the answer to that, in
5 terms of this meeting, maybe that's outside the scope
6 of this meeting. But I'll certainly let -- let
7 Tiphany address that.

8 MS. JINKS: At this time, we aren't certain how we
9 would actually incorporate the with pass or without
10 pass conditions, as far as the Corps of Engineers are
11 concerned.

12 But for the scope of this study, we're looking at
13 restoration of Jim Neville -- excuse me, of Palmer
14 Point Park within the area.

15 MR. ANKERSON: Edward Steinfeld.

16 MR. STEINFELD: Yeah.

17 MR. ANKERSON: I was going to say Steinfeld.

18 MR. STEINFELD: Yeah. I get a lot of return
19 address mail like that.

20 MR. ANKERSON: You can speak for half an hour if
21 you can do it like he does.

22 MR. STEINFELD: Anyway, essentially, a little
23 repetitious of what has been said. I think maybe we've
24 got the cart before the horse here.

25 And that until Midnight Pass is reopened, these --

1 And tonight we're talking about Palmer Point Park
2 and the Jim Neville Marine Preserve, and there is
3 certainly an interrelationship between the Jim Neville
4 Marine Preserve and Midnight Pass as well.

5 So all of these are interrelated. We've got to
6 keep that in mind if we're going to get the most bang
7 for our buck and really maximize this effort.

8 The other thing I would like to say is we talked
9 about the different organizations or government --
10 governmental entities that are part of this.

11 We have to understand also in this -- for
12 tonight, that the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and the
13 Palmer Point Park were donated by the Palmer Family
14 Trusts.

15 And anything that is going to be done down there
16 is going to have to pass their muster, at least from
17 the point of view that it lives up to the terms of that
18 donation. I'm sure that as long as it's an aggressive
19 process, that there won't be any problem with it.

20 The only question that I have, and I will put this
21 back down again, is I would like someone to give us a
22 little bit of a background in terms of what a marine
23 estuary is, which is what we talk about the Jim Neville
24 Marine Preserve, what a marine estuary is versus what
25 the current conditions are.

1 this work here, any of this work that is going to
2 interfere with the migration of the pass, which was the
3 problem before, any of this work that would interfere
4 with that is going to be negative.

5 So I think that my feeling is that I would like to
6 see -- the bay is dirty now, and it's real bad. I
7 would like to see the full Sarasota Bay returned to its
8 original state, and the area there returned to its
9 original state with an improvement so that the pass
10 would not be migrating.

11 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.

12 Dr. Robert Heisey. Heisey.

13 DR. HEISEY: Yes. We have property on Drymon Bay,
14 which just looks out on Casey Key. We put a dock in
15 there a few years ago, and the E. P. A. asked us to
16 plant some spartina grass, which we did. They all died
17 within a year. And we noticed that there's no other
18 grasses around that bay.

19 I think that, again, we get back to the concept of
20 Midnight Pass. And having had a home up north, where
21 we had to pull out our oil tank because the E. P. A.
22 warned us to check on this and wanted to be sure that
23 we weren't getting contamination, I can't understand
24 how our same government can be so cavalier about
25 hydrocarbons on the water from all the boat traffic and

1 MR. ANKERSON: I think Bruce is going to have to
2 take that one.

3 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes. Essentially, the difference
4 between marine estuary and estuarine has to do with the
5 freshwater input. And in this system, where we're
6 dealing with right now, there's very little fresh water
7 input.

8 So it's -- the only -- only water -- fresh water
9 is from rainwater. It's not like we've got a creek or
10 a river coming in and directly into these areas,
11 providing fresh water.

12 The estuarine is an area where you have the mixing
13 of the fresh water and the saltwater. It is an estuary
14 in the fact that it is behind the barrier islands.
15 There is some effect, you will find higher salinities
16 outside the barrier islands than you will find on the
17 inside.

18 There are certain species that are more prevalent
19 in the less salty conditions, and there are other
20 species that are more prevalent in the more salty
21 conditions.

22 MR. ANKERSON: Okay, well, those are all of the
23 comments that I have that were actually presented
24 there. But at this time, I would like to leave a few
25 minutes here, maybe ten minutes, for any further

1 so forth there's going back and forth through the
2 Intra-coastal Waterway.

3 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.

4 Patrick McCarthy has been a frequent visitor to
5 these meetings.

6 MR. MCCARTHY: I'll pass.

7 MR. ANKERSON: You want to pass?

8 Jim Herbert.

9 MR. HERBERT: Good evening, I'm Jim Herbert, as a
10 lot of you know. I won't take a lot of time out, but
11 the first thing I would like to say, this is my first
12 night here, and I would really like to thank them for
13 the process.

14 It really is a wonderful process, and they should
15 be applauded for that, because it's giving everybody an
16 opportunity to have their say and to participate in the
17 process.

18 I would like to reemphasize what Bob said a little
19 bit before, which is it's very important to talk about
20 the interrelationship of all the things we're talking
21 about tonight.

22 Two nights ago, you talked about Snake Island.
23 And a reference was made with Midnight Pass. Last
24 night, you talked about the Bird Colony Islands to the
25 north. And there is another interrelationship there.

1 comments.

2 And if we don't have any, then what I'll do is go
3 into the discussion about how we're going to go into
4 this planning session over there. Which, because of
5 the complexities here, the fact that we're dealing with
6 two sites again, will probably take us a little bit
7 longer. And it's the most interesting part of the
8 evening. And then we'll bring you back and present all
9 that.

10 So before we do that, I see hands getting ready
11 to go up. So I would ask that you keep your comments
12 as short as possible and as succinct as possible, and
13 if it's been said, reiterate that that's the case, and
14 we'll mark that for the record.

15 The gentleman in the very back there.

16 MR. SULLIVAN: First gentleman, and I apologize --

17 MR. ANKERSON: Go ahead and give your name, if you
18 would like. If you don't want to, that's fine, too.

19 MR. SULLIVAN: My name is Mike Sullivan. I live
20 over here in Osprey.

21 The first gentleman who gave his analysis of the
22 situation, and I apologize for not remembering your
23 name, but you gave a very good analysis of the problem,
24 but you didn't give a solution.

25 Could you tell me what you really think should be

1 the solution to this problem?
 2 MR. OLSON: Glad to.
 3 MR. ANKERSON: Briefly, please.
 4 HELPER: Here, sir. Sir.
 5 MR. OLSON: Can I go back to my artwork? Can I go
 6 back to my --
 7 Back at the turn of the century, this Jim Neville
 8 island did not exist. It was put there by dredges
 9 coming in here, dredging the canal. That should all be
 10 removed, and so that the tidal flow can go over the top
 11 of it, whether it's high or low tide. Then all this
 12 water can come from here and here, this would not be a
 13 barrier.
 14 So all this should be removed, put back to where
 15 it was 30 or 40 years ago, 50 years ago. That's a
 16 solution.
 17 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.
 18 WOMAN FROM AUDIENCE 1: I have a question.
 19 MR. ANKERSON: Wait until you get a microphone so
 20 we can make sure that we hear you.
 21 WOMAN FROM AUDIENCE 1: I just have a question.
 22 When -- it's very admirable that you are asking for
 23 community input.
 24 I would like to know how you plan to quantify it,
 25 and after it's quantified, what will you do with that?

1 Will you keep community -- community input at all, in
 2 any systematic way, or is it just -- is it going to be
 3 an overview of how people feel?
 4 MR. HASBROUCK: It's kind of a combination of
 5 both. We will definitely look at all input. We will,
 6 when we create our alternatives analysis, we will
 7 analyze each alternative that is presented, and then
 8 look at the feasibility of it.
 9 Because it's not a detailed survey, line survey,
 10 you can't really put any kind of statistical analysis
 11 to the input.
 12 We will quantify the number of people that gave us
 13 comments that say do nothing. We will quantify the
 14 number of people that say regrade the islands and make
 15 them solid mangroves. We will look at the consensus.
 16 And I'll give you an example from Snake Island. I
 17 don't know if you're familiar with Snake Island very
 18 well, but essentially it's in Venice Inlet, and the
 19 western side of the island is completely eroding.
 20 A lot of the recreational boaters use the
 21 southern and northern portions for anchorage. And then
 22 also, you know, passive recreational, a lot of walking,
 23 a lot of picnicking on the island.
 24 At the end of our workshop, we had five break-out
 25 groups, and four of them had almost the very same

1 concept. And that was provide stabilization on the
 2 west side of the island to prevent further erosion.
 3 And the consensus that was reached, the audience
 4 recognized that by doing nothing, Snake Island would
 5 erode away and they would lose that resource.
 6 So for us, the take-home lesson from Tuesday night
 7 was essentially that's what the majority looks for,
 8 that's what the majority of the public was interested
 9 in.
 10 I can tell you we will further that concept and
 11 look at the cost feasibility of it, the negative and
 12 the positive impacts of that specific design
 13 consideration.
 14 We cannot ignore the fact that the majority of the
 15 public was interested in that specific consideration
 16 and a consensus was reached.
 17 It's a little bit harder in something more
 18 complicated, such as Jim Neville. Because it does have
 19 a lot more alternatives.
 20 We will include information that we get from the
 21 web site. We'll include information we get from the
 22 written comments. We'll include the public comments
 23 that we've gotten tonight. And then we will also look
 24 at the designs.
 25 I have heard repeatedly that a lot of people are

1 interested in making sure that what we do does not
 2 impact opening the pass, and it would allow for water
 3 that comes out of the pass, if the pass is open, to get
 4 into the bay.
 5 Now, in my mind, that means something in effect
 6 essentially lowering these islands down to an
 7 intertidal grade that allows that water to sheetflow
 8 over the area.
 9 Now, if all groups reach a consensus and everybody
 10 sitting around the table says, yes, that's what we
 11 want, and that's what ends up becoming drawn, and
 12 that's the majority of the people, we won't exactly
 13 quantify and say, yeah, 82.3 percent of the people said
 14 that that's what they want.
 15 But we would recognize that that's a majority.
 16 Then we will further that alternative in the analysis
 17 and weight the public consensus.
 18 Now, there's a five million dollar cap on the
 19 construction for the 1135 process, which includes not
 20 only the five islands, but also considering preventing
 21 the further degradation of the three Bird Colony
 22 Islands to the east of the Intra-coastal.
 23 Now, if Jim Neville, taking Jim Neville down to a
 24 grade that will allow for sheetflow of water costs four
 25 and a half million dollars and did not leave an

1 opportunity for other islands, then we would have to
 2 weigh that. We would have to consider that.
 3 And that would essentially would be written into
 4 the analysis and said, okay, we considered this, and we
 5 felt like that the impact and the loss of opportunity
 6 for other the islands was too great.
 7 Then maybe we would consider, okay, let's look at
 8 the way the flows come in, and maybe the southern lobe
 9 is the one that's feasible to take down to the
 10 intertidal grade and allow the other northern lobe to
 11 stay as an upland restoration area.
 12 And I'm not, certainly, saying that's where we'll
 13 go. I'm using that as an example.
 14 I hope that answered your question. You can
 15 recognize -- that's why it's not just a single decision
 16 and why we won't walk out of here tonight and say this
 17 is what we're going to do.
 18 We will walk out of here tonight and say we've
 19 got this many people that said this, we've got this
 20 many people that said that, and then that's what we
 21 carry forward into our alternative analysis to look at
 22 the feasibility of those concepts.
 23 MS. JINKS: If I can clarify something briefly
 24 that Bruce just elaborated on, the five million cap.
 25 That includes the studies, as well as the plans and

1 specifications, which is the detailed design, and
 2 construction for these six islands.
 3 MR. ANKERSON: Yes, sir.
 4 MR. COLTER: Thanks. I just wanted to make a
 5 quick comment on something that a few other people had
 6 said, and -- could I have design number one for Jim
 7 Neville, please?
 8 It was a point about increasing the amount of flow
 9 going through this. And regardless of whether or not
 10 the pass is open --
 11 MR. ANKERSON: Excuse me, if you could just give
 12 your name, if you would like to, for the record.
 13 MR. COLTER: Yeah, my name is Jim Colter.
 14 And -- okay. For other reasons other than the
 15 pass opening. This area is a very low flow area of the
 16 bay. It also has problems with nutrients. And here
 17 are the -- well, particularly in the summer, when it is
 18 very warm.
 19 And I would like to see -- this is my personal
 20 favorite of the designs. But I would like to see more
 21 openings. Because one thing we do have in the bay,
 22 even without pass opening, and the limited circulation
 23 that remain, okay, there would be more openings to the
 24 water, and on various sides of the island, you have
 25 wind-driven currents that would help push water through

1 this area.

2 Stagnant water, even of pristine areas that has a
3 really low flow rate, even in a bay like this, can be
4 very low productivity, be very stressful on fish, the
5 animals that live in the bottom and the seagrasses, and
6 include high nutrients and other factors, such as poor
7 circulation. And it's not a problem we have under
8 those conditions.

9 So I'm a proponent of having more entries in
10 here, because it's a wind-driven circulation throughout
11 the restored areas.

12 One other comment, there is a -- reports about a
13 problem in terms of the comments on estuaries, there is
14 a -- has been a trend over the years of decreasing
15 salinity in the Little Sarasota Bay area.

16 So when we get a very dry season, unless we get
17 heavy seasonal rainfall, there's going to be
18 dramatically lower salinities. So it's an estuary by
19 definition, but it's not a 365-day-a-year estuary.

20 MR. ANKERSON: Very good. Thank you.

21 Gentleman in the far back on the right.

22 MR. HIRSH: My name is Mark -- thank you. My name
23 is Mark Hirsh. And my only comment is, as I recall the
24 meeting you had at the Sarasota High School, the
25 comment was made that each island could be considered a

1 Yes, sir.

2 Let's take just a few more minutes, if we can.
3 I'm particularly interested if you have considerations,
4 and many of you have expressed those already, that
5 would be helpful to the group as a whole as they go
6 over into the mapping exercise.

7 That's been -- this has been the most
8 sophisticated discussion that we've had thus far in
9 terms of adding design considerations and so forth.
10 And that's good. Because once we get into the groups,
11 you're limited to the number of people in your groups
12 and the ideas that they have. So that's fine.

13 Go ahead. I'm sorry.

14 MAN FROM AUDIENCE 1: On the Jim Neville Preserve,
15 do you have any idea on how much of the spoil is sand
16 that's suitable for beach restoration?

17 In other words, is there any possibility of simply
18 pumping material across Palmer Point into the Turtle
19 Beach area? Or the use of the material for -- that you
20 take out of that area for some of the erosion problems
21 that exist in south Siesta Key?

22 MR. HASBROUCK: The preliminary results that we
23 have gotten back indicate that there are some sands on
24 Jim Neville that would be suitable for beach
25 restoration.

1 project, and each project would have five million
2 dollars.

3 MS. JINKS: No. That's incorrect. Five million
4 total is for these six islands. That was the request
5 that was sent up to the Corps of Engineers by the West
6 Coast Inland Navigation District.

7 MR. ANKERSON: And the gentleman right next to
8 him.

9 MR. GREGG: My name is Terry Gregg. Am I the only
10 one in the room who doesn't understand what passive
11 recreation opportunities are on an island that's
12 supposed to be pristine, get rid of exotic plants,
13 create fish and wildlife?

14 What do you mean by passive recreation
15 opportunities?

16 MR. ANKERSON: Good question. Bruce.

17 MR. HASBROUCK: And we -- you know, certainly we
18 need to make sure that these type of issues are
19 consistent with the documents from the trust. But we
20 have envisioned things, if we do open-water areas in
21 lagoons that could be suitable for kayaking and
22 canoeing.

23 Possibly of providing people the ability to walk
24 around on these islands. But nothing such as picnic
25 tables, or fire rings, or camping areas. That's a

1 The geotechnical investigation did encounter
2 layers of peat, which either could be the existing
3 grade and the deposition of organic material, or it may
4 have been that through the early stages of the dredging
5 that they encountered a lot of these organic materials
6 that have been deposited in the bay, and those actually
7 got pumped up on these islands, and those could just be
8 layers that we would have to look at possibly making --
9 taking a couple feet of the sand, and use that for the
10 beach, take another couple feet of the peat, save that
11 for the restoration in these areas.

12 And then if we get back down to the original
13 grade. Of course, in the best case of restoration, you
14 place -- you take the area and eliminate the impact.

15 So an example is if this island used to be
16 mangroves, the best thing we could do is take the old
17 spoil sands back off of that, get it back down into the
18 existing grade that it used to be which has the native
19 sands -- or the native soils in it, and that's
20 typically your best opportunity for restoration.

21 So to answer your question, yes, I believe there
22 are some. Once again, I hate to get cost involved.
23 But we would have to look at feasibility. Now, if
24 you're looking at a thousand cubic yards, and it costs
25 \$100,000 to get that 1,000 cubic yards, \$100 a cubic

1 little bit further than passive.

2 It's a little more complicated on these two
3 because of the trust. Certainly the other islands that
4 we're looking at that do not have that kind of
5 limitation, we're actually looking at opportunities to
6 encourage that type of activity.

7 But that encouragement of recreation and
8 encouragement of human interaction on these two --
9 or -- and possibly Palmer Point, could go against the
10 trust.

11 Then we would look at things such as making sure
12 that the uplands are isolated amongst the mangroves,
13 and that there's really not -- you know, unless you
14 wandered amongst the mangroves to get into those upland
15 areas.

16 And it truly provides more of a preserve area
17 rather than an upland area that has an opportunity for
18 people to walk around on.

19 MR. ANKERSON: I think it's worth noting that in
20 the Snake Island discussion the other evening, the
21 folks didn't want any recreation. I mean, they
22 recreate, but they didn't want any recreational
23 improvements whatsoever, and that was a consensual
24 decision among every group as well. That presumably
25 doesn't mean golf course.

1 yard is probably not a feasible cost in the ratio.

2 MR. ANKERSON: How about one more, two more, then.
3 Three more. Okay. Then -- because what we can do is
4 if people continue to want to address this forum as a
5 whole, we will come back to the forum as a whole.

6 We'll have the discussion, which will be greatly
7 enlightened, I think, as the groups come up and present
8 what their various concepts are. And then we can, once
9 that's done, open it up again, have a further plenary
10 discussion.

11 So yes, ma'am.

12 MS. KERR: Hi, my name is Wanda Kerr. One of
13 our -- one of the criteria that you had there was
14 regarding mosquitos. And I don't know where we're
15 coming from, but we've had a lot more this year, and
16 especially with encephalitis and everything.

17 It seems to me if the criteria was kept to have
18 the water flowing over the islands, not only would it
19 be good if the pass was opened, but also, that would
20 allow mosquito control to better work.

21 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. That sounds like an
22 excellent suggestion as well.

23 Yes, sir.

24 MAN FROM AUDIENCE 2: Could you explain or give us
25 the analysis you're going to do for weighting the

1 criteria so you can -- you can then rank the different
2 alternatives?

3 Because if you have a five million dollar cap, you
4 could run out of money quickly by alternative one on
5 Jim Neville Marine Preserve with just doing that
6 project.

7 So what criteria, what weight are you going to put
8 on the different criteria you're putting there on costs
9 that will then relate to your alternative analysis?

10 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce.

11 MR. HASBROUCK: We haven't established our
12 weighting criteria yet. A couple of things come to
13 mind. There are softwares out there that people have
14 developed that actually assist that.

15 I would say, just off the top of my head, that
16 the -- trying to reach the restoration goals of
17 Sarasota Bay that is established not only in Sarasota
18 Bay's -- or Sarasota County's comprehensive plan, but
19 also look at what was set up in the master plan for the
20 Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program.

21 Cost certainly is going to be a consideration.
22 Public input is a consideration. And as far as how
23 we're going to weight those, I'm open to ideas, to be
24 honest with you. We have not established that yet.

25 MR. ANKERSON: One thing we also learned in the

1 where -- you know, and essentially what Tom alluded to,
2 is we design something that has negative environmental
3 impacts.

4 In other words, we build something that is going
5 to wash away and ends up polluting the rest of the bay
6 and covering up adjacent seagrass communities. And,
7 you know, that's a constraint.

8 But there are always -- I'll call them mechanisms
9 that help us minimize the negative impacts.

10 MR. STEINBERG: I'm talking about man-made
11 constraints now. In other words, are we going to run
12 out of money in four years and the five million dollar
13 cap is not renewed? Or --

14 MS. JINKS: The five million dollars is five
15 million federal. It's 75 percent federal, 25 percent
16 local sponsor. Anything with the project that's over
17 five million becomes the responsibility of the
18 non-federal sponsor, that's West Coast Inland
19 Navigation District.

20 So I'm assuming that's the clarification you
21 needed to answer your question?

22 MR. STEINBERG: Yes, thank you.

23 MR. HASBROUCK: And then one other thing on that,
24 too, as part of this process, we'll develop a long-term
25 maintenance and management plan. If the islands --

1 Snake Island discussion is it probably wasn't going to
2 cost a whole lot. They were very minimalist in their
3 approach there. So that, of course, provides benefits
4 if there's more sophisticated things that are required
5 farther up the bay.

6 Let's see, there were people who I suggested
7 could -- yes, sir, I know you've had your hand up.

8 One more question after this, and then, as I said,
9 we'll come back into this type of a forum once we're
10 done.

11 MR. STEINBERG: Hi, my name is Joe Steinberg. I'm
12 just wondering, are there any other constraints besides
13 this five million dollar cap and the Palmer trust, that
14 I, for one, don't know about, bear on this?

15 And maybe we should know about that before we get
16 into any lengthy design phase here, because it's
17 just -- it would be fruitless.

18 MR. ANKERSON: Go ahead, Bruce.

19 MR. HASBROUCK: Not that I know of.

20 MR. ANKERSON: There's one that is that -- I
21 believe I have learned this, that there is a ten
22 percent limit on the amount of money that can be spent
23 on recreation relative to the other funds. So
24 that's -- is that correct, Tiphonie?

25 MS. JINKS: That's correct.

1 certainly the ones that are owned by Sarasota County,
2 and they agree, you know, as part of their -- what am I
3 looking for here.

4 Part of the agreement, I guess, is that they'll
5 provide the long-term maintenance and management.
6 That's not part of that money. But it is a part of the
7 commitment of the process, in that the county
8 commissioners would have to be on board to assume the,
9 you know, responsibility of the islands as well as the
10 inland navigation district.

11 MR. WAECHTER: So keeping it simple will benefit
12 the county economically?

13 MR. HASBROUCK: Absolutely. For those who didn't
14 hear, he said keeping it simple would benefit the
15 economics of the county.

16 MR. ANKERSON: A couple other hands have gone up.
17 Can I ask you to hold until the end here and when we
18 come back, please?

19 Because I know you're going to find this process
20 interesting. It's going to get late. And we really
21 want that kind of input, which has been greatly
22 enriched by this discussion, and I'm sure could
23 continue to be greatly enriched by this discussion.

24 What I would like to do now is have you move over
25 to those four -- I think we may have five tables over

1 MR. ANKERSON: That's one such restraint. The
2 other thing is the NEPA process itself and the
3 requirement there be a net environmental benefit, I
4 believe, for them to -- for the Corps to go forward.
5 Other than that, I'm not aware of any others.

6 MR. STEINBERG: Are there timing constraints? In
7 other words, can this go on for years, and years, and
8 years?

9 MR. HASBROUCK: We're currently exploring what
10 we're calling a phased approach. And there may be
11 benefits to both existing conditions as well as the
12 human environment to doing a phased approach.

13 In other words, instead of going out and just
14 blasting the whole thing and it ends up being just bare
15 sand, and then we start from there, we are looking at
16 the possibility of a phased approach that might utilize
17 either removing the nuisance species over a couple
18 three years, things such as maybe working one portion
19 before we get into the other area to work on it.

20 But that's -- I wouldn't really consider that a
21 constraint. That's kind of what may come out of the
22 feasibility at the end. It just may not be feasible to
23 do all of them at once.

24 Practicality, I would say, could be a constraint.
25 You know, we wouldn't want to get into a situation

1 there. And self-select. Don't anybody stand up yet,
2 because I want to explain this process before -- and
3 let you understand it.

4 Self-select a table where you would like to be.
5 And you can be with your friends, or your enemies, or
6 whatever, however you want to deal with it.

7 And there will be four official positions in that,
8 two of which will be from our group. One will be what
9 we're calling a host, which will be a person who will
10 help facilitate the process somewhat like I am doing,
11 and Chris, and Jodi, and Jeanine, and those folks,
12 Tiphonie, I think, will serve that purpose.

13 The other will be a design professional. And
14 that's to guide you if there are technical questions,
15 such as you've been asking and Bruce has been
16 answering. And some of you have got that expertise
17 yourselves and will volunteer that anyway.

18 And then within your group, we would like you to
19 select a reporter, that is, somebody who will take
20 notes on what people are saying. And it's got to be
21 fast and furiously, because as you hear, it's a
22 brainstorming session, and a lot of people are throwing
23 ideas on the table just as quickly as they can.

24 And then a second person to present that. A
25 reporter up here who will present that information to

1 the plenary when we come back.

2 So that's really all there is to it. So go ahead
3 and head on over there and have some fun. And we'll
4 call you back in, say, 30 minutes and try and wrap it
5 up a little bit after 9:00, if we can. But we'll stay,
6 again, as long as you need us.

7 (Break-out session held at this time, then
8 resuming full session.)

9 MR. ANKERSON: Let's start to wrap it up here so
10 we can get into the discussion of various working
11 groups here. Because that will take some time as well,
12 and it's nearly 9 o'clock.

13 If we could come on back to your seats and get
14 started with the group presentations.

15 Once again, if you could come on back, we'll get
16 started.

17 If we could get everybody together and -- one
18 reminder. I'm told that you're not allowed to leave
19 until you turn in a pink and yellow form over there,
20 which is the questionnaire, so -- there they are.

21 Okay, very good. Just kind of -- sorry to have to
22 break you up, but it seemed like some of the folks were
23 starting to slow down, and then things start to
24 dissipate, and too many people leave, and we end up
25 talking to ourselves. So we've got a good -- a good

1 maybe we wouldn't be able to do anywhere else in the
2 bay system.

3 We felt that this area really didn't support
4 structured recreation, and it shouldn't be an important
5 of this -- shouldn't be a part of this, not an
6 important part, shouldn't be a part of this at all.

7 We've got the beach immediately to the west. We
8 talked last night about Big Edwards Island possibly
9 being more structured. Snake Island, I wasn't here for
10 Snake Island, but I understand that we're talking about
11 more passive recreation down there.

12 This area maybe would be better left to nature.
13 There's no reason that canoes and kayaks couldn't go
14 through it, but we don't need motorized watercraft.

15 That was one of the things that we thought should be in
16 there. If a boat with a motor was going to go in on
17 the flats, then they need to be able to turn their
18 motor up and tow across or not go in there at all.

19 The Jim Neville -- I want to go to the Palmer

20 Point first, at number two. Where is that?

21 MS. BROOKS: It's right here next to yours.

22 MR. WAECHTER: Oh, okay. Thank you. I'm walking
23 away from it.

24 Concept number two of Palmer Point and concept
25 number one were basically similar. The idea of taking

1 number of folks still here.

2 We've got five groups to get through. It's 9
3 o'clock now. So I suspect there was some detailed
4 design going on over there. I'm hoping that you can
5 put that into as few and as succinct of words as
6 possible, bearing in mind that we do want to capture
7 all that information.

8 If you point at maps, it's sometimes helpful for
9 us when we're reviewing the transcript of the court
10 reporter and so forth if you would just say north,
11 south, east, or west if it's appropriate to do so.

12 So let's go ahead and take it from group one.
13 Let's hear what they had to say about the various
14 concepts. And then we'll move on through. And at the
15 end, whoever is left standing will continue to address
16 any questions of the entire group.

17 What I would also like to do is --

18 MR. WAECHTER: Need some more engineers over
19 there.

20 MR. HASBROUCK: I'm a biologist, so I can't help
21 you.

22 MR. ANKERSON: We'll reserve comments on all five
23 until we get to the very end. I think you will
24 probably see some consensus emerge, and you'll see
25 areas of divergence and so forth. And some of that

1 the existing upland area, digging a tidal lagoon with a
2 mud flat in it, and then building an upland
3 restoration area.

4 And that seemed like a pretty good idea. You've
5 got the ability to dig out the area and use the spoils
6 that you dig out to create the upland restoration. So
7 you're getting the most bang for your buck.

8 But between the two of them, concept number two
9 took advantage of the already lower elevations on the
10 west side of this area and built up what is already the
11 higher area.

12 So this is the less expensive of the two. So you
13 get the same bang, but it costs you less bucks. That
14 seemed to be the way to go.

15 And that was basically our consensus on that, was
16 just to go with concept two as drawn. It could be --
17 it could even vary somewhat from this. But this seemed
18 like a pretty good idea.

19 On the Jim Neville Marine Preserve, we felt that
20 concept number three violated totally the requirement
21 that whatever was decided to do not negatively impact
22 the decision on Marine -- on Midnight Pass, whichever
23 way it went. So we eliminated concept number three.

24 Concept number two was better than concept number
25 three. But we thought that concept number one came

1 will become apparent. It may be a bit more complicated
2 in this case because of the major --

3 MR. WAECHTER: After this group that we had back
4 there try to make their presentation, the other groups
5 will probably just say ditto.

6 Okay. What we basically did was made a list of
7 what we thought were criteria that should be applied to
8 both areas. The maximization of all the different
9 habitats, the upland, the estuarine, the salt marsh areas,
10 mangroves.

11 The return of a marine estuary environment to the
12 area. To minimize the impacts to the salt marshes,
13 etcetera. When we said salt marshes, etcetera, what we
14 meant was the desirable portion should be negatively
15 impacted in the minimum amount.

16 Look to the historic model. Look to the way
17 nature designed this as our guide to the greatest
18 extent possible. The exception to that would be to
19 maximize the lagoons.

20 We have lost so many lagoon systems around the bay
21 due to development, dredge and fill, hardening
22 seawalls, that we have an opportunity here of two
23 different locations to maybe create some lagoons.

24 So that's varying from the historic model,
25 perhaps, but we're taking advantage of a situation that

1 back a little more closely to what this might have been
2 like originally.

3 But going with what I had said earlier and what
4 Jim Colter said earlier, taking these lagoons and
5 taking advantage -- you've got another lagoon down in
6 here, you've got a lagoon over here, you've got water
7 through here, this is quite deep up in here, you can
8 canoe back up into here. Take these and connect them.

9 So what we did was we drew connecting canals or
10 lagoon systems through here that each would be able to
11 go entirely across the island system.

12 Now we're getting back to the historic situation
13 where, if Midnight Pass were reopened, you would have a
14 free flow of water through this area. If the pass were
15 not reopened, you would still have the ability for
16 wind-driven current to come through the area, to bring
17 the fresher water in.

18 There would be no negative -- no negative impact
19 on doing it this way. And it would be potentially a
20 very positive impact. So that's basically what we came
21 up with.

22 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. The only caveat I'll
23 add to whether or not we have speaking between the
24 groups is if there's individuals in the group who
25 recognize that the speaker has missed something or that

1 there was some major controversy that the speaker
2 didn't address because they were pursuing their own
3 agenda, then, of course, we would have the opportunity
4 at that point.

5 So group two, please.

6 MR. JAMES: Well, nothing in our -- thank you.
7 Nothing of ours is inconsistent or incompatible with
8 group one. I'll go -- I'm just going to go down the
9 page.

10 We had a very strong consensus in our group that
11 we were concerned with or our almost sole priority
12 would be to restore the water and, therefore, the fish
13 and, therefore, the birds. Not much concern about
14 recreation and some of the other things. The removal
15 of the trash stuff even came second.

16 None of the concepts meet the area of water
17 quality concerns and the fish habitat. We didn't like
18 any of the -- any of the activities. I think you'll
19 see more of that later.

20 Our group consensus was that the best plan would
21 be to restore these particular islands, just these few,
22 at least, to their original state when the pass is open
23 and so forth.

24 The Jim Neville Preserve reduces down so we would
25 have sheetflow over the top of it, whether it's wind

1 about Jim Neville or you're talking about Palmer Point.
2 And that will help us as we try and pull all this
3 together as well.

4 MR. COLTER: Okay, our first discussion involved
5 the Jim Neville Preserve area. And probably starting
6 point was the concept number one.

7 Overall, there was pretty much a consensus to
8 maximize mangrove habitat. So this would mean get rid
9 of as much of the uplands as possible. You won't have
10 to worry about maintenance of uplands, which exotics
11 could always be a problem there.

12 And asking a county maintenance person to go over
13 the river and through the woods, the mangroves, to
14 maintain the exotics wouldn't be a very nice job.

15 Minimize the uplands. And also, we liked the idea
16 of trying to increase the number of inlets through that
17 area, which goes along sort of with the sheetflow
18 concept, but take advantage of areas that are already
19 close to inland points and maximize the flow through
20 the restored mangroves.

21 Another idea was to perhaps increase the water
22 area and maximize the edge effect of the mangroves.
23 Have as many little small channels and things that flow
24 up into the mangroves, because of the maximum fisheries
25 benefit you get with mangroves is along the edges that

1 driven or tidal driven if the pass eventually opens.
2 That shouldn't be the plug in the bathtub for that
3 area. That water needs to circulate. And this just
4 gets in the way.

5 Recommended design process. It seems to me that
6 the design process is that it's broken out each of the
7 islands, or sometimes two islands, and then there's a
8 little design team or a design effort as to how to
9 maximize that particular island.

10 And that's getting the -- our group consensus was
11 that's kind of the wrong emphasis. Design process
12 really ought to look at everything from Lido Key on
13 down to Venice Pass and decide what to do with all
14 those collection of islands that would best facilitate
15 or enable the water quality, and the fish habitat, and,
16 therefore, the bird habitat.

17 So it's an idea that the design emphasis, when you
18 get a team that says, okay, here's an island, what do
19 you do with it, you're going to have the world's best
20 single island. But that best island might be plugging
21 up all the water flow, stopping the whole process.

22 So the design process that you've undertaken needs
23 to be also looked at or perhaps rethought from the
24 perspective of what's good for that entire area there,
25 not just what -- how to optimize single islands one at

1 have the water flow. When you get back into very dense
2 groupings of mangroves, you have a lesser effect in
3 terms of the fisheries habitat.

4 We were not too concerned about cutting through
5 some of these small areas that might affect a little
6 bit of the saltern because the salterns were actually
7 an artifact of the slumping of the material that was
8 piled on the islands in the first place. The salterns
9 usually do not occur on the flood tidal shoals.

10 Okay, there was -- it also came up, which I hadn't
11 heard anybody else address yet, is the problem of the
12 expense of removing fill is a big concern and what you
13 do with it, is it compatible with beach material,
14 that's always a good option.

15 But there were a couple suggestions. There is --
16 one suggestion is perhaps use the property at the south
17 end of Siesta, which is also county owned, I believe,
18 maybe putting some of the material on that site,
19 increasing elevations.

20 There is also, which you can just barely make out
21 in this, on the east side of the existing Intracoastal
22 Waterway is an old remnant of the very first
23 Intracoastal Waterway, and it's deeper than the rest of
24 the bay. It's soft, muddy sediments.

25 And there would be possibly an opportunity for

1 a time.

2 Basically, then we came down, we didn't like any
3 of the three concepts. We just -- we would level
4 Neville Island, let the water sheetflow through it.
5 And do nothing with Palmer Point, let it take care of
6 itself.

7 If the pass reopens, that will take care of it.
8 If it doesn't open, if we get enough water flow through
9 there, then that again will probably pretty well take
10 care of itself.

11 Did I misrepresent anybody in the group? Or leave
12 something out?

13 MS. JINKS: Sir, what's your name for --

14 MR. ANKERSON: Yeah, that's another thing. If you
15 could state your name.

16 MR. JAMES: Oh, my name?

17 MS. JINKS: Yes.

18 MR. JAMES: Gene, G-e-n-e, James.

19 MR. ANKERSON: You're not required to state your
20 name, but if you would like to, you're certainly
21 welcome.

22 Group three, please.

23 MR. COLTER: Okay, my name is Jim Colter.

24 MR. ANKERSON: Also, Jim and others, as you talk
25 about it, if you would make sure you say you're talking

1 backfilling this to the existing grade, bringing it up
2 to the full extent, where you could have seagrass
3 colonization.

4 So it's an unused remnant of the first
5 Intracoastal Waterway. And that was one option
6 possibly to get rid of some of the excess material,
7 and it's a short distance. Transport would be very
8 expensive.

9 We did not suggest or think that any recreational,
10 active recreational enhancements were necessary. It
11 would be enough just to restore the area, which would
12 be accessible by very small boats and canoes.

13 There was, I thought, one neat idea. It was
14 brought up possibly to have, at the north end of -- on
15 the public beach areas of Casey Key and -- what used to
16 be the north end and the south end of Siesta, perhaps
17 have some small viewing platforms.

18 This is one of the most picturesque areas on
19 Sarasota Bay. And to be able to get up to some
20 elevation and look out onto that would be very
21 interesting.

22 I'm just -- I'm trying to read our writing.

23 If I forget anything, just any of our other
24 members could go ahead and speak up.

25 I'll move on now with Palmer Point. Again, the

1 concepts were very similar. Maximize the mangrove
2 area. So we would not have necessarily any uplands
3 area. Just go ahead and get rid of that.
4 Again, the idea of why not have some more inlets
5 to increase water flow through this area. So you would
6 go through some narrow points in here where you would
7 minimize impacts on saltern, which, again, are kind of
8 an artifact of disposal in the first place.
9 Another one, perhaps bring it down through a wider
10 part of the saltern. But there's another potential
11 disposal opportunity here. This is a very deep,
12 dredged portion of the bay here also. I have never --
13 have not ever dove in this hole. But I've been told
14 it's very deep.
15 Typically, these areas are very soft, anoxic type
16 bottoms, they are very poor habitat. These can be
17 backfilled to a certain level that's not going to
18 impact the boating use, unless you have a 15-foot draft
19 on your boat.
20 So there would be an opportunity for some
21 restoration here as well as an access point for
22 additional flow, and again maximizing the amount of
23 edge effect within your pass with several channels
24 running around it, maybe one through the middle, some
25 around the edge, and just a lot of mangrove diversity

1 in there.
2 Did I forget anything?
3 MAN FROM AUDIENCE 3: Just the mosquito ditch.
4 MR. COLTER: Mosquito ditch. Yeah, this, once
5 again, out of the project area, but a point that was
6 brought up, there's a number of mosquito ditches up
7 here that do not connect with the existing water.
8 And there could be a relatively inexpensive
9 enhancement if these were reconnected with the waterway
10 and the water allowed to circulate, and also help solve
11 the mosquito problem that is kind of notorious in this
12 area.
13 And I believe that's it, unless we have any other
14 comments from the group.
15 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you.
16 Group four.
17 Remember, if you can't read your own writing,
18 imagine what we're going to have to deal with.
19 MR. PETRECCA: Bob's a hard act to follow. But
20 basically, concept one on the Neville Preserve is very
21 similar with what Bob suggested. We just want to move
22 the sheetflow, if possible.
23 And one problem we have is this cost factor. What
24 we're trying to do here, to come up with an optimum,
25 ideal situation would be to remove the exotics and the

1 spoil and put everything back like it used to be. But
2 we have no idea per acre what this type of project
3 costs. We didn't get any of that information.
4 So it's very hard without taking the cost factor
5 into consideration in these projects. This is -- when
6 you spread that five million dollars out on these six
7 different islands, it can be real thin. And there's
8 going to have to be some compromises made somewhere.
9 So I guess the one compromise would be to do
10 whatever possible to improve this sheetflow in the
11 Neville project. And then we also considered the
12 mosquito problem here, improving the old mosquito
13 ditches that are existing there. I remember -- well,
14 there are some in there.
15 But that, again, we're just kind of putting the
16 horse before the cart here. Because we don't know how
17 much of this we can afford to do. That five million
18 dollars is going to evaporate. Probably 25 percent of
19 it will go to engineering just for plans.
20 I don't know. I mean, I could -- I might be way
21 off on that. But you have to engineer these projects
22 before you can even start them. And I know that's an
23 expense.
24 We're also concerned about how the exotics will be
25 removed, whether they're going to be done with

1 herbicides, which I have a deadly fear of. But I may
2 be wrong. I've been told it's no different than
3 throwing salt on a tree.
4 In other words, I think we're -- our consensus of
5 our group was this project -- these projects should be
6 put on hold until after the Midnight Pass problem is
7 resolved, and then do whatever has to be done, if it's
8 feasible, and if the funding is there.
9 I probably missed some things here. This is not
10 my writing. But mine's even worse than this. So if I
11 have left anything out, that anyone in the group can
12 think of, speak up.
13 MR. WAECHTER: You left out your name.
14 MR. PETRECCA: I'm Jack Petrecca. I thought I
15 told you that.
16 MR. ANKERSON: Make sure that we recover all of
17 your written information and your maps and so forth.
18 And hopefully they were labeled by the various groups
19 and we'll be able to correlate that to the transcripts
20 and so forth and we'll make some sense out of this.
21 Group five.
22 MR. FLYNN: I'm Ron Flynn. And what can you say
23 being group number five. I think just about everything
24 was covered. But some interesting things.
25 We're wondering -- this is group number one.

1 Group number five. Let's see. This is sort of out of
2 sequence here.
3 Very first question that came up was how much
4 spoil matter was placed at the time of the dredging.
5 And that's significant because if we really look at
6 these -- these maps, you can see where the spoil is
7 dumped.
8 If you just watch me trace the outlines here, you
9 can pretty much see. It's aerial photographs. But
10 something very interesting in that if I take this map
11 out, I know you've -- some of your folks back there
12 might not be able to see this, but there is a hook
13 here.
14 And that's related to, if you look at this one
15 over here, let's see, I think I've covered it up, but
16 this is Palmer Point Park. This hook comes over to
17 here. And over on this side is Spanish Point. And
18 this forms a bottleneck.
19 So one idea was to remove the hook. And that
20 would increase the water flow all the way through the
21 Sarasota Bay. That's a theory. Nothing to
22 substantiate that.
23 Another alternative is, and I think this was
24 mentioned before, was to cut a channel through here,
25 not just to build it in, but also be concerned about --

1 be concerned about the upland restoration. Because
2 this may block the view of the homeowners over here.
3 Let's see. So remove the hook. And removal of
4 all exotic species. And wherever we have these lagoons
5 is to build inlets and outlets, not just to have an
6 inlet.
7 And I think that that pretty much covered it for
8 Palmer Point Park, and in that we would -- we suggested
9 either removal of the hook or cutting of some narrow
10 channel, deep channel, or to remove all of this and
11 have a wide, shallow channel. In other words, this
12 would be like a shoal.
13 Jim Neville. The only thing different that we
14 were a little more graphic, again, and that what we
15 were suggesting ideally would be return this to a
16 natural state. In other words, remove everything. And
17 let this be a tidal shoal, tidal flat.
18 And the other alternative would be to remove part
19 of it as a tidal shoal, or, in the case of having the
20 lagoons in the middle, we also suggested building
21 channels, north and south channels going in and out.
22 And I think that just about covers it.
23 Yes. I think that does it.
24 MR. ANKERSON: Got a question or an additional
25 comment?

1 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Question. The written
2 thing there says more water flow north/south but not
3 east/west. You didn't comment on that.

4 MR. FLYNN: Yes, sorry. There was a lot of
5 discussion -- I'm looking for the one drawing of the
6 Jim Neville Preserve. Here it is.

7 Here's two lagoons that's connected with a single
8 lagoon in the middle, a narrow lagoon. What we're
9 suggesting is that if you look at this map again, that
10 the natural flow of water through here is north and
11 south.

12 So cutting a channel east and west across Jim
13 Neville Preserve, our thought, there would be no
14 purpose in doing that. It would be more efficient, in
15 a flow of water, to go north and south.

16 So in effect, in effect, you wouldn't have two
17 bottled lagoons with one opening over here. What we're
18 suggesting is cutting a channel through here, a channel
19 through here, and as someone mentioned, I think with
20 Bob, cutting maybe channels through here. Just to
21 facilitate the water flow.

22 Any more questions?

23 SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Mother Nature would like
24 to speak now.

25 MR. ANKERSON: Mother Nature would like to speak?

1 approach as well.

2 Any others?

3 Bruce, how about you, do you want to have the
4 final parting words, or --

5 MR. HASBROUCK: Of course.

6 Basically, I do want to thank everybody for your
7 input. I've been very encouraged by tonight. We --
8 last week and the week before, when we were
9 brainstorming about how to even hold this forum,
10 certainly we wanted public input, but then in the same
11 sense, we thought people want to be involved. Let's
12 give the opportunity.

13 There is a risk. I mean, we could have been all
14 over the board here, and then we've got people, you
15 know, a half year down the road, said, hey, wait a
16 minute, you know, I proposed this and I don't see it.
17 And then we have to really look at carefully analyzing
18 that.

19 When we reach a consensus, we begin to see that
20 the process is working. It gives us a real good
21 opportunity now to focus on the next step, and that is
22 to take really what was the consensus, assess that, but
23 also assess other ideas, and look at the feasibility of
24 it.

25 Cost estimate will be part of the document. It

1 Okay, Mother Nature will speak. Let's -- I'm sorry.

2 MR. FLYNN: Oh, there was a question about the
3 material?

4 MS. JINKS: No, remember, you were saying or the
5 group was saying if there was some material that was
6 suitable, place it on Siesta Key.

7 MR. FLYNN: Yeah, we're suggesting that if any of
8 the material that was suitable be selected and placed
9 on either Casey Key or Siesta Key for beach -- to
10 support beach -- replacement of erosion.

11 MR. ANKERSON: Okay. So that's the five groups.
12 I think, you know, as I was listening, you saw where
13 there were areas of clear consensus as to certain, at
14 least, broad consideration, some of which may or may
15 not have been considerations that were originally
16 discussed. And that will be reconstituted,
17 reincorporated, and evaluated, along with all the other
18 comments that were provided.

19 Does anyone have any general comments? Does
20 anybody want to discuss where they thought they saw
21 consensus throughout the five groups? I think that
22 might be an interesting thing to do.

23 Or does everybody want to go home at this point?

24 MR. WAECHTER: I think it's interesting, from what
25 I've heard, I wasn't here for the first night, but I

1 will be a fairly detailed cost estimate. It will allow
2 us to look at things such as other projects, how much
3 does it cost per cubic yard for the material removed.

4 That will be the number one cost. We're not going
5 to just pull a number out of the hat. We're going to
6 look at other projects from our other experience and
7 from other professionals throughout the states that
8 have done these types of projects. We want to look at
9 what those costs are. That will be very well spelled
10 out in the document.

11 The other very, very comforting and exciting thing
12 to me is the fact that through the last three nights,
13 the consensus has always been comprehensive, but
14 ironically, each night we have walked away with really
15 a different -- different assessment of what the public
16 wanted.

17 Fortunately, there wasn't a conflict. In other
18 words, we didn't have a whole bunch of people that
19 said, you know, hey, we want to give a place for jet
20 skiers to be able to go inside and run around inside
21 these islands. You know. Or we want to be able to park
22 as many boats as we can along the island.

23 But we really got into issues that we can look at.
24 Comprehensive once again. There are opportunities
25 within the study and there are opportunities within

1 was here last night, and I'm certainly here tonight,
2 that there seems to be, as in the other nights, a
3 consensus here. That the consensus is historical
4 perspective seems to be the consensus. Flow across the
5 islands seem to be a consensus.

6 MR. ANKERSON: Turn around and look at those guys.

7 MR. WAECHTER: Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse my back.

8 MR. ANKERSON: They're the ones that are going to
9 be disagreeing with you. No.

10 MR. WAECHTER: I didn't know many -- know the
11 terms that Jim Colter used, but that's what we were
12 going for, too, maximizing the fringe effect,
13 maximizing the water flow through the area.

14 I think we were all going for the same things, we
15 just said it in different ways. I think it was
16 interesting that all three nights that seems to be
17 what's happened here, in stark contrast to other
18 projects that have been attempted, where -- where the
19 people were not brought in early on, and so it was a
20 payback at the end.

21 Whereas in this, it looks like this is going very,
22 very nicely.

23 MR. ANKERSON: I also thought I heard some
24 consensus across the board on the recreational aspects
25 of things, and basically, that was kind of a minimalist

1 these five islands to take care of the recreational
2 aspect, the hydrologic aspect, the water quality
3 aspect, other projects in the area.

4 And I just -- I can't thank you enough for coming
5 out tonight and providing us input. Make sure you fill
6 out your forms. There is information on them. And we
7 have extras. If you would like the information that
8 was on the top of the pink and yellow sheets, take a
9 spare, but be sure you leave your comments with us.

10 Thank you very much.

11 MR. ANKERSON: One final thing I would like to say
12 is I would like to thank Tiphonie and the Corps of
13 Engineers for providing the upfront costs to have this
14 participatory process, because it's both, in terms of
15 human resources and dollars, it costs a lot more to do
16 things this way than it does to just go forward and
17 blast away.

18 So with that in mind, let's --

19 (Audience claps.)

20 (Thereupon, this workshop was concluded at
21 approximately 9:28 p.m.)

1 STATE OF FLORIDA)
2 COUNTY OF SARASOTA)
3 I, NANCY E. PAULSEN, Registered Professional
4 Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did
5 stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that
6 the transcript is a true and complete record of my
7 stenographic notes.

8 Dated this 17th day of February, 2000.

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NANCY E. PAULSEN, RPR

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 1, 2000

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: Deed the island to SARASOTA County relieving
Chuck Listowski of any responsibility.

Name William D. Willson

Mailing Address 506 Bay side way

City, State Zip Code NOKomis, FL 34275

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 1, 2000

Question/comment directed to: WCIND

Question/comment: STABILIZE WEST END OF ISLAND
W/ SPOIL FROM DREDGING, MANGROVES ETC.
NO FACILITIES, TABLES, ETC. HAVE FULL BOAT
ACCESS TO ISLAND.

Name JON KOOT

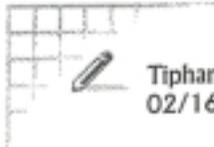
Mailing Address 604 COLONIA LN.

City, State Zip Code NOKOMIS, FL. 34225

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Tiphanie C Jinks
02/16/2000 09:38 AM

To: PATRICK McCARTHY <patnok@gte.net> @SMTP@Exchange
cc: Alberto Gonzalez/CESAJ/SAJ02@CESAJ
Subject: Re: SNAKE ISLAND

Hi Patrick,

I am aware that the website has not been updated. After the 10 day comment period expires tomorrow, it will be updated shortly thereafter. There are three night of information that needs to be digested, analyzed, coordinated by the interagency team, and put into a format that's acceptable on the website. The meeting date has not been set. You will receive information in the mail to notifying you when it will occur.

Your website does not need to be revised/updated. When our web page is updated, your link will automatically show what is current as long as you keep it linked to the first page on our website.

Thank you,
Tiphanie Jinks
904-232-3506

From: PATRICK McCARTHY <patnok@gte.net> on 02/16/2000 12:33 AM

From: PATRICK McCARTHY <patnok@gte.net> on 02/16/2000 12:33 AM
To: Tiphanie C Jinks/CESAJ/SAJ02@CESAJ
cc:
Subject: SNAKE ISLAND

I don't see a up date please advise. Your info is still incorrect.

see www.mootruck.com/snakeisland/

Up date this site please... thank you

when is next meeting?

From: PATRICK McCARTHY@patnok on 01/27/2000 12:38 PM
To: Tiphonie C Jinks/CESAJ/SAJ02@CESAJ
CC:
Subject: SNAKE ISLAND



SNAKEISL

Ms.JINKS,

I am distressed by what I see on the site. What happened to the do nothing plan. What is going to happen to the spoil when you dredge the intercoastal? Also your data is flawed. In 1967 there was 3.31 acres ;in 1998 there was 1.99 . 3.31 is a far cry from 7 as in your webb site . also a good 3/4 of the island is beach not the 1/4 you show. If we can not run our boats up on the beach our access is denied.see atch.Please advise. Lots of people are paying a lot of attention to this.
THANK YOU
PAT

From: PATRICK McCARTHY <patnok@gte.net> on 02/16/2000 10:02 PM
To: Tiphonie C Jinks/CESA1/SAJ02@CESA1
cc:
Subject: Re: SNAKE ISLAND

Thanks for the prompt reply. By update I mean correcting the incorrect information ie. the 7 acres (should be 3.31) & your existing conditions. If this site is public information it should be correct. I know it will be a while before your plans are done. Again thank you & looking forward to working with you on the restoration of SNAKE ISLAND.

PATRICK McCARTHY
NOKOMIS AREA CIVIC ASSOC.
WATERWAY COMMITTEE

5 Kiers Island.

for circulation.

Concept 3 preferred. Limit recreational access to N. end of island.

My preference is to also remove S. spoil for additional wetlands.

Ecological Restoration

Prime objective.

"Visual Buffer" is a concession for people who do not have an environmental awareness, or actually do not care about habitat restoration.

I am personally sorry to see the concessions for "visuals". This may be politically expedient but these are & will remain artificial habitats. As a Floridian who finds Native ^{flora} fauna desirable, I think the visuals are enhanced by removing the Australian Pines.

Good job by facilitators.

Jim Culter
13525 Wild Citrus Rd
Sarasota, FL 34240
(941) 371-0676

Big Edwards Island should be restored to wetlands conditions.
The existing ~~no~~ shorelines of this portion of the bay are 100% urbanized.
Sarasota Bay needs more aquatic preserves. Mangrove shoreline provides critical nursery habitat & very few public lands are available for wetlands restoration.

State/Federal/County lands should be managed for natural habitats. All exotics must be removed. The "view" should not be a valid reason for leaving exotic vegetation on the island. Natural Florida vegetation provides a wonderful view.

"Visual Buffer" should not be an Ecological Restoration objective
USE Rocky material for protective rip/rap around island edges.
Of concepts presented # 2 preferred.

Comments on Public Statements

"Some Homeowners" - have very little environmental concern.
└ Environmentally hostile & believe they have jurisdiction
└ proximity does not give rights of determination over public property.
└ trying to bully the process & state their view as the majority.

Overall a good job on design concepts.

Jim Culter
13525 Wild Citrus Rd.
Sarasota, FL 34240
(941) 371-0676

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: the Army Corps / Sarasota County

Question/comment: I am in full support of restoration. The exotic plants need to be removed as quickly as possible. The abandonment of the Edwards Islands project was a great disappointment to me. It appeared to me at the community forum last year that a few ignorant people forgot the I.C.W. islands are for everyone - not just wealthy waterfront property owners. I encourage the development of hammocks on these islands, or the planting of native species, such as the successful Leffis Key restoration in Manatee County. I think passive recreation is a good idea - such as boardwalks, but the incorporation of boating amenities should not be allowed. As to the restoration plans, I think whichever plan creates the most ecologically diverse habitat areas is best.

Name Glenn Gates
Mailing Address 723 Goodrich Av
City, State Zip Code Sarasota FL 34236

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Lynn A. Morey III

3908 Easton Terrace
Sarasota, Florida 34238

Voice: (941) 924-2203
FAX: (941) 926-1451

e-mail: lynnmorey3@worldnet.att.net

February 14, 2000

Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CESAJ-PD-PF (Jinks)
Box 4950
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

RE: Big Edwards Island, Bird Colony Islands, Skiers' Island

Thank you for the very informative meeting you held on February 2, 2000. While our group provided many suggestions during the break-out session, another idea came to mind since that evening.

I am a 45 year native of Sarasota and have skied around Skiers' Island since I was 12. This is the only area that is reasonably protected from both the wind and waves. I now bring my family here. This is the only safe area for families to ski. The other designated ski area is near City Island which has a very narrow area that is deep enough for boats and skiers and should be used by only one boater at a time. It is very dangerous to have oncoming traffic, with skiers swinging out to each side, which occurs commonly at the City Island/Ski-A-Rees location.

Thus, Skiers' Island needs to be preserved as Sarasota's only protected family skiing area. The tall Australian Pines provide a wind break. Replacing these with Cabbage Palms would cause two problems. Palms provide zero wind break and the berries are attractive to Crows, which may not be desirable to have so close to the Bird Colony Islands. Cutting the Skiers' Island in half would allow waves to disturb the relatively calm ski area between the island and Siesta Key.

I am in favor of diversity in the bay. (1) Our break-out group made suggestions of a cross between (I think it was) plans 2 and 3 for Big Edwards Island. Remove the pines, create a lagoon for wading birds, create mangrove areas, use the existing berm for a path, plant sea grapes and cedar trees, and continue to allow the beach area on the protected southwest side for boater access. (2) The bird colony islands could use some boulders from Big Edwards Island to create a breakwater from wakes from the Intercoastal Waterway. Open Midnight Pass to reduce the North-South erosion of the bird islands due to increased tidal velocity. While at first it seems absurd that the closure of Midnight Pass could increase erosion at the Bird Colony Islands; all it takes is an additional percentage point or two of velocity, 24 hours a day to have an accumulative effect. (3) Leave the Australian Pine trees on Skiers' Island for a windbreak and to satisfy the coastal residents that enjoy looking at the pines. The pelicans like the pines. I see the pelicans resting in the high branches where they get a great view of fish swimming near the water surface.

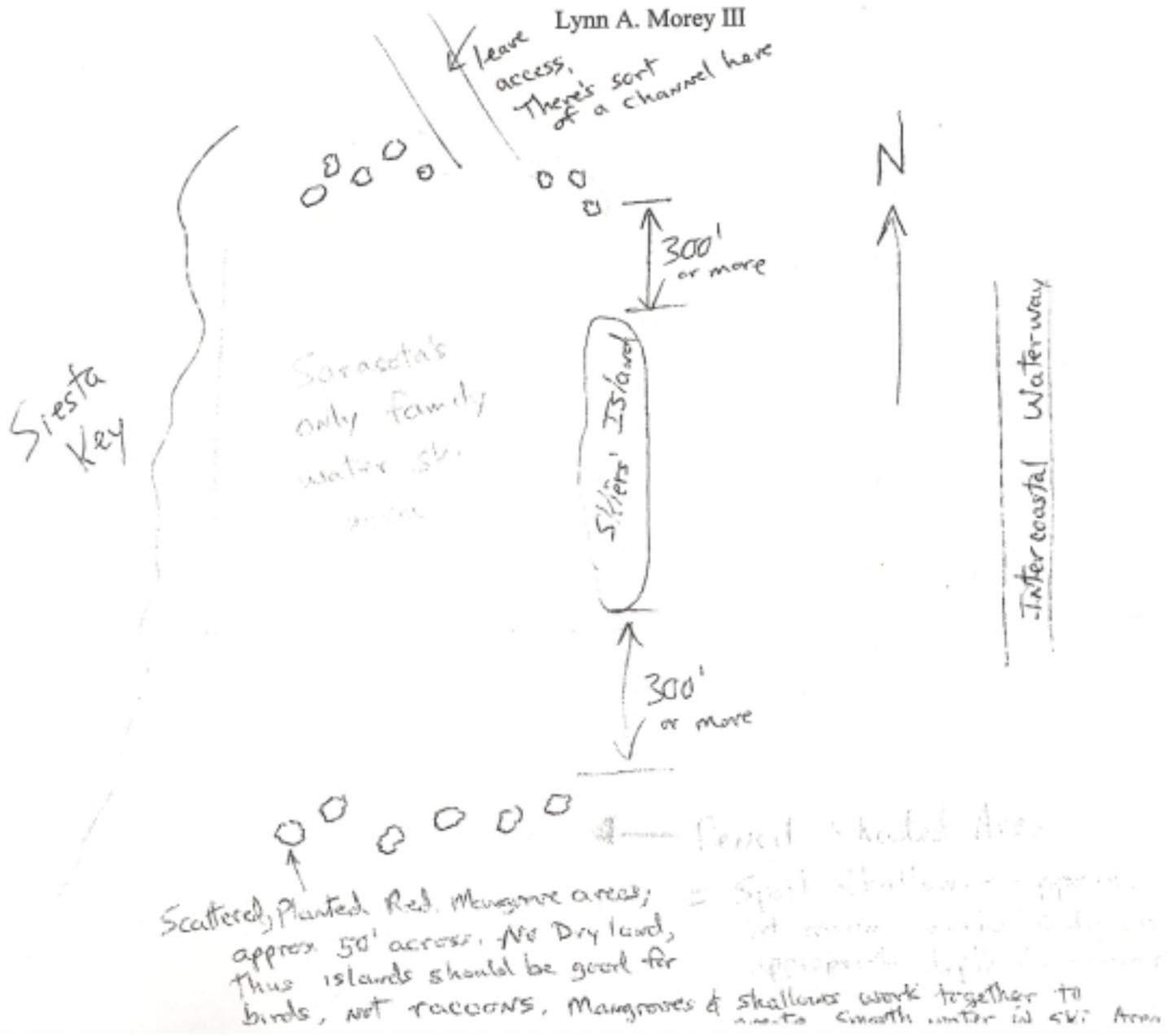
Lastly, a new idea. I understand there may be some fill from Big Edwards Island during restoration or when the Intercoastal Waterway gets dredged. Perhaps some of this spoil can be used to create shallows for a few small mangrove islands, scattered in the bay. These shallows would be just deep enough for red mangroves, but not piled high above the water like the existing spoil islands which induces Australian Pines to take hold. In our break-out group, we had a member from the local Audubon Society. He stated the reason the Bird Colony Islands were successful nesting areas is because there was no large dry land area where raccoons could live. Further, these mangrove islands were just far enough from shore to discourage raccoons from swimming from shore to eat the eggs.

A few small scattered mangrove islands could help replace some of the shoreline that is now seawall. A few strategically placed shallows (from spoil), planted with red mangroves, could provide nursery areas for small fish, resting or nesting areas for water birds, and create more smooth water for skiing. Skiers' Island and Siesta Key provides a wind break for skiing when the winds come from the East or West. Strong wind from the North or South can make it too rough for kids to water ski.

Sincerely,

Lynn A. Morey III

Lynn A. Morey III



PATRICIA CALVERT BLASER

1315 Quail Dr. - Sarasota, FL 34231
Home Phone 941-924-5342 - E-mail PBlaser@AOL.com

Feb. 8, 2000

Re: Ecosystem restoration "Edwards Islands".

To whom it may concern,

The question I have is; Is the petition we have, being taken into mind?

After the meeting the other night, I heard a comment about one commissioner was surprised because there were not more people at the meeting. I called several people whose names were on the petition and they stated that they didn't know they needed to come to the meeting if they had voiced their opinion by signing the petition. That does make sense if the petition is being counted. Otherwise, The word needs to get out to these people (over 500) that they need to come to the next workshop.

Please respond,



P.C. Blaser

February 2, 2000
Workshop

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: ACOG

Question/comment: I believe that the primary goal should
be to create a diverse array of native habitats.
All exotic species should be removed. Special
consideration should be given to re-creating habitat
types that have been destroyed in other areas
of the bay in not a proportion to the destruction
in general (e.g. coastal hammocks, high marsh).
The islands should be primarily wildlife habitat, with
no effort made to provide for human recreation.
It is folly to phase exotic removal, as they
will re-grow within a few growing seasons.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State Zip Code _____

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PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT
AUTHORITY: 42 USC 4321, 4331-4335

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the Midnight Pass Society, Inc.



Midnight Pass...Pass it on!

4343 Sawyer Road
Sarasota, Florida 34233
E-Mail: giacomo@home.com

Robert Waechter, President (941) 349-0798
James P. Herbert, Chairman (941) 923-3317
Website: www.midnightpass.org

8 February, 2000

Jacksonville district
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CESAJ-PD-PF (Jinks)
Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Re: 3 February Sarasota Workshop

Dear ACOE:

Thanks again for hosting a most rewarding second series of restoration workshops regarding spoil sites between the Siesta Key (north) Bridge and the Venice Jetties. This is a unique, fragile segment of the bay well worth your consideration. Those in charge of the meetings did an excellent job of presenting the findings and keeping the participants "on point."

I was only able to attend the final workshop on the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park. However, I understand that the earlier sessions also produced some valuable input as well as consensus on several proposed actions.

The Jim Neville/Palmer Point meeting drew the most people primarily because of the continuing interest in the fate of Midnight Pass. But the tone and spirit of the diverse groups participating was both positive and enthusiastic. Virtually everyone there wanted to maximize the habitat restoration opportunities.

The commonality of opinion was also most interesting. To recap:

- ◆ The participants emphasized the *restoration* of the subject areas. There was a marked distrust of trying to create something new or "better than it ever was." They want you to "re-create" rather than create.
- ◆ The Marine Preserve and Palmer Point areas under consideration should be restored to maximize their environmental attributes and minimize the recreational attributes. The feeling was that these needs were not compatible on the same turf and that other of the subject spoil islands could be better used to meet "people" needs.

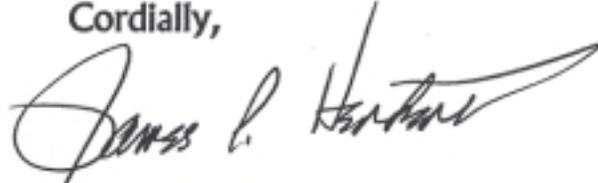
- ◆ This balancing of land use is important because it emphasizes the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to the subject of restoration. Further, through integration, we are able to meet all of the needs of the community rather than selecting one to the exclusion of another.
- ◆ Most people felt that it was better to maximize mangrove habitat, the tidal lagoon area and historic elevations. The Saltern areas were a product of the spoil deposition and there was no particular interest in preserving them.
- ◆ We felt that the environment would be better served by limiting or excluding public access. However, viewing areas should be established so that the public can appreciate the restored area, understand the objectives and learn the importance of environmental restoration projects.
- ◆ In bringing elevations down to historic levels, a lot of spoil will need to be re-located. What is not beach compatible needs to be addressed. At least 2 areas were suggested that were nearby and acceptable.
- ◆ The inlets to the lagoon areas should be maximized to emphasize water flow and take advantage of wind-driven currents. This would also allow for water flow over and through the Bird Islands during storm events. The stagnant mosquito ditches at Palmer Point Park should be incorporated into the tidal lagoon system.

I believe the enthusiasm and interest evident at these meetings displays the public interest in preserving and protecting our environmental resources. But we shouldn't miss the opportunity to maximize the effort. Instead of just addressing a few issues on some spoil islands, we should explore *all* of the restoration opportunities for this area. So, I again suggest that you should expand the scope of your present project. Alternatively, perhaps the WCIND could take on the bigger picture and incorporate the ACOE's project participation therein.

It should also be emphasized that this project needs to be cognizant of other efforts in the area and to appreciate the inter-relationship of our bay resources. Others commented on the relationship of Snake Island erosion and the plugging of Midnight Pass. There's a similar connection to the erosion of the Bird Colony Islands and North Siesta Key. And the fate, the future of Midnight Pass will play the most important role in what this segment of bay will become in later years.

I would welcome the chance to discuss this letter and our opportunities to maximize this important effort. I'd also like to speak with you as to the Midnight Pass project and the Part the ACOE has played in the past and can help with the future. And, thanks again, for hosting these meetings. They were well worth the effort!

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James P. Herbert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

James P. Herbert,
Chairman

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: _____
Having been a resident in the immediate area of
Palmer Point and the former Midnight Pass I can only suggest
that enough has been squandered studying the water and every
possible alternative to doing anything to restore the Midnight
Pass. Why not simply open it with a dredge and if it starts
to fill in, open it again. This would be cheaper than paying
for studies and lawyers which have accomplished little more
than to use up a lot of money. Short of opening Midnight Pass
I suggest you not bother doing anything with the area. It has
lost most of it's appeal as far as the waterway is concerned.
I once was a boater but have quit this area for any
of the recreational needs I used to enjoy.

Name _____ Bruce E. Stewart
Mailing Address _____ 9200 Midnight Pass Road,
City, State Zip Code _____ Siesta Key, Sarasota,
Florida, 34242

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
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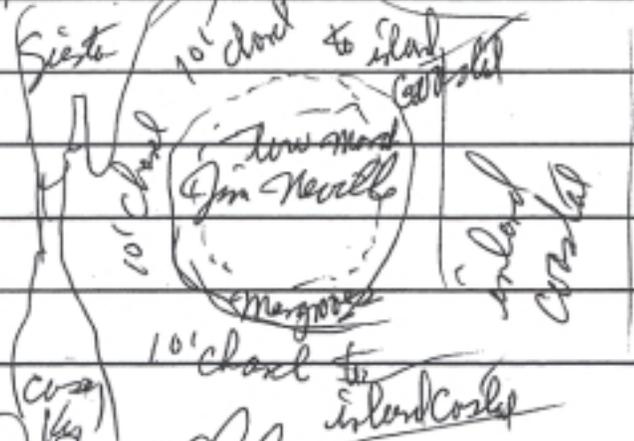
February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: Army Corp of Enginr

Question/comment: Jim Neville Marine Preserve

should be returned to its original state before
the Inland Coastal was dug.

Jim Neville Marine preserve should be
high & low marsh and mangroves with the channel 10ft
deep on the west side of the preserve.



Name Jim Olson

Mailing Address 4822 Ocean Blvd apt 6-B

City, State Zip Code Sarasota, Fla

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From: Genejames@aol.com on 02/04/2000 09:51 AM
To: Tiphanye C Jinks/CESAJ/SAJ02@CESAJ
cc: Genejames@aol.com@SMTP@Exchange
Subject: Public meeting re Palmer Point and Jim Neville Preserve

At last night's meeting, the Public Group 2 report included a point that the studies should be more global – consider the entire area between Venice Pass to the South and Lido Island to the North.

A better articulation of the consensus of this group might be a suggestion that the studies start with the desired WATER FLOW for the entire area including improved intermixing of gulf and intercoastal waters in the area. The restoration of the various islands should then be shaped and determined largely to enable/facilitate the desired water flow patterns.

A clear consensus of all the groups seems to be emphasis on restoring water system health.

If the study continues to work on one island at a time, then the predictable result is 8 or 9 "Fantasy Islands" at a prohibitive cost. In addition, the resulting island designs may restrict the water system flows and inhibit the water health improvements.

Please forward this e-mail to the project manager(s) at HDR Engineering, Inc and/or anyone else concerned with this project. I was not able to find e-mail addresses for them nor was I able to find any mention on the HDR website of this project.

Finally, there should be a selectable e-mail response choice on the web pages related to this project on your site at:

www.saj.usace.army.mil/restore/projects/sarasota.htm

This site and other associated sites presently contain all of the legal constraints, justifications, preliminary concepts, etc – BUT NO PROVISION FOR INPUTS FROM THE PUBLIC.

Thank you in advance for considering this input.

Gene James
genejames@aol.com

From: Fred Melin <fredmelin@home.com> on 02/17/2000 11:41 AM
To: Tiphonie C Jinks/CESAJ/SAJ02@CESAJ
CC:
Subject: Comments: Ecosystem Restorations in Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet; February 3, 2000, Public Workshop

February 17, 2000

Ms. Tiphonie Jinks
CESAJ-PD-PF
Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

RE: Comment Sheet, Ecosystem Restorations in Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet; February 3, 2000, Public Workshop

Dear Ms. Jinks:

First, thank you for your part in holding and conducting the workshops regarding this project. I think they have been very beneficial to the public, and I trust they will prove useful to the Corps.

I must say I was taken aback by the presentations of the alternatives proposed for Palmer Point Park and the Jim Neville Marine Preserve. Perhaps naively, I thought the word "Restoration" meant just that: restoring the mangrove islands and shallow water bay bottoms as closely as possible to their state before the deposition of spoil materials in the 1950s and 1960s. At least one member of the public touched on this, suggesting changes based upon "historical perspective." I, along with those sitting with me during the presentation and in our break-out groups, would like to see removal of that material and, if possible, placement of the beach-quality material on the Gulf side of the barrier islands. It seemed to us that would be more truthfully a restoration. More importantly, I am sure you have heard that there is a widely held belief that the dredging and deposition of materials at those locations destabilized Midnight Pass, a pass system that appeared to have reached equilibrium at that time. Of course the past is just the past, but I believe anything now undertaken by the Corps should be closely tied to the results and recommendations of the Midnight Pass Study. If that study includes (as many believe it must) a recommendation to alter the spoil islands to help stabilize a reopened Midnight Pass, the Corps should not undertake an alternative "restoration" project that would prove to impede a stable Midnight Pass. Rather, the Corps should only do work that would improve stability.

None of us at the February 3 workshop felt we had cost information that would be necessary to suggest a true restoration. Costing such projects is not within my expertise or that of other members of the public at the workshop. All we were told was the budget limit for the project. That is hardly sufficient to allow the public to suggest viable changes to the proposed alternatives. Perhaps that is a problem inherent to this process, so I do not want to sound unduly critical. Under the circumstances, I will only be critical if a true "restoration" alternative is merely dismissed out of hand as not feasible on the basis of cost.

I was pleased to see that the Midnight Pass Study will be a part of the data collection for the Sarasota Bay Feasibility Study. Certainly that will be necessary to achieve the long-range goal of environmental restoration. However, it is hard for me to understand how even preliminary decisions can be made now by the Corps in this area when the Midnight Pass Study will not be presented until February 22, 2000. I urge the Corps to hear the presentation on February 22 in Venice, and to take into consideration the conclusions before the Corps proceeds further.

Thank you again for the public workshops, and for receiving my written comments.

Fred Melin
P.O. Box 15612
Sarasota, FL 34277-1612

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: What is the proposed timeframe?

- Where does the \$ come from?

- I would like to see a cost/ecological benefit comparison for the three ~~proposals~~ proposals on the two projects.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State Zip Code _____

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PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT
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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: _____

Little Sarasota Bay is Stagnant -
The ^{temporal} grasses are gone, the fish
& bird habitat is severely diminished -
What can the Corps of Engineers do
to assist in the permits to
opening of the Midnight Pass??
The benefits are so numerous: -
the beach restoration on Little
beach, the saving of the ecology
on Little Sarasota Bay

Name: JOHN TAD #507
Mailing Address: 8897 Midnight Pass Rd
City, State Zip Code: Sarasota, FL 34242

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THE EXCESS SAND
FROM THE JIM NEVILLE MARINE PRESERVE & MOVE IT
TO SNAKE ISLAND TO HELP PREVENT EROSION?
YOU CANNOT VIEW THESE ISLANDS AS
SEPARATE PROJECTS. YOU MUST ADDRESS THE
WHOLE. OTHERWISE IT'S SIMILAR TO THE
BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT,

Name NANCY BROWN
Mailing Address 4200 MIDNIGHT PASS
City, State Zip Code SARASOTA FL 34242

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QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: ACOG

Question/comment: I believe that the primary goal should
be to create a diverse array of native habitats.
All exotic species should be removed. Special
consideration should be given to re-creating habitat
types that have been destroyed in other areas
of the bay in not a proportion to the destruction
in general (e.g. coastal hammocks, high marsh).
The islands should be primarily wildlife habitat, with
no effort made to provide for human recreation.
It is folly to phase exotic removal, as they
will re-grow within a few growing seasons.

Name _____

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City, State Zip Code _____

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

February 3, 2000

Question/comment directed to: anyone

Question/comment: We need to open - reopen Mid night
Pass to save the shore line especially
north of the Pass to Turtle Beach & on to
Point of Rocks & Sandbarling.

We feel that the pass being closed has
caused shoreline destruction from Venice Pier
& Jetty all the way to Anna Marie which
affects Lido Beach, Big Pass, New Pass

Presently the Pass is trying to cut thru
properties at 9150 & South destiny Blind Pass Road.
now making a temporary repair at cost of \$600000.
Originally more water flowed thru Mid night Pass than Venice & Big Pass
combine -

Name ARTHUR E SINGLETON

Mailing Address 9150 BLIND PASS ROAD

City, State Zip Code SARASOTA FL 34242

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Arthur E Singleton 2-3-2000

Robert Waechter
6539 Peacock Rd.
Sarasota Fl. 34242
Home Phone (941)346-0379

2/07/00

Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CESAJ-PD-PF (Jinks)
Box 4970
Jacksonville, Fl 32232-0019

Attn: Tiphonie C. Jinks CE

Re: Ecosystem Restoration in (Little) Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet
Workshop 2/03/2000, Pine View School

Dear Ms. Jinks,

Thank you and the ACOE for your professional and well run workshop. It was a pleasure to see so many folks come together on the same page by the end of the workshop.

I would like to make a suggestion to the ACOE and it's contractor, HDR Engineering, about how you might meet everyone's goals while at the same time making the project as economical as possible.

As pointed out by Mote Marine scientist Jim Culter, the saltern areas referenced in the photos are not natural to this location but rather are tidal canals and lagoons that have been filled in with silted down dredge spoils deposited on, and forming, the upland areas. By utilizing the historical natural configuration of the islands that once made up the flood tidal delta we now know as Jim Neville Marine Preserve we could minimize the amount of dredge spoils that must be relocated, while maximizing the area to be returned to it's more natural state of Mangrove Islands laced with tidal canals. Leaving a portion of the upland areas on both the North and South portions of these islands will provide additional spoil deposition areas that can then be ringed with dense mangroves to discourage intrusion. Limiting these sites in area and layering them in a deep bed of mulch will minimize the colonization by exotics.

By insuring that the tidal canals, connecting the remaining lagoons with the (previously) saltern areas and the Bay on both the East and West sides, are deep enough at low tide to permit canoe and kayak transit will provide a wonderful, passive, recreation area that would be embraced by all interested groups.

There is no need to re-invent the wheel here, we need to, as near as possible or practical, go back to what was here before man and his machines started "making it better". Lets concentrate on the historical perspective and let that 'look back' dictate how we move forward.

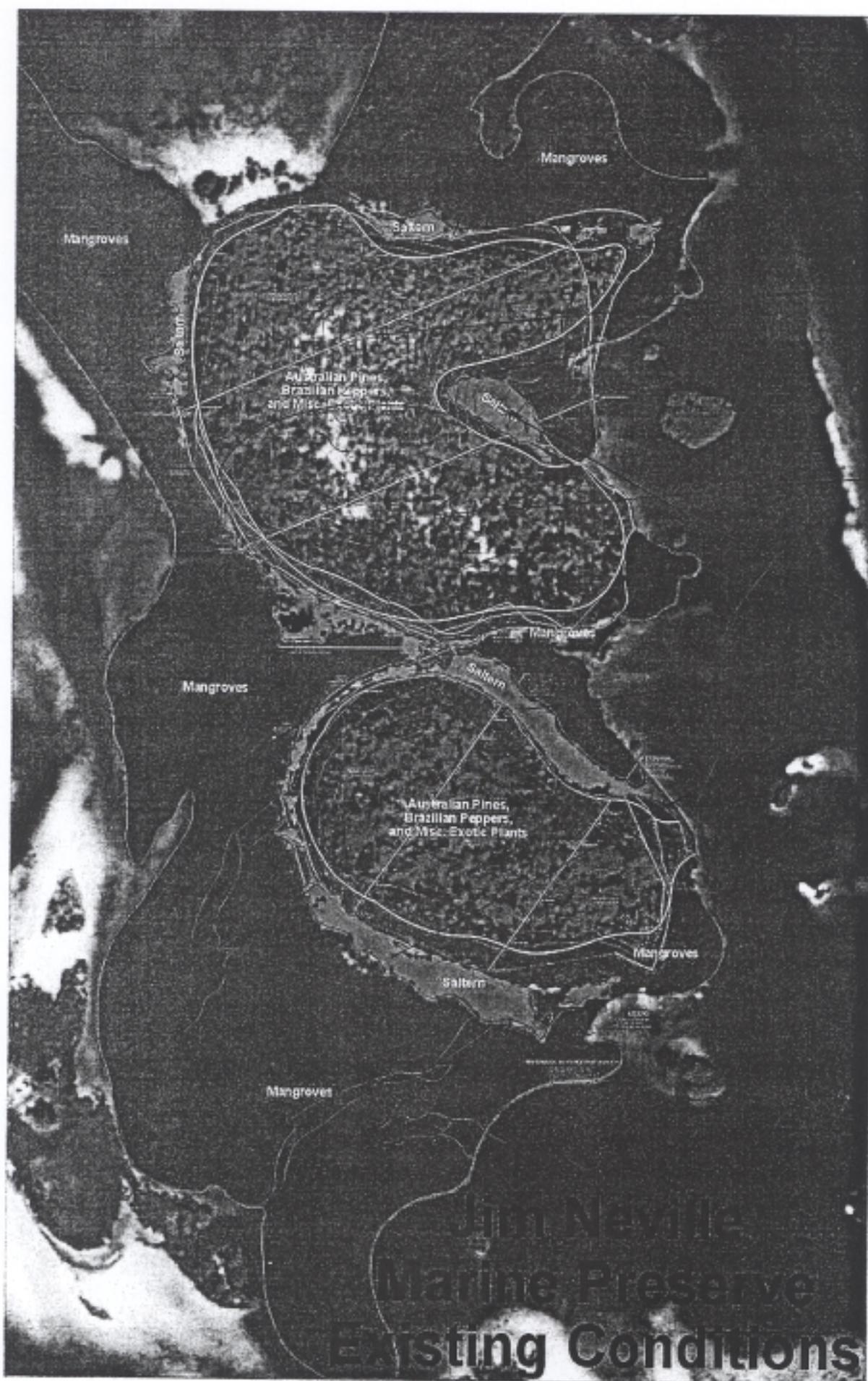
I have enclosed an annotated copy of the "existing conditions" photo as a reference.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Waechter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert Waechter, Director SKA
Chair, Environmental Affairs, Siesta Key Association
President, Midnight Pass Society

CC: Bruce Hasbrouck, Sr. Scientist, HDR



UPLANDS FOR FILL DISPOSAL ALONG WITH OLD MOTE SITE

LOWER INTO LITTORAL ZONE.

LOWER SALTERN AREAS TO ORIGINAL ELEVATIONS AND UTILIZE FOR CROSS FLOW MAXIMIZING FRINGE AREA TO GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE

CONNECT EXISTING LAGOON AREA TO BAY

Marine Preserve
Existing Conditions

Eliminate all uplands to closer mimic flood-tide shoal islands of this section of Florida, which do not have uplands.

Midnight Pass - interactions

If a stable pass configuration is accepted by the County, additional design criteria must be ~~considered~~ considered.

Additional shallow channel ~~areas~~ areas could then be constructed through the islands (roughly NE → SW orientation) to enhance circulation.

Design # 1, best approach. However, without a ^{Midnight} pass opening, circulation will remain very poor in this area. Through-island cuts will allow for wind-driven currents to flow through new wetlands. Water movement by itself ~~is~~ should be an important consideration. Low flow-high nutrient water is very stressful for seagrasses, & fauna. O.O. crashes are common in this area in summer & water movement will alleviate this to some ~~degree~~ extent.

for
No Pass
Conditions →

The old Icw east of the existing Icw could receive material from the islands. The sediments in the old Icw are very poor & atypical for the area, fine grained-organic. It would be a significant improvement to "cap" the soils in the old Icw with a sand/fine sand mix. If the hole were filled to the photic zone, seagrass colonization would ~~be~~ be likely.

Jim Neville



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District

Release No. DRAFT
For Release: October 7, 1999
P.O. Box 4870 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Contact: Jacquelyn Griffin, Public Affairs Officer
Phone: 904-232-2235 FAX: 904-232-2237
Email: jacquelyn.j.griffin@saaj02.usace.army.mil

News Release

ARMY CORPS TO HOLD PUBLIC WORKSHOP

ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET

JACKSONVILLE – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District has scheduled a public workshop to discuss ecosystem restoration in Sarasota Bay.

The workshop will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 28, 1999, at Sarasota High School's West Cafeteria, 1000 South School Avenue, Sarasota, Florida.

The purpose of the workshop is to discuss a feasibility study the Corps is undertaking in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District for the restoration of spoil islands in Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet. Jim Neville Preserve, Palmer Point Park, Bird Colony Island, Skiers Island, Big Edwards Island and Snake Island will be the islands addressed in this study effort. The public is invited to attend and time will be allotted for them to provide comment.

For additional information about the workshop, please contact the Jacksonville District Public Affairs office at 904-232-2235.

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Public Workshop

**October 28, 1999
7:00pm – 10:00pm**

**Sarasota High School
1000 S. School Avenue
Sarasota, Florida**

Presented by:

US Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

West Coast Inland Navigational District

HDR Engineering, Inc.

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Project Background

- 1987 - Sarasota Bay designated a Priority Water Body by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - 1995 - The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Sarasota Bay was approved by the Governor and EPA.
 - 1997 - Section 1135 Proposal for Ecosystem Restoration of spoil islands in Sarasota Bay was submitted to the US Army Corps of Engineers
 - 1998 - US Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters approved funding for the Section 1135 Feasibility Study
 - 1999 - US Army Corps of Engineers and HDR Kick-Off the Feasibility Study
-

Project Team

US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), Jacksonville District

- Lead Agency for the Section 1135 Feasibility Study
- Alberto Gonzalez, Project Manager
- Tiphonie Jinks, Study Manager

West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND)

- Non-Federal Sponsor
- Charles Listowski, Executive Director

HDR Engineering, Inc.

- Consultant Conducting the Feasibility Study with the ACE
 - Bruce Hasbrouck, Study Manager
-

Coordinating Agencies

Sarasota County

Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration: The Public Involvement Process

Goals of the Workshop

- To inform the public about the Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, which is jointly funded by the U.S. Army Corps and its non-Federal sponsor, the West Coast Inland Navigation District.
- To solicit initial public comment at the earliest stage in the proposed project, and to address as many of those comments as possible during the study's public involvement process.
- To review and consider all comments, written or oral. Written comments received within 10 days of the workshop will be considered.

Rules of the Workshop

Time is a limited resource. This public comment period does not represent the only opportunity to be heard on this matter. Comment forms have been provided and will be accepted now and at any time during the planning process. In the interest of eliciting the most information possible as early in the process as possible, and out of respect for others who wish to speak, we ask that all members of the public observe a few simple rules:

- Please speak clearly and concisely. Two to three minutes should be sufficient time to pose a question or offer a comment.
- Please respect the role of the facilitators as time managers.
- Please do not interrupt others when they have the floor.
- Please listen carefully.
- If you agree with what someone else has said, please say so, but do not repeat what they said.
- Please respect the right of others to differ in their opinions.
- Please consider opportunities to achieve consensus.

Upcoming Public Involvement Opportunities

Additional opportunities for public input will be provided through this study. Individual workshops for the different islands will be scheduled during the alternative analysis phase of the project to solicit additional public input; as well as an optional public meeting once the Environmental Assessment has been completed. Notices will be mailed to all those interested parties who have signed-in and provided their mailing address during this workshop. The attached Project Schedule illustrates the upcoming opportunities for public involvement.

The Section 1135 Process and the National Environmental Policy Act

Section 1135 Process – Project Modifications for Improvement of the Environment

What the Corps Can Do

The Corps of Engineers has the authority provided under Section 1135 of the Water Resources Act of 1986, as amended, to make modifications in the structures and operations of water resources projects, constructed by the Corps, if determined that the modifications are:

- Feasible and consistent with the authorized project purposes
- Improve the quality of the environment in the public interest

The primary benefits from projects must be associated with improvements to fish and wildlife resources. Examples of the types of projects the Corps can fund are: removal of exotic vegetation; planting trees on project lands; opening river oxbows closed by the Corps; and manipulation of previously placed dredged material.

How is a Section 1135 Project Initiated and Conducted?

To initiate a Section 1135 project a non-Federal entity must submit a letter of intent indicating an interest to act as the non-Federal sponsor for a proposed project modification. Upon receipt of a letter of intent, the Corps will request funds to conduct an initial appraisal, called the Preliminary Restoration Plan, of the proposed project modification to determine eligibility.

The Section 1135 Preliminary Restoration Plan (PRP) consists of a discussion of the existing project features or functions being modified, a description of the degradation attributing to the project, the nature and scope of the ecosystem restoration features outlined, the projected environmental outputs and a map of the project area. The PRP acts as a request to initiate the feasibility phase.

Public Participation in Section 1135 Projects: The NEPA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires public consultation on major federal actions that may have a significant affect on the human environment.

Through NEPA, federal agencies are required to prepare a “Detailed Statement” for the proposed major actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This statement includes the environmental impacts of the proposed action, alternatives to the proposed action, and any adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided should the proposal be minimized.

For this project, the NEPA requirement will be met through the completion of an Environmental Assessment (EA). Agencies are required to involve the public in the preparation of an EA to the extent practicable. This workshop and the follow-up workshops discussed tonight represent the Corps efforts to ensure that the public is involved in this Section 1135 Project.

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration: Benefits of Restoration

Ecological

Wetlands

- Nursery Habitat
- Water Quality
- Biomass

Uplands

- Native Species
- Wildlife Habitat
- Ground Cover

Safety and Navigation

- Potential to Reduce Storm Damage
- Minimizes Potential For Obstructed Waterways
- Reduces Siltation of Navigational Channel

Water Quality

Reduction of Erosion

- Impacts to Sea grasses
- Coverage of Other Habitat

Improved Filtration

- Mangroves
- Emergent Vegetation

Successful Restoration Projects

Munyon Island – Palm Beach County

Peanut Island – Palm Beach County

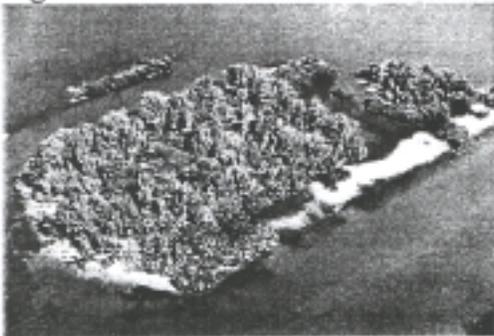
Leffis Key – Manatee County

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration: Study Information

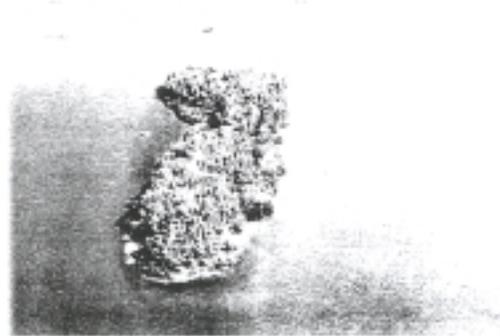
Spoil Islands Being Considered

The Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, being conducted by the Corps is studying the potential restoration of six spoil islands located in Sarasota Bay. These islands include:

Big Edwards Island



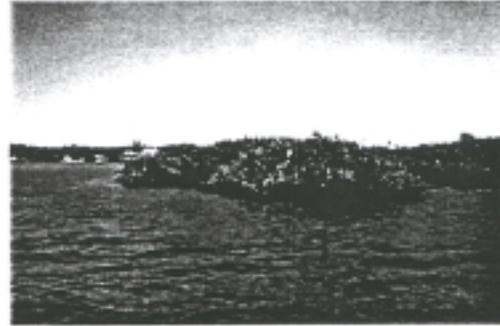
Skier's Island



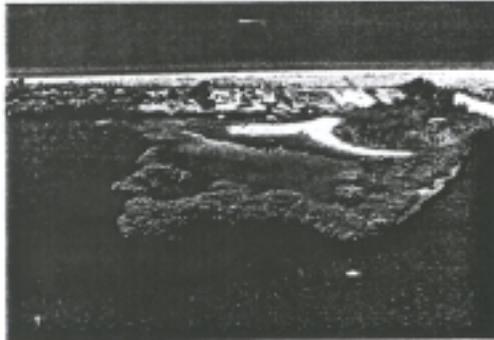
Jim Neville Preserve



Bird Colony Islands



Palmer Point Park



Snake Island



Data Collection

Currently, data collection efforts are ongoing regarding existing biological, historical, and water quality studies of Sarasota Bay. In addition, island specific data collection has been initiated including the ecological characteristics of each island. Island specific survey and geotechnical activities will also be underway shortly.

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration: Study Schedule

Task Name	Duration	1999												2000			
		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Data Collection	125d																
Public Workshop	1d																
Alternatives Analysis	60d																
Selection of a Preferred Alternative	10d																
Preliminary Design	18d																
Conceptual Design	28d																
Prepare Environmental Assessment	178d																
Public Workshop	1d																
Public Workshop	1d																

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration
Feasibility Study

Panel: Richard Hamann, University of Florida,
Center for Governmental
Responsibilities
Tom Ankerson, University of Florida,
Center for Governmental
Responsibilities
Carman Vare, Palm Beach County DERM
Alberto Gonzalez, U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers
Bruce Hasbrouck, MDR Engineering, Inc.
Charles Listowski, West Coast Inland
Navigation District
Tiphonie Jinks, U. S. Army Corps of
Engineers
Eric Sutton, Sarasota County
Jeannie Hunt, MDR Engineering, Inc.

REPORTED BY: NANCY E. BRUIN PAULSEN
Registered Professional Reporter
Notary Public
State of Florida at Large

DATE: October 29, 1999
Commencing at 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Sarasota High School
1000 South School Avenue
Sarasota, Florida

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meetings scheduled also to also be working with the
public with regard to specific areas.

But public input must be informed. And so the
first part of the workshop is going to focus on
presenting some information to you, both as to how the
Corps of Engineers will be conducting the feasibility
study and the role of public participation in that.

We have a couple of representatives from the Corps
of Engineers. Alberto Gonzalez and Tiphonie Jinks, who
are working on this project for the Corps of Engineers.
They're going to be following Tom Ankerson, who is
going to be explaining the public participation part of
the workshop.

Then Bruce Hasbrouck from the consulting firm
which has been retained by the U. S. Army Corps of
Engineers to conduct the feasibility study, which is
the subject of this workshop, is going to explain to
you the objectives of restoration projects of the
nature that are being considered here, the ecological
benefits and other benefits that can be obtained.

We also have a guest speaker, a Carman Vare, who
is with Palm Beach County. They have had substantial
experience restoring some spoil islands. And he's
going to show you those examples and talk about their
experience.

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MR. HAMANN: I would like to welcome everyone to
the workshop. If you could take your seats, we need to
get started. We have a very much great deal to handle
tonight.

My name is Richard Hamann, I teach at the
University of Florida College of Law. My colleague,
Tom Ankerson, also works at the College of Law with me.
He's also a lawyer and a professor there.

We have two students here who are helping us as
part of a class project, Jodi Lane and Ashley Murphy.
Although her nametag doesn't say that. They're -- Jodi
is a law student. Ashley is working on a doctorate in
an interdisciplinary ecology program.

We are the facilitators of this workshop. Our
job is to help accomplish the primary goal of this
workshop, which is to get public input, to get your
comments, to get your questions answered as part of
this process and then as part of the process which will
be continuing in the future.

So we're going to devote half of the time tonight
to accepting your public input. There will be
opportunities to fill out public comment cards, to mail
them in to the Corps of Engineers. They will be
compiled. They will be utilized in this process.

And then we're going to have some follow-up

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Then Bruce is going to come back and explain to
you exactly how the feasibility study is going to
proceed, what the steps are for public participation in
that process.

And that should take about an hour. At that
point, we are then going to move to a public input
process and a process for answering your questions.

We have other members of the project team here who
are going to be available at that time to help answer
questions.

The local sponsor of this project is the West
Coast Inland Navigation District. The executive
director, Chuck Listowski is here. Eric Sutton is here
from Sarasota County, in case any questions come up
that may -- he may be able to help answer.

Mark Alderson I see is back here from the Sarasota
Bay National Estuary Program, if any questions come up
that he might be able to help with.

So we have a lot of resources. And at this point,
let me turn this over to Tom Ankerson to explain to you
very briefly how the latter part of the meeting will
proceed.

MR. ANKERSON: Thank you, Richard.

Once we have finished with the presentations by
our panel, we'll open the discussion to you all. And

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1 we'll do that in two forms.

2 Initially, some of you or most of use, hopefully

3 all of you, have filled out one of these cards back

4 there, which is a contact information sheet by which

5 you will receive further information as the process

6 continues. There is also a little box to check as to

7 whether you wanted to speak or not.

8 Those will be given to me. And I'll call your

9 name in the order that they're given to me. And you'll

10 be given an opportunity to speak.

11 If there's time thereafter and people still want

12 to continue to speak, we'll just acknowledge people by

13 a show of hands.

14 And if there's time after that, and I think the

15 panel is willing to make time even after we close the

16 formal part of the presentation, we can move into more

17 informal settings using the maps and based on the

18 structure of the three different areas that are under

19 consideration. And we will stand by and continue to

20 record comments as they come in.

21 The comments that you provide, both written and

22 verbal, are being recorded. And we will take those

23 comments and try and assimilate them and reproduce them

24 -- reproduce them in the form of a report that tries to

25 give some sense of what the public comment -- to

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6

1 characterize that comment from tonight.

2 So that's -- there's also a question sheet, by the

3 way, where you can provide written comments if you

4 don't feel like speaking out this evening. Written

5 comments are equally welcome.

6 Within comments -- written comments received

7 within ten days of this date will be considered in this

8 summary that I just mentioned to you that we will be

9 working on.

10 So with that in mind, I'll turn it back to

11 Richard, who will go ahead and proceed as the manager

12 of time. I'll introduce some of the -- kind of the

13 rules by which we'll run the participation when we get

14 to the public participation point.

15 But the fundamental thing is our job is to be time

16 managers, and hopefully, get as many comments put

17 forward as possible. That entails two things.

18 Hopefully, if somebody has made a comment that you

19 otherwise would have made, then there won't be a

20 necessity to reiterate it. You can reiterate it in

21 writing or wait until after we have had a good

22 cross-section of comments to reiterate that.

23 And then secondly, any other comments and so forth

24 that you want to provide, we'll continue to take them

25 in ten days.

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1 So with that in mind, I'll turn it back to

2 Richard.

3 MR. HAMANN: And Alberto I believe at this point

4 was going to talk about the background. I was also

5 supposed to be flipping through these slides.

6 MR. GONZALEZ: Good evening. And I just want to

7 -- thanks for coming here. And I apologize, it's kind

8 of cold here. I got that vent. It's kind of freezing.

9 And so we're just trying to give you just a brief

10 summary, because some of these details on these slides

11 are kind of detailed about the specific program that

12 we're trying to do or conduct this study.

13 So again, my name is Alberto Gonzalez. I work in

14 the Jacksonville district. I am the project manager

15 for the Sarasota Bay study. I've been with the corps

16 for almost 20 years, and mostly in the planning, in the

17 detailed hydraulics, and then moved in the last eight

18 years to the project management arena.

19 This is a little bit of project background for the

20 Sarasota. And you've got the chronologic dates. '87,

21 the Sarasota Bay was designated a priority water body

22 by the E. P. A.

23 Then in '95 came the Comprehensive Conservation

24 Management Plan. '98, the request from the -- our

25 local sponsor, we got involved in an initial -- kind of

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1 an initial general assessment for this study.

2 And in '90 -- and this year, '99, we just did the

3 kickoff, which was called the feasibility study, and I

4 got into some general details on that.

5 We're doing this under the section 1135, which is

6 just a program that was created -- enacted by law in

7 1986, in the Water Resources Development Act. It's a

8 program that's fairly new, although in '86, but it's

9 fairly new nationwide. And we had done throughout the

10 nation and even in the state of Florida some under this

11 program.

12 What this program looks is kind of for small,

13 where the federal investment is five millions or less.

14 And that's the reason we're doing this under the

15 section 1135 as opposed to an authorized or a

16 congressional authorized project.

17 Under this program, obviously, we look for

18 environmental benefits to outweigh the cost. Also,

19 there has to be a connection under the 1135 with a

20 corps project. In this case, on the Intracoastal

21 Waterway and those spoil islands along the Intracoastal

22 Waterway which were created as fill material all -- as

23 disposal islands.

24 And the non-federal in this case would be a public

25 agency or a nonprofit, in this case is --

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MR. ANKERSON: Can you follow your microphone?

MR. GONZALEZ: I know. I tend to do that. I'm sorry.

The non-federal, like I say, is the West Coast Inland Navigation District.

The cost sharing is who pays for what under this program. The federal government will pay 75 percent and the non-federal sponsor 25 percent. It gets into some of the details. And I think everybody has the handouts. If not, I think we have additional copies.

The proposal, which we already passed this stage, is that the initial assessment. This is just a general document, about eight or nine, ten pages, which identify the proposed restoration, this federal interest, do we have a potential sponsor.

And based on that document, a general document, we submit that to our offices in -- our headquarters in Washington. And with that document, if approved, then it just give us permission to go into the next phase, which is the feasibility phase. This is the phase that we are at now.

In general, what the feasibility phase looks is just like general. Gather general information about the conditions of those islands. Get public input. Get also comments from resource agencies, like Fish and

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with those islands. So all those will be considered.

Our document we have on environmental assessment, which is -- it's just -- it's a concise document that analyze all the environmental impacts, if any, on those islands and then determine the significant impacts, if any.

The agencies are required to provide comments or input into that. Normally, we get -- once we have a general scoping of what we are proposing, the agencies will have normally between two to three months to comment. Those serious comments or concerns need to be addressed before we can follow or finalize our process.

Okay, I think this is the time that our contractor, E. D. R., will talk about, in general, about what we're doing. But again, I'll be available at the end if you have any questions.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thanks, Alberto.

Basically, I'm going to talk a little bit about the benefits of the ecological restoration, since that is the project we are proposing here.

There's two aspects, certainly the wetlands and the uplands. Although one time somebody asked me is there anything else.

But essentially, the wetlands we're looking at

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Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries, E. P. A.

Then with that information, and we also do some general engineering information, with that information, we compile all that data into a matrix.

And we're trying to look into what is the most cost effective or benefit for those islands, again, with support from the resource agency. We won't do anything in these islands without the support of resource agencies or the public.

And then once we finish this phase, it goes to our division for approval. Once approved, we've still got two more steps, which is the plans and specification, which is the detail design, and from that, construction.

This process involve also the National Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA. And what we're doing here tonight is part of that process. Conduct our first workshop. Get ideas, input from the public, trying to get as many comments as we can from the public.

And also, we'll do a general scoping with resource agencies to get their input and try to address or try to accommodate some of these comments into our process of selecting a plan. Or don't select a plan. One option would be a no-build option, or don't do anything

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include mangroves, the grass marshes, including spartina, juncus, as well as the below the tidal, such as the seagrasses.

Safety. Certainly recognizing that many of the trees, the Australian pine that are on these islands, have very shallow roots. And if we were into a situation such as a hurricane or a very large storm, these trees would become projectiles.

And anybody that's living on one side or the other would be subject to these trees being blown not only into your yards, but also potentially into your houses.

Navigation. Once again, should we have a storm, you need to recognize that there's a lot of these trees that would be blown into the waterways.

And it would be a while before the waterways could be cleared, because with a catastrophic storm, the first effort would be with the land-side resources, and the Intracoastal Waterway, it would be a little while before it would be cleaned out.

As well as silt in the channels from erosion. Many of the spoil islands have a lot of exposed sands on them.

During the smaller rains, as you see from water quality, a lot of the sand and silt clays from these

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13

1 spoil islands would -- do and would wash back out into
2 the waterway. Now, during a catastrophic event, you
3 would end up filling in a lot of the Intracoastal
4 Waterway.

5 Keep in mind, too, spoil islands were previously
6 material that were out in the bay that were dredged
7 from dredging the Intracoastal Waterway. Many of these
8 soils are very fine clay material that once it's
9 suspended in the water column, you have a -- it takes a
10 long time for it to settle out.

11 So what happens from spoil islands from the
12 erosion is you get a lot of reduced light. And the
13 material as well covers up your grasses. You get
14 die-off from the seagrasses, and you get a lot lower
15 production of the marine habitat.

16 So the benefit of the restoration is improved
17 water quality to where you reduce that erosion as well
18 as the wetlands that would be created from spoil
19 islands, should we scrape them down and make them
20 wetlands, provide additional filtration of both the
21 suspended sediments as well as the nutrients in the
22 water column.

23 And there are successful restoration projects.
24 One of them is right here, just north of Sarasota
25 County, in Manatee County, is Leffis Key.

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15

1 to this side. Can everybody hear me now? Okay, Rob,
2 you know what, I didn't turn that thing on yet. Can
3 somebody turn that on for me?

4 Okay. There was a -- I guess a county logo before
5 that. There you go. Thanks. Representing
6 Environmental Resources Department of the county. Let
7 me just move this -- can I move this a little bit? Do
8 you mind? Let me move everything so I can see what I'm
9 doing here. Okay.

10 Rob, next slide, please.

11 We did a couple studies in Palm Beach County in
12 the beginning '90s to identify some restoration sites.
13 We also did inventories of the mangroves, seagrasses,
14 and all the natural resources along the estuary as well
15 as fresh water.

16 We came up with some startling numbers. We found
17 that 85 percent of all the mangroves and estuaries in
18 the county and Lake Worth Lagoon were gone. We had
19 about 15 percent of the mangroves left.

20 Also, about 65 percent of the seagrasses were gone
21 because of dredging and filling, so we only had about
22 35 percent of the submerged bottoms still having
23 seagrass intact.

24 We also have a tremendous amount of pollution that
25 goes into Lake Worth Lagoon. It's a lot different from
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14

1 And another one we have asked a representative
2 from Palm Beach County, Department of Environmental
3 Resource Management, to come today and talk about an
4 1135 project that they have successfully implemented in
5 Palm Beach County.

6 So with that, I would like to introduce Carman
7 Vare.

8 MR. VARE: Thank you. Appreciate it. That's
9 loud. How do you talk in this thing? Very carefully?

10 MR. HASBROUCK: There you go.

11 MR. VARE: You sneak up on it, right?

12 I've got some slides. I guess I'm not going to be
13 using this power point. Is there a way we can turn
14 this off?

15 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure. Hold the green button down
16 three seconds.

17 MR. VARE: I brought some ancient slides here. I
18 never had a chance to put a power point presentation
19 together. So I'm just going to go back to my slide
20 projector right now, and we'll just kind of go through
21 these slides.

22 Oh, the only thing is, somebody's got to click
23 this thing. Want to click it? Okay. Thank you.

24 Okay. I'm going to use that microphone.

25 I'm going to switch microphones here and come over

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1 Sarasota Bay.

2 We have about 400 million gallons of fresh water
3 coming out of Lake Okeechobee in the ag areas that
4 discharges into the Lake Worth Lagoon. So it's high in
5 tannins. And typically, the water is not real
6 transparent. Whereas in Sarasota, it looks a lot
7 cleaner.

8 I used to live over in Sarasota when I first came
9 down to Florida back in the early '80s. And I was
10 really -- when I saw Sarasota, I fell in love with it
11 right away, and this is the place I picked to live
12 until a job opened up for me over in Palm Beach County,
13 something I was looking for.

14 So I switched over there. And I've been over
15 there for about 16 years or so. And I don't think it
16 was a bad choice.

17 What we basically have, there is two different
18 type habitats, which we just covered a second ago, as
19 far as benefits.

20 Natural habitat, which we're trying to get more
21 of, is -- you have an internetwork -- a network of root
22 systems, you have the fish, you have a stabilization
23 that the root systems provide, and you also have
24 nutrient uptake -- thank you.

25 You have nutrient uptake that occurs from the

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17

1 transpiration of the roots. And also the leaf that are
2 falling into the water is a detrital food base, which
3 starts the whole food web system.

4 What we have a lot of in Palm Beach County is
5 this. I think Sarasota County is better off as far as
6 that goes. But we've got a whole lot of this with
7 nothing much else.

8 Next slide, please.

9 One of the things we have done is we worked with
10 some volunteers -- and this is kind of getting off the
11 issue a little bit just to show you something. I'm not
12 sure if anybody has tried it over here yet.

13 But you put P. V. C. pipe in the water right next
14 to a bulkhead. And you can put a mangrove seed in
15 that. And that will typically germinate. And
16 eventually, you'll have a mangrove tree that will take
17 place.

18 If you don't do that, you have to put a lot of
19 rock in front of the seawall, you've got to bring in
20 soil amendments, and it's very, very expensive. This
21 is a real cheap way of trying to get some mangroves to
22 grow in front of a bulkhead. So we're experimenting in
23 a couple different places with that.

24 This is one of the projects we've got with the
25 Corps of Engineers right now. This is called Johns
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1 Island. And I'm going to have to stand back. I
2 really can't see these slides too well. I'll sit right
3 here.

4 Can you hear me? Okay. I'm just going to sit
5 down here.

6 This is the C-51 Canal. This connects into Lake
7 Okeechobee. And this is the thing that discharges all
8 that fresh water that basically pretty much pollutes
9 the entire Lake Worth Lagoon.

10 This is an area that is managed by the Audubon
11 Society right now. We have Australian pine in this
12 area, this area, and we have some mangroves that are
13 surviving right along the edges.

14 This is -- I think it's under review right now by
15 the corps, and I just talked to Alberto, he said it was
16 approved, so we're going to be going forward with this.
17 It's about six or seven acres in size.

18 This is Peanut Island. This is a much bigger
19 island. This is about 79 acres in size. We have a
20 spoil area here that the port utilizes. The port's
21 over in this location. Palm Beach Inlet is over here.
22 And there is another FIND spoil location right here.
23 There is about a million or so cubic yards in total
24 between the two spoil sites.

25 Some of the work that we've got proposed on
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19

1 this -- and this is actually a phase two. Phase one
2 has already taken place where they built some
3 recreational amenities on the northeast corner of the
4 island, and they also put a walkway around the entire
5 island.

6 What we want to do is there's mangroves over here
7 we want to create a flushing channel to get to. We
8 also want to create some mangroves.

9 On this area here, to try to utilize the gin-clear
10 water that comes in through the inlet, we're going to
11 build a shallow water reef about an acre or so in size,
12 and then build about a two and a half acre shallow
13 water lagoon behind that.

14 So this is going to be a tremendous area as far as
15 fish utilization. It will probably be a real neat area
16 for people to see, you know, over time maybe snorkel on
17 it.

18 We're also going to be converting a lot of this
19 Australian pine material into a maritime hammock, which
20 are trees are basically 30 to 40 foot tall, versus
21 Australian pines, which these are about 100 foot tall.

22 And basically, these are on the footprint of where
23 a spoil is going to be placed anyway, so. This island
24 was basically built to hold spoil. So what we're
25 trying to do is work within the framework of the intent

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20

1 of the island.

2 There is also the Kennedy -- there was a Coast
3 Guard facility right here. And John Kennedy, when he
4 was alive, used to live about a mile or so south of
5 here. And they put a bunker in place during the Bay of
6 Pigs, a place that he could go to.

7 And so that area is still intact, and there is a
8 whole -- the Coast Guard facility is here, and it's
9 turned into a maritime museum. So that's pretty neat.
10 That's kind of a side-bar or a side benefit of the
11 island, what it provides.

12 Next slide, please.

13 This is just another perspective of Peanut Island.
14 And again, and this is another project that the corps
15 right now is reviewing.

16 Thanks, Rob.

17 This is a third project that's under review right
18 now. And this is Lake Osborne. This in particular is
19 called Limpkin Lake. It used to be called Square Lake
20 because it was an old borrow bit. So we're trying to
21 get creative.

22 This is a really popular park. This is an area
23 that's really underutilized and has a lot of algae and
24 nuisance-type weeds in it.

25 So what we want to do is scrape this area down,
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21

1 plant lots of cypress pineapple. The freshwater good
2 stuff.

3 This is a big patch of Australian pine. We want
4 to cut, basically create an island out of this and
5 plant it heavily to bring in herons and that type of
6 thing.

7 So this is a little getting off the estuarine type
8 of scenario, but just to let you know there is another
9 project underway with the corps.

10 We think highly of this program. There is a
11 tremendous amount of funding available. And we have
12 some projects that are very expensive. So we're
13 looking at this -- we're looking at, you know, this
14 opportunity. We want to take advantage of it as much
15 as we can while the program is still around.

16 There is no telling how long a program like that
17 might be around. I mean, when you have a change in the
18 guard and that type of thing, programs can dissolve.

19 So while this thing is hot, we want to take
20 advantage of it as much as we can. So we have four
21 projects right now under review by the corps. Plus we
22 have one that we just recently completed.

23 Next slide, please.

24 And this is the Munyon Island project.

25 Next slide.

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23

1 later, but it retained the name Munyon because of the
2 guy named Munyon that actually bought the island.

3 He never was actually a doctor. He was a snake
4 oil salesman. And he sold the stuff called Paw Paw
5 Elixir.

6 Next slide, please.

7 That's the Paw Paw Elixir.

8 He was also a preacher. And he used to point his
9 finger up to the sky all the time and say there is
10 hope. And he actually had a little factory out there
11 with the Paw Paw bottles. So there is actually a piece
12 of those still remaining.

13 This is a picture of the old seawall on the south
14 end.

15 Next slide.

16 As far as the project itself goes, on the third
17 phase, we did a lot of clearing. We -- obviously a lot
18 of Australian pines. These are probably 70, 80 foot
19 tall. You get loaders and bulldozers initially.

20 Next slide.

21 And in areas where we had some archeologic remains
22 that we couldn't disturb the soils, we had to get a
23 little bit more creative as far as clearing.

24 So we had this thing looked like a Dino or
25 dinosaur, we would go in there and clamp the tree, and

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1 This is the island itself. This is a park right
2 out here, John D. MacArthur Beach State Park. This is
3 the Atlantic Ocean. And this is about a 450-acre spoil
4 island.

5 What we did is the first two phases that we had to
6 do we did -- because we didn't have a lot of funding.
7 So what we had to do is do about a \$300,000 or so
8 project at a time. And a tremendous amount of the
9 project remained. We found out about the corps
10 project, and we decided to take advantage of that.

11 Next slide, please.

12 In order to get -- to qualify for corps funding,
13 you have to be able to connect it to a federal project,
14 which we were able to do. The Intracoastal Waterway is
15 out here. And they used that spoil, when they dredged,
16 they dumped it on the island. So we were able to make
17 the connection.

18 Next slide.

19 And on the south end of the island, there was a
20 hotel called The Hygea. And in the early 1900s, there
21 was a guy named Dr. Munyon that built the island and --
22 or built this hotel and put a seawall in.

23 And a lot of people came over there and they used
24 the area from the northeast. And it was a real
25 popular -- and it burnt down basically about 20 years

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1 they would chop the base off, and then pick it up and
2 lay it over the side, so that we weren't disturbing the
3 soils in case there was some archeological artifacts
4 there that needed to be protected.

5 Another method that we employed was actually
6 having people climb these things and topple it piece by
7 piece. If you have a good understory of trees that you
8 don't want to damage, then the only way to get the tree
9 out is really to take it a piece at a time.

10 We found that Munyon Island had a lot of good
11 native vegetation already on there, and we protected it
12 pretty well. So we wound up having a lot of vegetation
13 that remained.

14 Next slide.

15 What we did with the vegetation in the third phase
16 is we chipped it and we stockpiled it.

17 Next slide.

18 And then we got the stockpiled material and spread
19 it out. And what this did is it did a lot as far as
20 controlling exotics from coming back in again. Exotics
21 are really opportunistic. There is a lot of seed
22 source out there still remaining even if you take the
23 exotic tree away.

24 So this compost material would basically prevent
25 those seeds from germinating. And eventually, you

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1 would have natives taking over.

2 We planted a lot of native trees on top of this
3 area. So over time, we'll have a lot of maritime
4 hammock vegetation.

5 Next slide.

6 One of the other aspects of the project is we had
7 to bring in rock, riprap basically, to protect the
8 trees that were planted.

9 Next slide.

10 And they used a clam bucket in this particular
11 case with the material loaded on the barge.

12 Next slide.

13 Also, there was an inlet that we created on the
14 very north end with the rock. And it turned out that
15 that's the only inlet that we had that connected the
16 entire project up. It's about 3,000 feet long. There
17 is about 22 acres of wetlands. And this is the only
18 place it connects into the project area.

19 This is just a shot of the riprap itself. We have
20 some monster boat wakes that come across this way.
21 It's basically full out when boats go by. And there's
22 40-foot Bertrams and stuff that go throw out a three or
23 four foot boat wake. And on a high tide, it can almost
24 top the rocks. So without these rocks in place, at
25 least in some of the areas, we would lose all the

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1 minus 17 feet, and the bottom had a bunch of mucky,
2 silty, disgusting material on the bottom, had no
3 dissolved oxygen.

4 So what we did is we took the material that we got
5 from Munyon by barge, and we brought it into this area,
6 with a silt curtain up around it, and deposited it on
7 the bottom, brought the elevation up about ten feet,
8 got it up to about a minus seven mean low water. Which
9 is still plenty deep for boating and that kind of
10 stuff, but it also provided light penetration to the
11 bottom.

12 So we're actually getting seagrasses in some cases
13 to recruit, and the bottom is tremendously healthy
14 compared to what it was, which was kind of an oozy,
15 silty kind of substrate.

16 Next slide.

17 And that was kind of the process to deposit it.
18 It looked kind of messy. But the silt -- the siltation
19 dropped out pretty quickly.

20 And just to -- on this particular note here, with
21 Peanut Island, we have a million cubic yards of
22 material. I forgot to mention that.

23 There's a million cubic yards of material in the
24 spoil locations. Right now, what we're trying to do is
25 make a marriage of that material to a 60-acre hole

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1 plantings that we did behind it.

2 This is a slide that depicts the scrape-down that
3 took place, the way we took the banks out and sloped
4 them with five to one and planted these areas,
5 basically dug out these channels and stuff so we could
6 get flushing to occur in all the wetlands that we
7 planted.

8 And we -- just a point here is we had some upland
9 that we left behind, on the -- on the areas that we
10 original had intended to put wetlands. Because there
11 was some real good native uplands, we decided to keep
12 those there, not even try to mess with them.

13 Next slide.

14 And when we did the mining, the sand, we would
15 stockpile it, and then load it on trucks, and then the
16 trucks would load it onto the barges.

17 Next slide.

18 This is a picture here, it's pretty graphic. This
19 is the third phase. This is the big pile of dirt.
20 It's probably 20 foot tall. And basically that's the
21 ramp barge. And then we had the equipments barge here
22 with two barges that loaded back and forth.

23 Next slide.

24 What we did with this is here is Munyon Island
25 over here. We had a hole that was about 17 foot deep,

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1 that's located about 15 miles or so south of Peanut
2 Island in an area that we're calling the Lake Worth
3 Golf Course.

4 Basically the golf course was created because they
5 dredged the 60-acre area back in the '20s and brought
6 it down to about a minus 20 feet.

7 So what we're trying to do is get that million
8 cubic yards, which is now beach compatible, and bring
9 it down there and fill the elevations to bring them up
10 to about a minus two or a minus three. So that's also
11 in the works. Which is a fourth project that's in the
12 planning process with the corps.

13 Next slide.

14 And what we do is we get the community involved.
15 We think that's a real vital -- vital thing. It's
16 really neat, too, when you get the scouts, you get
17 environmental groups, you even get boating public, you
18 get the marine industries association to go out and
19 collect mangrove propagules and put them in flats,
20 basically.

21 Each flat holds about 38 mangroves. You've got to
22 plant them within about a year or so. And we had these
23 shade houses built all over.

24 We planted about 65,000 mangroves over the span of
25 time that we did this project. And so we had over a

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1 thousand volunteers helping us plant these things. So
2 there's a lot of people that can point out there and
3 say they were involved in the project.

4 And we get a lot of sort of stewards, of people
5 that will boat by, they'll get out and take a look,
6 maybe pick up some trash, and just have a feeling of
7 pride of being involved in something like this.

8 Next slide.

9 And this -- we had a lot of pontoon boats that
10 were donated to us as well when we moved the material
11 across. So we -- I think at one particular time, we
12 had two or three of these things like on a Saturday
13 morning moving volunteers across, back and forth, and
14 moving mangroves back and forth.

15 Next slide.

16 And this is kind of what it looks like with about
17 50 volunteers or so involved in planting with the
18 flats. And we plant the mangroves on three-foot
19 centers.

20 And we got lots and lots of kids involved. We're
21 not necessarily trying to accomplish a whole lot
22 sometimes. We just want the kids to experience some
23 fun. And so it's -- everybody kind of wins out in
24 this.

25 Next slide.

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1 Now, what we did is over time, we're creating our
2 own donor site. But they really didn't have anyplace
3 in Palm Beach County that had any significant spartina
4 area.

5 So putting these plugs in, and then next slide,
6 about a year later, that's how fast it grows. And it
7 really coalesces well, it has a real good root system,
8 it stabilizes the soils rea good, and actually preps
9 the area for mangroves.

10 Ultimately, we live in a, you know, subtropical,
11 tropical type habitat where mangroves are the climax
12 species. So the spartina will kind of get a foothold,
13 and then the mangroves eventually will take over in
14 areas that we didn't otherwise plant mangroves.

15 We plant spartina along the banks, not so much on
16 the flats but along the banks because the banks are
17 fairly unstable, and they're usually a three-to-one
18 slope or a four-to-one slope.

19 And so the spartina will stabilize a bank, and
20 then the mangroves will root themselves in and
21 eventually out-compete the spartina.

22 And this is a picture here of a project in '92.
23 This was our very first phase that we did. It was
24 about three acres. And it shows the condos in the
25 background.

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1 And sometimes, you have an eagle scout project
2 where the guy has to -- he's in charge of getting food
3 for his crew.

4 So this particular guy, this guy right here, I
5 can't recall his name, it's been a while, he called up
6 Domino's Pizza and the Noid came out in person. He
7 goes -- we had Channel 12 out there, and they were
8 trying to get some publicity.

9 And this is our environmental director right
10 there, Richard Walesky. He would kill me if I
11 mentioned that, but I figured I would do it anyway
12 because he's not here.

13 Next slide.

14 And then just to show you, we have kids that are
15 two years old and grandmothers that are 60 or 70,
16 whatever -- however old she is. I should say 50, I
17 guess, for women, you shouldn't...

18 Also, the spartina plugs, when we put these things
19 in, there isn't a whole lot of spartina down in Palm
20 Beach County. For some reason, as you go farther and
21 farther south, the spartina kind of runs out.

22 And so what we have to do is we have to find a
23 donor site north of us. So they typically go up to
24 Daytona and basically rob, rob Daytona of plugs, bring
25 them down here and install them.

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1 And this is what it looks like -- this is about --
2 this was shot about three or four years later. We have
3 white mangroves that are six, seven, eight foot tall.
4 It basically came in, it grew in pretty well. So we're
5 real happy. Right now, these trees are probably 10 to
6 12 foot tall.

7 Next slide.

8 And this was probably planted within seven or
9 eight months of this picture. We put a dune walkover
10 -- I'm sorry, not a dune walkover, we put in a
11 boardwalk that spanned -- the boater access area, which
12 we have over here, went across, and we have an
13 educational intuitive keos -- interpretive keos here.
14 We also have 15 acres of the island that's an upland
15 that we planted as a maritime hammock.

16 Next slide.

17 And we get groups, we get the National Sierra Club
18 group, they'll come in, there's like a workshop
19 program. We'll have people from California, North
20 Carolina, Ohio, and they'll all converge here in this
21 one area, and they'll go out and help us weed, they'll
22 help us plant. We'll have 20 of them at a time.

23 This is a group that came in from all over the
24 country. And then at the end of the project, we would
25 go out and do some seine work, and catch some fish, and

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1 see how the project was working.
 2 Next slide.
 3 And actually, this particular seine was done in
 4 the very early stages of the project, so there's not a
 5 whole lot of diversity. We mostly have mojarra and
 6 mullet.
 7 But we were getting -- we're targeting -- we sort
 8 of targeted this project for snook. We were hoping to
 9 get a lot of snook to develop in here. And we've found
 10 lots and lots of juvenile snook since we took that
 11 photograph. Unfortunately, I didn't bring any slides
 12 of that. But it is working the way we were hoping it
 13 would.
 14 These are Roseatte Spoonbills that are using
 15 basically the area.
 16 Next slide.
 17 And another spin-off that we didn't count on were
 18 fiddler crabs. We don't have a whole lot of intertidal
 19 zone in Palm Beach County. It's pretty well developed
 20 and bulkheaded.
 21 So these are all big, giant tidal flats that we
 22 created that are intertidal, meaning that at low tide,
 23 they're exposed. And fiddler crabs love that type of
 24 habitat.
 25 So we counted over a million fiddler crabs just in
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1 the first two phases that we did on Peanut, which was
 2 -- on Munyon, which was about six or seven acres. So
 3 we added another 11 or 12 acres when we worked with the
 4 corps in doing the final phase.
 5 And it was real impressive to see all these crabs,
 6 and seeing the birds feeding on these crabs. So we're
 7 obviously making a good food source for birds.
 8 This is a mantis shrimp that we found in the area.
 9 Lots of -- not lots of those, but we're finding some of
 10 those, which are kind of rare.
 11 Next slide.
 12 Also another spin-off that we weren't counting on
 13 were seagrasses. We've got -- this is turtle grass
 14 right here, *Thalassia*. And there is mostly Cuban
 15 shoal, which is *halodule wrightii*.
 16 We weren't counting on this stuff growing, but
 17 it's actually taken up a residence in our tidal canals
 18 and our tidal ponds.
 19 So we're getting a lot -- we basically have two
 20 and a half acres of seagrass that were created inside
 21 the areas that we cut out. So that's another major
 22 plus.
 23 And when it comes time to mitigate for seagrasses,
 24 we'll say that this may be an alternative people could
 25 look at in the future, they could scrape an area down
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1 and let seagrasses recruit.
 2 Next slide.
 3 These are just a couple of quick sequence --
 4 sequential shots of Munyon. This is the north end.
 5 This is what it looked like before we started. This
 6 was after the first phase. This was done -- phase one,
 7 this was about three acres.
 8 And this is after phase two. This was another
 9 three or four acres. Basically a nice, straight line
 10 right there. And we left spoil behind.
 11 And we have a tidal pond here. What we found was
 12 tidal ponds were real important for holding fish. If
 13 you have just tidal ditches, these ditches, a lot of
 14 times, can just empty out and then the fish are
 15 trapped. So we dug the ponds a couple feet deeper so
 16 the fish can kind of pool up there.
 17 And also, these things act as a pumping mechanism,
 18 because it's a passive pump -- tidal pump that occurs
 19 through this inlet. This is the only place it really
 20 connects.
 21 So the more of these features you build into this
 22 thing, the more this is going to push water in and out
 23 on an incoming or an outgoing tide. So these things
 24 are real vital in keeping this inlet open. So we
 25 actually built more -- we covered a lot more of these
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1 things in the third phase.
 2 The next slide.
 3 We basically have -- that's the one we were just
 4 looking at. We put a big one in here, 250-foot
 5 diameter tidal pond. We had another same size one
 6 there, we've got one here, and one down there.
 7 So all of this water basically works its way
 8 northward, pushes through this inlet. So what we have
 9 is -- and there's that straight line again. So these
 10 are the first two phases, this was all the stuff we did
 11 with the corps on the third phase.
 12 And if we hadn't have worked with the corps, we
 13 would probably be looking at probably three more phases
 14 of work, which would have taken us probably another six
 15 or seven years and cost us a tremendous amount of money
 16 out of our own pocket.
 17 And the corps came up, and I think they paid well
 18 over a million, a million point two, that type of
 19 thing. So we're really happy to work with those guys.
 20 We also created, I guess -- and this is something
 21 in the negotiating stage, which is where we are right
 22 now, we had the marine industries association that
 23 we're real concerned, all our wetland plans here.
 24 And we basically, at one point, we were showing
 25 this whole thing as being wetlands, and putting a wave
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1 fence or a wave break all the way down the entire
2 length of the island.

3 We worked with the president of the marine
4 industries and some of the boating community and we
5 came to an understanding that we would leave an area
6 called the boater access area. We would plant it
7 basically like a maritime hammock and a dune, so that
8 people could bring their boats up along this area.

9 So it was kind of something that we had worked out
10 over negotiating phase, which just to let ya'll know, I
11 mean, you've got to be open and receptive to all kinds
12 of ideas.

13 The boardwalk is right here, the interpretive
14 keep's here. All this area here was all the original
15 island, basically, that was there prior to disposing
16 this area when they dug out the Intracoastal.

17 Next slide.

18 In the last five years, kayakers, Earth Day and
19 other -- the kayakers go out there every week and
20 basically do weeding and also pull trash. We have
21 Earth Day projects out there a lot. And so there's a
22 lot of people utilizing it. And we're touting this
23 project.

24 And this is -- the project is basically -- is it
25 complete there? I still see some Australian pine

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1 there, so it can't be totally complete. There's a few
2 Australian pine that we couldn't actually mechanically
3 take out that we wound up treating.

4 But this has become an eco tourism point where we
5 have people coming into the county just to out to
6 Munyon Island. So it's really working out real well.
7 Everybody is a winner on this one, so.

8 That's the end.

9 MR. HASBROUCK: Thanks, Carman.

10 All right, what I want to do now is spend a couple
11 minutes and get this -- talk a little bit about the
12 project scope.

13 There are several phases of the scope. And
14 certainly, it is a feasible study, which means that
15 we're going to look at all options and determine the
16 feasibility of those different options.

17 Early on, public input, what we're doing right
18 now, as well as we've been having some meetings with
19 different individuals throughout the community to find
20 out what are some of the key interest items.

21 And that's our real goal right now tonight is to
22 find out what are your key interest areas and to make
23 sure that we are doing a study and looking at all
24 alternatives.

25 After that, we'll do conceptual design. We'll

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1 take a lot of those alternatives that are presented to
2 us and do a matrix and determine the feasibility of
3 those. And then prepare a conceptual design for each
4 of the islands.

5 We'll do an alternative analysis of several
6 aspects, look at both the cost of them, the benefits of
7 them, and the impacts. Because a lot of times, doing a
8 project does have a negative impact.

9 Once we have developed that alternatives analysis,
10 we'll have another public information meeting and give
11 the public opportunity to come back and give us more
12 feedback, and basically hopefully embrace what we're
13 doing.

14 We'll do -- write the environmental assessment,
15 which is the NEPA process that Alberto talked about a
16 few minutes ago. And that does require us to go
17 through and look at each of the options and determine
18 the pros and cons of each of them.

19 We will develop a preferred alternative for each
20 of the islands. And then at that point, we will come
21 back for some more public involvement. And basically,
22 ask the public to review these documents, as well as
23 work with the different review agencies, such as U. S.
24 Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine and
25 Fishery Service, Sarasota County, Florida Department of
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1 Environmental Protection, and really get a lot of
2 review from different agencies on that.

3 Now, with -- the data collection is the early part
4 of the process that we're into right now. As far as
5 all of Sarasota Bay, we're looking at both the
6 biological features, the historical features.

7 We've got a lot of historical data about what was
8 there before the spoil islands were built, keeping in
9 mind that in the true sense of restoration is to return
10 back to the way it was before the impacts.

11 And then we're also looking at water quality data
12 from the -- from Sarasota Bay.

13 Now, each of the islands are -- and it includes
14 the Bird Colony Islands, Snake Island, which is all the
15 way to the south. Let me...

16 I don't know if you guys can see this very well.
17 But Snake Island is right in Venice Inlet. It's the
18 one right at the mouth of the inlet, which is having
19 tremendous erosion problems.

20 And then middle part of the -- of Sarasota Bay, we
21 have Palmer Point, as well as Jim Neville Marine
22 Preserve. And then to the north, we have Skier's
23 Island, Big Edwards Island, as well as the bird
24 colonies across from Big Edwards Island.

25 This is Big Edwards Island. I'm sure most people

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1 are familiar with it. But essentially, this is a
2 fairly unique area where there are -- there is a
3 mangrove fringe around it. Then we've got Australian
4 pine in the middle.

5 Now, when they originally built this island, they
6 built quite a few berms around it and pumped the spoil
7 into the middle of it. There's quite a bit of rock
8 material on the island. And that's one aspect that we
9 will consider is a possibility of utilizing that rock
10 to shore up the bird islands.

11 Here's Skier's Island, also very similar to Big
12 Edwards in that originally there was a berm built
13 around the edge of it, and then when the spoil was
14 pumped out of the Intracoastal, it was pumped into the
15 middle of the island.

16 There is a mangrove fringe as well as a portion of
17 mangrove that goes up into the middle of it, as well as
18 mostly Australian pine around the outside -- or in the
19 middle with Australian -- I'm sorry, Australian pine in
20 the middle with Brazilian pepper up against the
21 mangrove.

22 These are the Bird Colony Islands. These are
23 directly across the Intracoastal Waterway from Big
24 Edwards. And you can see what's happening is because
25 of the erosion, the mangroves are losing their roots,

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1 out there, there is a tremendous amount of suspended
2 sediments in the water column and no seagrasses or
3 anything growing in this area.

4 Our data collection, within the next two weeks, we
5 will have survey crews out on these islands. Don't be
6 alarmed. They will be cutting trees down. That's the
7 only way that they can shoot straight lines in their
8 survey.

9 They will not be cutting any mangroves, but they
10 will be cutting basically Brazilian pepper and
11 Australian pine. It's to a planning level of detail,
12 so they're not going to be shooting elevations on every
13 foot, but they are going to be giving us enough
14 information that we can, you know, do the study.

15 And also, identifying the significant features,
16 such as the berms around the outside of Big Edwards and
17 Skier's Island.

18 We're going to do geotechnical services.
19 Essentially they will be out there about the same time
20 as survey. They will be doing borings in the islands
21 to determine the soil types, to look at rock, clay, and
22 as well as the silts and fines.

23 And then we can utilize that information to
24 determine whether or not this material will be suitable
25 for placing on the beach or other types of uses.

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1 and it's basically washing away the material. We're
2 getting quite a bit of death in these islands.

3 These are very productive bird islands. And we're
4 going to be coordinating with the Audubon Society, who
5 has some very good data regarding the number of
6 species, types and species that are nesting on these
7 islands.

8 Jim Neville Marine Preserve. Once again, a good
9 bit of mangroves around the outside edge. Australian
10 pine in the middle with a mix of Brazilian pepper, and
11 another area of almost pure Australian pine but some
12 Brazilian pepper, and then this is Midnight Pass back
13 here.

14 Palmer Point Park just south of there. A lot of
15 mangroves, a very productive area. But there is a
16 portion in here that is a lot of nuisance species.
17 Almost a pure monoculture in here of Australian pine,
18 nothing else growing in it.

19 And then you can see there's been some activity
20 out here with the Littoral Society has been doing a
21 little bit of removal of the nuisance species.

22 And then Snake Island. This is the one in the
23 south end, at Venice Inlet. A tremendous erosion.
24 This is four to five feet high here.

25 And you can see on aerials as well as when you're

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1 And then certainly there is previous studies.
2 There's a lot of information about Sarasota Bay that
3 both the National Estuary Program has been doing, Mote
4 Marine Laboratories, D. E. P., Sarasota County, and
5 then, of course, the Midnight Pass study is doing very
6 extensive modeling with respect to water circulation.
7 So we plan to utilize some of their information.

8 Then we'll do conceptual design. We're going to
9 look at building areas for mangroves, both the -- or
10 all the red, white, and black mangroves, as well as the
11 buttonwood. Some people call that the green mangrove.
12 Conocarpus, which is a very beneficial species that has
13 been wiped out throughout much of Florida.

14 The emergent grasses are the areas that are in the
15 intertidal that grow between the low tide and high
16 tide. Spartina, juncus, paspalam, and several others.
17 They are real beneficial for fisheries habitat as well
18 as stabilizing the soils.

19 Then in the uplands, we're going to look at
20 coastal hammocks. Certainly go with drought tolerant
21 things. And then I put tropical hardwoods, but it's
22 probably more a subtropical hardwoods.

23 But there are some species in this area that we
24 would like to reestablish in the upland areas of these
25 islands.

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1 We're going to look at the water circulation
2 patterns, the inlets, the outlets, things such as the
3 tidal ponds that Carman was talking about that allow
4 for a lot of flushing action and can help keep inlets
5 open.

6 As well as shoreline hardening with riprap and
7 rubble. We're looking at that. We don't want to be
8 hypocrites and say that, you know, these islands cause
9 a lot of problems with erosion and getting suspended
10 sediments in the water and then turn around and build
11 something that does the same thing. So we're going to
12 make sure what we build will not continue that.

13 And then we have to look at the deposition of
14 those removed soils. And I say deposition. I mean,
15 you have to put them somewhere. And we're going to
16 look at a lot of options of that.

17 We will consider all alternatives. In this type
18 of study, that's our job. So any idea is an idea. Be
19 it, you know, done before or never done before, we'll
20 look at it. And we'll consider both the positive and
21 the negative impacts from those alternatives.

22 Then all of these alternatives, of course, we will
23 assess for the opportunity for success. We're not
24 going to propose something that's never been done
25 before and that there is no chance for it surviving.

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1 another permitting agency that ultimately the project
2 will have to get permits from. As well as Sarasota
3 County, of course. It's in Sarasota County, so we are
4 interested in their input.

5 Okay. Project schedule. Well, right now, we are
6 in the data collection phase. It should be done around
7 November. We are right here, the end of October, with
8 our public workshop.

9 And as soon as we have done our data collection,
10 we will start doing our alternatives analysis. Many of
11 the ideas that we would like to get from you in the
12 next few minutes, when I wrap this up, are going to be
13 the basis of some of these alternatives.

14 Then early next year we will be selecting a
15 preferred alternative. We'll have a workshop to
16 present that alternative to people.

17 Then we will move forward in the preliminary
18 design of that preferred alternative, take it a step
19 further in the conceptual design.

20 And during this process, we'll be preparing the
21 environmental assessment. And that is a document
22 that's a written document that will be available for
23 public review.

24 And then we will have a workshop when we're
25 finished with the environmental assessment that

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1 But I want you guys to understand that no build is
2 an option. As part of the NEPA process, many times
3 good ideas are very expensive, very difficult to
4 implement.

5 And we can't go out and just propose something
6 because it's a good idea if it's not feasible. So thus
7 the idea behind the feasibility study.

8 Public input. We are, of course, coordinating
9 with citizens, people like yourselves. We've been
10 working with some homeowners associations, civics
11 groups, and then individuals. We're wide open to
12 everybody.

13 There are interest groups. There's people that
14 are -- believe that this is a good idea, and we are
15 getting input from them, including the County's Coastal
16 Advisory Committee, the Audubon Society, the Littoral
17 Society, and others, boating groups, fishing groups.

18 Then there will be agency review, like I said a
19 few minutes ago. A different arm of the U. S. Army
20 Corps of Engineers, a regulatory division, we will have
21 to get permits from them.

22 The West Coast Inland Navigation District is one
23 of the sponsors, and they'll certainly be looking at
24 this project.

25 Florida Department of Environmental Protection is
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1 outlines all of this and why we did what we did, and
2 why we are at the stage we are at.

3 Then the written document is a draft at this
4 point. Will be submitted to the review agencies as a
5 draft. We anticipate getting comments back from them.

6 And sometime probably late 2000, we will have
7 what's called a FONSI, a finding of no significant
8 impact. And that's the document that the lead agency,
9 in this case U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, determines
10 that, yes, this project is feasible. And we would move
11 at that point into the final design, permitting, and
12 then into construction.

13 And I think that's it. Yes. Two minutes over.

14 MR. ANKERSON: Could we have some lights? Thanks.
15 Thanks, Bruce.

16 What I would like to do, I think, is, if Jodi and
17 Ashley will help me, is move the easels over here and
18 move those -- just spread those four out. And just
19 work facing this way instead. I think it's a little
20 bit more comfortable.

21 So that will require you to either turn your seat
22 or turn your head, but the chairs are portable, and
23 it's a bit more cozy this way as well.

24 I've got 12 cards indicating people who want to
25 speak. We'll run through those. I would ask you to

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1 keep your comments to two to three minutes, if you
2 would, in deference to other people who want to speak.

3 Once we have finished with those who have
4 indicated that, we'll open the floor to additional
5 persons, and at that point, continue speaking --
6 continue talking as long as we need to, or break into
7 three groups.

8 I want to remind you, again, that this is just the
9 first workshop. And that there will be three
10 subsequent ones, which I believe will be broken out
11 based on the geographic locations, more or less, of the
12 sites.

13 And that will give you an opportunity to provide
14 more focused input into specific considerations that
15 you may have as to those sites. And we may do a little
16 bit of that this evening as well.

17 With that in mind, I'll call our first person, who
18 would be Marjorie Riggle? And I'll apologize for
19 mispronunciations as they come along.

20 Marjorie.

21 MS. RIGGLE: My question is in regard to Shakett
22 or Cow Pen Slough, which empties into Shakett Creek,
23 which empties out in and ultimately has an impact on
24 the other side of Venice Inlet on Snake Island. There
25 is also a subsequent island behind Snake Island that is

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1 increase the water coming down -- we are impacting
2 right now in that we're dredging out Shakett Creek.
3 And so that's going to be --

4 MS. LANE: Spell that name of the creek. I'm not
5 from this area. I'm from the --

6 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: S-h- --

7 MR. ANKERSON: A-k- --

8 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: A-k-e-t-t. Shake it.
9 That's it. Shake it.

10 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. Ann Schnap? Have I got
11 that right, Ann?

12 (Inaudible.)

13 MR. ANKERSON: Okay. Richard Paul, manager,
14 Florida Coastal Island Sanctuaries.

15 MR. PAUL: Thank you. I'm Rich Paul, manager of
16 National Audubon's Florida Coastal Island Sanctuaries,
17 and Ann Schnap, who just declined her opportunity to
18 speak, is our assistant manager.

19 Together, we have responsibility for a number of
20 Bird Colony Islands along the coast of Florida,
21 particularly the Tampa Bay region, Pinellas County and
22 down into Sarasota Bay and Roberts Bay.

23 And the Bird Colony Islands in Roberts Bay are one
24 of the Audubon sanctuary islands in our care. There
25 are three of them, I should say, since there are three

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1 somewhat of an estuary.

2 How does that particular area -- you have
3 discussed only Snake Island. Does that other estuary
4 impact at all on your plans? And what does the effect
5 of Cow Pen Slough dumping into Shakett Creek, dumping
6 into the other side of the inlet affect what your
7 proposals are going to be?

8 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce, do you want to take that?

9 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure. Essentially, we will look
10 at that. And certainly, I don't have the answer right
11 now. But anytime we're looking at any of the aspects
12 of these islands, we will consider the adjacent
13 conditions and make sure that we're not doing something
14 that's going to have a catastrophic effect on something
15 else that's beneficial.

16 And that's a lot of looking at, for instance, with
17 armoring anything we do to make sure we're not going to
18 go in there and scrape the island down, then allow for,
19 say, excessive currents to come back in and then impact
20 something behind it.

21 So we will certainly look at that.

22 MS. LANE: Impact on Cow Pen Slough, is that how
23 you want to phrase it?

24 MS. RIGGLE: Well, we have an impact now in that
25 we're dredging in that area. So we're going to

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1 islands there.

2 And so we are particularly interested in having an
3 opportunity to participate in the design and review of
4 project proposals at that site, and perhaps more
5 broadly as well, working with you, Bruce, and others.

6 We've done some work with Carman Vare in the past
7 over in Palm Beach County. Not as much as we want yet.
8 But we like the kind of work that they're doing. And I
9 hope the rest of the audience here had a chance to look
10 carefully at what Carman is working on over there,
11 because they're good projects.

12 We do have a couple of questions and perhaps a
13 caution. One is if you're planning to go out and
14 survey the bird rookery islands in Roberts Bay, you'd
15 better do it very soon and very carefully, because it's
16 likely the great blue herons are already beginning to
17 gather on the islands for the next nesting season.

18 It's typical there to have some young already in
19 the nest, not just eggs, but young by Thanksgiving.
20 And it takes then four weeks to incubate. So they're
21 just about ready to start.

22 MR. HASBROUCK: I'll go ahead and address that.
23 Basically, the Bird Colony Islands will have no survey
24 and no geotechnical work because we would not
25 anticipate doing any work actually on them.

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1 MR. PAUL: Okay.

2 MR. HASBROUCK: If we did any work, it would be
3 just armoring the edges of them.

4 MR. PAUL: Okay. Well, you won't be armoring now,
5 you might be considering the idea, right?

6 MR. HASBROUCK: Exactly.

7 MR. PAUL: Yeah, okay.

8 We also, through our colony watch program, have
9 some volunteers who assist us in monitoring of some of
10 the other islands, one of which is Snake Island. So as
11 you go through your information-gathering process,
12 we'll look forward to providing some of that
13 information.

14 MR. HASBROUCK: Right.

15 MR. PAUL: Thank you.

16 MR. ANKERSON: So as I understand it, the concern
17 about surveying now is alleviated; is that right?
18 Because you're not going to be surveying?

19 MR. HASBROUCK: Within the Bird Colony Islands.
20 The other areas that will be surveyed will be in the
21 uplands. We'll take a couple of shots around the edge
22 of the mangroves.

23 But we anticipate there would be very little
24 opportunity for work within the mangrove areas. So the
25 majority of the survey and the geotechnical

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1 investigations will be within the upland areas.

2 MR. ANKERSON: And then Mr. Paul is offering
3 volunteer assistance; is that correct?

4 MR. PAUL: We've already been in conversation
5 about it.

6 MR. ANKERSON: Very good.
7 Jim Cutler, Mote Marine Laboratory.

8 MR. CUTLER: I'll pass at this time.

9 MR. ANKERSON: Takes a pass.
10 Alice Bagett?

11 MR. HAMANN: Biegel.

12 MR. ANKERSON: Biegel.

13 MR. ANKERSON: Over here. Bay Islands Homeowners.

14 MS. BIEGEL: Yeah, I'm Alice Biegel from Bay
15 Island.

16 When this all got started a good year and a half
17 ago, it was massive chaos. And I've got documents here
18 that permits were given illegally.

19 And I just want to know, I really believe what
20 you're saying here. I really am impressed with what I
21 see up here. I'm impressed with talking to you people
22 that I have in the past month and stuff.

23 Are you going to stay honest? Because I really --
24 I'm impressed with what I hear, and I think the
25 neighbors in Sarasota are going to be impressed with

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1 what they see. Because it's a whole different
2 presentation that we were given from local Sarasota
3 people on the environmental issue.

4 Can you please promise me that it is going to be
5 this way and on the up-and-up, that what you told us,
6 the people are going to be talked to, that you're going
7 to show us what you're going to do, that you're going
8 to have us back here again to talk to us, that it's
9 going to stay that way?

10 Because I think it's going to be a whole different
11 scenario. I really think it won't be the Little Edward
12 Island fiasco that it turned out to be a year ago,
13 because so much was done behind our back that was done
14 wrongfully, that we have proof that it was done wrong.

15 And I'm also looking at this. Little Edward
16 Island definitely was thrown out and you're only going
17 to work with Big Edward?

18 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, ma'am. And we're definitely
19 here today to tell you that, yes, we will follow the
20 process that we have outlined.

21 I want to make a little clarification that I left
22 out. For the second meeting, we're looking at three
23 separate workshops, recognizing that these islands and
24 these areas are different, they do involve different
25 people.

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1 While we're talking about, for instance, Snake
2 Island, we're going to do it down in the Venice area,
3 right there, so it's easy for people to come.

4 The Big Edwards and Skier's, we'll have a workshop
5 on those two right in that area. And then a little
6 farther south for the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and
7 Palmer Point.

8 MS. BIEGEL: Okay. Could I -- one more question.
9 Is -- Skier's Island. Skier's Island, can Sarasota be
10 rest assured that whatever you do to Skier's Island, we
11 can still ski around it?

12 Because the first one was we couldn't ski. It was
13 gone. They were going to throw it out. We couldn't
14 ski, they were going to put so much fill in.

15 Can we be promised that whatever you do to Skier's
16 Island, people can still ski around the island?
17 Because it's the only area in Sarasota people are
18 allowed to ski in.

19 MR. HASBROUCK: We -- I mean, actually, I would be
20 going against my other word if I told you anything
21 absolute right now. But that's an alternative that we
22 will consider, recognizing that --

23 MS. BIEGEL: Okay. Then I just would like to
24 throw that at you.

25 MR. HASBROUCK: Exactly.

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1 MS. BIEGEL: Just whatever you design and think of
2 for Skier's Island on the land part itself, careful
3 with the waterway, because that is our only skiing area
4 for this -- Sarasota County.

5 MR. HASBROUCK: We will certainly assess that.

6 MS. BIEGEL: Okay. Thanks a lot.

7 MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Alice.

8 MR. ANKERSON: I wonder, Alberto, if you wanted to
9 address the concerns as well.

10 MR. GONZALES: On --

11 MR. ANKERSON: Just her general concern with the
12 prior process and this process.

13 MR. GONZALES: Well, through our contractor here,
14 which is H. D. R., they will follow our process through
15 these public workshops.

16 And I'm very surprised at the attendance, and I
17 hope that in the next one we'll have probably even
18 more.

19 I think that the way we're doing this in the corps
20 now -- we learned over the years of -- you know, we
21 hear those big walls. And now the public is very
22 important in our process. And we are for public
23 involvement a lot.

24 And then we won't do it, I guarantee you, we won't
25 do it -- we're doing these five islands for the

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1 MR. ANKERSON: Dona Bay.

2 MR. McCARTHY: Which is a loose-leafed
3 organization.

4 MR. ANKERSON: I like the name, anyway.

5 MR. McCARTHY: Do I need that? Can everybody hear
6 me?

7 Okay. I want to touch on what this young lady
8 said, because you went about halfway there. Cow Pen
9 Slough, the turbidity at Snake Island is a direct
10 result of Cow Pen Slough and the fresh water running
11 down through Shakett Creek.

12 That picture was taken at high tide. The blue
13 water is up in the inlet. If that picture was taken
14 six hours later, you would have a brown streak of water
15 going out into the Gulf. That happens twice a day
16 every day when we have four tides.

17 Cow Pen Slough is a major issue in our area. Cow
18 Pen Slough needs to be addressed, the control of the
19 dams, maybe.

20 Because when I talked to them in June, when they
21 opened the dam, we went from crystal clear water up by
22 King's Gate, crystal clear water, they opened the dam
23 on the day that they open it, because they've always
24 done it that way, and then we have the brown water.

25 And we didn't have a lot of rain this year. I

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1 economy, the economics of doing the five studies into
2 one. And most likely, it could be that the end result
3 could be improvement of maybe two, or three, or all of
4 them, or just one.

5 So we're just doing the study from the economic
6 standpoint and then issuing a recommendation on maybe
7 the future work. Or it could be in phases, just one
8 island and the other ones to follow.

9 So it could be a lengthy process. Or it could be
10 funding of this program is still available. Is --
11 there is a lot of good opportunities, but there's a lot
12 of people there asking or requesting assistance.

13 We have, in the general range, about 20 studies
14 that we already have requests but we don't have funding
15 for. So we've been fortunate in this case that we got
16 this. And let's fund it in the program.

17 And if it goes to the end phase, which is
18 construction, it's federally funded, you've got the
19 federal support on that.

20 But still, you know, we'll conduct our two or
21 three or as many as needed in order to get a good
22 consensus on this project.

23 MR. ANKERSON: Patrick McCarthy, Pirates of Dona
24 Bay or Dona --

25 MR. McCARTHY: Dona Bay.

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1 know they have to open the dam when they have to do
2 it. But it should be done on a time when it's needed.
3 And it could be opened and closed depending on the
4 weather.

5 But it destroyed the saltwater environment in
6 Shakett Creek when they opened that dam, which I
7 believe on June 6th, the first day of hurricane season,
8 and then they'll close it again coming up on the last
9 day of hurricane season.

10 That's because they've always done it that way.
11 The man on the phone couldn't really give me any other
12 answers beyond that.

13 That's a big problem there. The recreational
14 aspects I think you've dealt with. Be careful you
15 don't get misquoted in the paper. A lot of people --

16 MR. LISTOWSKI: My lips are sealed.

17 MR. McCARTHY: You upset a lot of people with your
18 comment, but we'll forget that, because the paper
19 misquotes people all the time.

20 MR. LISTOWSKI: Right. Thank you.

21 MR. McCARTHY: I'm looking forward to
22 participating in this process. And thanks for doing it
23 right this time.

24 MR. ANKERSON: James Herbert, Midnight Pass
25 Society.

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1 MR. HERBERT: Yes.

2 MR. ANKERSON: Took my power.

3 MR. HERBERT: That's right, I did.

4 And I can also say that we're well on our way to
5 restoring the area, because we've just this evening got
6 them to admit that this is the Jim Neville Marine
7 Preserve. And we're going to change all those charts
8 to make sure that that's there.

9 The concern that I have is that -- and as a
10 society has is that we don't want to make this just an
11 effort that's addressing certain islands.

12 What we want to do is we want to make it a
13 comprehensive, integrated, interrelated restoration
14 plan for the whole area, taking into consideration all
15 of those things, including what C. D. M. is looking at
16 doing now.

17 MR. ANKERSON: C. D. M. is?

18 MR. HERBERT: Camp, Dresser and McKee is doing the
19 study on the possible restoration of Midnight Pass. We
20 don't know whether it's possible yet or not.

21 If it were possible and they decided to move
22 forward on that, you would handle the bird islands in
23 one way. If it's not possible to open Midnight Pass,
24 then you would do -- it's not a restoration of the
25 island, but you would do something entirely different,

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1 MR. HASBROUCK: Yes. Yes and no. I mean,
2 definitely we have a contract with the U. S. Army Corps
3 of Engineers that is very specific for what us to look
4 at.

5 What I would anticipate is that somebody like
6 Sarasota County would take the results of this study as
7 well as the results from the Midnight Pass study and
8 put those into more of a comprehensive study.

9 I will -- my other answer is no. We will not look
10 at a bay-wide restoration issue. It's just -- that
11 gets to be a huge project.

12 We have to focus on what we're working on, try to
13 come up with something that's really feasible out of
14 that, and then what Sarasota County, the West Coast
15 Inland Navigation District, or the U. S. Army Corps of
16 Engineers, D. E. P., Sarasota Bay National Estuary
17 Program, any other entity takes that the next step.

18 But that's the no part of the answer. The yes
19 part is absolutely, we will consider a lot of aspects.
20 We've got to, from water quality, water circulation,
21 many things of those issues.

22 MR. ANKERSON: Robert Waechter, Siesta Key
23 Associates or Association.

24 MR. WAECHTER: You're not going to empower me.

25 Thank you. I have a question for Mr. Gonzalez and
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1 because you're not restoring the marine preserve, the
2 marine area that was there.

3 The other things we would like to do in terms of
4 seeing it integrated and interrelated is making sure
5 that the people resources and the environmental
6 resources were balanced.

7 That you go back into the up areas where we're
8 talking about the fish nurseries, like North Creek and
9 the other uplands areas where the fish hatcheries
10 traditionally were. Because if the pass were restored,
11 those would be essential elements of an integrated
12 plan.

13 The same thing, we talk about the seawalls mainly
14 on the mainland. This is an excellent idea we talked
15 about with the P. V. C. idea. Because all of those
16 seawalls that we have, the boat wakes bounce off of
17 those, and that creates a huge amount of turbidity.

18 And if we could get mangroves in front of those
19 seawalls, it would just be gangbusters.

20 And it's that and a hundred other ideas. The idea
21 is not just to make it attention to a few of the
22 islands, but to make it a coordinated, integrated plan,
23 I think bigger than we've been talking about.

24 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you. Do you want to address
25 that anyone?

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1 Miss Jinks, to start off with. I really hope that you
2 don't feel that what we're doing here now, that I don't
3 mean you, but that the corps doesn't feel that you are,
4 by doing this, addressing all of the negative impacts
5 that the corps has caused in this area with the work
6 that they did on the Intracoastal Waterway. That would
7 be very distressing, if you felt that by coming in and
8 doing these spot projects that you have now addressed
9 Sarasota County, because you certainly will not have.

10 You will have addressed maybe some of the
11 problems. But, you know, maybe not even the biggest
12 problems. I just wanted to make that comment to you.

13 I like the word that Bruce used, historical
14 restoration, return to what it was before the impact.
15 Boy, there's an awful lot there. I have looked at
16 documents that show the corps dredging their way
17 through the south channel of Midnight Pass, depositing
18 the spoils on the Jim Neville Marine Preserve, thank
19 you.

20 The spoils then silting down into the north
21 channel that formed the second half of the bifurcated
22 channel system of Midnight Pass, and closing it and
23 eventually causing the pass to migrate.

24 We know the I. C. W. was over dredged by a
25 multiple of two, diverting the water flow north and

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1 south.

2 So if you talk about restoring it to what it was
3 before the impact, that would be nice. I mean, that's
4 a huge job.

5 I would like to see any project in the Jim Neville
6 Marine Preserve, whether it takes into consideration
7 the restoration of Midnight Pass or not, which is to be
8 determined by the C. D. M. study, I would like to see
9 the north channel restored to its historic depth.

10 We have charts as recently as the '50s, prior to
11 the corps's mid '60 dredging, that show that the main
12 channel down through the Intracoastal, what is now the
13 Intracoastal Waterway, went to the west of the Jim
14 Neville Marine Preserve, looped around to the west and
15 then back to the east into what is now the I. C. W.
16 That channel should be restored.

17 The cross channels across the Jim Neville Marine
18 Preserve should be restored. The sheet flow at
19 astronomical high tides should be restored. And
20 primarily the marine echo system, the Midnight Pass
21 system itself should be restored. Because
22 historically, that's what was there before the impact.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. ANKERSON: Joan and Pat Blaser.

25 MS. BLASER: No comment.

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1 County, the Cedar Hammock.

2 MS. BENE: Just north of us.

3 MR. GONZALEZ: And the Whitaker Bayou, I heard.

4 In the flood -- I think flood damage prevention in that
5 area. But this is a new area yet that...

6 MR. ANKERSON: Richard Angers, Coral Cove
7 president, I think.

8 MR. ANGERS: I'll pass. Thank you.

9 MR. ANKERSON: Perhaps Marilyn Angers.

10 MS. ANGERS: I'll get it next time.

11 MR. ANKERSON: Well, that's it. I've gotten back
12 to Marjorie. So at this point, I think there's a half
13 an hour plus remaining within the scheduled allotted
14 time.

15 And does anyone who hasn't spoken yet want to make
16 a statement or a comment?

17 MR. BULLOCH: Hi, I'm Dave Bulloch with the
18 American Littoral Society.

19 You have presented a lot of information here
20 today, and you'll probably have a lot more, such as
21 these beautiful photographs and whatnot. I wonder if
22 you could post this all on a web site somewhere and
23 give us a web address.

24 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce or Alberto.

25 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes, we have a web page at the Army
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1 MR. ANKERSON: Kafi Benz. Kafi Benz, Indian Beach
2 Sapphire Shores Association.

3 MS. BENE: The Indian Beach Sapphire Shores
4 shoreline goes from Manatee County down to Whitaker
5 Bayou. And I came hopeful that perhaps the project
6 might be extended into that area.

7 We've got a very long shoal coastline in the bay.
8 And our neighborhood would like to know where to go to
9 talk to somebody about a project of protection of that
10 shoreline, would be possibly assisted by the Army Corps
11 of Engineers, in case you're looking for new projects.

12 MR. ANKERSON: Alberto, I think you might want to
13 address that.

14 MR. GONZALEZ: Normally, through -- well, you can
15 as a citizen, either through the congressional or
16 through the -- your state, county, just a simple letter
17 request to our commander y in Jacksonville. And I
18 don't know if the handouts have our address, but I'll
19 make sure that you get it.

20 And just with a simple letter saying that we've
21 got this problem here, and we would like to either --
22 the county or any public entity, just a letter request.
23 And you can do it two ways, directly to us in
24 Jacksonville or through a congressional representation.

25 I think we're doing some other work in Manatee

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1 Corps. And although those particular pictures are not.
2 But I'm going to make sure that we at least post --
3 you're just talking about the pictures in this photo?

4 MR. BULLOCH: Yes. I think if you're going to
5 have yards and yards of data, such as the slide
6 presentations that you've had here, I mean, obviously,
7 no one of us could have gotten this all down.

8 And it would be nice to, say, have this on a web
9 site where we could review this at our leisure and have
10 this into the future.

11 And this would, say, replace the need for actually
12 publishing all this stuff, which -- I mean, for
13 example, I think news outlets and so forth would like
14 to go back to this.

15 I would like to be able to zap out some of these
16 pictures. Because some of the aerials you have taken
17 and so forth are the best I have seen of some of these
18 areas.

19 And they would be interesting before. And then
20 as you go along and outline the areas that you are
21 going to remediate and so forth, put those up. And
22 then perhaps we can be prepared when we come to the
23 meetings with some notion of what you intend to do and
24 perhaps -- perhaps it will help.

25 MR. HASBROUCK: I believe that much of our

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1 information, for instance, each of those areas are
2 digital files. In today's day and age, most anything
3 digital is, you know, a half hour away from being a web
4 page, just convert it into H. T. M. L. language.

5 I mean, I don't see why we couldn't even do it
6 with our power point display. Most of that is handled
7 through the Corps of Engineers public affairs office.

8 And I guess we can talk about it, look at the
9 feasibility of putting the information up on the web.

10 MR. ANKERSON: I think Richard wants to --

11 MR. HAMANN: Yes, I just wanted to point out the
12 recent availability of a publication which has got an
13 excellent selection of good historical photographs,
14 which is this Historical Geography of Southwest Florida
15 Waterways that the Florida Sea Grant College with
16 support from the West Coast Inland Navigation District
17 has published a number of copies.

18 If you're interested in getting a copy, let Chuck
19 Listowski know that.

20 MR. BULLOCH: I certainly am.

21 MR. ANKERSON: It's an excellent documentary.

22 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Is that the one by Dr.
23 Antonini?

24 MR. HAMANN: Yes, it is.

25 MR. ANKERSON: This gentleman over here.

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1 MR. ANKERSON: Thank you, Mr. Earl.

2 Anyone else?

3 MR. WAECHTER: Yeah, I would just like to
4 reiterate what Dave Bulloch suggested about the web
5 page. It seems to me that once that's suggested, how
6 can you not do it.

7 Just the fact that we can come prepared. We'll
8 know what we're talking about doing, we're know what
9 we're talking about, we'll know what you're talking
10 about.

11 It just makes so much sense, to not do it would be
12 almost criminal.

13 MR. ANKERSON: Anyone else? This gentleman back
14 there. Ashley.

15 MR. SAUERS: Hi, my name is Steve Sauers. And I
16 guess I'll wear the hat tonight of representative of
17 local government and the Coastal Advisory Committee for
18 Sarasota County.

19 And I would like to ask a question. It's rather
20 detailed. I'll try to bring you along and maybe prompt
21 an answer. I think maybe Bruce has the best chance of
22 answering this. But anyone can have a try at it.
23 And --

24 MR. HASBROCK: Do I get to put my bid up front?
25 Like jeopardy?

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1 MR. EARL: Yes, my name is Bill Earl, and I'm
2 here, I'm a board member of CONA, which is the Sarasota
3 Council of Neighborhood Associations. We represent 43
4 neighborhood associations throughout Sarasota County,
5 from Venice on up here to north county.

6 I'm here tonight on a fact-finding mission on
7 behalf of CONA. We would like to be added to the list
8 and kept apprised of the project as it evolves.

9 Just some personal comments, I want to encourage
10 and thank the corps and the water navigation district
11 for getting involved in this.

12 I'm a citizen. I live in Sarasota County. And I
13 think as the process evolves, you'll find that most of
14 the citizens of Sarasota County are going to support
15 restoration of the bay, support the elimination of
16 exotic species.

17 My own personal experience, I know Dick Eckenrod,
18 who is the director of the Tampa Bay estuary program,
19 and he's told me that the projects up there have been
20 very successful and really helped the quality, made a
21 big difference in the quality of Tampa Bay.

22 So again, I want to encourage you and urge that
23 you continue with this project and keep us apprised so
24 the citizens can follow and learn as you proceed here.

25 Thank you.

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1 MR. SAUERS: Well, the background is something
2 that all of you have seen as any of you have worked in
3 these kinds of projects throughout Florida.

4 You understand as well as anyone that we're living
5 in a situation where the opportunities for putting back
6 what was historically in place naturally are ever-
7 diminishing.

8 And you can just look at these photographs and see
9 that a lot of the terrain that surrounds Sarasota Bay
10 is developed to the point where options are limited at
11 best and written off altogether for substantial
12 restoration of natural communities.

13 This brings me to question how we're going to set
14 targets to establish restoration in whatever limited
15 forms, if we look at just islands or if we look in a
16 broader sense, as the representatives of the Midnight
17 Pass Society and Siesta Key Association brought up
18 earlier.

19 So I'm wondering if we could deal with the issue a
20 little bit about whether these islands are appropriate
21 to be targeted as merely reclaiming what was once
22 there, or whether we should look at the broader needs
23 for restoration in our entire base system and then try
24 to design some examples within these islands of the
25 things that are needed most because of what we have

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1 lost on a broader-scale basis.

2 And also with a look toward prioritizing the kinds
3 of restoration needs that come about from having lost
4 the most values and functions from their historical
5 precedent.

6 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce, before you start out, I
7 wonder if maybe Carman might be a person to answer at
8 least that first question, is did you have restoration
9 targets, what were they, and perhaps in general terms,
10 and how have you fared against those targets.

11 MR. VARE: We did some inventories early on, and
12 we found about a hundred or so areas that had been
13 impacted one way or another from dredging, filling,
14 that we could get to that were available, public
15 lands.

16 And so identifying those, we also prioritized them
17 on the ability to be able to restore them. So we were
18 able to do that. So the ones we have been targeting
19 are the ones we have rated the highest, ranked the
20 highest.

21 So we have looked into that, and we did put a plan
22 together and we have been implementing it for about ten
23 years or so.

24 MR. ANKERSON: And then I guess the -- I think
25 what the gentleman was driving at, although that may

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1 information, acreage of mangroves, acreage of
2 seagrasses. Those are targets. Those are already
3 stated targets both in the estuary programs, C. C. M.
4 P., the master plan for restoring the bay.

5 But the other answer to that question is I always
6 like to look at the extremes. And to me, the extremes
7 are do nothing and leave the islands exactly as they
8 are, to the other extreme is take them back to where
9 they were, which in four out of the five cases were
10 submerged, many of them two to three feet deep with
11 seagrasses on top of them.

12 I doubt we'll do either. I imagine we'll hit
13 somewhere in between.

14 As far as looking at the targets, if you look at
15 the basic three areas, the mangroves, the submerged
16 grasses and the emergent grasses, one of the things --
17 the early part of this process is what's called the
18 need statement. And that is we have to establish that
19 there is even a need to do what we're proposing.

20 And I envision that what will happen is as we go
21 back and look at the acreages that used to be there
22 versus the acreages that are there now -- or here now,
23 we'll begin to ferret out and begin to see exactly
24 that.

25 You know, 50 miles of area and a hundred acres of

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1 have been it, is were there specific targets for
2 restoration, that is, amount of mangroves recovered,
3 amount of fish species, new fish species, seagrass, all
4 that sort of thing? Do you have measurable indicators
5 of success?

6 MR. VARE: As far as mangroves go, we have about a
7 hundred acres of mangroves left in Lake Worth Lagoon.
8 That's about 50 miles of shoreline. So that's pretty
9 insignificant.

10 The Munyon Island project, we brought back 20
11 acres. Obviously, you have a hundred acres of
12 mangroves in something that large, there is a real loss
13 there. I mean, to bring some of that back is a real
14 plus.

15 So -- but by adding another 20 acres to Munyon
16 really helped. It was a real shot in the arm to the
17 water body.

18 So I think anything we can do as far as mangroves
19 goes to that water body is a real plus. I don't know
20 if we need to go further than that or not.

21 MR. ANKERSON: Bruce.

22 MR. HASBROUCK: First part of the question, I
23 mean, that's part of what we're doing is establishing,
24 looking at baseline data.

25 Certainly, we'll know the acreage from historical

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1 mangroves? I mean, I hope common sense will tell
2 people that that's not a good equation for future life.
3 I mean, we could lose this planet if we continue doing
4 things like that.

5 So we've got to get out there, establish what used
6 to be there, and try to set some criteria. But -- not
7 to sound like a politician, but we'll probably do
8 something in between.

9 MR. SAUERS: Bruce, just to follow up briefly, to
10 put it in more simple terms, I guess, is that merely
11 recreating what was there in any of these island
12 environments historically may or may not be what is of
13 greatest need for restoration for the improvement of
14 Sarasota Bay ecosystem.

15 And I would hope the process would be open to
16 that, and try to -- try to achieve the target of -- of
17 looking at what's best for the system overall, not
18 merely to put back the same types of communities that
19 ever existed in any one particular island according to
20 the same square footage --

21 MR. HASBROUCK: Right.

22 MR. SAUERS: That may have been there in the past.

23 MR. HASBROUCK: Oh, absolutely, I agree. And we
24 certainly look for input.

25 MR. ANKERSON: I wonder if it wouldn't be

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1 appropriate now to just move these pictures in
2 different parts of the room, and then unless there is
3 more general questions directed at folks, those folks
4 who want to comment on specific issues, we'll certainly
5 take that, can then work with the engineers and the
6 consultants for a few minutes and we -- is that okay
7 with you guys? Is that something that would work?

8 MR. HASBROUCK: Sure.

9 MR. ANKERSON: Sure. Sure. We'll go ahead and
10 take other questions. I just wanted to -- I thought
11 things were dying down. She was first, and then you.

12 MS. RIGGLE: The one element that I don't hear
13 represented here, and it's probably in a large part the
14 reason that we're all here, going back to the way it
15 was would be wonderful for water quality, for
16 estuaries.

17 But the changes that have taken place in this
18 physical area, just the increase in population, I guess
19 a big concern I have is making sure that what we do
20 improves the quality of the bay, but also allows the
21 public to participate not only in the improvement of
22 the bay and restoring these various habitats, but also,
23 this is a boating area.

24 And we've had a tremendous impact in the increased
25 population in the area. And a big part of that is

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1 example to demonstrate both the recreational aspect and
2 the ecological aspect.

3 We will not ignore the fact that these islands are
4 being used by people. We can't. If we did ignore
5 that, we would not be doing what we're supposed to do.

6 Our job is to look at all alternatives. There's a
7 lot of things that people don't realize that -- I'll
8 use an example and I'll elaborate a little bit on this.

9 An example would be, for instance, if there is a
10 channel adjacent to bird islands and we go in and armor
11 the bird islands with riprap, end up filling in that
12 channel, and then turn around and say, yeah, but we
13 can't do any dredging because that's ecologically bad.

14 But think about the side aspect of that. As
15 people are going where the channel used to be, they
16 can't go there anymore, now they're running their boats
17 across grass flats.

18 And the environmental impact of not recognizing
19 the cause and effect of an action can actually be
20 worse.

21 Another action is the concept of potentially, and
22 I say this very cautiously, potentially something along
23 the line of a dock or mooring buoys along an area, that
24 instead of having people come up into the grasses and
25 trash areas because they want to get to these islands,

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1 boaters.

2 And so I guess a big portion of our discussions
3 need to center around the improvements that we're going
4 to make, what effect are they going to have on the
5 boating community, are they going to be positive
6 effects, are we going to include those individuals.

7 The gentleman from Palm Beach County talked about
8 creating an area on that island to allow boats there.
9 You have created a beautiful atmosphere for people to
10 go and see what nature can be like.

11 But apparently in the beginning as you were doing
12 it, you failed to indicate where the boaters should --
13 if you only can get there by boat, where is he going to
14 put his boat.

15 So I think another element that I haven't heard
16 mentioned is how are you going to include that portion
17 of the population. They'll be real willing to be the
18 volunteers and helpful if you tell them how it's going
19 to affect them in a positive way.

20 MR. HASBROUCK: I agree a hundred percent, and I
21 can also tell you that's part of the reason, and I know
22 some people kind of wondered, you know, why is somebody
23 here from Palm Beach County talking about a project in
24 Sarasota County.

25 The bottom line is we felt like this was a good
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1 we identify an area, allow for the access, and prevent
2 additional impacts.

3 The other issue is educational. If we don't
4 educate the public, we're also losing out on the
5 future. And we intend to look at the opportunity for
6 interpretive signage.

7 When we go into these areas, provide the
8 opportunity for people to come out to these areas and
9 say, wow, this is really cool, I mean, look what they
10 did. And maybe even put labels on trees, if we do
11 uplands.

12 If we leave some of these areas upland for people
13 to utilize, we would still like to remove the nuisance
14 species, but potentially bring in subtropic hardwood
15 hammock, something that very little of it is out there,
16 we could provide the people the opportunity, and maybe
17 they would go into their own yards, tear down the
18 Australian pines, and bring in the more desirable trees
19 and plant them in their yards.

20 So keep in mind that these are the things that we
21 will be considering.

22 MR. BULLOCH: Hi, it's Dave Bulloch again.

23 One of the issues that will come up in the future
24 is the role of Sarasota County in all this. Because
25 you will come do something and go. And the Australian

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1 pines and the Brazilian pepper will start in on
2 their -- intrude again.

3 And the question is going to be what is going to
4 be the long-term maintenance of the upland areas that
5 you leave.

6 Right now, I don't think there is any historic
7 precedent in the county for controlling these area --
8 these island areas at all. Or for that matter,
9 controlling much of the mainland barrier islands,
10 either, as far as keeping exotics out.

11 So the question is are you going to be able to
12 extract a promise from the County on the maintenance in
13 perpetuity of what you fix?

14 MR. ANKERSON: Somebody want to -- Alberto.

15 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, in this case, once we finish
16 the project, then the operation or maintenance of
17 whatever work we do in those islands will be the entire
18 responsibility of the West Coast Inland Navigation
19 District, which is to keep those islands to the
20 state -- there will be like a management plan
21 developed, and through West Coast Inland Navigation,
22 they will be responsible to do the maintenance.

23 Or, like I said earlier, we're doing these
24 islands. West Coast Inland Navigation can elect to
25 sponsor -- they are sponsoring these five at this time.

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1 to be a constant yearly maintenance of that island.
2 Okay?

3 And I would -- I mean, my personal preference
4 right now would be that you -- the most conservative
5 position would be to get rid of all upland hammocks
6 entirely.

7 Because given the maintenance history of Sarasota
8 County, they're simply going to become overrun with
9 Australian pine sometime down the line. Because that's
10 the previous history.

11 And I wonder if you're going to be -- you're going
12 to take that into consideration, whether the County is
13 or is not going to put funds forward in perpetuity to
14 take care of this.

15 If it's not, then your design characteristics
16 would be quite different.

17 MR. HASBROUCK: Absolutely. And furthermore, we
18 do have a representative from Sarasota County Natural
19 Resources Department as part of our study team, making
20 sure that not only are those issues, but Eric Sutton is
21 also in very regular coordination with people as high
22 as the county commissioners, and to make sure that we
23 approach this project, we don't make commitments that
24 the County is not willing to take because of that very
25 issue. It could affect our design parameters.

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1 And they can elect to sponsor two and maybe the County
2 the other three.

3 So until we pass this phase and then we go to the
4 next phase, which will be the detailed -- the plans and
5 specs and construction, at that time, we will set the
6 ground rules and the final cost sharing of this
7 project.

8 And that is what we call a project cooperation
9 agreement, where the Army will sign their part and the
10 sponsor will sign their part and their responsibilities
11 of maintenance on those islands.

12 So it could be -- at this time, the sponsor is
13 West Coast Inland Navigation. And that through -- in
14 the future could change, too. The County or public
15 entity may elect to sponsor some of this, depending on
16 the funding.

17 MR. ANKERSON: A response?

18 MR. BULLOCH: These properties belong to Sarasota
19 County Park and Recreation, is the controlling interest
20 on, say, like the Edwards islands and so forth.

21 I don't understand what you're just saying. I
22 mean, what I'm getting at is that if you know there is
23 going to be little or no maintenance on a particular
24 island, then your design for that island would be
25 considerably different than if you knew there was going

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1 MR. ANKERSON: Eric, did you want to address that?

2 MR. SUTTON: I would just like to say, Dave, I
3 understand what you're saying. And certainly at this
4 point there's a lot of options out there. And
5 maintenance is an extremely environmental aspect.

6 So as they work through these alternatives, we'll
7 have to take a look at what they propose. And I could
8 take the ideas, especially yours, to the
9 administration, to the board, to make sure that those
10 concerns are heard at that time.

11 MR. ANKERSON: Any other comments, questions?
12 Yes, sir?

13 MR. FLYNN: My name is Ron Flynn, and I live on
14 Siesta Key. And I just have a comment.

15 I like what I'm hearing. It's encouraging. And I
16 also share the concerns that were expressed by Midnight
17 Pass Society regarding a restoring to the natural
18 condition that the area was in prior to dredging of the
19 Intracoastal Waterway.

20 I do have a suggestion. In addition to armanent
21 of the bird keys, I would suggest putting in a no-wake
22 zone. I am a boater. But I and other boaters do
23 observe the no-wake zones. So that probably would help
24 the situation, in the erosion of those keys.

25 And the other comment I would like to make is

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1 regarding an article that was the Sarasota Herald
2 Tribune about two months ago announcing that the Army
3 Corps of Engineers was going to dredge the Intracoastal
4 Waterway.

5 And I'm not sure what the impact of that effort
6 would be on this.

7 MR. LISTOWSKI: You missed Monday's meeting. We
8 had Don Fore, the operation and maintenance project
9 manager for the Corps of Engineers Jacksonville
10 district, at the South County government building. And
11 he explained that there is no immediate plan.

12 Talk about not needing a microphone.

13 There is not only no immediate plan, but there is
14 simply a study underway that will probably conclude in
15 about a year. There are some of our spoil areas that
16 might not be necessary. And there are some of our --
17 there are some spot areas in a 150-mile-long
18 Intracoastal Waterway project that might need
19 attention.

20 But I think what you saw was a perfect example of
21 erroneous journalism. That somehow, because there were
22 a lot of mistakes in the context of the article, people
23 got all concerned and upset. And it was unjustified.
24 But that's something that we live with in these public-
25 sector jobs.

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1 not just here.

2 And this is an effort by the federal government to
3 come back in and try to make things a little bit
4 better. They're never going to make them right because
5 there are other variables that have occurred like a
6 tremendous population growth in this area.

7 One comment that I wanted to make about Carman's
8 situation is, is that what we're seeing in his slide
9 show is what might here. And that is, the mandate to
10 do something with resources based on the fact that the
11 population is such that you have to manage things.

12 The idea of going around and being able to live
13 life like a Mellow Yellow commercial, where you have
14 rope swings and you have full throttle everywhere you
15 go, those days are completely gone, and it's only
16 because we have high-performance engines. We also have
17 a lot more people here sharing the same resources.

18 So what's happening on the east coast, where
19 Carman comes from, might be the case here, but it's not
20 there yet. So we have an opportunity, incredible
21 opportunity to access federal resources to plan for the
22 future, which we cannot avoid.

23 And I'm done with my evangelistic thing now. But
24 I wish everybody would understand that nobody's trying
25 to pull the wool over anybody's eyes. We absolutely

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1 And as many times as we try to reiterate a point
2 and clarify a point, we'll still have a headline that
3 is erroneous. And I'll apologize for the local media
4 for them to you.

5 And this gentleman here was attacking me about
6 something that I have no idea about. But it was
7 probably also something similar.

8 You know, the idea about Snake Island and Skier's
9 Island, they are in the control, vested interest, fee
10 simple interest ownership of the West Coast Inland
11 Navigation District. So that answers Mr. Bulloch's
12 question.

13 And that's one of the reasons why Mr. Gonzalez
14 described a project that's possibly being phased in,
15 where we might be able to do two islands but not five,
16 or three but not five, or one.

17 There's no -- there's no stress on anyone here.
18 This is an unbelievable opportunity to access federal
19 resources that haven't been seen in this area since the
20 culmination of the Intracoastal Waterway work that was
21 originally done.

22 And it's an admission, this program is actually a
23 sophisticated admission of wrongdoing that was
24 unintentional by the federal government when they did
25 these kinds of projects. And it's nationwide. It's

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1 need your support or else these opportunities for
2 millions of dollars to come to this area from the
3 federal government will be lost.

4 MR. ANKERSON: Other comments? I guess we can go
5 ahead and -- Richard.

6 MR. HAMANN: I just wanted to encourage people to
7 sign up to get mailed out information, to report on
8 this workshop, to know when the next series of
9 workshops are.

10 After they come up with some alternatives,
11 remember we're going to have workshops to deal with
12 these specific areas.

13 And then the idea now was to get these
14 representatives from the corps and from the H. D. R.
15 Engineering to get your comments about specific areas.
16 If you want to point out specific features on the map.
17 Otherwise, thank you for coming.

(Thereupon, this workshop was concluded.)

BRUIN COURT REPORTING, INC.

(941) 484-8848 / 955-4579

1 STATE OF FLORIDA)

2 COUNTY OF SARASOTA)

3 I, NANCY E. PAULSEN, Registered Professional

4 Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did

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2 36:15 37:18 57:20 73:23

Yellow

[1] 87:13

Young

[3] 52:18-19 59:7

Yourselves

[1] 46:9

Z**Zap**

[1] 40:15

Zone

[2] 33:19 84:22

Zones

[1] 84:23

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: Army Corps of Engineers

Question/comment: *N. Jetty walkout- As you can see from these photographs the entire walkout is in need of repair due to its extremely "hazardous" + "unsafe" condition to all who use it both county + public. Many people have already fallen at this site + fortunately have received minor injuries. At the walkouts end rusted iron beams are protruding upwards that could cause severe injuries to someone. My request would be that this be looked at to consider what type of repairs or rebuilding to make this "safe" + useable without hazards.

*N. Jetty Park
1000 Casey Key Rd
Nokomis Fl
Name

David Perry Attn: Parks + Recreation

Mailing Address

6700 Clark Rd.

City, State Zip Code

Sarasota, Florida 34241

The Corps will attempt to provide a written response to any questions not answered during the public meeting. You may return the card at the meeting or mail it to the address provided on the reverse side.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: 42 USC 4321, 4331-4335

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From: Robinhart@Robinhart on 11/13/99 10:12 AM

To: Tiphonie C Jinks/CESA1/SAJ02@CESA1

cc:

Subject: (no subject)

I am president of Sarasota Audubon Society. We have 1200 members in Sarasota County. Neither the Conservation Chair or I were able to attend the October 28 workshop on ecosystem restoration in Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet. We are very interested in the restoration of the spoil islands.. We help monitor rookeries in the bay for the Florida Coastal Island Sanctuaries. We strongly urge you not to exclude Little Edwards Island in your plans. All the islands are part of one ecosystem and Little Edwards is so close to Big Edwards Island that it will affect any restoration on Big Edwards. If you remove exotics from Big Edwards, you have an adjacent seed source to reinfest it. You will not avoid controversy by excluding Little Edwards Island, because you will find some of the same issues will arise when you offer specifics for restoration of the other islands. While recreation may be a secondary result of the restoration, we think ecosystem restoration means restoration and creation of fish and bird habitat and enhancing water quality. Please keep me informed about future workshops and plans. Thank you.

Robin Hart, Ph.D>

President, Sarasota Audubon

This email was sent earlier to the ACOE public relations officer.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: Army Corps of Engineers

Question/comment: ^{*N} N. Jetty walkout - As you can see from these photographs the entire walkout is in need of repair due to its extremely "hazardous" + "unsafe" condition to all who use it both county & public. Many people have already fallen at this site & fortunately have received minor injuries. At the walkouts end rusted iron beams are protruding upwards that could cause severe injuries to someone. My request would be that this be looked at to consider what type of repairs or rebuilding to make this "safe" & useable without hazards.

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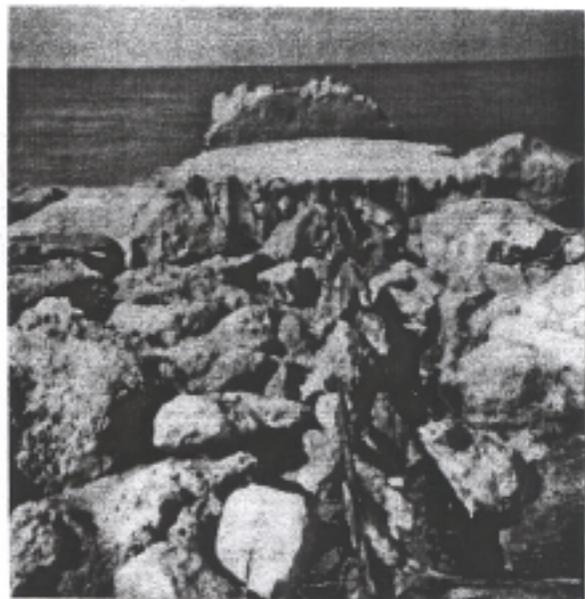
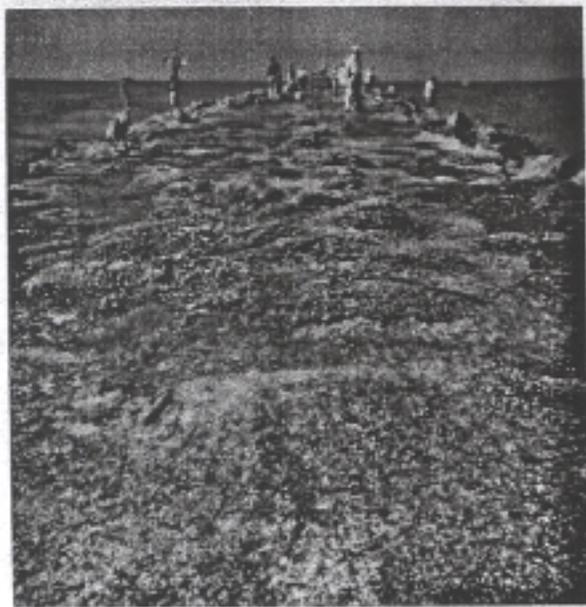
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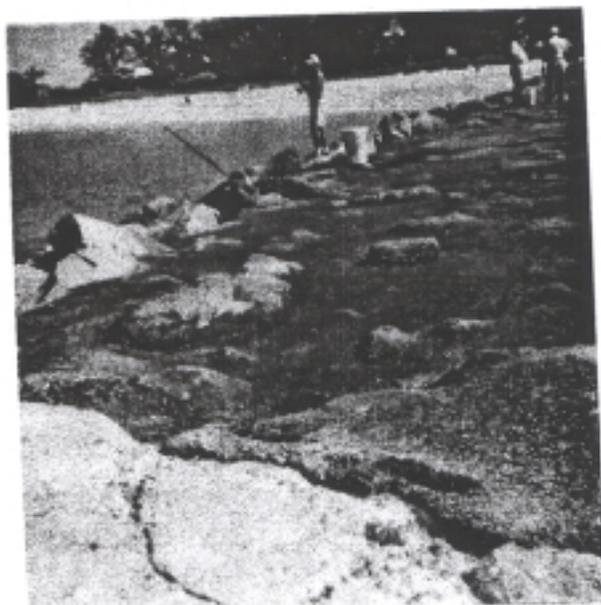
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DAVID PERRY (Foreman Parks & Recs)
6700 Clark Rd
Sarasota, Fl. 34241

N. Jetty Park (pictured above)
1000 Casey Key Rd (and side)
Nokomis, Fl.



ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

11-1-99

Question/comment directed to: Mr. Alberto Gonzalez

Question/comment: + Stephanie Jinks

Per the attached letter and
data referring to the cleaning
up the Bay at Palmer point
and the reopening of Midnight
Pass inlet to restore the bay
to its clean environment like it
was in 1980.

Arthur E. Singleton

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State Zip Code _____



Arthur E. Singleton
9150 Blind Pass Rd Apt 402
Sarasota, FL 34242

Phone 941-349-3552

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Arthur E. Singleton
9150 Blind Pass Rd Apt 402
Sarasota, FL 34242

Jacksonville District 11-1-99
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn. CESAJ-PD-PF (Jinks)
Box 4970
Jacksonville FL. 32232-0019

Dear Mr. Alberto Gonzalez
and Tephania Jinks.

I was in attendance at the
Oct 28, 1999 Public Work shop
at Sarasota High School in Sarasota FL.

We all thank you for taking
the time to come to Sarasota and the
good results will come from this
"Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration
Feasibility Study".

I am enclosing clippings and
photos that express my feelings
as to why I feel the bay at Palmer
Park needs to be cleaned by the
reopening of Midnight Pass that
was allowed to be closed in the early
1980's.

This closing has caused erosion
and beach damage from Venice
Inlet, 14 miles to Big Pass, Sarasota
Bay and on to Anna Marie Island.

Arthur E. Singleton
9150 Blind Pass Rd. Apt. 402
Sarasota, FL 34242

11-1-99

There always has been an opening to the intercoastal waterway. In the early days it was at the point of rocks in the Sanderling area.

From the attached photos you can see it is trying to come thru in a number of places, like Turtle Beach, Dr. Rubin home, Fisherman Haven Condo area.

The photo shows Fishermans Haven Condo under construction in 1973 before the Midnight Pass was closed and we have over 200 feet of sand beach at that time.

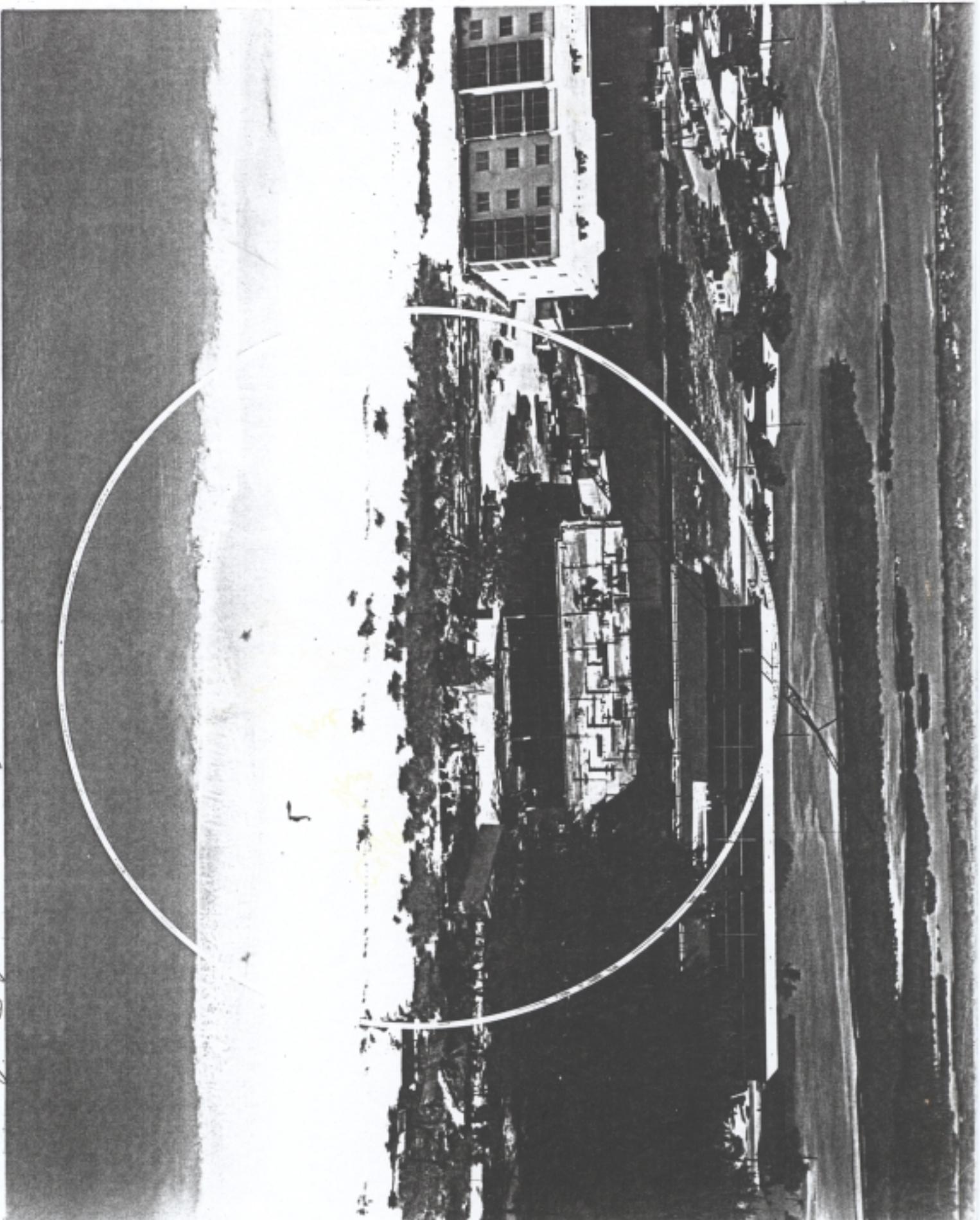
Thanks for your help and understanding

Sincerely
Arthur E. Singleton

Phone area 941 - 349 3552

Art Singleton
349-3552

9150 Blind Pass Rd.
Sarasota, FL 34242-2942



Fishermen's Haven Circle March 24th, 1973 - 200 ft wide sand beach. AS



Erosion 24 hours later



Undercuts Corner of Paving

Fisherman's Haven Gulf Erodes Corner of Parking Lot

Feb. 3, 1998



SW Corner of Parking



View North at Parking

Bill Joseph



Water over Road Curb



Fisherman's Haven
Gulf Invades Blind Pass Road
Feb. 3, 1998

Water on Road to 19 Houses



Erosion 24 hours later (wind changed)



Easement Road and Parking

Pat Singleton

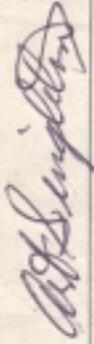


SARASOTA

Herald-Tribune

A NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY

OPINION



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1999

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

A Midnight Pass consideration

I was saddened to read that the "politically divisive" issue (so described by staff writer Rod Thomson), the closing of Midnight Pass, can continue to live, while Blackburn Bay continues on its death walk. The project manager for Sarasota County, Paul Wingler, is quoted as saying that it is possible to open the pass, yet he covers his political wellbeing by placing contingencies on that solution. That's the best way to allow the bay to continue on its march to a polluted death.

What larger-than-life forces cause such a 16-year march in mud? Could it possibly be the wishes of a couple of politically powerful homeowners simply trying to extend their own privacy? Soon, when the water gets black, thousands of residents will have the same privacy, because no one will want to visit or be near "Black" Bay.

Could we believe that environmentalists, wearing the cloak of protecting Earth, have lobbied to muddy our bay and change the natural habitat that was pristine for years? Could it be that it simply takes our County Commission 16 to 100 years to accomplish a rou-

The Sarasota County Commission risks losing Blackburn Bay and could become an accomplice to the massacre of a county treasure.

tine dredging operation? I can't believe that any of these reasons could justify destroying a natural gem.

The County Commission risks losing this legacy. It has sat idly, watching the blackening of the waters of Blackburn Bay. It could become an accomplice to this massacre of a county treasure.

There are very few among us who have the ability, in their lifetime, to influence such a monumentally significant operation to save a part of our Earth for future generations. I hope people pray that the commission finally reverses this decaying immediately, by restoring the pass, and restoring Blackburn Bay.

Geoff Scimone
Nokomis

Owner of threatened home

BY JACK GURNEY

By Jack Gurney
Hindsight and high water have provided a Siesta Key beachfront homeowner with new insights about the temporary nature of gulf coast shorelines.

"In retrospect, it's more difficult than I expected," Dr. Gordon Rubin said. "If it wasn't so beautiful, we'd just pack up our bags and leave."

Dr. Rubin and his wife Phyllis are scrambling to fortify the three-story house built by Sarasota artist Syd Solomon near the barrier island's south end.

The Gulf of Mexico shoreline near the former Midnight Pass inlet is eroding and waves are threatening to undermine the seaward portion of the house.

"What's most troubling is that this is not a hurricane situation," Rubin said. "It's not even a storm. This is just flood erosion."

Local and state emergency permits have been issued for a new foundation support system at the Rubins' 9210 Blind Pass Road house.

By Jack Gurney
They're having a very tough time of it," Florida Department of Environmental Protection Field Engineer Steve West said.

"The structure sits on a large gravity footing," he explained. "There's not enough [piling] penetration. This house is unique because it's way seaward."

Permits have been issued that allow 35 stainless steel pipe piles, each three inches in diameter, to be inserted through concrete footings into four foundation slabs.

Dr. Rubin, a retired dentist who bought the Solomon house in 1993, compared them to the root canals that he used to perform on patients.

"There's been quite a bit of damage," he said, "but we're in the process of correcting it. We have a very good contractor who knows how to work near the sea."

Turtle Beach near the south end of Siesta Key is also experiencing severe erosion, a natural condition that is threatening to destroy the Rubins' house.

"We'd like to see the beach renourished

wants new beach, seawall

and a seawall built to protect the homes here," he said. "There are now 10 or 11 houses instead of just the two or three that were here several years ago."

"It's possible that the county and state shouldn't have let anybody build down here," Rubin said, "but they did. So they have to let us repair what's here."

DEP's West has worked for 18 years along a 90-mile stretch of Southwest Florida coastline that includes Siesta Key, and he is currently monitoring 200 waterfront projects.

"I've made four visits to this site already," he said, "and will probably make another one this week if I have time. The house has lost enough support that settling has occurred. It's a big mess."

A provision in the state's permit could force the Rubins to demolish the seaward portion of their house if gulf water undermines the foundation.

If the gulf advances seaward of the foundation, the house will no longer be on pri-

HIGHLIGHTS

▼ Dr. Gordon Rubin concedes that, possibly, Syd Solomon's house shouldn't have been built.

▼ County and state officials are keeping a close eye on structural efforts to save the house.

▼ The entire Turtle Beach area near the south end of Siesta Key is experiencing erosion.

9200 Blind Pass Rd
Sarasota FL 34242

vate land because title will automatically pass to the state.

West indicated that the state would have to notify the Rubins if such an event occurs, surveys would have to be ordered and evidence presented.

"I had to read the language [in the provision] three or four times myself," he said. "It was developed by our legal staff and is still sort of confusing to me."

BOB ARDREN Sarasota Waters



having to make a hard decision.

Once the county gets this new proposal, the issue will probably be how to pay for it, but, hey, the county commission approved closing the pass, and I at least

feel it should be responsible for opening it again.

BAY ISLANDS PLANS DISCLOSED



Speaking of cleaning up after yourself, Sarasota Bay's islands are in for an overhaul is the impression I got last week at a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public workshop. About a hundred people showed up at Sarasota High School to watch a presentation promising lots of public input over the multi-year planned program - but I went away with the clear impression it's a matter of when, not if, the program happens.

Slides showing the Corp's work on similar islands in Palm Beach County were impressive. Islands there were sculpted and landscaped to provide wildlife habitat, and judging from the pictures, it worked. Backing up those pictures was an official of the Palm Beach County Department of Natural Resources who was both earnest and believable. As I said, it was an impressive presentation.

There will be more meetings and presentation of possible plans, so we'll try to keep you informed as to times and dates in the future.

MIDNIGHT PASS PLANS DOWN TO ONE OPTION - HMM

We've all been told for months that the county's consultant on Midnight Pass would come up several possible options for re-opening the pass, but that's changed. Now one option, one the consultants feel will work we're told, is under final peer review and could be before the county commission by the end of the year.

That's probably good. It removes the possibility of county commissioners haggling over which option to use and even possibly doing something as silly as putting the question to the voters to avoid

Siesta erosion prompts tax revenue request

BY JACK GURNEY

Shoreline erosion at the south end of Siesta Key may complicate the allocation of Sarasota County tourist tax revenue for beach renourishment.

There is currently more than \$2.6 million available for putting sand back on beaches, but some of it is tentatively committed to Lido Key and Longboat Key projects.

As a result, about \$2.2 million will be up for grabs if the county commission routinely approves a proposed budget for fiscal year 1999-2000.

The City of Sarasota wants at least an additional \$1.5 million — and perhaps up to \$2 million — for the Lido Key project that is scheduled to begin early next year.

More than half a mile of Lido Key's south beach is badly eroded. The city has secured a 50 percent matching grant from the state to renourish it, and has requested tourist tax revenue to pay for the balance.

"Cutting us off now will mean we will have to cancel the project, creating a very bleak picture for the resorts and condominiums..." City Manager David Sollenberger stated in a recent letter to County Administrator Jim Ley.

The additional \$1.5 million to \$2 million would appear to be available, but the Siesta Key Association has notified Tourist Development Council Chairman David Mills that it may want a portion.

Siesta Key is experiencing erosion in the Turtle Beach area near the former Midnight Pass inlet. Rocks have been placed in front of two condominiums, Fisherman's Haven and Fisherman's Cove, to harden the shoreline.

A beachfront home built by Sarasota artist Syd Solomon — and now owned by Dr. Gordon and Phyllis Rubin — has suf-

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ The Siesta Key Association wants Sarasota County to study Turtle Beach erosion.
- ▼ An Aug. 13 letter to the Tourist Development Council describes conditions and suggests money may be needed.
- ▼ The City of Sarasota wants available tourist tax funds for a Lido Beach project.

fered structural damage. It is situated just south of the condominiums.

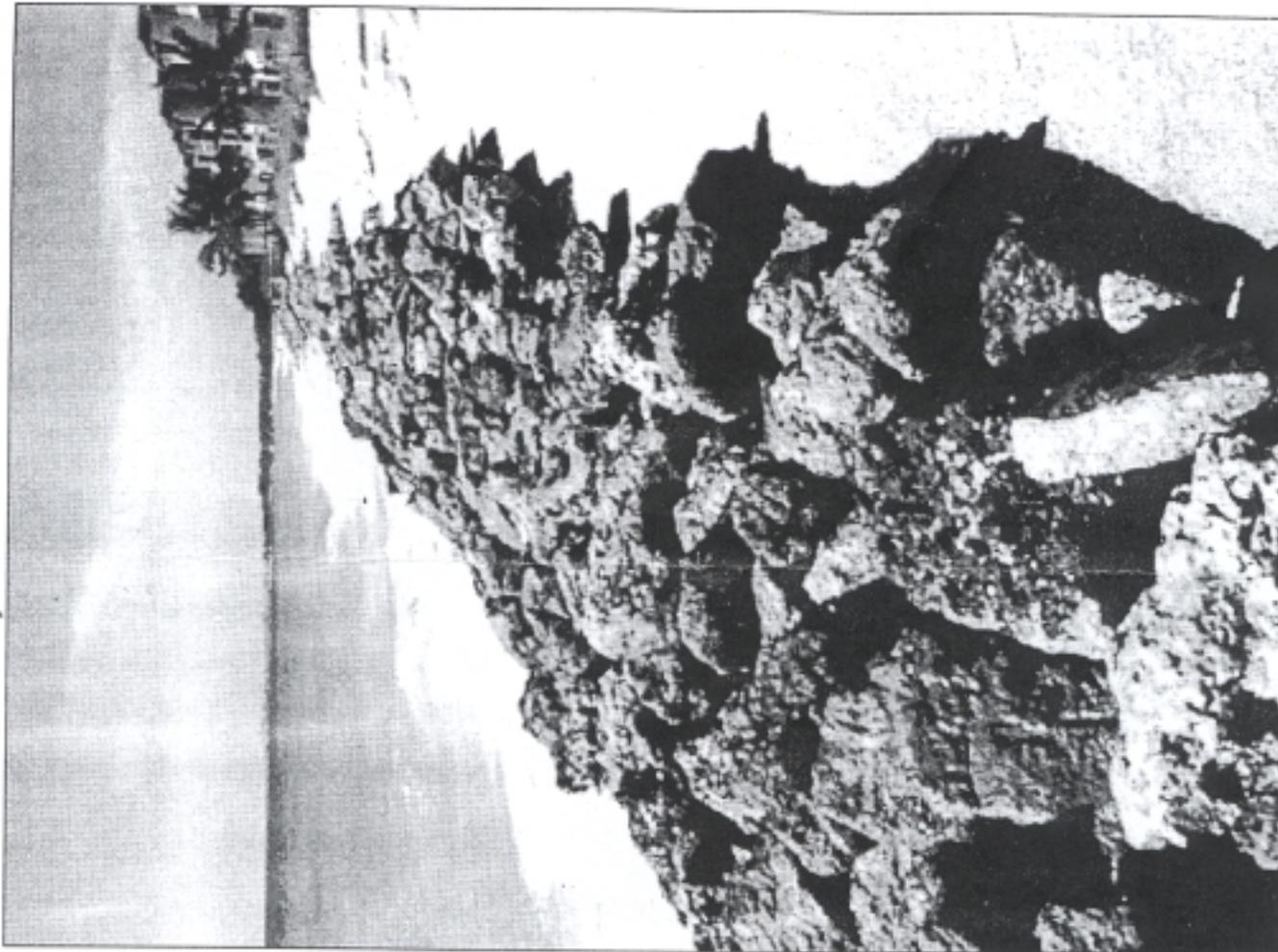
County and state permits have been issued for structural repairs and engineering plans to shore up the Rubins' house at 9210 Blind Pass Road.

In an Aug. 13 letter, Siesta Key Association Director Bob Waechter requested that the Tourist Development Council "refrain from committing additional resources, above those already approved, toward the renourishment of Lido Key's beach until the problem of erosion along the south end of Siesta Key is at least assessed."

The letter further requested that the council on Sept. 16 recommend to the county commission an investigation of the Turtle Beach area erosion problem.

In Nov. 1997, the county commission voted to increase the tourist tax from 2 cents to 3 cents on each dollar, and commit 70 percent of the additional revenue to beach renourishment.

The increase annually generates more than \$1 million for local beach renourishment projects and provides a source of matching money for grants from the state.



REBECCA WILD BAXTER
Erosion on Siesta Key south of Turtle Beach has become so bad that Fisherman's Cove and Fisherman's Haven condominiums had rock riprap placed along the beach. Erosion is even more severe farther south.

Art Singsler

nion

SATURDAY

Midnight Pass issue hangs

BILL COPELAND



Geezerland, humor a mental analgesic. ■ Bob Wachtelhaus, boo-boo on his name, me with a new joke: All cars are burned, the man that he was ironing who iron and absent-minded iron to his car. But why "Because the stupid go back."

■ Another Matt Mun ... all you do is touch suddenly it's wonderlar ■ The best line from Hill: "It's all iron Hayworth always said erters went to bed with were disappointed to w Rita Hayworth." ■ Go figure. We h sporium that flourished was killed by Spanish it doesn't the moss kill t bearded oaks? ■ Overdue reader thanks to Heisen Carol derson, Jack and Elena ard Blucher and John W ■ E-Z Grammar: You cause; the causeway is ■ Rationale: Having look back on gives yo base for looking forward

— twice. After both attempts, storms promptly filled the new cuts. We learned from this that an attempt to reopen the Pass will require a hardening of its shores with some sort of paving — an expensive procedure." It would be hard to find a matter of public concern that has so transfixed its factions for so long and with such fervent focus. The Ringling fixed-or-bascule bridge fiasco may have more disputants, but Midnight Pass refuses to pass.

Other passing thoughts:

■ The new Star Wars fever proves that there is life after Darth. ■ Cope's Law: You have to take the bad with the good, but not necessarily in that order. ■ Upon my moving away, the postal clerk turned to the worker next to him and asked, "Why do all these old geezers think they have to be funny?" Simple. Out here in Old

Community Redevelopment Agency be at such odds with each other? Especially when they are the same people.

Ernest W. Babb

MIDNIGHT PASS: LET IT FLOW

David Link's letter (*Pelican Press*, June 10, 1999) would lead us to believe that we, resident property owners, business property owners and taxpayers with real interests on Little Sarasota Bay (LSB), should continue to live with the folly that two individuals created by closing Midnight Pass in December 1983. I know that this condition is unacceptable to my neighbors, friends and business associates of the LSB area and we will actively support all activities to restore the pass and LSB. We have the resolve to right this wrong.

We know that a decade ago the pass provided significant flushing action in LSB and that the bay waters in the vicinity of the pass were clear and the environment was, indeed, a "Paradise Found." We know that because we lived here (swam, fished, boated and hiked here) when the pass was open. A significant natural asset in its own right, Midnight Pass served as a major marine doorway between the Gulf of Mexico and the rich estuary resources of Little Sarasota Bay.

Link would have us believe that the closing of Midnight Pass, a major alteration to waterflow in 1983, has not contributed significantly to the declining living aquatic resources and habitat degradation of LSB. We are to accept Link's dated opinion that by reopening the pass, "only 16 percent of LSB's tidal prism will go through a new pass." His opinion, he states, is "based on historical data (not a computer model with lots of assumptions)."

I don't know his source of the historical

data so I can't comment on it. I'm surprised at Link, because today's scientists rely heavily on computer models of all sorts.

However, as for historical data, the NOAA Nautical Chart 11425 Tidal Current Data Table indicates that Midnight Pass had the strongest tidal current of the three entrances to LSB. At "ebb" tide the average velocity in knots were: Midnight Pass at 1.4, South bridge at 0.3, and Blackburn bridge at 0.7. At "flood" tide: Midnight Pass at 1.8, South bridge at 1.4, and Blackburn bridge at 0.9. Of the three entrances to LSB, only Midnight Pass was a direct source of fresh ocean water to LSB.

This historical data indicates that Midnight Pass supplied the most water, and the freshest water of the three entrances, and that the unwarranted closing of the pass caused a significant negative impact on the LSB estuary. At this point, even "16 percent" fresh saline water would be better than no fresh saline water at all.

Link assumes the pass will close when opened. The pass, or a pass in the vicinity, was open for hundreds of years. Therefore, "based on history," we may conclude that the pass will remain open indefinitely. However, we are waiting for the recommendations of consulting firms and Mote Marine. Their recommendations will be based upon computer models and historical data that will address the stability of the pass when opened.

It appears to me that Link's interests in this matter are self-serving and, therefore is prejudiced in his opinions. Wherever Link's interests lie, they certainly seem not to be in the restoration of LSB.

I would encourage all to support the Midnight Pass Society whose interests are in the restoration of LSB. The next board of directors meeting is June 24, 7:30 p.m., at the Stickney Point Branch of Nations Bank.

Ron Flynn



P.O. Drawer 35200 • Sarasota, Florida 34278 • (941) 364-4880

Ms. Tiphonie Jinks C.E.
US Army Corps of Eng.
Jacksonville District

11/03/99

Re: Ecosystem restoration in Little Sarasota Bay and Venice Inlet
10/28/99, Sarasota High School

Dear Ms. Jinks,

Thank you for the very informative introduction to the project you are formulating for Little Sarasota Bay. If the same level of cooperative sharing of information and concerns can be maintained we can all look forward to a worthwhile and productive restoration project.

However, the concern that was brought up at the forum about the work being too spotty and site selective was a valid one. As an example: When the Corp installed the ICW in the mid sixties a significant amount of damage, both direct and ancillary, was done in and around The Jim Neville Marine Preserve. Any restoration project in this area, to be truly restorative, rather than creative, in nature should look to not only re-contouring the islands themselves but also to removing the dredge material that migrated into the channels and flats to the north and west. The 1955 US Coastal Geodetic Survey, Hydrographic Survey #8154, (Little Sarasota and Blackburn Bays Venice Inlet to Midnight Pass) shows a clearly defined channel and flats area west of the islands. The channel ran from north of the preserve, west around the islands, and back to the current location of the ICW south of the islands. This entire area has been silted over by undiked dredged material placed on the mangrove islands during construction of the ICW.

The "Bird Islands" along the ICW are being eroded and under cut, partly from boat wakes but also from the increased volume and velocity of tidal currents since Midnight Pass was closed.

What we need is a "Comprehensive, Inter-active, Inter-related Restoration Plan", an overall plan for the entire bay system that would give us a working blueprint, one that could be used to explain why some projects were being done in one area and others in another. Citizens will embrace the concept of a total bay revitalization, even if it is done piecemeal, if they are given the chance to approve, and be a part of, the bigger picture.

The Siesta Key Association looks forward to playing an active role in the creation, and subsequent implementation, of such a plan

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Waechter".

Robert Waechter
Chair: Environmental Affairs, Siesta Key Association

c: Robert Kiebitz, Pres SKA
Priscilla Quist, Sec. SKA
Sarasota County Commissioners

**ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET**

Question/comment directed to: Alberto Gonzalez, Project Manager, and Tiphonie Jinks, Study Manager
Department of Army, Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

Question/comment: _____

Regarding the study approach, I recommend consideration of a rational approach to setting habitat restoration targets throughout the study area. The Sarasota Bay watershed is an urbanized area wherein existing land uses preclude many opportunities for replacing a full complement of critical habitats that once made up the Bay ecosystem, historically. As such, the goals for habitat restoration must be set with consideration of the historical extent and proportion of various habitat types that will sustain and enhance the Bay ecosystem, optimally.

Given the inherent limitations of available real estate and resources to effect habitat restoration, it may not be ecologically prudent, nor adequate, to merely focus on recreating what once existed on any of the spoil islands that are under consideration in this program. It may be of more value to the Bay ecosystem to restore based on a rational plan to achieve a similar diversity and proportion of critical habitats to that which existed historically. In order to complete the puzzle of a functional Bay ecosystem, we may need to pack lots of critical habitat pieces into our shrinking game board!

Name STEVEN SAUERS, Environmental Management Consultant

Mailing Address 1647 Arlington Street

City, State Zip Code Sarasota, FL 34239

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: _____

PLAM SHOW HOW EACH PROPOSED PROJECT EFFECTS THE BAY
AS A WHOLE AND HOW EACH INTER-RELATES TO THE OTHERS.

JIM HEVILLE MARINE PRESERVE SHOULD BE RESTORED TO
WHAT IT WAS BEFORE CORP. DEPOSITED SPOILS &
DREDGED SOUTH CHANNEL OF MIDNIGHT PASS SYSTEM &
THE OVERDREDGING OF THE ICW.

Name

ROBERT WAECHE

Mailing Address

6539 PEACOCK RD

City, State Zip Code

SARASOTA FL 34212

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: _____

I TOTALLY AGREE WITH BOB WAGHTER

THE OPENING OF MIDNIGHT PASS IS

CRUCIAL TO THE WHOLE PROJECT!!

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State Zip Code _____

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PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT
AUTHORITY: 42 USC 4321, 4331-4335

PRINCIPAL PURPOSES: Information on this card is used for organization and conduct of this meeting. It may be added to the mailing list for notification of future meetings on the topic and for addressing correspondence subsequent to the meeting.
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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: Team

Question/comment: Representing Indian Beach Sapphire

Shores Assoc - the neighborhood with a

boundary of Sarasota Bay from the

Manatee County line to Whitaker Bayou

- quite an extensive portion of the shall

type shore line of the bay -

We want a focus upon preservation

of & encouragement of a return to the natural

shoreline and seagrass beds. We are

desirous of a prohibition of long docks

and the resulting prop-dredging that

ensues - will you help us? Broken up

long docks become projectiles during storms

(Introduce the cedars on islands as orig)

Name Rafi BENZ

Mailing Address Box 2900

City, State Zip Code Sarasota Florida 34230

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: _____

Question/comment: - The public workshop on Ecosystem Restoration in Sarasota

Bay was a Resounding success.

- I would appreciate notification of the web address on the
proceedings as soon as it is available. The American Littoral Society will
do our best to publicize its existence.

- After the meeting, one remarkable commentary was
"Why aren't they considering Little Edmonds Island?"

Name DAVE Bulloch American Littoral Society

Mailing Address 4154 KEAN DRIVE

City, State Zip Code SARASOTA FL 34241

email davebulloch@webtv.net

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ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN SARASOTA BAY AND VENICE INLET
QUESTION/COMMENT SHEET

Question/comment directed to: MS T. JINKS P.E.

Question/comment: _____

ATTACHED GUEST EDITORIAL WAS WRITTEN BY
ME AND ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE CONCERNS &
POSITION OF THE SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION

Robert Waechter

Name ROBERT WAECHTER

Mailing Address 6539 PEACOCK RD

City, State Zip Code SARASOTA FL 34242

The Corps will attempt to provide a written response to any questions not answered during the public meeting. You may return the card at the meeting or mail it to the address provided on the reverse side.

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The Board of Directors of the Siesta Key Association has determined that the condition of Little Sarasota Bay will be one of its priority issues. This position is not a change in course for the community organization, but rather a subtle shift from supporting programs deemed beneficial, to a more proactive role of calling attention to conditions that are in need of improvement in Little Sarasota Bay - and contributing toward the solutions of those problems.

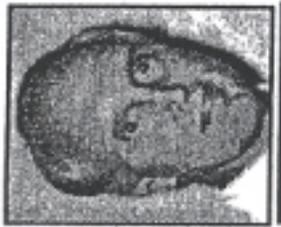
Already under way is a series of water quality tests, for fecal coliform, enterococcus and salinity levels, that will be shared with the Sarasota County Health and Natural Resources departments.

Recent reports of increases in seagrass populations in Little Sarasota Bay are in reality not as dramatically positive as some news releases might lead us to believe. Unfortunately, such reports tend to lull us into a state of complacency clearly not warranted after a closer inspection of the facts.

While there are, finally, some indications that vast beds of varied grasses wiped out in the mid-1980s are making an attempt at a comeback, the truth is we now enjoy a mere shadow of the grasses that existed - both in quantity and diversity - prior to 1983. The low salinity and increased turbidity of bay water during rainy seasons has effectively eliminated hundreds of acres of potential seagrass habitat from any chance of being repopulated.

Additionally, in a privately sponsored series of tests in the summer of 1997, levels of fecal coliform colonies far in excess of those mandated as maximums for an

BOB WAECHTER Guest Column



outstanding Florida Waterway, such as Little Sarasota Bay, were measured. These elevated levels were still unacceptable high weeks after a rain. Before 1983, higher levels of salinity would rapidly kill off coliform colonies soon after they were introduced into the bay.

Not so today. The lack of any break-in the barrier islands of Siesta and Casey keys ensures that the effects of upland runoff dominate the bay for days, and sometimes weeks, after the event.

To the casual observer, Little Sarasota Bay is still a productive and beautiful place, - but it's not what it once was, and what it could be again if we work to accomplish the following:

- Limit and control upland runoff;
- Initiate a property owner-friendly mangrove planting program;
- Restore to the greatest extent possible the natural habitat on the little islands that are scattered throughout the bay, while keeping in mind the necessity of maintaining a balance between habitat restoration and recreational areas for our citizens;
- Reopen Midnight Pass, thus restoring the historic circulation in the bay, increasing the sheet flow through and around the

Jim Neville Marine Preserve, while reintroducing the fresh, cleansing gulf waters and stabilizing the otherwise widely fluctuating levels of salinity.

• Recreate brackish backwater areas essential to the life cycle of many species. These goals all interact and interrelate with each other. Explaining how and why they interrelate is an important part of convincing citizens to support the effort.

We now have the opportunity to do just that. The Army Corp of Engineers, in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District, is sponsoring a workshop on ecosystem restoration in Little Sarasota Bay to be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 28, at Sarasota High School's West Cafeteria. The workshop is open to the public.

The importance of early citizen participation, or the lack thereof, was demonstrated last year in the failed Little Edward's Island restoration proposal. The Army Corps of Engineers needs to be told early on what we, as a community, expect for our bay and what we feel the Corps is obligated to do (i.e. coring its mishandling of deposition spoils when they dredged the Intra-coastal Waterway in the 1960s).

We must insist on a truly comprehensive, interrelated and interactive plan for all of Little Sarasota Bay - not a patchwork band-aid approach.

• Robert Waechter is a 22-year resident of Siesta Key. He is president of the Midnight Pass Society and is chairman of the Siesta Key Association's Environmental Affairs Committee.

the Midnight Pass Society, Inc.



Midnight Pass...Pass it on!

4343 Sawyer Road
Sarasota, Florida 34233

E-Mail: giacomo@home.com

Robert Waechter, President (941) 349-0798

James P. Herbert, Director (941) 923-3317

Website: www.midnightpass.org

November 3, 1999

Jacksonville district
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CESAJ-PD-PF (Jinks)
Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Re: 10/28/99 Sarasota Workshop

Dear ACOE:

Thank you most sincerely for initiating the feasibility study on Sarasota Bay Ecosystem Restoration. This is a fantastic opportunity to work with the ACOE on restoring our bay resources. Your attention, your time and your financial support are all most welcome! I have every confidence we will be able to turn this into an action plan which will have a major impact on Little Sarasota Bay.

The handout referred simply to Sarasota Bay. I believe you would be best served to identify in the title the specific bay segment to be considered; Little Sarasota Bay or greater Little Sarasota Bay or lower Sarasota Bay. This area has very different attributes than the larger bay segments.

But "Ecosystem Restoration" should not be limited to just work on selected spoil islands plus Palmer Point Park. That suggests to me a much broader approach to the issue. As presented at the workshop, ecosystem restoration can best be addressed for this bay segment through a comprehensive, integrated, inter-related restoration plan. If this is beyond the charter of the ACOE, you'd still be integrated into those elements you do consider appropriate.

- ◆ Such a plan would first inventory all our natural resources and opportunities within the study area. It would consider what was historically present as well as what presently exists. After all, "restoration" can only be achieved in this manner.

- ◆ The plan would also inventory all private parcels of significant value to the restoration effort, properties that might play a role in meeting the environmental and/or recreational needs in the area.
- ◆ It would not exclude any areas because of past controversies... like Little Edward's Island. That doesn't mean any unpopular action would be taken, just that the area would be considered for the role it should play, if any, in the restoration effort.
- ◆ The plan would be comprehensive in scope as to ideas and as to participating agencies. Environmental obligations, recreational needs and the health, safety and welfare of citizens would all be considered. It would be "frontloaded" by Sarasotans, considering any and all relevant ideas that would have a positive impact on our bay resources. Including the citizenry early and often will go far to earn public acceptance of the final action plan.
- ◆ The plan would integrate the various plan elements into a single, coordinated approach to bay restoration.
- ◆ It would recognize the inter-relationship of the various plan elements so that they complemented rather than conflicted one with the other. For example, the Jim Neville Marine Preserve would be addressed quite differently depending on whether Midnight Pass was restored or left plugged.
- ◆ The comprehensive plan would need to recognize that recreational and environmental uses of natural assets are most often in conflict. Maximizing the recreational use of an area often minimizes its environmental value... and vice versa. This is especially true as to spoil islands. But the comprehensive approach to the issue should lead to a balancing of these conflicting uses.

Most of the adverse impacts on our bay resources are the result of our very presence. In addressing "ecosystem restoration," it must be recognized that we will often have to settle for mitigation instead. Seawalls just aren't going to be removed. Dredge and fill projects won't be reversed. The ICW itself is here to stay. But we can and should take positive mitigating actions to restore these resources to the extent that is practicable.

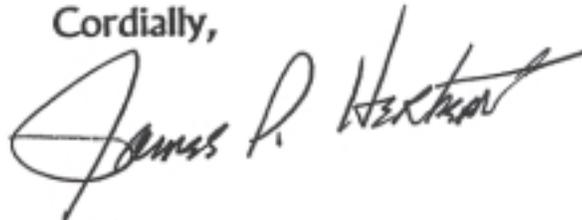
There are any number of specific actions to consider. The very best ideas would likely come from a series of Forums. This would also involve the community in the process, generate enthusiasm for the project and increase its chances of success. Some thoughts of mine include: Restoration of Midnight Pass if

determined feasible. Restoration of the historic fish nurseries in North Creek and other tributaries. Mitigation of wave impact on seawalls through creative mangrove planting. Removal of exotic species. Restoration/renovation, as appropriate, of spoil islands. Application of zoning principles to natural resource areas. Balancing boat launching needs with facilities. Environmental education programs. Lookouts over areas reserved to meet environmental needs. Connection of Turtle Beach lagoon to bay at North end. Integration of areas like Turtle Beach, Spanish Pointe, Palmer Point, Blackburn Point and others into people-friendly sites.

Some ten years ago the Midnight Pass Society published a book titled An Environmental Assessment of Little Sarasota Bay Subsequent to the Closure of Midnight Pass. Included therein was a chapter called "The Future." This was a series of suggested actions in the event of the restoration of Midnight Pass. I am attaching a copy of that chapter for your consideration.

I hope that these comments are accepted in the same spirit in which they are given..... an enthusiasm for the proposed project, an eagerness for it to be all that it should be and a commitment to help you achieve success any way I can. If I can be of any help or service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Herbert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James P. Herbert,
Director

CC: Bruce G. Hasbrouck
Chuck Listowski

The
Midnight Pass



SOCIETY, INC. "MIDNIGHT PASS - PASS IT ON!"

POST OFFICE BOX 38865
SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34231

ROBERT D. MEADOR, PRESIDENT (813) 849-1825
JAMES P. HERBERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (813) 923-8917

MIDNIGHT PASS POSITION PAPER

RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Dr. John B. Morrill
James P. Herbert

March 16, 1990

**THE FUTURE OF MIDNIGHT PASS,
THE JIM NEVILLE MARINE PRESERVE
AND LITTLE SARASOTA BAY**

SYNOPSIS

A great deal of attention has been focused on the problems associated with Midnight Pass... what went wrong, who's to blame, what will it cost to right this wrong? This paper is devoted to the opportunities available once the decision is made to positively resolve the Midnight Pass issue.

The restoration of tidal flow through Midnight Pass will be of immense benefit to the embayment's historic coastal lagoon ecosystem. While it will take time, there is every reason to believe that the marine plants and animals that had inhabited this area will recolonize it once again.

There are steps we can take to aid and abet the recolonization process and other environmentally sensible options available to preserve the abundant natural assets while maximizing the ability of Sarasotans to enjoy and to appreciate them.

To insure that the actions taken to "improve" this special area complement one another and will serve the environment, we need to adopt some long-term management strategies... a MANAGEMENT PLAN. We herewith offer some suggested actions, plans or programs we feel should be part and parcel of such a plan, tempered by the availability of financial resources to fund implementation of these ideas.

GENERAL

In planning for the future of Midnight Pass, the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Little Sarasota Bay, some review of the past is in order if only to be sure we don't repeat the mistakes of the past again... and again. But far too much attention has been placed on the problem of Midnight Pass... who or what was harmed, the damage done, who was responsible, what should or should not have been done. It's not hard to lose sight of the fact that "what's done is done." It really doesn't matter.

"Man" interfered with the dynamics that controlled Midnight Pass and caused it to cease to function, causing serious and substantial damage to the long-established ecosystem of Little Sarasota Bay. Marine plant and animal communities in the Jim Neville Marine Preserve have endured

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THE FUTURE

March 16, 1990

Page Two

significant losses as to both numbers of individuals and diversity of species living there.

It's time to focus attention on the OPPORTUNITIES available at Midnight Pass. The chance to restore an historic saltwater doorway between Gulf and Bay. The chance to take positive actions which will significantly improve environmental conditions and restore needed marine life habitat. The chance to reclaim lands despoiled in the name of progress. The opportunity to actively and aggressively manage this area so as to protect its abundant natural assets while maximizing the ability of Sarasotans to enjoy and to appreciate them.

The restoration of Midnight Pass is the only environmentally responsible course of action open with respect to this essential inlet. But, to maximize the benefits of restoring Midnight Pass, we need to adopt some long-range strategies, a MANAGEMENT PLAN. such a plan would prioritize our intended actions. It would insure that our goals were aligned so our actions weren't at cross purposes but complemented one another. A management plan would provide a proper balance between protection and enhancement of the environment as against the rights of individuals to utilize the area... with the environment coming first. After all, if we don't first protect and preserve these natural assets, what will be left to appreciate?

Following is a brief sketch of each of several suggested plans, actions or programs we would like to see as part of such a management plan. We recognize that our enthusiasm to enhance and improve this special part of Sarasota County must be tempered with the availability of the financial resources to carry out these ideas.

MARINE PARK. We propose the establishment of a special Marine Park zone extending from just above the junction of the ICW and the northern channel to Midnight Pass, southward to just below Spanish Point and extending from the Gulf of Mexico eastward to the mainland shores of the Bay but including the tidal areas and flood plains of Catfish and North Creeks. This would be a TRUE marine sanctuary where the overriding objective is the replication, to the extent possible, of the natural environment and conditions prior to the influences of "Man." Included in the Park would be all of the waters in the area (including the creeks) and all of the encompassed County-owned lands: The Jim Neville Marine Preserve, the south end of Siesta Key and the north end of Casey Key.

NO WAKE ZONE. We propose that the entire Marine Park area be designated a "no wake" zone... including the Intracoastal Waterway to the extent it falls within Park boundaries. surely we can dedicate one area in the Bay to the environment as a true marine sanctuary.

MONITORING. While some monitoring will necessarily be required as a condition of the Pass restoration permit, there is a lot that can be learned here as well. Comprehensive water monitoring needs to be established to fully assess the improvements to water quality once tidal flow is reestablished. A comprehensive biological monitoring

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program is also essential to assess the effects the restored environmental conditions have on the benthic community, the migratory marine animals and the bird life.

Regular monitoring should also be initiated of the local beach profiles, the rebuilding of and accumulations at the ebb shoal, the rate of deposition in the sand bank in the throat of the inlet and the effect restored tidal flow has on the historic tidal channels... especially the northern channel. People monitoring would be useful, too: the numbers and characteristics of the individuals visiting the area and the purpose for their visit... as a throughway to the Gulf, as a destination, for picnicing, fishing, bathing, etc.

MITIGATION. As part of the restoration plan, quite a number of young mangroves will have to be transplanted. Additional plants can also be set out along with the transplants. These new plantings need to be monitored as to survival rate. Low survival rates should trigger additional, but revised, planting efforts. A similar transplanting program will be needed for sea oats growing in the inlet site.

LEAST TERN NESTING AREA. While the beach material at the inlet site is not suitable for least tern nesting purposes, the area south of the Pass has been nested by them for years. To continue as such, the beach area will need to be managed... kept clear of non-compatible materials, primarily vegetation. The area will also need to be kept clear of people, at least (no pun intended) just prior to and during the nesting season.

CHANNEL MARKING. While the ICW is well marked, the northern and southern channels to Midnight Pass need to be adequately marked so that boaters are kept off the shallow, grass bed areas. The majority of our local waters could use improved channel markers for that matter.

HABITAT MODULE. The National Estuary Program is undertaking to restore native habitat to altered lands in a model project. The objective is to promote habitat restoration in suitable areas throughout the project area. Much of the land, shoreline, intertidal and subtidal areas in the Midnight Pass vicinity have been despoiled or otherwise altered by Man. Most of this damage was concurrent with the alteration of inlet dynamics which led to pass instability and closure. It would be most fitting to restore the despoiled lands at the same time the historic inlet is restored. The three County land parcels in this vicinity are all prime candidates for habitat restoration.

Jim Neville Marine Preserve. Originally and still often referred to as the Bird Islands or Keys, the area was renamed in memory of this local environmentalist (Mr. Neville was an honorary Society Board member). The breakdown of the 111 acres in this parcel is shown in Exhibit #4 of the Opposition paper. About $\frac{1}{2}$ the emergent lands are vegetated in mangroves. There are 2 ponds on the property. But the elevation of some 20 acres was raised in the deposition of ICW spoils in the early 1960's. The Australian Pines and other exotic species of vegetation need to be removed... the Pine turned into firewood. There are then 2 choices: the lands could be regraded back to their historic elevation and revegetated in native species of plants. There are other areas in

.....more

the vicinity that might accomodate the excess fill. Or, the elevated lands could be regraded to create a unique coastal hammock area in the County...complete with Gopher Tortoise!

The submerged lands have been covered in up to a foot of "fines" running from the undiked spoil areas. Interference with this material would likely be cost prohibitive and cause more problems than were solved. However, with tidal circulation restored, these areas could be recolonized by Cuban shoalweed. The colonization process could be helped along of course through a replanting project. Any such replanting project should include the re-introduction of Turtle and Manatee grasses at their appropriate growing depths.

The "Man-created" salt barrens, totaling nearly 10 acres, should be addressed along with the remains of the spoil piles.

North Casey Key. Sarasota County owns some 36± acres on north Casey Key (see Exhibit #4 to the Opposition paper) of which about $\frac{1}{2}$ needs attention. The Australian Pine-vegetated spoil pile remains should be denuded of the exotic plant species and the land elevation returned to historic levels. Almost 10 acres of submerged lands have been subjected to coverage in clay fines and should be addressed in the same manner as the "Preserve" above.

This parcel contains some high marsh areas. Perhaps the best protection would be to better define the elevation around the southern part of the area and dedicate that to "people" uses, keeping them out of the marsh area proper.

The beach portion of this parcel includes a least tern nesting area. For it to remain as such, it will have to be actively managed to retain the necessary characteristics and environmental conditions.

South Siesta Key. Recently purchased by Sarasota County, these lands include the abandoned MML site. The derelict portion of the lands need to be reclaimed for environmental purposes. The area would lend itself to substantial revegetation in native species. There are Australian Pines to be removed from this area and some lowering of elevations necessary.

ZONATION OF LANDS. To accomodate the wants and needs of people while simultaneously protecting and preserving the very environment that is attractive to them is a tall order. But, if the environment is to survive in anything resembling a natural state, it must be done. The layout of the County-owned lands in this area lends itself to a unique approach to this preservation-utilization dilemma: dedicating the different parcels to serve different purposes. Here is a suggested plan of use-zoning:

North Casey Key. Dedicate this park area as the destination site for boaters... which it has historically been. Discourage to disallow landings on the other parcels, at least along the Bay shoreline. Establish an elevated nature trail around the high marsh area and include some rustic picnic grounds facilities. Erect an observation

THE FUTURE

March 16, 1990

Page Five

tower for viewing the area in general and particularly the Jim Neville Marine Preserve. Assure there's adequate water circulation to control the mosquito problem that's been endemic to this area. And, finally, balance the beaching of boats against the vegetation of the shoreline. Some boardwalking may be necessary to accomodate visitors and preserve native plantings.

Jim Neville Marine Preserve. A special place, it deserves special protection. It should be dedicated to the environment. Boaters should be discouraged from beaching there. Casual strollers should be discouraged, too. If "people use" at all is encouraged, it should be confined to a small section of the Preserve and include boardwalked trails.

South Siesta Key. This area could be dedicated primarily for hikers from the public beach facility, Turtle Beach. To preserve the interior shoreline, boat landings should be discouraged. Rustic picnic facilities would be appropriate. An interpretive nature center... a trail-side natural museum... would be most appropriate. It could be expanded to include a small building which would include a monitoring station. An observation tower as on north Casey Key would be of use. If access to the "Preserve" were encouraged it should be from this site as an extension of the trail-side museum.

SUMMARY

These are just a few simple concepts that have come to mind. Additional ideas for maximizing the benefits to be derived from this area while preserving its natural beauty are limited only by the imagination and the taking of time to consider the opportunities available.

The point to be stressed in addressing the future for our environmental assets is that we can no longer treat them with benign neglect. There are just too many "people pressures" put on our natural assets... and the natural environment almost always loses in the clash of needs. If we're to preserve our natural environment we're going to have to actively manage its preservation and protection.

MIDNIGHT PASS SOCIETY INC.

4343 SAWYER RD. Sarasota Fl. 34233

Robert Waechter, President Phone (941) 346-0379
Fax (941) 923-6898

Jim Herbert, Chairman Phone (941) 923-3317

9/08/99

Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck, Vice President
HDR Engineering Inc.
5100 W. Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa Fl. 33609-1840

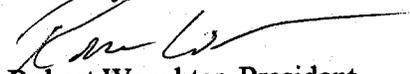
Re: Little Sarasota Bay "Comprehensive, Integrated, Interrelated, Restoration Plan".

Dear Mr. Hasbrouck,

I hope you are getting a positive responsive from all the interested parties. You can be assured that The Midnight Pass Society will stay involved and attend all public workshops. In addition, I reported on our meeting to the Siesta Key Association and they will also attend.

Please note our address above, the one you used was old and out of date.

Sincerely,



Robert Waechter, President
Midnight Pass Society

c: Jim Herbert

Rep. Dan Miller

P. C. Blaser
1315 Quail Drive
Sarasota, FL 34231

Sept. 1, 1999

Bruce Hasbrouck, Vice President
Sr. Environmental Scientist
HDR Engineering, Inc.
Suite 300
5100 W. Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33609-1840

Dear Mr. Hasbrouck,

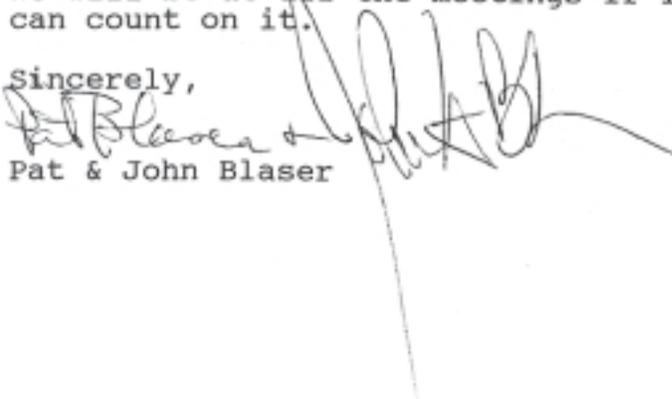
Thank you for your letter of August 31, 1999. Even though you are being kind enough to ask us our opinion, we feel like the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program is determined to completely destroy Edwards Islands and we will fight them to the end!

We who live around the islands had the county purchase them (from a individual who was going to build houses on them) so they would be left as they are. We, as county taxpayers own the islands and we want the pines left there.

First of all, we feel the money should be used to shore-up the bird islands and then all the man made channels and lagoons should be dredged and marked well so people use them instead of the shallows. All the run-off should be caught in retention ponds of some sort where possible to trap all the dirt and garbage that washes into the bay. The tab for sewer systems should be picked up by the government. To spend money to remove trees that people want to remain is a waste. It will not clean the air or the water.

We will be at all the meetings if informed and in town. You can count on it.

Sincerely,


Pat & John Blaser



American Littoral Society

4154 KEATS DRIVE, SARASOTA, FL. 34241 (941)377 5459

October 4, 1999

Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck
HDR Engineering Inc.
5100 W. Kennedy Blvd.
Tampa, FL. 33609-1840

Dear Mr. Hasbrouck:

It was a pleasure meeting you and your associates. I think your approach is on the right track.

We talked about what to do with spoil from the Edwards Islands area. Enclosed is an article from the Sarasota Herald-Tribune (Oct 3) and is the first "map" I've seen of the proposed berm to control flooding along Phillippi Creek. It would appear that mammoth amounts of fill will be necessary and is reasonably close to a possible off-loading site at the northern Siesta Key causeway.

For what its worth.

Regards,
Dave Bulloch

P.C. Blaser
1315 Quail Drive
Sarasota, FL 34231
(941) 924-5342

September 2, 1999

Tiphonie C. Jinks
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Dear Tiphonie,

I appreciate meeting you the other day. It was very kind of the three of you to come to our house to ask our opinion about the Islands. I have the feeling our feelings won't count for anything but like Bruce said, "Maybe we'll be pleasingly surprised".

What John and I would like to know is how much this feasibility study is going to cost?

Can the money earmarked to be spent on the projects be used to open Midnight Pass?

Thank you once again for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Blaser". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

P. C. Blaser



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

September 28, 1999

Planning Division
Flood Control and Flood
Plain Management Section

Mrs. Patricia Calvert-Blaser
1315 Quail Drive
Sarasota, Florida 34231

Dear Mrs. Blaser,

Reference is made to your letter, addressed to Ms. Tiphonie C. Jinks of my staff, dated September 2, 1999. The cost of the Feasibility Study for the Sarasota Bay Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Project is \$373,000. The money that has been allocated is earmarked specifically for the feasibility study. The Corps process requires that a feasibility study be performed to ensure that there exists a Federal interest in participating in the solution of the existing problems. Federal interest will exist as long as the benefits are greater than the cost of implementing the plan. We can not construct a project, in this case opening Midnight Pass, without first performing a feasibility study.

In response to your question concerning the dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway, I have enclosed a copy of the Corps' News Release, which can be located on the Internet at <http://w3saj/pao/nr9940.html>.

If there are any questions, please contact Ms. Tiphonie C. Jinks at 904-232-3506.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James C. Duck".

James C. Duck
Chief Planning Division

Enclosure



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Jacksonville District

P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

News Release

Release No. **99-40** Contact: Jacquelyn Griffin, Public Affairs Officer

For Release: September 9, 1999 Phone: 904-232-2235 FAX: 904-232-2237

Email: jacquelyn.j.griffin@saj02.usace.army.mil

CORPS TO DEVELOP PLAN FOR WATERWAY DREDGING

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the West Coast Inland Navigation District are developing a Long Range Dredged Material Management Plan (LRDMMP) for the Intracoastal Waterway from the Caloosahatchee River to the Anclote River. The plan will examine the waterway between the two rivers to identify existing shoal areas, to predict areas where future shoaling is expected to occur and to determine the types of sediments present in the existing shoals. The plan will also identify the requirements for the land, easements and rights of way necessary to dispose of material that will be removed from the waterway. The report describing the plan is scheduled for completion in February 2000.

The cost of the report, estimated at \$458,000, includes survey work, sediment sampling and analysis, real estate review and report preparation. The results of the sampling and analysis are expected by the end of October.

"This plan is necessary to ensure that the channel is properly maintained for safe navigation," said Don Fore, the Corps' project manager for dredging the waterway. "The report will also identify whether the material to be dredged will need to be placed in upland areas or recycled to nearby beaches."

-30-

For more information about Jacksonville District's activities, visit our website at:
<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil>

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MWD and C111

Bay health continues to improve — in places

"Sarasota Bay is not one beating heart," as Kellie Dixon of Mote Marine Laboratory put it recently. What she meant was that the bay is more like a community of neighborhoods — some improving, some not.

Overall, however, the trends definitely look good, according to a new study just completed by Dixon of bay water quality over the past 30 years. Ask any angler and he or she will almost certainly say that fishing continues to improve in the bay — and some of that improvement definitely comes from better water quality.

Looks to me as though the taxpayers' investment in cleaning up the bay is really working. It may be a little spotty, but it's real.

RED TIDE GONE?

Mote Marine Laboratory reports finding no red tide in water samples recently collected from New Pass to about 30 miles offshore. There's always the possibility of a re-bloom, but there's always that chance. For now, it looks as though we dodged the bullet on red tide this year, too.

GOOD JOB, STAN

Stan Lowe is surely one of Sarasota's premier sailors, boat surveyors and boatmen and I've got to pass along yet another honor this old friend of ours recently received. Stan was named Florida's Museum Volunteer of the Year — for the entire state — for his work on the Sharpie project at Spanish Point.

Surely you know about the Sharpie project in which Stan and a few others are hand building one of these wonderful little coastal cruisers — and even built their own workshop from bamboo growing on the museum grounds.

Meanwhile, I hear Stan's having a little health problem. So come on old friend, there's work to be done — work that needs you.

Stan, here's hoping things improve for

BOB ARDREN Sarasota Waters



you — and soon.

CHANGES AT 'THE WHARF?'

Long-time readers will recall I used to spout fire and fume over conditions at the city's anchorage south of Selby Gardens. That is until one day an old friend took me aside and said, "Bob, this is Sarasota's wharf and nothing is ever going to change here. The city can't or won't do it, so why not just relax and enjoy it for what it is."

So I did. But now comes word that an old cooking coach and sailing buddy of mine named Espin Bullock is coming aboard at O'Leary's Deck & Grill — and some real changes may be in the wind there. For one thing, you can be sure the food will improve.

Espin, you see, is the founder of such Sarasota eating establishments as the Hillview Grill, and before that, the now-lamented Oasis at Webber and Beneva. This person knows food, especially local seafood and the best of Southern-style cooking. He's also a life-long sailor and has lived aboard a sailboat for the 20 or so years we've been acquainted.

Lillian O'Leary tells me she hopes to re-emphasize sailing out of her business at the south end of Island Park — and she's hoping Espin will be able to help her do that.

So here's wishing Espin and the O'Learys good luck on their new "marriage," and here's betting we'll all benefit from it.

★MAKE WAY FOR THE ARMY

Well, well, well, it looks as though the county commission is going to have to pick on something bigger than the Sarasota

Bay Program over restoration of bay islands in the future. Suddenly, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is interested.

What's happened is that somebody finally figured out the Army Corp created those ecological nightmares, so it should be responsible for clearing them up. After all, that's what Professor John Morrill at New College preached, and it always made sense to me.

Nothing is going to happen in the way of changes until the Midnight Pass question is resolved, you can be sure of that. But after that, who knows?

A public workshop to discuss the entire matter is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m. at Sarasota High School's West Cafeteria.

CCC BANQUET COMING

The Sarasota chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association — the group that used to be called the Florida Conservation Association — will be holding its 13th annual fund-raising banquet and auction Nov. 22.

As in past years, attendees will have a chance to find real bargains on everything from fishing trips to gear to artwork. Shucks, I bought a great Clyde Butcher photograph of the Everglades one year for a fraction of its cost in a gallery during the banquet's silent auction. It's still on the five-room wall.

Scheduled to be held at Michael's on East this year, tickets to the affair are \$75 per person or \$135 a couple and include a year's membership in the CCA. For more information and tickets, contact Bob Piper at 366-1040.

WOMEN'S FISHING CLINIC SCHEDULED

Professional fishing guide Merrily Dunn will hold her highly praised "Women's Introduction to Fishing" clinics on Saturdays, Nov. 6 and 20, and Dec. 11 at C.R.'s Sailwater Charters on Siesta Key.

hours of on-the-water fishing from a boat. All the tackle you'll need is provided, as is a fishing license for the clinic.

Cost is \$45 per angler and includes a gift pack of Dunn's favorite lures. Space is limited to eight. For reservations or information, call C.B.'s at 349-4400.

SAILING/SEAMANSHIP COURSE OFFERED

An abbreviated basic sailing and seamanship course will be given by the Longboat Flotilla of the Coast Guard Auxiliary starting Monday, Nov. 15, with classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for four weeks. Teenagers 19 and over who pass the course will receive their Florida Boater Education Permit, and for all folks new to boating, this is a great way to "learn the ropes."

Cost of the course is \$20 for a study guide and text, and for more information, call Alfred Halblain at 378-5620.

FISHING REPORT

Fall fishing is coming on strong following the little cool snaps we've been having. Everybody is reporting good Spanish mackerel catches, along with some bonito, just off the beaches.

The macks are showing up in the passes, too, and can often be spotted by the bird activity above the schools chasing bait to the surface.

C.B.'s also reports big jacks, five to ten pounds, also running in the passes right now. If it's good eating you're after, C.B.'s also says trout in the 15 to 22-inch range are being caught in the north bay.

New Pass Bait Shop reports some smaller kings are starting to show up offshore. With Capt. Rob Roberts bringing some home almost on a daily basis, Pompano are also being caught off the beaches, and New Pass suggests the north bay for good reds and trout on the flats.

Down at Hart's Landing, right downtown, some nice flounder are being caught

produces rollover

No ticket matched all six numbers in the latest Lotto drawing and the jackpot will roll over, Florida Lottery officials said Thursday. The new prize is estimated at \$18 million.

The winning numbers drawn Wednesday night: 11-16-17-22-33-53.

The game also produced 35 first-prize tickets that matched 5 of 6 numbers with each worth \$5,771.

In addition, there were 2,383 tickets that matched 4 of 6 and were worth \$68.50 apiece, and 47,476 tickets had 3 of 6 numbers worth \$4.50.

Cadets to practice search and rescue

Civil Air Patrol cadets from Manatee and Sarasota counties will practice search and rescue techniques Saturday.

About 75 members of the teen auxiliary of the Air Force will be in areas of north Manatee searching for a simulated crashed plane and its occupants. The exercise will teach them about navigation, first aid, radio communications and map reading.

For information about Civil Air Patrol membership, call 729-8441

Correction

The Sarasota County commissioners have approved an 11-space parking lot at Blount Avenue and Clark Road. Because of a reporter's error, an item in an Other Action box in Thursday's *Herald-Tribune* incorrectly stated the number of parking spaces.

Inside

- 2B Hotline
- 4B State News
- 6B Obituaries
- 7B Community Central



Christina Randolph, 4, above right, of Sarasota shows off her Minnie Thursday. Above right, Bailey Gilbert, 2 (with mom Lisa), left, Brand dressed up as Blue from the Blue's Clues TV show at the Library par

SARASOTA COUNTY

Island restoration project outlined

The plans are detailed at a public workshop at Sarasota High School.

Jennifer Sullivan
STAFF WRITER

A project that may restore six Sarasota County islands was detailed Thursday night to a crowd of 80 residents, environmentalists and county representatives.

The meeting at Sarasota High School, which was held by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the West Coast Inland Navigation District, was the first in what is promised to be many public workshops to discuss possible changes to 50 acres of ecosystems from Venice to Sarasota.

A study conducted by the Corps of Engineers will focus on Big Edwards Island, Skier's Island, Jim Neville Preserve, Bird Colony Islands, Palmer Point Park and Snake Island.

The study will be used to determine whether environmental restoration is needed. If the project is approved, the federal government will pay for 75 percent of the work. A funding source for the rest has not been found.

"Much of the spoil uplands are covered by Brazilian peppers and Australian pines," said Bruce G. Hasbrouck, an environmental scientist and vice president of HDR Engineering in Tampa.

Hasbrouck, who has been hired by the Corps to help conduct the study, said the two types of vegetation are "noxious plants whose leaves are poisonous." They keep desirable plants from growing, he said.

During a 30-minute presentation, Hasbrouck said mangrove and sea grass would be planted in the areas during the environmental work.

In a six-page color handout given to everyone at the workshop, the Corps says, "The prima

PLEASE SEE ISLANDS ON 6B

He was a Navy veteran of War II and was a member of the Incarnation.

Survivors include his wife, Rosa; daughters, Linda of New York and Arleen of Shohola, Pa.; and son, Doris O'Shea of Pompano Beach.

A memorial Mass will be held Saturday at 10 a.m. at St. Martin's Church. Martin Fulmer is in charge.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Lung Association, 1000 South Central Expressway, Suite 119, Sarasota, FL 34232, or to the Salvation Army, 1000 27th St., Sarasota, FL 34230.

Margaret A. Jendreski

Margaret A. Jendreski, 68, Sarasota, died Oct. 27, 1999.

She was born Oct. 30, 1930, in Saratoga, N.Y., and came to Sarasota 15 years ago from Schenectady, N.Y. She was retired from the accounting department of New York Telephone Co. in Albany, N.Y. She was a member of the Episcopal Church.

Survivors include her husband, James A.; a daughter, Barbie Bea-Sarasota; two sons, Rick of Sarasota and Jim of Schenectady; grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, with a funeral service at 8 p.m. Monday, at Wiegand Brothman Chapel. Burial will follow at Sarasota Memorial Park.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Lung Association, 1000 Central Court, Suite 119, Sarasota, FL 34232.

Janet Johnson

Janet Johnson, 72, Sarasota, died Oct. 28, 1999.

She was born Feb. 24, 1927, in New York and came to Sarasota 48 years ago in Naples. She was a retired teacher for Sarasota Memorial Hospital. She was a member of True Missionary Baptist Church.

Survivors include two sons, Antoinette of Sarasota and Charlie of Gainesville; four sisters, Bessie Buggs and Barbara J. both of Rochester, N.Y., and Jeanne Buggs and Connie Buggs, Perry; two brothers, Levi and David Buggs, both of Sarasota; five grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

Funeral Home is in charge. Burial will be announced.

Richard L. Peckham

Richard L. Peckham, 71, North Port, died Oct. 24, 1999.



He was born Dec. 26, 1927, in Pontiac, Mich., and came to North Port 14 years ago from Troy, Ohio.

He was an Army veteran and a chef in the restaurant business.

Survivors include his companion, Sharon Frueh of North Port; four daughters, Cynthia Gangle of McComb, Ohio, Donella Davis of Kenton, Ohio, Kelye Marilli of Palm Bay and Karla Boggs of Springfield, Ohio; two sons, Mark of Findlay, Ohio, and Kyle of Piqua, Ohio; two brothers, Terry of Denver and Larry of Monroeville, Ind.; a sister, Linda Aamaan of Fort Wayne, Ind.; and 19 grandchildren.

Burial will be in Dayton, Ohio. James A. McKee Funeral Home is in charge.

Irva Rayner

Services for Irva Rayner, a Sarasota resident who died Oct. 20, 1999, are as follows: Visitation will be from 6 to 10 p.m. today at Jones Funeral Home. The service will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at Glorious Holiness Community Church. Burial will follow in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Jennie Lee Rice

Services for Jennie Lee Rice, a Sarasota resident who died Oct. 28, 1999, are as follows: Visitation will be from 6 to 10 p.m. today, with a service at 11 a.m. Saturday, at Jones Funeral Home. Burial will follow at Galilee Cemetery.

Adelaide Seastrom

Adelaide Seastrom, 86, Venice, died Oct. 27, 1999.

She was born July 14, 1913, in Lambertton, Minn., and came to Venice 14 years ago from Muskegon, Mich. She retired after 38 years as a teacher for the Muskegon School System. She was a member of Bird Bay Golf Club Association. She graduated from the University of Minnesota. She was a member of Grace United Methodist Church in Venice and Central Methodist Church in Muskegon.

Survivors include a daughter, Nancy Seastrom-Solomon of New York City; and a sister, Mrs. Her-

Officials outline plans for island restoration

ISLANDS FROM 1B

benefits from the projects must be associated with improvements to fish and wildlife resources."

Improvements will be made by removing exotic vegetation — Brazilian peppers and Australian pines — planting trees, stopping erosion and moving previously placed dredged materials to areas where they are needed.

"We're just trying to explain what we are trying to do to the public," said the Corps' Alberto Gonzalez, who is the project manager for the Sarasota County restoration.

Both Gonzalez and Hasbrouck assured audience members that the study will be open for comment, and "if people support it, we can finish a report on it by September 2000," Gonzalez said.

Even though a decision about whether to conduct the restoration

project has not been made, crews will head to most of the islands to begin testing within the next two weeks. Scientists will cut down Brazilian peppers and Australian pines and begin boring rocks to determine clay, silt and rock types.

"We plan to finish data collection in November," said Hasbrouck, who added that the next public forum will be held in January or February.

Because diagrams, maps and site plans are not the easiest way to envision the types of work that are being proposed, a representative from Palm Beach County presented a 45-minute slide show.

After the Army Corps finished with Munyon Island, off Palm Beach, erosion was reduced, water filtration was improved and vegetation was successfully restored. All of these results are goals in Sarasota County, too.

Report on school rates leads to class review

GRADUATION FROM 1B

as they enroll into and transfer from schools, beginning in ninth grade. The dropout formula also included all high school students, not just those older than 16.

"I'm sure there are people who look at it and say, 'That's not bad, 21st in the state,'" said Eileen Harris, Charlotte County director of planning and evaluation. "That's probably not how we're going to look at it."

Instead, Charlotte, like other districts in the region, plans to use the information provided as a base for improvement.

"This is the first time we've had true data," Harris said. "It's always exciting when you know where you are because you can better determine where you have to go."

Manatee and Sarasota school officials said they want to verify the state report.

"It truly doesn't look realistic to

to improve student performance.

Manatee schools added three dropout-prevention programs this year. Preliminary results from those initiatives seem positive so far, Lucas said.

Sarasota was alerted to its dropout problem a year ago in a report by a national school reform company called SchoolMatch, Weiss said. In response, the district added truancy officers and started new programs for at-risk students, she said.

"We certainly are looking at different programs, particularly in the high schools," said Barbara Chomko, Sarasota's director of secondary education. "We're also looking at middle school programs as we transition kids to high school."

School improvement is the goal, said state education commissioner Tom Gallagher.

The new formulas were intended to give educators a better way

SARASOTA

Herald-Tribune

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HERALD-TRIBUNE EDITORIALS

Back to the islands

Corps of Engineers got a better start on restoring Sarasota Bay habitats

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is criticized — sometimes for good reasons — as a remote federal bureaucracy insensitive to local concerns. But the corps deserves credit for seeking public input before embarking on a plan to restore Sarasota Bay's native habitats.

By engaging the public early and operating openly, the corps will have the best chance of avoiding the problems that stalled a similar proposal — made by state and local officials — for Little Edwards island. The plan for Little Edwards was widely criticized, and the opposition was fueled by a lack of public input in the early stages.

As the corps studies whether it's feasible to remove exotic plants and restore productive environmental functions to six islands in Sarasota Bay, keeping the public informed will be a key to achieving desirable outcomes.

The six islands targeted for study are Snake Island, at the Venice Inlet; Palmer Point Park and the

Jim Neville Marine Preserve, in the Midnight Pass area; and Skiers, Bird Colony and Big Edwards islands in Roberts Bay.

Four of those islands are owned by Sarasota County. Because of the Little Edwards island controversy, the county government imposed a moratorium on habitat restoration on its properties. That moratorium doesn't prohibit the corps' feasibility study, said Gary Comp, general manager of natural resources for the county. Nevertheless, any plans by the corps will be subject to similar political pressures that should be recognized up front.

The feasibility study begins a new approach to the restoration of spoil-island areas in Sarasota Bay, according to information provided by Jacksonville-based corps officials, the West Coast Inland Navigation District and HDR Engineering Inc.

An objective study of the need for restoration and a commitment to public communication and participation are necessary for that approach to succeed.

Tort reform and Learjet cras

Payne Stewart's family and the families of other victims of the Learjet crash Oct. 25 would have no recourse in Florida courts should the investigators find any design or manufacturing defect that contributed to the crash. A tort reform legislative package signed by Gov. Jeb Bush took effect on July 31. These new laws prohibit suits against the manufacturer of any airplane "used in commercial or contract carrying of passengers or freight" if the aircraft is over 20 years old, as well as private planes over 10 years old. The \$2.5 million Learjet was 23 years old.

 Bruce W. P.
 Sar

These new laws also prohibit any product made in dance with government actions — as all airplanes are presumed to be free of design or manufacturing defect error of this state, vetoed the legislation pushed by insurance companies and manufacturers.

Stewart's fellow millionaire pros, who live in Florida, think about this the next time they open their wallets for the Republican Party of Florida or get Learjet.

Defend civil rights of all stripes

This is in response to a question posed in an Oct. 13 letter. "Why is it OK to sneer religion?" The letter writer raised the question that if he drew a picture like "The Holy Virgin Mary" at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, using someone like David Ben Gurion as a model, could we imagine the response of the American Civil Liberties Union?

I am not a member of the ACLU, but I know what the response would be. It would be the same as their response to New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani's reaction to the painting of the Virgin Mary.

I have found that the ACLU really is not interested in the "whom" as much as it is in the "what." This is most exemplified in its position of the renowned Skokie, Ill., area.

The mayor of Skokie wanted to march by the Nazis, but ACLU defended their right, based on our Constitution, to express themselves.

I have, on occasion, found so many paintings to be offensive, but do not mean we should not allow artists, writers, actors and others the arts to express themselves. Once we start restricting expression in the arts and literature, where will it stop?

I am all for letting people and organizations express themselves within the framework of the U.S. Constitution.

Payton's amazing grace

The definitive running back died as he played — with...

Stone crabs expensive, but state might limit traps

Stone crab claws are retailing for \$20 a pound! Let's see, that's four or five dollars a jumbo claw according to my figuring.

Tom Wallin over at Walt's says that it's just been "a down year so far, but stone crabs run in cycles. I've never paid fishermen so much for them - but two years ago when they were retailing for \$6.99 a pound, I'd never paid them so little.

"Just wait for a couple of big cold fronts to come through," Wallin counsels, "then we'll have a much better fix on how good a stone crab season it's really going to be.

"Right now supply and demand is at work and there isn't much supply."

STONE CRAB WORKSHOP

As long as we're talking about stone crabs, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has scheduled a series of public workshops on the possibility of limiting the number of traps in the state's fishery. The closest one to our area will be Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Manatee County Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Kendrick Auditorium, 1303 17th St. West, Palmetto.

MIDNIGHT PASS PLANS DOWN TO ONE OPTION - HMM

We've all been told for months that the county's consultant on Midnight Pass would come up several possible options for re-opening the pass, but that's changed. Now one option, one the consultants feel will work we're told, is under final peer review and could be before the county commission by the end of the year.

That's probably good. It removes the possibility of county commissioners haggling over which option to use and even possibly doing something as silly as putting the question to the voters to avoid

BOB ARDREN Sarasota Waters



having to make a hard decision.

Once the county gets this new proposal, the issue will probably be how to pay for it, but, hey, the county commission approved closing the pass, and I at least feel it should be responsible for opening it again.

BAY ISLANDS PLANS DISCLOSED

Speaking of cleaning up after yourself, Sarasota Bay's islands are in for an overhaul is the impression I got last week at a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public workshop. About a hundred people showed up at Sarasota High School to watch a presentation promising lots of public input over the multi-year planned program - but I went away with the clear impression it's a matter of when, not if, the program happens.

Slides showing the Corp's work on similar islands in Palm Beach County were impressive. Islands there were sculpted and landscaped to provide wildlife habitat, and judging from the pictures, it worked. Backing up those pictures was an official of the Palm Beach County Department of Natural Resources who was both earnest and believable. As I said, it was an impressive presentation.

There will be more meetings and presentation of possible plans, so we'll try to keep you informed as to times and dates in the future.



BOB ARDREN

Bill Burger, until recently Sarasota County archaeologist, demonstrated the Native American method of fish smoking used on the west coast of Florida at the Terra Ceia Muller Smoke Off last weekend.

THAXTON ANNOUNCES

In a county blessed with our wonderful environment, and constantly struggling with the effects of exploding growth on that environment, some of us have long wondered why we don't have a strong environmental voice on the county commission. That may change.

Jon Thaxton, the Conservation chair of the local Audubon Society and also chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Sarasota Bay Program, has announced his candidacy for the District Five seat on the commission. I've worked with Jon for years on the county commission and, while we don't always agree on specific points, we're certainly brothers in arms regarding the big picture of protecting our precious environment.

Most interestingly, Thaxton has managed to balance his conservation work

with a 20-year career in real estate, so this may be a fascinating campaign coming up.

PEANUT FOUND DEAD

Sorry to have to report that Peanut, a male bottlenose dolphin treated at Mote Marine Laboratory this summer and released back into the wild, has been found dead. A while back we reported that the creature had been found very ill at New Smyrna Beach last July but seemed to have fully recovered during its stay at Mote.

Released Oct. 12 at Ponce Inlet, Peanut was found dead Oct. 23 on a small island near the inlet, entangled in debris from the Hurricane Irene storm surge. Mote scientists surmise the dolphin was killed by what they called "an acute event," but say

IN COUNTY'S LEGAL OFFICE

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ The Sarasota County Commission requested a gun sales ordinance last March.
- ▼ A recent constitutional revision allows counties to have tougher laws than state.
- ▼ The latest word is that a proposed ordinance is stuck in the county's legal department.

BY JACK GURNEY

A new Sarasota County gun sales law with tougher restrictions than Florida's statewide rules is stuck in the county's legal office and apparently won't be ready this year.

According to administration sources, a second draft of a proposed gun sales ordinance is waiting for comments from the City of Sarasota and Sheriff Geoff Monge.

"There is no indication this item will be on the commission's Nov. 23 agenda," Jeff McCay, the county's administrative operations manager, said, "or before the end of this year."

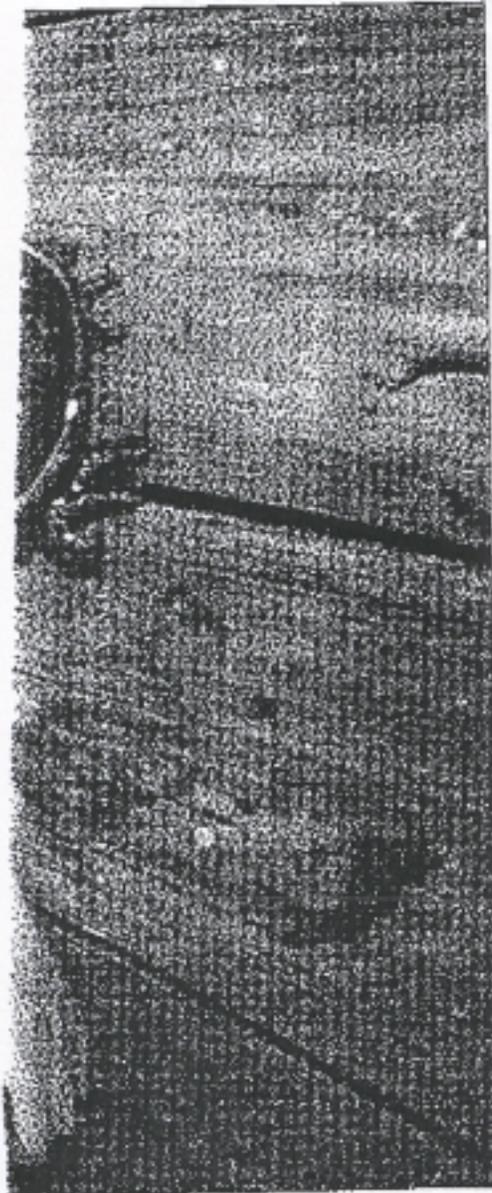
The latest delay will disappoint commissioners who anticipated dealing with the issue this autumn and pushed for it to be put on an advertised agenda.

On Nov. 9, County Administrator Jim Ley indicated that a draft of the gun sales ordinance would be released for review on Nov. 18 and could be scheduled for discussion at the commission's Nov. 23 meeting.

The proposed new rules for local gun purchases are supposed to be in line with a Florida

Twins Ranjani (l.) and Anjali Natarajan finish creating their contributions to the Empty Bowl luncheon which will benefit All Faiths Food Bank. The girls, students at Ann Darling Pottery Studio, are among the amateur and professional potters who are making bowls which will be filled with soup from participating restaurants. For more about the Nov. 21 program, call 922-6059.

REBECCA WILD BAXTER



Islands could shift to the county

BY JACK GURNEY

Public ownership of Skier's Island near Siesta Key and Snake Island north of Venice could be transferred to Sarasota County for liability reasons.

The two uninhabited islands are popular gathering spots for recreational boaters. They are currently owned by the West Coast Inland Navigation District. Both were created with bay

- ▼ The two spoil islands created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are currently owned and maintained by the West Coast Inland Navigation District.
- ▼ District officials are concerned about liability issues if people are injured on the islands.

bottom spoil deposited by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers when the Intracoastal Waterway was dredged in the 1960s.

"We're in an exploratory stage of discussions," Navigation District Executive Director Chuck Listowski said. "This subject was initiated by the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program

SEE ISLANDS, PAGE 2

Two neighboring counties - Hillsborough and Pinellas - had adopted tougher local ordinances, while many others in Florida are considering them.

On March 23, the county commission initially put the county attorney's office on notice that it wanted to see gun sales language in line with the constitutional revision approved in 1998 by voters.

Months passed until finally, Sept. 28, Commissioner Nick Patterson asked what

SEE GUNS, PAGE 1

Pelican Press

18 Nov 99

REAL CLOTHES
FOR REAL WOMEN!

YOUR Party - your Policy - the
Reference

ISLANDS FROM PAGE 1

and Sarasota County."

The Navigation District has paid medical claims for people injured on Snake Island and would like to divest itself of further liability for mishaps.

"Snake Island has been a chronic issue for 10 years," Listowski said. "It is one of the islands currently on an area list being studied by the Army Corps."

Consultants for the Army Corps are also taking a hard look at Skiers' Island and Little Sarasota Bay and four other spoil deposit areas to determine whether they want environmental restoration projects.

On Oct. 28, Army Corps representatives held a public workshop meeting in Sarasota to discuss possible projects to upgrade Snake Island, Skiers' Island, Big Edwards Island, the Bird Islands, Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point.

Conspicuous by its absence is Little Edwards Island, the focal point of neighborhood objections last year when environmental agencies sought to remove exotic plant species and create a tidal fish habitat area.

minimal maintenance is near completion.

A team of consultants, led by the Camp, Dresser and McKee engineering firm, anticipates releasing a preliminary report with reopening alternatives later this year.

Advocates for reopening Midnight Pass lobbied the county commission for a temporary moratorium on Little Sarasota Bay projects until the study is completed.

"They feared that altering sites in the area could threaten the integrity of information gathered by the consultants and provide ammunition to opponents of a reopening project.

The unresolved Midnight Pass issue became entangled with the National Estuary Program's environmental restoration efforts when area residents opposed the Little Edwards Island project.

Little Edwards Island is located just south of the Siesta Key Bridge and only a short distance from Skier's Island in Little Sarasota Bay.

Residents objected to an exotic species removal plan drafted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and endorsed by the National Estuary

Program.

The plan would have removed Australian pines and Brazilian peppers, both considered exotic plant species, from the island, and reconfigured portions of it to create a fish habitat area.

Whether nearby Skier's Island and Snake Island ultimately pass into the county's ownership may depend on what the Army Corps' study concludes.

"We may not want ownership shifted to the county," Commissioner Bob Anderson said. "I think we need to hear from staff on this."

Snake Island is located near the Venice Jetties and has eroded from about seven acres in the mid-1960s to only about 1.5 acres today.

"The island has been eroded by tidal flow," Listowski said, "and there is a lot of floating debris around it. There are also submerged obstacles that can impede boaters."

Snake Island is a remnant of nearby Rattlesnake Island. It was separated by the Army Corps when the Intracoastal Waterway was created. Rattlesnake Island is owned by the county.

The Army Corps is empowered to undertake habitat and ecosystem restoration projects when it identifies long-term damage inflicted by its past projects.

Congress has allocated millions of dollars to a Section 1135 account for environmental repairs necessitated by past projects such as the Intracoastal Waterway.

"We're still well away from implementation of these projects," Listowski said. "Survey work needs to be done and public information issues dealt with."

In fact, the Army Corps' study has been temporarily stalled while Sarasota County completes an independent study of the former Midnight Pass area in Little Sarasota Bay.

Last year, the county commission declared a moratorium on all environmental restoration projects in the area until the politically volatile Midnight Pass issue is resolved.

Midnight Pass formerly separated Siesta Key from Casco Key before it became unstable and was ordered closed in 1983. An ongoing \$225,000 feasibility study to determine whether the pass can be successfully re-established and kept open with



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Workshops set on bay islands

BY BOB ARDREN

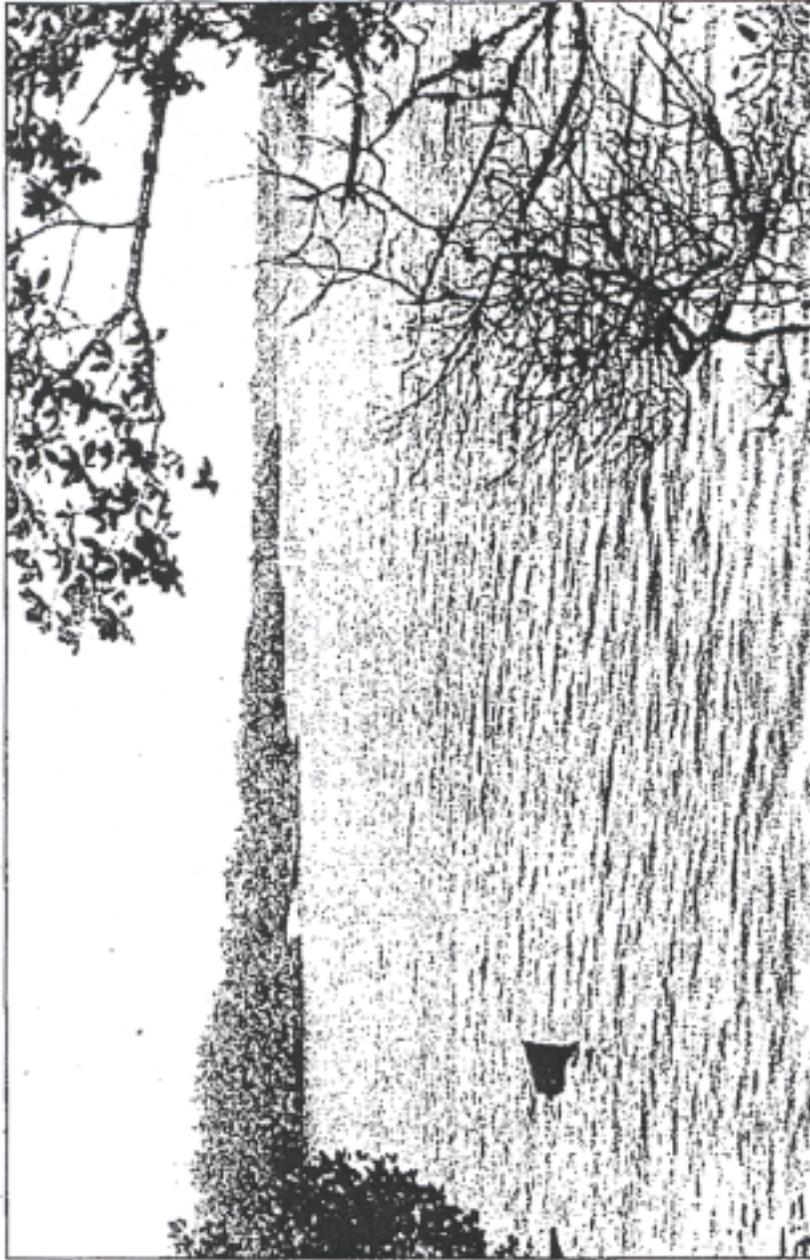
Work is beginning in earnest to begin taking public input and guide the officials who are planning improvements to the spoil islands along the Intracoastal Waterway. For now, at least, those changes will all be to islands south of Siesta Drive and southward to Venice.

Three workshops to discuss the restoration of spoil islands in Sarasota Bay have been scheduled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The workshops, each for a particular island or group of islands, all follow up on the general workshop held by the Army Corps last October.

Working in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District, the Army Corps is conducting an "Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study" of the islands in south Sarasota Bay that were impacted by activities of the Corps in the past. Each of the workshops will be used to discuss proposed alternatives for restoring the spoil islands.

At the initial workshop in October, attended by about 100 people, the Army Corps presented an overview of the multi-year program planned for bay island restorations. Slides of the Corps' work on spoil islands in Palm Beach County — similar to the ones in Sarasota Bay — showed dramatic changes in the islands' appearances. Each of the islands was sculpted and landscaped to provide wildlife habitat and greatly enhanced recreational opportunities.

James C. Duck, chief of the Planning Division for the Jacksonville District of



Restoration of islands in the bay south of the Siesta Drive bridge will be the subject of workshops planned for February. FILE PHOTO

the Corp of Engineers, said that information on the Sarasota Bay project is located on the Corps of Engineers' web site at www.usace.army.mil/restore/projects/sarasota.htm. The web site will be updated with workshop specifics one week prior to the workshops, Duck announced.

For additional information on the workshops, Duck suggested contacting Tiphame C. Jinks at (904) 232-3506.

BAY ISLAND WORKSHOP SCHEDULES

Feb. 1: Venice Community Center, 326 South Nokomis Ave., Venice. A 7 p.m. workshop for Snake Island.

Feb. 2: Pine View School, 1 Python Path, Osprey. A 7 p.m. workshop for Big Edwards, Bird Colony and Skier's islands.

Feb. 3: Pine View School, 1 Python Path, Osprey. A 7 p.m. workshop for Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park.

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natee superintendent or taxpayers

sulting position probably wouldn't meet state criteria for an employee in the senior management class, and would not be counted as credit toward retirement. That's disputed by Denisar's attorney, Scott Cairns, who said last week that he has successfully worked out similar deals for other Florida superintendents.

Obviously, school officials need to delve further into this issue so that it doesn't come back to haunt them or Denisar.

As we stated before, the deal isn't perfect, but it does have some appealing features, including an agreement by Denisar not to sue the school district for his suspension in 1997 over a budget dispute. Such a suit would be time-consuming and costly, no matter who won.

The deal with Denisar may still be salvageable. Before signing anything, however, the School Board must be certain to check all the strings attached.

ld fulfill Medicare vision

k, however, officials of y's trade group, Phar- Research and Manufac- nering their opposition. ighing that they were ism by politicians and industry executives will support a federal it this year even without isive Medicare reform. nes the hard work of fig- ow to structure the ben-

gress should extend a basic drug benefit package to all, even if that means using a sliding scale of premiums or co-payments to keep the cost to government down. Costs would be affected by drug prices as well. Drug companies give substantial bulk discounts to private insurers; Medicare should do at least as well, despite company protests. . . .

The legislation that created Medicare was written in the early 1960s with the goal of helping senior citizens meet their basic health care needs. Back then, that generally meant surgery or hospitalization. Since then, ailments of aging have become increasingly treatable through outpatient drugs. . . .

Given the cost savings of outpatient drugs, a well-designed Medicare drug benefit might even help pay for itself while fulfilling Medicare's original vision.

— Los Angeles Times

On selecting the city manager

I am shocked by the North Port advisory committee decision not to give any weight to academic achievement in selecting candidates for the job of city manager.

The spokesperson for this anti-intellectual decision, Eugene Matthews, said that because he doesn't have a degree, he is "defending people that don't have the snooty degrees or doctorates."

As a public official, Mr. Matthews demonstrates a lack of understanding of the responsibility he owes to the citizens of North Port. An important part of the selection process must give appropriate weight to the experience and educational achievements of a candidate.

Sarasota Herald Tribune - 1/19/08

The committee's decision to give equal weight to a bachelor's degree and a doctorate earned in city management not only is a measure of political incompetence but suggests their deliberations may be pro forma to give a yet-to-be-identified candidate a leg up on the competition.

Given the problems facing the citizens of North Port the electorate should demand more from their public officials than this committee is willing to give. First, a much higher standard should be used in the selection of committee members. Only then may the city of North Port find a city manager equal to the challenge.

Gerald McNulty
Sarasota

*Hearings on Sarasota Bay soon

Regarding the Army Corps of Engineers' remediation of Sarasota Bay:

On Oct. 28, the Army Corps of Engineers held a workshop at Sarasota High School to present its plan for a feasibility study for remediation of the spoil islands it created when dredging the inland waterway in the Sarasota Bay area years ago. Six sites will be covered. After the study, which is now complete, the corps promised to hold public hearings on the options for each site.

That hearing schedule has just been published:

Feb. 1 (a Tuesday) at 7 p.m., in the Venice Community Center, 326 S. Nokomis Ave., Venice, for the workshop on Snake Island.

Feb. 2 (a Wednesday) at 7 p.m., Pine View School for the Gifted, 1 Python Path, Osprey, for the workshop on Big Edwards, Bird Colony and Skier's Islands.

Feb. 3 (a Thursday) at 7 p.m., again at Pine View School. This workshop will deal with the Jim Neville Marine Preserve and

The Army Corps of Engineers has scheduled public workshops on its remediation options for the spoil islands it created when dredging the Intracoastal Waterway years ago.

Palmer Point Park.

If people missed the Oct. 28 meeting, they can review the presentation on the Web: www.saj.usace.army.mil/restore/projects/sarasota.htm

The American Littoral Society urges all those interested in the ecological restoration of Sarasota Bay to attend one or more of these hearings, learn the options and express their opinions.

Dave Bulloch
Regional Director
American Littoral Society
Sarasota

pick up after their dogs. This should also include dog parks. Not only is it a mess to step in it, but it is also a health hazard to dogs and humans alike.

I fully support a stiff fine to those people who so choose to leave their doggie remains behind.

In my opinion, the county shouldn't have to provide poop bags, but it does help for those dog owners who don't think ahead to bring bags.

I try to bring extra bags to share when my dogs and I go places. Many of you might have seen us downtown and other places at some time. "Zendor" is my huge black Newfoundland who wears sunglasses, a sun visor and carries ice in a back pack that he wears to help keep cool. He is seen a lot around Sarasota County in different places as he does his film, modeling, television and Pet Therapy. We offer poop bags to anyone who needs them around us, and most people appreciate this.

At Paws Park sometimes with all the activity and visiting going on, we miss seeing our dogs go potty, but a lot of times someone

appreciate the help, but a few dog owners get mad and don't clean up after their dogs. These are the people who just don't care and might benefit from a stiff fine.

In my opinion, there are not enough dog friendly places in Sarasota County ... so possibly a "poop law" would help. Wouldn't it be great to have a doggie park on the beach where dogs could run and play in the water and on the beach ... fenced in so they could be free? Much like Paws Park. I think that a small charge per visit would be a great idea. This could help pay for the upkeep of the doggie beach.

Please do whatever is necessary to make Sarasota County a more dog friendly place to be! Our tourists and residents would really love it, judging by all the negative comments I get about this being a county that hates dogs.

Jeanine Brawn

WHOSE SPACE IS IT?

Why is it so hard to understand that a dog needs a place to play? A dog run is a cheap

Relian Press 1/20/00

ISLAND REMEDIATION WORKSHOPS PLANNED

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Dave Bulloch, regional director
American Littoral Society

ARTICLE IS MISLEADING

In your Jan. 13 front page article on soft money, your featuring of Dieter Gebhard's quotation misleads your readers. Referring to the proposals of the Charter Review Board, Gebhard said, "Under Florida law, an individual can contribute up to \$50,000. We

reduced it to \$20,000."

The truth is that in Sarasota County, our charter clearly states that no contribution from any contributor may exceed \$200. Political parties are clearly contributors in the sense of our charter. The Charter Review Board is trying to open our county to the well-known abuses of soft money. As they would have it, any organization could dump \$20,000 into the campaign of any candidate, while they are now limited to \$200.

Your paper does no service to its readers when it fails to make clear the present contribution limits and allows it to appear that the Charter Review Board is trying to limit contributions when, in fact, they are trying to increase the maximum contribution by 100 times. If they are successful, no candidate for county office not backed by business interests could ever expect to win an election.

Leslie R. Inglis

EVERYTHING GOING?

About the Beach Road Dog Beach, the sequence of events is programmed:

- 1) This Beach Road segment is closed - "Residents Only."
- 2) The Australian pines were mangled.
- 3) Man's best friends are on their way out.
- 4) What or whom is next?

Mary Ann Ruesewald
Mira Mar Beach Apartments

Football writer condensed game with flair

Dan LeBatard's Miami Herald write-up of the college football championship game said it all.

"Florida State and Virginia Tech played a mesmerizing, breathtaking, magical game for college football's championship Tuesday night. It had fake punts and blocked punts, fourth-down gambles and fourth-quarter collapses. Fumbles and bombs often ended up in the end zone, as did the spectacular Peter Warrick and the hypnotizing Michael Vick. Only way this game could have had any more in it is if it had included dancing elephants, circus clowns and Bobby Bowden on a trapeze."

Top 35 Oxy-Morons

35. State worker
34. Legally drunk
33. Exact estimate

ANNE JOHNSON Flotsam & Jetsam



11. Plastic glasses
10. Terribly pleased
9. Computer security
8. Political science
7. Tight slacks
6. Definite maybe
5. Pretty ugly
4. Rap music
3. Working vacation

2. Religious tolerance
And the number one Top Oxy-Moron is ...

1. Microsoft Works

On living.

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Theodore Roosevelt

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another." Charles Dickens.



T-shirt trivia.

"Accept that some days you're the pigeon... and some days you're the statue."

"When did my wild oats turn into Shredded Wheat?"



And I quote: "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." Franklin D. Roosevelt.



find the turtle grass and hunt them there if you really wanted scallops for supper.

And that's why concern is high on Anna Maria - and here in Sarasota, too - over the continuing spread south of a parasitic slime mold that has been attacking turtle grass in Tampa Bay. Turtle grass is the primary victim of the mold called labyrinthia, and turtle grass is the nursery for lots of different fish and shellfish, along with providing food for manatees and sea turtles.

In addition, turtle grass is one of the bay's best filters of contaminants in the water. So the thinning meadows of turtle grass in Tampa Bay - which are moving very close to Anna Maria Sound now, and which some consider the northernmost waters of Sarasota Bay - is a real concern here too.



Squadron's attempts to take over management of the mooring field off the squadron's clubhouse and docks on Ken Thompson Park.

As a non-profit group, the squadron can negotiate a management contract with the state for the bay bottom that can keep costs reasonable for boat owners while allowing the sailors some control over the comings and goings - and mostly the long-term storage - in the anchorage.

The next step is final squadron approval before the plan goes to the city commission.

SQUADRON

In a letter last week, City Attorney Dick Taylor made it clear that he supports the Sarasota Sailing



The shore birds are hanging around inland as

BAY ISLAND PLANS COMING

Though I haven't seen them, friends tell me surveyors' stakes are popping out of the ground on Skiers Island - aka John D. MacDonald Island - in preparation for the Army Corp of Engineers' planned restoration. We reported the times and locations of the coming public workshops on restoration alternatives Feb. 1 and 2 in last week's *Pelican Press* and they're listed again on this week's Opinion Page (page 9) - so if you have ideas on how to make these spoil islands "jewels of the bay," it's time to speak up.

AND GOOD NEWS FOR WATERFRONT FISH EATERS

Just have to let you know that the change in management at O'Leary's Sailing School on the south end of Island Park has resulted in a huge improvement in the food there. Now only fresh fish is served - usually grouper or mahi-mahi - in the sandwiches and luncheon baskets, and if you're really lucky, you wander by on a day they're serving the homemade fish chowder.

NEW TROUT RULES CONSIDERED

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is reconsidering its rules on spotted sea trout. Presently sea trout are closed on this section of Florida's West Coast during November and December, daily limit is five fish within a 15 to 20-inch slot, with one fish over 20 inches permitted.

A bit complicated, huh? Well, the new rules under consideration would keep the same sizes and limits, but would have a state-wide closure on trout during February - or lower the bag limit to four fish a day and leave the fish open all year. A final decision is still months away.

CRA

Anti also of con water boate more state trap 1 times (1) little prob and crab

PELICAN Press 1/20/00

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VENICE

Residents want island unchanged

posted 02/01/00

By Bebe Bahnsen
STAFF WRITER

They listened to three ideas for changing Snake Island, but the residents who attended a meeting Tuesday had their own idea: Leave it alone.

About 60 people turned out to hear a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers consultant present three options for the island in the Venice Inlet.

Bruce Hasbrouck of HDR Engineering in Tampa said the plans his firm drew up would stop erosion and establish more wildlife habitat on the island.

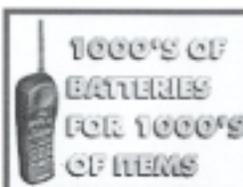
But the options would ban or severely limit public access to Snake Island, and that was unacceptable to the boaters in the audience. They want to go to the island for swimming, picnicking and snorkeling.

Several people who live across the inlet from the island also spoke in favor of the boaters' position.

Keith Olson said hundreds of others who weren't there felt the same way. He and others have collected 700 signatures on petitions calling for a



About 60 people turned out to hear a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers consultant present three options for dealing with erosion on Snake Island in the Venice Inlet. Most wanted the island left alone. Parts of the waterway will be dredged again soon, and some of that spoil could be used to rebuild parts of the island.



ABOUT US

hands-off policy, Olson said.

"Basically, everyone wants the government to leave the island alone," Olson said.

Hasbrouck said that doing nothing is an option, but that erosion will continue without measures to stop it. He presented figures showing that erosion has reduced the island from just over 3 acres in 1967 to just under 2 acres now.

His analysis of the size of the island in 1967 varies widely from the 7-acre figure cited often by Chuck Listowski, director of the West Coast Inland Navigation District.

WCIND owns the island as a possible dredge spoil site.

But the idea of stopping the erosion brought a sense of common ground to the meeting.

Dredge spoil could be the answer. Parts of the waterway will be dredged again soon, and some of that spoil could be used to rebuild parts of the island.

Listowski said that the products dredged up in the next project would first be used for beach renourishment. But Listowski said he agreed that some of it should be used on the island.

Another public meeting will be held when HDR Engineering presents its design for the island, which is to incorporate the public's concerns.

But by then, WCIND and the Corps could be minor players. WCIND has asked Sarasota County to assume ownership of the island as a recreation site.

Commissioner Shannon Staub, who attended the meeting, said that hearing from so many people who treasure the island as it is has made that idea seem more attractive.

"At this point, I don't see any problem with the county taking it over," she said.

Staff writer Bebe Bahnsen can be contacted at 486-3069 or at bebe.bahnsen@herald-trib.com.

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WORKSHOP SET FOR BAY ISLANDS RESTORATION

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, in partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District, has scheduled a public workshop for Wednesday, May 17, to discuss preferred alternatives for restoring spoil islands in south Sarasota Bay. Islands to be discussed include Big Edwards, Bird Colony Islands, Skier's Island, Snake Island, Jim Neville Marine Preserve and Palmer Point Park.

Pine View School, 1 Python Path in Osprey is the site of the workshop and it begins at 7 p.m.

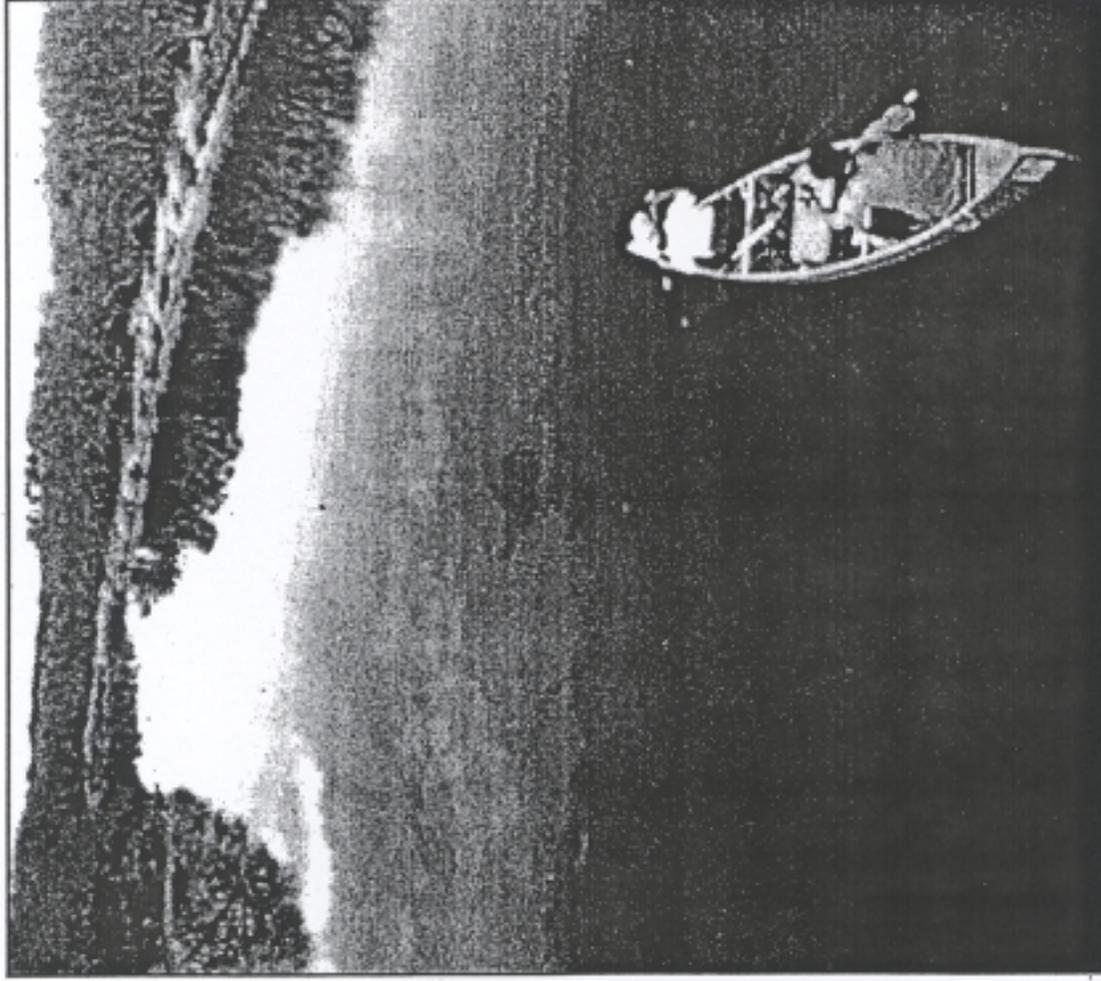
MIDNIGHT PASS STUDY MEETING DATE CHANGED

Sarasota County's Coastal Advisory Committee previously announced meeting date of April 19 to further discuss the Midnight Pass study has been changed. The new date is Monday, April 17. The meeting will take place in the county commission chambers in downtown Sarasota beginning at 1:30 p.m.

BUCKLE UP FOR SAFETY

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office traffic campaign is continuing this month with the focus on violations for seat belts/child restraints. This traffic campaign started this year in February with the focus on aggressive drivers, and violation of right of way for the month of March.

The campaign is part of an ongoing commitment to focus on reducing the number of traffic accidents and fatalities in Sarasota County.



Boaters of all kinds enjoy the "Wild and Scenic" Myakka River. REBECCA WILD BAXTER

MYAKKA FROM PAGE 1A

Peace River as is being suggested with Myakka River."

The county's long-term water plan include capturing millions of gallons a day from the Peace River and delivering through a 23-mile pipeline to a Laurel treatment plant.

A 34-mile portion of the Myakka River recognized by the state as Wild Scenic. It is located between State R 780 and the Charlotte County line.

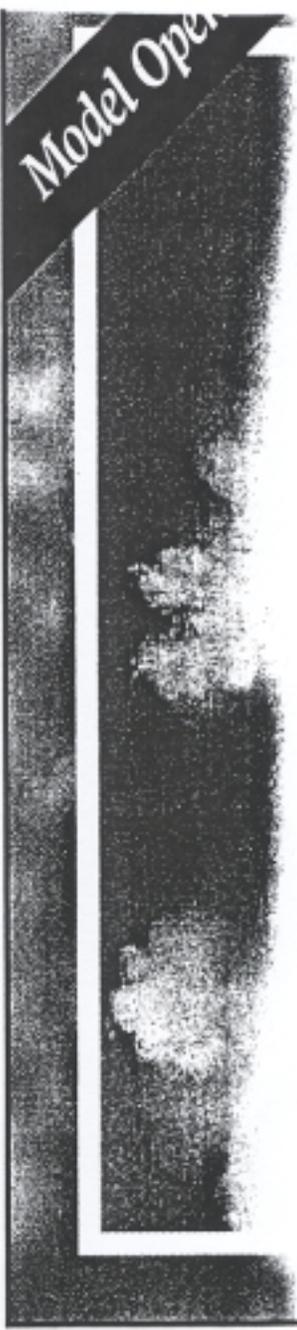
There are only two Florida rivers meet the state's Wild and Scenic criteria the Myakka and Wekiva. A third, Loxahatchee, is recognized by the federal government.

"The fact that the district only considers a Myakka River project as 'concept doesn't make it good," Miller said. "It's dumb. We should be working to protect it."

While most of the land along Loxahatchee and Wekiva has been placed in public trust, portions of the Myakka still flanked by private landowners.

An Environmentally Sensitive Lands Oversight Committee is currently working with experts to protect certain privately owned lands within Sarasota County.

Several of the parcels are located along the Myakka River State Park. A resolution adopted .25 mill county property tax supposed to fund some of the buyout



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THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2000

Plans for bay islands unveiled

ISLANDS FROM 1B

dredged the Intracoastal Waterway in Sarasota Bay several decades ago.

The Corps can spend up to \$5 million on the restoration. The West Coast Inland Navigation District will contribute \$1.25 million.

The Corps wants to remove nuisance exotic plants, such as Australian pines, from all six islands and replace them with cedar trees. That recommendation drew support from those attending the other workshops.

But a few people Wednesday said they did not like the idea of removing large shade trees that have been around for 40 years.

"What do you think is going to happen with the habitat that is there now if you take down the trees?" asked attorney David Band of Siesta Key.

Bruce Hasbrouck, study manager with HDR Engineering Inc., the project consultant, said replacing the trees will improve conditions for native fish and wildlife.

The other proposals include:

- Enhancing public use of Big Edwards Island by creating a natural foot trail along the upland areas and a boardwalk across the marsh and open water system.

- Maintaining a place where people can ski around Skiers' Island.

- Limiting public access and recreation on the Jim Neville Marine Preserve.

- Preserving the mangroves on Palmer Point Park.

- Enhancing and maintaining boater access with no structural recreational facilities on Snake Island.

The Corps plans to prepare a detailed report on existing conditions and the effects the proposed changes would have on the water quality, wildlife and habitat. The public and other federal and state environmental agencies will have the opportunity to offer comments.

Sarasota

B HERALD-TRIBUNE / THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2000

SARASOTA BAY

Plans unveiled for six islands

By Patty Allen-Jones
STAFF WRITER

Although much of what residents would like to see done to improve six small islands in Sarasota Bay was included in proposed designs unveiled Wednesday night, a few people were not happy.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held its fifth workshop to discuss plans to restore the ecosystems of Big Edwards Island, Skiers' Island, Bird Colony Islands, Jim Neville Marine Preserve, Palmer Point Park and Snake Island. The islands were created when the Corps

PLEASE SEE ISLANDS ON 3B

Plan in place to increase acreage and slow erosion fo

By Todd Goodman
Staff Writer

After months of study, a preferred option has been selected for Snake Island.

The option, which will increase the island's acreage and help lessen erosion, was announced Wednesday during a public workshop at Pine View School in Osprey.

Snake Island is located in the Intracoastal Waterway between the north and south jetties.

Recommended changes to the island include:

- Enhance public/boater access without cluttering the area with boardwalks or docks.

- Remove exotic trees and vegetation, then scrape down the understory. The reason for the scrape down, according to Chuck Listowski, executive director of the West Coast Inland Navigational District, is because exotic vegetation tends to sterilize the soil — making it hard for native growth to begin.

"Native vegetation has a characteristic that helps stabilize the ground," Listowski said, "which is important since Snake Island has a history of erosion."

- Provide additional acreage to the island by creating a low-lying marsh on the west side of the island.

"There will be more than 3 acres if you count the marsh," he said. In

1998, the island was 1.99 acres — more than an acre less than it started with in 1967.

- Maintain beach at the southern end of the island and extend the shore on the east side.

- Provide improved/diverse fish and wildlife habitat.

"The low-lying marsh on the western end is a habitat potential and stabilizing feature all in one," Listowski said. "It would serve as a food source and protection for fish. And birds not usually seen will hang out in those areas as well."

People have been heard

Public opinion has been instrumental in the development of this

preferred alternative for the island. According to Bruce Hasbrouck of HDR Engineering, this option is a direct result of public input.

"We broke the audience up into discussion groups at February's public meeting," Hasbrouck said. "We said, 'Here are our options, now draw what you want. Well, four of the five groups drew essentially the same thing.'"

The biggest public concern involved trees. Not everyone wants to wait 20 years for the new trees to provide shade. This complaint will be considered.

"The public quickly made itself known on the tree issue," Hasbrouck said. "We need to explore these

options further. "We can't plant full-grown ones or plant growing smaller ones."

Project costs are estimated at \$250,000 to \$400,000.

If the island rehabilitation according to plan, construction will begin in the fall of 2002.

"The project requires approvals," Hasbrouck will look for a resolution from county commissioners. The government favors the project, but it will be up to the WCIND board to approve.

However, if the commission is not in favor of the project, the WCIND board would have to approve it. Listowski said.

erosion for Snake Island

land. Hasbrouck said. "We could bring in a full-grown ones or plant quick-growing smaller ones."

Project costs range from \$250,000 to \$400,000.

If the island rehabilitation goes according to plan, construction will begin in the fall of 2002.

"The project requires multiple approvals," Hasbrouck said. "We will look for a resolution from the county commissioners. If the local government favors the change, it will be up to the WCIND board to approve."

However, if the commissioners are not in favor of the changes, the WCIND board would probably stop the project, Listowski said.

Tracking progress of Snake Island

August 2000 — Environmental assessment availability and public review period.

September 2000 — Completion of section 1135 feasibility study.

Spring 2001 — Design phase begins.

Fall 2002 — If approved, construction will begin.



Well, I've been put on a diet. An "information diet," no less, by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. That's what a puzzling recent official letter signed by DEP Secretary David Struba has informed me - and presumably lots of other people too. It seems that the government thinks we newspaper folks are getting too much information.

No kidding. "Consider this an information diet," the May 5 letter says in announcing that DEP won't be publishing its quarterly report anymore. "We are evaluating the information we compile in order to pare back the 'empty calories' and boost the 'nutritional value,'" it continues.

After finishing a good laugh at whatever pompous bureaucrat wrote that drive, I got upset. So the department in state government that most often seems to find its tail under a rocking-chair believes that it's being too open, huh?

Now there's an interesting public relations approach. Keep them in the dark and that way they can't write anything bad about us. Boy, they need to get rid of some of the dead wood and bad talent in that department. Remember, it's your tax dollars and mine paying for this kind of nonsense - and now clumsy secrecy - and this from a governor named Bush who claimed he wanted to "open up government."

Sounds more to me like a signal that we should all be keeping an extra sharp eye on Mr. Struba and company.

BAY ISLAND WORKSHOPS END

What I believe was the last of the Army Corp of Engineer's workshops on re-claiming the bay islands happened last week and I'm told the project looks like a go from the federal standpoint. That's fine with me, but I imagine there will be plenty of howls from those who believe the Australian pines on those



Bill Higgenbotham, of Tulisa, OK (right), and Capt. Jonnie Walker show off 15-pound king mackerel Higgenbotham caught Monday near the M reefs about ten miles offshore.

BOB A

NEW REEF BALLS IN BAY

Even more government news. Is that the feds' are paying for 527 more reef balls to be placed on six new artificial reefs in Sarasota Bay. Now there's a government project any angler will appreciate.

The city commission (acting as a pass-through agent) approved the \$70,000 pro-

ject sponsored and funded by the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program and is possibly adding another 173 reef balls fall.

As one who has seen what reef ball fishing is like at the Saprito Fishing dock, let me tell you that we should be thanking the feds for this project.

SEE WATERS, PAGE

Valicom Pro SS 6/25

GAP

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regarding your health care.

No issue affects more people than the issue of health care. This year, the legislature managed to fund many of the needs of the elderly and still reduce taxes, thereby not pitting the needs of one generation against the needs of another. It has been my pleasure this year in Tallahassee to work to make sure that all Floridians, regardless of age, can lead a happy, healthy life.

Rep. Nancy Detert

PRICE OF PRIVATIZATION TOO HIGH

A May 12 Sarasota Herald-Tribune headline proclaimed, "Ford Motor admits its profitable SUVs pose safety, environmental problems." This implies that Ford knowingly proceeded and will continue with SUVs no matter who dies or what the effect is on our environment. Profit first. This lack of conscience is prevalent in corporate America. This is why "privatization" is an anathema instead of a solution.

About 400,000 annually die prematurely and our children become addicted to cigarettes in a trade-off for 400,000 jobs. The gun manufacturers exact a toll of 30,000 lives a year and 10 times more injuries. Ask doctors what they think about the privatization of health care and how the inefficiencies have caused deaths and price increases. It is permissible for the drug industry to rip off Americans and deprive some of needed prescriptions.

What is really frightening is the move to privatize education. The injection of greed and profit incentive into our public education system could have a devastating effect on the future of our nation. This is too much to pay so that parochial schools can get taxpayer's money.

Let's not be brainwashed by the special interest propaganda to "let private industry do it." The price is too high!

Mort Goodman

LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE

Thank you for publishing the anonymous letter "The other side of Sunset" (5/11/00). I know what the writer reports is true (dog feces in mailbox, etc.). I have lived on Avenida Messina for 22 years and have enjoyed Mira Mar Beach (a.k.a. Sunset Beach). Dog owners from all over the county flocked to Siesta Key, parked in the Village, and walked their dogs along Avenida Messina, which became a rest stop of lawns and verges, triggering ill will between property owners and visitors, even pitting neighbor against neighbor. But, as disturbing as that was, it was just as sad to note the long absence of sea birds along the beach, and the unpleasant odor emanating

circumstances - all to accommodate a day sailor cruising to the Gulf.

Gordon King

DON'T FOOL WITH MOTHER NATURE

The plans for our six bay islands announced by the county commissioners in a May 18 article in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune are not new plans nor are they the plans of the U.S. Corp. of Engineers. The plans are the same as those proposed by the county commissioners the past two years. The voters have rejected the plans each time they have been proposed, but like a many-headed monster, they will not die.

Their plan is to destroy all the vegetation and wildlife now on the islands. On this barren spot they would then create their own vision of a point in time. This they call restoration.

Before the dredging of the intercoastal waterway, these areas were primarily water. The dredging built up a hill of dirt. Nature then stepped in and covered these hills with vegetation of all kinds, finishing with a ring of mangroves. The birds came and landed, and the shoreline prospered. The islands not only provide a haven for wildlife but a welcome view of nature. It is also a haven for boaters, picnickers and explorers - all a gift of nature.

This is not a project that waits to be done. The Corp of Engineers has some tax money available - upon request - for certain shoreline projects. If approved, the Corp makes available 3/4 of the project cost if the remaining money is provided by a taxing unit.

Apparently, the lure of spending this money is irresistible enough to make our county commissioners ignore the stated wishes of their constituents and proceed with their own agenda. Needless to say, the cost is nothing for leaving the islands as they are, and which the public has indicated they prefer.

The County Commissioners should not think the voters are fooled by their attempt to shift responsibility. It is their call and the result will not go unnoticed. The voters will remember. The barren islands will be a constant reminder when it is time to vote again.

Lucy Morgan

SAFETY OUTWEIGHS NEED FOR INCREASED TRAFFIC FLOW

I am writing in response to last week's editorial regarding proposed changes to the Higel Avenue/Midnight Pass and Higel Avenue/Ocean Boulevard intersections. As someone who is well acquainted with, and vehemently opposed to, the proposed

speed turn at Ocean Boulevard an shows a complete disregard for human ty.

3) According to the Sarasota Dept of Transport, this plan was initiated year ago by the Siesta Key Chamber Commerce and the Siesta Key Association. The Presidential including presidents of the Siesta Association and Condo Council, was involved.

4) The proposal was put forth in guise of island improvements that benefit all residents. In fact, this ultimately benefits the Chamber Commerce members but completely detracts the residential nature of Siesta.

5) There have been no complaints with either the Florida DOT or the County DOT regarding the intersection that would suggest the need for changes.

6) Since the installation of the traffic light at Higel Avenue and Midnight Pass years of campaigning by residents have been no major accidents or incidents at this intersection.

7) More than 300 single-family homes of north Siesta Key were represented at most recent SKA meeting. It is clear that this tremendous rally of support that residents agree; Any further attempt to increase traffic speed and volume in our residential neighborhood is not acceptable.

8) There are alternative techniques (being used elsewhere in Sarasota) could improve the efficiency of traffic at the Higel/Midnight Pass intersection without in any way destroy the ambience of the neighborhood. These alternatives were explored fully before the current plan was another step.

Island living is supposed to be a little quieter, perhaps not as hectic as life on the mainland, but we must trade-offs. To destroy the peaceful ambience that we all value so highly for the sake of commercial interests as part of this plan is a tragedy.

I urge all residents to contact Commissioner Nora Patterson at 941-425-1111 to voice your opinion on this crucial issue.

BE SUN SMART THIS MEMORIAL DAY

About 80 percent of the 1.3 million skin cancers diagnosed each year are preventable. Here are a few common tips:

- 1) Keep out of the sun when rays are strongest (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
- 2) Wear protective clothes out to shade your face, neck and ears. Skin cancer frequently appears on the face.
- 3) Use sunscreen with a sun

I would like to thank all the SKA board members, past, present and future for their service. They are no more, no less, than outstanding residents of our beautiful island who care and they show it by getting involved.

The SKA is open to all residents to become a member and run for a position on the board. The monthly meetings can be attended by anyone, member or not. Any resident can ask to speak before the board and they will be heard, for or against any topic that affects Siesta Key. In my 10-year affiliation as a member I have never witnessed anyone being denied a voice.

This does not mean that the board has to allow being subjected to the same topic time after time after time. Believe me your voice was heard the first time and they have the minutes to prove it. You were not ignored, you were given the same consideration given to all, but the members have to make a decision and they do so by majority vote.

These members give of their time to try and make Siesta the best place in Sarasota to live and they try to do it as democratically as possible and heed the Roberts Rules of Order.

In closing, remember, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." Join, get involved, be a part of one of the best organizations in Sarasota County, and again I thank all that have done so.

Earl A Roney

TIME TO JUST DO IT

It is remarkable what an education you can get attending 15 years of hearings, studies and forums on Midnight Pass.

When we bought our condominium in Pelican Cove, Midnight Pass had just been "accidentally" closed under emergency relocation orders issued by the Florida Departments of Environmental Regulation and Natural Resources and with the approval of our board of commissioners. Everyone was sure that the pass would soon be opened, since no permit was ever granted to close it.

people in Sarasota County have some type of hearing loss especially among the baby boomers.

Flo Innes
President, SHHH

TAX PROPOSAL UNDERHANDED

I am writing in regards to the article about the school board wanting to raise taxes. Once again I must ask: Are we taxing the middle class out of Sarasota? These tax increases are coming fast and furious. First, there is a 5 cent gas tax and a 6 percent phone bill increase, along with a potential 1/8 to 1/4 mill hike in property taxes (all without a vote). And now it looks like the school board wants to sneak in a school property tax increase. Being already one of the most "tax wealthy" counties in the state, you would think a Republican-led county could live up to their platform of lower taxes and smaller government. What a bunch of hypocrites.

I must cry, "foul, no fair" about this tax increase. Slipping a referendum for these new taxes under the radar screen of the voters by holding this vote in the middle of July raises a red flag. The school board must

and more... Skiers Island, the Bird Co Island and Jim Neville Pres chunks of land for birds, w We Sarasotians love our much. They're bird and trees. Delightfully retire their branches twitch gra The pine bay-islands ar by all Sarasota County tax money has legally paid if do not belong to an outsi Corps engineers or to a k sioners. The isles legally citizens, taxpayers, all.

When it Rainfall for the of June is Average rain month of Jun and we have nearly 7 1/2 ; first 3 weeks weather patte persist for t Although the decreased recent rains t us. Have a g

**For more let
editor, see
The Pelican
comes letters
ters to 230
Madera, Sara
or fax to 3**



NEWS 40

by Chief Meteorologist
Bob Harrigan

7 Day Forecast

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TAXPAYERS TAPPED INSTEAD OF DEVELOPERS

News articles and newspaper editorials on the recent state legislative action that eliminated the right of Sarasota to impose an impact fee for school construction is another example of how special interests cost taxpayers dearly.

Over six years ago the need to impose a school construction impact fee was evident. On numerous occasions the school board was urged to consider a school impact fee. It was also pushed in public meetings. The county even offered to calculate and administer collections of this fee through its established impact fee system. But, even though the board admitted the budget for new school construction was inadequate to cover growth and development driven needs, the board's regular argument was that they were "unsure such a tax was legal."

For six years, and after watching 14 other counties legally enact school impact fees, our school board still refused to consider this option. Now, these representatives have successfully stonewalled the issue and helped lobby the legislature to take this monkey off their collective backs.

It was clear then, as it is now, that the question was never a legal one but the lack of political will on the part of our elected school officials to go against the development community and enact a fee that would reduce the tax burden on all current taxpayers. Who wins? The progressive school boards who had the leadership to pass impact fee legislation. Who loses? Counties with timid school boards like Sarasota.

Now this same board is about to ask all county taxpayers to again dig deeper into their pockets to pay for the shortages caused by their deliberate inactions and poor management skills. Remember this when it comes time to vote on this issue, and remember several of these same school board members are now shamelessly asking for your vote to again elect them for four more years.

We trailered our 17-foot Cape Cod Catboat down from Massachusetts, and rented a slip in Pelican Cove's harbor. With the pass closed, I would have had to motor six miles and wait while several drawbridges opened, in order to get to sailboat water. I would have to motor at least two hours each way. But we all knew that the pass would be reopened, and it would just be 15 minutes to the open gulf.

It's now 15 years and what seem like a hundred meetings later. I'm getting a little old for sailing, and I'm getting a little cynical. My Catboat is now on land. This county and this state have robbed my retirement of 15 years of pleasurable sailing. Politics, bureaucracy and the hubris of a few have blocked restoration of a natural, healthy, functioning pass, and that has robbed the bay of all of its previous health and beauty and has compromised the recreational uses for which Sarasota promotes itself.

The third meeting of the Coastal Advisory Committee is now history. They're still contemplating their navels. What are those unanswerable questions before them?

- 1) Can a pass be placed there and can it function? Of course. It was there for years until the Army Corps of Engineers messed it up. It needed no maintenance before then.
- 2) Did it close naturally? Not on your life. In 1963, the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners, the DER and the DNR granted emergency permission to relocate the pass, with no engineering or environmental requirements at all. Ooops! It remains closed.
- 3) Do we know who's responsible? See above. (Our Governor Jeb Bush says the Army Corps is responsible for the damage to the Everglades - and they must repair the damage, and pay for it, as well). Midnight Pass is Sarasota's Everglades.
- 4) Are we sure that following the recommendations of this independent, comprehensive study, everything will be as it once

background music of Florida for me.

Years later, when the Intracoastal was dredged and development had filled in so many of the hidden inlets and secret places, the small spoil islands became the last of the areas that one could go fishing and picnic amidst the peaceful setting of water and trees. Once again the Australian pine was adding pleasure.

So, when I start hearing that all such "exotics" should be eliminated and these once spoil islands returned to a pristine condition that they never had in the first place, I question why? Who decides which point of time we should return to? With all the major problems that are caused by our development, why is so much focus being put on the island habitats, particularly ones that so many people seem to enjoy as they are?

I have moved from Sarasota to Nokomis to Englewood to Florida, trying to find my "Old Florida." Now Don Pedro State Park has rid itself of the "dreadful pine" and one must crowd into man made shelters to cool and eat. At least my yard still has some Australian pines to help me recapture the Florida I remember.

I hope this will if I give a new perspective on ways to please the voters that have been around far longer than most.

Jane Gross Gaenther

READERS LEARN OF HEARING LOSS

SHHH, Self Help For Hard Of Hearing, is so proud to report that the first National Day of Hearing Testing was a smashing success. This event was held at the Selby Public Library on May 6. We screened over 100 people and found 90 percent showed some level of hearing loss.

Thanks to the Pelican Press for its support. The article written by Jean Reed was read by people from Venice to Bradenton. One gentleman from Holmes Beach said he read the article that morning in the Pelican Press and came right down for the free screening.

surely know that in any given primary the voter turnout is only about 20 percent, so what would be the turnout in mid-July? Eight or, at the most, 12 percent? How shady and underhanded this time table is! I believe this referendum should be put out in the Sunshine and voted on in September or even in November, when a higher percentage of people will decide its fate.

I am all for a good education, but I am also for fiscal responsibility. Instead of raising taxes, let us look internally and cut waste (and the huge bureaucracy). We need government accountability, not higher taxes. And by the way, where is all this education-enhancing lottery money?

If thinking about our government, it brings to mind the movie "Robin Hood" (Disney or Errol Flynn - your choice). Prince John and the tax collectors are shouting, "Taxes, taxes, we need more taxes!" One must ask, where is our Robin Hood?

Stefan Butz,
county commission candidate

PINES BELONG TO ALL

Early one morning, a loud squawking from the blue jays resounded in the pines. Quickly swallowing a mouthful of coffee, I hurried outside in jeans and old T-shirt. Outside the fence gate on the sidewalk a small brown owl huddled as blue jays squawked and pecked at his head. Alarmed I picked up a branch and urged the owl, hopping, through the open gate and into the pines.

Webber Street is a killer highway that runs through a woody neighborhood, and I was afraid the owl would move into the street with the blue jays and all would be hit by fast speeding cars.

Then I got a large towel out of the utility room, put it over the owl and carried him inside. After another swallow of coffee, I phoned the Pelican Man's Bird Rescue Center. Thirty minutes later, a tan jeep pulled into the driveway and a Bird Rescue guy got out with a cage. He smiled, looked

08/22/00 THU 08:31 FAX 941
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mendations of this independent, compre-
hensive study, everything will be as it once
was? No honest engineer or environmen-
talist could ever make that promise, and
the members of the CAC know it.

5) Will we ever know for sure? Only if we
try.

6) How? Get answers to all of the ques-
tions that can be answered. Enumerate
those that can be only answered during
construction or after the pass is reopened,
start! Be prepared to make adjustments
during the restoration, and expect that
some further design changes will be need-
ed once you have an operating system.
There just is no other way.

We who live around Little Sarasota Bay
are innocent victims of a clear example of
environmental vandalism, not unlike the
Everglades or toxic waste dumps. We are
not responsible for the environmental dam-
age done by the Army Corps, the commis-
sioners, the DER, and the DNR. It is the
responsibility of the Coastal Advisory
Committee, the county commissioners,
and the Army Corps, the DER and the
DNR to restore health to this damaged sys-
tem.

You are the experts. We are the victims.
Don't tell us it can't be done. It worked
very well without man's intervention for
years. History is our proof. Just do it!

Allen J. Cosini

THEY'RE MORE THAN JUST 'PRETTY'

In response to Bob Ardren's dig in the
May 25 issue, I would like to offer a Florida
native's view of some simple pleasures I
experienced growing up in Sarasota.

Sixty-some years ago, my parents built an
apartment house on Lido Beach, at what was
then the end of the road. My twin brother
and I spent many hours walking to Big Pass

378 8067 NATURAL RESOURCES DEPT
ment, why is so much focus being put on lit-
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Sarasota is so fortunate to have the
Pelican Press newspaper that is so support-
ive of charitable organizations. We owe the
Pelican Press much credit getting the infor-
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pulled into the driveway and a Bird Rescue
guy got out with a cage. He smiled, looked
up at the tall Aussie pines, and whistled,
"Wow, they sure are beautiful!"

I replied, "They're Florida-born Australian
pines descended from the original Ringling
pines. The same beautiful pines that grew
and made Little and Big Edwards islands,
Skiers Island, the Bird Colony Isles, Snake
Island and Jim Neville Preserve. Worthwhile
chunks of land for birds, wildlife and people.

We Sarasotans love our Aussie pines very
much. They're bird and people friendly
trees. Delightfully refreshing with cool
breezes and hints of ancient pine humor as
their branches twitch gracefully."

The pine bay-islands are property owned
by all Sarasota County taxpayers whose tax
money has legally paid for them. The isles
do not belong to an outside group of Army
Corps engineers or to a few county commis-
sioners. The isles legally belong to Sarasota
citizens, taxpayers, all.

Jackie A. Moore

For more letters to the
editor, see page 11.

The Pelican Press wel-
comes letters. Send let-
ters to 230 Avenida
Madera, Sarasota 34242;
or fax to 346-7118.



NEWS 40

by Chief Meteorologist
Bob Harrigan

Thurs., June 22,
thru Wed., June 28

When it rains it pours.
Rainfall for the the first 20 days
of June is above normal.
Average rainfall for the entire

JUNE 22, 2000 Pelican Press