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Navarre Beach Restoration Project Named One of America's Best Restored Beaches

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association announced today that the Navarre Beach restoration project is a winner of its 2010 Best Restored Beach Award. For the last 40 years, beach restoration has been the preferred method of shore protection in coastal communities on the east, west and Gulf coasts. Beach restoration is the process of placing beach-quality sand on dwindling beaches to reverse or offset the effects of erosion. Navarre Beach was one of four beaches nationwide selected for 2010.

The three main reasons for restoration are:

- Storm protection – a wide sandy beach helps separate storm waves from upland structures and infrastructure.
- Habitat restoration – numerous species rely on wide, healthy beaches as a place to live, feed and nest.
- Recreation – America's beaches have twice as many visitors annually as all of America's national parks combined. Every year, there are more than 2 billion visitors to America's beaches. In 2007, beaches contributed \$322 billion to the America's economy. More importantly, for every dollar the federal government spends on beach nourishment, it gets an estimated \$320 back in tax revenues.

The restoration project at Navarre Beach was designed to restore a critical protective buffer to the upland along approximately four miles of Gulf shoreline repeatedly damaged by multiple storms. The project was also designed to re-establish important recreational and economic benefits for the area, including 0.7 miles of beach and dune at the county's Navarre Beach Park. The project ultimately expanded the storm-damaged beach and residents saw the Gulf being "pushed" away from their properties, evacuation routes and other public.

The initial planning and permitting called for placement of 2.2 million cubic yards of sand to construct the design beach and dune and 240,000 cubic yards of material for advanced nourishment. The sand was transferred from a borrow area, located approximately four miles offshore in 60 to 70 feet of water, via hopper dredge and offloaded for beach fill placement via submerged pipelines. Construction began in March 2006 and was completed in mid-November 2006 with a final pay volume of almost three million cubic yards. The final fill volume placed was approximately 500,000 cubic yards more than the volume originally estimated and permitted. This was the result of erosional losses within the project from storms after the permit was issued but, before construction commenced. A vegetated dune feature was included in the design.

Santa Rosa County co-sponsored the project with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems. Leaseholders and Santa Rosa County raised the local cost-share through the establishment of a Municipal Service Benefit Unit on the barrier island.

The FDEP Bureau of Beaches & Coastal Systems nominated the Navarre project and an independent panel of coastal managers and scientists selected the winners. Judging was based on three criteria: the economic and ecological benefits the beach brings to its community; the short- and long-term success of the restoration project; and the challenges each community overcame during the course of the project. Other 2010 recipients include Corpus Christi, Texas; Seahurst Park, Burien, Wash.; and Seal Beach, Calif.

Past Best Restored Beach award winners include: Panama City Beach, Fla., in 2002; San Diego Beach in 2003; Ocean City, Md., in 2004; Indian River County, Fla., in 2005; Delaware's Rehoboth and Dewey Beaches in 2006; the Chaland Headland Restoration Project in La. in 2007; Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Wash. in 2008; and South Padre Island, Texas, in 2009. A complete list of award-winning beaches, and more information about beach restoration and ASBPA, is available online at www.asbpa.org.

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Navarre Beach before and after the restoration project, photos by: www.KennyWilder.com