

Presentation to OILA, Summary of Sand / East Pass May 31, 2018 meeting with Okaloosa County

Attendees: Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel, Greg Kisela (Assistant County Manager), John Donovan, Dave Miller, Rebecca Sherry, David Sherry, and (by telephone) Dave Hancock.

The meeting lasted more than an hour, and much ground was covered.

Topics included:

- 1) A county proposal to split the sand from the proposed East Pass Dredge 75:25, with Holiday Isle private beach getting 150,000 cubic yards and Okaloosa Island predominantly public beach getting 50,000 cubic yards;
- 2) Possibly placing the East Pass dredge sand up on the dry beach, pursuant to a beach restoration profile on Holiday Isle and Okaloosa Island, instead of in the approved swash zone areas;
- 3) Possibly placing Okaloosa Island's 50,000 cubic yards at El Matador condominium;
- 4) Okaloosa County hiring a special counsel to replace the special counsel who had been working on an improved sand source for any Okaloosa Island beach renourishment, including East Pass Inlet management and East Pass related sand as a possible improved sand source;
- 5) Possible re-opening of the East Pass Inlet Management Plan;
- 6) Holiday Isle's recurring beach erosion; the need for a long term solution; and the slow progress to date on the County Commissioners' instructions to fix the problem;
- 7) The possibility of using the OK-A borrow site as a sand source to perform a larger beach restoration on Holiday Isle. This option seems to be the one that gives both communities what they want, much more sand for Holiday Isle, and East Pass sand for Okaloosa Island;
- 8) Timing and cost of the East Pass channel dredge project. See additional details for some items below.

**Issue 1: Okaloosa county (the County)'s Proposed 75:25 East : West sand split:**

We questioned whether Okaloosa Island would get any sand under the county's 75:25 proposal. The county's prior estimate was that 100,000 to 130,000 cubic yards was available for dredging and the county's current proposal requires 200,000 cubic yards. Permits limit dredging to the navigation channel template, so there may be nothing left for Okaloosa Island after Holiday Isle takes 150,000 cubic yards.

It was suggested that Okaloosa Island go first, as the only way to assure Okaloosa Island gets its share. Destin had gone first in the recent dredge cycle, taking 150,000 cubic yards from East Pass for Norriego Point. Greg Kisela thought Okaloosa Island going first was doable, and will pursue this possibility.

It was mentioned that as the downdrift beach (net sand flow East to West), that even a 50:50 split would short change Okaloosa Island, and Okaloosa Island is still owed 55,000 cubic yards of East Pass sand from 2006 as remediation for the Walton County / East Destin project. Carolyn Ketchel suggested a 50:50 split, but Greg Kisela wanted to stay with the 75:25 split because he wants Holiday Isle's sand to last at least 2 years.

**Issue 2: Possibly placing East Pass dredge sand up on the dry beach, pursuant to a beach restoration profile, instead of in the approved swash zone areas:**

The county is working with FDEP and the US Army Corps of Engineers to get these agencies to allow placement of the maintenance dredge sand up on the dry beach, with a profile similar to a partial beach restoration.

John Donovan mentioned that such an ad hoc beach restoration template sand placement is not allowed under existing permitting, and the possible difficulty of obtaining such approval. The county may continue its effort to obtain these permits, although the outcome is unknown, and such permits likely would be contested.

**Issue 3: Possibly placing Okaloosa Island's 50,000 cubic yards (25%) at El Matador condominium:**

Commissioner Ketchel mentioned possibly placing Okaloosa Island's portion from this dredge at El Matador condominium, and it appeared this had been discussed with Dave Hancock of El Matador prior to this meeting. The El Matador placement proposal seemed to die quickly. With longshore flow to the West, this proposal provides no benefit to any property except El Matador. Okaloosa Island's East Pass sand would be placed farther east than this proposal, with the exact location to be determined, likely in the swash zone.

**Issue 6: Holiday Isle's recurring beach erosion, the need for a long term solution, and the slow progress to date on the County Commissioners' instructions to fix the problem:**

Okaloosa County's coastal engineer's 2017 presentation recommended "renourishing" Holiday Isle's beach (due to continued erosion) with OK-A sand processed with a mechanical separator. This a mere 4 years after Holiday Isle's major beach restoration project was completed.

The persistent erosion of Holiday Isle, and the resulting expense, caused the County Commissioners, by unanimous vote, to direct staff to find long term solutions to Holiday Isle's beach erosion problems. According to Greg Kisela, the county has hired a coastal engineering consultant to identify possible alternatives.

There was discussion about the open air pavilion at Jetty East condominium that protrudes well south of other structures on Holiday Isle. Photos shown confirmed this is where the dune failed on Holiday Isle.

**Issue 7: The possibility of using the OK-A borrow site as a sand source to perform a larger beach restoration on Holiday Isle:**

There seemed to be support for restoring Holiday Isle with OK-A sand, rather than East Pass sand. Holiday Isle property owners have repeatedly said OK-A sand is acceptable, and that sand source was used in the Holiday Isle 2013 major beach renourishment project.

Dave Miller, David Sherry and others agreed that since the sand on Holiday Isle does not last, there is no good reason to waste East Pass quality sand on a temporary private beach.

Since Holiday Isle sand is going to be gone in 2 years or so, use OK-A. Greg Kisela noted the increased cost, but that ignores the very real cost of starving Okaloosa Island's sand supply by

using East Pass sand, and the fact that Holiday Isle still has some sand from the last restoration and needs less sand now.

This option seems to be the one that gives both communities what they want, much more sand for Holiday Isle, and East Pass sand for Okaloosa Island.

**Issue 8: Timing and cost of the East Pass dredge project:**

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would contract to dredge East Pass, costing \$1 million to \$1.25 million, possibly as high as \$1.5 million. Congressman Gaetz is working to get federal funding for the project of \$1 million to \$1.5 million. There is no guarantee of getting federal funds for this dredge, but Greg Kisela is optimistic. Even if federal funds are not provided, Okaloosa county would have USACE contract to dredge and reimburse USACE. This USACE cost is considerably less than the cost estimated when the county was contracting to dredge 100,000 to 130,000 cubic yards. Absent federal funds, TDC funds would be used. Any East Pass navigation channel dredging would likely start in September or October, 2018.