

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

02.13.20



Dredging of the Destin East Pass Inlet to Begin In Less than a Month

Okaloosa County— After years of trying to dredge the East Pass, the Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the City of Destin and Okaloosa County will begin dredging the navigational channel Near the end of the month under a joint FDEP Permit issued to the City and County. The project is expected to take approximately 30 days dependent on the weather and the final amount of material to be removed.

The process to get to this point has involved multiple agencies, overcoming weather, funding, and litigation issues, and a final push by Congressman Gaetz's office to prioritize the East Pass dredging project.

Funding for the Project will come from federal funds for the first \$1,500,000 and thereafter local from tourism bed tax dollars for another \$500,000 or more depending on the final dredging costs. The project is expected to take approximately 30 days dependent on the weather and the final amount of material to be removed.

The dredging is expected to remove approximately 250,000 cubic yards+/- of sand from the federal navigation channel. Per the inlet management plan material is required to be placed on the adjacent eroding beach (i.e., where it is most needed) as determined by an engineering analysis. Per that analysis and the FDEP permit, the material for this dredging project is required to be placed to the east of the inlet. For a visual image of the area to be dredged (red) and the location of where the material will be placed (green) please see the attached project overview figure.

The project accomplishes two very important project goals: dredging the navigation channel to provide safe navigational access within East Pass for commercial and recreational vessels and beneficially using the dredged sand to provide much needed storm protection and beach (recreation) area along Okaloosa County's most severely eroded beach.

"The severely deteriorated condition of the East Pass as well as some of our critically eroded beaches threatens the economic vitality of Destin. Dredging East Pass will ensure safe passage of our maritime traffic as well as protect upland structures from storm surge events. I am excited that we can help the most threatened beach in Okaloosa County," said Mayor Jarvis of Destin, "Holiday Isle is an important part of our tourism economy, and hosts thousands of visitors every year. We are thankful to Okaloosa County Commissioner Kelly Windes for fighting for this – and ensuring the dredge gets the job done all the way this time. His determination with the Corps of Engineers is a big reason this dredge is coming to the East Pass."

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“This is a great moment for Okaloosa County,” said Commissioner Kelly Windes, “This would not have been possible without the continued cooperation of everyone involved. We made Okaloosa County a better, safer place by getting this done.”

Visuals of the dredge area attached

By Authority,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Trey Goodwin'.

Robert A. “Trey” Goodwin, III

Chairman, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT CHRISTOPHER SAUL AT
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