Phase V.2 Florida Coastal Access Project

FLORIDA RESTORATION AREA

Overview

The Florida Coastal Access Project was first proposed as part of Phase V of *Deepwater Horizon* (DWH) Early Restoration (prior to the settlement of the DWH oil spill natural resource damage assessment), and was described, evaluated, and ultimately selected in the Final DWH Oil Spill Phase V Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment. The Florida Coastal Access Project is intended to enhance the public's access to the surrounding natural resources and increase recreational opportunities through the acquisition and/or enhancement of coastal parcels in the Florida Panhandle.

First Phase

In the first phase of the Florida Coastal Access Project, four locations in the Florida Panhandle were selected to be acquired and/or improved to increase recreational uses and coastal access. These locations included Innerarity Point in Escambia County, Captain Leonard Destin Park in Okaloosa County, Lynn Haven Bayou Park and Preserve in Bay County, and Island View Park in Franklin County. Construction of the park amenities at Island View Park began in October, 2017. Construction at Innerarity Point and the City of Destin parks is anticipated to begin in early spring of 2018, to be followed shortly thereafter by the City of Lynn Haven park amenities.

Second Phase

The second phase of the Florida Coastal Access Project continues restoration planning begun during Early Restoration. The FL TIG prepared the Phase V.2 Florida Coastal Access Project: Final Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Analysis (Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA) which describes and evaluates three proposed restoration alternatives: Alligator Point Park, Little Redfish Lake Addition to Grayton Beach State Park, and Salinas Park Addition (the preferred alternative). Each of the proposed alternatives generally included the acquisition of a coastal parcel, the construction of various park amenities such as parking and restroom facilities, boardwalks, trails, and paddle-craft launches, and ten years of funding for the operation and maintenance of the property as a public park.

Figure 1: The proposed Salinas Park addition site is outlined in orange and is adjacent to the current Salinas Park boundary.

The preferred alternative, Salinas Park Addition, has been selected by the FL TIG for implementation based on the evaluation described in the Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA. Based on the analysis in the Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA, the federal Trustees of the FL TIG prepared a Finding of No Significant Impact, provided in Appendix D of the Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA.

Projects not identified for inclusion as alternatives or projects not selected in this Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA may continue to be considered for future restoration planning. If any Florida Coastal Access Project funds remain after completion of this second phase, the FL TIG would determine how to allocate those funds and would complete any necessary restoration planning and comply with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations.

Preferred Alternative: Salinas Park Addition

The selected Salina Park Addition alternative is an approximately six-acre undeveloped parcel on the south side of Saint Joseph Bay in Gulf County, Florida (Figure 1). The parcel is adjacent to the existing Salinas Park (Bayside) property. On the parcel for acquisition, the FL TIG proposes to construct three trail heads near the adjacent road, bike facilities, an elevated boardwalk with observation platforms, and a trail extension from the existing parking area to the trailhead (Figure 2). On existing Salinas Park property, the FL TIG proposes to construct a crosswalk to enhance public safety when accessing the new park extension, an enhanced ecofriendly playground, and pickleball court features. Cultural and natural resource interpretive signage will be constructed on both the existing park property and acquisition parcel. The estimated cost for the Salinas Park Addition is $3.2 million.

For additional information, contact:

RACHEL HORNE
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

3900 Commonwealth Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Office Phone: 850-245-2107

Rachel.Horne@dep.state.fl.us

Public Involvement

Following public notice, the Draft Phase V.2 PR/SEA was made available to the public for a 30-day comment period from November 8, 2017 to December 8, 2017. During the public comment period, the FL TIG hosted a public meeting in Port St. Joe, Gulf County, on November 16, 2017. Comments on the Draft Phase V.2 RP/SEA could be submitted during the comment period via a web-based comment submission site, U.S. Mail, and both orally and in writing at the public meeting. The FL TIG received a total of 100 comments via the public meeting and web submissions. The FL TIG considered all input received and then completed this Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA. Further details on the public comment process are provided in Chapters 1 and 6 of the Final Phase V.2 RP/SEA.

Figure 2: Proposed park amenities including elevated boardwalk and trail heads.