

Captiva and Friends Celebrate the Opening of Blind Pass

In a true example of partnership, the stage was set for the seemingly impossible and Mother Nature opened the curtain for the spectacular show that is Blind Pass, sparkling and teeming with life.



The project has been under way since the new millennium when an inter-local agreement between the partners was forged.

Over a year after dredging had begun, a current was ripping through the Pass “like a strong heart pumping life into the ecosystem, pushing life into all the outer extremities...” CEPD’s Mike Mullins told the crowd. “Life is pumping into our ecology and to our local economy.”

Lee County Commissioner Bigelow served as Master of Ceremonies, and speakers included representatives from the

partnerships that worked so hard to open the Pass: CEPD, Lee County, the City of Sanibel, the Lee County Tourist Development Council, the Fl. Department of Environmental Preservation, and the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Refuge.

Blind Pass has opened and closed for years, creating an unstable ecosystem. Closing again in 2001, the Pass remained closed until this project finally opened it.



CEPD Chair Mike Mullins, Senior Administrative Consultant Kathy Rooker and Commissioner Rene Miville.

Following the ceremonies, attendees enjoyed refreshments and music provided by Tween Waters, The Lazy Flamingo, Jensen’s Marina, and Queenie’s Homemade Ice Cream: all Captiva staples not to be missed – just like Blind Pass. ☼

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Michael C. Mullins
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Vice Chair

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Dave Jensen
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Rene Miville
Commissioner

State of the District



As the health of the ecosystem that is Blind Pass improves, so too does the management and effectiveness of the CEPD.

The CEPD is financially sound as 2010 heads towards spring, increasing revenues, rescuing and increasing grants, while implementing best financial and management practices. As well, the CEPD voted unanimously to utilize \$2.3million from historical reserves to reduce property owners' assessments for the 2005-2008 beach nourishments and the re-opening of Blind Pass. In 2008 and 2009 the CEPD built back \$250 thousand of such beach reserves from parking and operating efficiencies.

A Snapshot of CEPD Accomplishments

The CEPD, with its outsourcing partner, Partners in Progress:

- Increased parking lot revenue by more than 50% (\$57,724).
- Rescued an expiring \$725,000 state grant and negotiated a \$48,000 increase.
- Rescued a threatened \$60,000 funding grant approved by Lee County to establish self-composting restrooms in the Alison Hagerup Parking Lot.
- Established an administrative reserve fund to pay bond principal and interest.
- Initiated an education and communication program including printed and electronic newsletters, presentations, and research.
- Replaced non-native, invasive plants to preserve the Captiva dunes.
- Improved the parking area to ensure maximum metering revenues and best management practices.

- Performed a cost/benefit analysis of using the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers versus a private coastal engineering firm for the next beach nourishment project. Follow-up is in progress.
- Published procedures documenting Captiva's beach nourishment cycle.
- Outsourced the administration of the district to Partners in Progress, a consulting firm with specialized knowledge of CEPD's beach nourishment cycle and expertise in workflow efficiency.
- Began the process of organizing CEPD files and historical documents into electronic format. ✪

State of the Beach

- Captiva's beach is doing fine for now ... but CEPD is keeping watch.
- CEPD evaluates nourishment projects annually for three years and at the five- and seven-year marks. The last project was in 2005/2006 and is holding up about the same as previous renourishments, which had an average shoreline retreat of 7.6 feet per year after three years.
- The current average shoreline loss is a bit greater than that at 8 feet per year and has accelerated in the last year primarily due to winter storms. The CEPD will be watching this closely.
- The '05/'06 project placed 1,352,931 cubic yards of sand along 6.4 miles of shoreline between Redfish Pass at the northern end of Captiva and Bowman's Beach on Sanibel. Storms necessitated a supplemental sand placement at two Captiva locations in April of 2008.
- This project provided an average beach width of 75.5 feet. As of September 2009, the project area had an average beach width remaining of 47 feet. ✪

Will Captiva Lose Its Beach?

Captiva's beach, running five miles along our shoreline, is renowned.

Are we taking our beach for granted? Another form of taking, judicial takings, is being considered by The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). On Dec. 2, the high court heard arguments re Florida's decades-old Beach Preservation Act which has enabled CEPD legislation to preserve our beach. For further information, see <http://tinyurl.com/cepd-scotus>

Since 1988, our beach has been nourished by the CEPD funded by property owners' assessments, federal, state and county tax dollars. Since then, the total of Captiva property values increased from \$240 million



to \$1.5 billion. A favorable SCOTUS decision is critical; it may permanently affect shorelines, beach access and property rights. At stake is Captiva's enabling legislation, funding and property values. At stake is Captiva's very own beach!

Florida Attorney General McCollum argues that beach nourishment has many benefits: erosion and storm protection, taxpayer funded beach preservation. McCollum adds, "about 198 miles of Florida's 825 miles of beaches have been restored...providing enormous benefits to the public ... to thousands of property owners."

Florida's position is supported by your CEPD as well as the Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association. FSBPA Director, Debbie Flack, warns of an adverse SCOTUS ruling which would "clearly stop Florida's beach restoration program... It would mean the cost of nourishment would become...financially prohibitive."

Walton County petitioners take exception. Claiming nourishment leaves an area of sand between property lines and the Gulf, they say this essentially creates a public beach denying privacy and constitutional rights. Attorney Kent Safriet, argues the "...intent is a land grab by local government to create a public beach where a private beach previously existed."



Our Captiva beach is threatened by more than just storms and erosion; an adverse SCOTUS decision may imperil our state's treasured beaches. Will Captiva lose its beach? Stay tuned for updates on the high court's decision. For more information, call CEPD or email Mike Mullins @ mycepd3@gmail.com. ☼

SAVE THE DATE

Captiva Community Panel Meetings:

- March 9, 2010
- April 9, 2010

Location to be announced.

CEPD Regular Meetings @ noon on:

- March 10, 2010
- April 10, 2010

Location to be announced.

CEPD Scheduled Workshops

@ 1 p.m. every Thursday @ the CEPD.

CEPD Beach Briefings to Homeowner

Associations: Contact your Association or CEPD for times and locations.

CCA General Membership Meetings:

- Feb. 23, 2010
- March 23, 2010

Captiva Town Hall Workshops:

- March 3, 2010: 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- March 31, 2010: 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Location to be announced.

Protecting Captiva's "White Gold": Its Beach

"Florida's beaches are more than white gold; they are a white gold mine."

That's what CEPD Chairman Mike Mullins told the Lee County Legislative Delegation in December when he appeared before them to lead the charge against offshore oil and gas exploration.

CEPD has been engaged in a variety of initiatives culminating in Mullins' speech before the delegation. He appealed to everyone present, "Do not trade the white gold in our hands for the black gold under the sands."

The presentation was just one piece of CEPD's aggressive campaign to express its concerns that if drilling is allowed:

- the quality of Captiva's beaches will deteriorate due to inevitable oil spillage and drilling effluvia; and
- access to the beach-quality sand required for nourishment of Captiva's beach would cease when offshore sand sources are leased to oil companies.



CEPD was among the first organizations in the state to pass a resolution opposing offshore drilling and has encouraged other communities and organizations to pass

similar resolutions. CEPD commissioners and consultants published several newspaper articles and editorials to educate citizens on the issue. *Get involved!*

Five things you can do to fight offshore drilling

- 1-Write your legislators; tell them to reject offshore drilling. For addresses, go to <http://tinyurl.com/yfcl77z>
- 2-Write the Century Commission to reject offshore drilling (www.CenturyCommission.org).
- 3-Write a letter to the local media.
- 4-Educate yourself! Attend a CEPD Town Hall.
- 5-Volunteer to help pass a referendum for the next beach nourishment! ☼