

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

March 29, 2022



DESTIN
FORT
WALTON
BEACH
FLORIDA

Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida Seeks Volunteers for Dune Stabilization Project

Okaloosa County, Fla. – Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism continues dune restoration and stabilization on Okaloosa Island beaches. Community volunteers are needed to help with a project, funded by Okaloosa County Tourist Development and a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation matching grant. Volunteers will assist with dune stabilization by helping to plant 200,000 sea oats on **Saturday, April 16th at 7 a.m.**

“The dunes are an important part of our coastal landscape,” said Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Mel Ponder. “We are fortunate that Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism is dedicated, not only, to keeping our highly-visited beaches pristine but to help fund this project that ensures resiliency to our coastlines in the event of a storm by reinforcing the dune system.”

In November, Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism installed 10,600 feet of sand fencing along three miles of Okaloosa Island public beaches and John Beasley Park with the assistance of a partnership with *Trees on the Coast*. Teams of volunteers made the sand fencing installation a success. The fencing helps expand the dunes and mitigates impacts that have been made to nesting sea turtles, piping plovers and other nesting birds in the area. Planting sea oats along the existing sand fencing allows for dune restoration and stabilization which are key to the natural coastal environment and provide additional wildlife habitats as well as protection for upland structures during storm events.

“The dunes provide a sand source that keeps our beaches healthy. The first step to building up the dune system is to install sand fencing to trap and build sand. The next step is to plant vegetation that stabilizes the dune and prevents sand from blowing or washing away. This project has resulted in the installation of 3-miles of sand fencing and now the planting of 200,000 sea oat plants. Community support has been essential to the success of the dune stabilization project,” said Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager, Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

Visit destinfwb.com/sea-oat-planting-rsvp/ to register for this **April 16th** volunteer opportunity. Volunteers will sign a waiver and pick up sea oats to transport to assigned beach accessways where team leaders will be stationed to offer instruction and assistance. Equipment will be provided but volunteers are asked to bring water, sunscreen, and gloves.

For more information on [Destin-Fort Walton Beach](https://www.destinfortwaltonbeach.com/) or dune restoration and stabilization, contact Stacey Young, Community & Media Relations Strategist (850) 606-5389 SLYoung@MyOkaloosa.com or Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager (850) 609-5394 afogg@myokaloosa.com. Learn more about how tourism works for Okaloosa County at myokaloosa.com/tourist-development/home.

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