



News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Invited to Attend Public Beach Access Expansion Celebration

Destin, Florida – A nearly 340-ft beach front “Tarpon Beach Park” is now on its way to becoming a reality thanks to the partnership between the City of Destin, the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners, the Tourist Development Council and Trust for Public Land.

To celebrate this project, on Friday, Feb. 3, 2023, at 10 a.m., located at 3310 Scenic Highway 98, the City of Destin will be hosting a ceremony as the current structures on the three parcels adjacent to the Tarpon Beach Trail will be cleared to make way for the park that will have new, stunning views, of the Gulf of Mexico along Scenic Highway 98.

“Making our beautiful beaches more accessible to our residents and out-of-town guests is a top priority for the County,” said Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Trey Goodwin. “This is a major step toward that goal, and we are grateful to have a team of partners that understand that commitment.”

“These kinds of partnerships are an effective way to move Destin forward in a positive direction for both locals and visitors,” said Destin Mayor Bobby Wagner. “I applaud the efforts of our partners and the work of former Mayor Gary Jarvis in making this a reality.

Okaloosa County and the City of Destin have pledged a combined \$26.5 million to expand public beach access in Destin. The Tarpon Beach project is Phase II of this endeavor and the cost share is split 50/50 between the City and County. Phase I progress took place with the removal of structures in April 2021 to expand the Crystal Beach Access. The County's portion, as well as much of the City's, will be funded with Tourism Development District revenue.

Trust for Public Land was the lead agency that helped negotiate the purchase of the properties for both Phase I and II.

"Increasing access to the pristine Tarpon Beach is not only a tourism draw for the city but gives residents walkability to the waterfront and all its amenities that have previously been closed off," said Kate Brown, Senior Project Manager for Trust for Public Land. "Trust for Public Land has been working for years to improve beach access in Destin and create more green spaces that are open and welcoming to everyone, and

we're proud to continue this partnership with the City."

The new park at Tarpon Beach will be constructed to include free parking, restrooms and great views of the Gulf of Mexico. Parks at both Crystal Beach (Phase I) and Tarpon Beach (Phase II) are expected to be open to the public in May 2024 with construction starting after this tourism season.

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