

May 24, 2010

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From sea to shining sea: ASBPA releases list of the Best Restored Beaches of 2010

FORT MYERS, FL – The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) today released its much-anticipated annual list of the nation’s best restored beaches. This year’s list provides representation from both the west and east coasts of the U.S.

The 2010 winners are:

- Corpus Christi, Texas
- Navarre Beach, Florida
- Seahurst Park, Burien, Washington
- Seal Beach, California

Why should you want to visit a restored beach? Here’s the top reason, according to ASBPA President Harry Simmons – fun. Many of America’s most heavily used beaches are restored beaches – wide and sandy, providing abundant recreational opportunities for beachgoers.

“As Americans flock to our nation’s coastline during the upcoming beach season, most don’t even realize they may be enjoying a restored beach,” said Simmons, who is mayor of Caswell Beach, NC. “Coastal communities have restored more than 370 beaches in the United States, including such iconic beaches as Jones Beach in New York, Ocean City in Maryland, Virginia Beach, Miami Beach, Galveston Island in Texas and Waikiki Beach in Hawaii.”

ASBPA created the Best Restored Beach award as a way of highlighting the value of restored beaches.

For the last 40 years, beach restoration has been the preferred method of shore protection in coastal communities on the east, west and Gulf coasts. Beach restoration is the process of placing beach-quality sand on dwindling beaches to reverse or offset the effects of erosion.

The three main reasons for restoration are:

- Storm protection – a wide sandy beach helps separate storm waves from upland structures and infrastructure.
- Habitat restoration – numerous species rely on wide, healthy beaches as a place to live, feed and nest .
- Recreation – America’s beaches have twice as many visitors annually as all of America’s national parks combined. Every year, there are more than 2 billion visitors to America’s beaches. In 2007, beaches contributed \$322 billion to the America’s economy. More importantly, for every

dollar the federal government spends on beach nourishment, it gets an estimated \$320 back in tax revenues.

During times of economic hardship, the beach can be an even more desirable vacation destination than other domestic and foreign alternatives, offering families and visitors an accessible and affordable getaway.

To enter the Best Restored Beach competition, coastal communities nominated their projects for consideration, and an independent panel of coastal managers and scientists selected the winners. Judging was based on three criteria: the economic and ecological benefits the beach brings to its community; the short- and long-term success of the restoration project; and the challenges each community overcame during the course of the project.

The following are comments by judges concerning the honored beaches:

Corpus Christi Urban Waterfront Beach Projects, Texas

The Corpus Christi Urban Waterfront Beach Project consist of two projects: McGee Beach and Corpus Christi Beach. These urban beaches have been ranked among America's top beaches; great sand, clear calm waters, and a diversity of events and attractions providing easy access to the public.

In 2004, the city of Corpus Christi partnered with the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program to nourish McGee Beach. The \$640,000 project consisted of 56,000 cubic yards of beach-quality sand; a 1,800-foot-long section of beach was widened to approximately 250 feet. Five 300-foot-long concrete sheet pile groins were installed to reduce sand losses and thus extend the intervals between renourishments.

In the late 1970s, construction of the initial Corpus Christi Beach restoration project was funded by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the city of Corpus Christi; the beach was renourished in 1998. In the summer of 2001, the city and TGLO co-sponsored a project to back-pass sand to re-nourish the beach section. Construction of the \$1,456,000 nourishment project included placement of 125,000 cubic yards of imported sand and 25,000 cubic yards of back-passed sand for a total fill volume of 150,000 cubic yards over 3,000 linear feet of beach.

Navarre Beach, Florida

A non-federal beach restoration project at Navarre Beach was designed to restore a critical protective buffer to the upland along approximately 4 miles of Gulf shoreline repeatedly damaged by multiple storms. The project was also designed to re-establish important recreational and economic benefits for the area, including 0.7 miles of beach and dune at the Navarre Beach State Park Recreation Area.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems co-sponsored the project with Santa Rosa County. Property owners raised the local cost-share through the establishment of a Municipal Service Benefit Unit on the barrier island.

Perhaps one key success factor can be found simply in the ultimate acceptance of the completed project by the stakeholders, including many who were vocal opponents in the initial planning stages. Once sand began to expand the storm-damaged beach and residents saw the Gulf being "pushed" away from their properties, evacuation routes and other public infrastructure, public opinion began to slowly move from criticism to appreciative acceptance of the project.

Seahurst Park – Burien, Washington

The Seahurst Park Project is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-funded effort through a Project Partnership Agreement with the City of Burien. Seahurst Park's South Shoreline restoration project

has reinvigorated a park and a fragile ecosystem. The design has restored the physical connection between the natural beach and its sediment supply.

The restored beach supports federally listed threatened and endangered species such as Chinook salmon. Residents of Burien and other communities throughout the region visit Seahurst Park to learn about the environment and enjoy the park's shorelines. The Corps' Seattle District has completed a general investigation and feasibility study for Puget Sound restoration.

The project was the first one funded by the Corps' "Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters" program and has effectively served as a prototype project for addressing many Puget Sound ecosystem restoration issues, including bulkheading and sediment supply.



Photo above: Seahurst Park - Burien, Washington

Seal Beach, California

The Seal Beach project located in Orange County has significant historic importance as being the state's first U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' beach nourishment project that has been ongoing for almost 50 years. The state of California is aggressively promoting beach nourishment projects, and this is an example of a very successful ongoing project that is a model of what others can look like in the state.

This beach provides a resource to millions of people in a high-density population area on the border of Orange/Los Angeles counties. Nourishment allows the city the flexibility to better manage the sand within their compartmentalized shoreline over time, improve the users' experience, and enhance protection. There was a high level of cooperation between local, state and federal governments to allow an unconventional contracting process to succeed in a tight timeframe and budget.

Past Best Restored Beach award winners include: Panama City Beach, Fla., in 2002; San Diego Beach in 2003; Ocean City, Md., in 2004; Indian River County, Fla., in 2005; Delaware's Rehoboth and Dewey Beaches in 2006; the Chaland Headland Restoration Project in Louisiana in 2007; Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Wash. in 2008; and South Padre Island, Texas, in 2009. A complete list of award-winning beaches, and more information about beach restoration and ASBPA, is available online at www.asbpa.org

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