



COUNTY OF ARANSAS

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PRESS RELEASE

County Judge Burt Mills announced today that Aransas County has been awarded more than \$306,000 in federal funds to evaluate “living shoreline” measures to protect approximately 8,000 feet of eroding shoreline along Little Bay and parts of Fulton Beach Road. The grant was made under the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP), which channels funds from offshore oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico to conservation and protection of coastal areas in Gulf states. The project began in 2006, when all four governmental entities in Aransas County (Aransas County, the Aransas County Navigation District, the City of Rockport and the Town of Fulton) collaborated on a study of shoreline erosion problems on the Live Oak Peninsula.

“Living shoreline” techniques for erosion prevention avoid traditional vertical-face bulkheads, which increase nearby erosion and damage communities of plants and animals living in the bay. Instead, the project will evaluate other alternatives including, for example, the use of sloping concrete mats with holes in which marsh grasses are planted. Other options include construction of an offshore breakwater that allows development of a fringing coastal marsh in the quiet water between the breakwater and the present shoreline.

The project will evaluate various living shoreline options for three areas that include the Little Bay shoreline along Broadway and shoreline segments along Fulton Beach Road from the access road to Key Allegro north past Paws and Taws. The project, which will begin immediately and last one year, will also include development of engineering specifications for the techniques selected and work to obtain the necessary permits. The project funds will not support cost of construction of the measures selected, which will come from future grants.

The project will include opportunities for public input to the selection and design of shoreline protection measures.

Judge Mills noted: “County staff will manage this project, with the active collaboration of representatives from the City of Rockport, the Town of Fulton and the Navigation District. Every citizen of the County has a stake in what we will be doing. I’m very pleased by the good cooperation among governmental entities that has gotten us to this point.”

Fulton Mayor Russell Cole commented that “The erosion problem along Fulton Beach Road is obvious to everyone. This project will set the stage for a long term solution. I think we will be able to get rid of the unsightly rip rap and restore some of the biological richness that used to be there.”

“Public access to Little Bay is a high priority in this project”, said Rockport Mayor C.J. Wax. “People enjoy fishing from the shore along Broadway. We need to protect that shoreline from further erosion, while at the same time providing for good public access to the water in that area. We need to do everything we can to protect Little Bay, and a living shoreline to help control erosion will help that effort.”

Navigation District Chairman Ron Outen stated: “This is a big step in the right direction. We are learning to preserve and restore natural systems such as marshlands as a way to protect roadways and other valuable infrastructure. These living shoreline techniques provide water quality benefits by filtering pollution washing into the bays from the land. They also enhance the biological productivity of the bays.”

For more information, contact David Reid at 790-0152.