

Beach Renourishment 2021: Your Important Role

For the past 25 years, property owners within the boundaries of the South Amelia Island Shore Stabilization Association (SAISSA) have committed to preserving and protecting our beach and dunes by helping fund initial beach restoration in 1994 and two subsequent beach renourishment projects in 2002 and 2011. **After two hurricanes and almost 10 years, the need to once again renourish our beach is fast approaching.**

In early 2020, property owners within the boundaries of SAISSA will again be asked to sign a petition in support of funding a proposed beach renourishment project, now targeted for 2021. Support of a majority of property owners is required before the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners will begin the process required to adopt a non-ad valorem special assessment to pay the cost of beach renourishment.

It is important that your decision about supporting beach renourishment and committing to pay your proportionate share be an informed one.

To that end, SAISSA's goal is to be completely transparent and provide property owners with accurate, fact-based, timely information about what SAISSA does; why, when and how we do it; and the role of owners in critical decisions related to beach renourishment. In the coming months, we will do so in various ways, among them our website, newsletters, town halls, and presentations at community meetings.

In the following pages, a brief background about SAISSA -- its members, governance, funding -- is provided.

What do you need to know as you consider whether to support the next beach renourishment? What would help you make an informed decision?

Send your questions to saissabeach21@gmail.com. Answers to your questions will be shared with all property owners.

BACKGROUND

While many long-time property owners undoubtedly recall some of the history of SAISSA and previous beach restoration and renourishment efforts, many new owners may know little about this history and these efforts. A brief recap is provided here.

The South Amelia Island Shore Stabilization Association (SAISSA) was created in 1993 by property owner associations and property owners at the south end of Amelia Island to protect, preserve, restore and enhance the beach/dune system on the south end of Amelia Island in Nassau County, Florida. This followed a devastating three-week nor'easter that severely eroded the beach and dunes and threatened to undermine the Windsong Villas and Amelia Retreat condominiums.

SAISSA has five voting members:

- Amelia Island Plantation Community Association, Inc. (AIPCA)
- Amelia Retreat Condominium Association, Inc. and Seaside Retreat Condominium Association, Inc. (together represent one voting member)
- The Residence Common Association, Inc.
- Amelia Island Sanctuary Property Owners Association, Inc.
- Riverstone Properties, LLC, owner of the undeveloped tract between the Florida State Park and the Sanctuary

SAISSA BOUNDARIES

SAISSA currently includes 2,266 residential properties and 46 commercial properties. The oceanfront boundaries extend from the southern limit of Burney Park on the north to the northern limit of the Amelia Island State Park on the south. Both developed and undeveloped properties are included within SAISSA boundaries. Osprey Village is not included within SAISSA boundaries.

GOVERNANCE

An 11-member Board of Trustees represents property owners within the boundaries of SAISSA. Seven trustees are appointed by the Amelia Island Plantation Community Association; one trustee is appointed by the Amelia and Seaside Retreats; one trustee by the Residence and Residence Commons; one trustee by The Sanctuary; and one trustee by Riverstone Development, LLC.

The South Amelia Island Shore Stabilization Municipal Benefit Unit (SAISS MSBU) was created by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in 1993 in support of SAISSA's beach and dunes initiative. The purposes of the MSBU are *"to undertake, administer, and finance undertakings, projects, and services pertaining to beach renourishment, restoration, erosion control and maintenance within*

the boundaries of the MSBU, and to provide for the financing of such undertakings, projects and services through, among other means available to the MSBU and Nassau County, Florida, special assessment of real property located in the boundaries of the MSBU that is or will be benefited by such undertakings, projects and services.” (Ord. 94-1, Sec. 1.)

The Nassau County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is the governing body of the SAISS MSBU. SAISSA manages the beach restoration/renourishment program under contract to Nassau County.

The BOCC approves SAISSA’s budget and handles all SAISSA project financing. **The BOCC will not allow a beach renourishment project to proceed without majority approval by property owners within SAISSA boundaries, who will be agreeing to bear the cost of the renourishment project.**

TIMING OF BEACH RESTORATION AND RENOURISHMENT

The beach and dunes within SAISSA boundaries were restored in **1994**. Eight years later, in **2002**, the first beach renourishment project was completed. A second renourishment project was completed nine years later in **2011**. Following each renourishment, SAISSA has continuously monitored the beach to assess how well it is withstanding erosion and storm-related impacts.

It should be noted that, in 2004, the Florida Park Service, in support of SAISSA’s 2002 renourishment project, built a breakwater at the end of SAISSA’s southern boundary and a terminal groin at the south end of Amelia Island. Together the breakwater and the terminal groin have reduced sand losses and helped extend the life of beach renourishments.

The success of the 2011 renourishment project in protecting the upland beach within SAISSA boundaries, despite two hurricanes, has allowed SAISSA to target 2021 for the next beach renourishment, extending the time between projects to 10 years.

Meeting this target date depends on many factors, including multiple local, state and Federal approvals and, **among the most important, the consent of a majority of property owners within SAISSA boundaries.**

FUNDING

1994 BEACH RESTORATION

The construction and post-construction monitoring costs were almost entirely funded by property owner assessments collected through the SAISS Municipal Service Benefit Unit.

2002 BEACH RENOURISHMENT

The construction costs were almost entirely funded by property owner assessments collected through the SAISS MSBU.

Since 2005, SAISSA has qualified for State cost-sharing assistance for most required post-construction monitoring programs, which has reduced the cost to SAISSA property owners.

2011 BEACH RENOURISHMENT

Property owner assessments collected through the SAISS MSBU initially funded most of the \$11 million cost of the construction phase of beach renourishment and three years of post-construction monitoring.

In 2014, the State of Florida reimbursed SAISSA 39% of construction costs, or about \$4.2 million for construction and monitoring costs. **This was applied to debt service payment, which reduced costs to property owners.**

Since 2014, the State has cost-shared monitoring, permitting and design costs associated with preparation for the next beach renourishment.

2021 BEACH RENOURISHMENT

The estimated construction cost of the proposed 2021 beach renourishment is currently **\$20.8 million.**

The State of Florida through its Local Government Funding Assistance Program has appropriated up to \$7.9 million in grants to reimburse SAISSA for some of the cost of the project, which would include the cost of post-construction monitoring in 2022.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State Division of Emergency Management (DEM) together are anticipated to reimburse SAISSA up to \$3 million for sand losses resulting from Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Irma in 2017. If, and when, received, this money would offset some of the cost of the 2021 beach renourishment.

Together, State and Federal agencies could possibly reimburse up to 53 percent of the total estimated construction costs, including the first year of post-construction monitoring costs. However, actual reimbursements will depend on actual expenditures.

State reimbursements are typically received during construction. Federal reimbursements are received months, sometimes years, after completion. Therefore, SAISSA will have to borrow an estimated \$20.8 million to initiate construction of the proposed 2021 beach renourishment.

Property owners will be responsible for paying the cost of renourishment, plus borrowing costs, less Federal and State reimbursements.

A majority of property owners will have to support the 2021 beach renourishment before any assessments will be approved by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners.

Individual property owner assessment amounts depend on property value and property location within SAISSA communities, i.e., oceanfront, non-oceanfront neighborhoods east of A1A, and neighborhoods west of A1A.

NEXT STEPS

Beach renourishment is a complex and challenging process requiring detailed engineering, extensive mathematical models, and approvals by multiple State and Federal agencies.

With the support of its members, SAISSA has successfully managed previous beach restoration and renourishment projects. Preparations to do so again are on-going, but this can only happen with your support. **In early 2020, property owners within the boundaries of SAISSA will be asked to sign a petition in support of funding the proposed beach renourishment project now targeted for 2021.**

Whether or not you own oceanfront property, the protection and preservation of our beach is vital to all the communities at the south end of Amelia Island.

Let the SAISSA Board of Trustees know what your questions are by emailing saissabeach21@gmail.com. We will do our best to answer them. We will update all property owners on key findings and actions that affect renourishment plans and approvals. We will publicize all scheduled town halls and community presentations.

We encourage all property owners to stay up to date on SAISSA plans for beach renourishment so when the time comes, you can make an informed decision about the future of our beach.