

THE TIGERTAIL LAGOON / SAND DOLLAR ISLAND RESTORATION PROJECT FAQs

1 What is all the work going on in the lagoon and on Sand Dollar Island?

The construction work you are seeing on Sand Dollar Island and in the lagoon is part of the City of Marco Island's Tigertail Lagoon / Sand Dollar Island Ecosystem Restoration Project that was permitted through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

2 Why are you doing this work?



2017 Pre Hurricane Irma

The Project's goal is to restore the lagoon and island as closely as possible to the conditions prior to Hurricane Irma in 2017. The lagoon and island form the Big Marco Pass Critical Wildlife Area that is important to several protected species including birds, turtles, manatees, fish, and sea grasses.

As a result of gulf-side currents, the island's northern tip has grown 15 acres in five years. It is encroaching on the Marco River navigation channel and threatening closure of the lagoon entrance.

In 2017 Hurricane Irma caused significant damage to this area by reducing the height and resiliency of the central section of the island, allowing frequent storm waves to over-wash the island and push sand into the lagoon. This sand covered some critical sea grasses and wetland areas and restricted tidal flow to the southern end of the lagoon. In five years almost 20 acres of wetlands have been lost.



2022 Post Hurricane Ian

In September, 2022 Hurricane Ian dealt the final blow causing Sand Dollar Island to weld on to the mangrove shoreline in the middle section, creating two separate lagoons. There is currently a narrow, unsustainable break in Sand Dollar Island by the southern lagoon that is pushing even more sand into that area. It is currently the sole source of tidal flow to the southern lagoon and county park.

Finally, Sand Dollar Island, the lagoon, and the associated mangrove shoreline provide an important natural barrier against storms for the northwest side of Marco Island that is prudent to maintain

3 How are we accomplishing this goal?



The equipment you are seeing is doing 4 things:

1. Opening up the lagoon's northern entrance and deepening the lagoon channel to improve tidal flow/water quality and restore habitat.
2. Reconnecting the northern & southern lagoon sections by excavating the channel that previously existed.
3. Recycling the sand from the island's northern tip and the lagoon channel to rebuild the protective dune in the island's middle section.
4. Shaping and grading the island's northern tip to create optimal conditions for shorebird nesting.

4 When will the work be complete?

The work on the northern tip of Sand Dollar Island is scheduled to be completed by the end of February and the overall project is scheduled to be completed by May 2023.