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Contact: Tina Haisman, ASBPA Media Relations, (239) 292-2882 or media@asbpa.org.

ASBPA Announces 2009 Winners of Best Restored Beaches

FORT MYERS, FL – The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) today announced winners of its 2009 Best Restored Beach Award.

This year's winners are: Fire Island, N.Y.; South Padre Island, Texas; Marine Park – Bellingham, Wash.; St Joseph Peninsula, Fla.; Encinitas (Pacific Station), Calif.; Lido Key, Fla.; Duval County, Fla.

"ASBPA created the Best Restored Beach award as a way of highlighting the value of restored beaches," said Harry Simmons, mayor of Caswell Beach, N.C., and ASBPA president. "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."

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 eroding 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 over 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 \$320 back in tax revenues.

Coastal communities have restored more than 370 beaches in the United States, including such iconic coastlines as Miami Beach, Coney Island and Southern California's Venice Beach.

At a time of economic recession, the beach is an even more desirable destination than other domestic and foreign alternatives.

To enter the competition, coastal communities nominated their restoration 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:

Bellingham, Wash.: The Bellingham project generated significant public interest in beach restoration. The project started in September 2004, with a beach cleanup effort to remove wood piles, rebar and asphalt paths. The newly completed Marine Park Shoreline Restoration Project provides safe water access and features lush landscaping, new benches and a renovated picnic shelter. The project also includes rock structures to keep the new sand and cobble in place; and environmentalists enhanced the fish habitat that connects the salt marsh and eelgrass habitat systems.

Duval County, Fla.: The Duval County Shore Protection Project is a federally authorized project along 10 miles of the Atlantic coast near Jacksonville, Florida. It extends from the St. Johns River jetties to the St. Johns County line and is a section of shoreline that was heavily damaged by numerous severe storms in the 1960's, including Hurricane Dora. Beach restoration reestablished a wide, stable sandy beach that provides storm protection benefits, environmental enhancement and increased recreational opportunities for the residents of Jacksonville and northeast Florida and tourists from around the world. The project is part of a long-term project initially constructed in 1980 and is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Jacksonville.

Encinitas, Calif.: The Encinitas-Pacific Station Project is the first "opportunistic use" project in Encinitas and was made possible through a public-private partnership. The goal was to place suitable beach-quality sand from a local development project (Pacific Station) on one of the city's most popular beaches to provide recreational enhancement and storm protection benefits. The city and the developer worked cooperatively and with a variety of local, regional, state and federal regulatory agencies. One of the key features is this project added a new source of sand into a sand-starved beach system. As the sand drifts south, it will protect beaches and coastal properties and provide increased recreational benefits for many miles down the coast.

Fire Island, N.Y.: This project is a highly successful beach renourishment project built between January and April 2009. It is the culmination of 16 years of individual effort among 11 communities leading to the largest and first joint project on the Fire Island barrier island along the south shore of Long Island, N.Y. The project demonstrates how periodic renourishment aids in sustaining greater storm protection and recreational enhancement, instead of waiting until erosion has reached a critical point before action is taken. The project also restored the protective beach and dunes of one critically eroded community, and will aid in preserving the shoreline for future visitors to Fire Island.

Lido Key, Sarasota, Fla.: The Lido Key is located within the City of Sarasota, on the west coast of Florida. The bright white beach of Lido Key is vital to both the local and state tourism-driven economies and is a major recreational asset for City residents. In addition to year round recreational use, the beach is also important in providing coastal storm protection. The beach renourishment project concluded in April 2009 with the placement of over 600,000 tons of white sand. The project restored the beach of Lido Key to the condition it was in prior to the devastating hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, and now provides vital storm protection for a hurricane evacuation route, major residential buildings and recreational areas, as well as restoration of the beach's sea turtle nesting and shorebird habitats.

South Padre Island, Texas: South Padre Island is on a barrier island off the southern tip of Texas. The town's commitment to preserve and restore local beaches, maintain the quality of life and sustain the

local tourism-based economy was the driving force for the beach restoration project. In 2008, Hurricanes Dolly and Ike each caused severe damage to the town's beaches, including the back beach sand dunes. The project was designed to work with nature to enhance local coastal resources while restoring coastal habitat. The project was successfully completed in early 2009 and has produced clean, wide beaches that are open to the public.

St. Joseph Peninsula (Cape San Blas), Fla.: The St. Joseph Peninsula Beach Restoration Project is located along the western portion of Gulf County, Fla. Over 250,000 people visit St. Joseph Peninsula each year and provide substantial economic benefits to the local economy. A key component of the project's success was the support of the local community, who donated time and resources to make this project a reality. The project included beach restoration along 7.5 miles of coastline, including areas with critically eroded beaches. The project's success is based on excellent sand quality and design, resulting in an enhanced recreational beach, increased storm protection and an extended habitat for marine life.

"This year's award-winning restoration projects displayed solid science principles as well as excellent environmental concerns," Simmons concluded.

Past 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; Rehoboth and Dewey Beaches in Delaware in 2006; the Chaland Headland Restoration Project in Louisiana in 2007; and Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle, Wash. in 2008.

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ABOUT ASBPA

Founded in 1926, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) represents the scientific, technical and political interests along the coast in an effort to shape national research and policy concerning shore and beach management and restoration. ASBPA strives to engage in a factual debate on coastal issues and economics that will foster sound, far-sighted and economical development and preservation of our beaches; thereby aiding in placing their beliefs within the reach of the largest possible number of people in accordance with the ideals of a democratic nation. For additional information about ASBPA, please visit www.asbpa.org.

This information is provided by the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association. For information, to change your e-mail address or to unsubscribe from this list, contact us at exdir@asbpa.org.