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Across the Way...

Life on Dewees Island, South Carolina

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Building a Beach for Future Generations



Erosion and accretion.

For those who own property on a barrier island, one is good and one is bad, but both are as natural as the rise and fall of the tide. Nature gives, and nature takes away, and that's just the way it is.

Or is it?

We've all heard stories of houses crumbling into the sea when the ocean reclaims her age-old territory...and it's become almost commonplace for developers to build homes on recently accreted land, acting as though Mother Nature has provided a permanent gift of buildable property. Are these homes one day doomed to fall into the sea?

Yes, no, and maybe.

The answer, of course, is ambiguous, because humans cannot overpower the forces of nature. But what we *can* do is study the issue...learn how nature works...and work with those natural

systems to enhance their effectiveness. And that is how Dewees Island has approached the issues of erosion and accretion.

A little history: When the Dewees Island development team arrived in 1991, the Dewees beach was heavily damaged. Hurricane Hugo had torn ashore in 1989, and the dunes system and maritime forest were crumpled into a massive heap of destruction. Millions of pounds of sand had washed away, and the beach's long-term stability was uncertain. Understanding the value of the beach as an amenity and the value of the dunes system as a "line of defense" against future storms, the development team set in motion an effort to renew and revitalize the entire ecosystem.

The first step was to install ranks of sand fences. Although the nearly flat beach looked quite peculiar with rows



As part of the Dewees beach nourishment plan, some of the Hurricane Hugo debris was selected to remain in place to offer stability for regrowing sand dunes.

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ACROSS THE WAY

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Dewees Island Annual POA Meeting

of brown wooden snow fencing stringing the beach for miles, the team knew that the fencing would function the same way as do dunes' vegetation. Quite simply, they would give sand blowing across the beach a place to hit...stop...and build up.

Almost immediately, the fences began to work, and sand began to "drift" into piles. To give the tiny dunes a chance to grow, developers also built beach access paths to the edge of the high tide zone. Again, this step looked almost humorous, because there were no dunes for the boardwalks to go "over." The focus, however, was a healthy dune system, so the boardwalks were construction...foot traffic through the ecosystem was eliminated...and the unmolested ecosystem was able to thrive. As a third step, developers enlisted the assistance of staff and property owners alike, as volunteers

took to the dunes area to plant and fertilize (by hand) indigenous vegetation like Sweetgrass, Sea Oats, and Seabeach Amaranth. These plants are, of course, the long-term answer to building healthy dunes systems, as their roots stretch far and deep, and give drifting sand a natural place to hit, stop, and build up!

The end result of Dewees Island's beach renourishment efforts almost defies description...today the beach boasts row after row of towering dunes, and the original boardwalks lie somewhere beneath many yards of new, white sand. Not only have the dunes grown up, they've grown OUT. Dewees' staff has had to extend the boardwalks three times to keep up with their expansion. The value added to Island property as a result of this wide, beautiful, stable beach is priceless.



As you can see above, two layers of boardwalk have been covered by our expanding dunes, and we're now on a third level!

Once again, the Dewees Island POA will be gathering for its Annual Weekend, a time of both business and fellowship. We hope all our POA members will make plans to join us, as this promises to be a great time for everyone!

Friday, March 14, 2003

6:30 - 9:15 p.m.

Cocktail Party & Heavy Hors d'oeuvres

7:00 - 7:10 p.m.

Sixth Annual Fishing Rodeo Results

7:10 - 7:20 p.m.

Fifth Annual Photo Contest Results

7:20 - 7:30 p.m.

Art Council - Art Show Announcement

7:30 - 7:50 p.m.

Environmental Program Presentation

Saturday, March 15, 2003

7:30 a.m.

Light Snack - Coffee, Juice, Water, Bagels, Biscotti, Fruit

8:30 a.m.

Utility Corporation

- I. Establish Quorum & Call to Order
 - II. Audit Review
 - III. Election of Directors
 - IV. By-law Revisions
 - V. Chairman's Report
 - VI. Adjournment
- 10:45 a.m. Short Break
11:00 a.m.

Property Owners Association

- I. Establish Quorum & Call to Order
- II. President's Report
- III. Audit Review
- IV. Election of Directors
- V. Island Manager's Report
- VI. Committee Reports
- VII. Adjournment

3:00 p.m. Oyster Roast and Barbecue



Arts Council Opens New Season

The Dewees Island Arts Council opens its Visual Artist Series 2003 at The Huyler House on Friday evening, March 14, with a stunning exhibition of black and white photography by renowned Savannah artist Jack Leigh.



Oystering by Jack Leigh features 20 photographs from the coast of

Charleston to Bluffton, SC; and is a part of a larger exhibition that has been touring museums in the Southeast. The exhibition will be on display through April 13 and all works of art are for sale. Contact Cassandra McLeod (886-9908) or Anne Anderson (886-4027) for purchases or additional information.