

Fernandina Beach dune restoration/sea oats planting

Sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*) are common plants found growing in Florida's sand dunes. They help to stabilize the sand on the dunes and can help the dunes to accumulate sand, rather than eroding. However, when people walk over and across sand dunes, the plants become dislodged and this leaves the dunes unprotected from wind and rain erosion. Planting sea oats in heavily trampled areas can help restore and protect the dunes which in turn helps protect the houses behind the dune area.



On the morning of October 13, 2001, 16 volunteers showed up to help plant 2100 sea oats seedlings along the dunes just north of the parking area at Fernandina Beach's North Beach. The plants were donated by Dr. Mike Kane at the University of Florida. He has been doing genetic studies on sea oats, looking at differences between plants that occur in the panhandle area of Florida and Florida's east coast. The planting is the first step of a planned 1-mile long dune revegetation project which is being coordinated by the City of Fernandina Beach.



After rounding off the top of the dune, volunteers placed stakes at 18" intervals to show where to plant the sea oats. We began at the top of the dune and worked our way down towards the beach.



After planting, the sea oats were fertilized with a balanced (10:10:10) fertilizer and were watered by the Fernandina Beach fire department.



A total of about 250 feet of dune was planted; the area was marked off with flagging tape and temporary signs. The remaining area of dunes will be replanted in early spring. If you wish to be notified about the next planting, please call Vicki Wolfinger (277-7310) or Maia McGuire (904-461-4014).