



August 27, 2008

Mr. Richard Noyes, Project Manager
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

Dear Mr. Noyes:

Please review the attached application from the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust to Florida's Beach Management Program for inclusion into Florida's Long-Range Budget Plan and a FY2009-2010 appropriation of \$135,000 for beach erosion control.

Please feel free to contact me in my office at 305-960-4603 if you have any questions or need for additional information regarding the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Nourishment Project.

Sincerely,

Guy Forchion
Director of Operations

HISTORIC VIRGINIA KEY BEACH PARK NOURISHMENT PROJECT

Florida Beach Management Program Long-Range Budget Plan (LRBP)

Project Description: The Historic Virginia Key Beach Park (HVKBP) nourishment project involves the restorative completion and maintenance of the 2002 US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Section 111, Shoreline Stabilization Project which started construction in mid 2004, 100% Federally sponsored.

The Section 111 project involved removing 25 existing timber groins and 26 concrete king pilings. 28 timber groins were constructed and installed to replace the removed existing timber groins along a 3,400-ft long section of shoreline. Placement of approximately 5,000 cy of fill material was planned to be deposited into the severely eroded area of the historic beach park's shoreline; the material was taken from a suitable site in central Florida. The construction of a coastal dune feature along a 1,300-ft long section of the shoreline, 2-ft high was proposed for the landward edge of the beach fill – approximately 710 cy of material would be deposited. The existing timber groins and concrete pilings were disposed of by the ACOE.

Location: Miami-Dade County, Florida, between reference monuments R84–R88.

Severity of Erosion: Historic Virginia Key Beach Park in Miami Florida is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; there are several historic buildings, historic structures and historic public pavilions and amusements that are sprinkled along the 1-mile shoreline. Along this natural coastal dune are 28 timber groins for erosion protection and historic visible impact. Surveys conducted in 1977, 1990 and in 1992 following Hurricane Andrew show the impacts of erosion, however, it is difficult to do direct comparative analysis of several profile lines due to the relocation of R monuments between the surveys but the comparative beach profiles for R-83 and R-84 show that beach fill placed in 1974 had largely eroded by 1990, prior to Hurricane Andrew. (ACOE, Section 111, Shoreline Stabilization Report and Draft Environmental Assessment, February 2002)

Benefits: 82 ½ acre Historic Virginia Key Beach Park is the City of Miami's largest park, open to the public 363 days per year. With approximately 1-mile of Atlantic oceanfront shoreline it is a natural recreation area with parking, historic features and amusements resting on a natural barrier island at the entrance to Biscayne Bay. Virginia Key is the Northern-most island in the Florida Keys.

Attached is a copy of the Virginia Key Beach Park Master Plan, it provides a historical context and environment study of the historic property and outlines the blueprint for the total restoration of the public park site.

A message from the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust's deceased founding chairperson, M. Athalie Range, in 2003 clearly related the importance of Historic Virginia Key Beach Park at that time; furthermore, a brief historical timeline provides additional milestones, (see attached message and timeline).

Federal Funding: The shoreline area targeted for the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Nourishment Project recently benefited from an ACOE, Section 111, Shoreline Stabilization Project that complete over \$2 million in construction before it was cut short of completion by America's involvement in the Iraq War. With the United State's involvement in the war the 100% federally funded project had all funding removed and the project ended before the shoreline was cleared of rock and debris and the dune restoration and all fill material could be placed.

During the same period of time the ACOE approved the construction of a Section 1135, Ecosystem Restoration Project which included exotic vegetation removal, native vegetation planting and some coast dune restoration. The project's 75% federal funding was removed and the project began with funding from the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust (Trust). The Trust completed the Section 1135's recommendations for exotic removal and began native replanting. Currently, federal funding has been nearly completely restored and the ACOE should begin work and completed the project in 2009-2010.

Local Commitment: HVKBP is City of Miami property; the City of Miami and the VKBPT have combined as the local sponsor of the ACOE Section 1135 Project. The Section 1135 has a 75/25 (Federal/Local) project match; the local match has contributed approximately \$400,000 to the completion of the project thus far. A dedicated local funding source for the LRBP Nourishment Project has not been identified at this time but the City of Miami and VKBPT are committed to the completion of the historic beach park along with Miami-Dade County which has contributed over \$20 million in county funds toward the construction of a museum on the historic beach park property.

State Funding: The attached Long-Range Budget Project cost estimate illustrates a \$135,000 cost share for the state of Florida. The entire historic beach park shoreline is eligible for state funding.

Project Performance: Historic Virginia Key Beach Park has been largely neglected since the late 1970's, through its closure in 1982, until historic renovations and repairs began in 2004. The beach park re-opened to daily public operations in February 2008 following a 26-year closure to public visitors.

Use of Innovative Technologies: The historic beach shoreline project area was initially established through traditional beach fill and construction techniques; erosion control devices (groins) were installed several decades ago and nourishment activities took place in the mid-1970's. The Trust is currently investigating a new erosion control treatment that may have the ability to re-nourish the shoreline with natural material without transporting in new/additional fill material. On-going testing of this new technology is currently taking place outside of the United States.

Use of Program Funds: The state funding request for Historic Virginia Key Beach Park will allow for initial surveying, environmental study, permitting, planning and design during the first year; following the initial design phase nourishment and shoreline restoration will commence followed by a schedule of monitoring and an additional assessment and nourishment phase.

Attachments: Message from former Trust Chairperson M. Athalie Range (deceased)
Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Timeline
Virginia Key Beach Park Trust Master Plan – Wallace, Roberts &
Todd, LLC

ATTACHMENT 1

A Message from M. Athalie Range, Chairperson...

In my opinion Virginia Key Beach Park is as important a part of the historical mosaic of South Florida as any other significant historical district or structure located in this Southern region. Virginia Key Beach Park is our history.

I remember the days before Rickenbacker Causeway. Before the causeway linked the island of Virginia Key to the mainland African Americans gathered on the Miami River to ride boats to Virginia Key Beach. During those years the beach was paradise for my community. Many other groups segregated by law who could not enter "white" beaches and recreation areas joined us at Virginia Key Beach. Hispanics and other Caribbean populations visited Virginia Key Beach and enjoyed its natural beauty and the "safe space" it afforded non-white populations during an era of separation and discrimination.

When I fast forward to the present I'm very proud to have the chance to lead the re-birth of such a historic and meaningful site through the efforts of the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust. The community and City of Miami officials have charged the Trust with the responsibility of planning, designing, and developing Virginia Key Beach Park for daily public use. We are working hard to upgrade facilities and build new educational and recreational attractions while maintaining many historical elements and natural settings.

Virginia Key Beach Park is now growing into a powerful symbol of unity for South Florida. Government leaders and the modern mosaic of diverse cultures have come together to fulfill the potential that is historic Virginia Key Beach Park.

Join us and become a **Friend of Virginia Key.** (January 2003)

ATTACHMENT 2

Timeline

- **1945 (August)** Virginia Key Beach Park opened as Miami-Dade County's "Colored Only" beach.
- **1979** Dade County gives the historic Virginia Key Beach Park property to the City of Miami.
- **1982** the City of Miami closes the historic beach Park citing high maintenance costs.
- **1987** a Master Plan for Virginia Key was developed by the City of Miami.
- **1998** City of Miami facing fiscal crisis considers private development of the public site for exclusive use.
- **1999 (June)** Miami City Commission established an official Virginia Key Park Civil Rights Task Force.
- **2000 (January)** a Virginia Key Beach Park Planning Charrette was conducted to determine future use of the historic property.
- **2000 (December)** Miami City Commission established the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust.
- **2002 (June)** historic Virginia Key Beach Park is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **2003 (February)** Virginia Key Beach Park Trust starts \$30 million Master Plan process.
- **2003 (November)** Groundbreaking for phase one of restoration & repair of historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2004 (August)** Shoreline re-nourishment project begins on historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2004 (November)** County-wide bond program is passed by voters and the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust is awarded \$15.5 million for construction.
- **2005 (January)** Sanitary Sewer project begins on historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2005 (June)** County-Wide General Obligation Bond program kick-off press conference is held on historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2005 (August)** Sanitary Sewer project is complete and pump station is energized.
- **2005 (October)** A full list of capital construction projects begin to prepare for beach re-opening highlighted by the Board of Trustees' selection of a respected architectural team to design the museum/cultural center on historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2006 (February)** Trust staff move administrative office to construction site on Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2006 (April)** Phase two of restoration (Circulation Roads and Parking Lot Improvements) begins.
- **2006 (August)** Miniature Train Corporation (MTC) 16-Gauge Mini Train returns to Historic Virginia Key Beach Park
- **2006 (September)** BEA International is selected as the Design Team for Museum Building on Historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2007 (February)** Release of RFP for Exotic Vegetation Removal on Historic Beach Park.
- **2007 (July)** Completion date for Circulation Road and Parking Lot Improvement.
- **2007 (November)** Completion of first phase of Exotic Vegetation Removal on Historic Beach Park

- **2008 (February)** Completion of the DERM Virginia Key Restoration Project – exotic vegetation removal, land clearing and native vegetation planting
- **2008 (February)** Completion of the Kids Play Area (Boundless Playground)
- **2008 (February)** Historic Mini Train repainting and rail road installation
- **2008 (February 22nd)** Historic Virginia Key Beach Park re-opens to the public for first time in 26 years.
- **2008 (July)** Haley Sharpe is selected as the exhibit design team for the Museum on historic Virginia Key Beach Park.
- **2008 (August)** Historic Mini Train and Railroad re-opens to the public for the first time in over 35 years.