



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources
Department*

City Council Regular Meeting Date: July 15, 2025

To: City Council
From: Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Dana A. Souza, City Manager
Date: July 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Wulfert Channel Dredging Project

BACKGROUND:

As a result of Hurricanes Ian, Helene and Milton, the Wulfert Channel and Dinkins Bayou channels have accumulated bottom sediment (material) that has impeded navigation. These areas require maintenance dredging to restore navigation channels and ensure safe passage of boats traveling to and from Sanibel residential docks.

At the June 5, 2025 City Council meeting, staff presented the Wulfert Channel and Dinkins Bayou Dredging Project and special assessment district for consideration. This project would have included dredging of the entire permitted areas in Wulfert Channel (9,250 cubic yards) and Dinkins Bayou (13,140 cubic yards). However, after extensive public comment and Council discussion, at the Special City Council meeting on June 12, 2025, City Council adopted Resolution 25-024 establishing their intent to levy a special assessment district for the cost of dredging the eastern portion (within the City's jurisdictional boundary) of Wulfert Channel only (2,900 cubic yards). The Resolution excluded the Dinkins Bayou Dredging area that was previously considered. City staff will hold a public meeting this summer to discuss a potential future dredging project within Dinkins Bayou with residents, to see if there is the collective will to move forward with it; and, if so, to collaboratively reduce the amount of dredging to the minimum necessary.

Project Scope & Approach

In accordance with Resolution 25-024, the Wulfert Channel Dredging Project includes the dredging of the eastern portion (within the City's municipal boundary) of Wulfert Channel only (2,900 cubic yards). Additionally, in order to transport the dredge spoils to the Henderson Road boat ramp for offloading, the City's contractor finds it necessary to dredge Area 1 & Added Area 1 (2,350 cubic yards), as shown on the Dinkins Bayou Dredging Plan, for a total project volume of 5,250 cubic yards.

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Subject to City Council approval and notice to proceed, the contractor (Bayside Dredging LLC) is prepared to commence dredging operations in August 2025. The Project Area will be dredged mechanically from a barge. Dredged material will be loaded onto a barge and transported to the Henderson Road boat ramp. The material will be transferred to sealed and watertight dump trucks and hauled to the Wulfert Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) for dewatering. Trucks will travel approximately 1.2 miles between the loading area and the WWTP by traveling along Henderson Rd., Dinkins Lake Rd., and Wulfert Rd. The final destination of the dredge material is yet to be determined, but after dewatering it will need to be hauled from the WWTP to a proper disposal site either on or off the island. The contractor estimates the project will take 60-90 days to complete.

Project Permitting

The City has received federal emergency permits through the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for maintenance dredging in Wulfert Channel (SAJ-2024-01807 NWP-SJF; work must commence by September 1, 2025) and in Dinkins Bayou (SAJ-2012-01760 NWP-SJF; work must commence by March 14, 2026).

State authorization is provided under the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Emergency Final Orders (EFO) for Hurricane Helene (OGC No. 24-2534) and for Hurricane Milton (OGC No. 24-2580). Under the EFO, this activity (i.e. restoration dredging to conditions and configurations existing immediately prior to the storm) may be conducted by a local government without notification to FDEP. The EFOs will expire upon the expiration or rescission of the related Governor's Executive Orders for Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton.

Any subsequent dredging after the expiration of the current state and federal emergency authorizations will require non-emergency FDEP and USACE permits. Once the emergency maintenance dredging is completed, the City will consult with FDEP and USACE on plans to establish long term permits for routine dredging of the project areas.

Project Cost & Contractor Award

On May 7, 2024, Sanibel City Council approved a 3-year contract with Bayside Dredging LLC to provide dredging services in the Shell Harbor/Sanibel Estates and Watershadows areas through FY26 (Contract PW24-028). The contract was awarded to Bayside Dredging after a competitive bidding process and the unit cost pricing for dredging is consistent with the awarded contract. Bayside Dredging's proposal is included in the agenda packet for this item in the contract attachments. Dredge quantities are estimates; the contractor will invoice based on actual quantity dredged. Should a suitable location be identified for disposal of the spoil material on island, additional savings may be realized.

FUNDING SOURCE:

City of Sanibel (33.33%) and the Wulfert Channel Dredging Assessment District (66.67%)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

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Approve the agreement with Bayside Dredging LLC to complete the Wulfert Channel Dredging Project in the amount of \$739,000 and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

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