

## **Beach building celebration scheduled for Oak Island Turtle Nesting Project**

**OAK ISLAND, N.C.** --Sponsors of the \$11.3 million project to restore two miles of beach habitat for nesting sea turtles will host a Beach Building Celebration on Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. Participants, including Congressman Mike McIntyre, will gather at the beachfront at the corner of East Beach Drive and SE 46<sup>th</sup> Street. Speakers will include Mayor Joan Altman, of Oak Island, Congressman McIntyre, COL James W. DeLony, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District. Members of environmental organizations and officials from other coastal communities will be present. **Members of the press are invited to attend.**

The project is a first in coastal construction—designed specifically to enhance habitat for the threatened Loggerhead Sea Turtle, Green Sea Turtle, and the endangered Kemp Ridley sea turtle. The animals lay their eggs on bare beaches above the high water line. Years of erosion have worn away the beach and dune system at Oak Island to the point that turtles either cannot nest, or lay eggs where they will inevitably be washed away by the tide. The project will add a wide stretch of beach over a two-mile length of shoreline, along with a raised berm to encourage the turtles to return to the sea, rather than moving into Island housing areas and associated traffic hazards.

The Town of Oak Island is the project sponsor, and has provided major contributions, including \$1,418,750, and in-kind contributions of walkways and dune plantings. The town has also enacted a special lighting ordinance to further protect the turtles and enhance the project.

North Carolina State Division of Water Resources has supported the project with \$4,256,250 in funding.

Construction on the project is being carried out by Bean Stuyvesant, LLC, a contractor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District. The Corps provided the federal funding, design, and construction for the project. The federal share of project costs, \$5,675,000, is authorized under section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act as an environmental enhancement to an existing federal project,