

Cortez Commercial Fishing Village Uses Grassroots Efforts To Fund Large Scale Habitat Restoration

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Cultural Embrace of Surrounding Water

Cortez Fishing Village is one of the last of its kind in Florida. Located an hour south of Tampa on Sarasota Bay, this small, timeless community truly embraces its maritime heritage and the need to protect and enhance native habitat. Because of its strong linkage of Community/Place/Occupation, the residents of the historic Cortez Fishing Village have long memories and a world view that is ecologically centered on the water that surrounds them. Despite the lack of restoration funding available, the fishermen (and women) hosts the Cortez Seafood Festival to raise funds and successfully leverage their monies to obtain grants for large scale habitat restoration.



Historical photo of the Cortez Fishing Village



Location Map

Grassroots Efforts to Fund Restoration

To preserve the natural habitat upon which the commercial fishing industry depends, the local citizens of Cortez began hosting the **Cortez Fishing Festival** to raise funds. Donations from more than 700 members and corporate sponsors support local restoration efforts including work done by fellow grassroots partner, the **Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (F.I.S.H.)**.

F.I.S.H., a local not-for-profit organization, is committed to preserve the character and heritage of Florida's traditional waterfront communities within the natural environment that nurtured people in fishing cultures for thousands of years. They have been awarded additional grants from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission.



1940's Historical Aerial of the FISH Preserve



FISH Preserve Concept Plan

Phased Habitat Restoration Projects

Despite the lack of restoration funding available, F.I.S.H. has successfully leveraged their fundraising dollars to develop an overall large scale habitat restoration plan and acquire federal, state, and local grants to enhance the Preserve habitat in phases. ESA provided the design, permitting, and construction oversight for this large-scale habitat restoration project.

The photos below depict a restoration effort funded by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.



Aerial of Recent Restoration

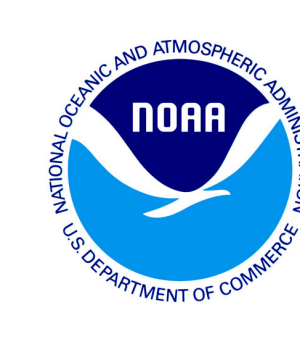
Acknowledgments/ Funding



F.I.S.H.



SBEP



NOAA



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