



SUN PHOTO BY STEVE REILLY

A Great Lakes Dredging and Docks Company crew prepares for the dredging of Stump Pass. The dredging company has been using Charlotte County's Chadwick Park on Lemon Bay as a staging area.

Stump Pass dredging finally here

By **STEVE REILLY**
STAFF WRITER

ENGLEWOOD —
Dredging crews are expected to be setting up today in the Stump Pass inlet.

"The contractor is mobilizing and hopes to start pumping this week," said Michael Poff, president of Coastal Engineering, the consulting firm hired by Charlotte County for the project. He will be updating the county's Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee Thursday on the project.

"Oh, so close!" Poff exclaimed in an email to the *Sun*.

Poff's enthusiasm shouldn't be surprising, considering all the county went through.

The \$4.9-million dredging project was grounded for more than six months when the county received bids that exceeded the budget by \$5 million or more.

In December, a scaled-down project saw more bids viewed as more reasonable by the county. Great Lakes Dredging and

BEACHES AND SHORES

Charlotte County Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee meeting is at 9 a.m. Thursday in the conference room of Building Construction Services, 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. For information, call Gayle Moore at 941-623-1094.

Docks Company submitted the lowest bid.

The project will include depositing sand along the Gulf shoreline along the southern half of the Stump Pass Beach State Park, and for the construction of a permeable rock groin at the southern tip of Manasota Key.

The groin will trap some of the sand, keeping it from being carried by currents south, into the inlet. The groin could extend as much as 400 feet into the Gulf and will be constructed a foot above the mean high-tide line.

Dredging crews have until May 1, the beginning of sea turtle season, to complete their work on Manasota Key.

Great Lakes dredging crew members have been meeting with community representatives to discuss specific environmental issues and other concerns.

"Basically, it's an opportunity we take before every project to make our employees aware of the project area, the community and the sensitive areas of the community," Great Lakes operations manager Chris Faught told the Beaches and Shores committee last month.

The project also includes depositing sand along the northern shoreline of Palm Island after May 1.

Permitting agencies will allow sand to be deposited on the north shoreline of Palm Island during sea turtle nesting season; however, the county is subject to strict environmental protection measures, Poff said.

More detailed information on the Stump Pass project is available under "Project Status" on the county's website, www.charlottecountyfl.gov.

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