



Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association Monthly Newsletter JULY 2025 EDITION



Wrap-up of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session

by Pepper Uchino, President

Sometimes a marathon turns into an ultra-marathon. With the fiscal year 2025-26 budget signed on June 30th, within hours of the constitutional deadline, we enter the new budget year having literally just wrapped up the final act of the 2025 Legislative Session. In stark contrast to recent years, there was quite a lot of animosity and bickering between the Senate, House and Governor, much of which spilled into public view.

SB 2500, the budget bill, came in about \$115.1B, including almost \$2B in tax relief. Trust fund spending was \$64.5B, with general revenue making up the balance at \$50.6B. The state's reserves are healthy at \$15.7B – unallocated general revenues stand at \$7B, \$4.9B in the Budget Stabilization Trust Fund, \$500M in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund, and the remainder \$3.3B in unallocated trust funds.

APPROPRIATIONS

Our governmental strategy was to request \$50 million in recurring Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) dollars for beaches and to request funding the DEP's hurricane recovery plan with supplemental dollars. From the start of committee weeks, we knew this would be a tall order as the Legislature, especially the House, indicated heavy budget cuts – including recurring funding. In a busy session for FSBPA, our programmatic budget line remained open (not a good thing) until the very end, but started with \$50M, which provided some level comfort going into budget conference negotiations. On the other hand, the writing was on the wall early on that there was no interest in funding the recovery plan – priorities of the presiding officers lay elsewhere, and no supplemental funding was dedicated to the \$242M recovery plan. Despite an extremely tight budget year, we were able to secure \$52.5M for the statewide program (\$50M recurring trust fund and \$2.5M non-recurring general revenue).

In addition to regular beach funding, we once again targeted the hurricane restoration reimbursement grant program (HRRGP) for additional sand placement. As you recall, the program received two tranches of \$50M each after Hurricanes Ian and Nicole in 2022. The

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dollar-for-dollar reimbursement program for armoring and sand placement for individuals, which was later expanded to multifamily units, has been severely underutilized. The program was extended for one year, and like last year, half the remaining funds as of July 1, 2025, will be available to local governments for large scale sand projects without a match requirement.

The Traditional Statewide Beach Budget for FY2025-26

TOTAL - \$52.5M

1661 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY BEACH PROJECTS - STATEWIDE FROM LAND ACQUISITION TRUST FUND . .	52,542,082
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From the funds in Specific Appropriation 1661, \$50,000,000 in recurring funds and \$2,542,082 in nonrecurring funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund are provided to the Department of Environmental Protection for distribution to beach inlet management projects consistent with any component of the comprehensive long-term management plan developed in accordance with section 161.161, Florida Statutes. Funds shall be used to fund post-construction monitoring and projects 1 through 13 on the Strategic Beach Management Plan and projects 1 through 8 on the Inlet Management Plan.

Other beach funding in SB 2500

“Back of the bill” and Implementing Bill

Section 167 of SB 2500 – Reverts and reappropriates unexpended balances in the Hurricane Restoration Reimbursement Grant Program to DEP - approximately \$16M. This section must be read in conjunction with Section 10 of SB 2502, the budget implementing bill, which extends the program for one year. More importantly for our purposes, as of July 1, 2025, half of remaining funds in the program will be made available to local governments affected by Ian and Nicole with no match requirement for large scale sand placement needs. **Projects must be completed by 7/01/2026.**

Up to an additional \$15M is available to assist and mitigate impacts from harmful algal blooms to the state’s beaches, although protecting beaches is just one of the listed purposes for the funding, so we can expect the funding to be spread among the other enumerated purposes.

1529 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY GRANTS AND AIDS - INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FROM WATER PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM TRUST FUND .	10,000,000
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Funds in Specific Appropriation 1529 are provided to the Department of Environmental Protection for the purpose of supporting the evaluation and implementation of innovative technologies and short-term solutions to combat or clean up harmful algal blooms and nutrient enrichment of Florida's fresh waterbodies, including lakes, rivers, estuaries and canals. Funds may be used for the Department's red tide emergency grant program to support local governments in cleaning beaches and coastal areas to minimize the impacts of red tide to residents and visitors. Funds may also be used to implement water quality treatment technologies, identified by the Department, near water control structures in Lake Okeechobee.

1532 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND

NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY
GRANTS AND AIDS - HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS
MANAGEMENT
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 5,000,000

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1532 are provided to the Department of Environmental Protection to assist county governments responses to emergency conditions associated with Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) (which includes, but is not limited to, red tide and blue-green algae blooms) that may impact the public health, Florida's environment and fragile ecosystems, including beaches and wildlife. Funds will implement an emergency grant program for the mitigation of HABs to minimize the impacts to Florida residents and visitors.

Other Environmental Appropriations Issues

This budget includes slightly less than last year's record for environmental programs. It reflects the belt tightening that was expected as continued nonrecurring spending ate into anticipated dwindling surpluses. As usual, resilience, everglades, and water spending were near the top of the list, but significant funds were allocated to land acquisition once again, but through DACS for agricultural land easements. The following is a partial list of budget items we tracked in the environmental silo that were included in SB 2500.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES SPENDING

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Total: \$3.4B (\$743.7M GR; \$2.66B TF)

- Only relevant line item because it comes from LATF –
- Conservation and Rural Land Protection – Easements and Agreements - \$250M (\$200M from LATF)

Department of Environmental Protection

Total: \$2.6B (\$666.7M GR; \$1.93B TF)

- ***Beach Management Funding Assistance - \$52.5M + HRRGP Funds (approx. \$8M)***
- Everglades Restoration Projects (All) - \$810M
- Water Quality Improvements - \$461.5M
 - Water Quality Grant Program, including water projects - \$436.5M
 - Indian River Lagoon WQI - \$25M
 - Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvements - \$20M
- Total Maximum Daily Loads - \$26.2M
- Non-Point Source Planning Grants - \$8M
- Onsite Sewage Program - \$1.8M
- Florida Gulf Coast University Water School Study - \$8M
- **Harmful Algae Blooms**
 - ***Blue Green Algae Task Force - \$10.8M***
 - ***Innovative Technology Grants for Harmful Algal Blooms - \$10M***
 - ***Harmful Algal Bloom Management - \$5M***
 - ***Study on effects of Blue green algae toxicity (in DOH budget) - \$1M***
 - ***Harmful Algal Bloom Grants - \$600K***
- ***Coral Reef Protection – \$17.8M***
- Coastal Zone Management Program - \$1.4M
- Springs Restoration - \$50M
- **Resilient Florida Program/Sea Level Rise & Flooding Resilience - \$150M**
- Florida Forever Programs and Land Acquisition - \$69.4M
- Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern - \$20M
- State Parks Maintenance and Repairs - \$19M
- State Park Facility Improvements - \$15M

Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Total: \$569M (\$46.3M GR; \$403M TF)

Relevant line items:

- Derelict Vessel Removal - \$4.5M
- Gulf Coast Restoration - \$1.9M

SUBSTANTIVE BILLS PASSED DURING SESSION

The following bills were passed during the 2025 Legislative Session:

[SB 80](#) (Harrell)/[HB 209](#) (Snyder) – State Land Management (FSBPA SUPPORTED)

The bill requires state parks to be managed for conservation-based recreational uses and in a manner that provides the greatest combination of benefits to the public and the land's natural resources. It bans the construction of sports facilities and lodging establishments within state parks. Additionally, it authorizes DEP to acquire, install, or permit the installation of campsites and cabins in state parks within certain restrictions. The bill also requires DEP to provide a report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the status and operation of state parks. Lastly, the bill revises notice requirements for public meetings related to land management plans.

The bill has been signed into law and is now [Chapter 2025-76](#).

[SB 1300](#) (Simon)/[HB 1143](#) (Shoaf) – Permits for Drilling, Exploration, and Extraction of Oil and Gas Resources (FSBPA SUPPORTED)

The bill requires DEP to consider certain factors when determining whether natural resources of certain bodies of water and shore areas are adequately protected from potential accidents or blowouts from oil or gas drilling and exploration activities. As part of a balancing test, it requires DEP to evaluate protective measures against potential harm, considering the natural resources' ecological functions, water quality impacts, and other environmental factors. Additionally, the bill prohibits certain oil and gas drilling activities in counties designated as rural areas of opportunity if the proposed site is within 10 miles of a national estuarine research reserve.

This bill has been signed into law and is now [Chapter 2025-193](#).

[SB 1622](#) (Trumbull)/[HB 6043](#) (Andrade and Abbott) – Beaches (FSBPA SUPPORTED)

The bill repeals the customary use change adopted by the Legislature in 2018, which caused significant confusion and litigation in Walton County and Redington Beach. The repeal returns Florida to the legal paradigm that existed under case law. Doing such allows a local government to adopt an ordinance or rule that finds, determines, relies on, or is based upon customary use of any portion of a beach above the mean high-water line (MHWL) without the need to first obtain a judicial declaration affirming a recreational customary use on the subject beach. It also creates a new process for establishing an erosion control line (ECL) for the purposes of constructing a beach restoration project in Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Bay, Walton, Levy, and Monroe Counties by setting the ECL at the MHWL as determined by a survey, without public comment. It requires the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to adopt to the ECL and file the proper documentation of such ECL where one has not previously been adopted. The bill clarifies that:

- The DEP may proceed with beach restoration projects for specified critically eroded beaches.
- Beach restoration projects conducted pursuant to these provisions do not require a public easement.
- Any additions to property seaward of the erosion control line resulting from such restoration projects remain state sovereignty land.
- Such restoration projects are in the public interest.

This bill has been signed into law and is now [Chapter 2025-178](#).

ISSUES NOT PASSED DURING SESSION

Tourist Development Taxes:

The House made a significant push to significantly adjust how tourist development taxes would be spent. After heavily lobbying against the bill, the issue died in committee. The final iteration would have redirected 75% of TDT revenues not pledged for bonds or other contractually obligated projects to reduce the local property tax burden. This would have

devasted our local governments' ability to come up with matching dollars for state and federal projects. I expect this issue to come up again next session.

Auxiliary Containers:

The bill would have preempted local auxiliary container ordinances, such as those regulating bag and single-use plastic and polystyrene food containers. I also expect this issue to come up again next session.

Attend the 2025 Florida Resilience Conference!



Conference Updates

- Abstract Notifications will be sent out by Friday, July 11th.
- Early registration rates are available through August 20, 2025.
- For more information on registration fees and to register, visit the [Registration page](#).
- Sponsorship opportunities are still available on [our conference website](#). Don't miss the chance to be part of Florida's premier beach management and coastal resilience event!
- Reserve your hotel room early: [click here](#) to make your reservation online.
 - Group Rate \$229 single/double and a reduced resort fee of \$15 per day, plus tax
 - Self-parking is complimentary for overnight guests. Day self-parking is \$17 per day.
 - The hotel will honor the group rate as long as rooms remain in FSBPA's block or by **August 20, 2025, whichever** occurs first.
 - *NOTE: When making your reservation by phone, please mention **Florida Resilience Conference** to receive the group rate.*



For more information about the conference, email mail@fsbpa.com.

Conference
Website

Article Spotlight - Sandsnap: An Improved Model and a Growing Database

By Brooke Walker, David Young, Brian McFall, Shelley Whitmeyer, Dan Buscombe

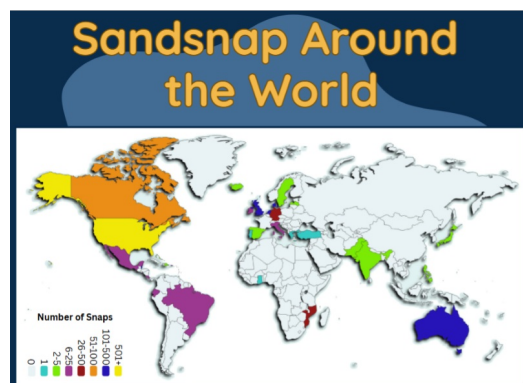
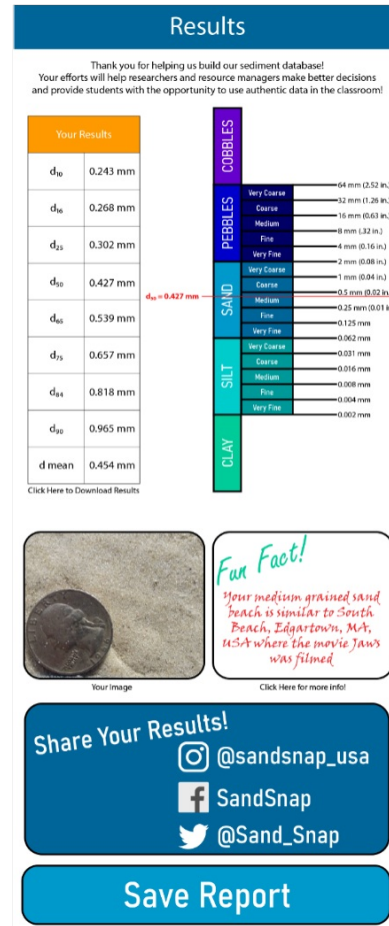
What is Sandsnap:

One of the major data gaps in studying beach morphology is sediment grain size, which is a critical factor in all nearshore morphology models. Knowing sediment grain size informs many aspects of coastal management decision making, including coastal resilience and vulnerability, beach nourishments, and beach compatibility for beneficially used dredged sediment. Traditionally sediment grain size is physically collected on an as-needed basis; however, physical collection at a large scale is unfeasible – prohibitively expensive in both time and cost.

Sandsnap is an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers research initiative to amass the first nationwide beach sand grain size database with the help of citizen scientists using their smart phones' cameras and on-board GPS. Building a nationwide sediment grainsize database is achievable when combining ubiquitous smart phone technology with artificial intelligence.

How Does Sandsnap Work:

Sandsnap users take a photo of sand along with a U.S. coin or Euro coin, which is used for scaling, and upload the photo along with their phone's GPS location to the Sandsnap database via the web application (<https://sandsnap-erdcchl.hub.arcgis.com/>). The image is then analyzed with several open source deep learning convolutional neural networks on MS Azure cloud computing resources to filter erroneous images, detect the coin, and measure the sandy beach grain size distribution. The calculated grain size is returned to the user within two minutes along with a fun fact and as also added to the cloud database. All image submissions and extracted grain size data are easily accessible and available for download on the interactive SandSnap web application.



Sandsnap Updates:

Over the past several years, the Sandsnap team has been making iterative changes to the model, improving accuracy and processing methodology. The Sandsnap database has grown from 700 entries in 2021, to nearly 3,500 entries in June 2025. Sandsnap has also gone

international – with data submitted from over 40 countries, requiring the Sandsnap team to retrain the model on Euro, Canadian, and Mexican coins.

Sandsnaps within the United States and its territories comprise 65% of the total. Florida snaps make up 10% of Sandsnaps nation-wide! Additionally, the Sandsnap team is working with the Infinity Science Center in Pearlington, MS to develop a museum exhibit that will be shared with an estimated 60,000 guests every year.



How to Support Sandsnap:

There are several great ways that you can get involved with Sandsnap. **First**, send us your sand snaps! Use this quick guide and QR code to access our web application where you can upload your photos of sand at each beach you visit. You can find the full instructions and hints for taking the best photos on our [website](#). Each snap helps us to further improve our model and adds to our grain size database to improve coastal management.

Second, send us training data! We use both images of beach sand along with a physical sand sample to train the Sandsnap model. The more varieties of sand we can input into the training database, the more robust the model will be. If you're interested in providing sand samples to the Sandsnap team, please send an email to SandSnap@usace.army.mil. We will send you a sample collection kit, along with a pre-paid shipping label to mail the beach sand sample back to us.

Finally, follow us on social media! By following us, you help us reach a wider audience of beach-goers, citizen scientists, and sand aficionados. You can find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and [Instagram](#). We would love to share our improvements and milestones with you.

Contact:

If you would like to reach out with any questions or get more involved with Sandsnap, please email us at SandSnap@usace.army.mil. We would love to hear from you!

In Memory of Rob Weber - Cherished Colleague and Friend

We are deeply saddened to share the passing of Robert "Rob" Weber, a long-time colleague,

dedicated board member, and unwavering advocate for Florida's beaches. Rob served as Coastal Coordinator for the Town of Palm Beach for more than 15 years, and his leadership and devoted service left a lasting impact on both the shoreline and our coastal community.

Rob was humble in his accomplishments and always quick to recognize the contributions of others. His work on regional beach management—including the development of Florida's first Beach Management Agreement—showed his vision, determination, and collaborative approach with an infectious never give-up attitude. In 2021, FSBPA presented Rob with the **Local Government Award** in recognition of his outstanding commitment to beach preservation and enhancement.

Rob had a remarkable ability to connect with residents, stakeholders, and agency partners. He was deeply respected by all who had the privilege of working with him. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Rob's family, friends, and colleagues. He will be dearly missed and always remembered.



A monthly electronic publication of the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association.

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Calendar of Events

FSBPA Events:

August 20: Last day to secure your hotel reservation

August 20: Early registration for the 2025 FRC ends

September 17: 2025 FRC begins

September 18: Annual FSBPA Business Meeting

September 18: Annual Awards Banquet

February 4-6: 2026 National Tech Conference

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