

Press Release

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Landowners Invited to Restore Dunes

FORT MORGAN - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners are encouraging coastal landowners to grab a shovel, get their hands dirty, and help restore wildlife habitat.

The beautiful dunes along the Gulf Coast are home to a number of unique species, including the Alabama beach mouse, sea turtles and migratory birds. But the dunes have taken quite a beating from recent storms. That's why the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are inviting landowners to restore those dunes and give wildlife a fighting chance.

"Recent hurricanes have caused considerable damage to wildlife habitats along the Alabama coast," said Rob Tawes, a supervisor in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Alabama Field Office in Daphne..

"In response to the damage, Congress appropriated money to the Fish and Wildlife Service, and we have, in turn, partnered with other agencies to develop a program to assist landowners in restoring damaged habitat," explained Tawes.

The partners are hosting a **Dune Restoration Field Day on November 7th at 9:30 a.m.** Participants will meet at the beach property of Lynda and Blaine Crum in Fort Morgan. The addresses are 3388 Ponce de Leon Ct. and 3372 Ponce de Leon Ct. Additional parking is available at Reed Realty just across the street.

Here, landowners will learn how to plant vegetation and take care of the plants to enhance dune formation. We will also provide them with information on how to apply for funding to help with other restoration projects on their property. Those projects would include maritime forest and salt marsh restoration, installation of protective fencing and retrofitting lighting fixtures to reduce light pollution along the beach.

The program will provide the plants, and the landowner will be expected to take care of them. Participants will have no out of pocket expenses with this project. Organizers hope landowners will take advantage of this opportunity to rebuild their dunes, and help restore the beauty of the beach.

“So many landowners depend on the county, state and federal government to rebuild their dunes. We hope this project will open the door for landowners to restore the beaches themselves, and protect our unique wildlife,” said Rhonda Bryars with the Baldwin County Soil and Water District.

There will be plenty of visual opportunities for the media. If you are a member of the press and you’d like to join us, please contact Denise Rowell, public affairs officer for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service at 251-441-6630, or e-mail at denise.rowell@fws.gov. If you’d like to get involved with the project, contact Rhonda Bryars at 251-937-3297.