Dunes must be protected in order to reduce flooding

Beach-goers should not sit, walk, or play on sand dunes

R

Lee McDonald
GARDENING COLUMNIST

Of the new sea oats that were planted during the last multi-million-dollar restoration project after Hurricane Matthew, the survival percentage of seedlings we plant can be low, especially if they are not protected from human foot traffic. It takes two years for them to become established. Sadly, we had only eleven months. Some are still struggling to hold on, but with folks dragging lawn chairs over them or climbing the dunes and sitting on them, we can expect a lower stabilizing effect to this very expensive and worthy project. Without the dune structures, we can expect increased flooding. We can also expect rising costs and decreasing availability of property insurance for those living in areas where dunes have been compromised by poor planning and/or inadequate enforcement of laws to protect them.

There are many reasons to educate the public, even those who disagree that the sand dunes are not an appropriate place to build homes.

Neptune Beach resident Lee McDonald is a Master Gardener with the Duval County Extension Service.

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