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## Elnor Island cleanup gets underway

*Volunteers needed Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup> to help remove marine debris from the John's Pass mangrove key*

Treasure Island's Beach Stewardship Committee is about to embark on the first step in the cleanup of a mangrove key in John's Pass. Elnor Island, a 15-acre natural island situated at the east end of John's Pass between Treasure Island and Madeira Beach, is home to a number of native plant species, some invasive species and quite a collection of marine debris washed in by the John's Pass tides.

Already, the City of Treasure Island has instituted an annual spraying program to kill off invasive plant species such as Brazilian Pepper. On **Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup>**, the next phase begins to remove the accumulated marine debris on the island.

Beach Stewardship Committee Chairman Dennis Velasco says the cleanup effort doesn't involve volunteers hauling away any dead plant material. "What we're asking for is two types of volunteers: people who can use their boats to shuttle people back and forth to the island from Gator's docks and volunteers who want to work on the perimeter of the island and remove the accumulated debris."

Inspections of the island earlier this year by Treasure Island Commissioner Bob Minning indicate the debris consists mainly of dock lumber, all sorts of plastic containers and materials, glass and aluminum.

Volunteers should bring their own work gloves, sunscreen and bug repellent and rubber-soled boots or shoes. Volunteers meet at **8:30am on Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at the Gator's Marina docks adjacent to Kingfish Park** (just past Gator's Café & Saloon on Kingfish Drive).

City of Treasure Island barges will haul away all debris removed from the island. Sid Rice of Gator's Café is donating funds to cover the disposal fees.

"This project is the perfect activity for church groups, civic associations and environmentally-minded citizens," said Velasco. "Just a few hours volunteering can make such a huge difference in restoring the natural balance to Elnor Island."

Mariners who wish to provide boat shuttle service should coordinate with Dennis Velasco at 727-360-1901.