

Florida FFA chapter is 'Saving the Dunes'

BUNNELL, Fla. — Members of a Future Farmers of America chapter in a community near Daytona Beach, Fla., have discovered a way to stop sand erosion that threatened Flagler Beach and could have destroyed a nearby highway.

Some 90 FFA members are planting tough, salt-resistant grasses with long, fibrous root systems across 18 miles of beach.

When available, the group lays down discarded Christmas trees to

slow the blowing sand, says FFA advisor Jim Galvin.

Galvin says consistent high winds and hurricanes plague the beaches during fall and winter months, causing water levels to rise and waves to crash against the dunes. As the waterfront inches closer, erosion has become severe enough to threaten a nearby state highway, he says.

Heavy winds blow much of the sand away, further complicating the problem.



Members of the Future Farmers of America chapter in Bunnell, Fla. work to save the sand dunes of a popular seaside area near Daytona Beach. The FFA members hand-plant and care for tough salt-resistant grasses and use discarded Christmas trees to check the beach erosion. The effort is part of the FFA Chapter's Building Our American Communities project.

Last summer, the Bunnell FFA chapter in Flagler Beach began a three-year plan to "Save the Dunes."

Beginning with 3,000 salt-tolerant plants, FFA members treated the beach much as a backyard garden, carefully watering plants to ensure their survival.

Last winter, with the help of the 500 citizens of Flagler Beach, they collected discarded Christmas trees and lined them at dune sites.

Explains Galvin, "We placed the trees in the most eroded dune areas, laying them down on their

sides in gulleys caused by erosion and partially covering them with sand to hold them in place.

"The blowing sand caught in the limbs of the trees, and naturally started piling up. Within two weeks, the trees disappeared under the reconstructed sand dunes."

With 2.5 miles of the most popular part of the beach restored, Galvin says his chapter has accomplished what couldn't be done before:

"People tried a lot of other

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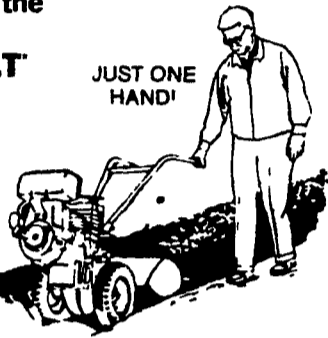
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