

# More volunteers needed on Sat., March 23 for beach grass planting at South Bethany and Delaware Seashore State Park

SUSSEX COUNTY – More volunteers are needed at two sites – South Bethany Beach and Delaware Seashore State Park – for Delaware’s annual beach grass planting set for 9 a.m. until noon on Saturday, March 23.

With online registration now closed, volunteers are urged to call DNREC’s Shoreline and Waterway Management Section at 302-739-9921 or email [Jennifer.Luoma@delaware.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Luoma@delaware.gov) to sign up. More information on the planting event can be found on DNREC’s website at [Beach Grass Planting 2013](#).

According to Jennifer Luoma, environmental scientist and coordinator of the event, other sites have enough volunteers signed up but more are needed in South Bethany and Delaware Seashore State Park, north of the Indian River Inlet.

“We are planting a large area of dunes in South Bethany and in Delaware Seashore State Park and could really use more volunteers,” said Luoma. “Dunes in these areas were rebuilt after Hurricane Sandy, and beach grass is needed to help stabilize the dunes and make them more protective during a coastal storm.”

The event, now in its 24th year, helps protect Delaware shorelines by planting Cape American beach grass on sand dunes at beaches along the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Last year approximately 800 environmental enthusiasts, families and students planted more than 150,000 stems of beach grass along

four miles of coastline between Delaware Seashore State Park and Kitts Hummock Beach.

Sand dunes are essential for protection against damaging coastal storms. When sand dunes are destroyed, storm waves can rush inland, flood properties and put lives at risk. Stabilized dunes absorb wave energy and act as major sand storage areas, which replenish sand to eroded beaches during a storm.

Beach grass helps to build and stabilize dunes by trapping windblown sand. As the grass traps the sand, it builds the dunes higher and wider, which makes dunes more protective of the structures behind them. Since the program was introduced in 1989, more than 5 million stems of beach grass have been planted by dedicated volunteers.

DNREC's Shoreline and Waterway Management Section coordinates the annual beach grass planting event. The section also implements beach replenishment and erosion control projects along Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay communities to enhance, preserve and protect private and public beaches.

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