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Legal Action Needed to Save Ingram Dunes

SCELP challenges DHEC's decision to permit the clearing and leveling of one of the highest and oldest relic dune systems in the entire state of South Carolina.

MARCH 4, 2019 — Today, the South Carolina Environmental Law Project (SCELP)—on behalf of Preserve Ingram Dunes, a group of concerned citizens formed in 2016—filed an appeal with the S.C. Administrative Law Court to help protect the historic and untouched dune system from a proposed 31-home residential development.

SCELP's appeal urges the Court to review and reverse the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) granting of a stormwater permit for the site, which is the last requirement before clearing and bulldozing can start.

Ingram Dunes is a privately owned, 9.4-acre stretch of coastal maritime forest and ancient dune system, as well as the last remaining undeveloped green space in the busy city of North Myrtle Beach. This sensitive natural area, located off of Hillside Drive between 9th Avenue South and 10th Avenue South, is home to a vast variety of species, including migratory birds, foxes, great horned owls, 100-year-old live oaks, as well as a widely used refuge for South Carolinians.

In today's filing, SCELP contends that this open space is not only a beautiful and beloved natural resource, the dunes naturally filter storm water and help control and prevent pollution. What's more, the dunes are a critical buffer to flood waters, meaning they are vital to an area especially vulnerable to flooding due to surrounding development.

DHEC's permit for the proposed project violates the state's coastal protection laws. Allowing the construction of the flood-prone development stands to "destroy a culturally, historically and environmentally significant state resource," SCELP's filing states.

Ultimately, the ideal outcome is for the City of North Myrtle Beach to purchase the land and turn it into a city park or nature preserve.

Thanks to major grassroots efforts from Preserve Ingram Dunes, preservation efforts are gaining traction. Last week, the South Carolina Conservation Bank granted \$510,000 to the City in order to purchase the dunes, adding to the \$500,000 already committed by the City.

However, there is still a long way to go to save the dunes from destruction. The estimated land value is between \$2 million to \$3.1 million. So far, roughly [\\$1.1 million](#) has been raised from the conservation bank's new grant, the city, concerned citizens and other supporters. What's more, the bank's [chairman Douglass Harper said](#) the city has only until June 30 to use the grant to purchase the land, with confirmation by May 1.

“We have worked to protect the Ingram Dunes for the past two years because we love this magnificent and unique land,” said **Damien Triouleyre, the coordinator Preserve Ingram Dunes**. “We continue to work in the spirit of cooperation with the land owners, the city of North Myrtle Beach, conservation groups and concerned citizens. We all have come a long way, we are so much closer now with the \$510,000 grant from the state... Now let's get this done and saved.”

More information on the fight to protect Ingram Dunes can be found here:
<https://scelp.org/projects/view/132>.