

# Flagler Government Begins Long-Awaited Drainage Project in MalaCompra Basin

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What the drainage project is hoping to alleviate. (© FlaglerLive)

Work has started on Phase 1 of the long-awaited MalaCompra Basin Water Quality Enhancement project in northeastern Flagler County.

That project will accomplish two goals: ease flooding on the northern barrier island, and prevent untreated stormwater and septic tank effluent from making its way into the Intracoastal and ultimately places like Pellicer Creek headwaters – a pristine estuarine system.

The first step of the project is to clear some trees in the Hammock for the construction of a 60-inch drainage outfall pipe along Bay Drive and State Road A1A. This work will take about two weeks.

“We appreciate everyone’s patience with us as we work on this project,” said County Engineer Faith Alkhatib. “We will do our best to minimize the impact of the daily life of our residents.”

Masci Construction Inc., a Port Orange company, was hired for the Phase 1 work, which will take nearly a year to complete at a cost of \$3.5 million. It is the “backbone system.”

Phase 2 will be paid through a grant that includes Bay Drive Park improvements and pond. It is out for construction bid.

The \$6 million Phase 3, which includes the side street collection laterals, is almost fully funded through a Florida Department of Transportation grant for the 2019-20 fiscal year. It is currently under design.

"I understand there have been problems in this area for decades," said Commission Chair Greg Hansen. "Getting this fixed is really a health and safety issue for our residents."

Assisting, the St. Johns River Water Management District in 2016 awarded Flagler County a \$500,000 grant as a Rural Economic Development Initiative cost-share program project. The District decades ago placed the project in its Northern Coastal Basin Surface Water Improvement Management plan.

The Flagler County Commission tracked the problems for many years, and in 2010 agreed to make the project a top legislative priority. The County has spent more than \$6 million combined on the design and permitting – through the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the acquisition of property for the holding pond and outfall easements.