

Cape May Point beaches in good shape, to get more sand

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — The borough's beaches are in good shape due to reefs installed years ago, and more sand is on the way.

Stewart Farrell, director and founder of Stockton University's Coastal Research Center, attended a Borough Commission work session Sept. 30 to provide an update of the condition of beaches.

He said Cape May Point's beaches would receive replenishment before spring as part of Cape May's beach fill from the Army Corps of Engineers. Farrell said about 150,000 cubic yards of sand would be placed in the Nature Conservancy. Beaches from Lighthouse Avenue to Whilldin Avenue would receive about 50,000 cubic yards of sand, Farrell said.

St. Peter's beach will receive about 30,000 cubic yards of sand with the option of the borough receiving sand further west at its own expense, he said.

"The project ends at the western St. Peter's beach groin and they don't do Stites Avenue, they don't do Alexander Avenue, it was never part of the project," Farrell said. "What's happened, of course, is sand bypasses the groins little by little and those beaches have grown substantially wider since the 2005 project."

He said Alexander Avenue beach grew last year by spring. Farrell said other than the narrowness of St. Peter's beach, "the town's in pretty good shape."

Farrell said Cape May is getting about 400,000 cubic yards of sand, with most to be placed near Poverty Beach and some placed at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May. He said storms have pumped sand around Cape May's Third Avenue groin into the cove.

"This summer, the cove was a glorious place to take kids of go swimming because it was real shallow, real flat," Farrell said.

He said three storms — Jonas, an October 2015 storm and Tropical Storm Hermine — each took about 30,000 cubic yards of sand and placed it in the Nature Conservancy, with the sand ultimately making its way to Cape May Point. Farrell said Cape May Point's dunes are "fine."

He noted the Stites Avenue beach entrance was filling in and may need snow fencing. Commissioner Robert Mullock said the borough was considering some improvements at the Stites Avenue entrance to make a more gradual grade.

"We got a grant to look at it and do engineering work," he said.

Farrell said northwest winds trap sand and fill in the entrance. He suggested short lengths of dune fencing from mid-slope perpendicular to the wind direction in short rows.

Mullock said during stormy weather, water comes up on St. Peter's beach to the crest of the trail.

"We're thinking some of the straight in, straight out trails we should turn," he said.

Farrell said a beach entrance trail that faced into the weather would be better to be on an angle. He said on the oceanfront, a southeasterly direction for the trails is better because winds blow from the northeast most of the time, allowing waves to roll past the entrance rather than follow the path.

Mullock asked if the Alexander Avenue beach groin could be extended. Farrell said it would help the configuration of the Alexander Avenue beach but cut off sand flow to Sunset Beach.

"Most of the sand that goes by the Alexander groin

goes out to the Concrete Ship," he said.

Farrell said a construction project to extend the groin would be challenging due to the current and depth of the channel. He said a lot of rock would be needed to bring the groin to the low tide mark. For every 10 feet of groin installed about \$150,000 worth of rock would be needed, Farrell said.

The Alexander Avenue beach groin is not located in Cape May Point but in Lower Township, according to Commissioner Anita van Heeswyk. She said an adjacent property is privately owned.

Farrell said over time, rocks sink and shift in a jetty, which produces gaps.

On a question of artificial beach saver reefs placed offshore at Cape May Point beaches 15 years ago, Farrell said the rate of sand loss is one-third less than before the structures were installed.

"St. Pete's beach is the only one without it and that's the place where the sand goes away the fastest right now," he said.

The Lighthouse Avenue beach is maintaining sand because of a flow from Cape May, Farrell said.

In the coming beach replenishment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will place most of the sand from



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Three storms — Jonas, an October 2015 storm and Tropical Storm Hermine — took about 30,000 cubic yards of sand from the Nature Conservancy beach, above. The sand ultimately made its way to Cape May Point, which benefitted from the fill.

Madison Avenue to the north in Cape May, some sand at the cove and a small portion at Lighthouse Avenue and St. Peter's beaches, he said. Overall, the replenishment will cost about \$27 million, Farrell said.

He noted that more than \$1 billion has been spent on sand in New Jersey in the past 28 years, with close to 200 million cubic yards of sand added to the system.

Environmental group could take on a larger role in Cape May Point

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Commissioner Robert Mullock is suggesting a bigger role for the borough's Environmental Commission, such as reviewing proposals for projects involving trees, vegetation, dunes and Lake Lily.

At a Sept. 30 Borough Commission work session, Mullock said he did not want the Environmental Commission to be a "wet blanket" on the activities of volunteer organizations in Cape May Point but wanted it to be supportive whether it was a project for an irrigation system or bringing in mulch.

"Signage has come up and it seems like signage falls through the cracks," he said. "I think there's a need for an artistic kind of evaluation."

Mullock said the borough has such natural beauty that it should not be spoiled with bad signage such as at beach entrances.

Commissioner Anita van Heeswyk said the borough chose black and white street signs because it looked "clean and neat" when other towns were using green signs. She said in the past, projects were brought before the Environmental Commission for a review from an aesthetics perspective.

"I think we need to coordinate signs first of all, but I think on another level, beyond signs," van Heeswyk said.

Mayor Robert Moffatt suggested all of Cape May Point's volunteer groups attend the same Borough Commission work session two or three times per year and provide an update on their work and projects.

Van Heeswyk said she was pleased the Environmental Commission was so active. She said she believed any decision made about Lake Lily, such as chemicals being put into

the lake, should be brought to Borough Commission's attention and voted on.

"I think of us as the trustees of these things," van Heeswyk said.

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