

Cape May Point's beaches continue to gain sand

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT—The borough's beaches continue to gain sand, according to an annual survey by Stockton University's Coastal Research Center.

"This is the third year in a row where the natural processes have provided moderate sand volume gains in Cape May Point and the exception is the 42,210 cubic yards of sand that was put in by the Army Corps project this winter," Deputy Mayor Anita vanHeeswyk said.

She said the beach monitoring project began in 1991 to address changes along the borough's beaches. Cape May Point is required to monitor its beaches in order to receive Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) money in the event of a disaster or loss of sand, vanHeeswyk said.

Concerns noted in the report are the Whilden Avenue and Coral Avenue beaches where beach saver reefs were installed in the past, she said. The report states that landward of the beach saver reefs from Lehigh Avenue beach to Whilden Avenue beach a minor trough remains. Concrete barriers are still exposed on the seabed and have become more of a tripping hazard and risk of cut



File photo/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

An annual study by Stockton University's Coastal Research Center found that Cape May Point's beaches continue to accumulate sand.

feet from marine growth on the structure than the previous potential for wave rush or backwash of swimmers into the structure.

"The depth of sand is changing there and the dynamic of that is different," vanHeeswyk said.

According to the report, in 2019 and 2021, large additions appeared along the eastern borough beaches offshore, to the point of near burial of the 1993 "beach-saver" reef system installed at Whildin and Coral avenue

beaches.

These reef systems remain in place, but practically buried in sand. The 2019, 2020 and 2021 cross sections at these two sites show the most sand ever seen at the reef system.

This sand accumulation continued with deposition further seaward from the reef systems creating a gentler slope into the bay. Strong northwest winds have produced dramatic additions to the western site dunes enhancing both

the crest elevations and generating a wider foredune slope that now occupies the entire pre-beach fill project work width of the beaches originally in each cell.

According to the report, in 2019, the borough's beaches recorded a gain of 29,848 cubic yards of sand focused largely on the eastern ends of the borough's shoreline.

In 2020, the gain was less at 17,825 cubic yards, but there were only three cells where sand was lost: Lighthouse Avenue beach, Lake Drive beach and Pearl Avenue beach.

The 2021 survey found that six of nine sites gained sand with the winner by far being the Lake Avenue beach. The total of 67,331 cubic yards exceeds the sum of the past two years and yields a three-year accretion of 115,004 cubic yards of sand. None of the loss compartments saw serious declines in sand volume or major shoreline position retreats landward.

The Army Corps of Engineers commenced sand placement in Cape May City in 1989 and have conducted maintenance or storm restoration efforts 12 times including restoring beaches following Hurricane Sandy in January 2014.

In January 2013, the Army Corps completed its second nourishment cycle

of the Lower Cape May Meadows-Cape May Point project with placement of 345,000 cubic yards of sand.

In 2016, an additional 951,893 cubic yards were placed along the entire region's shoreline. Altogether, the beach restoration south of Cold Springs Inlet jetties has added 7.7 million cubic yards of new material never previously within the local regional sand supply.

In 2021 the Army Corps trucked sand into Cape May Point to augment the Lake Drive beach cell with 50,000 cubic yards of sand.

The local wave approach to the regional shoreline guarantees that most of that sand will eventually pass into Cape May Point minus the volume which moves out to sea or onto the Delaware Bay bottom directly or remains in place as part of the beaches and dunes.

The net sand volume change for 2021 was an excellent gain of 67,461 cubic yards of sand. The entire report is available on the borough's website under the document center tab in the floodplain management category.

Honored

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Lear, Hendricks and Hayes accepted the award on Zoom in recorded video statements.

In his video, Lear said it was fortuitous the state enacted a library construction bond as the city was planning to renovate the school. State funding coupled with grant awards and local investments facilitated the project, he said.

"The new library's location in a formerly segregated building, in the heart of what was once Cape May's vibrant African-American neighborhood, is ideal," Lear said.

He thanked the NJLA for its mission and vision and the imaginations ignited by librarians.

In her video, Hendricks thanked Lear for his leadership in bringing the project to fruition. She said the project was a labor of love and had extraordinary support from the county.

"As a former teacher, I've always valued libraries, the citadels of lifelong learning. No matter the age or the interest of its patrons, a visit to their local library can enrich their worlds, strengthen their imaginations and increase their knowledge," Hendricks said. "As a civic leader, I value libraries for offering the space to create and sustain community."

Hendricks quoted former first lady Laura Bush, saying "the most valuable thing in my wallet is my library card."

In her video, Hayes said such a project does not happen without leadership, focus and the initiative of many.

"The idea of restoring this beautiful, historic building was initiated by Chuck Lear, supported by Patricia Hendricks, the Board of County Commissioners, the Library Commission, the city of Cape May and my library director, Andrea Orsini," she said.

"As fortune would have it, grant money from the state came available. Receiving these grant monies would not have been possible without the efforts of a diverse group of people from various backgrounds collaborating their knowledge to make this amazing project a reality."

The county Board of Commissioners, county Library Commission and the city of Cape May are collaborating, with each contributing one-third of the remaining \$3.4 million construction costs.

Additional resources include a \$500,000 grant from the National Parks Service and the balance of a CCA grant from the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office.

The Franklin Street School was in decline for a long period of time. More than 20 years ago the CCA, a group of local citizens dedicated to cultivating the arts for school children and preserving local Black history, began an effort to renovate the building to serve as an arts and community center. The CCA received grants from New Jersey historic preservation groups and private citizens that helped stabilize the building. While progress was made, a much more extensive effort was needed.

A feasibility study for the effectiveness of the school as a library was conducted in 2018 with costs shared by the Board of Commissioners, Library Commission and city.

Key public presentations on the proposal were made, including a May 2019 town hall meeting attended by an estimated 250 people. Most citizens spoke in favor of the project.

At a critical City Council meeting, local citizens packed the City Hall auditorium to voice their enthusiastic support for the new library and community center.

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
9	8:13	8:27	2:08	1:47
10	8:53	9:03	2:47	2:23
11	9:32	9:40	3:26	3:00
12	10:11	10:16	4:05	3:37
13	10:51	10:54	4:44	4:16
14	11:32	11:35	5:24	5:00
15		12:18	6:06	5:49
16	12:19	1:08	6:51	6:45

MOON PHASES
New moon, June 10 • first quarter, June 18

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