

Executive Summary of Current Situation at the Point of South and West Beaches

15 JUL 2011

Increased and accelerated rates of beach erosion were predicted by the Village of Bald Head Island as a result of the realignment and deepening of the navigational channel of the Cape Fear River to the Port of Wilmington. To address this concern, the Sand Management Plan was implemented in 2000 with the Army Corps of Engineers and the State to place sand on Bald Head Island, Caswell and Oak Island beaches to restore lost habitat based upon 2 year dredging cycles. Unfortunately, due to inadequate funding of the Corps, dredging cycles have not occurred as prescribed by the initial agreement or the subsequent Settlement Agreement reached in 2005.

The most recently missed dredging cycle for the winter of 2010/2011, due to lack of funds from the Federal Government, had a direct and immediate impact on Bald Head Island's West and South Beaches.

Accelerated erosion has occurred this spring along West and South beaches, most noticeably at "the Point." By the beginning of the summer, the western most groin (# 16 - closet to the channel) had become totally exposed. Within three weeks, approximately 70 additional feet of beach including vegetation/sand dunes behind the end of the groin was lost along more than 300 feet of shore line.

Over the past year, this area of the beach has been eroding on average of 1 foot per day, for a total loss of 350 feet of beach and dunes into the water. This loss of more than a football field occurred without any named or major storms. The rate of erosion is sporadic; typically the greatest losses occur during lunar high tides or strong winds.

The photos with this article illustrate the Point prior to the channel expansion, its state a few years ago, and the rapid loss of beach, vegetation and dunes in just the past few months.

The lack of promised renourishment sand and accelerated erosion at the Point created a crisis situation, leaving the Village Council little option but to explore temporary solutions funded by Village property owners to protect natural habitat and island infrastructure .

Village Council voted to impose an additional 3 cents on the property tax rate to raise \$350,000 for this new fiscal year. The money will be used for emergency beach repair and restoration. The first priority was extending groin #16 to slow the average annual rate of 1 foot per day erosion in this hot spot. The Council and Village believe this area of the beach will continue to experience non-natural erosion and are therefore working through the permitting processes to allow for a sandbag revetment wall. In the interim, sand is being pushed and trucked back to fill in the hole that is still being created at the landward end of the new groin extension to protect this groin and the adjacent groin from failing.

Council recognizes the Village tax payers cannot continue to self fund the protection of our beaches and infrastructure as a result of the Federal Government not meeting their contractual obligations of the Wilmington Harbor Project. The Village is presently in litigation in the U.S. Federal Court, Eastern District of North Carolina, to compel the Corps to meet its contractual obligations. The Village is working with all entities involved to secure appropriate funding in next year's Federal Budget. Understanding this is a daunting task in today's economy, specific information will be forthcoming to ask for your assistance in contacting state and federal legislators.



1. January 1989 -- The Point of South and West Beaches



2. August 2007 Following Full Beach Renourishment



3. July 7, 2011 Following Emergency Repair to Groin #16

