

Cove Beach not being replenished

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According to Pakan, the Cove Beach is part of a federal project area, but the goal of the fed area project is a little different than other coastal projects. He said the ACOE's main goal is protecting the eco-system beyond the dune line and not shore protection, which is the aim of the Cape May project.

Pakan said the ACOE began construction of the Lower Cape Meadows project in 2004-05, when they put in the berm.

"What you call beach we call the berm," Pakan said. "That was to make sure the sea water wouldn't affect ecosystem restoration."

The berm is part of a 50-

year renourishment commitment, and the last beach fill took place in the winter of 2008-09. Pakan said a dune constructed beginning about three years ago, which runs perpendicular to Beach Avenue, was not part of the ACOE project. He said it was a "betterment" project paid for by local and state government.

"The fact that it is eroding has no effect on the integrity of the meadows project," Pakan said.

The only dune the ACOE is concerned with lies closer to the meadows, which Pakan call a "structure of last resort." It is the main dune of eco-system restoration project, and Pakan said there would have to be a lot more

resources before the federal project would be threatened. The Cove Beach, he said, is not part of the project. He said the ACOE gets its "marching orders and authorization" from Congress, and there is only so much they can do.

"We don't take into account recreational benefits. Our concerns are storm damage reduction and meadows restoration," he said.

Karen Hershey from the NJDEP press office said the goals of the NJDEP were consistent with the ACOE. The NJDEP website says, "New Jersey's Shore Protection Program was created to provide for the protection of life and property along the coast, preserve the vital coastal

resources of New Jersey, and maintain safe and navigable waterways throughout the State" (www.nj.gov/dep/shoreprotection).

Pakan said the higher level of erosion is due to unusual weather patterns, which include cooler summer temperatures, persistent high tides, and persistent winds from other directions instead of variable winds. He said the ACOE's coastal engineer pointed out that a sand bar had formed off the beach and he said some of the sand would begin returning in the fall. Depending on the weather patterns, the build up could be significant.

Pakan said the Lower Cape Meadows is scheduled for

beach replenishment every four years and the Cape May beaches are scheduled for beach fill every two years. Cape May is supposed to be renourished in 2010, and both areas, then would be scheduled for renourished in 2012.

"That is subject to funding," Pakan said.

Each year Congress has to reauthorize funding for any beach replenishment projects. Pakan said the ACOE would be willing to do any beach betterment the city or state would fund.

MacLeod said right now the city just plans to monitor the Cove Beach, which he said is technically outside Cape May's replenishment zone. MacLeod said the city does not have the expertise to

come up with an estimate of the cost, but he believes the city does not have the funds in the 2009 municipal budget for the level of renourishment required at the Cove.

"The price tag (for beach fill) has become more costly as evident by the last round of replenishment," he said.

In the fall 2008 replenishment, sand was trucked in as opposed to offshore dredging, a decision MacLeod said was based on cost. Around 250,000 tons of sand was trucked to a feeder beach on the Coast Guard base with the understanding it would drift to Cape May beaches. No sand was placed directly on Cape May beaches.

Boat ordinance

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boats. George Loos, who represents the South Jersey Traditional Small Craft Association, said the state should pay for the removal of abandoned boats. He said the state statute allowing municipalities to remove abandoned vessels was pushed through by state legislators and "some well meaning but misguided individuals."

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He said the city missed an opportunity to make the state stand up and enforce its own regulations on abandoned vessels. Loos also questioned the city's jurisdiction in regulating boats in adjacent waterways, saying a lot of new laws passed on regulating boaters were illegal.

City solicitor Anthony Monzo said all federal and constitutional issues were researched by the Office of Legislative Services, and from the city's standpoint, its ordinance was derived from legislation enacted by the state, so there were no state constitutional issues as well.

Monzo also responded to

Loos' comment that this ordinance would end up costing the city a lot of money, especially "if the wrong boat was towed."

Monzo said there would only be a cost if the city wanted to incur a cost.

"This is just a tool. The main thrust is to issue summonses, give the city the ability to fine people, and get the removal of abandoned vessels," he said.

Monzo said the First District legislators took up the issue based on local interest.

Resident Harry Poole said he was interested in doing something about abandoned

boats, but would like to see a policy that was more welcoming to boaters who visit Cape May. Another speaker likened the idea of boaters registering with the police department to a practice of a "totalitarian regime."

"That's no way to treat someone coming in," he said.

Members of the public also said they, the boaters and marina operators, were probably the best qualified to identify an abandoned boat and report it to the city.

Loos recommended establishing a harbor watch group to monitor and report abandoned vessels. Loos said all boats must be registered with the state, however abandoned boats normally lacked markers like a registration number, a name, or signs of upkeep and maintenance.

Weber said abandoned vessels might be listing or sitting low in the water. Most agreed the registration requirement would not prevent someone from abandoning a boat.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said the public comments would be taken into consideration when making a final draft of the ordinance. He said there was no urgency to move the ordinance forward, and recommended it not be introduced at the Aug. 18 meeting. He also recommended the city work with Lower Township, which briefly discussed the issue on Monday. About half of the Cape May Harbor falls under the jurisdiction of Lower Township.

Busy

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ported to the hospital as a precaution.

Cape May Beach Patrol Captain Buzz Mogck said in the month of July there were 22 calls for emergency services on the beach, primarily for suspected C-spine injuries. The volume of calls can result in a delay in emergency service for some people.

The Cape May Fire Department has crews to operate two ambulances full time. If a third ambulance is needed an off-duty crew is recalled to man the ambulance.

The CMFP provides ambulance service for Cape May, Cape May Point and West Cape May.

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