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Plant annuals for yearly treat in garden
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Resiliency: Ability to rebound, recover Part 2

Report recommends elevating seawall, a living shoreline for harbor area

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Some time in the next 32 years, the city will need to address methods to preserve its historic buildings and evacuation routes from a rising sea level and intensified storms.

As reported last week in part one, a coastal vulnerability assessment from the state projected sea level rise of 1.3 feet by 2050. The city identified 57 assets that could be affected by sea level rise and/or a

Category 1 hurricane in 2050.

Planning Board engineer Craig Hurless, quoting the vulnerability assessment, said the vast majority of land not developed in Cape May is environmentally constrained by floodplain, wetlands or both. These lands, and the wildlife habitats that they support, are very much a part of what makes Cape May an attractive area in which to live and vacation, and also are important for environmental tourism, such as birding, he said.

Much of these lands provide

flood protection as well. Cape May should strive to acquire lands that are developable in environmentally sensitive areas to preserve from development and enable them to be used for passive recreation areas, Hurless said.

According to the assessment, much of the city is located within the 100-year floodplain as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapping. Zoning regulations require that the lowest floor level of any building be not less than 2 feet

above base flood elevation (BFE) to minimize property damage.

Hurless said the city should continue to enforce flood-protection standards for development and implement flood protection/mitigation projects as funding allows. Benefits would include maintaining the city's reduced flood hazard insurance rates.

Current city regulations preserve soils and existing vegetation and require the replacement of vegetation that is removed when land is developed. Cape May has a land-

scaping ordinance that requires as much as 60 percent of a lot be left in vegetation and tree replacement for larger trees that are removed. Participation by the Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Commission in land development reviews has ensured compliance with the regulations and should continue, Hurless said.

The assessment notes Cape May's beaches are vital to both the environmental and physical protection

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David Nahan
CAPE MAY STAR
AND WAVE

A sweet day in West Cape May

In addition to music, crafts and a host of booths, the West Cape May Strawberry Festival on Saturday in Wilbraham Park featured numerous strawberry-related products, from mugs, below right, to jam to clothing to strawberry shortcake, above, courtesy of the Cape May County Technical High School Class of 2019, which was raising money for next year's prom. Above right, from left are 2019 class adviser Zen Bishop and Cape May Tech students Kennedy Peirson, Jackie Garcia, Michael Bryan, Janea Murphy, Victor Aguiler and Jess Mallek.

More photos on B8.



Army Corps: Raise seawall to 17 feet at Wilmington, Beach

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Adrian Leary confirmed to council Monday it is only interested at this time in raising the city's seawall to a height of 17 feet in the area of Wilmington and Beach avenues. He estimated the cost of such a project at \$2.8 million.

The Army Corps is undertaking a Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study. Leary said the study is being performed under the continuing authorities program in which a project can be planned, designed and constructed without the need for congressional authorization for construction. Such projects are capped at a cost of \$10 million, he said.

Leary said the study began in 2015 and is being cost shared between the Army Corps and city of Cape May. Following Hurricane Sandy,

the corner of Wilmington and Beach avenues was covered with about 6 feet of sand, he said.

The Army Corps began a beach renourishment project in Cape May in 1991 to alleviate damage from coastal storms, Leary said. He said half the beachfront has a seawall with a Promenade on the top. From Philadelphia Avenue to Wilmington Avenue, the beachfront has only a seawall with sand and vegetation on top.

The height of the seawall is fairly uniform from the west side to east side of the city, Leary said. Low-lying areas include the beachfront and Frog Hollow, he said.

Leary said the Army Corps ran coastal storm simulation models with existing conditions of the beach and seawall in storms the size of Hurricane Sandy

Army Corps, Page A8

Horseshoe crab having good year but not great

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — While warmer Delaware Bay water temperatures have brought more horseshoe crabs ashore to lay their eggs this year, their overall numbers remain low.

Larry Niles, a biologist who spent 25 years with the state Division of Fish and Wildlife, now heads his own company specializing in independent research and management projects in shorebird ecology and conservation.

"This year is a good year for both birds and crabs," he said. "This year the weather was unusually settled all through the month of May and the waters were warm

sufficiently so that the crab spawn was good."

The laying of horseshoe crab eggs on bay beaches coincides with the arrival of the migrating red knot, which stops to feed on the eggs on its way to breed in the arctic.

Niles said only 3,000 horseshoe crab eggs per square meter were measured in May 2017.

"This May we had about 12,000 eggs per square meter," he said. "We don't think that's because there are more crabs. The data show no increase in the number of crabs."

Last year, the bay water was cold in May and the horseshoe crab spawn

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