

## **SHORELINES – April 2002**

### **As presented to the Island Review Magazine.**

I am very pleased to announce that the Shore Protection Office webpage is now up and running at <http://co.carteret.nc.us/shoreprotection/default.htm>. There will be many efforts made to keep the public informed of the County's shore protection efforts and our new webpage is an important component in this process. Although the website is in the formative stages, you can download agendas and minutes of Beach Commission meetings, retrieve project reviews and updates, view the sand management plan, and see what monitoring efforts we are undertaking. Be on the lookout for an educational section and additional project information. Please take some time and click around the site and let me know what other topics you would like to see on the webpage.

The Pine Knoll Shores/Indian Beach Joint Restoration Project is now ahead of the revised completion schedule and we are looking forward to an attractive recreational beach and expansion of the critical beach habitat. By the time you read this article, a turtle monitoring program should be established that will provide for daily patrols along the beach extending west from the Atlantic Beach/Pine Knoll Shores town boundary to Bogue Inlet. We are very pleased that the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has developed and will be implementing the monitoring program. The patrols will occur during the entire nesting season (May 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>). We are looking forward to the results and are hoping that all of the precautions taken to ensure sediment compatibility in conjunction with expanding the backshore (dry beach) habitat will result in an increased number of turtle crawls, nestings, and successful hatchings.

Despite this good news, we are still dealing with the annual removal of sediment from the outer harbor at the Morehead City Harbor Project and the subsequent displacement of this material offshore. The cumulative effects of this process has essentially starved the downdrift beaches of Bogue Banks of their longshore sediment supply. Possibly the most fundamental step in trying to implement a true inlet sand management plan is the elimination of the federally-mandated least-cost disposal policy.

The least-cost policy is purely an internal financial consideration for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Unfortunately, it does not account for any negative consequences that this policy may have on our coastal system, nor does it account for the financial implications of trying to restore our beaches that are eroding in direct response to least-cost policy. Our local municipalities are fully funding their own beach restoration projects and the County and USACE are participating in a 50-year beach restoration program, yet every year the USACE remains bound to intercept and dispose sediment offshore beyond the point that this sediment can feed Bogue Banks beaches. What would be the cost savings by combining these projects into a sand management plan is a valid question. Possibly even more of an important question is would other beach restoration projects even be required in certain areas of Bogue Banks if a sand management plan would have been implemented that placed sand on the beaches rather than in offshore disposal sites?

Trying to abolish the least-cost disposal policy, or at least provide a mechanism where rational criteria can be established that will take adverse affects into consideration, is a large endeavor. The USACE is simply working within the confines of their protocol. Although they have shown a willingness to develop an inlet sediment management plan, they are faced with bureaucratic and funding constraints that preclude any implementation of such a plan from occurring.

The Shore Protection Office is working diligently and using all the channels possible to change the least-cost policy or implement a new program that would effectively establish an inlet sand management plan. In February, myself and the chairman of the Beach Commission, Buck Fugate traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with Congressman Walter B. Jones and the Assistant Secretary to the Army,

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Mike Parker. We had productive discussions and both gentlemen were keenly aware of the situation at the Morehead City Harbor. It is safe to say that this topic is becoming a priority for everyone and we are hoping for a breakthrough in the not to distant future.

**Beach Commission Update**

Colonel James W. DeLony, the chief engineer of the USACE Wilmington District, and key staff members provided a Corps Support to Bogue Banks presentation at the February 2002 Beach Commission meeting. The Colonel briefly discussed the technical and funding parameters for the 50-year Bogue Banks Shore Protection and Section 933 projects. The Wilmington District has been working closely with the County and local municipalities to expedite the timeline for both of these projects. Brief summaries regarding the emergency management capability of the Corps and a review of the navigation projects within the County were also included in the presentation. Prior to this presentation the Corps visited the Pine Knoll Shores/Indian Beach Joint Restoration Project.