

SHORELINES – February 2003
As presented to the Island Review Magazine.

2002 - A look behind and a look ahead.

2002 was a very productive and busy year in terms of our beach preservation efforts and 2003 promises to see even more activity. In fact, three distinct projects may be initiated or completed during this year. However, before we get ahead ourselves, let's recap last year's major events.

Without question, the most significant event of 2002 was the completion of Phase I of the Bogue Banks Restoration Project that placed 1.73 million cubic yards of sand along the shorelines of Pine Knoll Shores (PKS) and Indian Beach (IB). Although the construction process was everything but smooth sailing, and it may be premature to discuss if the Project is a complete success, we can say that (1) the beachfill is providing substantial storm protection as exhibited during many of the small scale storms that have occurred since construction was completed, (2) the threatened annual plant, Seabeach Amaranth and our favorite endangered reptiles, the nesting sea turtles enjoyed a significant return to the beaches of PKS and IB, and finally (3) the preliminary response of "critters" such as mole crabs, ghost crabs, surf clams, and polychaete worms that all make the beach their home are similar to the response observed in other beach restoration projects conducted throughout the east coast. On the down side, the delays associated with encountering tires in the borrow sites and the unfortunate takings of sea turtles during the construction process resulted in less sand placed on the beach than originally engineered. Also, sectors of the public were unhappy with the aesthetic quality of the sand placed on the beach. Hopefully we can improve on this and other aspects of our beach projects in the future.

Phase I wasn't the only newsworthy in 2002. After a little head-scratching, the Beach Commission presented sand management language to our Congressional delegation in hopes of including this language in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2002 that would federally mandate a more prudent use of sand resources associated with the Morehead City Federal Navigation Project. Although WRDA 2002 never materialized, the Beach Commission has a great foundation to work upon for upcoming legislative sessions. The Beach Commission also made some impressive endroads in delineating the importance of our beach projects to top officials on local, State, and National levels, and securing funding for our federal and State cost-shared Projects. The normal protocol for the federal funding appropriation process is to pass a budget by October for the following year. The war on terror and homeland security concerns has delayed this process significantly. As this *Shorelines* article is being prepared, Congress has yet to pass a budget and is operating most of the government under a continuing resolution. This has had an adverse effect on the funding picture for our Section 933 and 50-year Shore Protection Projects but fortunately, our local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District has advantageously shuffled their internal funding to our benefit. Rumor on "the Hill" has the 2003 fiscal year budget finalized before the President's State of the Union Address scheduled for late January.

The new year could see three projects come into fruition that would essentially result in nourishing our beaches from Beaufort to Bogue Inlets. Phase III of the Bogue Banks Restoration Project that includes plans for realigning the Bogue Inlet channel is on a tight schedule, but permits could be secured and the project could be placed on bid and possibly initiated this year. Phase III project plans include the realignment of the Bogue Inlet channel and using the material

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encountered during the new “cut” to restore the western portion of Emerald Isle. The Brandt Island Pump-Out/Section 933 Project on the otherhand is scheduled to take dredged, sandy material associated with the Morehead City Federal Navigation Project and place this material along the shorelines of Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, PKS, and IB. We’ll discuss this project in depth in the next month or two. There are many issues that will need to be resolved if the construction phase for this project is to begin in November 2003. Perhaps the most outstanding issue is whether the federal appropriation will be forthcoming in the 2004 fiscal year budget that should be passed by October. One project that is a sure bet in 2003 however, is Phase II of the Bogue Banks Restoration Project (eastern Emerald Isle). The cutterhead-suction dredge *RS Weeks* should have begun pumping sand by the time you are reading this article. The construction of Phase II should be completed by April.

An important component of both past and future projects is your involvement. I look forward to your input for 2003 and beyond.