

Post – Sandy Borough of Surf City Beach Replenishment Update

During the week of March 1, 2013 I had the opportunity to have a phone conversation with Mr. Keith Watson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regarding the repair of the damage to engineered dunes caused by Superstorm Sandy. What follows is a summary of our conversation.

Peter Hartney
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Chair, Beach Fees/Beach Replenishment Committee
Chair, Environment and Public Issues Committee

What was the task of the USACE in the days immediately following Sandy?

In the days following Sandy when access to the Borough was deemed safe, staff of the USACE were on the beaches of the Borough of Surf City surveying and assessing the damage. The data the USACE compiled was then compared against the most recent pre-storm data to determine both the impact of the storm to the beach system profile as well as the extent of repairs needed.

What did the USACE do with the data they collected?

The next step in the response process of the USACE was to take the data gathered from each of the engineered beaches on LBI – Surf City, Harvey Cedars and Brant Beach- and to develop a single, comprehensive beach profile repair project. Upon completion of the project development phase the USACE then sought and gained Congressional approval to undertake the repair project. In the Borough of Surf City the scope of the project is from South 3rd Street north to the N. 21st/22nd street block.

Is there funding for the repairs to be completed or will we have to wait?

The funding for the repair project is already in place under the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act (FCCE) of the Federal government and is **not** subject to the current sequestering situation faced by the federal government.

Where are we in the process now?

On March 1, 2013 the USACE submitted a request for funding to Congress and have the expectation that the funding will be approved and in place by the end of March. Due to the immediacy of the repair project the USACE plans to begin advertizing the project to contractors in mid-March with a contract award taking place by mid-April. Upon the contract award the USACE will meet with the contractor to determine the particulars of the project such as start date, location and project flow. The most optimistic projection of the USACE is that the project will begin in early June and given the urgent nature of the repairs will be done during the summer season with the USACE and the chosen contractor working to minimize the impact on the public as much as is feasible. (If you have not had an opportunity to witness first-hand any of our previous beach replenishment projects it is quite an enrapturing experience. It is a great way to get some sun while watching others work.)

What are the conditions of the beaches in Surf City?

Currently the beaches of Surf City are closed. Vehicles are prohibited and if pedestrians enter the beaches they do so at their own risk and are urged to use caution when crossing the dunes and walking on the beach. That being said our Public Works, Police Department and Administrator are discussing the safest manner in which to open the beaches to the public and repair the beach accesses so that they are open and safe in time for the start of the summer season.

How come there is no work taking place on the beach now?

While at first glance it may seem that now is the perfect time for clean-up and repair work to take place on the beach before the season begins it is important to remember that the beach is a dynamic system which is greatly influenced by passing winter weather systems, that is, we are in still in the midst of Nor'easter season (in fact as I write this on the evening of March 5th we are waiting for Winterstorm Saturn to pass in the next 36 hours). Every Nor'easter which passes the beaches of Surf City and LBI impacts the beach profile in various degrees so that any repair or cleanup work would in most likely hood need to be re-done. With that in mind significant repair and cleanup work will begin in mid-Spring. In the meantime working to minimize the impact on the taxpayer as each of us recovers from Sandy, the Borough, under the leadership of Mayor Connors, is pursuing funding possibilities from the State of New Jersey to cover the cost of the repairs necessary until such a time that the USACE can complete the Borough of Surf City portion of their repair project.

Will the beaches of Surf City be open this summer?

The long and the short answer is **YES**. Our beaches will be open and the Borough of Surf City will continue to be the family community where age old memories are shared and new memories are made each year. The Borough of Surf City is currently accepting employment applications for positions with our highly trained and well-regarded beach patrol, for beach badge checkers and for summer Public Works positions. Anyone interested in summer employment may stop at Borough Hall to pick up an application or for life guard and beach badge checker positions visit http://www.surfcitybeachpatrol.com/Employment_Application_Downloads.htm to download an application.

See on the beach in Surf City in 2013!