

## ***BEACH NOURISHMENT***

### **HISTORY**

In 1995, the Town of Kure Beach entered into a 50 year contract with the US Army Corps of Engineers for beach nourishment. At that time, the areas of Hanby and Wilmington Beach were not annexed into Carolina and Kure Beach, but were included in the project. This project was titled 'Carolina Beach and vicinity area south'. The project covers 3.5 miles of beach from N. Carolina Avenue in Carolina Beach to Camp Wyatt Court in Kure Beach. The Corps measured the beach and created a template to be used as a base line for future nourishment projects. As per the contract, projects have occurred every three years since. To date, the template has shown consistently that two areas of our beach erode the most without the sand ever returning.

Those areas are:

- N. Carolina Avenue in Carolina Beach to Myrtle Avenue in Kure Beach
- Davis Road to Camp Wyatt Court

The Corps has to justify and request, each budget cycle, the need for the sand that is put on the beach. That is why the template is used. It shows how the sand shifts in between 3-year nourishment cycles.

In the months preceding placement of sand on the beach, the Corps measures the beach again. If there has been more erosion than usual due to storms and if funding is available, the Corps then decides whether additional sand will be placed on the beach and where.

Over the years, the term 'beach nourishment project' has been replaced with 'Coastal Storm Damage Reduction project'. The reasoning for the change in name is because the Federal Government began looking at the cost benefit analysis for how much infrastructure and property is protected during storms because of rebuilding the beaches. This is also directly related to an attempt to mitigate FEMA spending that occurs after a major storm.

### **FUNDING**

65% of the funding for a beach nourishment project comes from the Federal government through the Corps of Engineers. The remaining 35% is split evenly with 17.5% from the State and 17.5% from the Room Occupancy Tax (a 3% tax the county collects from hotels and vacation rentals). No Kure Beach tax dollars have been used for any of the nourishment projects.

### **INTER LOCAL AGREEMENT WITH NEW HANOVER COUNTY**

In 2011, all three beach towns in New Hanover County entered into an agreement with the county outlining how nourishment would proceed in the event there was no Federal or State funding. This agreement allowed the county to obtain a permit to put sand on the beach. Funding for projects would be 82.5% from Room Occupancy Tax funds and 17.5% from each town for each individual project.

When it came time for the agreement to be renewed, the beach towns contested the 17.5% share for the following reasons:

- It puts the financial burden on the beach town residents only, but none on county or Wilmington residents
- Beach town residents already pay additional costs for visitors for trash removal, traffic control, emergency calls, and incidents requiring police attention, lifeguards, additional fire calls, and so on. This requires additional staff for police, fire, public works and lifeguards. Beach town residents pay higher insurance rates and have the inconveniences associated with the influx of thousands of visitors
- It is an excessive amount based on each project cost. In the case of Kure Beach, the last project cost \$5.4 million dollars. 17.5% of that is \$945,000 every 3 years, or \$315,000 each budget year. This equals more than the Town's individual budgets for Building Inspections, Finance, Lifeguards, Parks & Recreation and Debt Service and is 8% of the General Fund budget. It is equivalent to a 4 cent property tax increase per \$100 value of property.

As of this posting in December 2015, there is an on-going dialogue between the beach towns and the county about this.

**NEW REQUIREMENTS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Recently, the Federal government began requiring a cost to benefit analysis for each project. The value and amount of property protected by the amount of sand put on the beach would be compared to the cost. This is now a requirement for all coastal projects throughout the U.S.

There is concern by some that this is a potential red flag that Federal funding may not be available in the future. Kure Beach's next nourishment project is scheduled for 2018.