



# Coastal Voice

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN SHORE & BEACH PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

— DECEMBER 2012 —

## SAVE THE DATES:

- ✓ Coastal Summit: Feb. 26-28, Washington, DC
- ✓ National Coastal Conference: Oct. 22-25, South Padre Island, TX

## INSIDE:

- PAGE 2:** Rebuilding without putting others at risk
- PAGE 3:** Thanks due all around
- PAGE 3:** Nominations open for Coastal Summit awards
- PAGE 4:** Coastal Summit your chance to show your support for shore protection
- PAGE 4-6:** Summit summary: All the facts, and last year's online for you to view
- PAGE 7:** Remembering Joe Moseley
- PAGE 9:** Urge Congress to recognize the value of meetings
- PAGE 9:** Conferences
- PAGE 10-12:** Beach News Service articles for November

Visit the ASBPA online at [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org)

## Assessing beach nourishment in the aftermath of Sandy

By JOHN HARMS, ASBPA Government Affairs Advisor

The wind and rain that engulfed the better part of the Eastern Seaboard has now dissipated, leaving federal, state and local authorities to begin assessing the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy. One thing is clear: Communities that were



HARMS

protected by a federally constructed beach project fared much better during the storm than their non-project counterparts.

The advantages in lives saved and property and infrastructure protected was especially obvious in hurricane battered New Jersey. In particular, Gov. Chris Christie was impressed by the protection afforded by federally engineered dunes and beach. A few days after surveying the storm damage, Chris-

**"If you look at the towns that have had engineered beaches, up and down the state, those are the towns whose damage was minimal. Other towns that didn't, the damage was much greater. I think that's a lesson for us as we move forward."**

— New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, during a visit to Monmouth County

## WASHINGTON REPORT

tie stated that "our most important priority at the Jersey shore is to engineer all of our beaches.... I told [President Obama], that's my number one task."

All along the north Atlantic coast, but particularly in New Jersey — which bore the brunt of Sandy's wrath — communities without shore protection measures were devastated by the storm's unprecedented storm surge and heavy waves.

The positive difference made by

■ Continued on next page

- Donate to ASBPA for tax deduction • Dec. 31
- Nominate Members of Congress, Corps, media, staffers for Summit awards • Jan. 4
- Pay your 2013 dues • ASAP

## Rebuilding without putting others at risk

By HARRY SIMMONS,  
ASBPA president

As I watch the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy in media reactions, political posturing and more, a few thoughts come to mind. It is clear that well-designed and maintained beaches did their jobs at providing storm damage reduction. The folks who had not been fortunate enough to have that protection provided — or, in some cases, who rejected having it provided — caught the brunt of the damages.

Now there are many folks, from Members of Congress to governors to mayors, talking about what a great benefit a wide, sandy beach can be and how we, as a nation, need to rebuild those beaches that provided the protection and build new ones in places that had not done so before. That's all well and good. But the real work to do all that will have to start in the halls of Congress and in the White House. Adequate funding, something the coastal restoration program has not had in decades, will need to be found and committed to the effort.

But the big issue I'm not hearing anything about is that if

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

we spend all available funding to restore beaches in New Jersey and New York, will that mean that beaches in other parts of our American coast will be left out? To restore the Sandy-damaged beaches and not to provide funding to make sure that other beaches can provide



SIMMONS

the much-needed protection for their next storm that *will* one day hit them would be a national travesty.

Remind your elected officials that repairing Sandy's damage must not make your beaches more vulnerable. We all need the millions in protection that saves billions in damage response. Join us in Washington at the end of February for the ASBPA Coastal Summit, to help us effectively be "America's Coastal Voice."

As always, if I can be of any assistance to you on coastal issues, please send me an email at [president@asbpa.org](mailto:president@asbpa.org) or call/text me on my iPhone at (910) 200-7867. ❖

## Sandy

■ Continued from page 1

engineered beaches was most apparent on Long Beach Island (LBI) in New Jersey. The 18-mile-long island was breached by waves and the destruction in some towns, such as Holgate at the southern tip of LBI, was nearly complete.

Several years ago, the Army Corps of Engineers finalized a plan to install a 22-foot-tall dune system to stretch the length of the island. Unfortunately, the project was never completed because local property owners balked at opening their beach to the public and the possibility of losing ocean views behind the dunes.

Elected officials in states from Rhode Island to Maryland have now turned their attention to rebuilding coastal communities that, in many areas, serve as the economic engine for the region. In Washington, DC, Senators Schumer (D-NY), Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Carper (D-DE) are leading the charge to provide funding for the Corps and FEMA to begin nourishing coastal barriers before the next storm strikes.

In addition, they are hoping to streamline parts of the Corps' permitting and planning process to place sand back on beaches as soon as possible. ASBPA has provided technical assistance on Capitol Hill in an effort to boost support for beach nourishment and get coastal communities the funding they need before the next storm strikes. ❖

### More on Sandy?

■ ASBPA has a collection of Sandy articles at [http://www.asbpa.org/news/newsroom\\_12BN1112\\_sandy.htm](http://www.asbpa.org/news/newsroom_12BN1112_sandy.htm).

■ Also, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a great website on Sandy efforts at <http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/EmergencyOperations/HurricaneSeason/Sandy.aspx>

■ See also the CDIP wave data on Sandy in the upcoming *Shore & Beach* journal.

## Let us give thanks all around

By KATE & KEN GOODERHAM,  
ASBPA executive directors

A disaster such as Superstorm Sandy (not to mention the time of year) should inspire us all to take a minute and give thanks. We have a lot of “greats” to be thankful for — great local, state and federal government folks who literally saved the day during and after the storm (many of you reading this are among that group). Great nonprofits such as the Red Cross, who sent people from all over the country to help disaster victims and their communities recover from this freak of nature. Great people inside and outside the communities hit hardest by the storm who reached out to help the less fortunate — often as they themselves struggled to keep their lives moving forward in the wake of all that damage.

While the focus today is this one very unique storm, disasters of this nature are not confined to one area of this country’s coast. Therefore, the larger picture needs to focus on the importance of making our coasts ready for the next disaster, wherever it may strike. For that, we are grateful for all of you. You coastal professionals are the ones who work diligently and doggedly year in and year out to protect and prepare your coasts for the worst nature might offer.

### DIRECTORS’ REPORT

Some of you toil in the technical trades — academics, scientists, engineers, geologists, biologists. Some of you are elected officials, working to balance preparedness, politics and pragmatism. Some of you are a mixture of both. On the local, state and federal level, you help provide the infrastructure to minimize damage and the expertise to protect your unique stretch of coast. It can be a thankless task that’s only appreciated for what doesn’t happen — the house that isn’t lost, the community that isn’t destroyed — and we thank you for your dedication and determination.

Since the storm surged ashore, we have been deluged by media calls. We thank those of you we reached out to

for talking with the media. While there are always those who want us all to pack up and leave (for Kansas and its tornadoes, Montana and its fires, to California and its earthquakes), we thank all of you for saying what needs to be done to protect our coast and all those who call it home.

Finally, we want to thank all of you for your membership in ASBPA. Without all of you, this association would not be celebrating its 86<sup>th</sup> year. If you haven’t renewed that membership, please go online and do so today — and thanks. ❖



## Nominations open for Summit honors

Nominations are now open for the ASBPA Congressional awards, Congressional Staffer award and Corps award, to be presented on at the ASBPA awards reception held during the Coastal Summit, “America’s Coastal Voice” in Washington, DC, on Feb. 27.

- Congressional awards include “Coastal Advocate” — ASBPA’s highest award, a lifetime achievement award — and “Friend of the Coast,” for shorter term or more project-specific contributions. Any ASBPA member may nominate one or more Members of Congress for the awards.

- The Corps award honors a member of the Corps of Engineers who contributed to beach management and preservation. These are people from the districts who make projects happen.

- The Congressional Staffer award will be given to a single staff member for his or her efforts both to promote beach preservation and to facilitate project requests in the past legislative session.

- The Agency award will be given to a staff member for efforts to promote beach preservation.

- The Friend of the Coast Media award will be given to a media outlet for exceptional coverage of coastal news.

Nominations are due at the ASBPA offices no later than Jan. 4, 2013, and may be emailed to [awards@asbpa.org](mailto:awards@asbpa.org). The nominator will need to be in attendance to present the award. For questions, e-mail us at [exdir@asbpa.org](mailto:exdir@asbpa.org). ❖

## 2013 Coastal Summit — it's all about you

By **TODD ROESSLER**,  
Coastal Summit co-chair

**O**n Feb. 26-28, ASBPA will host the 18th annual Coastal Summit. Despite the post-earmark era, the federal government continues to play a critical role in shore protection projects, which are vital to preserving our coast and economy.

As in years past, the Summit is structured to provide you the skills and opportunity to discuss the importance of shore protection projects with your congressmen as well as federal agencies. Following Superstorm Sandy, the timing of this year's Summit could not be better. This is your opportunity to remind your representative of the importance of shore protection projects — not only to local economies but the national economy as well.

During the first afternoon of the Summit, we will prepare you for an effective meeting with your representative or federal agency. This year, during the second afternoon of the Summit, ASBPA is planning guided visits to the Hill and federal agencies, including USACE, USGS, NOAA and others. If your community has a shore protection project — either federal or local — this is your opportunity to let your representative or federal



agency know the vital role of your project.

In addition the advocacy component of the Summit, ASBPA will have conference-style meetings discussing timely and informative topics such as state and regional coastal legal issues, an overview of the impacts of Sandy, the Corps' response to Sandy's impacts, FEMA's role in restoring storm-damaged beaches and coastal areas, the performance of restored beaches during major storms, as well as other topics. These presentations and panels will provide you with the information that you need to develop and implement a successful shore protection project.

This meeting will be full of information from agencies, organizations, and policy makers in Washington that will be useful to you in your efforts to preserve and enhance the beaches and shores of America.

Please plan to join us, and thank you for being a member! ❖

## Want a better sense of the Summit?

### Check it out online!

Intrigued by the idea of the ASBPA's Coastal Summit, but want to know more? Now you can see for yourself by looking at some of the presentations offered at previous events. While the 2013 Coastal Summit will be different from 2012, you'll also see similar presentations. These presentations — what we call the "Virtual Summit" — are now available to everyone online. Go to [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org) and click on the "2012 Coastal Summit"; on that page you'll see the Virtual Summit. We think you'll like what you see. Go to: [http://www.asbpa.org/conferences/sum\\_12.htm](http://www.asbpa.org/conferences/sum_12.htm)

In January, we'll unveil the program for the 2013 Coastal Summit! ❖

### Summit facts

- **Theme:** America's Coastal Voice
- **Dates:** Feb. 26-28
- **Primary location:** ASAE Conference Center, 1575 I Street NW, Washington
- **Registration now open**
- **Early registration cost:** \$360 for members



## “America’s Coastal Voice”

**Feb. 26-28, 2013**

ASAE Conference Center • 1575 I Street NW, Washington, DC

**Dates: Tuesday, Feb. 26, 8 a.m. – Thursday, Feb. 28, noon (Eastern Time)**

ASBPA contact: Kate & Ken Gooderham, Executive Directors

Call: (239) 489-2616 ■ Fax: (239) 362-9771

E-mail: [exdir@asbpa.org](mailto:exdir@asbpa.org) ■ Online: [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org)

**Online registration opened Nov. 15 at [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org)**

### Program\*\*

**Registration:** Tuesday, Feb. 26, 10 a.m.

**Plenary sessions:** Tuesday, Feb. 26, 1-5 p.m.,

Wednesday, Feb. 27, 8 a.m. to noon ■ Thursday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-noon

**Advocacy:** Wednesday, Feb. 27, noon to 5 p.m.

**Awards Reception:** Wednesday, Feb. 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

**Closing:** Thursday, Feb. 28, noon

Join us for three days of policy, technology and advocacy in Washington, DC.

Information and program at [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org). Draft program available Jan. 1.

\*\*Program, including times, is in draft form and may be modified

**Deadlines:** Cancellation with refund: Feb. 19, 2013 (\$50 cancellation fee)

**Registration fees before Jan. 25: \$360/member ■ \$460/nonmember**

	ASBPA member	Non-ASBPA member*	Student member	Student non-member*
Until midnight January 25	\$360	\$460	\$200	\$225
After January 25	\$410	\$510	\$200	\$225
At the door	\$460	\$560	\$200	\$225

Register online at <http://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=963100>

Sponsorships are available...full details at [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org)

## Advocacy

Wednesday afternoon is set aside for targeted advocacy. We will discuss ASBPA's legislative agenda and how to have an effective meeting with your legislator or agency on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning during the sessions. We strongly urge you to plan an advocacy meeting for Wednesday afternoon in advance of your travel.

### **Meetings with members of congress or their staff:**

ASBPA has a legislative agenda, and your organization may have some agenda items as well, that need to be discussed with legislators. Most elected officials prioritize their Washington meetings based on constituency. Please confirm your Representative and Senators using the links below, then contact their offices to set up a meeting for Wednesday afternoon.

■ **Representatives:** [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and use the drop-down box to find your Representative

■ **Senators:** [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and use the drop-down box to find your state

### **Meetings with coastal agencies:**

ASBPA is arranging for a number of advocacy meetings with agencies such as NSF, CSO (Coastal States Organization), NOAA, FEMA, USGS, and USACE. If you are interested in meeting with another agency, let us know! Please contact ASBPA Secretary and conference co-chair Nicole Elko at [nelko@elkocoastal.com](mailto:nelko@elkocoastal.com) if you are interested in participating in one of these meetings.

## Hotel

There is no conference hotel. Conference venue is near to McPherson Square Metro Station (Blue/Orange lines). Nearby hotels include:

- **Crowne Plaza Hamilton:** (202) 682-0111 • 14th Street & K Street NW
- **Four Points Sheraton:** (202) 289-7600 • 1201 K Street NW



- **Embassy Suites Washington Convention Center:** (202) 857-3388 • 900 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW
- **Grand Hyatt Washington:** (202) 582-1234 • 1000 H Street NW
- **AKA White House:** (202) 904-2500 • 1710 H Street NW
- **Club Quarters Washington DC:** (202) 463-6400 • 839 17th Street NW
- **The Eldon Luxury Suites:** (202) 540-5000 • 933 L Street NW
- **Sofitel Washington:** (202) 730-8800 • Lafayette Square, 806 15th Street NW

- **Hilton Garden Inn Washington, DC Downtown:** (202) 783-7800 • 815 14th St NW

## Sponsorships

Sponsorships are available ranging in price from \$690 to \$6,000. Most include a registration. This year for the first time, a limited number of tabletop exhibit space is available in the conference meeting rooms. The Coastal Summit is a great opportunity to develop and maintain relationships with the decision-makers in coastal communities.

Send checks or government purchase orders to ASBPA, 5460 Beaujolais Lane, Fort Myers, FL 33919-2704. To be officially registered, payments must be received by Feb. 20, 2013.

\* Registration fee includes 2013 ASBPA membership.



## In memoriam: Dr. Joe Moseley

If there was ever a person we could have used the Vulcan mind meld for “sharing thoughts, experiences, memories, and knowledge,” it was Joe Moseley who passed away on Nov. 25. His was an example of an extraordinary life well lived.

ASBPA president Harry Simmons said, “Joe was the kind of guy we need more of in our efforts for America’s Coast: dedicated, bright and savvy on what it takes to get things done. We will sorely miss him.”

Over the last 44 years, Dr. Moseley worked diligently to protect and enhance Texas’ beaches and bay systems, and led the charge to organize grassroots associations tasked with the maintaining the health of Texas’ coastal systems. He began his career in Texas state government, participating in numerous boards and councils, and overseeing the creation of numerous legislative efforts that built on the ongoing understanding of the Texas coast.

In 1980, as he built his own consulting business he and continued to focus on environmental, marine and transportation affairs until he sold the business to HDR and retired. In addition to his work as



a consultant, Dr. Moseley has been active in local, state and national beach organizations. He has served on the ASBPA board of directors and the ASBPA Advisory Board.

On the state level, Dr. Moseley has helped lead the charge to form Texas Shore and Beach Association, which was followed by the creation of the Texas Chapter of ASBPA. His family has requested that remembrances be made as donations to the Texas Chapter. The address is Larry A. Wise, P.E., Treasurer, Texas Chapter ASBPA, 11011 Richmond Ave., Suite 200, Houston, TX 77042.

A detailed obituary can be found at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/statesman/obituary.aspx?n=joe-clifton-moseley-pe-ph-d&pid=161273495#fbLoggedOut> ❖

## ‘Shore & Beach’ is coming to your mailbox soon!

The next issue of Shore & Beach is heading to your mailbox, and it’s an issue with something for everyone... really! Consider this lineup:

- A first look at CDIP wave data from Superstorm Sandy.
- A look at the history of beach nourishment in South Carolina.
- Could the short-term solutions installed on Dauphin Island eventually be a long-term answer to the island’ erosion problems?
- Using photographs through the years to measure the width of a California beach.
- An ASBPA position paper on managing sea level change.
- An ASBPA policy statement on the state of U.S. coastal engineering and science.
- A discussion of ASBPA’s legislative and policy priorities.
- Two book reviews.

As the journal completes its 80<sup>th</sup> year, the range of issues it addresses is a rich reminder both of its value as a coastal resource and of the association’s range of interests and involvement as well. ❖



## Please donate to keep ASBPA strong

In the year ahead, ASBPA will keep working on key issues to ensure America's shorelines can be enjoyed by all. Please remember, ASBPA is a 501(c)3 organization and appreciates any year-end tax-deductible donation that you can afford. Your donation will go a long ways to help ASBPA promote both beach and shoreline preservation. If not, we certainly look forward to your involvement in ASBPA next year.

You can donate to the overall cause, or you can donate for specific efforts:

- **Shore & Beach:** We've published *Shore & Beach* continuously since 1933. It is one of the most important (and most expensive) things we do. Executive Editor Lesley Ewing and the editorial board have brought the journal to new heights of content and professionalism.

- **American Beach News Service:** Through this program we share with small newspapers information about the coast on a bimonthly basis. It is a way to educate the general public in coastal areas about the coast.

- **Murrough P. O'Brien Awards:** Every year we choose one person to give our lifetime achievement award. This award pays for their expenses to attend the National Coastal Conference. We also provide at least one student with a \$500 stipend, to encourage the next generation of coastal professionals.

Activities Enjoyed		
	2011	2012
	A	B
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>205</b>
Beaches	95%	97%
Relaxing	79%	85%
Swimming	73%	79%
Dining Out	72%	72%
Shopping	52%	57%
Shelling	42%	47%
Sightseeing	44%B	31%
Attractions	28%	27%
Visiting Friends/Relatives	23%	20%
Photography	23%	18%
Watching Wildlife	21%	18%
Exercise/Working Out	13%	18%
Bicycle Riding	12%	18%
Boating	11%	16%
Fishing	14%	16%
Miniature Golf	12%	13%
Parasailing/Jet Skiing	14%	12%
Birdwatching	12%	10%
Bars/Nightlife	14%	10%
Kayaking/Canoeing	7%	8%
Golfing	8%	7%
Guided Tour	8%	6%
Scuba Diving/Snorkeling	2%	4%
Cultural Events	4%	4%
Tennis	3%	2%
Sporting Events	2%	2%
Other	2%	1%
No Answer	1%	1%

## Lee County visitors enjoy beaches best

In August 2012, Davidson-Peterson Associates, the Lee County (Florida) Visitor & Convention Bureau's research firm, surveyed visitors about the activities they enjoyed while visiting Lee County.

*NOTE: Statistically significant differences between responses for 2011 and 2012 at the 95 percent confidence level are noted with an A, B lettering system.*

We also fund the Coastal Scholar Award, which provides a stipend and an internship position with the Science & Technology Committee to give a student hands-on experience with coastal professionals. ❖



## Urge Congress to recognize value of meetings

**Editor's Note:** *Normally our legislative concerns are on behalf of coastal issues. ASBPA is a member of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). Among other things, they provide us conference space for our Coastal Summit. Below is an excerpt from recent correspondence from them concerning the importance of government employee attendance to conferences and meetings.*

With the election past us and the fiscal cliff on the horizon, ASAE is continuing our efforts to protect government employee attendance to conferences and meetings. There is still work to be done to ensure the backlash against private sector and educational meetings does not continue. The decision by the Secretary of the Army earlier this month to suspend all Army attendance at non-Department of Defense con-

ferences for the remainder of the year shows that associations must continue to educate the government of the value of their meetings.

In Congress, ASAE is still monitoring the Congressional debates to insure that language such as the Coburn Amendment (SA 2060) is not passed as part of another bill. Among other provisions, this amendment would have restricted federal agencies from sending employees to more than one conference held by an organization annually. The long term focus of ASAE is to work with the administration to create understanding about the value of meetings and how they lead to better public policy.

It is important that you continue to work with your member of Congress and federal agencies you work with to show the value of your meetings and the importance of the public-private partnerships they create. ❖



[WWW.ASBPA.ORG](http://WWW.ASBPA.ORG)

With the impact of Superstorm Sandy at the forefront of everyone's minds, this past month brought home the importance of well-maintained beaches and coasts. A collection of articles about Sandy's impact, restored beaches and dunes, and recovery efforts is available on the website. We are continuing to add articles as more become available, so keep checking back to see the latest on the recovery.

Remember that electronic renewal is also now available on the site, linked under "Membership". Don't miss any of our newsletters or journals and keep supporting efforts to preserve America's shores and beaches. Thank you!

As always, the latest beach news is also available on our home page, RSS feed, and Facebook and Twitter pages. We welcome your input. Have a happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year!  
— **Beth Sciaudone, Ph.D. ASBPA webmaster** ❖

## CONFERENCES

■ **Feb. 13-15, 2013:** FSBPA National Conference on Beach Preservation Technology, Jacksonville, FL. Go to [www.fsbpa.com](http://www.fsbpa.com).

■ **Feb. 19-23 2013:** 8th International Multipurpose Reef and Surfing Science Symposium, Rincón, Puerto Rico. Go to: <http://www.imprsymposium.org/>

■ **Feb. 26-28, 2013:** ASBPA's Coastal Summit, ASAE Conference Center, Washington, D. C.

■ **Sept. 9-11, 2013:** Northeast Shore & Beach

Preservation Association Chapter of ASBPA, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, email to Richard Weggel ([weggel@drexel.edu](mailto:weggel@drexel.edu)).

■ **Sept. 25-27, 2013:** FSBPA Annual Conference, Delray Beach Marriott, Delray Beach, FL Go to [www.fsbpa.com](http://www.fsbpa.com)

■ **Oct. 22-25, 2013:** ASBPA National Coastal Conference, South Padre Island, TX. Registration opens in May.

American Beach News Service:

## Sandy's lesson? Wide beaches, high dunes protect people, property

**W**hat happens when you wrap a hurricane inside a winter storm, and have it come ashore during extremely high tides? Unexpected and significant coastal impacts, including major beach erosion, flooding and structural damage — but concentrated in those areas where the beach and dune defenses were not adequate to absorb the surge and waves from this record-setting storm.

While the official (and much-needed) analysis of the storm's components for catastrophe will be months, there are some broad-brush takeaways from the storm:

■ **Wider beaches with high dunes work.** Except (perhaps) for where Sandy made direct landfall, the story consistently was that wide sandy beaches and high dune systems kept the waves away from upland property and infrastructure, and prevented flooding from the unexpected storm surge. Even in areas where the beaches and dunes were lost, they provided the first line of defense and help minimize the amount of damage that occurred. They absorbed the first onslaught of wave energy and storm surge before they were overcome. Where the beach was narrow or the dunes too low, Sandy overtopped the coastal protections, flooded the upland homes and structures and pushed beach sand into the streets.

Of course, when designing a beach you normally don't prepare a coastal system for a direct hit by a once-in-a-lifetime (we hope) storm — any more than seat belts

and airbags can protect you when the car you're in is hit by a train. High dunes and wide beaches were no match for a 15-foot storm surge and a mountain of water that had days to build momentum in those areas north of where Sandy made landfall. Even though these engineered systems were not designed to provide protection for a super storm the size of Sandy, they performed above and beyond all expectations.

One reason for having a wide beach is to create a buffer, so sand will be "sacrificed" to help protect things landward of it; similarly high dunes behind the beach serve as a levee, preventing inland flooding. Mostly, in Sandy all along the affected coast healthy beaches did just that; when adjacent coastal communities suffered differing amounts of damage, the health (width and height) of their beach and dunes systems was the deciding factor in reducing destruction.

■ **Coastal protection doesn't stop at the coastline.** In the face of storms like Sandy, keeping coastal communities safe isn't just about wide healthy beaches. Some of the worst destruction happened in those towns and cities where flood waters could run amok once seawalls and other hard structures were overtopped — because ground-level buildings and aging infrastructure were no match for rising tides. Worse, some cities had no easy way to drain off floodwaters once the tides receded, because barriers and geography kept grav-

ity from doing its job — making a bad situation worse and delaying recovery and repair.

■ **We need to heed the warning of coastal scientists and implement coastal protection plans developed by coastal engineers.** Along the coast, plans and preparations are often more shaped by politics and personal preferences than by prudence — doing "what's possible" rather than "what's necessary." Politicians need to heed warnings that are based on coastal facts and science (rather than just those based on volume and stridency). Conversely, we need to demand "good" science — reproducible, redundant and reliable — be used as the basis for our policy decision-making whenever possible, rather than accepting the assertions of well-meaning but unqualified "experts" as the inspiration for coastal action.

Wider beaches and high dune systems, along with elevated structures built to tested building codes and siting plans, can provide significant protection and sustainability of our coastal infrastructure. The cost of doing it right is higher than what has been spent in the past, but significantly less than the cost to clean up and repair the impacts of a single storm such as Sandy.

■ **Protecting coastal infrastructure is a crucial investment.** Particularly in those areas with crucial public infrastructure (tunnels, power plants, airports, major roadways) so close to the coast, a

■ **Continued on page 12**

American Beach News Service:

## The flood insurance myths

Every major coastal disaster brings with it a flood of new (or not so new) myths concerning the federal flood insurance system. It's a favorite target for coastal naysayers, who bring up these false claims as consistently as the tides. But just because someone says something over and over doesn't make it true, so we offer some factual responses to the usual charges:

### ***"They're just going to build back what was there before."***

No, they won't. In order for coastal communities to be part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), they have to agree to abide by certain rebuilding standards... usually along the lines of "higher, stronger and further back." That's on top of evolving building codes that also reflect the knowledge gleaned from prior storm damage, that mandate stricter standards for a structure's strength and survivability.

Want proof? Look at post-storm photos when there's a mix of building types and ages. The older, at-grade buildings are usually gone, while the newer, stronger and higher structures are usually still standing. That's also why the devastation looks the worst when the coast area that's hit hasn't faced a storm's fury in a while — older structures and older standards wash away, replaced with better buildings better able to survive.

### ***"Flood insurance is a subsidy for rich people and their fancy beachfront second homes"***

No on both counts. It's not an outright subsidy, since those being covered have to pay premiums and meet certain standards (at least on a community level). And it doesn't offer enough coverage to dramatically enhance the spread of multi-million-dollar manses. The top NFIP coverage is for \$250,000 for residential structures and \$100,000 for residential contents (non-residential limits are \$500,000 in each category). So NFIP doesn't really benefit someone whose home is worth \$2.5 million (although 10% coverage is better than nothing) — but it can make a big financial difference if your flood-possible home is valued at \$250,000 (which is not very much home if you've priced waterfront or water-adjacent properties lately).

### ***"Flood insurance rewards risk, rather than making the coast safer."***

Actually, quite the contrary: NFIP works to make coastal dwellings safer, recognizing that people want to live near the water whether you give them insurance or not. Look at all those structures Sandy laid waste to along the Jersey Shore. Many of them were built long before there was a federal flood insurance program, so their owners were drawn to the coast because they loved the living there —

not because Uncle Sam gave them a few bucks in coverage. Now that they have to be rebuilt (and, have no doubt, they will be rebuilt), these structures are going to have to meet higher building standards in order to qualify for NFIP coverage — and that will make them stronger and safer, more likely to survive the next big storm.

### ***"Government has to back flood insurance because private-sector insurers won't touch such a risky market."***

Not exactly true. Government typically backs flood insurance coverage because:

1) It's the carrot (affordable rates) that enables government to apply the stick (better flood mitigation and building standards) to help reduce the overall risk of flood damage to properties.

2) If government is going to be on the hook for post-flood disaster recovery anyway, it makes much more sense to have a system that makes property owners pay into it in advance (via premiums) and have to meet certain standards to lessen risk (through the NFIP program).

3) If the federal government requires flood insurance for properties whose mortgages are guaranteed by federal agencies (a path to home ownership that's been pursued by Washington for decades), then it better have reasonable access to affordable flood policies to make this program work.

Flood coverage is a very volatile and seasonal market, one

■ Continued on next page

## Myths

■ Continued from page 11

that's not very attractive to a profit-driven, stability seeking private insurer. That's doesn't mean it's not essential coverage to have — and that's where government has to step in. (And it doesn't mean that the current NFIP couldn't stand a little reform — a process that was started earlier this year and one that needs to continue to make the program stronger and more self-sustaining.)

***“Federal money should not be used to rebuild storm-damaged beaches — that just rewards risky behavior.”***

The federal government (among others) has a considerable investment in a healthy coastline. It protects citizens and infrastructure; it generates a lot of economic energy through tourism and commerce; it plays a vital ecological role for habitat, protection of unique species and an important link in a delicate estuarine system; and much more. Further, it is proven (and clear again, post-Sandy) that millions spent on beach restoration protects billions in property, infrastructure and livelihoods. ❖

## Sandy

■ Continued from page 10

sound protection plan would limit damage and speed recovery. Plans big and small will be advanced in the months to come to deal with the vulnerabilities exposed by Sandy, and we encourage reinforcement to be part of the recovery and repair investment.

This should be a wake-up

## Northeast Beaches Conference

# Call for papers

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- Coastal Environmental & Regulatory Issues
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- Environmental Effects and Monitoring of Sand Borrow Sites
  - Coastal Hazards Planning
- Monitoring of Borrow & Sand Mining Sites
- Innovative Shore Protection Methods

**Abstracts are due by: May 15, 2013.**

**Electronic submission is encouraged: [weggel@drexel.edu](mailto:weggel@drexel.edu)**

Notification of acceptance of abstracts will be mailed by June 12, 2013. Abstracts of accepted presentations will be printed and distributed at the conference. Authors of accepted papers are required to present the paper and register for the conference. No further paper will be required; however, presenters are encouraged to prepare a paper for submission to *Shore & Beach*.

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call for other coastal communities unaffected by the storm. We would hope the events of the past several days will inspire them to look hard at their own potential weak infrastructure links and start considering what steps they can take to shore

up those crucial public resources before they face the storm specter staring down at them.

As New Jersey and New York just were reminded, it's not a question of "if" but "when" — and "how bad." ❖