

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Want to be president? Here's what you need to know about America's coastlines

FORT MYERS, FL – In an effort to focus some conversations toward science-related issues during this presidential election, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association would like to share this open letter to the presidential candidates.

Dear Mr. McCain and Mr. Obama:

Our great country is surrounded by two of the world's most beautiful oceans, the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. More than 50 percent of Americans live within 50 miles of one of these coasts, and more are moving there every day. Since we plan to sustain this lifestyle of coastal living and provide the infrastructure to support these burgeoning economic zones of the United States, we are going to have to become much more diligent in taking care of our shorelines and protecting this resource.

Fortunately, it's not too complicated a task. In fact, it's the same philosophy as taking care of your car or your house: Preventive maintenance – if you do not take care of it, it will fall apart. We all know Benjamin Franklin's famous quote, "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." We also know that the cost of repair or replacement is often exponentially greater than the cost of routine maintenance. Indeed, our nation's shorelines *are* falling apart – in some places they are eroding at an alarming rate. In my home state of North Carolina, beaches are eroding at about 2 feet per year, according to researchers at University of North Carolina-Wilmington, East Carolina and Appalachian State.

In Florida, more than 485 miles of beaches (59 percent of the state's coastline) are eroding -- 387 miles of that deemed "critically eroded." Overall in the U.S., more than 20,000 miles of shoreline are eroded, and 2,600 miles of shoreline are considered critically eroded, according to Dr. James R. Houston of the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center.

For the last 40 years, beach restoration has been the preferred method of shore protection in the U.S. Beach restoration is the process of placing beach-quality sand on eroding beaches to reverse or offset the effects of erosion.

The three main reasons for restoration are:

- Storm protection (a wide sandy beach helps separate storm waves from upland structures and infrastructure);
- Habitat restoration (numerous species rely on wide, healthy beaches as a place to live, feed and nest); and

- Recreation (America's beaches have twice as many visitors annually as all of America's national parks combined).

Studies have shown that for each \$1 spent on beach restoration projects, \$4 to \$5 accrues back to taxpayers in benefits.

Over the years, coastal communities have restored more than 370 beaches in the United States, including such iconic coastlines as Miami Beach, Coney Island and Southern California's Venice Beach.

As a coastal resident and manager, and as proud member of the ASBPA, I urge you, if elected, to ensure better collaboration between federal, state and local interests in the restoration and management of our shorelines. Thank you for your consideration, and good luck with your very important candidacy.

For more information about the importance of America's coast, please feel free to visit www.asbpa.org.

Sincerely,

Greg "Rudi" Rudolph
ASBPA board member
Carteret County (NC) Shore Protection Office

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ABOUT ASBPA

Founded in 1926, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) represents the scientific, technical and political interests along the coast in an effort to shape national research and policy concerning shore and beach management and restoration. ASBPA strives to engage in a factual debate on coastal issues and economics that will foster sound, far-sighted and economical development and preservation of our beaches; thereby aiding in placing their beliefs within the reach of the largest possible number of people in accordance with the ideals of a democratic nation. For additional information about ASBPA, please visit www.asbpa.org/about_us/about_us_history.htm.

This information is provided by the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association. For information, to change your e-mail address or to unsubscribe from this list, contact us at exdir@asbpa.org.