

# BEACH NEWS

American Shore & Beach Preservation Association

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## How do you get federal funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to nourish your beach?

FORT MYERS, FL -America's 95,000 miles of shoreline provide breathtaking views, fun in the sun, vital storm protection and habitat for coastal vegetation and animals. Maintaining these shores is a complex process and may frequently require adding sand to combat erosion. This process is called beach nourishment.

Beach nourishment projects are usually constructed along shores where there is a trend of sand erosion - either from natural or man-made causes. The primary reasons to perform beach nourishment projects are to provide protection to the property behind the sand and to increase the recreational and habitat area along the shore.

Beach nourishment projects are typically funded by federal, state, local or private dollars - often by a combination of them. In the United States, the agency with responsibility for federal beach nourishment projects is the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

You might think it would be simple to fix an erosion problem by adding sand to a beach, but the process is actually complicated, lengthy and political.

When local coastal officials diagnose a beach erosion problem and decide to seek federal funds to help pay for the project, they approach the Corps for assistance. They also contact their members of Congress to ask for a study of the problem to be "authorized" and funded by Congress.

"The Corps relies on Congress to authorize beach nourishment projects," said Corps Senior Scientist Nicholas C. Kraus. "Without the authorization, the project will not be able to obtain federal funds."

If the study does obtain Congressional authorization and funding, the Corps begins a reconnaissance study to determine if there is a likely federal interest in the project.

The reconnaissance study is followed by a feasibility study, which includes extensive engineering and environmental analyses. Unlike most other types of federally sponsored construction projects, the Corps is required to complete a benefit-cost analysis that demonstrates how each dollar spent on a beach nourishment project will give the federal government a return that

exceeds one dollar. In fact, the average benefit-to-cost ratio for federal beach projects is around five dollars in benefit for each one dollar of cost.

"That return on investment is usually realized by the project saving money in the long run or by preventing storm damages," Kraus explained.

Once finalized, these studies are then submitted to the Corps regional office for independent technical review before being submitted to the Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The Corps headquarters submits study recommendations to its Civil Works Review Board, (CWRB) which is comprised of senior command and technical staff. The CWRB briefing serves as the corporate checkpoint to assure that the final decision report and environmental and economic documents are ready for state and agency review.

The next step is for the Corps to send details of the proposed project to the governor of the affected state, the public and several federal agencies with oversight responsibilities, including the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Projects must be environmentally sustainable. We want to minimize any potential negative impacts on the environment," Kraus said. "In fact, we prefer to design projects that benefit the environment."

After agency reviews are received and acted upon, the Corps sends the report to Congress for an authorization to construct. This is followed by one of the most important steps - the appropriation of funds by Congress. If Congress does not appropriate funds for the project, it will die here.

Unfortunately, there are beach nourishment projects on the books that cannot yet be built because Congress has not made the authorization with appropriation of funds.

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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](http://www.asbpa.org).

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