

Edisto Beach Coastal Storm Risk Management Project

Key Messages:

- **The primary benefit of the project is to reduce risk of damage to life and structures behind dunes.**
 - Additional benefits include: sharing the cost of beach nourishment with the federal government; eligibility for repairs after declared disasters; attractive and usable beach for both residents and visitors.
- **The easements will allow the Corps' contractor to build the dune and berm designed to reduce risk of damage by coastal storms.**
 - Having the easements in place long-term allows the Corps to conduct periodic nourishments, for which costs are shared by the federal government, and allows the Town to be eligible for post-storm repairs to the beach if a natural disaster has been declared. In the event of a named storm, the Town may be eligible to receive 100% of the cost of storm repair, whereas before the Town was only eligible for 75% from FEMA.
 - The easements will be held by the Town of Edisto Beach, not the US Army Corps of Engineers.
 - At any time, the Town can revoke the easements, and they will be returned to the property owner.
 - The easements may only be transferred to another qualified Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS), if the Town can no longer serve as the NFS. The easements could transfer it to the State, or Colleton County if either one of those entities wanted to take on the project. This would require a new Project Partnership Agreement.
- **The project includes a vegetated dune and berm, which were designed to maximize risk reduction for the relative cost.**
 - The height of the dune will vary depending on the current conditions of the beach.

Questions & Answers

Benefits

What are the benefits of this project to me?

- The primary benefit of the project is to reduce risk of damage to life and property.
- Additional benefits include:
 - sharing the cost of beach nourishment with the federal government;
 - eligibility for post-storm repairs for declared natural disasters;
 - attractive and usable beach for both residents and visitors.

Why are we partnering with the Corps? Why not just do this on our own?

- sharing the cost of beach nourishment with the federal government
- eligibility for post-storm repairs in the event of a declared disaster

What's in it for the Corps?

- USACE entered this partnership because it determined that reducing risk of damage by coastal storms at Edisto Beach provided a national and regional economic benefit.

Project Design

How tall is the dune?

- The existing dune on the beach has been severely eroded. This project will return the dune to its optimum height to maximize risk reduction. The design elevation of the dune is 14ft elevation NAVD88 in the inlet reaches, and 15ft elevation NAVD88 on the front beach.
- Currently, the conditions of the beach vary depending on where you are. The Town has placed markers at each public beach access that show the height of the dune at that place, based on the current condition found there. If you visit your nearest beach access point, you can get a sense of how much sand needs to be added to reach that optimized elevation.
- At Beach Access 5, the current elevation of the dune is 12ft. To achieve the 15ft project elevation, approximately 3ft of sand must be added at this area. At Beach Access 31, the current elevation of the dune is approximately 11ft. To achieve the 14ft project elevation, approximately 3 ft of sand must be added at this area.

Why does the dune height become 14ft on the southern side of the island?

- USACE's study determined that a 14ft dune elevation on the inlet portion of the project provided the most cost effective risk reduction.

Where exactly does the dune height change from 15ft to 14ft?

- The transition will be over approximately 500ft, starting around STA. 156+00 to STA. 160+60. This is occurring near Billow Street.

What will impacts be during construction? What hours/days will the crew be working?

- The construction will be a short-term inconvenience for a long-term benefit.
- Crews work 24 hours a day, in small sections that can be tackled in 1-2 days.

How will the project look at beach access points?

- The dune and berm will be constructed near access points the same way they will be constructed in front of homes.
- The town of Edisto Beach will ensure the beach access points are still accessible once the project is built.

What happens if a storm hits the beach and washes away part of the project?

- In the event of a storm, the Town may be eligible for repairs funded 100% by the federal government. Criteria for eligibility include an emergency declaration, immediate risk to life and property intended to be protected, and damage that is 2% or more of the cost of initial construction.

Access to the Beach

How does the project protect beach access?

- The easements include language that people should not access the dunes except for repairs and maintenance. Additionally, OCRM and the Town of Edisto Beach have rules indicating that people should stay off beach dunes.
- Homeowners may request signage from OCRM to place on their dunes informing the public to stay off.
- The beach is a public resource. People should access the beach using the existing beach access points.
- The Town will allow beachfront property owners to walk from their homes out to the beach. The construction of a wooden walkover will require a permit, which will be coordinated with the Town.

How do you get over dune at beach access, especially for those that are handicap?

- Getting over the dune at beach access points will happen just as it does today. If there are access points where mats are in place to help people more easily move across the sand, they will be removed during construction and replaced after construction. Additionally, the Town continues to purchase and place additional beach walkover mats each year.

There are paths to the beach currently used by residents and renters to access the beach. Will that access continue, or will the homeowner need to construct a wooden platform with steps that goes from our property over the dune to the beach?

- Yes, the Town will allow beachfront property owners to walk from their homes out to the beach. The construction of a wooden walkover will require a permit, which will be coordinated with the Town.

Easements

Why do we have to have easements?

- All projects cost-shared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers require the NFS to acquire easements on portions of private property where a project is being built. Having the easements in place allows the Corps' contractor to build the dune and berm that are designed to reduce the risk of damage to property from coastal storms.

How much of my land will be needed for the easement?

- The Town will survey the exact area needed for each easement, based on the template provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Generally, the easement line follows the landward toe of the existing dune. Easements will include the portion of the property beginning at the easement line and moving seaward to the edge of the property.

Will the Corps own my easement or part of my property?

- All easements will be held by the Town of Edisto Beach, not the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If the Town decides to end its partnership with USACE, the easements can be revoked and returned to property owners.

Does the easement allow the public on my property?

- Some parcels on Edisto beach extend very far seaward. If the public is already accessing those properties to recreate on the beach, you could expect that behavior to continue.
- The easements require that the public has access to the public beach. The Town of Edisto Beach has 38 public access points. This is where the public will be directed to access the beach, just as things operate today.
- The dune will be vegetated and protected from the public traversing or sitting on the dune other than at designated public access points.
- The easements include language that people should not access the dunes except for repairs and maintenance. Additionally, OCRM and the Town of Edisto Beach have rules indicating that people must stay off beach dunes.

What happens to any temporary structures within the easement area, like walkovers or gazebos?

- The design team tried to avoid structures within the easement area. If there are any structures within the easement area, they are considered “temporary structures” such as wooden walkovers. In the case that a temporary structure is within the easement area, sand will be placed up to and around the structure. Effort will be made not to damage the structure.
- The easement allows the construction of dune walkovers, so long as they do not interfere with the integrity of the project. The construction of any such structures within the easement must be approved before construction.

Why are they not temporary easements if the project only has a 50-year life?

- The easements are perpetual, until such a time that the Town takes action to revoke the easements and return them to property owners. The initial project has a 50-year life span. Even after those 50 years, the project is still considered an authorized project, and is still eligible for emergency repairs. If there are no easements in place, the project is not eligible for emergency repairs. Additionally, when this initial project is complete, there will be an opportunity for the Town to engage in another/new 50-year project so that the Town can continue to receive benefits for another 50 years.

Why does there need to be an appraisal of the easement areas? Why is there only one appraisal?

- The Corps requires the Town to use an approved appraiser. The process requires only 1 appraisal by this approved professional.
- An appraisal is completed to determine the value of that segment of each property. If the value of the property exceeds the value of the benefits provided by the risk reduction associated with the project, the property owner must be offered compensation in that amount.