

Edisto Beach Storm Damage Mitigation Project

How long has this project been in the works?

Since 2001, Mayor Burley Lyons and Council began looking at all possible funding sources for beach nourishment and maintenance. For an Overview of USACE Project Process a power point presentation is available and can be obtained by contacting ihill@townofedistobeach.com for a copy of the Power Point presentation.

Why is this the first time we are hearing about the project?

There have been 14 public council meetings and 4 public hearings to obtain comments along each critical path.

Why does it benefit Edisto Beach to have this relationship with the Army Corp of Engineers(ACOE) for beach nourishment?

This is a question that goes directly to funding. In 2018 Congress appropriated 22 million dollars for the Edisto Beach Storm Damage Mitigation Project. When the time comes for the next beach nourishment, funding that was available for previous nourishments will more than likely not be available. Studies show approximately every 16 years beach nourishment is needed to maintain a wide and healthy dune system. The initial beach nourishment by the **USACE** will be a 65%/35% cost split with any expenditures by the Town such as surveying being applied to the towns 35% cost share. Then for regular scheduled nourishments a 50%/50% split will apply. For any storm damage that may occur between scheduled nourishments 100% of the repairs will be covered by the **USACE**. Along with this comes the expertise of the Army Corps of Engineers and their extensive background, knowledge and experience in beach preservation along the entire United States coastline.

Will the Town require an easement on my property and what is its purpose?

Yes, an easement is an interest in land owned by another that entitles its holder to a specific use. **You still own your property and it will convey as such.** In order for the **USACE** to construct a dune system, easements are required. Easements are for 50 yrs (the life of the USACE's Storm Damage Mitigation Project). They are necessary for the access to the dune system, the construction of the dune system, and for future maintenance of the dune system by the **Army Corps of Engineers**. The town will hold these easements not the federal government.

Will the public have access to the dune within the easement?

Yes, just as they do now, but restrictions (signage) will be placed along sand fencing and plantings to discourage traffic (beach goers) and for ongoing and long-term protection of the dune.

How will I access the beach across the dune from my property?

Just as you currently do now, by foot path or boardwalk. The Town is experimenting with different types of mat walkovers and will supply a list of suggested walkovers for your convenience.

How will this affect the walkovers at the beach accesses?

Sand will be graded at the beach accesses with a gradual slope up and down the other side for easy access to the beach.

Where and how high will the dune be built?

The USACE Storm Damage Mitigation Project is designed to provide beach nourishment and a dune system that would provide the desired level of protection from the effects of hurricanes while maintaining associated recreational benefits with a wide beach.

After Hurricane Matthew, a berm was built to protect the beach and its properties. The USACE dune will basically be built along the same dune reinforcing what we already have in place. The height of the dune will be anywhere from 12 to 36 inches higher than the current berm. The town has had posts marked at each beach access showing the anticipated height of the USACE dune. These are the posts where the life rings are hung. The marked lines are 15 feet above mean sea level. The height of most lots on beachfront are between 9 feet and 12 feet above sea level.

How will this project affect my property values?

With a Storm Damage Mitigation Project in place that provides strong protection from storms and a wide recreational beach, coastal property values would not be at a huge risk. If nourishment were to cease the value would not be lost immediately, as it would take time for gradual erosion and storm events to destroy the property. However, coastal real estate property owners would realize quickly, if not immediately, that their property had been placed at risk by the cessation of beach nourishment, and the reduction in coastal property prices and value would occur rather quickly. This does not only impact beachfront owners.

Is the State Park reach being funded by the Town?

No.

Why is the inlet reach included in the project?

At the January 2019 public hearing, a question was asked about removing the inlet reach from the project. Taking these comments into consideration, Town Council has requested this action and is waiting for an answer from the USACE.

Why is the Town concerned about storm surge when sea level rise is causing flooding on the marsh side of the island?

Sea Level rise along Big Bay Creek has been discussed by Council and staff are in the development stages of determining what ordinances changes are required for folks to protect their properties. Staff are also seeking grant sources to provide data necessary to make informed decisions moving forward.

