

\$500,000 upgrade for beach

Trucks haul new sand into storm-ravaged Harvey Cedars

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HARVEY CEDARS — Dump trucks filled with sand rolled north Thursday along Long Beach Boulevard past the private cobblestone driveways leading to multimillion-dollar homes known by name rather than street number.

Sounds of idling Mack truck engines and the warning beepers on bulldozers and loaders overpowered the serenity of a sunny autumn day on the seashore. Occasionally, a puff of diesel exhaust rose above the dunes, whisked away by the sweeping southerly breeze.

The long-awaited and much-needed beach replenishment project had begun in the borough after more than a month of frustrating delays.

Municipal officials and coastal engineers believe the wait and noise will be worth it.

The trucks, loaded with 25 tons of sand each, will more than double the size of a weather-ravaged beach.

"I knew it was going to start soon, and it is something we need badly," said Al Wight, a Cedars Avenue resident who watched the early stages of the project Thursday. "The last storm really cut the beach. I was glad that storm was only one day, or it could have been like 1962."

Wight, who has watched the give and take of the Atlantic Ocean for years, noted sand was already being returned to the Hudson Avenue beach.

"We couldn't wait for Mother Nature," he said. "We needed this replenishment."

From jetty to jetty

The \$500,000 project is being paid for with federal, state, Ocean County and town funds. It's designed by the Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the Bureau of Coastal Engineering, and will place 16,000 cubic yards of sand on a 900-foot stretch of beach between jetties at Cumberland and Salem avenues.

Once the project is complete, the beach will measure 140 feet from behind the dunes to the water line. Engineers estimate the beach in front of the dunes will be about 50 feet wide. It also will be 8 feet above sea level at its highest point.

The area of beach will be rebuilt 50 feet at a time, working from south to north.

The end of Hudson Avenue is the dumping point for the sand, which is then loaded into an articulating dump truck and moved about 200 yards south to the replenishment area.

The area where sand is being deposited off Hudson Avenue is narrow, and loaders and dozers won't be able to operate without the small ocean waves of the outgoing tide touching their tire

tracks.

"Half the dune is gone as the result of the last two storms," said Scott Fritzingler, an engineer with the Army corps' Philadelphia office. "There is no question some of the homes here were in trouble if nothing was done."

Scott Davison, project manager for Environmental Engineering and Construction, the Maryland contractor for the project, said he was stunned to see how much beach was lost in the two coastal storms.

"On Salem Avenue, at high tide, there is no beach," he said.

Davison would not guarantee, however, that the project would protect the Harvey Cedars dunes and beaches during future storms.

"In theory, yes," he said. "But that is not a promise. We can't control the weather."

Davison also said only portions of the dunes will be fixed because 16,000 cubic yards of sand will not go as far as they expected.

Matching sand color

About four loads of sand will be delivered each hour. Trucks will roll between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Engineers estimated 1,000 tons of sand will be dropped on the beach daily for 16 or 17 days.

The washed sand is from the Sahara Sand Pit on the Stafford-Eagleswood boundary. The sand is free of clay and dirt that would give it a brownish-orange tint.

"The grains are exactly the same as the ones on the beach right now," Fritzingler said.

A sample of sand from each truckload was taken and placed in a plastic bag to measure the consistency of color and texture.

"It looks a little dark now, but that's because it's wet," Fritzingler said. "Once it dries out, it will whiten up."

Before work could begin, Harvey Cedars needed a deed of dedication and a perpetual storm-damage-reduction easement from two homeowners, according to Borough Clerk Daina Dale. Once they were signed, the borough and state have the right to make beach repairs forever, Dale said.

"The easement is for property from the bulkhead line," Mayor Jonathan Oldham said. "In some areas that property goes all the way to the water, and in some places it's 10 feet.

"The easement also reaffirms public beach access while allowing us to fix the beach, fix the dunes, put up dune fence and do plantings. It is a north-south easement, which means people can use the beach just as they do now."

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