

In Cape May: Army Corps to Lessen Beach Slope

- By Jack Fichter
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CAPE MAY — While this city normally receives sand to build up its beaches, this autumn the Army Corps of Engineers will remove some sand to lessen a sharp drop at the shoreline that has been linked to neck and back injuries.

At a Tues., Aug. 16 City Council meeting, Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman said excess sand would be trucked to the Coast Guard base. He said the city met with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) four weeks ago which presented a process to change the slope of the city's beaches.

Mayor Edward J. Mahaney said a public meeting would be held in late September or early October featuring engineers from the Army Corps of Engineers and DEP representatives to explain the beach replenishment plan to the public and media.

“At this point, they are still working on some of the engineering aspects...” said the mayor.

The process is known as backpassing which moves some sand “that has gotten higher and longer than the beach template calls for,” to a spot where there is less sand, said Mahaney.

“In doing this, as Mr. Wichterman points out, we're going to create a gentler slope,” he said.

A secondary effect of the process is less cost for the project, said Mahaney. He said dredging would also take place along with the backpassing.

Two years ago, Cape May experienced 32 C-Spine (neck, cervical and spine) injury calls.

One year ago, the city reported 11 C-Spine injuries along the city's beaches with eight injuries in July and three in August.

C-Spine rescue squad figures for this summer are expected by the end of the month.

At issue, beaches with sharp drop offs may be causing neck and spine injuries for body surfers and surfers here as a result of sand replenishment by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps have been replenishing the city's beaches since October 1999.

Those who body surf were affected the most by running into a wall of sand at the shoreline.

Tags

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