

February 26, 2008

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT**

Harry Simmons, president, ASBPA, 910-200-7867

Howard Marlowe, director of governmental affairs, ASBPA, 202-775-1796

Tina Haisman, media relations, ASBPA, 239-418-1157

## **America's Coastal Policy: Why You Want the Federal Government's Toes in Your Sand**

FORT MYERS, FL – The fascination with living on or near a coast is as much a part of American culture as apple pie.

Currently, more than 53 percent of the nation's population lives in a coastal area. Experts predict the population of America's coastal counties will reach 165 million residents by 2015, with an average of 3,600 people moving near a coastline every day.

"The shores of our oceans, lakes and rivers are important assets for the people of America," said Harry Simmons, mayor of Caswell Beach, N.C., and president of the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA). "In addition to reaping economic benefits, beaches provide Americans with an opportunity for rest and recreation not equally available in any other form."

In an effort to keep America's shorelines healthy, the federal government relies on the expertise of several agencies, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) serves as the primary agency for beach protection projects. In coordination with a local project sponsor such as a town, county or state, the USACE decides which beaches need restoration by collecting data, researching coastal processes and using analytical techniques and models.

Once the USACE determines a project is necessary, agency officials send a recommendation to Congress. It is then up to Congress to allocate the needed funds for the project. Most of the time, the federal government and the local project sponsors share the costs.

In fiscal year 2008, Congress authorized approximately \$100 million for coastal protection projects; however, a review by the ASBPA demonstrates a need of approximately \$300 million in funds for 2009.

The necessity of this funding is clearly visible when looking at the numbers. Most beach projects are crucial for flood damage prevention. Experts estimate more than \$700 billion in damages have been prevented through these kinds of projects during the past 25 years. This represents a six-to-one return on investment.

In addition to damages prevented, USACE studies also show that beaches contribute more than \$250 billion annually to the national economy – benefitting the entire nation.

For more information about the health of your beach, visit [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org).

###

**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. The group strives to engage 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 benefits within the reach of the largest possible number of people in accordance with the ideals of a democratic nation. For more information on the ASBPA, go to [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org).