

Topsail Beach, North Carolina



asbpa

American Shore & Beach Preservation Association
Advocating for healthy coastlines

*Founded in 1926,
ASBPA is dedicated
to preserving,
protecting and
enhancing our coasts by
merging science
and public policy.*

Legislative & federal agency agenda: 2017

1: A new commitment to coastal funding: Infrastructure, restoration, resilience and research

The United States needs to invest in coastal infrastructure to help rebuild great American coastlines and coastal cities. Rebuilding beaches, dunes and other coastal infrastructure will put Americans back to work and protect millions of jobs based in the tourism economy. ASBPA supports the following policies to sensibly invest in healthy coastlines:

Congress should:

■ Renew and join the Coastal Communities Caucus

More than a third of the U.S. population lives in a coastal county; coastal communities are represented by Democrats and Republicans; and every community has a common need for healthy coastlines for storm protection, economic and environmental preservation, and recreation benefits.

- The House of Representatives should renew the Coastal Communities Caucus, and coastal members of Congress should join the caucus.

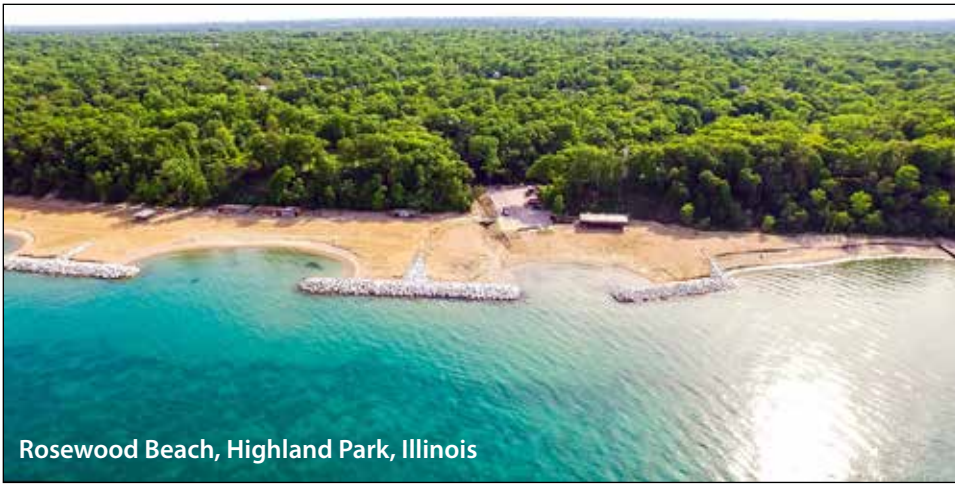
■ Immediately invest in coastal infrastructure to create jobs

The U.S. needs to create jobs by preserving, protecting and enhancing our nation's coastal infrastructure. Restoring coastlines has a tremendous return on investment and generates jobs — creating and supporting more than 30 jobs for each million dollars invested. That's more than twice as many jobs as the oil and gas and road construction industries combined.¹ Coastal infrastructure creates engineering and construction jobs, and protects and creates jobs in transportation, recreation and tourism, fishing and more.

- Provide \$5 billion over 10 years to construct federal, state and local beaches, dunes, wetlands and other coastal risk reduction, erosion control, and habitat infrastructure to address backlog in authorized projects and provide a “down payment” on projects in development.
- Conduct a national study on the economic value of coastal infrastructure to determine full cost and benefits to coastal projects.
- Any major infrastructure legislation should explicitly allow funding to be used for coastal, nature-based infrastructure (such as beaches, dunes and wetlands).
- Provide adequate appropriations for key coastal programs

**Washington office:
553 Park Road NW
Washington, DC 20010
Phone: (202) 827-4246**

**Email:
Derek.Brockbank
@asbpa.org**



Rosewood Beach, Highland Park, Illinois



There are many important coastal appropriations spread across many agencies. In particular, Congress should:

- Appropriate at least \$50 million for Shore Protection in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Civil Works construction.
- Appropriate \$4.8 million for Regional Sediment Management (RSM) in USACE Civil Works.
- Appropriate at least \$40 million for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Coastal and Marine Geology Program (CMGP).
- Appropriate at least \$5 million for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program.
- Appropriate \$6 million for a South Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (Sec. 1204 of the WIIN Act).
- Increase funding to coastal permitting agencies, including USACE, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

■ Provide long-term coastal funding from coastal and offshore development

The need for coastal restoration and protection will continue to grow as sea levels rise and development in the coastal zone increases. Regular and dedicated funding for coastal protection should be tied to new development, in particular any industrial development.

- Maintain existing sources of dedicated funding for coastal protection that are tied to offshore energy pro-

- duction — such as the Gulf Coast restoration funding provided in the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)
- Ensure lease fees for any new offshore energy production — whether renewable or fossil fuel — should (in part) be dedicated to coastal protection.
- Support legislation that provides new dedicated coastal funds — including legislation to provide funding for the coastal trust fund in the National Endowment for the Oceans Act.
- Support pathways for public-private partnerships that match private investment dollars with reduced financial liability and federal and state investment in coastal, nature-based infrastructure.

■ Begin work on the next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)

Congress should continue on a two-year cycle for passing WRDAs. As the 115th Congress considers a WRDA, they should work towards including:

- Language requiring the USACE to develop, and keep updated, a 10-year schedule of priorities for federally-authorized beach and inlet projects.
- Language to encourage the Corps to adopt a systems approach to planning, funding and implementing coastal risk reduction measures.
- Authorize a California Sediment Management program.

Federal agencies should:

■ Expand the range of benefits used to determine coastal projects' economic value

USACE coastal projects are authorized based on a specific purpose or mission — for example, hurricane storm damage risk reduction. Under law, every project that is approved by the Corps must have a 1:1 benefit-cost ratio (BCR) for the project's stated purpose. The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has typically required a 2.5:1 project BCR to be included in the President's budget. However many projects are, or should be, designed to have benefits across multiple purposes. To better account for and maximize benefits:

- USACE should calculate, and OMB should consider, the full array of benefits (and costs) for coastal projects, including:
 - Reducing storm damage to property and infrastructure;
 - Promoting public safety;
 - Protecting, restoring, and creating aquatic ecosystem habitats;
 - Enhancing shorelines;
 - Promoting recreation;
 - Supporting risk management adaptation strategies;
 - Other public economic or environmental benefits.

Redondo Beach, California



Seabrook Island, South Carolina

2: A new commitment to advancing coastal projects

Coastal projects that seek to restore habitat and protect coastal communities need to be implemented without delay; we are seeking to expedite the permitting of these projects without undermining environmental protections. ASBPA supports the following to improve regulatory and review processes:

Federal agencies should:

■ Advance Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials (BUDM) and RSM

Often the cheapest way to restore a beach or coastal system is to use the dredged or spoil material from a navigation project; however, bureaucratic policies can make this funding difficult or impossible to obtain. To improve use of BUDM and RSM:

- USACE should develop guidance and establish pilot programs for BUDM as outlined in Sec. 1122 of the WIIN Act (a.k.a. WRDA 2016).
- Make FEMA Public Assistance funding eligible for BUDM projects constructed by non-federal project partners.

■ Expedite USACE review and permitting processes

The USACE has made steps to speed up coastal review and permitting including following “3x3x3” (a review process that limits feasibility studies to \$3 million, 3 years, and 3 levels of vertical integration), changes to reconnaissance studies, and expanding nationwide permits to include living shorelines. But these are steps incomplete and have led to unintended consequences.

- USACE should evaluate outcomes of the “3x3x3 process,” both positive and negative, and further develop an approach that maintains the objective of streamlining within a more scalable framework.
- Provide guidance and implement the nationwide permit on living shorelines in such a way that allows for small placement of sediment as part of a living shoreline design.

■ Improve regulatory and permitting timeframes

Regulations around coastal projects are critical to protecting species, clean water and other ecosystem functions; however the implementation of regulations is often inefficient and adds unnecessary costs to projects. Regulatory constraints can reduce the time available for and delay the start of constructing projects that protect coastal communities. Duplicative and individual permitting across similar projects and regulatory jurisdictions add time and cost to projects. ASBPA wants to ensure permitting processes are as efficient and expedited as possible. In order to improve regulatory timeframes:

- USFWS and USACE should collaborate to develop a programmatic biological opinion for beach nourishment projects regionally, where appropriate;
- NMFS Protected Resources Division (PRD) should:
 - ▶ Provide clear instruction to USACE regulatory staff and private consultants on the preparation of biological assessments (BAs) and consultation requests to align with the issuance of Letters of Concurrence (LoCs);
 - ▶ Reorganize structure, in a manner similar to USFWS and NMFS Habitat Conservation Division, to take full advantage of regional familiarity with projects.
- NMFS should expand its pilot project on LoCs to satisfy Section 7 consultations.
- In the absence of sufficient federal funding, NMFS, USFWS and USACE should seek out collaborative agreements with state agencies that would allow the state to fund or provide a regulatory staff position within the permitting agency.

3: A new commitment to regional and state coordination

Coastal projects protect local communities and should be led by local and state efforts; federal investment and implementation of coastal projects should support local and state visions. States should coordinate with their neighbors to encourage

Washington office:
553 Park Road NW
Washington, DC 20010
Phone: (202) 827-4246

Email:
Derek.Brockbank
@asbpa.org
www.asbpa.org
www.facebook.com/
AmericanBeaches
www.twitter.com/asbpa

Founded in 1926,
ASBPA is dedicated
to preserving,
protecting and
enhancing our coasts by
merging science
and public policy.



cost efficiency for projects. ASBPA supports the following in implementing regional and state coastal plans:

Congress should:

■ **Fund the USACE Comprehensive Coastal Studies**

The North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) put forth a strategy for integrating shore protection with estuarine and environmental restoration, using structural, nonstructural and “natural & nature based features” (NNBF) in the region hit by Hurricane Sandy. The recently authorized South Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study would have similar benefits. Congress should:

- Fund follow-up studies in remaining three focus areas for the NACCS (three focus area studies were appropriated in FY16).
- Fund a South Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (Sec. 1204 of the WIIN Act).
- Continue to support the Coastal Texas Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Study.

Federal agencies should:

■ **Restore the Gulf Coast**

Following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, billions of dollars have become avail-

able to restore the Gulf Coast. The precedent-setting nature of this regional restoration effort makes it nationally important.

- Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) trustees and the RESTORE Council should ensure funding that they control is spent only on improving the environmental health of the coast and is spent on science-based restoration projects.
- The RESTORE Council and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) should develop a Gulf-wide sediment budget and offshore sediment assessment.

■ **Advance the NACCS projects**

- USACE should finish construction on the remaining authorized projects in the region hit by Hurricane Sandy that were funded by the “Sandy Supplemental” appropriation.

■ **Begin a South Atlantic Comprehensive Study**

- Using the authority granted in the WIIN Act and authorities previously available through regional sediment management, the SAD should assess flood risk and vulnerabilities of shorelines to hurricanes, storms and sea level rise in its region.

1) http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/pdf/RAE_Restoration_Jobs.pdf