

**Beach Erosion Committee
Meeting Minutes February 13, 2003**

Attendees:

**Bo Ellis
Bill Farmer
Larry Keegan
Lou Off
John Robinette
Freda Rutherford
Chris Schubert**

- 1. The recently completed Beach Erosion Study was discussed. The summary findings of the study indicated that the current erosion rate on Tybee Island is approximately 320,000 cubic yards of sand per year, and that the planned Savannah Harbor Deepening Project is forecasted to increase this erosion rate by approximately 12,000 cubic yards of sand per year, or by approximately 4 %.**

The additional 12,000 cubic yard erosion rate projected impact of the project on beach erosion is viewed as within the accuracy tolerance of the model. Discussion occurred as to whether or not a “sensitivity analysis” should be done to ascertain a range of probable impact on beach erosion from the project. This concept will be deferred until a subsequent meeting of the committee.

During the study, independent “peer review” occurred from Eric Olsen and Dr. Clark Alexander, and their concerns were incorporated into the final study report. The City of Tybee Island is having Eric Olsen review the final report and provide comments. It was determined that the Beach Erosion Committee will defer further consideration of the Beach Erosion Study Report until the City of Tybee Island provides input to the committee.

The Beach Erosion Study included data illustrating the degree of erosion and lowering of the ocean floor adjacent to and south of the ocean channel, as well as other changes in and around the Savannah River entrance area over an extended time period.

- 2. The status of HB 1021 was discussed. HB 1021 requires placement of beach quality sand from harbor dredging projects to benefit adjacent beaches, and has a delayed effective date until June 2003. The GA Department of Natural Resources had forwarded to NOAA a requested Routine Programmatic Change to incorporate HB 1021 into Georgia’s Coastal Management Plan, which is currently under consideration.**

- 3. Wave action from big ships was discussed. This issue is considered to be a separate issue, not part of beach erosion.**
- 4. Migration of the South Channel southward was discussed as a probable major cause for increased erosion along the north shoreline of Tybee Island. The City of Tybee Island is pursuing the possibility of including the north shoreline of Tybee Island for inclusion in the Federal Project that addresses the east shoreline and the southern shoreline portions of the Back River. The City has completed a sand addition project along portions of the island's north shoreline.**
- 5. The Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials Study being accomplished by the USCOE was briefly discussed. There was no data available as to the status of the study and its expected completion date.**
- 6. The results of effort analyzing the composition of the ocean channel materials anticipated for removal in the Harbor Deepening Project was discussed. The test borings have been completed, and the report analyzing the test results is not yet available.**
- 7. The study addressing the coarse/fine grain size issue has not yet been started. It is planned to initiate this study after the report analyzing the test results on ocean channel materials is available.**
- 8. Accretion and erosion on the islands south of Tybee Island was discussed, especially regarding impacts on turtle nesting. It was indicated that sand moves from Tybee Island to these southern islands and addition of sand to Tybee Island benefits these southern islands, and that reductions in these sand flows harm these southern islands when erosion rates exceed accretion rates.**
- 9. Chris Schuberth expressed his concern that neither the Beach Erosion Study conducted by ATM nor the "independence" of the ostensible "peer reviewers" provides alternative scientific viewpoints by individuals who are equivalent in technical expertise while independent of the project, and therefore the process in which the Beach Erosion Study had been developed is flawed. He noted that each of the two "peer reviewers" have at one time or another been important stakeholders of the process.**
- 10. The next meeting of the Beach Erosion Committee is planned to occur when comments from the City of Tybee Island are received pertaining to its review of the Beach Erosion Study completed by ATM for the Georgia Ports Authority.**