

January 2017

## **Beach Replenishment Efforts Continue**

As previously reported, Bethany Beach has been scheduled for replenishment by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in 2017, for the purpose of “flood and coastal storm damage reduction.” However, the project is dependent upon the Federal budget and funding process. Among other necessary steps in that process, allocation of sufficient funds in the USACE “workplan” for the year is essential for implementation. On October 3, 2016, the Delaware Congressional delegation, in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, strongly supported the allocation of \$12.5 million for Delaware beach and coastal projects in the 2017 work plan, to include \$6.65 million for Bethany Beach.

Since this is a vital issue for beach communities and the state, elected officials and staff of Bethany Beach, South Bethany, Fenwick Island and Dewey Beach met in November 2016 with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control manager for beach replenishment matters to discuss possible combined efforts to secure the necessary funding.

In November 2016, the Town Council approved a joint effort with South Bethany to reinforce the request of the Congressional delegation. By letter dated November 16, to the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Bethany Beach Mayor Jack Gordon and South Bethany Mayor Pat Voveris described the condition of the beach and dunes and emphasized the vital need for replenishment this year for the protection of citizens and infrastructure, and preservation of the local and state economy. The response of the Assistant Secretary, dated December 8, 2016, was noncommittal, stating, in part: “the Bethany Beach project will be considered for future funding, along with many other programs, projects and activities across the Nation in competition for available Federal resources.” (A separate similar letter was sent to South Bethany.)

In a further development, the Mayors of Bethany Beach, South Bethany and Fenwick Island, in a letter dated January 6, 2017, to elected officials in Lewes, Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach, raised the possibility of reactivating the Association of Coastal Towns. The purpose would be to more effectively address important issues of common interest, including beach replenishment. A meeting to explore that possibility has been tentatively scheduled for early February.

The BBLA Board of Directors has established an ad hoc committee to focus on the beach replenishment funding issue and to recommend appropriate steps that might be taken to support and supplement the efforts described in order to ensure the necessary funding for replenishment this year. The Board has offered to assist the Town in its efforts when it would be helpful to do so. The Board will continue to monitor this high priority issue and will keep our members informed of future developments.