Captiva Erosion Prevention District

Newsletter

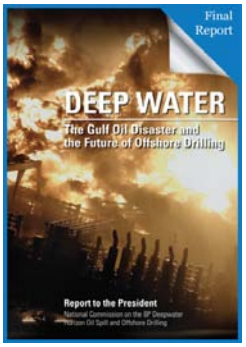
Winter 2011

Volume 3, Issue 1

It Could Happen Again!

The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling has warned that unless significant measures are taken, another blowout could occur. In their final report released on January 11, 2011, one of the key findings states, "The blowout was not the product of a series of aberrational decisions made by rogue industry or government officials that could not have been anticipated or expected to occur again. Rather, the root causes are systemic and, absent significant reform in both industry practices and government policies, might well recur."

The report emphasizes that errors and misjudgements by major oil drilling companies BP, Transocean, and Halliburton played key roles in the catastrophe. It also says that government oversight failed.



The final report calls for more science to better protect the environment. Among its findings is that Congress should create a new, independent agency with a strong science component. A part of the Department of the Interior and with enforcement authority over all aspects of offshore drilling safety, the new agency would include a leasing and environmental science office to oversee "environmentally responsible and efficient" development of the outer continental shelf. The agency's responsibilities would include conventional and renewable energy development as well.

The report also calls for "better science and greater interagency consultation to improve decision-making." It recommends that the NOAA play a more important role in deciding where drilling is

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Spread the Roots-Join CEPD for Dunes Planting

Our willingness to plant and maintain native dune vegetation on Captiva is a vital step in preserving our beach and the value of beachfront property. The CEPD invites you to participate in a community event to restore vegetation in areas of

Captiva's existing dune system. "Spread the Roots" takes place on March 24, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 11513 Andy Rosse Lane. CEPD is distributing **FREE** sea oat plants and planting instructions.

Sand dunes are much more than piles of sand. They are the first line of defense against storms. Dunes

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Spread the Roots

Ordering Instructions and Schedule

March 11	Reserve your plants. Call 472-2472 or email us at mycepd@gmail.com. One flat (200 plants) per household.
March 15	You will receive confirmation of your participation by email or telephone.
March 24	Pick up your plants between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at 11513 Andy Rosse Lane. One flat (200 plants) measures 12" by 18" so it will easily fit in your trunk. Begin planting.
May 1	Complete your planting by this date. Turtle nesting season begins.

www.mycepd.com 877.687.2373 239.472.2472 mycepd@gmail.com

Winter Beach Erosion – A Shore Thing

Most of us are not surprised when the shape of the Captiva shoreline changes after a tropical storm or hurricane. During a major storm, strong wave action, wind and currents will erode sand from the

beach and deposit it offshore as submerged sandbars. Beginning in late summer and lasting until early fall, we think of these major tropical disturbances as the culprits for eroding our beach. While beach erosion is episodic, often occurring during a hurricane or tropical storm, we also see beaches change during the seasons. Interestingly, the most dramatic changes can occur in the winter season.

The shoreline is constantly changing and coastal erosion is a natural process. Many coastal areas face chronic long-term shoreline erosion problems especially along the low-lying barrier islands of the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. Average erosion rates are 6 feet per year along the Gulf. *- Beatley, Bower, and Schwab (2002)*

Coastal storms have a variety of forms and take place throughout the year. The beach profile adjusts rapidly to the wave energy caused by the storms. There is a seasonal shift of beaches from summer to winter. Summer wave height is low energy. Generally, summer storms are small. The wind is southerly, light and variable. The waves are mild and low. In calm weather, the low gentle waves of summer will move sand from offshore sandbars and deposit the sand on the beach.

Winter storms cause considerable beach erosion. Southwest Florida cold fronts bring high winds. The combination of winds, high-energy waves and currents impact the coastline and drag sand offshore.

Exchanging Bed Tax for Sand

Throughout the Atlantic and Gulf states, policies on funding beach nourishment projects differ widely. In Florida, state statutes authorize the state to pay a share of the actual costs for restoring and nourishing critically eroded beaches, provided that the beach has adequate public access and the project protects natural resources and provides protection for endangered and threatened species.

The local community must also be willing to pay for some of the nourishment project. One source of local funding for beach nourishment on Captiva is derived from Captiva property owners through special assessments that are based on the nature and extent of benefits expected to accrue from the project. The other source is described in the Lee County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan states that Tourist Development Council (TDC) funds can be used for preserving Lee County Beaches.

The TDC is funded by the 5% tourist tax (bed tax) collected by Lee County on accommodations rented for 6 months or less. The revenue from the bed tax is distributed to 3 programs: 53.6% to the Visitor

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Beach Clips-Florida Facts

Captiva's Hagerup Beach Park was named most romantic beach in Florida by Travelocity in Dec. 2010.

Florida has 1,200 miles of sand beaches and 1,800 miles of coastline.

Florida has the 3rd lowest average elevation of all the states behind Delaware and Louisiana. Half the state is less than 100 feet above sea level.

76% of the population resides in coastal counties.

You are no more than 65 miles from saltwater, as the crow flies, no matter where you are in Florida.

Over 80% of the US population of loggerhead turtles nests on our beaches.

There are less than 150 Florida panthers in the wild. There are none on Sanibel or Captiva. Bobcats are often mistaken for them.

You can now buy a permit to hunt Burmese Pythons on 4 state-managed lands around the Everglades.

It Could Happen Again!

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permitted. Further, it calls for more scientific, technical, and oil spill response research to ensure

the safe development of oil and gas resources in the Arctic, an important area for future development, the report states.

Other recommendations from the report:

- Creation of an independent safety agency within the Department of the Interior.
- Expansion of offshore drilling regulatory and enforcement to match or exceed other oil-producing countries' tighter regulations.
- Establishment of a safety institute within the oil and gas industry.
- Acceleration of scientific and technical research in all areas of offshore drilling.
- Expansion of the Oil Pollution Act's current $75 million cap on liability for offshore facility accidents to hold drilling operators financially responsible for the consequences of their activities.

Richard Charter, offshore drilling expert and senior marine program policy advisor for Defenders of Wildlife, says it is now up to our national legislators. "Congress must now take legislative action to deal with the persistent environmental and economic impacts of the tragic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and chart a responsible path focused on alternatives to oil to keep America's coasts and natural treasures safe."

Save the Date

3/9/11	Board Meeting	noon
4/13/11	Board Meeting	noon
5/11/11	Board Meeting	noon
6/15/11	Board Meeting	noon
7/13/11	Board Meeting	noon
8/10/11	Board Meeting	noon

The CEPD Board of Commissioners holds public meetings the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The public is welcome.

Spread the Roots

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act as a natural buffer by absorbing the energy of storm waves and lowering the impact of erosion. Coastal storms, bright sunlight, sea spray and infertile sand create a harsh environment. Sand

dunes provide a habitat for shore plants and animals including migrating monarch butterflies, least terns, snowy plovers, ghost crabs, sea turtles and piping. Dune systems are fragile because the sand can be moved by wind, waves and storms. Heavy recreational use of the beach also increases the need to restore and protect dunes.

Vegetation is essential to dune formation and stabilization of the dune system. Vegetation traps windblown sand around plant stems, leaves and roots. This process, known as accretion, builds up the dune. As sand builds around the plants and the stems become buried, new roots form on the buried plants and new stems sprout.

Dune plants must adapt to the harsh conditions of the dune environment. They have to be able to survive temperature extremes, being buried by blowing sand, salt spray, drought, flooding, and low nutrients. Many different species of plant living in the dune system have developed specific attributes that help them survive in these harsh conditions. Long-term survival in the dune depends on plants that have dense root systems, fast growth rates, low profiles, and high procreation.

Crucial to growth and maintenance of dunes are sea oats (uniola paniculata). Dense areas can stabilize dunes and significantly minimize storm erosion. This creeping perennial grass has seed heads that look like spiked oats. They provide the best long-term stability because they have an extensive underground stem and root system, and burial by sand actually stimulates growth. It is also a favorite because it is vigorous and persistent, drought tolerant, effective at trapping sand, has a low incidence of pests, and tolerates a low supply of nutrients.

Winter Beach Erosion-A Shore Thing

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The rough seas and storms between October and April account for more cumulative damage from erosion than other months because they occur more frequently and may last several days.

The beach may look narrower to you this winter. If so, it probably is. But all is not lost. Look to the gentle waves of the summer to move some of the sand back onshore.

Sperm Whales Clear Out After Spill

Discovery News reports a lucky placement of acoustic survey equipment has allowed scientists to get some insight into what sperm whales did when confronted with the oil spill. They left.

The decrease in whales detected 9 miles from the spill compared to no change 15.5 miles away suggests the whales near the site purposely moved. The presence of the oil, the noise of the disaster itself, the drilling, and the increase in ship traffic apparently motivated the whales nearer the disaster site to move to cleaner, more peaceful, waters. Only one sperm whale has been reported dead in the Gulf and is not attributed to the spill.

Exchanging Bed Tax for Sand

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and Convention Bureau for operations and advertising, 20% to debt service on Lee County sports complex (stadiums), and 26.4% to beach and shoreline improvement programs.

Each year the TDC appropriates a portion of the Beach and Shoreline Program funds to a beach nourishment trust fund to assist with nourishment needs throughout the County. During FY 2009/10 this amounted to $1.1 million. When a nourishment project is presented to the TDC and the Lee County Division of Natural Resources, the state and federal cost share, if any, is subtracted and the balance required for the project is divided by the storm protection and recreational benefits based on the availability of public access. The TDC only allocates funds for recreational benefit of the beach.

In order to meet present and future beach nourishment needs on Captiva and in other parts of Lee County, the beach nourishment trust fund will need to get top priority from Lee County and TDC decision-makers. As Captiva prepares for the next nourishment project, it will look to Lee County and the TDC to pay their fair share of the cost of beach preservation. A strong County government commitment to protect and conserve the county's beaches is essential. Let's not forget our beaches

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