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Tropical Storm Fay impacts Captiva's coastline

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Although Tropical Storm Fay left property on Captiva relatively untouched, save for some high winds and heavy rain, the island's beaches are a different story.

On Monday, Sherrill Sims and Kelsey Angstadt of the Captiva Erosion Prevention District (CEPD) took to the beach with senior coastal engineer Steven Keehn of Coastal Planning & Engineering to evaluate just how hard of hit Captiva's coastline took from Fay.

According to the report compiled by Keehn, the damage caused by Fay issued from the storm's bands rather than the direction of the storm's advance, with winds coming from a northerly direction rather than from the south.

The coastline suffered berm recession and scarping. But at the time of the evaluation, Keehn noted that the beach was already beginning to recover once the storm had passed on.

"The beach absorbed the storm just as it was designed to do," said Sims.

The report further states that Fay had the most impact on the island's usual "hot spot" regions, located in the northern and central sections of Captiva and northern Sanibel.

In its entirety, the beach received moderate erosion due to the passage of Tropical Storm Fay.

"The true impact cannot be measured without surveys, which are not recommended under current conditions and can wait until the next periodic monitoring survey," Keehn wrote. "Substantial recovery should be expected in most areas, although the control hot spot regions warrant future observation."

"I was very impressed by our engineer, Steve Keehn," Sims added. "It was a real education for me and Kelsey."

The areas that exhibited the worst conditions and the most scarping (or steep slopes cutting into the sand) occurred near:

- South Seas Island Resort, just south of a traditional "hot spot" area
- Central Captiva by The Mucky Duck restaurant, a central "hot spot" area (where sand was deposited during the most recent nourishment in April)
- The northern region of Sanibel Island

In the Blind Pass area, scarping was minimal and the beach has begun to recover, which seems to be true of most of the island.

"There is some scarping along the middle section, but the beach still has a good width," Sims explained.

She also said that she was taking a swim in the Gulf on Wednesday evening and was amazed to find that a sandbar had developed and continued for hundreds of yards out into the ocean.

"The majority of the sand we lost is sitting just offshore, and I think you'll see it start to come in," she added.