

Opinion

MY VIEW

SEND YOUR VIEWS TO THE EDITOR: DON@NANTUCKETINDEPENDENT.COM

In regard to the SBPF efforts currently being discussed in your publication, I had a couple of comments.

Both biological and physical changes will occur at the borrow site. The U.S. Army Corps Manual, Design of Beach Fills, (EM 1110-2-3301) indicates that the

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By
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following aspects should be considered when selecting a borrow site.

Biological

1. While certain fauna, such as fish, may not be affected by the borrow dredging operations because they can simply swim away, many other types of fauna and flora cannot relocate themselves and direct mortality will result.

2. A common physical alteration that results from dredging is the exposure of a substrate that differs from the naturally exposed substrate. Because many organisms are adapted to a specific substrate condition, organisms may not survive repopulation attempts from adjacent non-dredged areas.

3. Dredging operations have negative impacts on organisms due to suspension of silt and clay size soil particles in the water.

The following My View is written in response to the "Voices Away From the Bluff" with Catherine Stover, published in the Oct. 24 The Nantucket Independent.

We read with interest Mrs. Stover's comments and appreciate her expressions of sympathy to those of us on the Bluff in danger of losing our houses. Two clarifying points: one, we do not have a place to which to move our house (common misconception) and two, we believe it is important to save the land of the North Bluff whether or not it has houses on it.

While we intend to specifically address the technical issues Mrs. Stover raises, there is an overall thread which runs through her letter which is puzzling and worthy of comment. Mrs. Stover seems unable to acknowledge any potential benefits of the SBPF project, even when they are backed by science. Yet she proffers great and sweeping certainty about the dire consequences of the project based on conjecture and emotion. In so doing, she disseminates misinformation and does a grave disservice to all concerned.

1) Beach nourishment has been successful in high energy environments.

We agree with Mrs. Stover that 'Sconset experiences intense ocean forces.

Physical

Dredging operations will alter the natural substrate relief features. As a result, wave energy and refraction patterns will be altered, which may negatively impact nearby shorelines. While the SBPF has concluded that their numerical analyses indicate that there will be negligible impact to the wave patterns and energy dissipation, thus a negative impact on the nearby Nantucket shoreline, caution should be used while interpreting these conclusions. The results of numerical analyses are sensitive to the input data, and even with perfect input, the analyses reduce the complex ocean behavior with a mathematical equation. A mathematical equation cannot "model" such complex phenomena for all possible scenarios. Nor do we have the ability to predict the oceans response to future unknowns, such as weather, global warming, change in currents, etc. It is difficult to imagine that the dredging of enough material to "protect" a natural shoreline, will not have an equally negative impact on the borrow area. In fact, EM 1110-2-3301 states: "Dredging material from ebb tidal shoals is a likely source of wave modification because these shoals lie close to the shore and their crests are at relatively shallow depths." The fact is, the SBPF cannot realistically predict that dredging offshore of Nantucket will not negatively impact wave action on the shoreline.

The design of a beach fill (nourishment) for protection will require indefinite

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Knowing this, our project engineers designed the beach expecting that just over half would erode over approximately 5 years, while the remaining portion would still be sufficient to provide protection to the bluff during a major (50-year) storm. During storms, the beach nourishment will erode just as the natural beach would erode because we are placing almost identical sediment on the beach. While we reviewed decades of actual wind and wave data to determine a range of conditions we may encounter over time, we agree with Mrs. Stover that no one can predict when the next colossal storm will hit Nantucket. Nonetheless, we can say that, with the project in place, the impact to the bluff, if any, will be drastically reduced. We'll be monitoring the beach regularly to ensure it is performing as we expect.

Finally, we note that beach nourishment has been undertaken successfully in high energy environments. Beach nourishment projects in multiple locations on Fire Island in New York have performed well even with similar high energy to 'Sconset.

2) Long-term impacts from beach nourishment will be minimal.

Our assessment of the beach nourishment project's impact on the environment is based on past experience with similar projects combined with site-specific analysis at Siasconset. Beach nourishment projects are conducted all over the world without long-term detrimental impacts on the

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LETTERS

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NANTUCKET IS FOR SALE

To the editor:

I have decided that the Town Meeting form of government and the Democratic public election process is no longer available on Nantucket.

I was under the assumption that the people, yes the voters of Nantucket voiced our opinion in the Special Town Election which our taxes paid for, not to build a Transportation Center in the suggested location. I guess not.

It was not so much the approving of the amount of money requested, but the actual location of the site, which most voters were opposed to. Have Engineers surveyed this property to ascertain that the proper space is needed for such a center for the proper turning radius needed to have the vehicles enter and depart with sufficient clearance in an already overly congested traffic problem area on our narrow in town streets?

I cannot understand how anyone who has actually studied all of these concepts and concerns can with any true sense of understanding use this property for anything but an open park area.

A few years ago, Donald Trump had come to visit Nantucket and was unable to bring his yacht into the Harbor due to the navigational problems of size. When he was informed of the situation his response was to "Dredge the Harbor" to which our conscientious town leaders at that time had told him we could not dredge the Harbor for his yacht to enter. His response back to them was, "What do you mean, I can buy Nantucket," to which he was told, "No. You cannot buy Nantucket because Nantucket is not for sale."

I now believe that reasoning has changed. Nantucket is for sale and can be "bought" for the right amount of money and by the "right" people. Please prove me wrong!

— Joanne Pimentel-Rocha

FOOD PANTRY STILL NEEDS YOU

To the editor:

We were sorry to see the ad in your newspaper announcing that the Food Pantry annual dinner would not take place this year. It has always been a wonderful evening, where a sold out crowd enjoyed each others company, outstanding food and drink, all of which was donated by a rotating group of restaurants. The chefs and wait staff also donated their time and tips so that 100 percent of the money raised through ticket sales was given to support this much needed cause.

Our hope is that those patrons, who would have attended this dinner, will still send in their checks to the Food Pantry so that it can continue to assist our hardworking neighbors who may need some help feeding their families.

Please join us and send your check to: The Nantucket Food Pantry, c/o St. Paul's Parish Basement, 20 Fair St., Nantucket, MA 02554.

Sincerely,

— Barbara and Michael Varbalow

THERE ARE BETTER OPTIONS

To the editor:

In our search for clean renewable energy, I've been greatly encouraged lately by two articles in our local newspapers. In *The Nantucket Independent* (Oct. 3) a suggestion was made for a gasification plant at the landfill that would generate electricity from waste. And a letter by Pete Sawyer in the *Inquirer and Mirror* (Letters Oct. 11) introduced a radical new concept by a solar company who would use the consumers themselves, to produce energy.

Considering how no one is serious about reducing our demand for energy anytime soon, our current way of thinking would have us blanket the entire planet with unsightly wind and solar farms, with unimagined consequences to the natural environment. It's the same kind of industrial mindset that brought us global warming. I think today's problems demand new ideas, and new ways of thinking.

In the past, energy production was concentrated in centralized power stations, serving customers over a vast network or grid. But today, with growing demand and shrinking space, we should consider alternative systems that would use the grid (users) itself to generate power.

CitizenRe is just such a concept, that could put this windfarm debate to rest. No "nimby," no environmental or safety concerns, no visual impact, and no infrastructure nightmare. Installing and maintaining panels on your home at no expense to you, with only a deposit and monthly fee for the power you actually produce, CitizenRe is a low-profile, no fuss-no mess, simple alternative for the Cape and Islands.

These are the kinds of ideas we need to explore. There are other options out there. While wind energy is indeed one answer, a wind "farm" is definitely not.

Sincerely,

— Howard Faria