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Menauhant Named One of America's Best Restored Beaches

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) today announced that the Menauhant Beach and Dune Restoration Project in Falmouth, Mass., is a winner of its 2010 Best Restored Beach Award.

"ASBPA created the Best Restored Beach award in 2001 as a way of highlighting the value of America's restored beaches," said Harry Simmons, mayor of Caswell Beach, N.C., and ASBPA president. "As Americans flock to our coastline during the upcoming beach season, most don't even realize they may be enjoying a restored beach."

Other winners for 2010 are Isle of Palms, South Carolina; Miami Beach, Florida; Moonlight Beach, California; and Presque Isle, Pennsylvania.

"One of the main things that attract people to Falmouth is its beautiful beaches. This project shows that with cooperation among local, state, and federal authorities, regional sediment management can provide a balanced and sustainable source of sediments for beach restoration projects. It is my hope that this type of activity can be the norm rather than the exception," said Jack Moakley of NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center, who managed the project for NOAA.

Don Hoffer, Falmouth's Beach Superintendent, expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the staff of NOAA. "Mr. Moakley and NOAA had the foresight to see the value of this project, then had the persistence to bring it to a successful fruition. It was truly an example of federal, state, county and local agencies working together to complete a project that not only enhances our natural resources, but also provides increased recreational use of our beach."

"As our home and as a vacation destination for so many Americans and international travelers who enjoy seaside living, the restoration of Menauhant Beach represents a major investment in the economic and environmental underpinnings of this wonderful Cape Cod community," said Jay Zavala, Falmouth Chamber of Commerce president. "It is a job well done that all stakeholders can take great pride in."

The Menauhant project was initially completed in the fall of 2008. NOAA funded a dredging project off Woods Hole, Mass. to deepen the navigation channel into Great Harbor. The project was managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Working with the officials from the State of Massachusetts, Barnstable County, and the Town of Falmouth, NOAA and the Corps obtained permits required to transport clean sand from the dredge site to Menauhant, a Falmouth public beach in need of restoration.

More than 20,000 cubic yards of clean sand from the dredging project was used to restore approximately 1,900 linear feet of beach at Menauhant, which is just over six miles away from the dredge site by sea.

Once delivered to the beach site, the sand was used to substantially raise and broaden existing dunes, and to construct new dunes in areas that were previously exposed to Vineyard Sound. New beach slopes were built to provide habitat for foraging shorebirds. Volunteers planted beach grass on all dune areas. Sand fencing installed around the completed restoration better controls foot traffic and promotes accretion of wind-blown material.

The restoration reduced potential for barrier overwash and storm damage, improved and increased intertidal habitat, improved public access to the shores and waters of Vineyard Sound, and enhanced recreational use at the beach.

For the last 40 years, beach restoration has been the preferred method of shore protection in coastal communities on the East, West and Gulf coasts. Beach restoration is the process of placing beach-quality sand on dwindling beaches to reverse or offset the effects of erosion.

The three main reasons for restoration are:

- Storm protection – a wide sandy beach helps separate storm waves from upland structures and infrastructure.
- Habitat restoration – numerous species rely on wide, healthy beaches as a place to live, feed and nest.
- Recreation – America’s beaches have twice as many visitors annually as all of America’s national parks combined. Every year, there are more than 2 billion visitors to America’s beaches. In 2007, beaches contributed \$322 billion to the America’s economy. More importantly, for every dollar the federal government spends on beach nourishment, it gets an estimated \$320 back in tax revenues.

Coastal communities have restored more than 370 beaches in the United States, including such iconic beaches as Jones Beach in New York, Ocean City in Maryland, Virginia Beach, Miami Beach, Galveston Island in Texas and Waikiki Beach in Hawaii.

During times of economic hardship, the beach can be an even more desirable vacation destination than other domestic and foreign alternatives, offering families and visitors an accessible and affordable getaway.

To enter the Best Restored Beach competition, coastal communities nominated their projects for consideration, and an independent panel of coastal managers and scientists selected the winners. Judging was based on three criteria: the economic and ecological benefits the beach brings to its community; the short- and long-term success of the restoration project; and the challenges each community overcame during the course of the project.

Past Best Restored Beach award winners include: Panama City Beach, Fla., in 2002; San Diego Beach in 2003; Ocean City, Md., in 2004; Indian River County, Fla., in 2005; Delaware’s Rehoboth and Dewey Beaches in 2006; the Chaland Headland Restoration Project in Louisiana in 2007; Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Wash. in 2008; South Padre Island, Texas, in 2009 and Navarre Beach, Florida in 2010. A complete list of award-winning beaches, and more information about beach restoration and ASBPA, is available online at www.asbpa.org.

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