



Picture from Pure Michigan Facebook

TO: All Property Owners Impacted by Erosion and Lack of Beaches south of New Buffalo Harbor

SUBJECT: New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance

DATE: March 1, 2017

You are invited to a meeting to discuss a recommended solution for the restoration of our beaches. Our property values have been significantly impacted due to this problem and we are getting very limited support from local/state/federal governments. This problem will only continue to get worse if action is not taken.

The New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance (NBSA) has been formed to address the erosion/lack of sand problem. The Alliance is made up of representatives from Sunset Shores, Warwick Shores, Forest Beach Villas, Forest Beach Estates, and Grand Beach. The construction of the New Buffalo Harbor in 1974 resulted in the blocking of the normal littoral drift of sand that moves from north to south in the New Buffalo area. This (blocking of the sand) results in additional erosion and lack of beaches. Most of the sand that would occupy our beaches is “stacked up” north of the harbor. Some of the sand moves past the Harbor and out into deeper water.

The Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) understood the problem and committed to periodic sand nourishment to make up for the blocked sand. The ACOE stopped their nourishment program in 1995 (lack of funding they claim) and our beaches are starved of sand and our shoreline has eroded. Lakefront owners have spent millions of dollars on protection (revetments). The ACOE understood the cause/effect of their harbor (on beaches south of the harbor) but have failed to restart the nourishment. The beaches south of New Buffalo Harbor will now require a significant amount of sand to re-establish the beaches and will require periodic nourishment to prevent continued erosion. If this work isn't done, lakefront owners will not have a recreational beach and will continue to have to spend more dollars to maintain their revetments. The erosion will continue independent of lake levels, however, higher lake levels will exacerbate the erosion.

To preserve and protect the beaches and the shoreline of Lake Michigan in the Southwest Michigan communities of New Buffalo, New Buffalo Township, Grand Beach and Michiana Shores

The NBSA has worked fervently over the past two years attempting to find a political solution. We have had site visits by the ACOE and Congressman Upton and State Representative Pagel. We have engaged in a letter writing campaign to support our efforts which resulted in letters from a host of citizens, the Township, the City of New Buffalo, the school district, the chamber of commerce to name a few. We have letters of support from the Governor's office. Senator Stabenow and Congressman Upton have both written letters to the Assistant Secretary of the Army asking her to address our problem and we have offered to fly to Washington and meet with our representatives, the Corps and Assistant Secretary. The response letters to Congressman Upton from the Assistant Secretary of the Army claim the "...harbor is functioning as intended". After two years working on a political solution and thousands of man hours spent, we have come up empty.

A study funded by the current NBSA members was conducted by the ACOE in 2009 to determine what could be done to reduce the erosion south of the harbor. The 85 page ACOE detailed study concluded, after looking at a number of possible solutions, that the best approach was to restart the sand nourishment program. The recommendation in the 2009 study was to rebuild the beaches to their pre harbor (1967) width of 150 to 200 feet. Based on the lake water levels in 2005 it was felt that 150,000 cubic yards of sand were needed to achieve this width. This was about the average amount of sand the ACOE placed on our beaches every three years during the beach nourishment program that ran from 1975 through 1995.

The NBSA has started discussions with the City of New Buffalo to address the problem. The City has asked the NBSA to submit a comprehensive and permanent fix for the problem. We have retained a shoreline engineering firm who has reviewed the ACOE recommendations and incorporated their own input to come up with a permanent Plan. This Plan will be presented at the meeting.

We can only be successful with the support of all property owners who have been harmed by the New Buffalo Harbor. We need to take action as quickly as possible. Our beaches will continue to erode, property values will continue to decrease, more lakefront homes will be threatened and the "fix" will be even more costly in the future.

PLEASE ATTEND AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING AT THE NEW BUFFALO HIGH SCHOOL ON MAY 27, 2017 AT 10:00AM MICHIGAN TIME. ENCOURAGE YOUR NEIGHBORS TO ATTEND.

## **The New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance**

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