



2017 Advocate Program Goals and Accomplishments

December, 2017

Overall: *The Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission (TISPC) improved the method of communicating specific goals to both our State advocate and a new Federal advocate. This resulted in increasing results that were beneficial for our Island. We improved outreach to our stakeholders through our new website tispc.org which had 462 visitors in 2017 with over 1700 page views*

North Carolina Legislature

Island Wide - Protect funding and explore the expand use of the Shallow Draft Inlet Fund

- *NC leadership of the Shallow Draft Inlet Fund is in flux within the Division of Coastal Management with the retirement of the director and the transition to a new appointee. Our advocate continued to monitor the situation and urged state legislators to look at other sources of revenue to fund the new Coastal Storm Mitigation Fund authorized by the 2017 Legislature.*
- Island Wide - Help find permanent sources of additional funding for beach nourishment at the state level
 - *The NC Legislature passed HB56 after overriding the veto by Governor Roy Cooper. Part of the legislation language in HB56 authorized the establishment of the NC Coastal Storm Mitigation Fund.*
 - *Our advocate played a key role in getting this legislation passed along with other advocacy groups such as the NC Beach, Inlet & Waterways Association (NCBIWA), as well as other groups and individuals.*
 - *Once funded this bill will provide funds for storm mitigation for towns like Surf City who do not qualify for matching grants with the NC Shallow Draft Fund since the town is not located on an inlet.*
 - *The 2016 review report of the Beach and Inlet Management Plan (BIMP) was the catalyst for establishing the Coast Storm Mitigation Fund. The report gave several examples of possible funding sources within the state budget. It is up to the state legislators to decide on funding source(s).*
- Island Wide - Work on passage of property insurance legislation to reduce and control the high property and flood insurance rates for Topsail property owners
 - *Our advocate has tracked and reported on insurance legislation at the state level. For example, the complex relationship between the Community Rating System (CRS), the Building Code Grading Efficiency System (BCGES) and the International Building code standard could result in less CRS discount and thus, higher flood insurance rates. In addition to our advocate, multiple groups such as NC Home Builders Association, NCBIWA, and others will need to come together to educate and encourage our state legislators on matters of insurance rates.*

- Island Wide - Assist with needed legislation and funding for hardened structures
 - North Topsail Beach – Funding for terminal groin
 - *Through the efforts of our advocate and others, Senator Harry Brown sponsored legislation that resulted in a \$2,000,000 grant to N. Topsail Beach to be used for future construction of the hardened structure.*
- Island Wide – Notify TISPC of any legislation that could impact Topsail Island activities on the ocean, inlet and sound
 - Our advocate alerted us to the changes proposed by the NC Wildlife Federation to “Designate Special Secondary Nursery Areas and Reduce Bycatch Mortality in North Carolina Coastal Fishing Waters.” Not only would the proposed legislation have had a negative impact on commercial fisheries, it would also have had a negative impact on obtaining CAMA permits and building in these designated areas along the coast.
 - *Through the efforts of our advocate and others to block this proposed legislation it did not receive NC legislative support.*
 - Topsail Beach – Provide insight regarding dune protection regulations
 - *TISPC was alerted to possible legislation that would have impacted all of North Carolina but was targeted at Topsail Beach that would have prevented building along the majority of the North Carolina coast. TISPC and its advocates led the discussion to remove this from legislative consideration.*
 - *This issue of dune protection and maintenance is under consideration by the NC Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) through a request by the TISPC and other concerned organizations.*
 - Regulatory Reform Act of 2016 - Direct the NC Coastal Resources Commission to amend the sediment criteria rule to exempt sediment from cape shoal systems.
 - This change could impact quality of sand used for re-nourishment projects – may need to provide comment on this legislation once we understand details.
 - *Without this amendment, fine-grain sand particles less than 0.21 inches could be used from cape shoals for beach nourishment with the likelihood of only short-term beach preservation.*
 - *Our advocate continues to follow this situation.*

United States Congress

- North Topsail Beach – Continue to facilitate the changes to CRBA mapping.
 - *Our federal advocate has done a remarkable job scoping out a strategy for a federal legislative approach to amending the CBRA L06 map area that would remove NTB from this map area. At present a Senate bill sponsored by Senator Tillis and Senator Burr is in sub-committee hearings that would make this map amendment. Congressman Jones will offer a similar House version, shortly.*
- North Topsail Beach – A partnership with Onslow County, Federal Government (US Marines) and NTB to dredge New River inlet and maintain for both the commercial fishery and recreational boating use plus support US Marines use. Dredged sand to be use for beach nourishment.

- *A New River Inlet Stakeholder Group has been formed under leadership of the US Army Corps of Engineers to meet the needs of both improved navigation in the inlet as well as providing a source of sand for beach nourishment.*
- **Topsail Beach – Obtain waivers for use of sand from inlet CRBA area for beach nourishment.**
 - *Our federal advocate has been working diligently to find an administrative solution to this problem which affects not only Topsail Beach but a number of other municipalities both within NC as well as in other states.*
 - *Through Mr. McIntyre’s efforts it has become apparent that a legislative change will be needed to solve this issue.*
- **Island Wide – Obtain federal funding and/or removal of 7-year sunset clause from approved federal beach nourishment projects (Surf City/North Topsail Beach & Topsail Beach). Currently Surf City only has the option of the federal project for assistance as they do not have inlet to qualify for NC state assistance. May need to push USACE to include our projects due to restrictions placed on new starts.**
 - *Our federal advocate has made our case to the USACE Administration Officials in Washington and the good cost benefit ratio in putting our federal projects forward. Our projects were ranked in the top five in the Southeastern district. Secondly, one in five new construction starts by USACE has been designation for coastal storm mitigation, thus there is some optimism that one or both of our island federal projects will be funded in 2018.*
- **Island Wide – We need total NC congressional delegations committed to supporting programs for coastal management – We believe we are responsible for a national park; as we have visitors from all states using our coast. It is important that both NC Senators are seen supporting NC coastal programs.**
 - *Our advocate has been a very successful catalyst to bring together the NC congressional delegations in support of coastal programs as evidenced by the Senate and House bills mentioned above that will correct an administrative decision made 35 years ago*
- **Federal Funding Proposal: Set up a dedicated fund such as the NC State Shallow Draft Inlet Bill. It could charge for documented vessels both private and commercial and ask for a portion of the Federal Gas Tax to fund nourishment and inlet projects.**
 - *At the present time our advocate has advised that there is no support for this type of federal help.*
- **Island Wide: Notify TISPC of any legislation that could impact Topsail Island activities on the ocean, inlet and sound**
 - *We have been informed of the direction of the federal budget and how the proposed legislation on funding infrastructure improvements may develop.*

NCBIWAs (North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association)

- *Improved coordination with NCBIWA through participation in the local-government conference and the annual conference by several members of TISPC.*
- *Several TISPC commissioners and Topsail Island officials are now on the board of directors at NCBIWA, thus improving communication and coordination.*
- *The NCBIWA Executive Director, Kathleen Reily, was instrumental in partnering with our state advocate to promote passage of NC legislation establishing the Coastal Storm Mitigation Fund.*