

This message is from Danny Leech at 846 Lighthouse Drive and is a request for members to step forward to take ownership of the Dune Management issue using the information/questions below as an outline. If you are interested, please respond to Danny Leech at 10sman@ntelos.com with a copy to Jack@JackRiggle.com.

Background: Our house is semi ocean and construction was completed in early 1987. During the 30+ years there have been many changes to Whalehead development. Time does not give us any special insight, but we have witnessed the changes, including dune loss. The Whalehead Property Home Owners Association has most definitely been beneficial during these years and hopefully, this organization can step up and both educate everyone and take action against a potential threat to Whalehead homes.

[WPOA] annual WPOA spring meeting – Agenda request: Dune Management

The Dunes are the protection for all of Whalehead, and for the first time in my knowledge, the dunes were breached in a couple of places last October. Certainly, any observant person can walk down the beach and see the gazebo structures and walkways high above the beach. In so many instances you can see the attempts to give these structures additional taller supports as the dunes eroded. WPOA has the choice of course to ignore the problems (avoid confrontation) or can bring the issues up to deal with them and create a much better probability of healthy dunes for the future.

Here is a “strawman” of what I think the WPOA Dune Management should look like. It is only some thoughts, but this subject needs leadership that can convert the ideas into action

1. Gather available information of dune loss, including aerial photos for last 40 years and publish so all home owners are better aware of seriousness of this situation. Due date Thanksgiving meeting
2. UNCW has a new course study on dune conservation (I am not sure exact course title) and WPOA could support a couple students doing research of Whalehead dunes to get accurate assessment of dune health and risks.
3. Immediate moratorium on any structures other than walks that touch dunes. I am sure ocean front owners won't like that, but it seems impossible to argue that driving pilings into dunes is not accelerating dune loss. The wind accelerates as it goes around the pilings and removes the sand. However, the UNCW study course investigation may prove that dune structures are not harmful. Again, there is a choice; keep building structures on the dunes and hope they are not destroyed, or stop the dune intrusion until you learn the true impact
4. Create “best practices policy” for dunes. This would include
 - a. Sufficient signage to educate owners and visitors to stay off the dunes (Adults still walk over dunes to take short cuts and kids play on dunes as parents watch)
 - b. Sand fences for all of Whalehead to best practice design to obtain best results (for all of Whalehead owners)
 - i. Fence material
 - ii. Post material, length and depth in sand to withstand winds
 - iii. Angle to erect sand fence
 - iv. Distance apart for sand fence

- v. Cost would have to be discussed. It is ocean front property, but every Whalehead property owner benefits from healthy dunes so may be cost sharing for sand fences
 - vi. Maintenance of sand fences is critical so again, responsibility and funding requires cooperation
 - c. Other measures to protect/refurbish dune line
- 5. Create Dune Statistics report and publish prior to every fall WPOA meeting. This could be done by UNCW students, but must be structured to show accurately long term (20 + years) changes that have occurred, short term (5 years) changes that are occurring (both weather and construction impacts), and then some predictions both with and without proper dune management. It is critical that some non-biased group continues to measure the dune health annually and publish findings to accurately assess if Whalehead has sufficient dune management to best avert future dune destruction

Regards,
Danny Leech
April 19, 2019