

Letter to the Inquirer and Mirror 10.29.15

To the Editor: On behalf of the local residents supporting efforts to limit the impact of erosion on the Sconset Bluff, I want to thank the Selectmen and Conservation Commission for their efforts to reach a fair resolution that allows this project to move forward and avoid a costly legal battle.

As the Sconset erosion project begins an important new phase, we have two areas of focus: studying the impact of this project and putting the recently-approved improvements into place.

Careful and detailed data monitoring during the next few years in combination with the data from the last years will help us understand if the erosion-control project can successfully prevent erosion in big storms and keep Baxter Road open. Data will also help us identify any negative impacts on nearby beaches as soon as possible, something we do not expect will occur because of the large volume of sand being delivered that keeps the project covered. We believe that the entire community can learn from our island's largest science project.

With sea levels rising and storms intensifying from climate change, this project provides an opportunity to get smart about how to protect our island in an environmentally- responsible manner. We have seen in other communities that poorly-designed coastal protection can cause unintended environmental harm. But we have worked tirelessly to avoid this through a method that works and does not harm others. Our best experts are confident that we have identified a way to protect our coastline without doing more harm than good.

We look forward to reporting to the ConCom and the broader community on how the geotube project actually fares over the next few years. Based on the hundreds of people who visited the viewing area at Baxter Road each day this summer, we expect that there will be great interest in discussing our findings in the years ahead. In the interim, we invite those of you who have not yet visited to do so: You will see the geotube system that helped us endure two tough winter storm seasons with zero erosion in the protected area and a bluff face that is now covered in healthy beach grass. (You can also take an audio tour with our coastal geologist by phoning (508) 443-6443 during your visit or from the comfort of your home).

With the permit for upgrades to the system designed by our engineers now in hand, we begin this week to build out the agreed-upon improvements: a top level of geotubes and end returns that will counteract scour. In addition, we will install a simple drainage system to keep storm water from Baxter Road from eroding the bluff from above. We will also deliver the sand required to cover the entire system, which is replaced every year. This unique sand mitigation feature prevents nearby beaches from being deprived of the sand that might otherwise have come their way from our eroding bluff. In this way we believe we are protecting our community and doing it in an environmentally- responsible way that prevents harm to others. It's easy to learn more and to follow the construction progress over the coming weeks at our website [www.sconsetbeach.org](http://www.sconsetbeach.org) or Facebook page [www.facebook.com/Sconset-Beach](https://www.facebook.com/Sconset-Beach).

This work will involve trucks delivering sand, as well as the use of heavy construction equipment. We expect the work will be complete in early December. I want to assure you that every member of the construction team is focused on moving forward in a way that is sensitive to the both the beach/bluff and our community. We apologize for the temporary disruption to the quiet of fall from the construction process. We especially want to express our appreciation to those in the Sconset community who may be inconvenienced. JOSH POSNER President, SBPF 77 Baxter Road