

## **CORPS AGENDA IS TO CREATE WETLANDS OUT OF BEACHES**

Why is the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) intimidating and threatening many beach owners with huge fines and incarceration for maintaining their beaches? Why are beach owners told they cannot use a rake, hoe or shovel to fill in beach swales which harbor mosquitoes (West Nile Virus)? Why has the Corps issued cease and desist letters to the Caseville County Park and Sleeper's State Park to prevent maintenance of their beautiful beaches? The reason -- the Corps new agenda is to create wetlands out of beaches in the State of Michigan by trampling on the property rights of beach owners and to destroy tourism for this State.

The Corps is trying to apply the same broad regulation brush that applies to wetlands such as Quanicassee, Nayanquing Point or Rush Lake to all beaches in Michigan. This is a mistake, and the net result will be less support for wetlands. The beaches that are maintained by property owners are not wetlands and if they are by some fiction, then the notion that they are globally important is too exaggerated for regulations to prohibit the beach owners from continuing to maintain their beaches as they have for decades. A few clumps of weeds that exist on most beaches have a de minimis, or inconsequential environmental effect when compared to the serious problems of dumping raw sewage and chemicals into the Great Lakes that closed many beaches last year and restricted the eating of fish caught in Lake Huron to once or twice a month. The Corps needs to understand that shoreline property owners are not polluters and will insist that their property rights must be respected as required by public policy and the law.

A most recent report, "Great Lakes Conservation Task Force, Final Report", chaired by the Honorable Ken Sikkema, it stated, "The needs of beachfront homeowners must be given reasonable and consistent consideration when habitat protection laws are enforced."

I do not think the Corps listens to the last state legislator nor the rights of the people. But the people will be heard at election time all the way to Washington. To most individuals it is clear from the Corps' actions that they are trying to expand the geographic jurisdiction of Clean Waters Act by filing court actions to fine property owners to get control of the property owner's beaches.

The Corps needs to focus on changes that will make a significant difference to the water quality and nourish our beaches to promote tourism and stop the broad pronouncement that what they are doing falls under the umbrella of, "It is a matter of greater public good taking precedence over individual property owner's desires." This is America and they must respect the property rights of all citizens.

The only active group that seems to be concerned about the "terrorist-like" acts of the Corps is a group called Save Our Shoreline formed in Bay City, MI. Where is the outrage from our local governments, business owners and politicians? Are you paralyzed by the Corps' actions or do you just not want to fight for something that is one of your fundamental rights? If you do not want to do it for yourself, then do it for your children

and your children's children. The State of Michigan is known for its beautiful sandy beaches, not weedy & mucky marshes. Help us to keep the beautiful beaches and promote tourism by contacting your state and local representatives.

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