

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL 3:30 P.M., APRIL 3, 2019

April 3, 2019

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## **BOEM, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and City of Virginia Beach Sign Agreement to Renourish Sandbridge Beach and Dunes**

*Project supports the local economy by maintaining the beach for locals and visitors to enjoy, and protects local infrastructure and natural habitat.*

**WASHINGTON** – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Norfolk District, and the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia, have signed an agreement authorizing the use of up to 2.2 million cubic yards of sand from federal waters to renourish Sandbridge beach and dunes.

The project, using sand from Sandbridge Shoal located on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), will renourish approximately five miles of beach. Dredging is expected to begin later in 2019.

“As a coastal community, Sandbridge is vulnerable to storm events and longer-term erosion. At the same time, its beaches and dunes attract tourists and local businesses that depend upon the local infrastructure,” said Renee Orr, BOEM’s Chief of the Office of Strategic Resources. “By helping the city to renourish coastal areas periodically, BOEM is playing an important role in protecting public infrastructure from severe storms.”

In addition to protecting infrastructure from storm damage, the project mitigates erosion that threatens biological, recreational, and cultural resources. Rebuilt beaches provide additional habitat to resident and migratory species, such as birds.



Sandbridge beach and dunes following the 2013 renourishment. Photo by Marjorie Weisskohl, BOEM

"Along with our many partner organizations—like BOEM and the City of Virginia Beach—we are proud to build critical infrastructure that has a tremendous impact at the local, state, and national level. This project will reduce the risk of damage from future storms," said **Col. Patrick Kinsman**,

“As Virginia’s largest city and a coastal city, the health of our beaches and coastline are so important to our citizens and economy,” said **Mayor Robert M. Dyer of Virginia Beach**. “Sandbridge is a beautiful part of our city, and having this partnership to renourish Sandbridge Beach and its dunes is a huge boost to us in helping maintain its beauty. We have worked closely with BOEM and USACE in the past, and I believe this is one more joint project that will be a huge success for Virginia Beach and its residents.”

The most recent Sandbridge Beach renourishment was completed in 2013, and the area has withstood impacts from other hurricanes and nor’easters since then.

To meet its stewardship responsibilities, prior to construction of the Sandbridge project, BOEM and USACE reviewed existing environmental analyses and updated them where needed. This process included extensive coordination between state and federal partners. The parties negotiated an agreement that avoids, minimizes, and/or mitigates possible adverse impacts to wildlife (e.g., loggerhead turtles, marine mammals, fish, and birds) and protects the human environment. BOEM’s Environmental Assessment is available on BOEM’s Marine Minerals Program [Virginia](#) project page.

BOEM has the authority to lease sand resources from the OCS for shore protection, and for beach or wetland restoration projects undertaken by a federal, state or local government. In exercising this authority, BOEM may issue a negotiated, non-competitive lease or memorandum of agreement for the use of OCS sand to a qualifying entity.

BOEM has invested more than \$40 million over the past 25 years to identify non-energy resources on the OCS, conducted world-class scientific research, and leased OCS resources to coastal communities and other federal agencies in need. Information from environmental research and resource identification has informed environmental assessment and leasing decisions concerning the use of OCS sand resources in beach nourishment and coastal restoration.

For more information about BOEM’s Marine Minerals Program, visit the website, <http://www.boem.gov/Marine-Minerals-Program/>. It includes BOEM’s newly-launched Marine Minerals Information System, an interactive support tool that provides public access to OCS marine mineral data and information, which can be found at: <https://mmis.doi.gov/BOEMMMIS/>.

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