

DUNE TIME: Last phase of renourishment under way on Surfside Beach

By SHANNON DAUGHTRY | Posted: Friday, February 10, 2012 2:00 am

SURFSIDE BEACH

More work to save the village's namesake attraction from some of the highest erosion rates in the state began this week, Texas General Land Office officials said.

Over the next few weeks, 70,000 cubic yards of sand will be brought to the beach, said GLO spokesman Jim Suydam.

"Ten cubic yards is equal to about one dump truck full of sand," Suydam said. "They're going to be bringing a whole lot of sand to Surfside."

This is the second half of the project that began last March to restore the beach, which had been decimated by erosion, tropical weather and tidal events, Suydam said.

"This is the dune portion of the project," he said. "First we built the revetment, then it was whacked by the hurricane, then we built the beach. Now, we can build the dunes."

The beach renourishment completed a year ago was a \$2.5 million project that included placing 140,000 cubic yards — or 167,500 tons — of sand hauled from a sand pit on the Colorado River near Bay City.

That work, which began in fall 2010, pushed the shore 100 feet or more from Beach Drive instead of breaking against concrete and rocks. It made the beach safer, Mayor Larry Davison has said.

Surfside Beach suffers from one of the highest beach erosion rates on the Texas coast, he said, which is the reason this project is such a necessity.

"Years of erosion — sometimes as much as 16 feet of beach a year — had thinned the beach to a sandy ribbon," Suydam said in a news release. "Hurricane Ike destroyed what was left, leaving the Gulf's waves lapping at Beach Drive and threatening to claim more than \$53 million worth of streets, sewers and other public infrastructure."

This is a \$2 million project, Suydam said. Part of the money is funded by the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, which is funded by money the federal government receives from offshore drilling leases, he said.

The rest of the funding came from the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act, Suydam said.

"That's the state's general revenue," he said. "It comes from the same general fund that children's health insurance and mental health care funding come from."

The project is expected to take about 45 days, Davison said. Currently, the contractor is about a

fourth of the way through it, he said.

“They should finish around March 4 or 5,” Davison said.

The project was put off after the beach renourishment was done to avoid interfering with nesting by the endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtle, which lays its eggs on the beach, Davison said.

The area of the beach where the new sand is being spread is from Welch Street up to Jetty View, Davison said.

“It’s about a quarter of a mile in distance,” he said. “The thousands and thousands of truck loads will be going there.”

The dunes will be built right on top of the revetment in that area, Suydam said.

“Adding this sand won’t be changing the beach that much,” he said. “The west end will get some though.”

Creating these dunes should help Surfside for another couple of years, Suydam said. But this is something that probably will have to be done again in another few years, he said.

“There’s a high rate of erosion at Surfside,” Suydam said. “Surfside pretty much suffers from every erosion that we have. And you have a lot of public infrastructure and private property on this that needs to be protected.”