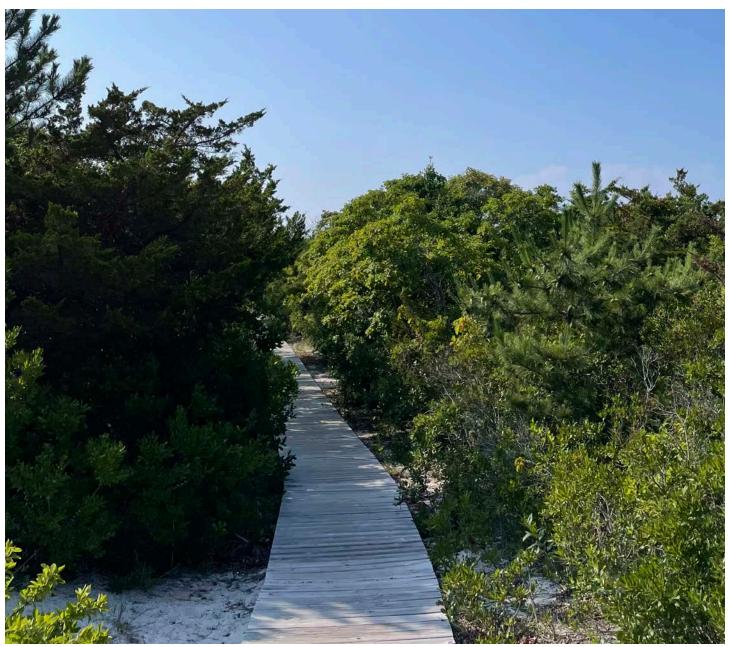
Barnegat Light Beach Boardwalk Pathways Restoration and Management Recommendations April 18, 2024



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The problem

In October 2023, Barnegat Light residents reported that wide swaths of native vegetation adjacent to the beach boardwalk pathways had been destroyed by brush hogging in October 2023 and the resulting debris left behind at a number of walkways.

December 13, 2023

After word spread, Barnegat Light residents packed the December Town Council meeting to express their outrage and asked that the destruction be stopped going forward. Their comments were generally dismissed, but it was agreed the brush hogging would stop and the issue would be taken under advisement in the Spring.

January 10, 2024

The issue was raised again at the January meeting. The boardwalk pathways are used by more people than any other public ammenity in town and they too should be maintained in an attractive way.

Residents suggested an advisory committee be formed to help develop a plan for the management and restoration of the boardwalk pathways. Mayor Larson and Councilman Wellington dismissed the idea of an advisory committee saying Public Works already had a plan which included using a weed whacker, a lawn mower and pesticide to control poison ivy along the pathways.

February 14, 2024

As a follow-up to the discussion at the January meeting, Mayor Larson and the Council were informed that we have discussed the possibility forming an advisory committee to address the restoration and management of beach boardwalk pathways with Richard Brodman, President of the Barnegat Light Taxpayers Association. Rich discussed this proposal with the Trustees of the BLTA who unanimously agreed to form a committee and to circulate this report to their membership in hopes of gaining support of this effort.

April 6, 2024

A follow-up meeting was held at Borough Hall with Ed Wellington and Stuart McGowan from Public Works; Bruce Allen and Rich Brodman from BLTA; and residents Jose Almiñana, Tracey Cameron, Linda Gerber, Preben Knapp, Fredda Lippes, Toni Murphy, Jim Murtaugh and Michael Sullivan.

Public Works admitted to making a mistake by brush hogging and mowing these areas and has has apologized for the resulting damage.

Public Works agreed to work with the Beach Pathways Advisory Committee on the replanting of the damaged walkways. At the subsequent Council meeting, Ed stated that "anything the group proposes will need to be approved by us."

This report documents the condition of all 26 boardwalk pathways, offers recommendations going forward as well as options for grasses, trees and shrubs to replace those that were destroyed, and provides a list of Barnegat Light residents who have voiced their support for these recommendations.

However, appropriate planting stock will not be available until Spring 2025 because of advanced orders that have already been placed by others.

If you care to join in the restoration and management effort, want to be kept informed, or if you wish to make a donation, please contact **Richard Brodman, rrbrodman@aol.com** or visit our website Barnegat Light Taxpayers Association.

If you have comments on this report, please contact **Jim Murtaugh, Icaofjm@gmail.com**

Recommendations

1

The town should have in place a dune management plan approved by the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Land Resource Protection (DLRP) as provided for under New Jersey Administrative Code Section 7:7-9.16 - Dunes which states that "the removal of vegetation from any dune, and the excavation, bulldozing, or alteration of dunes is prohibited, unless these activities are a component of a Department-approved beach and dune management plan."

2

Remove all debris created by the brush hogging in October 2023;

3

Establish a consistant buffer zone width on either side of the raised boardwalks;

4

Plant and maintain native trees and shrubs in the buffer zone where they were destroyed by brush hogging in October 2023;

5

Control poison ivy in and adjacent to the buffer zone in an environmentally safe manner;

6

Prune encroaching trees and shrubs according to accepted horticultural practices;

7

Identify and protect existing wetland areas; and,

8

Establish an advisory committee to help refine and implement management recommendations.



Much Ado About Beach Boardwalks in Barnegat Light

January 18, 2024

By Victoria Ford



DUNE BUGGER: Certain streets in the borough have had their boardwalk paths landscaped — too much for some resident' tastes. The question of best pratices along the "shoulders" could be taken up by an informal committee. (Photo by Ryan Morrill)

The boardwalk pathways to the beach on multiple streets in Barnegat Light were the source of discord at the Jan. 10 borough council meeting, where residents expressed a desire to form a committee to protect the vegetation that lines the shoulders of those pathways.

James Murtaugh of West Fifth Street had submitted a note for Councilwoman Dorothy "Dottie" Reynolds to read into the record on his behalf because he was at home with COVID-19. Mayor Kirk Larson said he didn't want this write-in to be a usual thing; letters belong in correspondence.

Murtaugh expressed his concern for the vegetation lost to public works activities, which he finds "completely unacceptable," and said the walkways "should be attractively maintained," with a clear and detailed plan set forth for management and desired outcomes. He suggested outside contractors ought to be considered.

"I don't know what an advisory committee is going to do," Councilman Ed Wellington said. As chair of the public works committee, he continued, "We went up to the beaches to clear the brush from the side of the boardwalks. We took it down; we made a couple mistakes by tearing down a couple of cedar trees. I apologized for that; that was wrong. We have a better way to avoid doing that in the future. The Virginia creeper, and the poison ivy, and the normal stuff that grows up there is going to grow back by spring. I'm not particularly concerned about it, but I can keep it controlled better, now that it's down and low, with the weed whackers. I can bring the lawnmower up there and keep it down. So, I don't know what an advisory committee is going to do. I have as many people complaining about the poison ivy with their kids as I do now complaining about the overgrowth of the boardwalks. It is what it is."

Furthermore, he added, "We have a legally binding contract with the Teamsters local. You cannot take barganing unit work away from the bargaining unit without negotiating it away."

Councilman Michael Spark took issue with Wellington's remarks.

"We have landscapers right now on contract doing things on the property," he said. "We're now paying contractors to do things we could have our own union people doing.

"The problem with these paths is they made them so wide," he continued. The compromise he proposed was to narrow the shoulders – instead of 4 feet, maybe weed-whack 2 feet. Murtaugh's wife, Tracey Cameron, who was in the audience, said an advisory committee would discuss what could be planted to replace what was torn up and determine how wide the shoulders should be on either side.

"Better than having poison ivy just grown back and have to rip it out again," she said.

But Larson balked at any such committee that might be perceived as borough-sponsored. "No. We have a council," he said. You'd have to get a vote on that."

Preben Knapp of Central Avenue spoke in favor of a boardwalk advisory committee and said maybe it could be done through the taxpayers association.

I was going to suggest that," Larson said.

Reynolds said Public Works Superintendent Stuart McGowan is "happy to talk to people." One suggestion was an informational sign identifying poison ivy and harmless Virginia creeper, she added.

Nobody reads the signs," Larson said.

Larson saw irony in letting oceanfront homeowners remove vegetation for a better ocean view, yet "we don't agree to making the boardwalks wider so people don't have bushes scratching them in the eye when they're walkind down there through the dark?"

"People feel this walkway is part of a pleasant experience of going to the beach," Reynolds said. "It is, if it's nicely maintained."

She added, "I don't see anything wrong with allowing our homeowners and taxpayers to voice their ideas as to how something in the town might be improved."

As noted in The SandPaper

on January 17, 2024, Jim Murtaugh was unable to attend the January 10 meeting due to Covid.

Councilwoman Dottie Reynolds read Jim's written comments regarding the destruction of the boardwalk pathways at the meeting but was cut short by Mayor Larson.

Following are his comments in full.

At the previous council meeting, the Mayor stated that it was too expensive to maintain the vegetation adjacent to the beach boardwalks other than how it had been done. I find this completely unacceptable. All the other public amenities in Barnegat Light are well and attractively maintained. Why are the boardwalks the exception? They are used by an order of magnitude more people than any of the others, and probably all the others put together. Our beaches are clearly a key reason a substantial majority of homeowners and renters choose to live and vacation in Barnegat Light.

The vegetation along the beach boardwalk pathways must be well and attractively maintained. There needs to be a clear and detailed plan describing what the desired outcomes are, how the vegetation should be managed and, where necessary, restored, and what methods and machinery are appropriate. Town Public Works staff should receive any training necessary to effectively implement the plan. Outside contractors should be considered if public works does not have the capacity to carry out components of the plan.

Resources to develop a plan and provide training are available. Dan Hoch, among others, has the necessary experience and expertise and currently has a contract with the borough. The principal partner in a prestigious landscape architecture firm, who has a summer home in Barnegat Light, has expressed a willingness to offer recommendations and advice. Members of the community have expressed willingness to participate in an advisory committee to help facilitate the planning process.

Jim Murtaugh

13 West 5th Street, Barnegat Light

14 of the boardwalk pathways have been left natural.

At least seven boardwalk pathways include wetlands.

Nine of the 12 destroyed pathways have been remediated by filling the sides of the boardwalks with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel and pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials.

Three of the 12 destroyed pathways, located at 8th, 16th and 22nd Streets, appear to be untouched since October.

Street	Brush Hogged	Natural	Wetland	Remediated
5th				
6th				
7th				
8th				
9th				
10th				
11th				
12th				
13th				
14th				
15th				
16th				
17th				
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The beach access points in Barnegat Light are cherished for their natural beauty and native habitat. The longer than average beach walks give residents and visitors a sense of being one with nature between the street and the beach. The beauty of these paths is that there is wild and natural growth to enjoy.

The Problem

When this natural growth encroaches on the pathways it can cause issues for some beachgoers, with poison ivy being a concern.

The Goal

Finding a balance between keeping the pathways natural but well maintained. This includes keeping a buffer of cleared area between the beach walks and the natural growth.

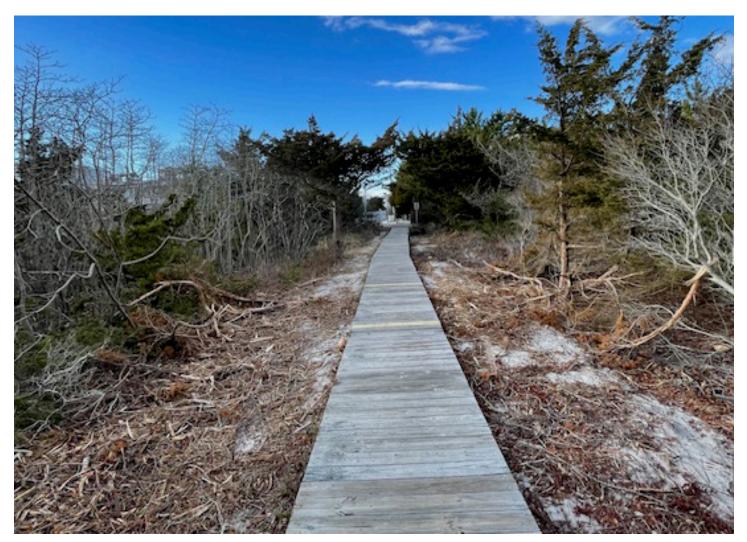
Dan Hoch

Hoch's Landscaping & Garden Center

Brush hogged beach boardwalk pathways

The following photos were taken shortly after the brush hogging of the buffer area adjacent to the raised beach boardwalks in Barnegat Light. Twelve of the 26 boardwalk pathways have been devastated by brush hogging.

The brush hogging measures as much as eight feet on each side of the four foot wide raised boardwalks and, as in the case of 20th Street, extended into the dunes.



8th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light October 2023

Sand path: 18 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the sand path





10th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light January 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk





Remediation



10th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials





13th Street brush hogged, wetland A. Jerome Walnut Nature Trail Barnegat Light November 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk





Remediation



13th Street brush hogged, wetland A. Jerome Walnut Nature Trail Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials





14th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light January 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk





Remediation



14th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials





15th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light January 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk





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15th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials







16th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light January 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk





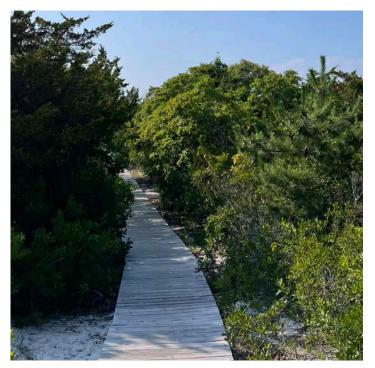




17th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light August vs October 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged/cleared area: up to 7 feet on each side of the boardwalk

August 2023



October 2023







17th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light October 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 7 feet on each side of the boardwalk



Remediation



17th Street brush hogged, wetland Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged/cleared area: up to 7 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials





18th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light January 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk







18th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials





19th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light January 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk



Remediation



19th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 8 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials



20th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light October 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 9 feet on each side of the boardwalk Cleared sandy area: up to 9 feet on each side of the boardwalk



Remediation



20th Street brush hogged Barnegat Light April 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged/cleared area: up to 6 feet on each side of the boardwalk Dune area cleared: 10–14 feet wide for turn-around

Remediation: filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials





21st Street brush hogged Barnegat Light November 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 6 feet on each side of the boardwalk Cleared sandy area: up to 6 feet on each side of the boardwalk











21st Street brush hogged Barnegat Light April 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Brush hogged area: up to 6 feet on each side of the boardwalk Cleared sandy area: up to 6 feet on each side of the boardwalk **Remediation:** filled with a mixture of sand, dirt, gravel, pieces of asphalt and other extraneous materials



22nd Street brush hogged north side Emergency vehicle access Barnegat Light November 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Emergency vehicle sand path: 10–12 feet Brush hogged area: up to 6 feet

Brush hogged area: 4–6 feet Sand path: 10–12 feet



22nd Street brush hogged south side Emergency vehicle access Barnegat Light November 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Emergency vehicle sand path: 10–12 feet Brush hogged area: up to 6 feet



Sand path: 10–12 feet Brush hogged area: up to 6 feet

Naturalized boardwalk pathways

The following untouched, naturalized beach boardwalk pathways are examples of how the restoration and management of the boardwalk pathway buffer zones should be treated.

The buffers range from one foot to four feet wide. Many are lined with beach grasses which prevent poison ivy from encroaching on the boardwalk pathways, help control blowing sand, and deter the spread of phragmites.



5th Street naturalized Barnegat Light January 2024

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Roll-up boardwalk: 3 feet wide Boardwalk to snow fence: up to 4 feet on each side of the boardwalk



Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Boardwalk to snow fence: up to 2 feet on each side of the boardwalk





Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide All buffers appear untouched



9th Street naturalized Handicapped accessible Beach tram turn-around Barnegat Light January 2024

All buffers appear untouched and vary in width





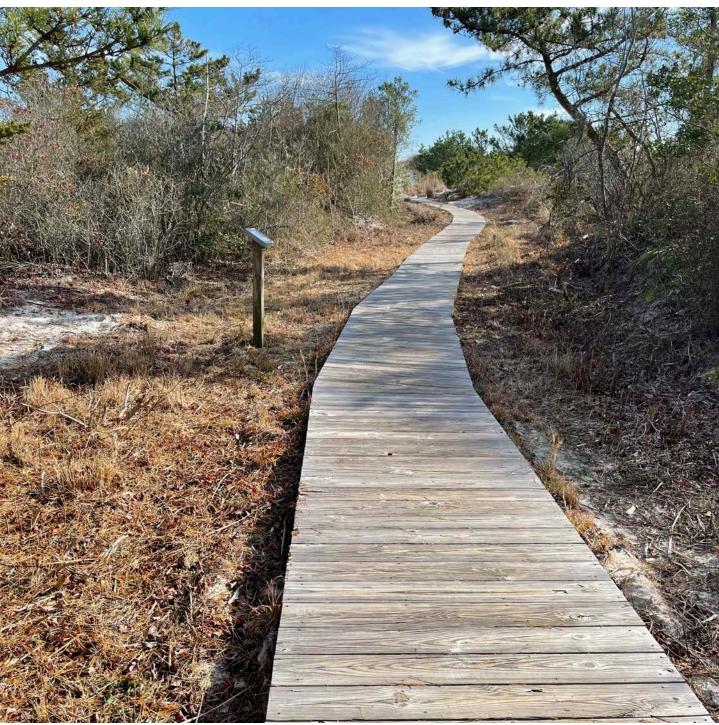
Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Trimmed buffers: up to 3 feet on each side of the boardwalk





12th Street naturalized, wetland A. Jerome Walnut Nature Trail Barnegat Light November 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Trimmed buffers: 2–6 feet on each side of the boardwalk





12th Street naturalized, wetland A. Jerome Walnut Nature Trail Barnegat Light November 2023

Raised boardwalk: 4 feet wide Trimmed buffers: 2–6 feet on each side of the boardwalk

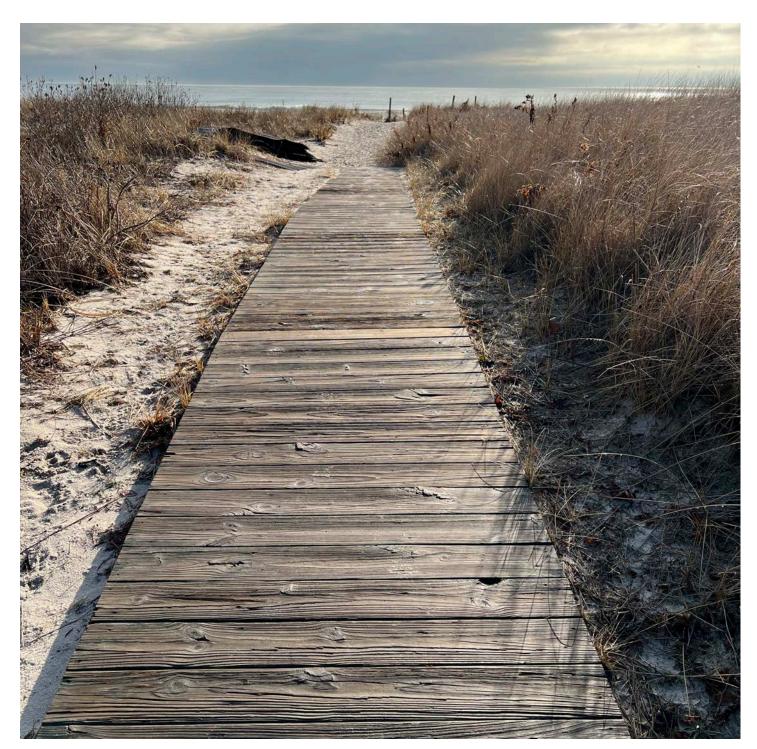




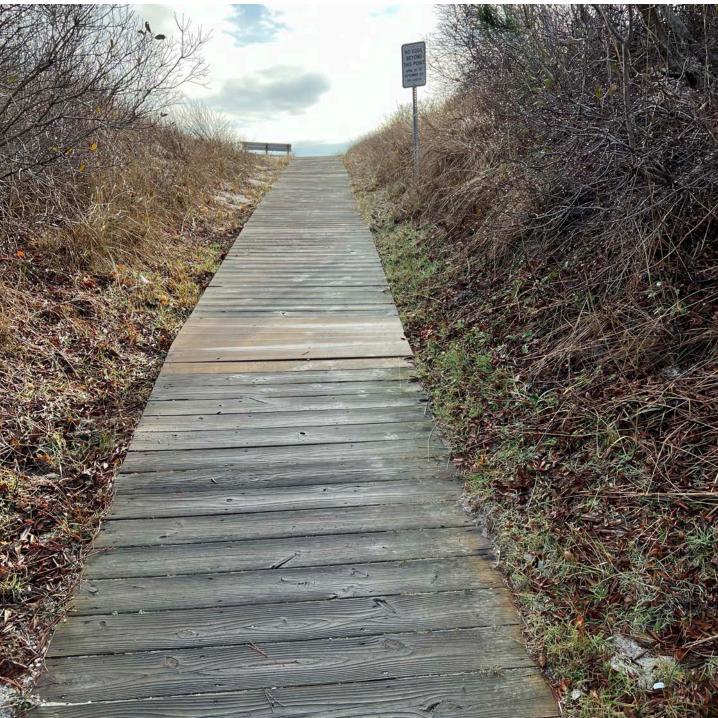














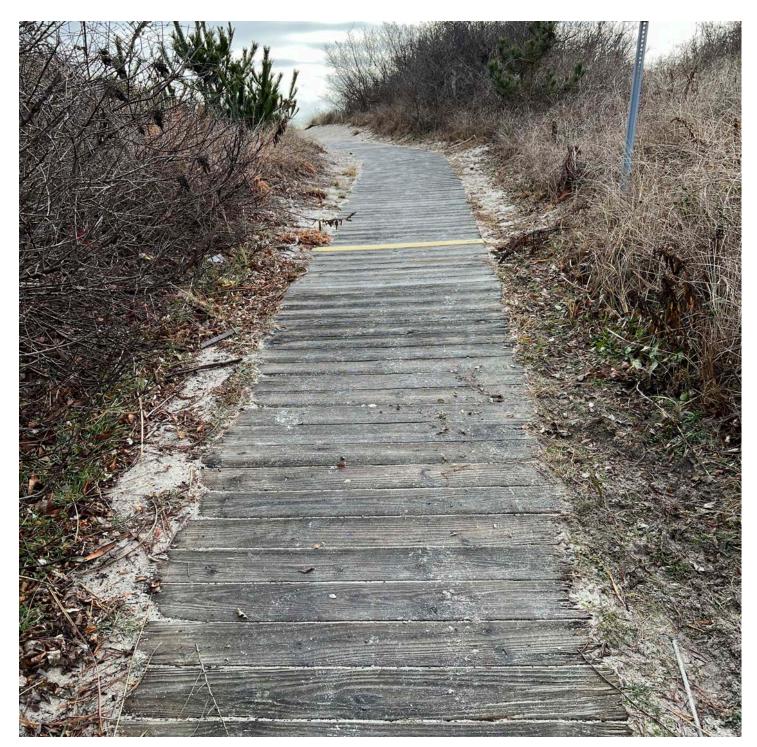




29th Street naturalized Handicapped accessible Barnegat Light January 2024

Buffer areas appear untouched





Recommended grasses

Switchgrass Panicum virgatum



Annual Beard-grass Polypogon monspeliensis

Broom sedge Andropogon virginicus



Big Bluestem Andropogon gerardii

Recommended trees and shrubs

Carolina Rose *Rosa carolina*



Serviceberry/Shadbush Amelanchier



Seaside goldenrod Solidago sempervirens

Pitch pine *Pinus rigida*

Recommended trees and shrubs

Eastern Red Cedar Juniperus virginiana



Northern Bayberry Myrica pensylvanica/Morella pensylvanica



Sassafras Sassafras albidum

Beach plum Prunus maritima

Recommended poison ivy control



Poison ivy is a native species providing considerable wildlife value, but it can be a nuisance to people if it cannot be avoided.

The white, waxy berries are a food source for songbirds during fall migration and winter when other foods are scarce.

Robins, catbirds and grosbeaks especially like the berries. Birds feed on insects hiding in the tangled vines and small mammals browse on the poison ivy foliage, twigs and berries.

Control

Poison ivy control can be done at any time of the year, but is best achieved May through July while the plants are flowering. Poison ivy should be accurately identified before attempting any control measures.

Poison ivy should be removed and controlled in an environmentally safe manner.

Restrict dune access



In addition to the beach boardwalk pathway restoration and management, we need to restrict access through the dunes.

Over the past several years, people have increasingly been cutting across the dunes between the boardwalks creating numerous new trails that seem to give permission to do so. These trails should be blocked at the boardwalks and grasses planted to fill in the paths and restore the dunes.



Dune Manual

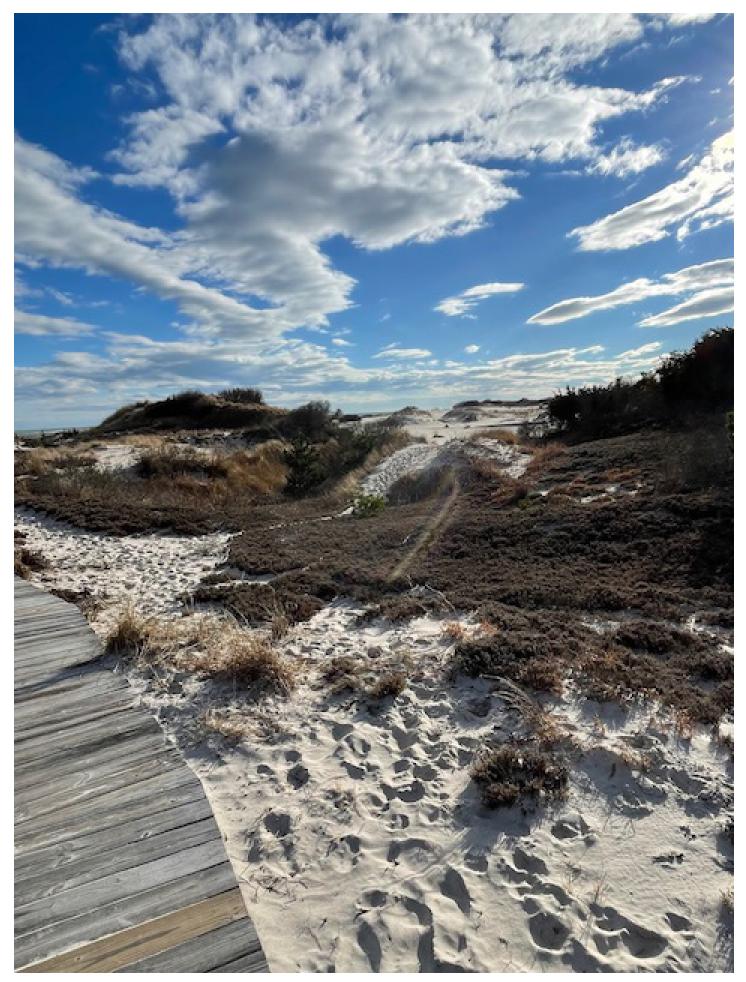
New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium Dune Manual answers a variety of questions including brief answers from experts in the area and links to more resources.

Among the issues addressed are: permits and permissions, preparing a dune for planting, what to plant when, where and how; what not to plant, amendments to increase the success of the plantings; and, sources of native plants for restoration. For more information, email Dr. Peter Rowe prowe@njseagrant.org.

Dune sign

New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium also offers a dune sign. It not only informs passersby to stay off the dunes but explains why. Municipal officials interested in obtaining printed copies of the manual and signs can contact the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium at 732-872-1300 ext 10.





Dune wetlands

Both permanent and periodic wetlands occur within the dunes in Barnegat Light. Wetlands are both an important resource and a critical habitat for wildlife. They should be protected and should not be disturbed.



Supporters

The following Barnegat Light residents have expressed their concern over the recent devastation of the beach boardwalk pathways and support the proposed recommendations.

Sheila + Mike Bergey Marijke Briggs George Robertson Mary + Bill Buzby Jeannette Michelson Paul Michelson Tracey Cameron Jim Murtaugh Chuck McGuffin Betsy + Ed Aras Diane Peskin Maryella Hannum Preben Knapp Jill Svelling Belloff Fredda Lippes Jose Alminana Gloria Popeck **Rick Bernstein** Bruce Allen Sharon + Keith Helsby Debbie + Rick Merson Bonnie + Rich Brodman Kay McDonnell Jamie Hand Ted Hynes Margo Bartiromo Linda Gerber Toni Murphy Jane + Rob Madell

8 West 3rd Street 18 West 4th Street 18 West 4th Street 20 West 4th Street 40 West 4th Street 40 West 4th Street 13 West 5th Street 13 West 5th Street 15 West 5th Street 6th Street 606 Central Avenue 608 Centrall Avenue 608 Centrall Avenue 7 Fast 9th Street 13 Fast 9th Street 13 Fast 9th Street 14 East 9th Street 14 East 9th Street 1405 Seaview 15 Fast 9th Street 16 East 9th Street 4 Fast 10th Street 18 West 10th Street 10 East 12th Street 10 East 12th Street 9 Fast 15th Street 1702 Central Avenue 1702 Central Avenue 13 East 20th Street

Jackie Sullivan Michael Sullivan Marlena Christensen Dottie Reynolds Debbie + Jeff Bochert

2002 Bayview Avenue 2002 Bayview Avenue 4 West 24th Street 2406 Bayview Avenue



Thank you to the following for their contribution to this report

Bruce Allen José Almiñana Rich Brodman Tracey Cameron *design* Linda Gerber Maryella Hannum Preben Knapp Fredda Lippes Toni Murphy Jim Murtaugh Dottie Reynolds Michael Sullivan