

Edgartown's Big Dig

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This is why your mom tells you to keep off of the dunes, because it is going to cost you a million dollars to fix them. Well, not you but the Cow Bay Corporation. The effort to restore the dunes, protect Trapp's Pond and maintain a viable beach for the private development continues.

Rough weather and mechanical failure have forced serious delays on the project. With work only one-third complete, the original permit was set to expire this week. An extension has been granted to keep the trucks rolling for another 24 days. And roll they do.

The big trucks and earth movers roll mightily over the beach and dunes at the bend in the road. Twenty cubic yards. That is how much sand the dump trucks can haul. The sand needs to be moved from the slurry channel, where it is separated from the water, to just a few hundred yards down the beach. In order to complete the restoration of the dunes over Cow Bay, the trucks will have to make that trip 1,500 times.

In all, some 30,000 cubic yards of sand will need to be trucked out to the dunes that keep Trapp's Pond from becoming Trapp's Inlet. The old shacks along this private strip of sand have been moved back and up, out of the way of the encroaching ocean. Despite the newly mounded barrier there is barely twelve feet of beach here. "Cow Bay was at a critical point," says project manager Tara Marden of the **Woods Hole Group**. A separate project to nourish the beach is tentatively scheduled for next year. Despite the deep tracks of heavy machines and the rough piling and pushing of so much sand, Ms. Marden tells VT that by April the grasses will be planted the fences will be put back up and the dunes, at least, will be ready for the summer.



The big dig is benefiting the town as well as the members of the Cow Bay Association. While the town is not profiting from the use of its equipment it is being reimbursed for wear and tear on the equipment. In a related agreement the town will also take lease on 180 feet of beach adjacent to the popular swimming destination. Cost to the town, \$1 a year. There will not be more parking, just more beach to spread out on. Other benefits can only be seen by taking a closer look.

Nearly one mile away, at the end of pipe that lies beneath the sand and snow along Joseph Sylvia State Beach is the Edgartown dredge. The barge has been working for nearly two months, cutting its way through a delta of sand that has built up inside the lagoon. At this end the work is going well and the job is beginning to pay dividends. Charlie Blair tells VT that, "We're already seeing the current change." More water moving through the pond should help with high bacteria counts.



So how much is Edgartown's Big Dig going to cost? Hard to say. It is not supposed to cost the town anything. The CBC could wind up paying up to \$900,000 for the completed project. The cost of running the dredge and pump is about \$4,000 per day. That is before you put the diesel in the trucks and drive them back and forth 1,500 times.

So, keep off the dunes!