

Popular Falmouth beach to be restored

■ Commission decides to replenish Wood Neck before the summer.

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FALMOUTH - Last night the Falmouth Conservation Commission approved a plan to restore the storm-damaged Wood Neck Beach.

An intense Dec. 9 storm and subsequent wind storms have driven the sand off the popular beach into the adjacent parking lot and eroded several feet of sand dune, said beach superintendent Donald Hoffer.

Selectmen ordered the beach closed late last month so the sand would not be contaminated by cars using the parking lot.

The mixture of sand, rocks and shells that spread into the lot will be sifted and put back on the beach, Conservation Commission Administrator Jennifer McKay said.

Prior to the Dec. 9 storm, the beach was scheduled to get a top-coat of fresh sand to replenish the

stony beach. Now the repairs will have to be more extensive.

The conservation commission decided last night to hold a public hearing in early March to discuss various options for adding more sand. A portion of the \$30,000 allocated for beach nourishment at the November town meeting is expected to be spent on the project.

The town faces a relatively short window of opportunity to make the repairs, between the late winter storms that could cause more damage and April 1, when piping plovers return to nest.

Surveying the damaged beach yesterday with Department of Public Works Highway Superintendent John Lyons, Hoffer pointed out a row of jagged, rusted sign posts that poked up from the sand. The dilapidated metal posts had once been completely buried by the Wood Neck sand dunes, Hoffer said.

Waves cut trenches into the small dunes and pushed sand through walkways into the dirt parking lot. Hoffer and Lyons estimated that several feet of dunes had washed



KEVIN MINGORA/Cape Cod Times

Courtney Bird, a member of the Falmouth Conservation Commission, warms up yesterday on Wood Neck Beach prior to his run. Severe erosion has exposed old posts that used to be buried under dunes.

away in some locations.

"Every storm is different," said Lyons, whose crew will likely oversee the repairs. "Every storm effects the beach in a different way."

Winter wind also caused waves to wash up behind the Surf Drive Beach building and caused erosion to other public and private

beaches.

But Hoffer said the damage to Wood Neck is the worst he has ever seen.

Without repairs, Lyons said, the beach would not be able to reopen.

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CCTIMES 2/9/06