



PRESS RELEASE

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Science and Sentiment Will Determine New Jersey's Top Beaches for 2009

(Sandy Hook, NJ).....With two weeks left before the close of the 2009 New Jersey's Top Ten Beaches Survey public poll, and little more than a month before the results are revealed on May 19th, the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium/New Jersey Sea Grant (NJMSC/NJSG) and the Richard Stockton College Coastal Research Center (CRC) are currently focusing on the science behind great beaches.

Although the Top Ten Beaches Survey is only in its second year, the CRC at Stockton has monitored 100 Jersey Shore beach sites from the Raritan Bay, along the Atlantic Ocean and down to the Delaware Bay for more than two decades. Each site is visited twice annually, once in the fall and once in the spring.

According to its Director and founder, Dr. Stewart C. Farrell, the Richard Stockton College Coastal Research Center was created in 1981, in response to a request from the Borough of Avalon's Environmental Commission to investigate the sudden onset of rapid shoreline erosion in the community.

"Following Hurricane Gloria's damage to the New Jersey shoreline, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection decided to come up with a means of compiling quantitative data on the types and magnitude of changes occurring along the entire ocean coast of New Jersey. As a result, a program evolved that established 100 survey stations with three in Raritan Bay, four in

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Delaware Bay and the remainder spread along the oceanfront coast about a mile apart. Each coastal community has at least one survey site within its borders and each tidal inlet has a station on each side.”

Farrell believes that the Center’s activities and beach assessments have provided advance warning of growing problem areas as well as convincing evidence of project performance following many significant public investments, financial and otherwise in specific beaches. Farrell also noted that “multiple State and/or Federally sponsored beach restoration projects since 1989 have been demonstrably successful in maintaining, even advancing the state of New Jersey’s beaches.”

The data collected by Dr. Farrell and his team at the CRC during these site visits is utilized primarily to provide regional information on the coastal zone for the New Jersey Beach Profile Network (NJBPN), but will also comprise one-third of the formula used to determine New Jersey’s best beach. While the scientific data won’t ultimately determine which beaches make the Top Ten list, they can be the deciding factor if two beaches receive a similar number of popular votes.

Beachgoers can still vote for their favorite beaches at njtoptenbeaches.org until midnight on May 1st after which time the Survey will terminate and the task of tallying votes will begin. The results will be announced at NJMSC/NJSG’s annual State of the Shore Media Event, which has kicked off the summer beach season for the past seven years.

NJMISC/NJ Sea Grant is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey’s marine and coastal environment. It meets its mission through its innovative research, education and outreach programs. For more information about NJMSC/NJ Sea Grant, visit njmsc.org

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