

'Sandgrabber' stops beach erosion



DUXBURY — On May 4, the first "Sandgrabber" on the New England coast was completed at Duxbury Beach.

The Sandgrabber's purpose is to deposit sand in front and behind the half-mooned shaped wall until the wall is completely covered.

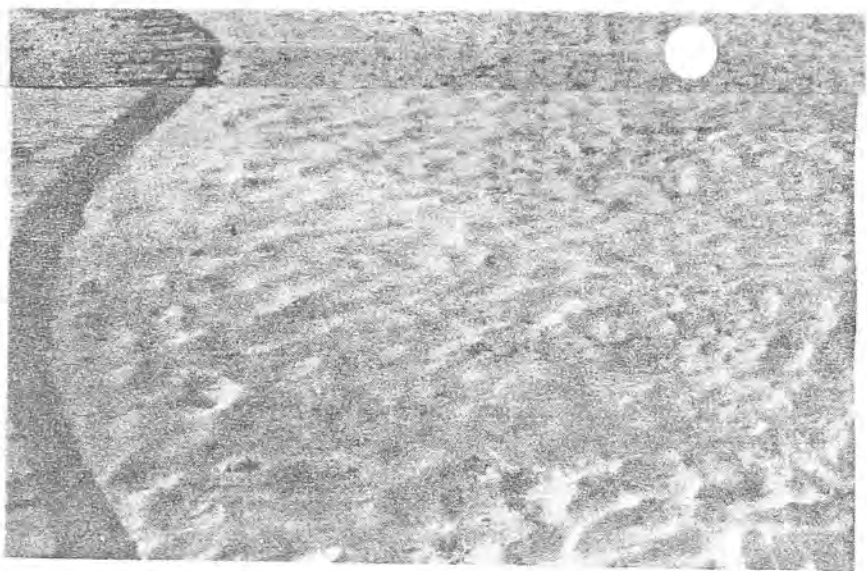
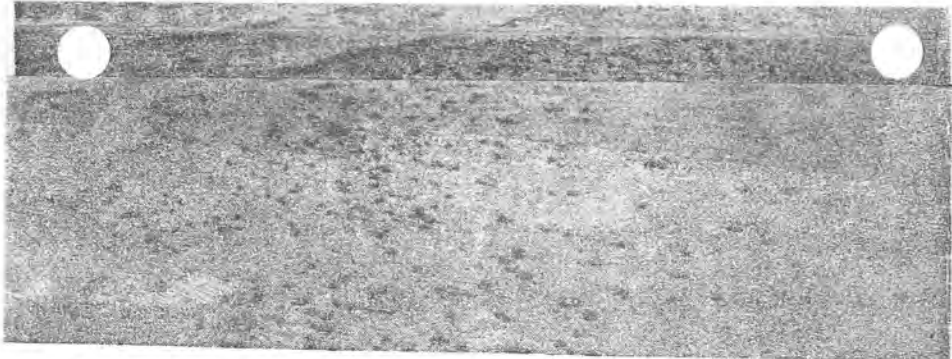
The structure consists of steel rods and cement blocks. It's designed to save sand and put a halt to beach erosion.

The wall allows free passage of water and sand from the ocean to the beach. As the waves roll over the wall, water passes through the openings of the blocks, and deposits beach sand behind the wall. Eventually, the wall is covered and a new beach is formed, usually in 30 days.

Since the Duxbury Beach Sandgrabber was constructed, it has withstood two "Northeasters" and is now almost completely covered with beach sand.

A one-year test has been conducted and approved by both the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency.






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Cinder block breakwater prevents erosion at Duxbury Beach. STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN COLE

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'Sandgrabber' a hit with Duxbury bathers

By RICHARD LAMERE
Staff Writer

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DUXBURY — A new wall that "grabs" sand is getting high marks for controlling erosion along 300-yard stretch of Duxbury Beach.

"We're pleased," said Duxbury Beach manager Ralph Blakeman as bathers enjoyed a rebuilt section now almost completely covered with sand.

But Blakeman will not pass final judgment on New England's first sand-grabber until he sees how it stands up when punished by another severe Northeast storm.

"Some people don't realize the power of the ocean," Blakeman said. "If we get a three-day northeaster — a good one, on a high tide, it'll pound the beach. If the Sandgrabber survives, it'll have proven itself as far as we're concerned."

ON MAY 4, the Sandgrabber was erected in front of the public bathhouse. The half-moon-shaped wall is three-foot high and made of 4,000 cinderblocks bound together by steel rods.

The cinderblocks allows free passage of water from the ocean to the beach. As the waves roll over the wall, the water passes back out through the blocks, but the sand carried in the water is trapped behind the wall. Eventually the structure is covered

to be completely covered with sand. Last week, only a small number of the blocks were still visible, and there was much more sand on the beach than in the past.

Ron Kidd of Marshfield, president of Sandgrabber Inc., of Massachusetts, notes that the structure stood up with only minor damage when it was first belted by a Northeast storm May 8.

"The winds blew at 70 miles an hour and it was pretty bad then — but it held together," said Kidd, who trying to sell his sandgrabber to other beach managers, including some on Cape Cod.

The firm installed the Sandgrabber at a cost of \$13,000 as a pilot project to illustrate to the town and other seaside communities what can be done to halt erosion.

THE TESTING of the Sandgrabber in Duxbury was approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency. It also has been installed in a number of other beach areas in the United States, including Michigan and overseas.

Blakeman said the Sandgrabber is a great addition to Duxbury Beach. "The people on the beach love it since it puts more sand on the beach, and the bathers always head for it," he said.

He said the final results of the project will be turned over to the Duxbury

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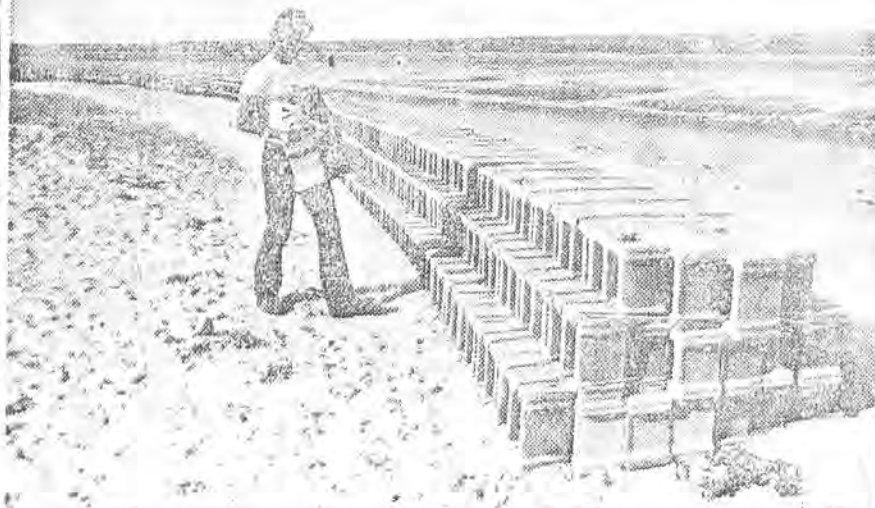


PHOTO BY ANGELA KALOVENTZOS

Wall of cinder blocks adds to Duxbury beach

By RICHARD LAMERE

Staff Writer

DUXBURY — This town is the first community in New England to try a new "sandgrabbing" operation designed to prevent beach erosion.

"Hopefully, we'll get a much improved beach," said Ralph Blakeman, veteran manager of Duxbury beach. "We suffer from northeast storms and this should be a big help."

Blakeman is pinning his hopes on a 200-foot wall of cinder blocks — tied together with steel rods — installed this week off the shoreline near the public bathhouse.

The process already has proven its effectiveness in fighting beach deterioration in other parts of the U.S. and Canada and is being introduced in Denmark, Brazil and eight other countries, officials said here yesterday.

IT TOOK ONLY two days for workmen to install 4000 10-by 12-inch cinder blocks this week, according to Ron Kidd of Marshfield, president of Sandgrabber, Inc. of Massachusetts, and Samuel Fair of Bay City, Mich., who invented the process.

"We went to the Duxbury Beach Ass'n and asked permission to put in a pilot project at no cost to the town to show people what we have and what it will do to stop erosion," explained Fair. "It'll now last forever and there'll be a new stretch of sandy beach."

The secret of the system is no secret at all, stressed Kidd.

"Instead of fighting Mother Nature with huge walls of steel or concrete, groins, jetties, breakers or revetments, the Sandgrabber seduces her — brings

the force of the waves through or over the block structure.

"This dissipates the energy of the waves and causes the water to drop its load of sand and gravel inward from the Sandgrabber. As the sand level rises inward, there is a tendency for the coarser sand and gravel to be deposited in front of the Sandgrabber, thus building the additional new beach."

THE 3-FOOT-HIGH line of blocks will be completely covered by sand in a matter of weeks. "It depends on the winds," noted Fair, pointing to 14 or 15 inches of sand that filled up the lower blocks on Tuesday alone.

Don Kidd, son of the firm's president, said, "This is a test to show people of Massachusetts what can be done to save beaches and preserve the shorelines."

"The Sandgrabber removes sand from the water. Everyone has been trying to figure out how to take sand out of the water, and this process does it."

Kidd said installation costs range from \$60 to \$100 per foot, depending on the locality and what equipment is needed. In some instances cranes and barges are needed, but the Duxbury project was relatively simple and the workmen carried the blocks from trucks and installed them on the beach quickly.

The Duxbury pilot project is costing Sandgrabber Inc. \$13,000.

"It's going to lift the beach up 3 feet and it's going to block the sand from going back into the ocean," predicted Kidd. "It's a wall that contains the beach area and it works."