

TO: The Board of Selectmen Courtesy of the Town Manager
FROM: The Roads and Right of Way Committee
DATE: March 18, 2014
RE: Public Access in the Baxter Road and Sankaty Beach Areas

In our advisory role to the Board of Selectmen, we would like to bring two matters of public access to your attention.

One, the **Sconset Foot-Path**: The R&ROW Committee has spent considerable time during the past years working on issues of public access in the Baxter Road area, specifically to the Sconset Foot-Path. As a result of the recommendations contained in the [Report of the Sconset Foot-Path Subcommittee](#), the Town has initiated actions to ensure public access across certain lateral ways from Baxter Road to the foot-path, as well as adopting a Management Plan for the path. The Committee has also erected Public Way markers at certain points indicating access to the path.

Portions of the foot-path have been lost due to erosion, most notably in the section north of 65 Baxter Road. A provision of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between the Town and the Sconset Beach Preservation Fund (SBPF), dated July 2013, references reinstallation of the bluff walk in this area, specifically:

(1) SBPF has proposed in Phase I the construction of a coastal erosion structure consisting of a rock revetment and **reinstallation of the bluff walk** for a distance of approximately 1500 linear feet located between approximately 75 and 119 Baxter Road... [Page 2, (1.). Emphasis added.]

The installation of Phase I, reduced to 900 feet and re-engineered from rocks to geotextile tubes is, for the most part, complete. However, during the many weeks of permitting and construction that have led up to this point, there has been no reference to reinstallation of the “bluff walk.”

We respectfully bring this to the Board’s attention and request that steps be taken to implement this important provision of the MOU.

Two, the **public beach below the bluff**: During the course of the research conducted by the Sconset Foot-Path Public Access Subcommittee, the R&ROW Committee learned more about the

Proprietors' beach below the bluff and how this stretch of beach came to be owned by the citizens of Nantucket. From [“The Path Along The Bluff,”](#) by Edouard A. Stackpole:

It was early in 1873 that Mr. Flagg obtained title to a large section of land between ‘Sconset and Sankaty, in that portion of the island laid out by the original Proprietors as “Plainfield,” bordering on Sesachacha lots. Although the original title gave him ownership to the foot of the bluff itself, **the “Proprietors” reserved for themselves the beach land from the foot of the bluff to mean high water.**” [Page 1 of 3. Emphasis added. Originally published in “Historic Nantucket,” Vol. 20, No. 4, April 1973.]

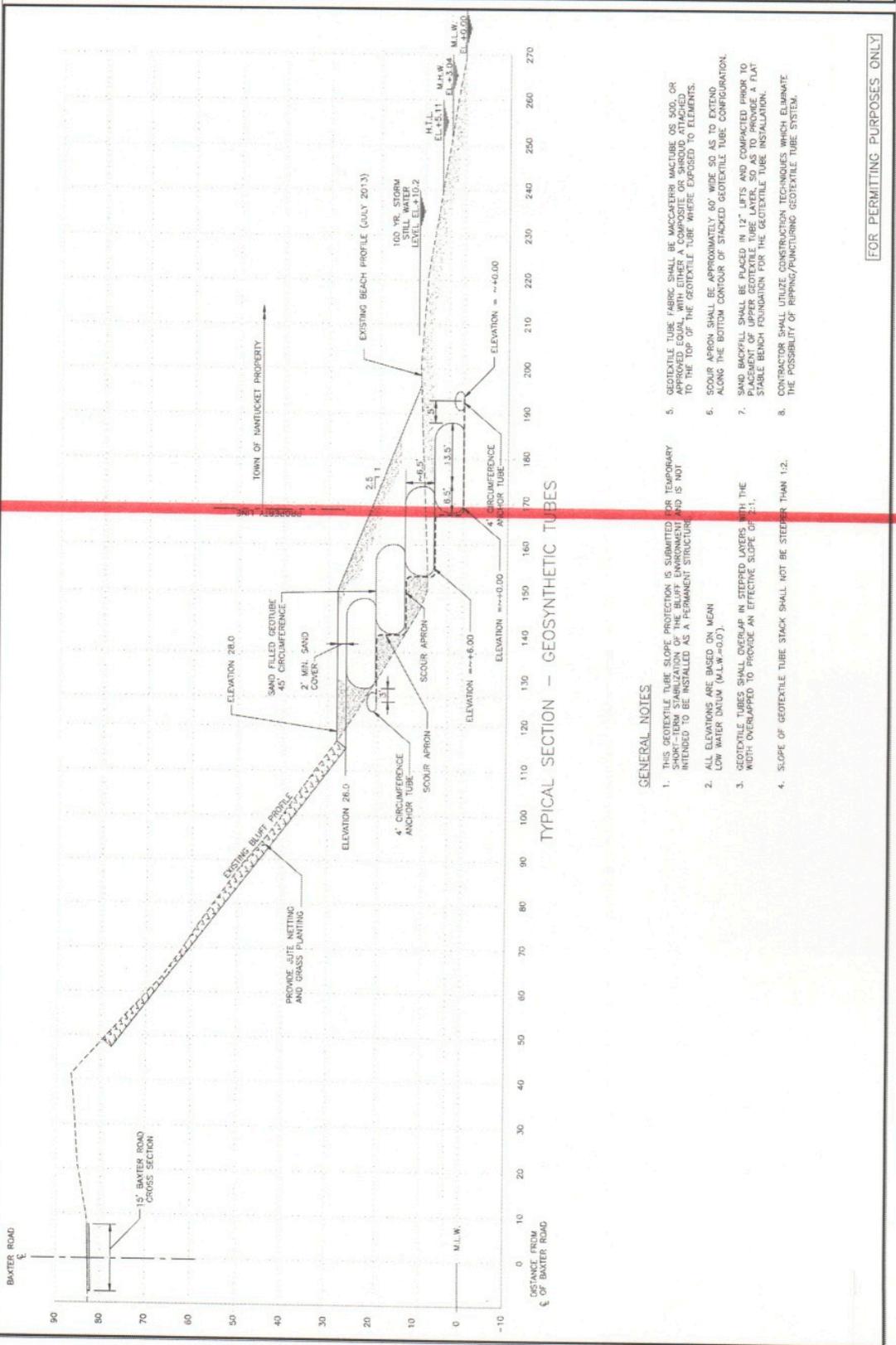
As erosion-control efforts in this area, sanctioned by the Town, moved forward, we ask the Town to be proactive in ensuring that public access to the beach below the bluff be maintained, at a minimum, if not enhanced.

As this area is almost certain to be subject to further erosion, with the beach receding into land that is privately owned, perhaps this is the time to negotiate with the private property owners in the area to secure One Big Beach (OBB) easements along the beach. Since the Town is allowing the private property owners in the area to benefit from the use of public land — the beach — to protect their houses, it seems only fair to ask them for something in exchange that will benefit the public. These easements will help Nantucket maintain access for the public to the beach envisioned by Mr. Flagg.

In addition, we advise the Board to consider the impacts of whatever erosion-control measures the Town supports on the public’s ability to use the beach it owns. Safe access along what beach is still public should be a priority. [See Attachment for cross section of the then proposed geotextile engineering structure, dated October 26, 2013. **Red line** denotes boundary of Town property that lies seaward.] Unless some semblance of beach is preserved below the bluff for citizens to pass and re-pass safely, there would be no need for OBB.

We thank you for your consideration and stand by, as a Committee, to assist in any ways we can.

ATTACHMENT



GENERAL NOTES

1. THIS GEOTEXTILE TUBE SLOPE PROTECTION IS ELIMATED FOR TEMPORARY SHORT-TERM STABILIZATION OF THE EMBANKMENT AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE INSTALLED AS A PERMANENT STRUCTURE.
2. ALL ELEVATIONS ARE BASED ON MEAN LOW WATER DATUM (M.L.W.=0.0).
3. GEOTEXTILE TUBES SHALL OVERLAP IN STEPPED LAYERS WITH THE WIDTH OVERLAPPED TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE SLOPE OF 2:1.
4. SLOPE OF GEOTEXTILE TUBE STACK SHALL NOT BE STEEPER THAN 1:2.
5. GEOTEXTILE TUBE FABRIC SHALL BE MACCAFERRI MACTUBE OS 500, OR EQUIVALENT, WITH ALL SEAMS AND JOINTS PROPERLY ATTACHED TO THE TOP OF THE GEOTEXTILE TUBE WHERE EXPOSED TO ELEMENTS.
6. SCOUR APRON SHALL BE APPROXIMATELY 50" WIDE SO AS TO EXTEND ALONG THE BOTTOM CONTOUR OF STACKED GEOTEXTILE TUBE CONFIGURATION.
7. SAND BACKFILL SHALL BE PLACED IN 12" LIFTS AND COMPACTED PRIOR TO PLACEMENT OF UPPER GEOTEXTILE TUBE LAYER, SO AS TO PROVIDE A FLAT STABLE BENCH FOUNDATION FOR THE GEOTEXTILE TUBE INSTALLATION.
8. CONTRACTOR SHALL UTILIZE CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES WHICH ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF RIPPING/PUNCTURING GEOTEXTILE TUBE SYSTEM.

FOR PERMITTING PURPOSES ONLY

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