

# Town beach between canal and a hard place

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Jetties built decades ago to protect the Cape Cod Canal in Massachusetts appear to be starving nearby beaches, threatening them with erosion.

In Sandwich, near the north end of the canal, reports dating back to 1959 describe beach erosion, The Cape Cod Times reports. That year, the Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the canal, said that the beaches were eroding at the rate of 3 feet a year and said that the jetties were interrupting the natural movement of sand along the beach.

A 1988 report by the town warned that downtown Sandwich could be at risk of high-tide flooding if erosion continued.

Town Manager George Dunham told the newspaper he has written the Corps twice since 2006 to ask for financial assistance for another beach study. He is still waiting for an answer.

Another problem is the dunes are nesting places for piping plovers and least terns. That means the town cannot use old Christmas trees and fences to stabilize the dunes.

Paul Schrader, an environmental activist, says saving the dunes should be the top priority.

"If they don't do something, there won't be any habitat left for them to nest in," he said.

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