

Costly fix considered for Paines Creek erosion

Photo 1 of 1 | [View Enlarged Photo](#)



Brewster officials are weighing construction of a stone wall to slow the erosion that is threatening to wash away the parking lot at Paines Creek Beach.

Cape Cod Times/Steve Heaslip

By **Doug Fraser**
dfraser@capecodonline.com
September 17, 2009

BREWSTER — Town officials are considering spending \$250,000 to build a stone seawall they hope will keep the Paines Creek Beach parking lot from washing out to sea.

At their meeting Monday night, selectmen reviewed a report from the Woods Hole Group, consultants they hired to study the area. The recommendation is to build a 300-foot-long sloping stone wall to save the parking lot and its 15 spaces from being scoured away by the swift currents of the creek and the violent storms that occasionally wrack the beach.

"If that's what it takes to preserve the landing then you've got to do it," said Barbara Alexander. Alexander was one of many people yesterday who drove into the lot to spend a few minutes at the shore. The beach is popular for more than getting a tan, she said. People watch sunsets, fish or have a quiet cup of coffee and read the paper.

"I live in Brewster and there isn't a lot of access to beaches," said Alexander who thinks the town should protect the limited beach parking it has now.

The report also investigated the cost and benefits of replacing an old, deteriorating steel culvert under the road at the entrance to the parking area. The idea would be to help stabilize the roadway over the culvert and provide more tidal flow upstream of the culvert and into Freemans Pond in order to improve water quality, saltwater marsh habitat and fish migration. The project has an estimated price of about \$250,000.

Woods Hole Group engineer Matt Shultz explained that other solutions to save the parking lot were considered but proved insufficient or presented greater problems.

Rock-filled baskets known as gabions cause more erosion than a sloped wall and could break apart. A vertical wall could cause too much erosion to the beach in front of it. Coconut fiber logs deteriorate too quickly. And, using smaller stones, known as cobble, to protect the beach would not provide adequate support for the parking lot, he said.

Selectmen recommended that Shultz and Natural Resources Director Chris Miller present the report to the town's conservation commission.

Town Administrator Charles Sumner was unsure about a funding source for the seawall, but pointed out that the town has had success in getting grants for saltwater marsh restoration and might get funding for the culvert replacement.