STATUS OF THE MUNICIPAL BEACHES
2026 ANNUAL REPORT
CAPE MAY POINT, NEW JERSEY

Aerial photograph showing the Borough of the Cape May Point beaches and dunes within the groin cells from Lehigh Avenue to Alexander Avenue. (photos courtesy T. Kingston, April 28, 2026)

PREPARED FOR: THE BOROUGH OF CAPE MAY POINT
215 LIGHTHOUSE AVENUE
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May 26, 2026

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Introduction

The Stockton University Coastal Research Center (CRC) surveyed the ocean beaches within the Borough of Cape May Point (Borough) between Lighthouse and Alexander Avenues on April 2 and 3, 2026. These beach profiles were compared to previous surveys that were conducted May 2023, March 2024, and April 2025. The findings included in this report complete the annual review of the municipal beaches prior to the 2026 beach bathing season.

The Borough's beaches are included in the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) *Lower Cape May Meadows-Cape May Point* Coastal Storm Risk Management Project that consists of a dune (+16.7 feet), 20-foot-wide berm, and wetlands restoration. The project is scheduled for periodic nourishment every four years (pending funding availability). Sand was placed on the beach at Lake Drive in March 2021. Between December 2024 and March 2025, sand was excavated from the beach berm within Cape May Point State Park (near the Borough's eastern border) and "backpassed" eastward to create three "sand island" placement sites on the beaches within South Cape May Meadows Preserve (managed by The Nature Conservancy) (Rochette, personal communication, 2025). No sand was placed on the Borough's beaches during this event or afterward to the time of the April 2026 surveys.

In the summer of 2025, the Cape May County shoreline experienced typical summer meteorological and wave/tidal conditions with no notable storm events. However, north-northeast driven nearshore waves initiated by the offshore passage of Hurricane Erin reached four feet on August 21 resulting in high surf and coastal flooding along the Cape May County beach communities. In fall 2025, a northeaster storm on October 12-13 generated high waves along the entire New Jersey Atlantic shoreline with nearshore surf measuring up to four feet at Cove Beach. In winter 2026, the January 25-26 storm created high waves from the east as did the storms on February 17 and the February 23 blizzard (NOAA Storm Events Database, accessed May 2026 and Surfline, accessed May 2026). (https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents/listevents.jsp?eventType=ALL&beginDate_mm=02&beginDate_dd=01&beginDate_yyyy=2025&endDate_mm=04&endDate_dd=15&endDate_yyyy=2026&county=CAPE%2BMAY%3A9&hailfilter=0.00&tornfilter=0&windfilter=000&sort=DT&submitbutton=Search&statefips=34%2CNEW+JERSEY). Though not named storms, the higher wave events triggered berm scarping and nearshore erosion.

The CRC completed the Borough's beach profile surveys five weeks after the February 23 blizzard (April 2-3, 2026). During the visits, all beach access points were open and accessible. Beach access points from Harvard Avenue (Lehigh Ave, Whilldin Ave, Coral Ave, and South Lake Drive) were the easiest to navigate as well as access points at Alexander Ave, Brainard Ave, and Stites Ave. The Pearl Avenue pathway may be challenging for those with lower mobility and might be a candidate for the installation of some form of pedestrian walkway matting to ease access. An alternative is for pedestrians to enter from Cape Avenue and walk on the beach to the northwest. The Surf Avenue access point is relatively longer, but the Surf Ave. roadway and ascent up to the dune crest is half the distance as a paved walking surface. Parking and walking access all appear to remain adequate for the residents and visitors.

Beach Monitoring Program

The CRC established the Borough's beach monitoring program in 1991 to address the changes observed along the shoreline and nearshore. Nine permanent monitoring survey lines were established about midway within the groin cells at the following streets along the Borough's ocean and bay shorelines (Figure 1). Each profile starts at a fixed reference position behind the dunes, crosses the dunes, beach and

extends over 600 feet into the water, ending at a depth of 12 to 16 feet. Table 1 provides the list of the monitoring site locations and the survey number and dates included in this report.

Table 1. Cape May Point Monitoring Locations, Survey Numbers, and Date of 2026 Survey.

CMP-0: Lighthouse Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 3, 2026)
CMP-1: Lehigh Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 3, 2026)
CMP-2: Whilldin Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 3, 2026)
CMP-3: Coral Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 3, 2026)
CMP-4: Lake Drive	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 2, 2026)
CMP-5: Cape Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 2, 2026)
CMP-6: Pearl Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 2, 2026)
CMP-7: Stites Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 2, 2026)
CMP-8: Alexander Avenue	Surveys 51, 52, 53, & 54 (April 2, 2026)

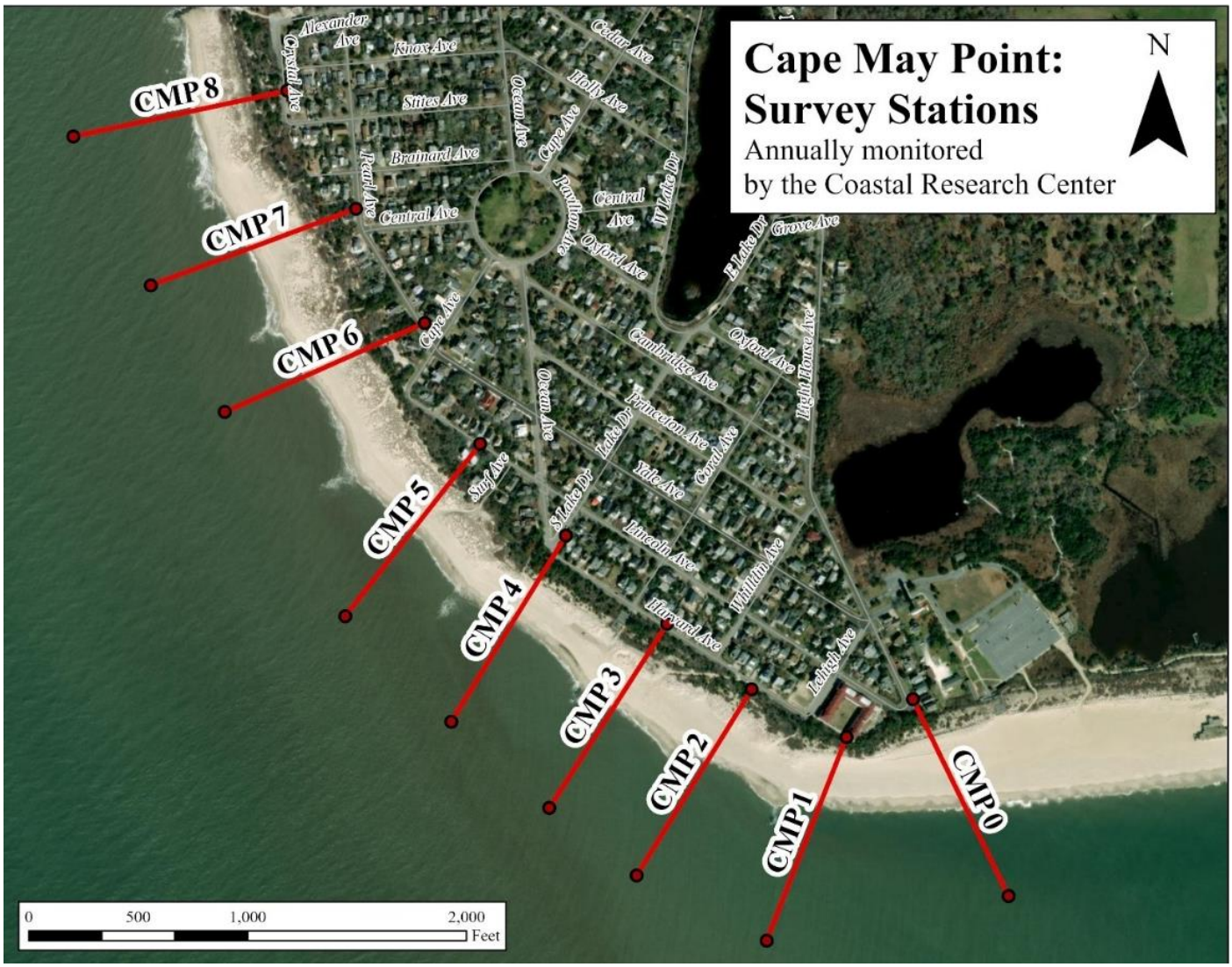

Figure 1. Site map of the Cape May Point beaches showing locations of transects monitored by the Coastal Research Center.

Table 2 shows the Borough's annual shoreline and beach volume changes between April 2025 and April 2026. The shoreline changes are based on the advance (seaward) or the retreat (landward) movement of the zero-elevation (0.0 ft) NAVD88 datum position on each cross section. This elevation represents the "shoreline" position; it approximates the proper change horizontally for any shoreline point selected on the beachface subject to daily wave run-up. The unit sand volume computed for the cross section in cubic yards of sand per foot of shoreline is multiplied by the distance between the groins in Cape May Point to arrive at the net volume in the right column for each cell.

Table 2. Profile Shoreline & Sand Volume Changes: April 2025 (Survey 53) to April 2026 (Survey 54)

Profile Number	Shoreline Change (feet)	Volume Change (yds^3/ft)	Cell Distance (feet)	Net Volume Change (yds^3)
CMP-0	-13.0	-5.21	420	-2,188
CMP-1	-2.9	-0.69	445	-307
CMP-2	-12.7	6.21	460	2,857
CMP-3	-7.6	8.33	450	3,747
CMP-4	19.8	13.66	675	9,223
CMP-5	-16.8	-21.62	690	-14,916
CMP-6	12.7	11.77	710	8,357
CMP-7	14.9	20.07	680	13,646
CMP-8	12.9	10.29	660	6,793
Total Volume Change for Cape May Point =				**27,211**

The April 2025 (S53) to April 2026 (S54) profile volume change comparisons show a net gain of sand within the Borough's beaches and nearshore (27,211 cubic yards). This is a reverse from the 2024-2025 comparison and returns to past trends where the beaches recorded net gains of sand since 2017 (see CRC annual reports 2014-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024). Over the past three years, there were: volume loss 2024-2025 (-34,049 cubic yards); and volume gains 2022-2023 (50,896 cubic yards); and in 2023-2024 (57,566 cubic yards).

There was seaward movement of the shoreline at CMP-4, CMP-6, CMP-7, and CMP-8. Of those locations, CMP-4, CMP-6, CMP-7, and CMP-8 recorded net gains in sand volume in excess of 6,700 cubic yards. The monitoring site at CMP-0 (Lighthouse Avenue) and the groin cell at CMP-5 (Surf Avenue to Cape Avenue) lost sand volume. Profile CMP-4 (Lake Drive) has typically been the Borough's most problematic profile but showed significant gains in 2025-2026 (9,223 cubic yards). The most erosion occurred at CMP-5 (Surf Avenue to Cape Avenue). CMP-8 has been one of the most consistent for volume gains and seaward movement of the shoreline and this trend continued in 2025-2026 (net gain of 6,793 cubic yards).

The Cape May Point federal beach maintenance projects occurred in January 2013, 2016, and 2021 (only at CMP-4). The profile cross sections in this report compare the spring conditions from 2023 (Survey 51) through 2026 (Survey 54) and show that the Borough's beaches have been stable or accreting (except during the 2024-2025 comparisons when there was net volume loss of the Borough's beaches).

Review of Beach Cells in Cape May Point

This section provides the site descriptions and changes documented at each profile location. The Spring 2026 photographs show each site's environmental conditions at the time of the survey. The cross sections show where changes have occurred and the locations where sand was added or removed (by natural coastal conditions) from the profile, as well as the shifts in shoreline (0.0 ft NAVD88 elevation) positions.

Lighthouse Avenue: CMP-0

CMP-0 is located within the easternmost cell that borders Cape May Point State Park and is bounded to the west-southwest by a rock groin that is buried under berm sand and exposed only in the swash zone. There is no public access directly from Lighthouse Avenue to the beach. The entry points are from Cape May Point State Park or from Lehigh Avenue. This profile location borders the beach where the USACE conducted sand backpassing from December 2024-March 2025. Borrowed sands were used to create "sand islands" on the berm at The Nature Conservancy managed area.

Figure 2. View to the east at the seaward toe of the dunes at Lighthouse Avenue (April 3, 2026). This photo shows the transition into the state natural area. The wide (300+ feet) beach is typical of this location. The WW II Fort Miles Battery remained on the dry beach.

The Lighthouse Avenue beach is approximately 375 feet wide from the dune toe to the water's edge. There was landward shoreline movement (-13 feet) and volume loss across the profile (-5.21 yds^3/ft). Windblown sand, trapped by vegetation created volume gains in the backshore seaward of the foredune ridge. In the nearshore, the slope remained consistent with the previous three years.

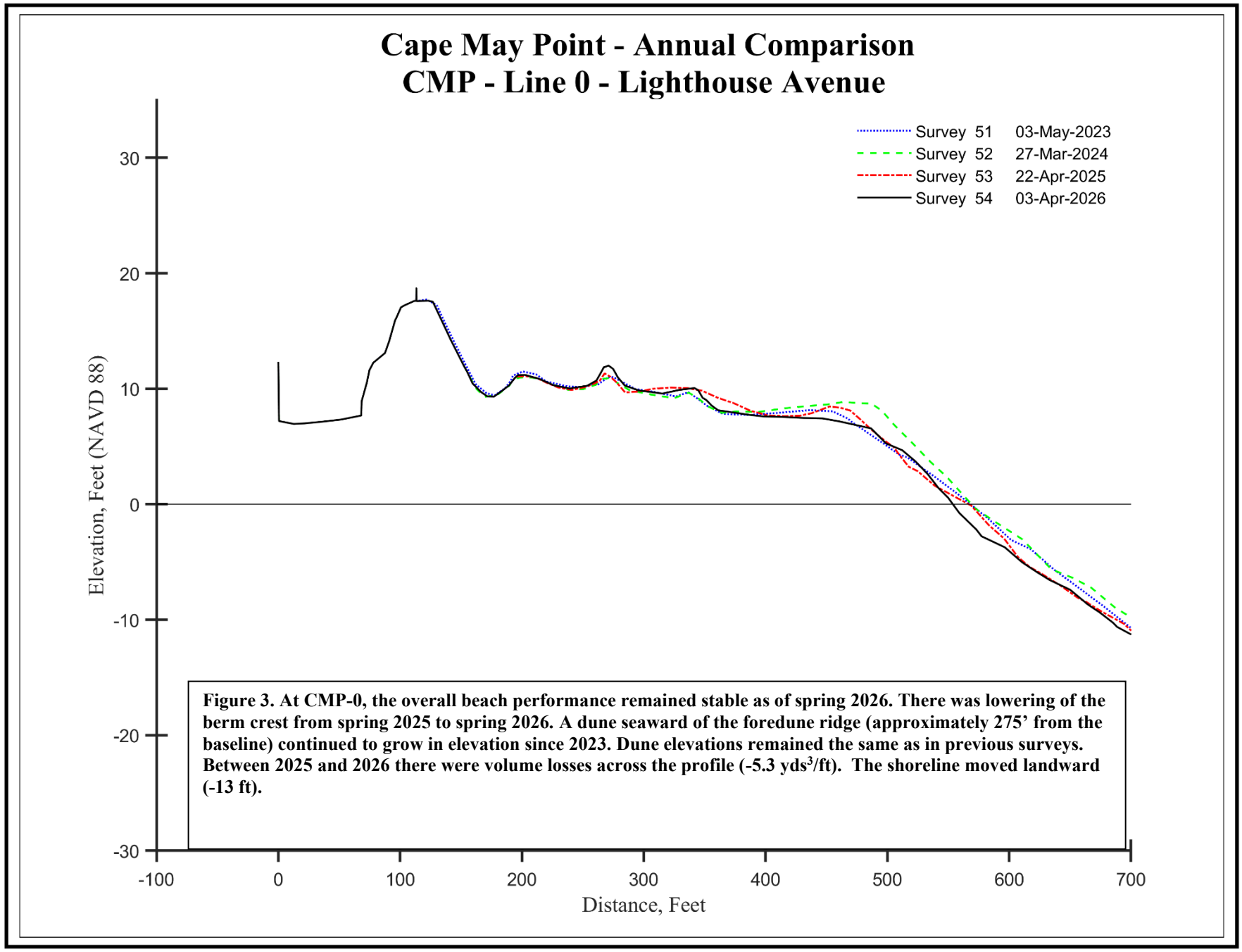

Figure 3. At CMP-0, the overall beach performance remained stable as of spring 2026. There was lowering of the berm crest from spring 2025 to spring 2026. A dune seaward of the foredune ridge (approximately 275' from the baseline) continued to grow in elevation since 2023. Dune elevations remained the same as in previous surveys. Between 2025 and 2026 there were volume losses across the profile (-5.3 yds^3/ft). The shoreline moved landward (-13 ft).

Lehigh Avenue: CMP-1

Profile CMP-1 is located within the area bounded by the Lighthouse Avenue groin and the Lehigh Avenue groin. Prior to the initial USACE project no dry beach was present between the rock groins. Shore protection was provided by a rock revetment that armored the seaward dune slope. Beyond the groins the seafloor steeply dropped into the adjacent tidal channel. The initial USACE project re-established a dry recreational berm and covered the revetment with sand to restore the dune.

Figure 4. View to the east-northeast from the dune toe at CMP-1 (April 3, 2026). Previously planted vegetation continued to collect windblown sand resulting in seaward growth of the dune. The foredune is located on top of a stone revetment. The dry beach remains well wider than the pre-beach nourishment width creating an excellent storm protection barrier as well as a recreational resource.

This cell also received sand during the USACE authorized second maintenance project conducted between November 2012 and January 2013. That project counted both the Lighthouse and Lehigh sites as one placement volume at 78,174 cubic yards. No sand placement has occurred here since that time. Between April 2025 and April 2026, CMP-1 gained only a modest amount of sand above the 0.0 ft NAVD88 elevation (.90 yds^3/ft.) but lost sand below the 0.0 ft NAVD88 elevation (-1.59 yds^3/ft.). The berm crest elevation in 2026 was lower than the 2024 elevation. The shoreline moved landward (-2.85 feet).

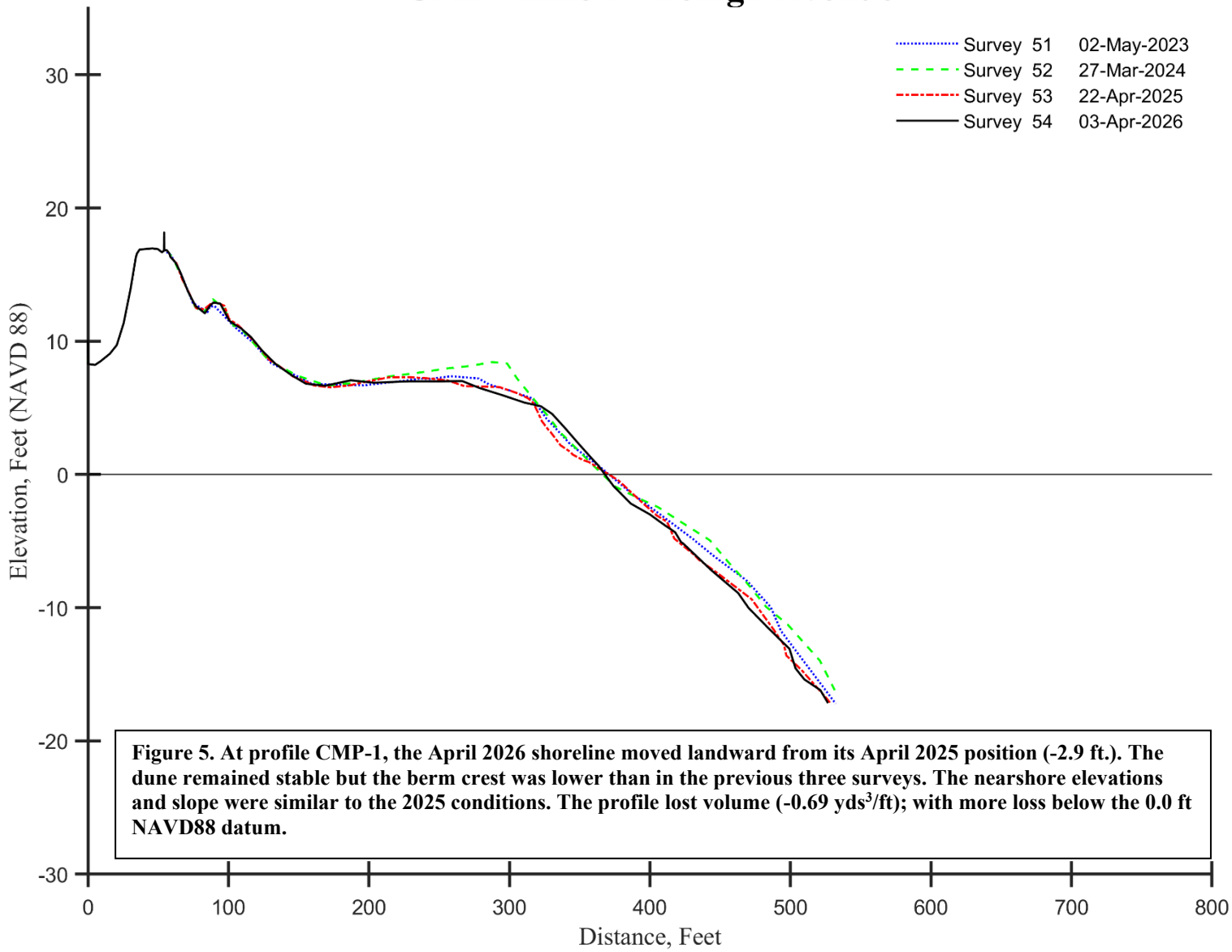

Figure 5. At profile CMP-1, the April 2026 shoreline moved landward from its April 2025 position (-2.9 ft.). The dune remained stable but the berm crest was lower than in the previous three surveys. The nearshore elevations and slope were similar to the 2025 conditions. The profile lost volume (-0.69 yds^3/ft); with more loss below the 0.0 ft NAVD88 datum.

Groin Cell - Lehigh to Whilldin Avenues: CMP-2

The CMP-2 beach is the first groin cell where "Beachsaver" submerged reef units were installed in 1993. Many of these units were buried under sand during the 2025 surveys, except at this location and at CMP-5. Sand that was added to the groin cell during the initial USACE project resulted in the near burial of a rock seawall that served as property protection prior to the federal project. No additional sand was placed at this location during the 2013 maintenance or from subsequent cycles.

At CMP-2, the "Beachsaver" unit was observed on the 2020 profile cross-section, and as a break in slope on the 2022 and 2024 surveys. The unit was prominent in the April 2025 survey and exposed in the 2026 survey (near the 500-foot distance from the reference point). Over 2025-2026, the unit trapped sand on the seaward side of the structure, and seafloor elevation was similar to the March 2024 position.

Figure 6**. The photo shows the view to the northwest from the foredune at Whilldin Avenue (taken April 3, 2026). In 2026 the foredune crest exceeded the landward dune in elevation though the dune maintained the same footprint, without any landward or seaward shift. There was approximately 150' of dry beach for recreation use.**

In 2025-2026 there was sand volume gain above and below the datum (6.21 yds^3/ft) and landward shoreline movement (-12.6 ft). The "Beachsaver" units are buried in the center of the beach cell and are exposed with any lowering of the seafloor elevation. At the time of the survey in 2026, the units were barely exposed at about –5.0 ft NAVD88 but may become a hazard to water bathers as conditions may shift. Caution is urged to water bathers in the area surrounding the unit and in-water bathing beyond 3-foot depths is not recommended. In addition, these individual 10-foot-long reef concrete units did not settle into the seabed in a uniform manner over time. Early traverses along the crest between the rock groins found that units tilted from end to end and were of differing crest elevations between adjoining segments so exposure could easily vary along the line of the reef structure, buried in places, but exposed at the surface in others.

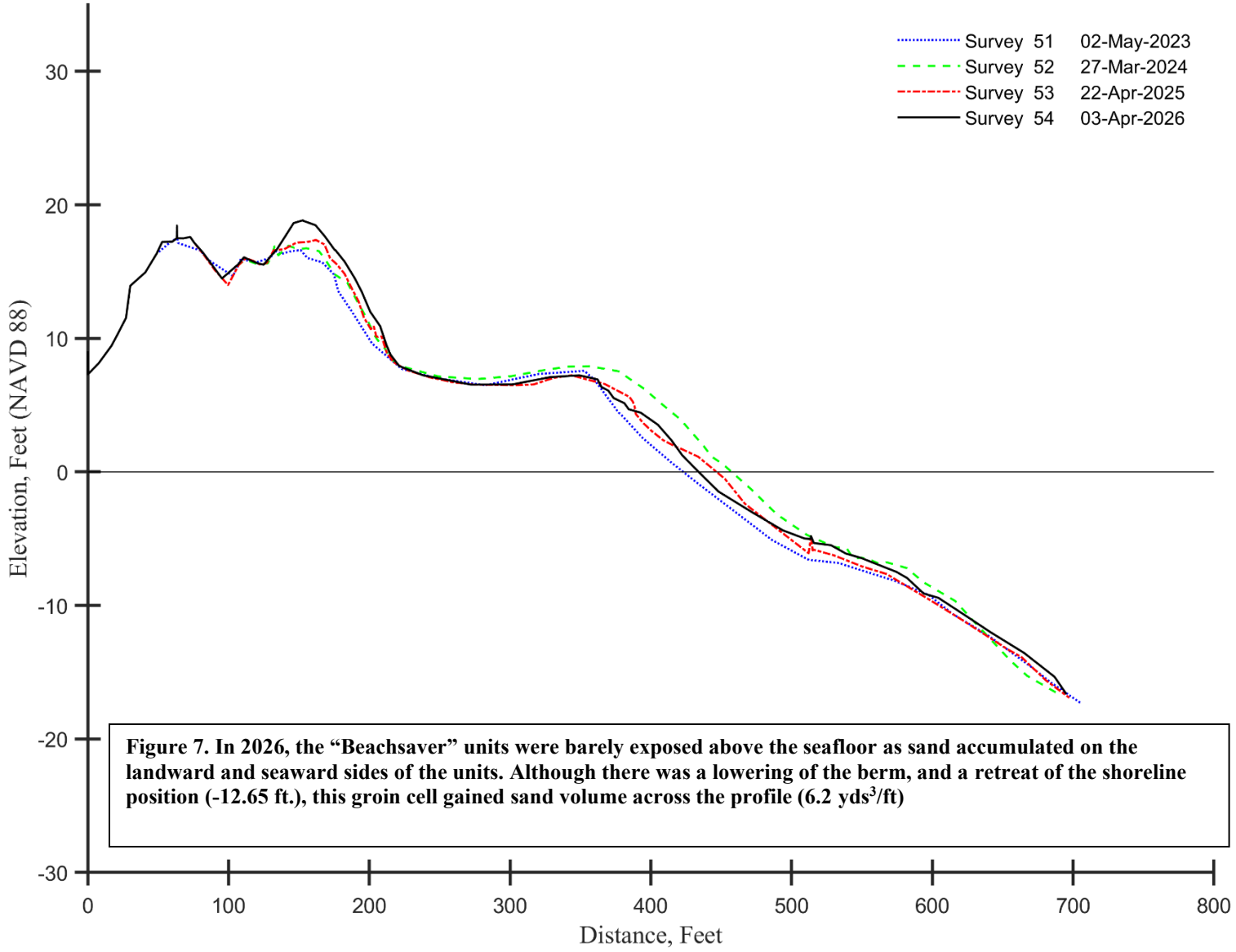

Figure 7. In 2026, the "Beachsaver" units were barely exposed above the seafloor as sand accumulated on the landward and seaward sides of the units. Although there was a lowering of the berm, and a retreat of the shoreline position (-12.65 ft.), this groin cell gained sand volume across the profile (6.2 yds^3/ft)

Groin Cell - Whilldin to Coral Avenues: CMP-3

Profile CMP-3 is bounded by rock groins at Whilldin Avenue and Coral Avenue. This beach cell was the second original 1993 “Beachsaver” unit installation in Cape May Point. Sand was added to the groin cell during the initial USACE project and subsequent accumulation along the units resulted in the burial of the entire beach unit structure. No additional sand was placed here during the maintenance cycles (2012-2013; 2016; nor 2021). The units were not exposed at the seafloor surface in the April 2026 survey.

Windblown sand continued to accumulate on the seaward portion and at the crest of the foredune. This upward and seaward growth has continued since 2021. The sand volume change above the 0.0 ft NAVD88 datum was a gain of 4.3 yds^3/ft. In 2026, the berm was less than 100 ft wide due to the dune’s seaward advancement and the landward movement of the shoreline (-7.6 ft). The berm crest was landward of its 2025 position. However, the nearshore elevations were at or above the 2025 elevations and there was a net gain of sand across the profile (8.33 yds^3/ft).

Figure 8. View to the southeast of the seaward foredune toe and backshore at profile CMP-3. In April 2026, the foredune peak was 15.5 ft NAVD88, one-foot higher than in April 2025 (photo taken April 3, 2026).

Since 2023, the “Beachsaver” units remained buried under sand at the Coral Avenue profile. Though buried, water bathers should be cautious of the units and any barnacle encrusted top concrete surfaces may remain a hazard for foot cuts to unaware swimmers, few of which even know the structures are present.

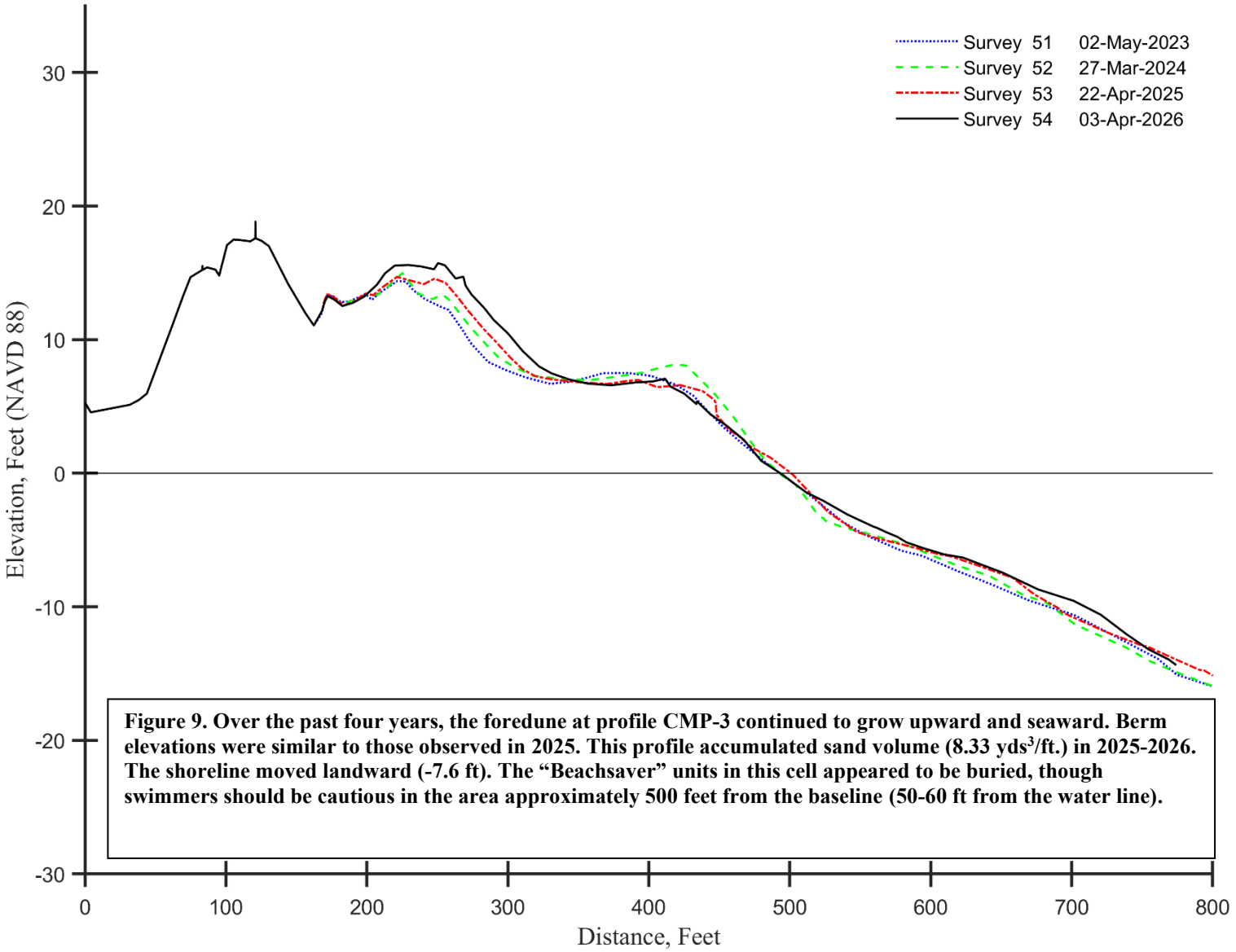

Figure 9. Over the past four years, the foredune at profile CMP-3 continued to grow upward and seaward. Berm elevations were similar to those observed in 2025. This profile accumulated sand volume (8.33 yds^3/ft.) in 2025-2026. The shoreline moved landward (-7.6 ft). The "Beachsaver" units in this cell appeared to be buried, though swimmers should be cautious in the area approximately 500 feet from the baseline (50-60 ft from the water line).

Groin Cell - Coral Avenue to Lake Drive: CMP-4

The Lake Drive (CMP-4) beach cell is bounded by the rock groins at Coral Avenue and south of Lake Drive (closer to Surf Avenue). This cell does not contain any nearshore "Beachsaver" structures, but it has received sand both during the initial project and in the 2nd maintenance cycle nourishment project. Over the winter of 2012/2013, the USACE placed 37,000 cubic yards of sand in the Lake Drive beach cell (Dwight Pakan, former USACE Philadelphia District Project Manager). This site also received modest sand placement in 2016 (42,300 cubic yards, Dwight Pakan, personal communication). In 2021, approximately 50,000 cubic yards of sand were transferred from both The Nature Conservancy managed lands and the Cape May Point State Park beach and truck-hauled to Lake Avenue and to the "Cove" beach in Cape May City (Dwight Pakan, former USACE project manager, personal communication). No sand was placed within the groin cell since 2021.

Figure 10. The April 2, 2026 photo at profile CMP-4 shows the conditions of the berm crest and scarp that resulted from higher waves during a full moon. The Coral Avenue groin appears within the swash area of the profile. The backshore elevation adjacent to the dune toe was higher than measured in the April 2025 survey.

The CMP-4 beach profile survey was completed a day after the passage of a northeast storm and full moon. A berm scarp was present along the entire groin cell though berm conditions were considerably more favorable than in the May 2025 survey.

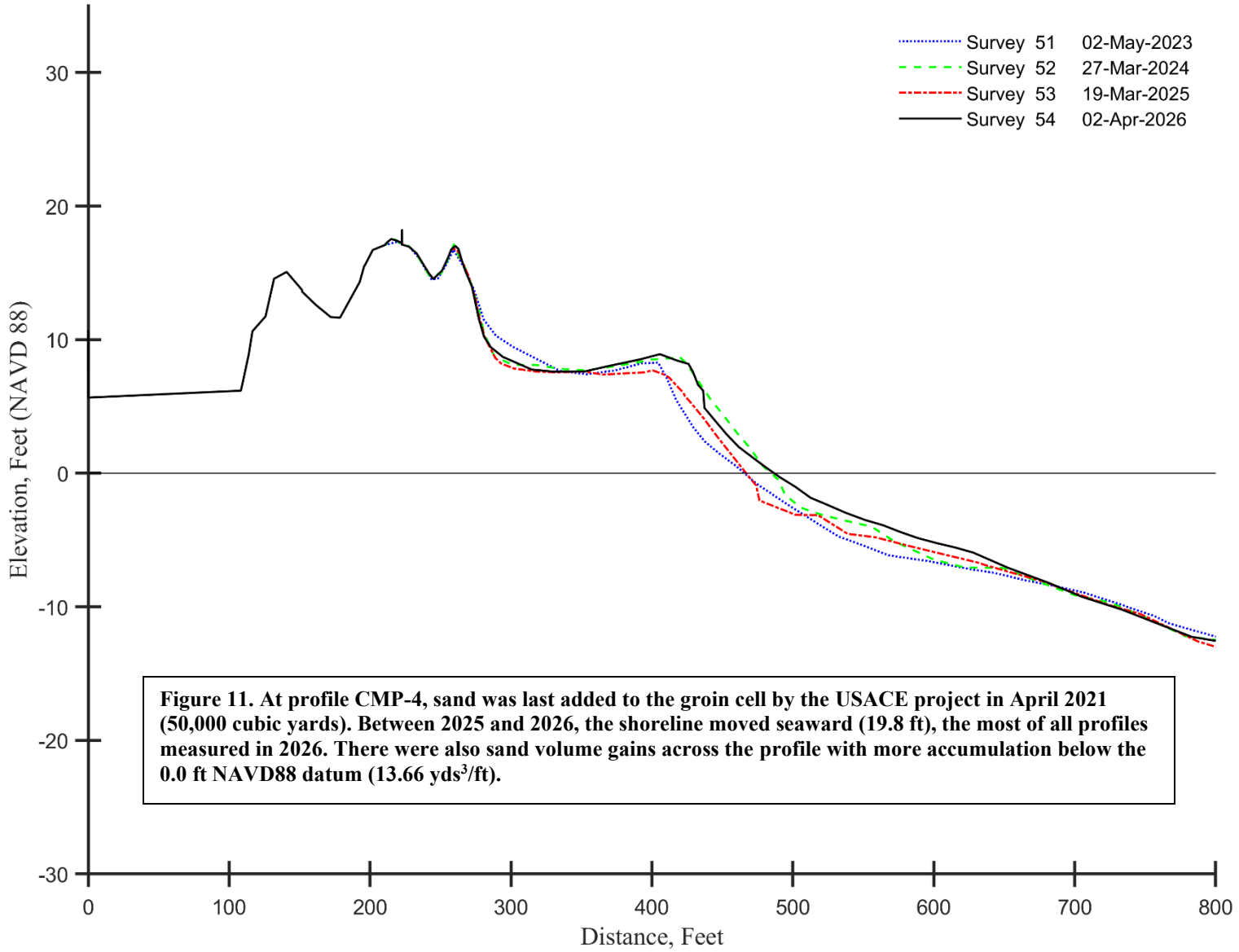

Figure 11. At profile CMP-4, sand was last added to the groin cell by the USACE project in April 2021 (50,000 cubic yards). Between 2025 and 2026, the shoreline moved seaward (19.8 ft), the most of all profiles measured in 2026. There were also sand volume gains across the profile with more accumulation below the 0.0 ft NAVD88 datum (13.66 yds^3/ft).

Groin Cell - Surf to Cape Avenues: CMP-5

The groin cell at CMP-5 contains nearshore "Beachsaver" units that were installed in 2002 during the USACE CMP-227 pilot project. In 2026, the breakwater units were present and exposed nearly four feet above the seafloor (located just over 250-feet seaward of the zero-elevation shoreline position). These units are furthest from the shoreline and lowest in elevation in the mid-section of the groin cell where swimming is allowed. Along the CMP-5 beach profile, the top elevation of the unit was measured at -5.97 ft NAVD88 and there was considerably more scouring around the structure in 2026. While the unit may not present a danger, individuals should be aware of its presence when swimming. Along the rock groins, swimming should be restricted where the units are closer to shore due to sand accumulation at the rocks.

No sand was placed northwest of Lake Drive during the 2012-2013 USACE maintenance project nor during the 2016 or 2021 efforts. In past studies of the Borough's beaches, natural processes have moved sand from southeast to northwest along the shoreline over time. At CMP-5 the groin cell lost considerable volume below 0.0 ft NAVD88 between the April 2025 and April 2026 surveys (-19.8 yds^3/ft). The foredune gained elevation and expanded seaward as windblown sand was trapped by vegetation. The dune growth has been continuous since 2018 regardless of the shoreline position or beach volume change though this was not enough to counter the volume losses across the profile.

Figure 12. The April 2, 2026 view to the southeast from profile CMP-5 shows the dune, berm crest, foreshore, and the Surf Avenue groin. The dry beach landward of the "Beachsaver" unit was less than 100 ft in width.

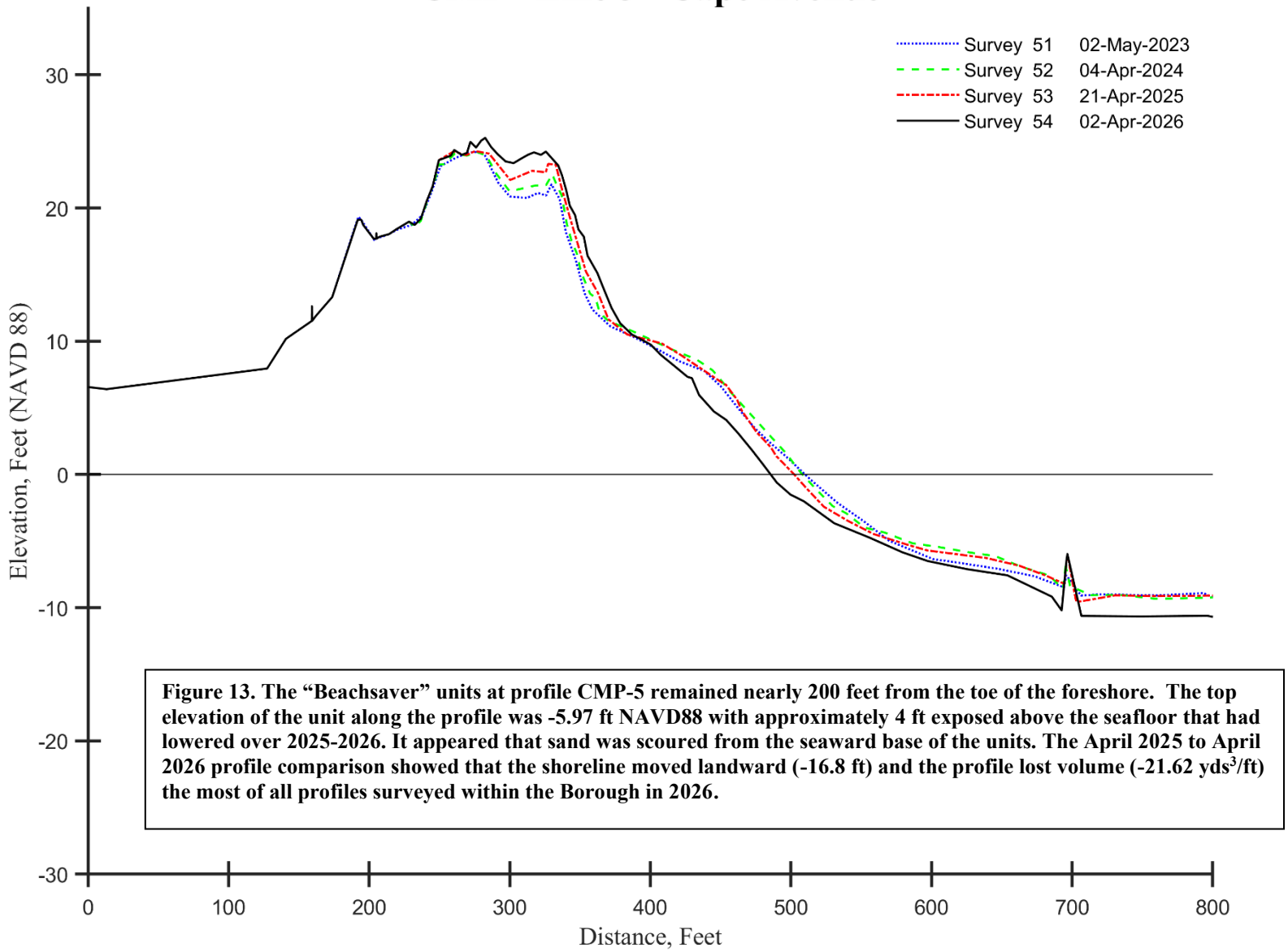

Figure 13. The "Beachsaver" units at profile CMP-5 remained nearly 200 feet from the toe of the foreshore. The top elevation of the unit along the profile was -5.97 ft NAVD88 with approximately 4 ft exposed above the seafloor that had lowered over 2025-2026. It appeared that sand was scoured from the seaward base of the units. The April 2025 to April 2026 profile comparison showed that the shoreline moved landward (-16.8 ft) and the profile lost volume (-21.62 yds^3/ft) the most of all profiles surveyed within the Borough in 2026.

Groin Cell - Cape to Pearl Avenues: CMP-6

The CMP-6 profile is bounded by the rock groins at Cape Avenue and Pearl Avenue. The nearshore bay floor contains the prefabricated concrete "Double T" structures that were installed as part of the USACE CMP-227 demonstration project in October 2002. These units were quickly buried and have remained buried by sand in the past 18 annual surveys. Consequently, the structures have no ability to influence additional sand retention. The "Double T" structures are located on the seafloor 11 feet below the 0.0 ft. NAVD88 datum and buried by 4 feet of sand nearly 100 feet offshore. The units, however, might be accessible adjacent to the rock groins, and any recreational activity in the water close to the rock groins is already prohibited.

Figure 14. The photo shows the berm and backshore at profile CMP-6 (taken April 2, 2026, view to the northwest). The foredunes here have grown upward and seaward since 2021 as a result from accumulated windblown sand and resulted in above-datum volume gains between 2025 and 2026 (10.19 yds^3/ft).

No sand was placed this far northwest in any of the USACE beachfill projects, so the beach building that occurred here over the past five years was the result of natural processes that moved sand from the updrift beaches (southeast of this location). The CMP-6 profile gained sand volume between 2025 and 2026 (11.77 yds^3/ft.) with most sand gains occurring above the datum predominantly on the seaward side of the dune as a result of windblown sand trapped by vegetation. This groin cell gained 8,357 cubic yards in sand volume over the past year (Table 1).

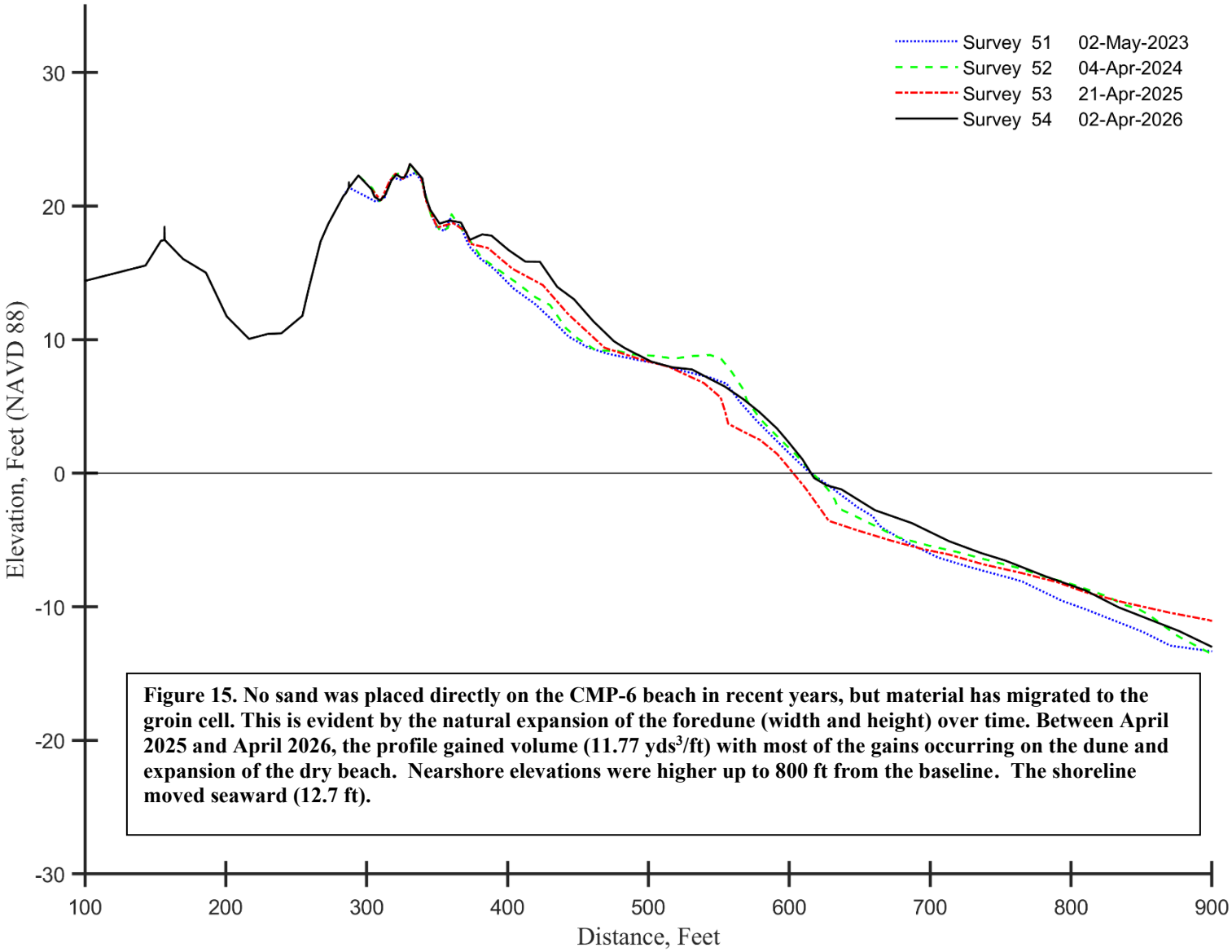

Figure 15. No sand was placed directly on the CMP-6 beach in recent years, but material has migrated to the groin cell. This is evident by the natural expansion of the foredune (width and height) over time. Between April 2025 and April 2026, the profile gained volume (11.77 yds^3/ft) with most of the gains occurring on the dune and expansion of the dry beach. Nearshore elevations were higher up to 800 ft from the baseline. The shoreline moved seaward (12.7 ft).

Groin Cell - Pearl to Stites Avenues: CMP-7

Profile CMP-7, located southeast of Brainard Avenue, is bounded by the rock groins near Pearl Avenue and Stites Avenue. The cell has not received any sand directly from the past USACE beach restoration or maintenance projects. Natural processes dominated by longshore drift continue to transfer sand from southeast to northwest along the Borough's shoreline. This is evident by the upward and seaward growth of the foredune. Past beach profile surveys have measured dry beach widths of nearly 200 feet. During the 2026 survey, the dry beach was approximately 170 feet. This should provide beach patrons with adequate recreational area and good swimming conditions for the summer season.

Figure 16. The April 2, 2026 photo (view to southeast) at profile CMP-7 shows the berm crest, foreshore, and exposed Pearl Avenue groin. The foredune continued to grow seaward over 2025-2026; evidence that there is ample natural sand transport to this groin cell.

In 2026, the dune crest elevation was 31.87 ft NAVD88 and the dune field continued to grow upward and seaward. The high and wide dunes at CMP-7 provide excellent storm protection for the Borough's infrastructure and homes. The dunes and backshore have gained sand since 2021 and the entire foredune slope has become an expanded dune field since 2018 with elevations greater than 15 ft NAVD88. In April 2026, the dry berm was nearly 15 ft wider than the conditions measured in April 2025. This profile gained the most sediment of all the Borough's monitored beaches.

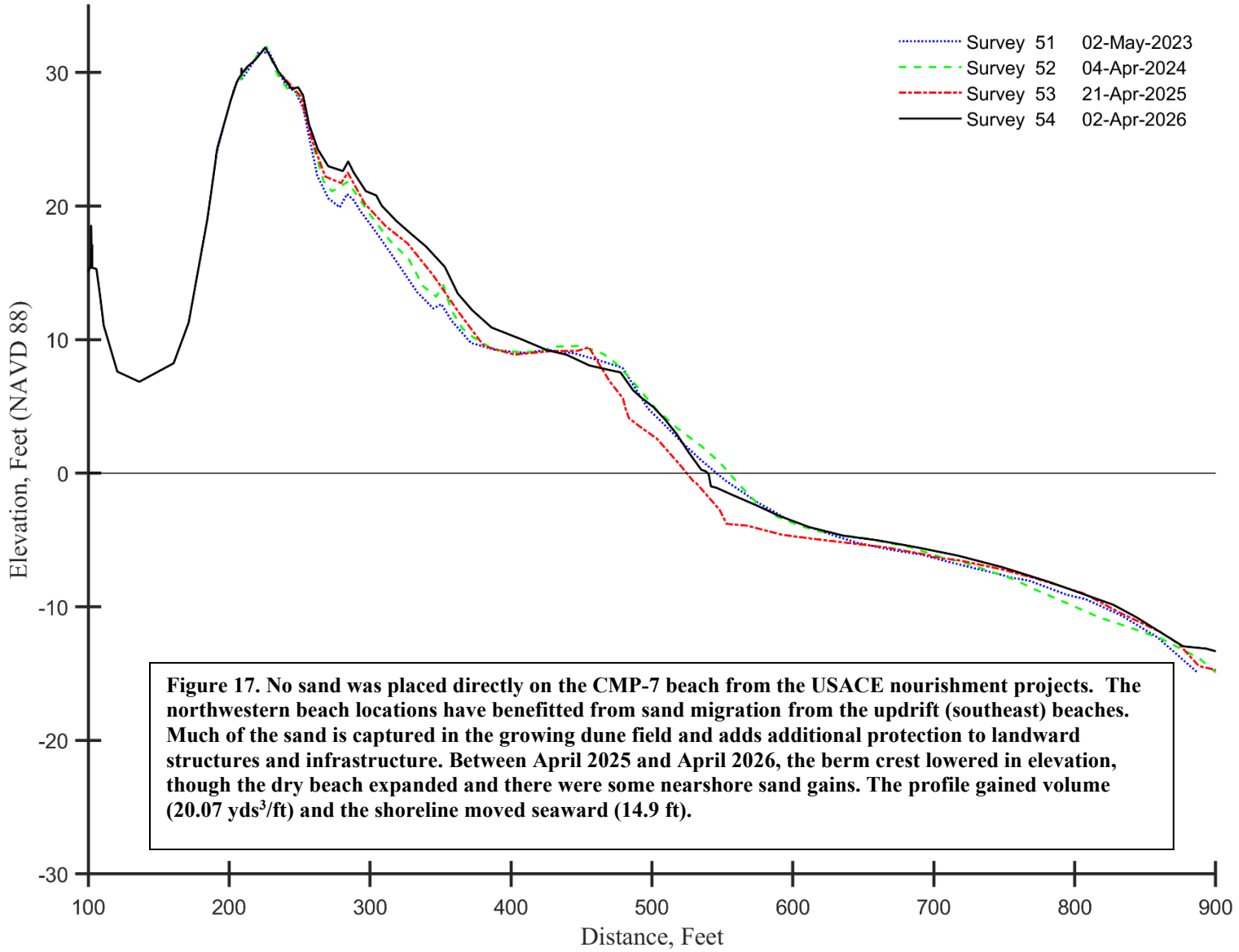

Figure 17. No sand was placed directly on the CMP-7 beach from the USACE nourishment projects. The northwestern beach locations have benefitted from sand migration from the updrift (southeast) beaches. Much of the sand is captured in the growing dune field and adds additional protection to landward structures and infrastructure. Between April 2025 and April 2026, the berm crest lowered in elevation, though the dry beach expanded and there were some nearshore sand gains. The profile gained volume (20.07 yds^3/ft) and the shoreline moved seaward (14.9 ft).

Groin Cell Stites to Alexander Avenues: CMP-8

The Alexander Avenue location, CMP-8, is the northwestern-most beach cell in the Borough of Cape May Point. This location was not included in the USACE beachfill projects. Natural processes have moved sand from the USACE project beaches to this location. The beach extends seaward nearly to the tip of the northwestern groin. (Though much of the groin is exposed in the April 2, 2026 photo below.) Sediment transport from this cell moves onto the western Delaware Bay shoreline and shoals locally known as the "Cape May Rips." Swimming is not permitted at this beach but is reserved for fishing and beach sitting only.

Figure 18. The April 2, 2026 photo (view to the northwest from the CMP-8 profile) shows the extent of wave runup onto the berm, foreshore, and Alexander Avenue groin. An erosional scarp along the dune toe shows the extent of past exposure to waves, though the dune field continued to grow over 2025-2026.

The CMP-8 profile recovered from the 2025 losses and gained in sand volume mostly below the datum (10.29 yds^3/ft). The dune field continued its growth (since 2017) but only in elevation from the 2025 conditions. The berm expanded from 2025, but the dry beach width was less than 50 ft. The shoreline moved seaward (12.9 ft). The groin cell gained 6,793 cubic yards of sand over 2025-2026.

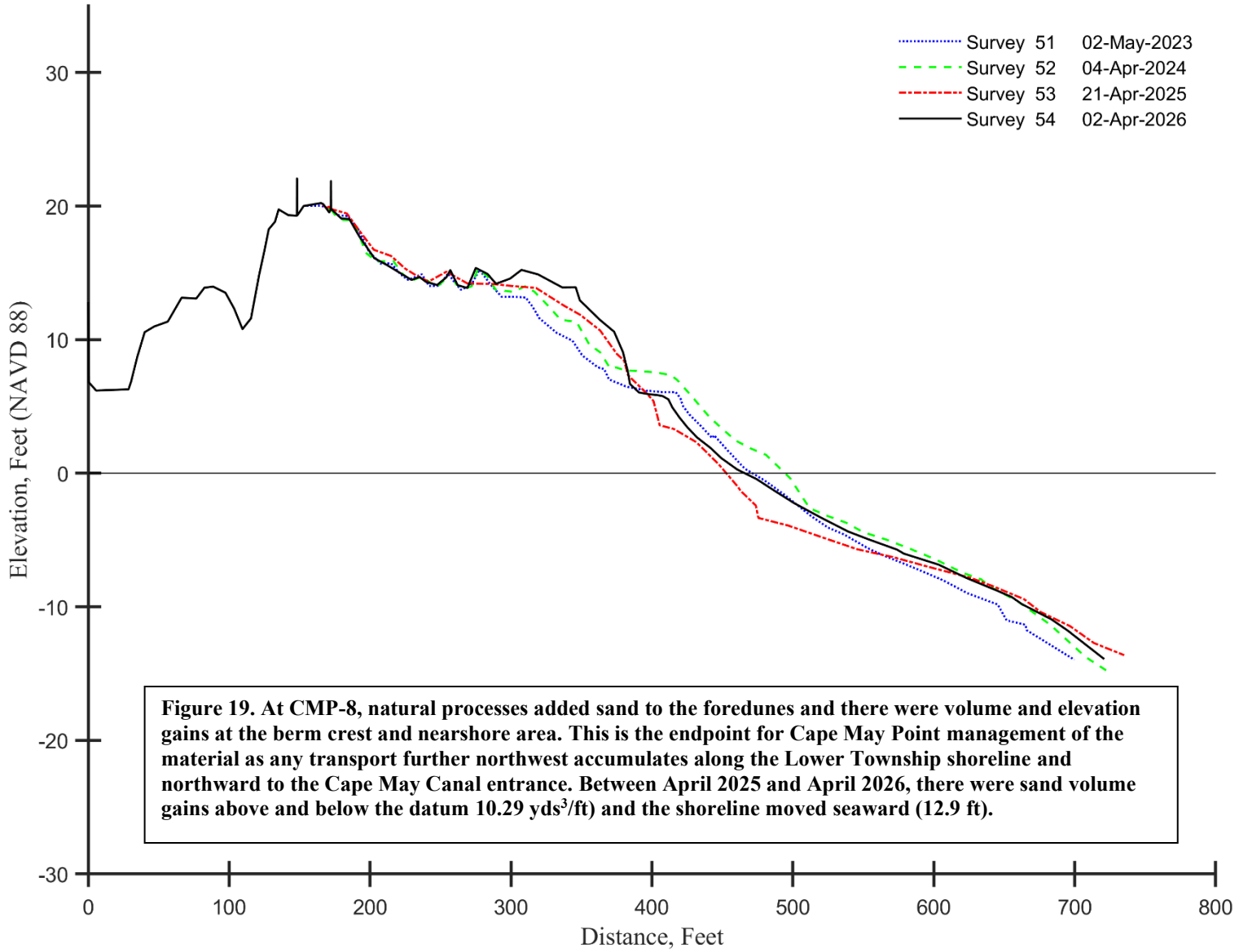

Figure 19. At CMP-8, natural processes added sand to the foredunes and there were volume and elevation gains at the berm crest and nearshore area. This is the endpoint for Cape May Point management of the material as any transport further northwest accumulates along the Lower Township shoreline and northward to the Cape May Canal entrance. Between April 2025 and April 2026, there were sand volume gains above and below the datum 10.29 yds^3/ft) and the shoreline moved seaward (12.9 ft).

Summary

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) commenced sand placement on the Cape May City and Cape May Point (Borough) beaches in 2007 for the *Lower Cape May Meadows – Cape May Point* ecosystem restoration project. Periodic project beachfills occurred in 2013 (345,000 cubic yards [cy]), and in 2016 (951,893 cy). In 2021, the USACE "backpassed" sand from the Cape May Point State Park and The Nature Conservancy beaches to Cape May Point (via truck) to augment the Lake Drive beach cell with 50,000 cubic yards of sand. The most recent project occurred between December 2024 and March 2025 where sand was excavated from the beach berm within Cape May Point State Park and "backpassed" to eastern beaches managed by The Nature Conservancy.

In general, the wave climate and littoral current in southern Cape May County moves much of the sand to the Cape May Point beaches. Some sand is transported out to sea, to New Jersey's Delaware Bay beaches, or sand remains in place in Cape May City and The Nature Conservancy managed beaches and dunes. This sand supply has resulted in an influx of material for all the Cape May Point beaches even those northwestern beaches that had not been directly filled.

The Coastal Research Center (CRC) completed the annual elevation surveys of the Borough of Cape May Point beaches on April 2-3, 2026. The surveys were completed six weeks after a noted storm (February 23 blizzard) and no coastal events were recorded in the *NOAA Storm Events Database* between then and at the time of the surveys. Results from the April 2025 to April 2026 comparisons showed an overall volume gain of the dunes, beaches, and nearshore within the Borough. However, there were volume losses measured at CMP-0 (Lighthouse Avenue) and at CMP-5 (Cape Avenue). Most of the volume gains occurred in the foredunes and dune fields that expanded upward and seaward as a result of windblown sand trapped by vegetation. No sand was placed on the Borough's beaches, and it is the opinion of the CRC that all volume gains between 2025 and 2026 were attributed to natural coastal processes.

Observations & Recommendations

1. Overall, the Cape May Point beaches, nearshore and dunes gained sand volume (27,211 cubic yards) between April 2025 and April 2026.
2. The beach cells at CMP-0 (Lighthouse Avenue) and CMP-1 (Lehigh Avenue) do not have reef structures. Between April 2025 and April 2025, the beaches at Lighthouse and Lehigh Avenues experienced net sand volume losses (though less loss than recorded between 2024 and 2025). Most of the sand losses occurred in the swash area of the profiles (below the 0.0 ft NAVD88 datum). However, the dry beach remained wide for recreational use. Both beach cells have steep nearshore slopes into deep water and strong tidal currents into and out of Delaware Bay.
3. The beach cell 2 (Whilldin Avenue - CMP-2) shoreline position (zero datum) was approximately 75-80 feet landward from the "Beachsaver" unit. This unit was exposed at 513 feet from the profile baseline and the elevation at the top of the unit measured at -5.02 ft NAVD88. There is a continued risk of injury to unwary visitors if this structure remains exposed over the summer of 2026. The CRC recommends not allowing swimming in this cell except for wading into 3 feet of water and installing a line of floats indicating the maximum distance into the water which should be about 20 feet from the "Beachsaver" unit.
4. Beach cell 3 (CMP-3 at Coral Avenue) continued volume gains 2025-2026. Most gains occurred in the foredunes and in the nearshore 700 ft from the baseline. The "Beachsaver" units (approximately 500 feet seaward from the baseline) were found to be buried by sand in the April

2026 survey. Swimming areas appear to be 50-60 ft from the waterline to the buried structures. Markers or floats should be used if swimming is allowed.

5. Beach cell 4 (CMP-4, Lake Avenue.) has no structures and typically has a relatively shallow nearshore slope than the groin cells to the southeast. The USACE added 50,000 cy of trucked sand in 2021, but none since then. This beach cell remains a good option for a swimming beach in Cape May Point this season. The shallow slope of the nearshore between the groins makes wading and swimming much safer for beach patrons.
6. Beach cell 5 (Cape Avenue, CMP-5) and beach cell 6 (Pearl Avenue, CMP-6) contain submerged breakwater units that were installed in 2002. At CMP-5, the units were detected at 700 feet from the baseline and there was scouring seaward of the structure. Swimming areas are nearly 200 feet between the shoreline and the "Beachsaver" unit which had a top elevation at -5.97 ft NAVD88 at 697 feet from the baseline. The structure was exposed above the seafloor (4.6 ft).
7. The "Double T" structure in beach cell 6 has been long buried by sand. Swimming near the groins that mark the cell boundaries should always be avoided since the units are slightly closer to the beach adjacent to the rocks. Profile CMP-5 had the greatest amount of volume loss of the Borough's beaches that resulted in a loss of (-)14,916 cubic yards of sand. Most of the losses occurred below the datum. In comparison, beach cell 6 gained sand (8,357 cubic yards).
8. Beach cell 7 at Stites Avenue (CMP-7) benefited from growth of the foredunes and berm, enhancing the recreational value of the beach again over 2025-2026. This beach cell gained the most volume (13,646 cubic yards). The nearshore remained shallow and there were sand gains from 500 ft to 700 ft from the profile baseline. This cell may offer a relatively safe option for swimming.
9. Beach cell 8 at Alexander Avenue reversed the losses from 2025 and gained 6,793 cubic yards of sand. The dune field expanded upward, but the dry beach was narrow and low compared to the 2023 and 2024 conditions. Most of the sand gains between 2025 and 2026 were below the datum. This beach has traditionally been closed to swimming.

The Coastal Research Center (CRC) will continue to monitor the conditions on the Cape May Point beaches at the Borough's request and will assist officials with addressing any coastal zone management issues. Please contact the CRC with any questions or concerns. Cape May Point should enjoy a successful summer season with excellent beach access and extensive space for all types of traditional recreation at the Jersey shore.