

OUTER BANKS SENTINEL 1/5/2003-1/8/2003

# Jockey's Ridge continues migration

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The tallest natural sand dune system in the eastern United States continues to fan out toward the south and west.

"It seems like this last several years that the dunes are spreading out," said Jockey's Ridge State Park Superintendent George Barnes.

Barnes said an increase in vegetation on the dunes and development around the park was more than likely responsible for the change in the dune's topography.

"The dunes are not losing any sand," he stressed. "It is spreading out."

Evidence of the shifting sand is easy to spot. A castle that was once part of a miniature golf course continues to emerge from the sand that buried it years ago.

The park's main dune stands some 90 feet tall and has not lost any height in about five or six years, according to Barnes.

In late December, heavy equipment was used to move sand from the south of the park that threatened to encroach on Soundside Drive. The project called for moving of approximately 125,000 cubic yards of sand to the north side of the park.

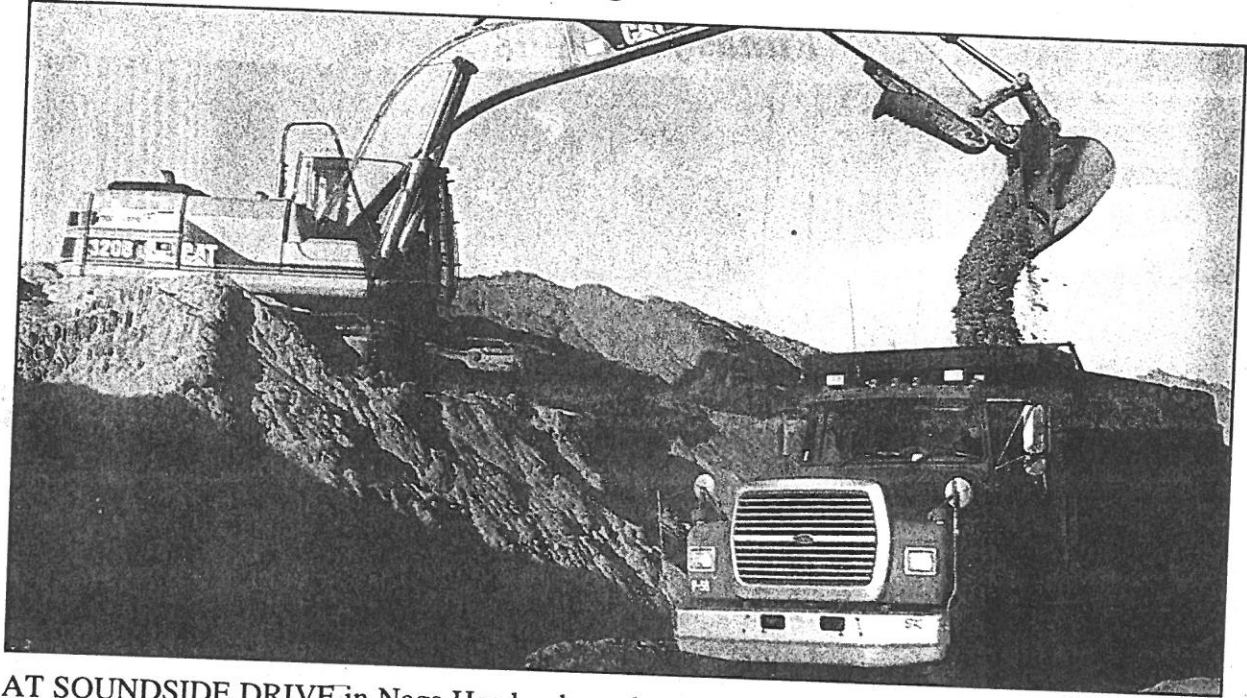
In addition to being a major tourist attraction, the dunes also provide a landing pad of sorts for hang-gliding enthusiasts.

As part of the efforts to stabilize the shifting sand, discarded Christmas trees are welcomed at the site. The trees are placed in strategic locations, where they trap sand and incidentally provide wildlife habitat.

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## *Shifting sands*



AT SOUNDSIDE DRIVE in Nags Head, where the southern portion of Jockey's Ridge is practically spilling over into the street, work is currently ongoing to help combat the threatening encroachment. Thanks to a grant from the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, approximately 125,979 cubic yards of sand will be moved to the north side of the ridge by mid-February. Averaging more than 2,000 cubic yards a day, work crews had already moved close to 13,000 cubic yards as of Dec. 17. According to Jockey's Ridge Superintendent George Barnes, beach grass will be planted and a sand fence, with dozens of old Christmas trees attached to give it more bulk, will be installed upon completion of the project to help slow future sand movement. (M. Artz photo)