



Glossary

Backshore — The zone of the shore or beach lying between the foreshore and the coastline and acted upon by waves only during severe storms, especially when combined with exceptionally high water.

Beach — The zone of sedimentary material that extends landward from the low water line to the place where there is marked change in material or form, or to the line of permanent vegetation (usually the effective limit of storm waves). The seaward limit of a beach—unless otherwise specified—is the mean low water line. A beach includes foreshore and backshore.

Berm — A nearly horizontal part of the beach or backshore formed at the high water line by waves depositing material. Some beaches have no berms, others have one or several.

Bluff — A high, steep bank composed of erodible materials.

Breaker — A wave meeting a shore, reef, sandbar, or rock and collapsing.

Breakwater — A fixed or floating structure that protects a shore area, harbor, anchorage, or basin by intercepting waves. See pages 14-17.

Bulkhead — A structure or partition placed on a bank or bluff to retain or prevent sliding of the land and protect the inland area against damage from wave action. See also **seawall**. See pages 26-29.

Cliff — A high, steep face of rock; a precipice.

Coast — The strip of land, of indefinite width (up to several miles), that extends from the shoreline inland to the first major change in terrain features.

Current — A flow of water.

Downdrift — The direction of predominant movement of littoral materials.

Dune — A ridge or mound of loose, wind-blown material, usually sand.

Erosion — The wearing away of land by the action of natural forces.

Fetch — The unobstructed distance over water in which waves are generated by wind of relatively constant direction and speed.

Foreshore — The part of the shore lying between the crest of the seaward berm (or upper limit of wave wash) and the water's edge at low water. The foreshore is ordinarily traversed by the runoff and return of the waves.

Functional life — The period of time during which a structure performs as intended. Performance can be expressed in terms of benefits obtained versus the cost of installation and maintenance.

Groin — A fingerlike structure built perpendicular to the shoreline, usually with other groins, to trap littoral drift or retard erosion of the shore. See pages 18-21.

Groundwater — Water within the earth that supplies wells and comes to the surface by seepage or in springs.

Jetting—A method of placing piles by forcing water around and under a pile to displace and lubricate the surrounding soil, allowing the pile to sink to the desired position.

Littoral—Of or pertaining to a shore.

Littoral drift—The sedimentary material moved along the shoreline under the influence of waves and currents.

Littoral transport—The movement of littoral drift along the shoreline by waves and currents. Includes movement parallel (longshore transport) and perpendicular (on-offshore transport) to the shore.

Longshore—Parallel to and near the shoreline.

Marsh—An area of soft, wet, or periodically submerged land, generally treeless and usually characterized by grasses and other low vegetation.

Neap tide—A tide having about 10 to 30 percent less range than the average, occurring about the time of quarter moons.

Nourishment—The process of replenishing a beach. It may be brought about naturally, by accretion due to the longshore transport, or artificially, by the deposition of dredged materials.

Offshore—The direction away from the shore, toward a large body of water.

Onshore—The landward direction, away from the water.

Overtopping—The passing of water over the top of a natural or man-made structure as a result of wave runup or surge.

Perched beach—A beach retained above the otherwise normal profile level by a submerged sill. See page 13.

Permit—A document issued that expresses the assent of a government agency, so far as concerns the public rights and the general public interest, for the accomplishment of certain works (e.g., construction).

Pile—A long, heavy timber or section of concrete or metal that is driven or jettied into the earth or bottom of a water body to serve as a structural support or protection.

Revetment—A facing placed on a bank or bluff of stone to protect a slope, embankment, or shore structure against erosion by wave action or currents. See pages 22-25.

Riparian rights—The rights of a person owning land containing or bordering on a water course or other body of water in or to its banks, bed, or waters.

Riprap—A layer, facing, or protective mound of rubble or stones randomly placed to prevent erosion, scour, or sloughing of a structure or embankment; also, the stone used for this purpose.

Rubble—Rough, irregular fragments of rock or concrete.

Runup—The rush of water up a beach or structure, associated with the breaking of a wave. The amount of runup is measured according to the vertical height above still water level that the rush of water reaches.

Scour—Removal of underwater material by waves and currents, especially at the base or toe of a shoreline structure.

Seawall—A structure separating land and water areas, primarily designed to prevent erosion and other damage due to wave action. See also **bulkhead**. See pages 26-29.

Sheet pile—A pile with a generally slender, flat cross-section that is driven into the ground or bottom of a water body and meshed or interlocked with like members to form a wall or bulkhead.

Shore—The narrow strip of land in immediate contact with the water, including the zone between high and low water lines. See also **backshore** and **foreshore**.

Spring tide—A tide that rises highest and falls lowest from mean sea level, occurring at new or full moon.

Tide—The periodic rising and falling of water that results from gravitational attraction of the moon and sun acting on the rotating earth.

Updrift—The direction opposite that of the predominant movement of littoral materials.

Wave height—The vertical distance between a wave crest and the preceding trough.

Wave length—The horizontal distance between similar points on two successive waves (for example, crest to crest or trough to trough), measured in the direction of wave travel.

Wave period—The time in which a wave crest travels a distance equal to one wave length. Can be measured as the time for two successive wave crests to pass a fixed point.

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