# THERE IS A BETTER SOLUTION

Erosion is no longer a problem on the north end of Figure Eight Island. The channel within Rich Inlet shifted naturally as it always does, and all the sand that a groin would collect has already collected naturally along the ocean and inlet shores.

If natural erosion occurs again, the association can correct the problem with a much lower cost and environmentally benign solution. With modest dredging, it can relocate the channel within Rich Inlet to position it where it is today. Channel relocation projects have already been successfully done within Bogue and Mason inlets for much less money than the terminal groin would cost. Previous cost estimates to move the channel were highly inflated, and nature has proven that this alternative is very cost effective.

#### Join our campaign to

# SAVE RICH INLET

#### What you can do as a Figure Eight Island property owner

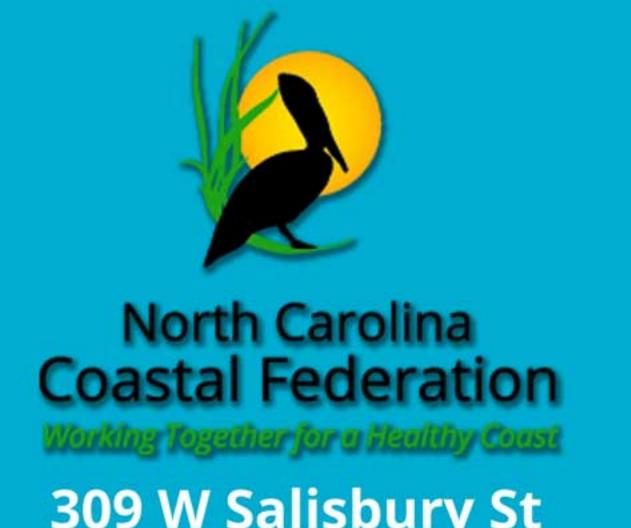
- Tell your homeowners association to stop wasting your money paying for lobbyists and consultants to do expensive environmental impact studies for a terminal groin at Rich Inlet.
- Vote "no" when it is time to decide whether the association should invest your money in applying for permits.
- Request the association organize a formal presentation by those groups and/or property owners opposed to the terminal groin.
- Encourage the association to invest in a better alternative than building an ugly and destructive wall at Rich Inlet.

#### What you can do as a concerned member of the public

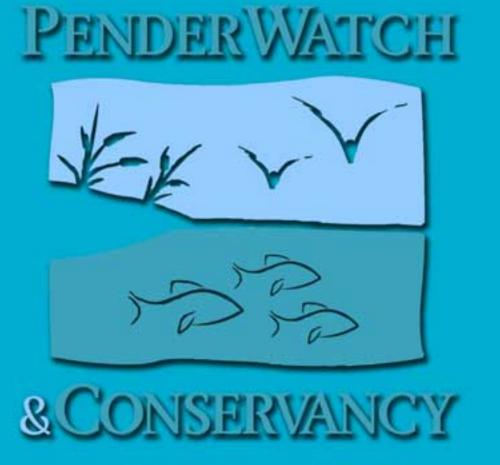
- Submit public comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers once the next version of the draft Environmental Impact Statement is issued.
- Submit comments on all future state and federal permit applications for the project.

## Visit our website nccoast.org or call us at 252.393.8185 to learn more about how you can help Save Rich Inlet

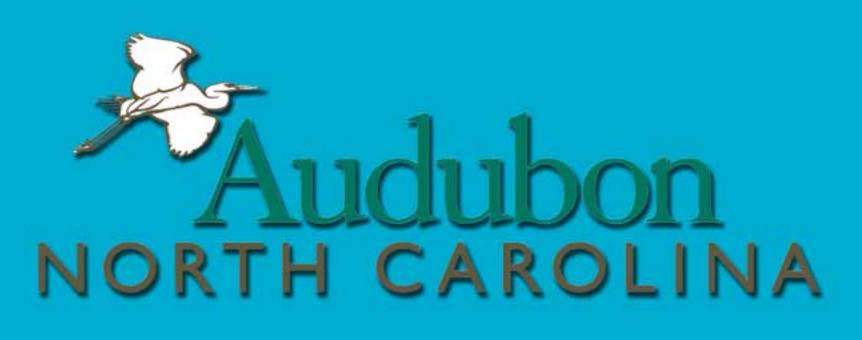
COVER PHOTOGRAPHS: Ghost Crab, Loggerhead Turtle: Sam Bland; Least Tern: Walker Golder



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# SAVE RICH INLET





For People, For Birds, For Fish. For All of Us. HELP KEEP IT THIS WAY. JOIN US. NCCOAST.ORG

#### North Carolina's inlets are full of life.

Low-lying spits of sand around natural inlets are essential nesting and foraging areas for fish, dolphins, sea turtles and birds. Thousands of boaters come to these shorelines each week to drop anchor, swim, fish and walk the beach.

Rich Inlet is one of the few naturally functioning inlets left in the state, and that makes it one of the best places in the world for shorebirds, terns and skimmers. The unmodified beaches around the inlet are superb, as evidenced by the vast numbers of birds using the inlet throughout the year.

Over 800 pairs of Least Terns are nesting at Rich Inlet this year, making it the largest N.C. colony in over 40 years of record keeping. Also nesting at the inlet are American Oystercatchers, Common Terns, the threatened Piping Plover, Wilson's Plovers and Willets.

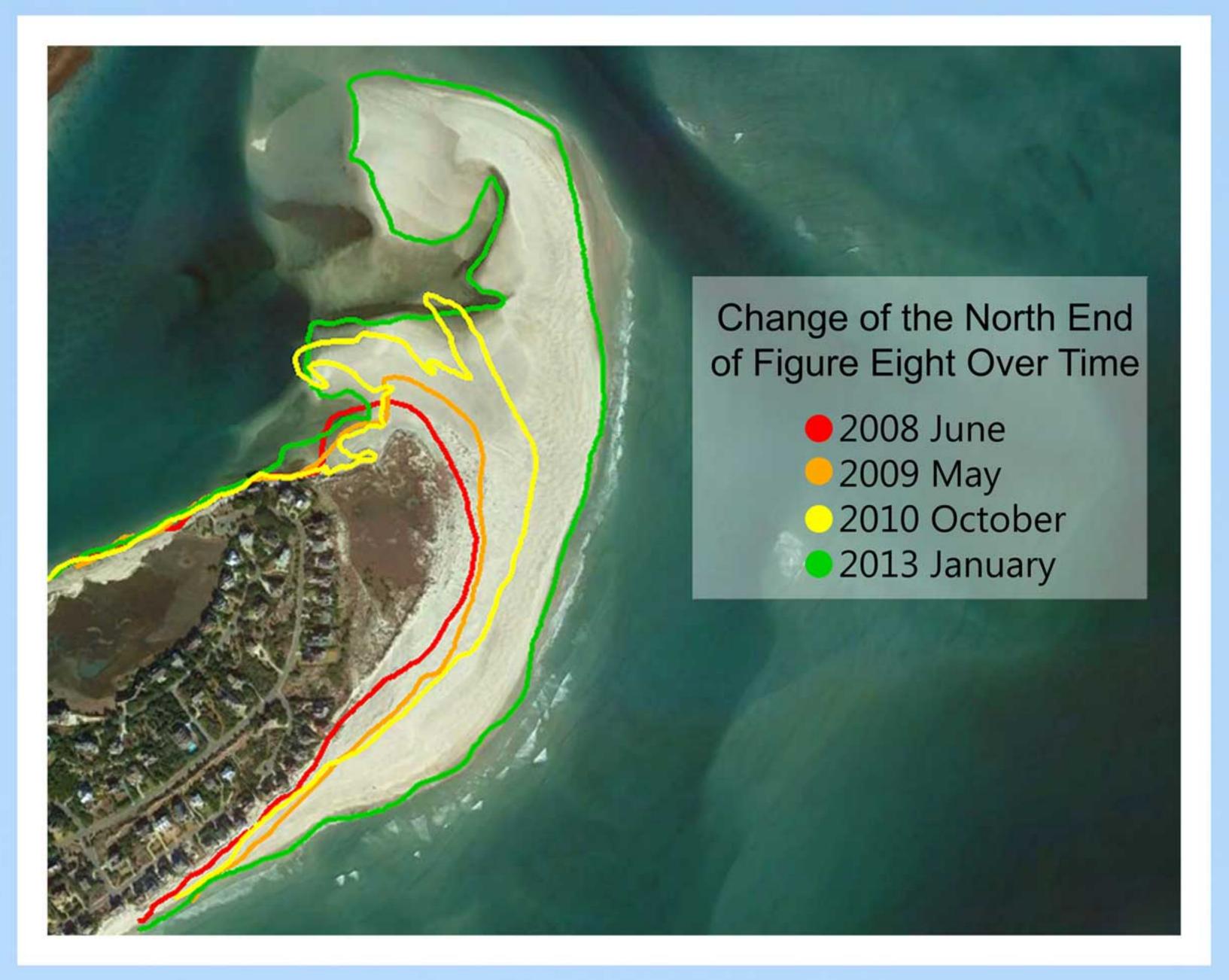


Figure 1: Shoreline changes between 2008 and 2013 at Figure Eight Island.

# THE THREAT TO RICH INLET

Some members of the Figure Eight Homeowners Association are pursuing a plan to build a terminal groin—a metal and rock wall—at the north end of the island.

The association has spent heavily on consulting and lobbying for the terminal groin. The groin was first proposed when the inlet channel moved north and resulted in erosion that endangered some ocean front homes near the inlet.

Now, though, the channel has migrated and the island is accreting. Erosion at the inlet is no longer a problem (See Figure 1).

The association's hired experts predict that if the wall were built the entire north end of the island seaward of the wall will wash away—along with all the critical nesting habitat and beach access areas that are now enjoyed by both wildlife and people (See Figure 2).

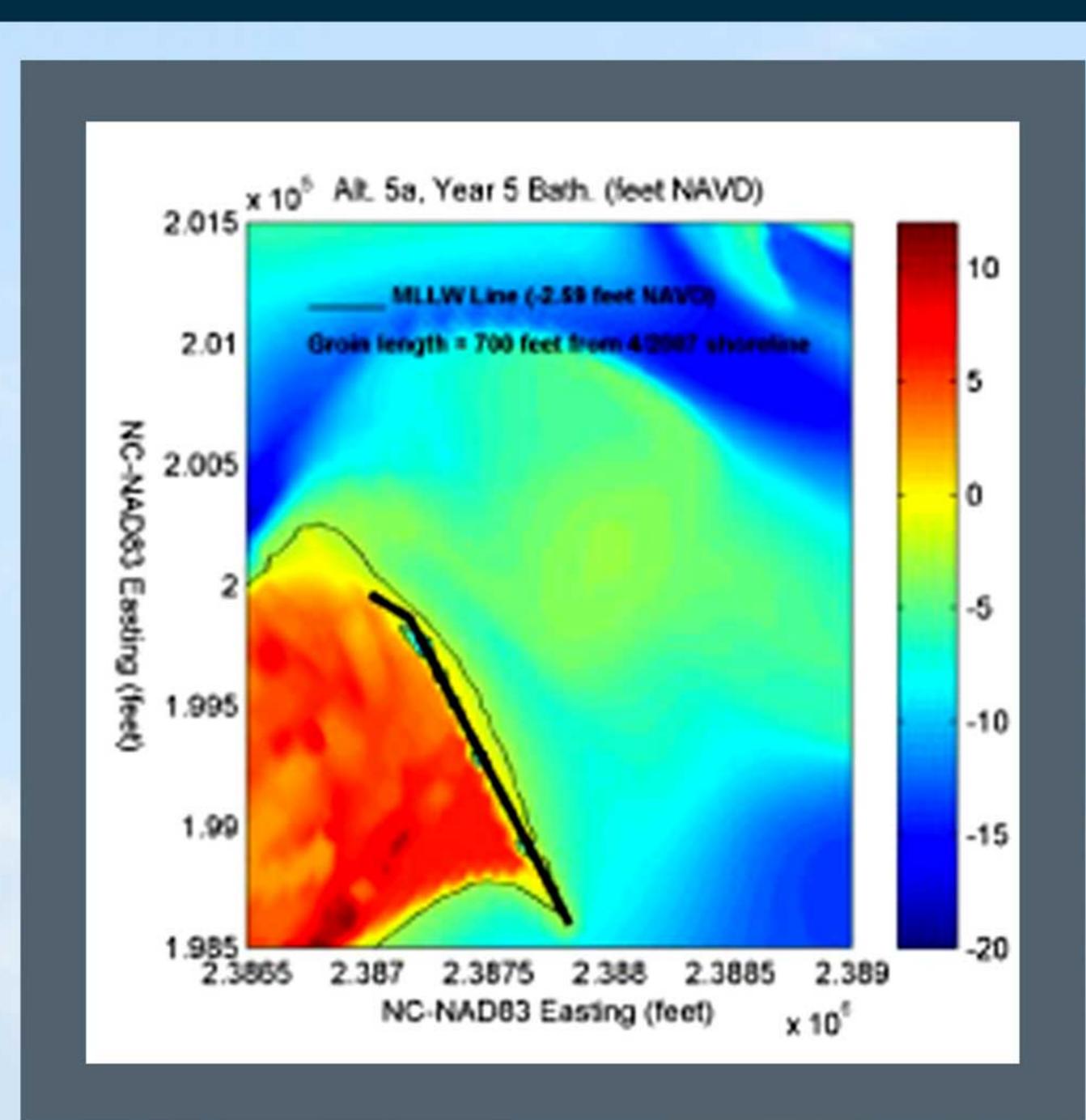


Figure 2: Projected shoreline behavior five years after

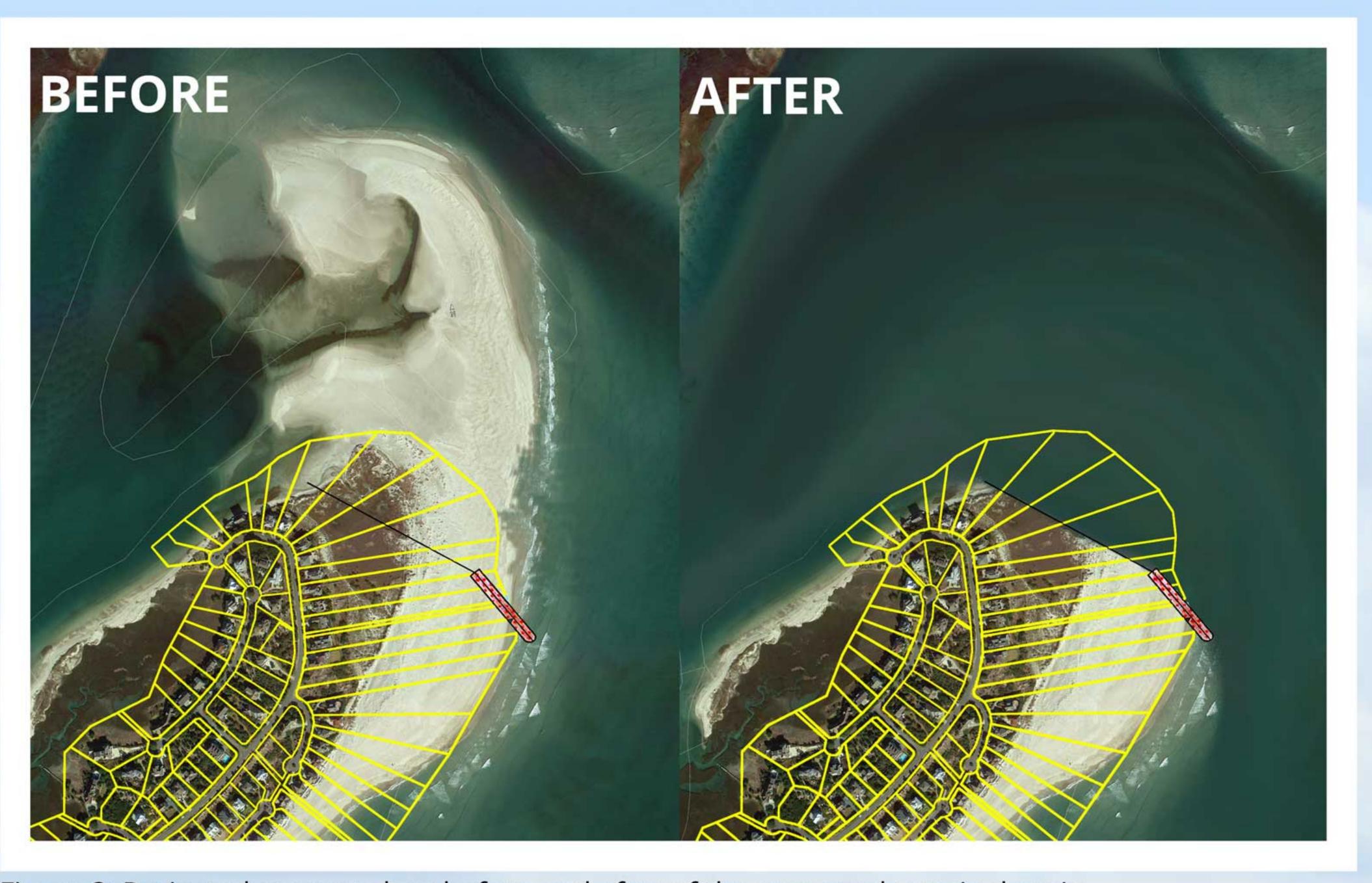


Figure 3: Projected property loss before and after of the proposed terminal groin.

# AND NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORY

Here are some interesting facts about the proposal to build a wall at the north end of Figure Eight Island:

#### **ECONOMICS**

#### UNDERESTIMATED COSTS

The association consistently under- NESTING HABITAT estimates the cost of constructing and maintaining a groin at \$17 million. In contrast, the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission estimates the cost of constructing and maintaining one terminal groin over 30 years to be committed \$18 million just to build a groin.

#### LOSS OF PROPERTY

Property owners at the northern tip of the island will lose significant portions of their land (See Figure 3). The association cannot even apply for permits to build the project without the permission of each of these property owners. This means the project cannot currently be built since not all property owners will allow the wall to be built on their land.

#### LOSS OF BEACH AND INLET ACCESS

Island residents and the general public will no longer have access to this valued natural area for recreation and enjoyment if the groin is built. The sand spits seaward of the groin will disappear and the area landward of the terminal groin is private property and much will be closed to recreational uses (See Figure 3).

#### ENVIRONMENT

### LOSS OF FEDERALLY PROTECTED

The north end of Figure Eight Island is designatedby the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as "critical nesting habitat" for threatened Piping Plovers. This legal designation protects this habitat from "significant degradation." The service has already informed the association ~\$55 million. Bald Head Island recently that it cannot allow the loss of this habitat as a result of this project.

#### ACCELERATED EROSION

The purpose of this wall is to trap sand. That means the sand would not go where it normally goes, and other areas of the beach

#### HARM TO FISHING

This structure may also modify sediment grain size, increase turbidity in the surf zone, make beach narrower and steeper.

This would result in:

- Reduced intertidal habitat
- Lower diversity and abundance of microinvertebrates, crustaceans and fish
- Prevention of shoal formation
- Diminished ebb tidal deltas, which are critical foraging grounds

#### LOSS OF FEDERALLY PROTECTED WETLANDS

The groin crosses 300 linear feet of coastal salt marshes, and will cause several acres of wetlands to be degraded or lost. This loss will have to be mitigated which adds significant and yet to be determined costs to the project.

#### LEGAL

#### ENDANGERED SPECIES

Negative impacts to the endangered wintering and threatened nesting Piping Plover and destruction of its designated "critical habitat" will violate the federal Endangered Species Act if the project is allowed.



Piping Plover

#### **COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT ACT**

This state law prohibits permits that are not consistent with all federal and state laws, rules and established public trust rights. A permit application under this law cannot be submitted if some property owners do not allow the groin to be built on their land.

#### YEARS OF LITIGATION

National, state and local environmental groups, many island residents and people across the state believe that federal and state permits cannot be legally issued for this project. They have already created an extensive federal agency record documenting this conclusion. Lawsuits costing many millions of dollars will be filed if permits are mistakenly issued, and these costs will be paid by every property owner on Figure Eight Island.

#### LIABILITY

The association and its members will be financially liable for paying for unintended damages caused by the groin if and when they occur.

